

Hugo Yang / Anne Sloan Profile
of the P.M.

PRIME
MINISTER.
JAN. 1985

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
23/1/85 31.1.85							
<p>PREM 19/1606</p>							



NSPM

Ref. A085/321

MR BUTLER

Hugo Young/Anne Sloman: Profile of the Prime Minister

Thank you for your minute of 29 ^{pp's attached} January.

2. Mr Young and Mrs Sloman told me some time ago that they had in mind a series of programmes profiling the Prime Minister. I made it clear to them then, and I remain of the view, that it would put serving civil servants in an impossible situation if they were to take part in such a programme and that I should have to advise against that. I said that I should not myself be prepared to take part.

3. I am sending copies of this minute to Sir Peter Middleton, Sir Clive Whitmore, Sir Michael Butler, Mr Williamson, Mr Ingham; and also to Sir Antony Acland and Sir Kenneth Stowe with a copy of your minute in case they are approached.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

31 January 1985



a. B.L.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

HUGO YOUNG/ANNE SLOMAN: PROFILE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

You may know that Hugo Young and Anne Sloman are preparing a further series of six programmes, tentatively for broadcast in May, following their programmes on the FCO and the Treasury. This series is to mark the Prime Minister's ten years as Party Leader and will amount to a profile of the Prime Minister, her policies and her working methods.

The producers of the programme are hoping to include interviews with a wide range of people with whom the Prime Minister has worked ranging from President Reagan and Helmut Schmidt to former policy advisers. They have said that they would like to have one programme on the working of No. 10 and for this purpose propose interviews with members of the staff here, and also with Peter Middleton, Clive Whitmore, David Williamson and perhaps Michael Butler. I have no doubt that they would also wish to interview you. The purpose of this minute is to let you know that the Prime Minister is not in favour of people in No. 10 giving interviews about the work of this office. From previous discussions, I know that Clive Whitmore in any case shared my reluctance to give such interviews. You and others may also feel that a series of programmes which is avowedly about the personality of the Prime Minister is sufficiently different from the programmes on the work of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Treasury to make it less appropriate for Civil Servants to take part.

However, the main purpose of this minute is to warn you and other recipients that you may be approached by Anne Sloman or Hugo Young and to let you know of the decision which the Prime Minister has taken about the participation of members of the No. 10 staff.

I am copying this minute to Peter Middleton, Clive Whitmore, Michael Butler, David Williamson and Bernard Ingham.

M. B. BUTLER

29 January 1985

088



10 DOWNING STREET

Mr Butler

I have spoken to Mr Roman
since I did not want to put
pen to paper on this subject.

She may well interpret
my remarks narrowly, and
try to persuade those who
have worked in Do to tent
do not now do so to
give interviews. We shall
need to formulate a line
for them, given that some -
of Peter Middleton, David
Williamson - have taken part
in previous Roman/Young/Jenkins
programmes

John 29/4

Prime Minister

I have a general policy - on which I try to give a lead - that people who work here should not talk about their work. So I would prefer to say 'no' to the interviews below. I know that Sir

MR BUTLER

HUGO YOUNG/ANNE SLOMAN PROFILE

Clive Whitmore shares my reluctance

I agree with you not.

As you know, Hugo Young and Anne Sloman are preparing a radio profile of the Prime Minister in a series of six programmes tentatively for broadcast in May. This is to mark her 10 years as party leader and, in this Parliament, her record of being the longest continuously serving post-war Prime Minister.

FERS
25.1.

You will also know that Mrs Sloman, with Simon Jenkins or Hugo Young, has made programmes on the FCO and the Treasury. The Prime Minister did not wholeheartedly embrace the idea of a profile of her when it was mooted, largely I think because of Hugo Young's involvement, but I have not attempted to dissuade Ministers who have sought guidance on participation; indeed I have positively urged some to take part.

