

pa
DMS
30/11

PRIME MINISTER

CABLE BROADCASTING

You asked whether cable broadcasting will be subject to the ordinary law on obscenity and libel. The answer is yes. The Cable Bill will include specific provisions to this effect.

ms

DMS

22 November 1983

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

3 pp's



HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

18 November 1983

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 8 November about the Cable Bill.

The Cable White Paper made clear that the Bill would remove any doubt which might presently exist as to whether the law on obscenity applies to cable. The reasons why you were led to believe that the answer to the Prime Minister's question might not be straightforward relate solely to the drafting of the relevant provisions. For example, it is not possible simply to apply the Obscene Publications Act since they penalise on publication of an obscene article and in the case of the cable distribution of a live programme there would be no "article" as such. More detailed provisions are therefore required. Nevertheless, the short answer to the Prime Minister's question is that the Bill will make cable programmes subject to the law on obscenity and also to the law on libel.

Yours ever

Mike

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10 DOWNING STREET

cc: Lord Res's Office
HMT
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NIO
D/ Energy
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From the Private Secretary

8 November, 1983

Cable Bill

The Prime Minister has seen a copy of your Secretary of State's letter of 4 November to the Secretary of State for Defence.

BT
The Prime Minister has enquired whether cable broadcasting will be subject to the ordinary law on obscenity and libel. I understand that Tim Flesher has already spoken to you about this, and that the answer to the Prime Minister's question may not be entirely straightforward. I should be most grateful if you could provide a note.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries of the recipients of yours.

DAVID BARCLAY

Hugh Taylor, Esq.,
Home Office