



MA

10 DOWNING STREET
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From the Private Secretary

18 September 1987

Thank you for your letter to the Prime Minister of 17 September about her seminar on broadcasting. I am sure the Prime Minister will be interested to see this.

(David Norgrove)

Gerald Howarth, Esq., M.P.

to



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Tel: (01) 219 4505 / 3580

17th September 1987

Rt Hon Mrs Margaret Thatcher FRS MP

Her Prime Minister

In advance of your meeting with the television people on Monday, I hope you will not mind if I put some points to you. Although I understand the meeting is being convened to discuss technical matters, it may extend to the question of content.

TV Violence.

The recent screening of Sins on Sunday 6th September prior to the 9.00 p.m. "watershed" illustrates 2 points:

1. The self-imposed watershed of 9.00 p.m. is not being rigorously enforced. I believe that until 9.00 p.m., parents should be able to rely on the broadcasters' fulfilling their commitment and not have to be poised to switch channels in case something unsuitable appears.
2. There is absolutely no sanction on the TV companies/BBC or personnel if they transgress. That is why we should press ahead to bring broadcasting within the scope of the OPA 1959, something which Michael Grade now accepts, so that the public can challenge. Douglas Hurd's idea of a watchdog committee like the Press Council would be a useful addition, but not a substitute.

The programmes which mirror violent aspects of life today, like the Professionals are more likely to produce harmful effects than, say, fictionalised programmes like the A-Team (where no one actually appears to get hurt) or cowboy films.

The news, too, can have an adverse impact. Increasingly we see more graphic pictures of massacres, shootings, road accidents. The rule is best summed up in the BBC's new guide to programme makers "the more you shock, the more it takes to shock."

Rt Hon Mrs Margaret Thatcher FRS MP

17th September 1987

Sex and bad language.

Both the BBC and ITV accept the need to exercise restraint. However, some of the soaps, like Eastenders, tend to encourage the use of foul language, disrespect for authority and a casual attitude towards sex. The BBC argues that they believe families should sit down together to discuss "adult social issues", but I do not believe it is the BBC's function to tell parents what they should discuss with their children.

Yours ever
G Howarth
GERALD HOWARTH

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17th September, 1987

The Right Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher FRS MP,
Prime Minister,
10, Downing Street,
London SW1.

Dear Mrs. Thatcher,

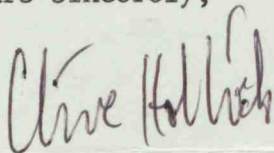
Re: Pay Television in the United Kingdom

I understand that you will be holding a seminar on 21st September to discuss a number of issues relating to the future of the television service. I do hope that one of the topics to be included in your deliberations will be the establishment of terrestrial subscription pay television.

We have been researching the prospects for pay television and our preliminary conclusion is that such a service would provide a welcome addition to the choice of viewing available to the public at a modest cost. We understand that the technology necessary to support such a service is available at a cost which would make the enterprise economically viable.

If the way is cleared to offer a pay television service to the public we would be keen to play a part in developing this exciting business opportunity.

Yours sincerely,



CLIVE HOLLICK
Managing Director

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