

PRIME MINISTER

BRUCE ANDERSON - SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

You have agreed to give Bruce Anderson, Sunday Telegraph, an interview tomorrow for some 30 minutes from 2pm.

Background

He sees the interview very much as a meeting with the Prime Minister at the end of what was billed as "your worst week".

He also wants to be helpful: indeed that is the purpose of his approach.

He will be accompanied by a photographer, Simon Walker. I will support you.

You know Mr Anderson as being at the dry, rumbustious (and robust) end of your support. He is incapable of not being provocative and even shocking, all of which is done for effect. He has a reputation to live up to.

There is no need for you to be unduly impressed or influenced or stirred by this. What you need to recognise is that in order to be helpful he has to put on a show of toughness and murderous intent. In cricketing parlance, his bowling will be fast and unrelenting but it will in no way be directed to lethal ends. I look forward to you swiping him to all corners of the ground.

In short, this interview is as much about impressions as substance, though since Mr Anderson is also an intelligent and serious journalist he will also be looking for insights.

Interview

There will be two focuses to the interview:

- domestic
- international

Domestic

I think he will kick off by asking you how you feel at the end of the week, post-Budget and Mid Staffs. Then I think he will want to explore:

- (i) how the Government fell from grace in 1989 to come to its present pass
- (ii) how do we come to have high inflation, high trade deficit after 11 years? What's going wrong?
- (iii) in these circumstances, is it not time to hand over to a successor?
- (iv) are you wise to stay on given your low popularity. Do you believe the Tories can win next time with you?

In this context, I have said he is wasting his time if he thinks you will criticise present or even former members of the Government - eg Nigel Lawson. I think he accepts that this is so, but beware lest he tempts you into a criticism.

Foreign

Here he will pursue four main elements:

- German unification: a preview of your meeting with Kohl next week; you should take satisfaction that your Germanys' policy has been 100% successful so far
- Anglo/US and US/EC relations - is our special relationship with the USA still special?
- future of EC, Britain's entry into the ERM - are you warming to it?
- South Africa.

Presentation

This is the opportunity for you to display:

- (i) your rude good health and strong spirit

- (ii) your conviction that, whatever the temporary difficulties, Britain is broadly heading on the right compass bearing but there is clearly need to get better trim to the vessel - inflation; trade deficit
- (iii) your navigation, after 10 years, is pretty reliable but it is sometimes difficult to hold course through the inevitable storms of life and Government
- (iv) that you know what you are doing on inflation, economy and community charge and are in command
- (v) your determination not to throw away or allow to wither by neglect all that you have achieved in 11 years - and explaining what you have achieved in the UK; and
- (vi) to sell the community charge as a fairer and reasonable and efficient means of financial local government, and of curbing its appetite for spending.

Internationally, you can, I believe, present yourself positively on all the subjects likely to be covered and take credit for world progress.

Finally this is not an occasion for being

- unduly modest or underplaying your achievements; or for
- soft-peddling politically; you need to go over on the offensive and dismiss the opposition as socialism (of which Eastern Europe is ridding itself) dressed up as moderation; bankrupt of policy; bankrupt of principle; and pure public relations
- irrelevant to Britain's needs.

In short, for Mr Anderson, you are in fighting trim. I look forward to his being eaten alive.



BERNARD INGHAM
March 22, 1990

BERNARD

I spoke to Bruce Anderson. He confirmed he was thinking in terms of doing a 'post your worst week ' piece. He intends to ask 'rough tough' questions so PM can respond positively.

On the domestic scene: he will ask

- why we still have high levels of inflation after 11 years of conservative government?
- is PM certain she is wise to stay on as leader given her current unpopularity and low standing in the polls? Is it not time to hand over to a successor?
- should she not have sacked Nigel Lawson in 1987?

On the foreign scene he wants to ask her about

- Germany - and meeting Kohl next week
- is the special relationship still special?
- future of the EC/ERM

He would be very keen to have a transcript as soon as possible Friday evening so he can do a piece that evening - we will get in COI but he was wondering about bringing a secretary with him?

He claimed he understood he was getting an hour with PM - I said you had said half hour although in practice this was likely to end up as 40 minutes but the PM had other engagements that afternoon. I asked him to arrive by 13.50.

He also asked me to confirm PM was lunching with Gordon Craig on Sunday (who he?.) I said to mention it to you but she often has guests privately at weekends and we do not always get to hear who they are.

Sarah

Sarah
21.3.90

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PRIME MINISTER

BRUCE ANDERSON - SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

Bruce Anderson telephoned me on Friday - just before you were to give an interview to the Sunday Express - to see if you would give him an interview, again intended to be helpful, this coming Friday afternoon.

You could give them 30 minutes just after lunch before you get down to the Central Council speech.

You don't want to get into the habit of Friday interviews. But I must say that a friendly interview at the end of a difficult week like this could be invaluable. It would be picked up by the rest of the media - as indeed the Sunday Express interview was - and give a more positive spin to weekend political reporting.

Agree to see Bruce Anderson at, say 2pm?

Y
/ to me



BERNARD INGHAM
March 19, 1990

2pm fri

FRIDAY, MARCH 23

10.00- PM Der Spiegel interview
11.00

11.30 Anne Nash

12.00 Returns meeting

12.30- GIS drinks
1.30

2.00 PM interview with
Sunday Telegraph

3.15 Sunday Lobby

6.00 Colleen and Mark Harris