

Telephone conversation with Denizil McDaniel
Monday 17th May 5.00 pm.

Spoke again with Denizil and advised that Minister would fit in a telephone ~~to~~ interview for 15 mins. It wouldn't be this week but we would try to arrange as soon as possible. He expressed disappointment and said this didn't move the issue forward. I said that I was very surprised because in my earlier conversation ~~he~~ I had suggested a down the line interview and he didn't say no at this stage. It was now going to be difficult for me to go back to senior officials + Minister and ask for face to face. I also stressed that my suggestion of a down the line had been because ~~of~~ I believed it would suit him better. The Minister has a busy diary + it is easier ^{+ quicker} to fit in a telephone interview rather than a face to face. Also face to face could be cancelled @ last minute due to Westminster business, when perhaps he already was on the road to Belfast.

He then stated that he felt he was being misled about and the story had been written anyway - previous Friday. I reminded him that he needed to be careful of personal criticism of Kevin or criticism ~~with~~ of Minister/Department. Kevin was a contact between him + Department and acted on behalf of the Department. He then questioned the language of Kevin's emails + I asked him to be specific. His reply was that I

Should read the emails. I also reminded him that the Minister had given a personal assurance that she would answer the additional questions/issues he had but he never put them.

He said he would think about it overnight ~~and~~ I agreed to talk to officials again and contact him on the Tuesday morning.

Alan Shannon

Note for file

Monday 17th May 9.30 am

I spoke with Deniz M^cDaniel following his email to Kevin. I explained that we were not being obstructive and that we were working against an extremely tight ~~dead~~ Minister's diary. I also stated that it was unfair to focus on Kevin, as he was point of contact between Deniz and the Department.

~~She~~ Advised that we would speak to Minister this afternoon and would come back to him late afternoon. Explained that if an interview were offered it would be 15 mins and would be telephone based.

If Minister agreed, it was unlikely to be this week, ~~as~~ ~~was~~ because CHO was on holiday and Minister may wish to speak with her again.

He is still very 'sore' with the Department and we will need to put considerable effort into 'building' bridges with him again. However, I said that I wanted to draw a line under what ^{he} had ^{perceived as} happened.

Colin 17/5/04