

PRIME MINISTER

BRIAN WALDEN INTERVIEW

This is just to give you an early feel for the Brian Walden LWT interview which will be recorded on Saturday morning and broadcast at 1.10pm on Sunday.

You should be at their South Bank studios for 9.30am - I will be in the office for 8.30am - for make-up. The recording will begin at 10.00am. It will be done down to time - approximately 43 minutes with a commercial break at an appropriate point. In short, the familiar pattern.

The set will be pale brown/beige so a plain blue suit would be in order. They counsel against checks or stripes.

LWT are keen to present this as a live broadcast and consequently have assured us that they wish to preserve the confidentiality of the content until broadcast. They will not therefore release texts until after the actual screening of the programme.

I spoke to Brian Walden this afternoon. He sees two broad issues for discussion:

- first, the economy: why is it all going wrong when it should be going right taking in your relations with the Chancellor and Alan Walters
- second, yourself - are you tired?, "going barmy?", as Brian Walden provocatively puts it; do you listen to people?; in short, your own idiosyncratic style of Government.

You should not regard this format as necessarily a disadvantage. I know you think I think only in terms of opportunity, regardless of the context, but you are unlikely to have a more sympathetic interviewer than Brian Walden. And this is an opportunity to put things into context.

I am copying this to Paul Gray so that he can tender his advice tomorrow. We should then discuss the interview on Friday when I shall get a more up to date approach from Brian Walden.

The economic scenario, however, suggests a calm exposition of the Government's economic successes to put the present problems in context; and a persuasive political exposition of the nature of the present problems related to -

- i) the crash of '87
- ii) the propensity for Britain to pay itself more than it earns through output, thereby inducing higher interest rates and higher unemployment than might otherwise be the case
- iii) the changed expectations of the nation based upon much greater confidence in the future leading to a freer spending and a lower saving society.

The difficult bit will be the handling of the EMS/ERM issue without letting down either the Chancellor or Alan Walters who must however be put in his place as an adviser and not as a decider. We shall need to rehearse very carefully the line you might take on this issue.

So far as the personal aspect of the interview is concerned, I think you need to get over the following points:

- your guiding principle, learned from your earliest years, is "to thine own self be true"; you are not a cosmetic, plastic figure like some you could mention
- this means that you have certain fundamental beliefs, speak your mind and refuse to go along with any old idea for the sake of a quiet life
- this means in turn that often you are alone in saying what needs to be said both at home and abroad; indeed, there are probably a lot of people in this world who are secretly grateful that you have absolved them of the responsibility for standing up for what they know to be right

- this again in turn means that you are not a comfortable character, or that you curry favour for the sake of it; but you hope you are respected
- but whatever people think, you are not going to change your ways now; you are going to go on doing what you believe to be right and in the longer term interests of your country and the world
- this may mean that you appear out on your own in such fora as the EC, NATO, or the Commonwealth; but the fact is that your policies have been widely adopted on both sides of the communist/capitalist ideological divide
- you are neither tired nor off your trolley, as Brian Walden alternatively puts it, with his usual charm; you are trying to do what you think is right and which so many people recognise as such
- you would prefer to be judged by your record than by the often calculatedly offensive caricatures peddled by those who have achieved very little, if anything, positive in their lives.

Overall, I think you want to leave the impression of a British Prime Minister who -

- i) recognises the difficulties that tend to come mid term for any successful Government but knows how to get out of them; and
- ii) acknowledges the gossip about you but remains undaunted because you believe in fighting for what you believe to be right and because you are encouraged by the overall success of your administrations.

Done in a suitably restrained way, this can be put out persuasively and indeed inspiringly and evade the trap of appearing manic or defensive.

What I want the viewer to say at the end of the interview is -

- i) you've got to admire her guts and you've got to admit she's right on a lot of things;
- ii) where else is there a leader who stands up for what she believes in and has a track record of success as long as your arm?; and
- iii) whatever anyone may say about you, Britain has in you an international leader whose influence and power is a major asset; we'd better start recognising it.

In short, you must play to your strengths in this interview without appearing cocky, boastful or complacent. You will need to imply a great deal rather than assert it openly. This is why we need to rehearse on Friday.

It will also be necessary to present a vision of the future to overcome any idea that you are on your way out.

You have a formidable programme ahead of you in order to achieve your objectives, at home of a prosperous and caring society (and able to care because it is prosperous), and abroad to assist in developing our destiny in Europe on a practical basis, helping the East to find their way to the alternative to communism, and to assist in resolving the other major issues of the day - South Africa, the Middle East, Cambodia and the tendency towards protectionism.

pp ARQuian
BERNARD INGHAM
October 25, 1989