



**BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION**

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Monday 31/7

Dear George,

Herewith the Report.

When you have read it, would you please seal it up in the enclosed envelope & give it to Hans Widdows secretary. I will arrange to pick it up later in the day.

Yours,

John

Read

George Widdows

31 July

Telephone  
01-353 8845  
01-353 8846

1, BRICK COURT,  
TEMPLE, EC4Y 9BY.

17/9 22, 1977.

E. C. Robbins Esq. CBE.

Dear Mr. Robbins,

I attach the interim Report.  
I would be glad to discuss it further  
at a convenient date after  
1 June.

Yours sincerely,

Avram Nemi,

## Preface

- 1.1. It will be noticed that I have described this Report as an Interim Report. I attach some importance to this description.
- 1.2. I appreciate that the material which has been handed to the Police by the News of the World may never be made available to me and that in that event I shall be unable to take my Inquiry any further or to make a Final Report. Nevertheless by describing this Report as an Interim Report I hope I am drawing attention adequately to two important points:
- (a) that in many respects the evidence before me even in regard to named individuals is incomplete and that my judgements are of necessity provisional; and
  - (b) that the articles contained a number of allegations against unnamed individuals which, with some exceptions, I have been unable to investigate at all.
- 1.3. When I first undertook this Inquiry I envisaged that the News of the World would be prepared to cooperate by making available to me some at any rate of the evidence on which they based their allegations. In the result, however, apart from one or two addresses, the only evidence which they have supplied to me has been a copy of the anonymous letter which was published (with the names deleted) of <sup>in the issue</sup> 14 March 1971 ~~see para~~ Sections 12, 13, 14 and Appendix 2.
- 1.4. It will be apparent therefore that I have had to proceed without any precise knowledge of the extent of the evidence in the possession of the News of the World and without being able to make any satisfactory assessment of its quality. I have come to the conclusion, however, that if this Interim Report is to be of any value to the Board I shall have to express views on a number of matters even though the basis of

these views is not as firm as I would have wished. As a consequence it is essential that the circulation of this Interim Report should be as restricted as possible.

1.5. The absence of the "evidence of the prosecution" - as it might be termed - has also affected the form of the Report. I had anticipated that I would be able to investigate most if not all of the allegations contained in the articles even in cases where the individual concerned was not named in the newspaper and that in the Report I would review the evidence at some length. Indeed my original draft was started on these lines but I decided as I proceeded that the gaps in the evidence made any attempt at a detailed analysis unsatisfactory. I have come to the conclusion therefore that I should state my views as shortly as I reasonably can and deal with any particular cases on which further information is sought by the Board by way of a Supplementary Note.

1.6. As the Board will be aware, I have been in correspondence with the Director of Public Prosecutions with reference to the progress of the investigation by the police. The information which I received at the end of March was to the effect that the material already in their possession was voluminous and that the investigation would still take a considerable time. It will be appreciated that this investigation is an additional reason for treating this Interim Report as a sensitive document.

1.7.



## Introduction

2.1. In the Spring of 1971 the News of the World published a series of articles containing allegations of corruption at the B.B.C. The series began with an article on the front page of the issue dated 14 February 1971 under the heading "SCANDAL AT THE B.B.C." which stated that reporters of the News of the World had been conducting a "massive investigation" and had "assembled an astonishing story of what goes on among producers, D.Js. and the fixers from the pop record business who batten on them." The article continued:

"The dossier details :

PAYOLA - cash payments to obtain plugs for records.

THE USE of call-girls to entertain well-known B.B.C. personalities.

DECEIT by producers and disc-jockeys who use the B.B.C. to push records in which they have a personal financial interest.

DISGUISED INDUCEMENTS - like all-expenses-paid holidays and trips abroad.

RIGGING OF THE "TOP 20" RECORD CHARTS, which computerisation was supposed to have made foolproof.

GIRL 'RECORD PLUGGERS' WORKING ON A BED-FOR-PLUG BASIS."

2.2. It seemed clear from the prominence given to the article that it was being suggested that the alleged corruption was widespread, and this impression was reinforced by the following specific passages in the first and second articles:

- (a) ".... Clandestine deals with B.B.C. employees over cash payments, lavish favours and the provision of sex parties are commonplace."
- (b) "Exactly how many record pluggers work on a 'bed-in-return-for-plugs' basis is anybody's guess. But this form of sexual payola is certainly commonplace."
- (c) "Direct cash payments to obtain plugs for records, Symonds agreed, were rife at the B.B.C. among certain producers and disc-jockeys."

(d)



2.3. In addition to these allegations of wide-spread corruption a subsequent article, published in the issue of 21 March 1971, contained serious charges about the television programme 'Top of the Pops' and suggested in effect that the girls appearing in the programme were being exposed to grave moral danger. "Nowhere in our inquiries", it was stated, "Did we discover such appalling disregard for the well being of pop-crazy youngsters."

