

~~CENSORED~~

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE REFORM
OF THE OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACTS

N C R O P A

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The N.C.R.O.P.A. is affiliated to the National Council for Civil Liberties

NO/DAW/DP

27th February 1991

Richard Baker, Esq., OBE, RD,
c/o The British Broadcasting Corporation,
Broadcasting House,
London,
W1A 1AA.

Richard H. Baker,

Thank you for your letter of 20th February in reply to mine of 15th February, regarding your membership of the Broadcasting Standards Council.

I am sorry and concerned that you should so cavalierly dismiss my letter as "unmitigated rubbish", and I certainly do not accept that assessment of it.

To answer the points you made, however, may I say firstly that it is entirely irrelevant whether or not you are "on the staff of the BBC" (or, indeed, of any broadcasting company) or a "free-lance". The fact is that, as a 'presenter' you are often in control of and participate in unscripted broadcast programmes. It is all the more likely, therefore, that such programmes provoke controversy and could fall within the remit of the BSC's "Code of Conduct". (In any case, your virtual permanent and continual employment by the BBC - 3 full broadcasting hours this week alone, according to the "Radio Times", and that's just radio - makes your claimed detachment from "staff" status effectively academic).

Secondly, the important thing about the Broadcasting Standards Council is not that it should have "a professional in the broadcasting field" as a member, but that any professional broadcasting communicator, whether as excellent and expert as yourself or not, would even wish to become a participant in the operation of the state censorship machine (of which the BSC is a disgraceful part). How you can reconcile that with a (presumed) concomitant commitment to the freedom of expression is, frankly, a mystery, although I suppose the £9000.00 yearly salary is not to be sneezed at.

What is certain, however, is that Schedule 14 of the Broadcasting Act 1990 makes it crystal clear that any member of the BSC "who is in any way directly or indirectly interested in any matter that is brought up for consideration at a meeting of the Council shall disclose the nature of his interest to the meeting, and where such disclosure is made the member shall not take part in any deliberation or decision of the Council, or of any of their Committees, with respect to that matter."

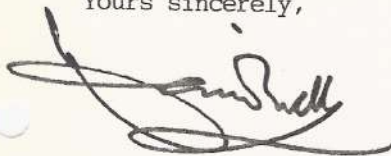
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This, in effect, renders you ineligible to participate in any BSC deliberation and certainly ineligible for the £173.00 weekly pay packet.

We urge you to reconsider your position in relation to this grotesque Orwellian creation and sever what can only be seen as your public espousal of nannyist state censorship.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Webb', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

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