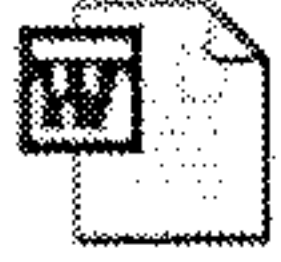


Baxter, Clare

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From: Shannon, Colm  
Sent: 11 May 2004 16:35  
To: Gowdy, Clive  
Cc: Carson, Ian; McCarthy, Miriam; Mulhern, Kevin  
Subject: Conversation with Trevor Birney



Doc1.doc

Secretary

I have attached for your information a record of a telephone conversation I had with Trevor Birney UTV. I thought it would give you an indication of his style.

Although we have agreed to reject their bid I don't want to tell UTV until the letter has gone out to Alan Bremner. Also after Thursday the Minister is not out and about as much and there will be less chance of her being door stepped.

We will advise UTV at the end of the week that Minister is not available due to diary commitments but we are happy to follow up any additional issues they may have. That way we can't be accused of not working with them.

Colm

NOTE FOR FILE TUESDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> MAY

RECORD OF TELEPHONE DISCUSSION WITH TREVOR BIRNEY UTV

Trevor Birney contacted the press office for an up date on his bid to interview the Minister about the Lucy Crawford case. Lesley advised him that the bid was still being considered and he would be advised before the end of the week. He said to Lesley that the handling of the bid by our office was unprofessional and to pass this message on.

Given the treatment of CMO by UTV I was not prepared to allow Trevor's comment to go unchallenged and contacted him. I again advised him that the interview bid was being considered and we would get back to him by the end of the week. He again stated that because we hadn't contacted him to tell him what was happening this was unprofessional. I accepted we could have told him it was still being considered but stressed that given the treatment of the CMO and his record of conversations with Kevin we had to treat his bid with the utmost care.

Trevor was annoyed that the bid to interview the Minister was being linked to the CMO interview. I advised that it was being treated on its own merits but the issue, that is the Crawford's, was the same. Also the basis of his discussions with Kevin and, in particular, his conversation the night before the interview with CMO was in complete contrast to what actually happened. As a result we had to carefully consider his current bid. He wasn't happy about this and said that their position had been robustly defended in correspondence and that should be the end of the matter. I didn't tell him about the further response we planned to issue but did indicate that their response was not the end of the matter.

He then tried to open up the conversation about the Crawford's and, in particular, the CMO's comment after the Issue programme that she would meet with the Crawford's. He criticised the delay in the letter being sent to the Crawford's and the fact that it didn't offer a meeting. I refused to be drawn on this and told him that we would get back to him before the end of the week about his bid to interview the Minister.

Ends