

TELECOM

Clive Priestley CB  
Director of Special Projects

MINISTER OF STATE PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
C. 8
22 AUG 1983
FILING INSTRUCTION: FILE No. ....

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Miss M G E Giles  
Private Secretary to the Minister of State  
(Privy Council Office)/Minister for the  
Arts  
Old Admiralty Building  
WHITEHALL SW1

*My dear Mary,*

OFFICE OF ARTS AND LIBRARIES
ACTION <i>by Secretary Mr Hodges.</i>
BY QP7132
FOR INFORMATION: <i>Mr Phipps Mr Stone</i>
19 August 1983
OAL (MB) ✓

ROH/RSC SCRUTINY: PUBLICATION AND PUBLICITY

1 You very kindly rang me about this the other day and we had a useful conversation about the question of when the report to the Minister should be published. You told me that there was some anxiety in OAL about the report leaking and discussed with me the possibility of my asking the parties to keep the thing under wraps; I replied that, as I was no longer in Whitehall, it might be inappropriate for me to ask the parties such a thing.

2 Since we spoke I have been thinking about the matter further. It seems to me that, whatever requests are made to the parties, a garbled account of the report is bound to reach the press. For one thing, I have been consulting the companies and the Arts Council about large parts of the text and, despite their best endeavours, there are bound now to be quite a number of people who know the sort of thing that I am going to say. For another, because it will be necessary to issue quite a large number of copies of the report to each of the parties they and we are bound to face the risk that there may be tactical leaking by someone, with whatever motives.

3 My conclusion is that the better course would be to take the bull by the horns and for the Minister to make the report available when he receives it, under cover of a summary indicating (a) how the scrutiny has been carried out; in what documentation the report consists; and what the main message is; and (b) how he is now proposing to proceed, ie the report has gone simultaneously to the two companies and the ACGB, he is allowing them X weeks in which to respond and he will be announcing his conclusions thereafter. As I mentioned to you on the phone the other day, I think it would be a great burden to the Minister if, instead of doing that, he had to cope with what might well be a barrage of misinformed comment and question during the period when he and the parties are using their best endeavours to consider the issues.

4 I am bound to say that I think the same consideration applies to the parties, and especially to the two companies. I would regard it as very unfortunate, and indeed unfair, if during the period when they were clearing their own minds on the issues raised by the report and were endeavouring to give the Minister a well considered and informed response, they had to devote some of their energy to beating off or

otherwise responding to ill-informed and possibly malicious comment, based on a garbled version of the scrutiny. It is, incidentally, already clear that parts of the report, taken out of context, could be used by an enemy of either company in a misleading and damaging way, creating impressions in the public mind which would take a lot of eradicating; I am thinking of things like the reports on the wardrobes, where the assignment officer has, quite rightly and at my request, gone into a lot of detail. We all know, or think we do, about clothes and how much they cost; my own eyebrows went up at some of the items identified by Georgina Soane; and I am in no doubt at all that if such material was quoted out of context early on it could cause everyone needless and persistent trouble.

5 Therefore, my clear and firm view is that the report should be made available as soon as it is sent to the Minister and to the three Chairmen.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

6 I understand that your office will be moving to Government Offices, Great George St in the foreseeable future. Will you very kindly arrange to let me have your new address, telephone number and date of removal as soon as you know them yourself?

7 I am copying this to Sir Kenneth Cork, Sir Claus Moser and Sir William Rees-Mogg.

*Yours ever*

*Oliver*

Copy to: Sir Kenneth Cork GBE FCA  
Sir Claus Moser KCB  
Sir William Rees-Mogg

*P.S. Sorry to be so "bawdierish" - it is the  
result of dictating too early in the morning.*



OFFICE OF ARTS AND LIBRARIES  
Old Admiralty Building  
Whitehall  
London SW1A 2AZ  
Telephone 01-273 4400

*From the Minister for the Arts*

2 September 1983

Clive Priestley Esq CB  
British Telecom  
2-12 Gresham Street  
London EC2V 7AG

*D 6/9*

*My dear Clive*

Your letter of 30 August is helpful in giving us part of the background to the recent press reports about the ROH/RSC scrutiny. The Minister regrets the leaks that have obviously taken place and hopes very much that they will not be repeated. He agrees with you that a build-up of informed discussion, speculation and pressure would obviously hamper sympathetic consideration of your report when it arrives. The Minister's intention is that it should be published as soon as it is available. Meanwhile he hopes that none of those concerned would in fact (to use your words) "feel that he must speak to the press in advance of the report being delivered". Of course the press will use every stratagem to get details of the contents and the views of those affected by it, but all concerned must realise that premature disclosure could do harm to their interests.

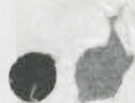
I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

*Yours love*

*Mary*

MISS M G E GILES  
Principal Private Secretary

Ants Policy March 80





10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister:

I am asked to see the Clive Priestley report on the ROH and RSC. The original is, I suspect, still at

request.

*[Handwritten signature]*  
1/9/9

*[Handwritten initials]*

1/9

Miss M G E Giles  
Private Secretary to the  
Minister for the Arts

30 August 1983

*My dear Mary,*

*JD*

*31/8*

ROH/RSC SCRUTINY: PUBLICATION AND PUBLICITY

1 Thank you for your letter of 24 August.

Publication etc

2 I am glad that the intention is to move to early publication. As you will have seen from articles in the SUNDAY TELEGRAPH at the weekend and the GUARDIAN yesterday, there is already some vigorous leaking going on. You will need to know that both Paul Williams and Nicholas de Jongh rang me and the circumstances in which they did so.

