



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

*M&A
for diary
meeting*

24th July, 1986

Derek Howe has passed me your letter of 21st July to the Prime Minister.

I will, of course, ensure that this letter is placed before the Prime Minister and you will receive a reply as soon as possible.

STEPHEN SHERBOURNE
Political Secretary

Mrs. Mary Whitehouse CBE

*→ White HO correspondence etc
→ cabinet 15 July 86*

NATIONAL VIEWERS' AND LISTENERS' ASSOCIATION

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ARDLEIGH, COLCHESTER, ESSEX, CO7 7RH.
Tel: Colchester (0206) 230123

PRESIDENT:
MRS. MARY WHITEHOUSE, C.B.E.

ORGANISING SECRETARY:
Mr. John C. Beyer

CHAIRMAN:
Mr. A. J. Hughes,
40 Fitzwalter Road,
Colchester, Essex, CO3 3SX
Tel: Colchester (0206) 45658

HON. TREASURER:
Mr. R. C. Standing,
Still Waters, Pine Walk, East Horsley,
Leatherhead, Surrey, KT24 5AG
Tel: East Horsley (04865) 2573

HON. BRANCH DEVELOPMENT OFFICER:
Mr. John R. Wilson,
18 Corstorphine Bank Terrace,
Edinburgh, EH12 8RX,
Tel: 031-334 1727

The Rt Hon Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, MP
The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street,
LONDON, SW1.

21st July, 1986

Dear Mrs Thatcher,

We have always been most grateful for and encouraged by the interest you have shown in our work over the years and I have endeavoured to keep you fully informed about what our association has been trying to do ever since you became leader of the Conservative Party.

I sent to you a copy of the paper 'Recommendations on an Amendment to the Obscene Publications Act, 1959 and to the Broadcasting Complaints Commission' we presented to the Home Secretary in preparation for our meeting with him at the Home Office on July 7th. Since then I have been much exercised in my mind as to whether or not I should write to you about what transpired on that occasion. But encouraged by the kindness you have shown on previous occasions I have now decided to do so.

We were grateful to Mr. Hurd and Mr. Mellor for giving us so much of their time but the truth is that I have never been more disappointed in any meeting with any Minister throughout the years of our campaigning, not least perhaps, because as a Conservative Home Secretary I and my colleagues had hoped for some kind of positive encouragement from Mr. Hurd. Instead of which we received a categorical "No" to our question as to whether the Government would introduce new obscenity law in the next session of Parliament and the impression was given that there was little prospect that any such legislation would appear in the next Conservative election manifesto. And this in face of the fact that the present law is proving quite incapable of controlling the type of material now available. The attached quotation from a letter from one of the delegates, James Bogle, to Mr. Mellor, and the attached press cutting does illustrate this point most strongly.

What I personally found so bitterly disappointing was that this was precisely the kind of "permissive society" Home Office response which we have come to recognise over the years and which we had hoped so much would have changed under your leadership. However

cont. . .

PATRONS:

SIR CYRIL W. BLACK, J.P., D.L., F.R.I.C.S.
LADY CHAPMAN
PROFESSOR G.N.M. COLLINS

THE MARQUIS OF DONEGALL
J. AUDREY ELLISON, B.Sc., Secretary Royal Society
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THE VEN. BERTIE LEWIS, M.A. Archdeacon of Cardigan.

THE EARL OF LONGFORD, K.G., P.C.
AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR THEODORE McEVROY,
C.B.E., K.C.B.
LADY PRITCHARD
THE RT. REV. M. A. P. WOOD, D.S.C., M.A., R.N.R.,
Former Bishop of Norwich

I must say that I was delighted to read that you have taken personal responsibility for the Election Strategy Group and hope very much that the urgency of the situation will be reflected in its proposals.

You were good enough to spare time to discuss these matters with me when you received me in Downing Street on October 18th 1983 and I would most sincerely welcome the chance to come and talk to you again at any time and in any place at your convenience. I realise, of course, that you will be taking a well-earned holiday but perhaps when you return you may see your way clear to meeting me. I would be more grateful than I can say.

With best wishes,
Yours sincerely,

Mary Whitehouse

Mary Whitehouse
President.