Mrs Sloman has now approached me to say they have concluded they do not wish to interview the Prime Minister, as they had suggested they might at the outset. They feel that it would be better for a picture to emerge from the very large number of people they have interviewed or are interviewing, ranging from President Reagan and Helmut Schmidt to Alfred Sherman, John Hoskyns etc.

No

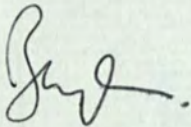
Mrs Sloman said they would, however, like to make one of the six programmes about the working of No 10, as distinct from the personality of the Prime Minister, though I am sure that would come out. To this end they would like to interview, on terms and ground rules and covering areas to be agreed:

- you
- me
- Peter Middleton
- Clive Whitmore
- David Williamson
- and possibly Michael Butler, Brussels.

No
=

Mrs Sloman has not yet fully worked out the approach, but it would presumably cover the conduct of business from No 10 - meetings, Question Time, visits/tours, press conferences etc. She puts considerable emphasis on the reputation which she has established in Whitehall for integrity in operations of this kind. We should need, if we turned down the idea, to make it clear why No 10 is different from Treasury and FCO, and a special case for maintaining reasonably anonymity.

You agreed to pursue this request alongside the projected series on No 10 by Christopher Jones, BBC TV, who has now written to you with his broad proposals.



BERNARD INGHAM
23 January 1985

PS: Please see attached correspondence just to hand from Mrs Sloman.



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Bernard Ingham Esq.,
10, Downing Street
London SW1

23rd January 1985

Dear Bernard,

Thank you for sparing the time to talk last night. Your advice was most welcome.

I enclose a pretty immodest note (for your eyes alone) about my record with civil servants. Among ministers, Geoffrey Howe will vouch best for me - I have no reason to suppose he regretted letting me loose on the Treasury or the Foreign Office and he is enthusiastically making room in his diary to make the speech at our book launch party on March 14th.

These programmes are a serious exercise which as I said, will I hope have a shelf-life beyond the broadcasts in May. I want them to contain some meat about the way Mrs. Thatcher operates as Prime Minister, and the way the job has developed in her hands, and this really does need the evidence of those who work with her in No. 10. If we get a green light I am very happy to come back and talk about the areas of questioning I would like to pursue with some of the people we mentioned last night.