Williams got in touch here late on Friday afternoon. By that time he was already extremely well informed about the direction to be taken by my report, although he had acquired a number of errors along the way. I thought it sensible to correct some of these rather than allow them to enter the record and, as he already knew so much, I did not think it sensible to be stuffy and uncommunicative. His article is interesting; it looks as if he has been speaking to a number of people other than, perhaps, in the RSC.

Nicholas de Jongh rang me on Sunday evening from Edinburgh at my weekend address, having been put on to me by his editor and re-routed from my home via the person who was looking after it for us. He was in a bit of a state, not having seen the Williams piece but having had it read to him over the phone. He knew a lot of the background of course. As he was in a difficulty, and was plainly going to write something whatever I said, I thought it reasonable to give him a little help whilst asking him not to stir things up.

I am bound to say that I feel more than a little irritated to have been put in this position without any warning from those concerned.

I think it would be a good idea if we had some ground rules. If anyone in OAL, ACGB or either of the companies feels that she/he must speak to the press in advance of the report being delivered, I shall be grateful if she/he will kindly let me know. I find it vexing that, before the report has been finalised and submitted, there is such well informed speculation about its content and, as far as I am concerned, I think I am owed the courtesy of being consulted.

I must leave it to you to establish such ground rules as are necessary to protect the Minister's interest. Perhaps you will kindly let me know what is said. I should add, and this is not an incidental point, that having been until recently a member of the Prime Minister's staff, I have a particular feeling for her position in all this; and I am bound to say that I do not think that the cause will be assisted by leaks which have the effect of seeming to make her the butt of the arts lobby or anyone else. What we must aim for is a temperate and objective discussion of issues which are, I think we all agree, of great interest to the performing arts and the intellectual and cultural health of the nation. Sorry to be pompous!

Delivery of the report

We are now, definitely, on the last lap. There is still some drafting to be done but I see most of that being finished this week. Thereafter, my aim will be to let the Minister have an advance copy of the text, if necessary not in its final form owing to the pressure on the typing and word processor pools, as soon as I can. I would estimate that a presentable version of the main report will reach the Minister by mid September and the printed version a little later.

I am copying this letter to Sir Kenneth Cork (Chairman, RSC); Sir Claus Moser (Chairman, ROH); Sir William Rees-Mogg (Chairman, ACGB); and Tim Flesher at No 10.

*Yours ever,*

*Clive*







Per

OFFICE OF ARTS AND LIBRARIES

Mr Rickett - For information

With the compliments of  
Lord Gowrie  
*Minister of State*

Old Admiralty Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2AZ  
Telephone 01-273 4400



OFFICE OF ARTS AND LIBRARIES  
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From the Minister for the Arts

24 August 1983

Clive Priestley Esq CB  
Director of Special Projects  
British Telecom  
Telecommunications HQ  
2-12 Gresham Street  
LONDON EC2V 7AG

*DP*  
*28/8*

*My dear Clive*

ROH/RSC SCRUTINY: PUBLICATION AND PUBLICITY

1. Thank you for your letter of 19 August about the publication of the report on the scrutiny.
2. I have now had another discussion with Mark Hodges about this issue. We accept that there is likely to be a good deal of misinformed speculation if the scrutiny is not published quickly, but we think the Minister could reasonably expect at least a few days in which to consider whether or not he wishes to talk to the Chairman of the Arts Council and the Chairmen of the Companies before the report is published. It would be helpful, therefore, if all concerned would regard the document as confidential until a decision has been taken about publication.
3. The latest news of our move is that although OAL will be moving early in October the Private Office will not be moving until later that month. We will of course arrange to let you have the address and telephone number as soon as we have more definite information. In the meantime I wonder if it is possible for you to let us have an indication of when the report is likely to be submitted to the Minister?
4. I am copying this letter to Sir Kenneth Cork, Sir Claus Moser and Sir William Rees-Mogg.

*y*  
*Tom. ewer*

*Mary*

MISS M G E GILES  
Private Secretary

c B.I. 4 pages 1-7 of Report



Prime Minister (2)

MW 28/9

MINISTER OF STATE, PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

The Report is summarized at Flag A

MW

AT 30/9

PRIME MINISTER

FINANCIAL SCRUTINY OF THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE AND THE ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

I understand that the report by Clive Priestley on his enquiry into the financial affairs of these two companies, commissioned by my predecessor, will be available within the next few days - possibly on Friday (30 September) or Monday (3 October). In accordance with the arrangements you have agreed, I propose to publish it on receipt and at that stage will say no more than the attached statement.

it will be handed to the companies on Friday

At this stage I intend to treat it as a consultative document and will be inviting comments from the Arts Council and the two Companies concerned.

30m or it is proposed to publish on Monday 3 October

A copy of this minute and enclosure goes for information to Peter Rees.

MW

by

LORD GOWRIE

28 September 1983

DRAFT PRESS STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER FOR THE ARTS

FINANCIAL SCRUTINY OF THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE AND  
ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

The Minister for the Arts has now received the report by Mr Clive Priestley, CB, into the financial affairs of the Royal Opera House and the Royal Shakespeare Company, commissioned by his predecessor in February of this year. Copies have been sent to the Chairmen of the Arts Council and the two Companies concerned, who are being invited to comment by the end of October. The Minister will be considering the report in the light of those comments, before any statement is made.

September 1983