Extract from a letter from Mr. James Bogle to Mr. David Mellor at the Home Office.

"You may recall you expressed surprise at my mentioning a case in the courts which involved a film showing the consumption of human excrement and that this film was subsequently found not to be obscene. You asked for "chapter and verse" on the case and I am able to provide this for you.

The case took place at Inner London Crown Court on 25th June 1981 under Section 2 of the Obscene Publications Act 1959. The accused was Mr. George Anthony de Giorgio charged with possessing obscene materials for sale for gain.

The film "Bizarre Tastes" included scenes where human excrement was consumed ("coprophilia") and the Judge, His Honour Judge Cooke, had to leave the Bench after viewing the film and adjourn the case for a brief period. It seems that this was because, as he explained, it had made him physically sick. Members of the jury were likewise very distressed.

In the end, the jury were unable to determine which members of the public would see the film and hence they could not be sure whom the film would "tend to deprave and corrupt". Thus the accused was acquitted.

The Judge did not however award him costs.

I hope this goes some way to providing you with evidence of the completely ineffectual nature of the Obscene Publications Act as currently constituted and of the pressing need to rectify this anomaly with government legislation."

D. T. 1. 19. 7. 86

80 sex arrests

A two and a half year investigation into a child sex scandal in Leeds has uncovered alleged offences involving 200 children, some as young as two. So far 80 people have been arrested, and more cases are being passed to West Yorkshire detectives. Inquiries were carried out by a hand-picked team of eight officers.

PERSONAL



092BHN

CC SS

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

31 July 1986

We spoke on the telephone about Mrs. Whitehouse's letter to the Prime Minister. I am sending you a copy of this on a personal basis.

The Prime Minister has agreed to see Mrs. Whitehouse, and Caroline Ryder will be getting in touch with your Diary Secretary to arrange a mutually convenient date in the autumn. Before that meeting takes place, however, the Prime Minister would like to discuss the obscenity legislation generally with the Home Secretary, and Caroline will be getting in touch to arrange this as well.

For the latter meeting, I think it would be helpful if you would provide us with a concise brief setting out:

- (i) the law at present, in relation to both television and the rest of the media;
- (ii) its shortcomings;
- (iii) the Home Secretary's assessment of whether, and if so how and when, the shortcomings can be remedied;
- (iv) Mrs. Whitehouse's assessment of the shortcomings;
- (v) the Home Secretary's views on her proposed solutions.

Mark Addison

Stephen Boys Smith, Esq.,
Home Office.

PERSONAL

Mary Whitehouse - to see. Did she
come up yesterday? MGA 30/7
MFA.
No. NCU 30/7

PRIME MINISTER

2/7/86

Mary Whitehouse has written you the attached letter, following a meeting with Ministers at the Home Office on 7 July. The letter explains that she was not at all satisfied with what the Home Secretary and David Mellor told her, and she is accordingly seeking a meeting with you later in the year.

It is obviously unfortunate that Mrs. Whitehouse has come away from the meeting with the Home Secretary in such disappointment. I have had a word with Douglas Hurd's office, and they were rather surprised by this assessment. They accept of course that the Home Secretary did not give any commitment to early legislation on the introduction of a new obscenity law, but they felt the mood of the meeting, at least so far as Mrs. Whitehouse was concerned, was a reasonably friendly one. (Apparently one of the delegation of three from the NVLA was at times rather abusive during the meeting, though the others felt rather embarrassed about this).

One option would be for you to write back to Mrs. Whitehouse in a very sympathetic way responding to her request for new legislation.

Another option would be to see Mrs. Whitehouse to try and reassure her about the seriousness with which the Government treat her concerns, and to go through some of the great practical difficulties in finding workable alternatives to the existing legislation. If you do see Mrs. Whitehouse, I am sure you should do so with the Home Secretary. To do otherwise would look as if you were undermining his position.

Which option would you prefer?

I will of course see

Mark Addison

Mrs. Whitehouse. But first I must

Mark Addison

have a meeting with the Home Office.

28 July 1986

DG2AJB

Judge says - Whitehouse's letters are relevant. We have been doing nothing about this subject for years. Of course she is upset but