2.4. The final article in the series was published in the issue of 4 April 1971. By that time it had become apparent that the allegations could be grouped under four main headings :

- (1) Allegations that producers and disc jockeys had received payment in cash or in kind, including sexual favours, in return for arranging for the playing of records on B.B.C. programmes.
- (2) Allegations that producers and disc jockeys had used their position in the B.B.C. to promote records in which they themselves had some financial interest.
- (3) Allegations concerning the programme "Top of the Pops".
- (4) Allegations that the "top-20" record charts had been rigged.

2.5. I came to the conclusion, however, that the allegations relating to the rigging of record charts did not implicate the B.B.C. or any of its employees and I have not included this aspect of the matter in my Inquiry. The relevant passages in the articles are set out in Appendix 3.



N.O.W. Investigation

- 3.1. Before I turn to consider any of the allegations, however, I think it will be helpful if I make some reference to the nature of the evidence which, as far as I have at present been able to ascertain, the News of the World had assembled before the articles were published.
- 3.2. It appears that the investigation began in the late Spring or early Summer of 1970. Three journalists were involved, Clive Cooke (who adopted the name of Arnold Carter), Trevor Kempson (who adopted the name of Ken Travers) and a third man who was introduced as Frank Freeman. This third man was stated to have been suffering from ulcers and does not appear to have taken part in the investigation after about August 1970.
- 3.3. For the purpose of their investigation the reporters adopted the role of being businessmen who were interested in "going into the record business". From an early stage they were assisted by Ed Moreno, a former disc jockey [redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted] I was unable to reach a decision as to whether Moreno [redacted] knew that the men [redacted] were working for were reporters and not businessmen at all, but it is my impression that Moreno did realise that he was working for the News of the World
- 3.4. I wrote to Moreno [redacted] as clearly [redacted] evidence would have been of great importance. Moreno declined to see me on the grounds that his complaint against the B.B.C. in 1969 when he was a disc jockey had not been dealt with and that he had already devoted a considerable amount of his time to the investigation being carried on by the D.P.P.  
[redacted]

3.5. At a later stage - I was told in August 1970 - the reporters engaged [redacted]

I have no very clear evidence as to this.

3.6.

the reporters attempted to get in touch with producers and disc jockeys employed by the B.B.C. The method employed was to telephone or visit the producer or disc jockey concerned and to try to interest him in meeting two businessmen who were going into the record business and wanted advice. A number of producers and disc jockeys agreed to such meetings and these were arranged at various places in London but mainly at a penthouse flat in Mayfair which, it seems, was rented for the purpose for several months in the latter part of 1970. The discussions at these meetings were tape-recorded and it is the transcripts of these tapes which I have made repeated efforts to obtain.

3.7. It is clear that some at least of the producers and disc jockeys were plied with drink.

3.8. The reporters also received information from other sources, including

(a)

(b)

(c) Jenny Howells, a record plugger and friend of Dorothy Squires,

(d)

(e)

(f)

(g) Mike Briton, a former stand-in with 'Top of the Pops' who was dismissed by the B.B.C.,

(h) Joan Sheridan

3.9. It may be that the reporters had interviews with a large number of other people, and it is certainly my information that the transcripts of the tape recordings run into many thousands of papers, but I have no detailed knowledge of the full scope of the reporters' investigations.

Other Background Material

4.1. In the course of my Inquiry three names often recurred - President Records, [redacted] and Dorothy Squires. I should also say something at this stage about [redacted].

4.2. President Records This was, and may be is, a small record company which employed in various capacities Edward Kassner,

It is, broadly speaking, true to say that President Records are involved in one way or another in nearly all the allegations in the articles, with the exception of those relating to the Top of the Pops programme.

I am unable to reach any firm conclusion as to what role President Records and its employees in fact played.

4.3. The allegations relating to sexual payola were linked in particular with [redacted] Tim Knight (see section 19).

4.4.

4.5.

4.6. The information at present before me suggests:

(a)

(b)

(c)

4.7. I should add that there is really no firm evidence, as far as I am aware, that any producer or disc jockey for the B.B.C. knew, even if

it be the fact, that parties were paid for by a record company.

4.8. Dorothy Squires In the context of my Inquiry it is to be noted:

(a)

(b)

(c) that in about 1968 she made a clumsy effort to offer money as a "Christmas present" to Doreen Davies (Mrs. Mills).

I also heard a number of other references to her in the course of my Inquiry.

4.9. who came with when he gave evidence, told me that Miss Squires had spent her life "on the boards" rather than on television and that for her it was "a professional thing to give presents before a show and afterwards in a run". It may well be that this is a fair explanation and that it is wrong to judge her by the same standards as one would a record company or a younger artiste who gave presents.

