

CONFIDENTIAL FILING.

Possible defamation of the Prime Minister
by the "Today" programme.

PRIME MINISTER

January 1988

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
18.1.88							
19.1.88							
22.1.88							
PREM 19/24/29							

PRIME MINISTER

MR THATCHER

(ra)

GUEST LIST FOR THE GENERAL RECEPTION

For reasons that I can readily understand, Mr. Thatcher crossed Mr. Hussey's name from the earlier version of this list. I wondered however whether there is not a case for inviting him.

You want to speak to him informally about the disgraceful "mini saga" on the Today programme. We cannot find an occasion in the near future when you are likely to see him. The General Reception is the only possible one in the near future though Mr. Hussey may find such receptions difficult because of his legs.

We could suggest that he came towards the end of the reception. You could then have a quiet word with him about the mini saga after the reception. Would you like Mr. Hussey invited in this way?

I should also be grateful for your views on the other guests.

N.L.W.

N. L. WICKS

22 January 1988

Mr Wicks

1. I only crossed out Mr Hussey because I did not think a Gen. Recep. is (a) suitable for Dte (as you say) and (b) important enough. I did discuss with P.M. 25/1

PM MAPX

P.10

2. I enclose copy of letter
which I wrote to Duke
New in the history of
public broadcasting has
so far a libel been
published against Raynor
let alone a Prime Minister

S

DENIS THATCHER MBE TD

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

18 January 1988

Dear Duke,

With deference may I ask you to study the enclosed transcript (extract) of the Radio 4 "Today" programme of 14 January.

The extent and depth of political bias in the B.B.C. is a matter of opinion, but this is a disgrace judged by any standard however low.

I cannot believe that the management of a public broadcasting system can continue to employ a producer who publishes so foul and deliberate an untruth against anyone on such a subject. Surely such gross professional mis-conduct can neither be excused nor condoned?

Regards to you both

Yours ever

Denis.

Marmaduke Hussey Esqre
Chairman
B.B.C.



10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

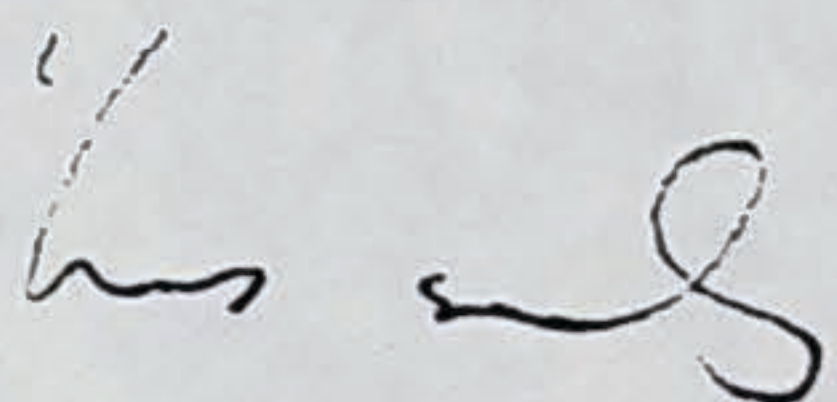
From the Principal Private Secretary

19 January 1988

Dear Michael,

Thank you for your letter of today's date which I have discussed with the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister was grateful to have the Attorney's advice on this matter. She would not want him to obtain advice from counsel specialising in the law of defamation.

I am copying this letter to Philip Mawer (Home Office) and to Sir Robin Butler.


Nigel Wicks

N.L. Wicks

Michael Saunders Esq
Law Officers' Department.

SLW

CONFIDENTIAL

Seen by PM



M.L. SAUNDERS
LEGAL SECRETARY

LAW OFFICERS' DEPARTMENT
ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE
LONDON, WC2A 2LL

19 January 1988

pm.

N L Wicks Esq CBE
Principal Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON S W 1

Jean Ngel.

Thank you for your letter of ~~18~~ 14 January enclosing the transcript of the item on the Today programme on Thursday 14 January which we discussed on the telephone.

The Attorney's view is that the item is defamatory. The defamatory elements include:

- "The final solution", in its inherent connotation and a fortiori in its apposition to "The unfit died of freedom", with its innuendo of intention to secure the deaths of the "unfit". The same applies to "ingenious" and "only the worthiest survived".
- "Crematorium shares surged". This is a particularly revolting defamation in its innuendo that this was a consequence desired by the Prime Minister: see "She legalized hard drugs", which personalises her as the target for the sting and not mere "Thatcherism".

Should the Prime Minister wish to take any further action on this, the Attorney considers that it would be desirable to obtain advice from Counsel specialising in the law of defamation.

I am copying this letter to Philip Mawer and to Sir Robin Butler.

