

...the programme... have... and covered the...
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...is already in a highly...
...national...
...the House of Commons on February 9th, at which I was present...
...by...
...in full, and...
...page of the "headline".

NO/DAW/DP

10th February, 1982.

John Withington, Esq.,
Editor,
"Reporting London",
Thames Television Ltd.,
300-316, Euston Road,
London, NW1 3BH.

Dear Mr. Withington,

On behalf of the National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts, I write to express our regret, not to say concern, that the item on the licensing of sex establishments in yesterday evening's "Reporting London" programme (9th February) was, in our opinion, presented in a manner which did not allow a proper and fair balance of views on this subject to be expressed. Although this did not entirely surprise us, since, in general but with a few notable exceptions, the reporting by the media, both broadcasting and the press, of anything concerned with matters of sexual censorship, has always been unfair and distorted, we had hoped that perhaps, at last, that biased attitude was changing.

We are particularly disappointed that you did not invite either myself or another representative from the N.C.R.O.P.A., since this campaign has been fighting censorship, for consenting adults, with great militancy ever since I founded it in April 1976. We are fighting for the principle of the inalienable right for the freedom of adults to see, read and hear whatever they choose for themselves, withpewhain incontrovertible harm would be caused to others if such a right were not curtailed. This is something still denied to the people of this country but which nearly all other countries of the so-called free Western World enjoy, most of which have long since had the great good sense to dispense with the ridiculously out-moded and repressive censorship legislation to which we are still subject. Furthermore, as soon as the "Reporting London" programme began its run, I added your name to our "press" release list to keep you well informed, in common with all other current affairs programmes including, of course, news programmes.

Our major complaint is that the people selected to discuss the question of sex establishment licensing were un representative of the majority. Firstly we bitterly oppose the inclusion of Mrs. Mary Whitehouse at all. She is the president of the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association, a "watchdog" organisation which was set up specifically to monitor television and radio broadcasting. Its views on the licensing of sex shops are as relevant as those of, for example, the Milk Marketing Board. Moreover Mrs. Whitehouse has, in the past, been afforded media coverage out of all proportion to the numbers and

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views she represents. The Whitehouse Mafia have infiltrated and coerced the mass media for far too long. It is scandalous that this has been allowed to go unchecked.

Secondly, Mr. Reg Race, as an M.P., is already in a highly privileged position and has an always readily available national platform on which to put forth his hysterical and irrational views, which he indeed took every advantage of in the debate in the House of Commons on February 3rd, at which I was present, when he ensured maximum publicity for his opinions by uttering that forbidden four-letter word - known by millions, that is, but still forbidden in the mother of Parliaments, apparently, and which "Hansard" is too coy to print in full, even though it appears bold and clear on the front page of "The Guardian"!

Thirdly, whilst we accept that it was perfectly proper for you to invite Mr. David Sullivan, he was being attacked two against one, and, as the proprietor of many of such sex establishments, one who quite naturally has a vested interest in fighting any proposed legislation which would adversely affect his businesses and his profitability. A representative, like myself (and I am not entirely unused to going before the cameras, having been a professional actor all my working life and having made over 700 television appearances) would have been able to express the viewpoint of the consumer (or, at least, potential consumer!), to express the viewpoint of the millions - yes, millions! - of people in this country who do enjoy sexually explicit material, who do want sex shops, who do want sex cinemas, who do want individual freedom of choice, and, above all, who loathe and detest - and fear, even - censorship.

As you will deduce from the names on our letterhead, none of our committee members has any connection with any business or commercial enterprise which could in any way be said to be a potential material beneficiary in the event of us (this campaign) achieving our aims. We are the only really effective organisation actively campaigning against censorship of this kind in this country. A measure of that recognition is that we gave both written and oral evidence to the Home Office Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship (the Williams Committee) and have three times been invited to Home Office discussions to put forward our ideas and views about legislation in this field. One of these discussions was with the Home Secretary himself. The most recent was on January 5th when we spent nearly two and a half hours with Home Office officials going through these very sex establishment licensing proposals line by line, clause by clause. Although we are opposed to the whole concept of licences for sex establishments per se, we did make many suggestions for improving the Bill, from our point of view, and concessions have subsequently been made to a number of our recommendations (e.g. the removal of prison sentences for offenders). I think this demonstrates that we are respected in high places, even if not in the realms of television.

One final point. We believe it is very regrettable that discussion on so important an issue is confined to so few minutes of transmission time in a programme like yours. However, limited though that time may have been, it is still surely disgraceful that outrageous, untruthful and arrogant statements like "the Williams Report is a totally discredited document", for example, which Mary Whitehouse had the audacity to make, should be allowed to pass completely unchallenged in any programme of whatever length.

In the interests of fair play, I do beg you to allow us our say and I hope, therefore, that you will consider inviting me on to your programme at an early date, to help redress the imbalance.

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I am enclosing herewith two copies of our promotional leaflet which details the views and objectives of the National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts, which I hope is self-explanatory and will be helpful. However, should you, or any member of your production team, require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I shall look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

David Webb,
Organiser,
National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts

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The leaflet of the National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts, which I have enclosed for you, is a copy of the leaflet which I have distributed to all members of the Campaign, and which I have also distributed to all members of the Campaign who have written to me since I last wrote to you. It is a copy of the leaflet which I have distributed to all members of the Campaign, and which I have also distributed to all members of the Campaign who have written to me since I last wrote to you.

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Encs.