4.10. Miss Squires had an interview with Mr. Crocker and I have a copy of his attendance note. She did not come to see me, however, though I made several efforts to arrange an appointment so I cannot give my

my own assessment of her.

4.11

The information which I have had about  
however, makes me feel some surprise that the News of the  
World have placed such reliance on it. This is a matter which I can  
explain further at a later stage if necessary.

5.1.

5.2.

5.3.



5.4

5.5. I was unable to interview myself but when was seen by Mr. James Crocker stated that had never "asked for a play."

5.6.

5.7. gave a somewhat unconvincing account of his visits to . Nevertheless I found no evidence to support that any corrupt agreement was made with either with or with (of President Records) who took to the house.

5.8.

5.9.

5.10. I found [redacted] an unimpressive witness, but I came to the conclusion that he had not, on the evidence before me, entered into any agreement which could properly be termed a payola agreement. Nevertheless I was disturbed by his failure [redacted] until I asked him specifically about it and I feel that a question mark must remain against his name for the time being.

[redacted]

6.1.

6.2.           When I interviewed           he told me that

"I certainly did not say that," he told me. "I would not have said that however many scotches I had had because the facts are exactly the opposite." He admitted, however, that on one occasion

6.3.



[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

6.4. In the course of his interview with me [redacted] told me

- (a) that after he became a B.B.C. producer he supervised the studio production of three records produced by a company in which a friend of his called Mickie Clark had a financial interest,
- (b) that he had not received any money for his work, and
- (c) that two of the records were played on programmes with which he was connected, but that they were picked by the disc jockey and not by himself.

6.5. I questioned [redacted] at length about the words attributed to him in the article. "All I can say" he said at one point, "is that the gist of what is said there is not true. Whether I said any of that or not I cannot say. The majority of the conversation I cannot remember, so it would be wrong of me to say I can remember not saying something."

6.6. Without access to the transcripts of the tapes of [redacted] conversations I feel unable to express a concluded view about whether he has made a full disclosure to me of the work he has done outside the B.B.C. I am also unable to make any finding as to what offer, if any, he made to the reporters. I feel bound to say, however, that [redacted] made an unfavourable impression on me and that I was not satisfied with his explanations of his discussions with the reporters.

7.1.





1950

Dear Mr. [Name],  
I have your letter of [Date] regarding [Subject].  
I am sorry that I cannot give you a more definite answer at this time.  
The matter is still under consideration and I will contact you again as soon as a final decision has been reached.  
Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Sincerely,  
[Name]

[Name]  
[Address]  
[City, State, Zip]

[Name]  
[Address]  
[City, State, Zip]

7.2. [redacted] admitted to me that he had produced two records during the time that he was employed at the B.B.C. but said that he had not received any payment in respect of either of them.

7.3. I questioned him at length about his conversations with the reporters. Without access to the transcripts of the tapes I feel unable to <sup>express</sup> any concluded view as to whether [redacted]

[redacted] insisted both in his written statement to Mr. Crocker and to me that he had been quoted out of context but he was unable to produce any convincing explanation for some of the phrases attributed to him.

7.4. As in the case of [redacted] I found [redacted] an unimpressive witness and I was not satisfied with his explanations of his discussions with the reporters.

8.1.



8.2.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]



8.3. [redacted] left the B.B.C. before the article appeared. He did not make any statement to Mr. Crocker and the only evidence which I received from him was oral evidence given when I interviewed him in the presence of [redacted] his business adviser.

8.4. [redacted] and received fees for doing so. He said the work was done in his own time and at a period when he was "looking round to get out of radio and to go into the record field". [redacted] conceded that he knew that what he was doing was contrary to the rules of the B.B.C. but thought he was doing no harm.

8.5. [redacted] told me that he was introduced to the "businessmen" by [redacted]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

By that time his employment with the B.B.C. had ceased. He sought to explain the passages in the articles partly by denying that some of the words were spoken and partly by saying that he had invented or exaggerated things. Moreno, he told me, had advised him that the men were "a bit women mad" and that he should "lay it on a bit thick" because they were "mad about birds". He also told me that he was given a lot to drink.

8.6. I found [REDACTED] a very unimpressive witness and I do not think he would be able to resist temptation if a substantial offer were made to him. On the other hand in view of similar evidence as to sexual boasting which I heard from the witnesses, I think some of the statements in the article, even if actually made, are not to be taken at their face value.

8.7. As [REDACTED] is no longer employed by the B.B.C. it is perhaps unnecessary for me to try to reach a final conclusion about the individual matters which in any event would be unsatisfactory in the absence of transcripts of the tapes. I feel bound to say, however, on the basis of his evidence and the way in which he gave it that I do not feel he is a suitable person to be employed as a producer by the B.B.C.