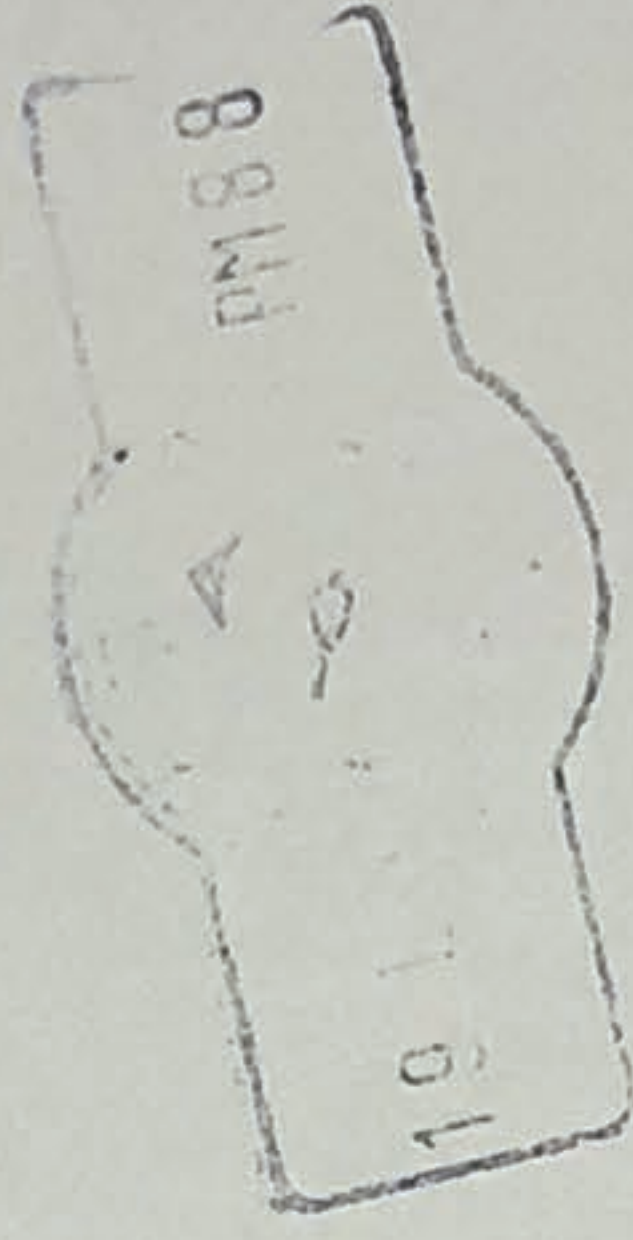
Yours faithfully
Michael Saunders

M L SAUNDERS

CONFIDENTIAL

PM: Detention of the PM, Jan 88.

THE OFFICERS OF THE
ROYAL CANAL OF THE
LONDON WATER



THE OFFICERS OF THE
ROYAL CANAL OF THE



10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Principal Private Secretary

18 January 1988

Dear Michael,

Here is the transcript of the item on the Today programme on Thursday 14 January about which I told you on the telephone.

I should be grateful if you could let me have the Attorney's advice on whether the item is defamatory.

It is not the Prime Minister's normal practice, or indeed wish, to send solicitors' letters to media organisations which issue statements which defame her. But I wonder whether this item might not prove an exception to the Prime Minister's normal practice.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Philip Mawer (Home Office) on a personal basis. I should be grateful if this is only seen by his Secretary of State and his Permanent Secretary. A copy also goes to Sir Robin Butler.

*Yours sincerely
Nigel Wicks*

N. L. WICKS

Michael Saunders, Esq.,
Law Officers' Department

CONFIDENTIAL

TRANSCRIPT OF "MINI SAGA" ON THE TODAY PROGRAMME ON THURSDAY 14
JANUARY 1988.(08.30)

"THATCHERISM THE FINAL SOLUTION" BY VINCENT HILL OF LONDON.

INGENIOUS: INDIVIDUAL CHOICE MUST BE PARAMOUNT. WITH GROWING
CONFIDENCE SHE LEGALIZED HARD DRUGS. PRICES FELL SHARPLY.
LEGITIMATE OUTLETS REPLACED BANKRUPT DRUG SYNDICATES. CRIME
FIGURES PLUNGED. CREMATORIUM SHARES SURGED. CITY POPULATIONS
THINNED AS THE WEAK SPIRITED SUCCUMBED.UNEMPLOYMENT VANISHED.
ONLY THE WORTHIEST SURVIVED. NOBODY COULD COMPLAIN. THE UNFIT
DIED OF FREEDOM.

IB
PRESS OFFICE
14.1.88