Jaws.
Anne

Anne Sloman
Editor, Special Current Affairs

Participation by Civil Servants in Radio Programmes

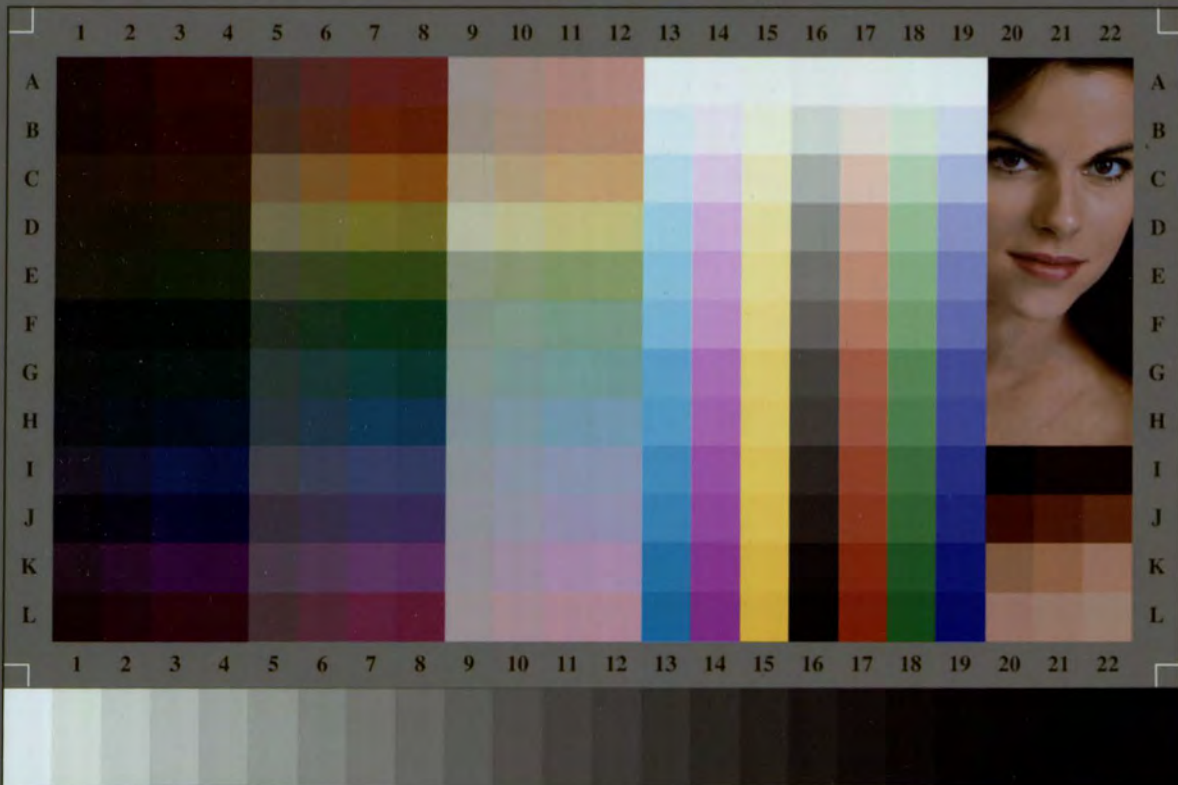
Anne Sloman first brought serving civil servants to the microphone to talk about their work fourteen years ago. In "The Case of Flora Ginetio", broadcast in April 1971 an immigration case was traced through the Home Office with evidence on air from the officials whose desks it had crossed. Other Talking Politics programmes in the early seventies to which civil servants contributed included one on Question Time in which the then Under-Secretary at the DTI described in some detail how his division prepared his minister for parliamentary questions. The series was subsequently published as a book Westminster and Beyond. In the foreword Sir William Armstrong, then head of the home civil service, wrote "For civil servants there will always be problems involved in appearing on public platforms, and areas of reticence which they must preserve, particularly in confidential advice to ministers. The line is difficult to draw, but given goodwill on both sides and the common objective of public enlightenment, the attempt can and should continue to be made." Since then Anne Sloman has continued to draw that line with considerable success. In 1981 she produced a series about the home civil service, No Minister, in which serving civil servants from a number of departments and at all levels from Permanent Secretary to principal talked freely about their work. The series was widely debated and reviewed in the press, and was adjudged to have been a success for all concerned, including the officials who participated. The ground rules negotiated by Mrs. Sloman with Ian Bancroft, then head of the civil service department are set out in the foreword to the book of the same name published in 1982.

In 1983, Anne Sloman turned her attention to the Treasury, and with the co-operation of Sir Geoffrey Howe and Sir Douglas Wass (and Sir Peter Middleton who was about to take over as Permanent Secretary) produced five radio programmes, But, Chancellor which looked at every aspect of the Treasury's work, from public expenditure to the Budget. They were again presented by Hugo Young, and as with the earlier series all those who

took part were serving civil servants talking about their current jobs.

The next major department of state to co-operate in such an exercise was the Foreign Office, and the book based on that series, With Respect, Ambassador will be published in March. The Foreign Office took the view that Anne Sloman's record was such that she could be trusted to operate freely under the ground rules established in 1981, and she and Simon Jenkins (who presented that series) were given carte blanche in their visits to embassies abroad to talk on and off the record to officials at every level.

In all Anne Sloman has, in the course of her career as a BBC journalist, interviewed nearly 100 serving officials about their present jobs. Not one has ever complained about the fairness of their treatment in the subsequent broadcasts.



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