

The 2011 BAFTA Annual Television Lecture PLEASE, SIR, I WANT SOME MORE.

Peter Bennett-Jones

19 September 2011 at BAFTA, 195 Piccadilly

Peter Bennett-Jones: Good evening ladies and gentlemen and thanks for turning out in such a supportive way on a Monday night; and thank you to BAFTA for giving me this platform. I have given it the title 'Please, Sir, I want some more..' for reasons which will become apparent and I would like to dedicate it to my dear friend and colleague Nigel Farrell, who is sadly very ill and unable to join us tonight. His work over the years with TigerAspect on numerous series including a host of Parishes and Places in.. has been exemplary – we love and respect him very much for his talent, his integrity and friendship.

One of the Golden Rules of Showbiz is never follow Stephen Fry, the deliverer of the 2010 BAFTA lecture. I have broken this rule to my cost before – the memory is still painful – but I feel impelled to do it again tonight. The reason for this is that, despite my reluctance to emerge from the back-stage shadows of agenting and producing like Quasimodo from the belfry, BAFTA have generously offered me a platform to talk about something I care about : how we ensure that our leading broadcasters and producers (that's you) deliver programming which actually matters, which shines a light on issues we do or should care about, which changes perceptions and attitudes and makes a lasting impact on viewers and on society. In short, I'm asking how do we use television as an agent for change and impact? And why is it important that we do this? The Sir to whom my title question is addressed refers to all broadcasters – as humble supplicants we are powerless without their co-operation

and commissioning consent, so much of what I have to say is addressed to the gate-keepers on behalf of the content creators. I'm going to argue that we're currently failing to make enough tv that really matters – I'm then going to try and explain why I think this might be the case and what we can do to rectify the situation.

But first, I want to dispel a popular myth. Anyone who sees tv as anything other than *the* dominant media platform is plain wrong. It is this dominance which generates our responsibility to do better. The recent Deloitte analysis commissioned for the Edinburgh TV Festival reported that TV viewing in the UK has risen every year since 2006, up 6% year on year, with an average of four hours viewing per person per day, with close on 90% of it live. Four hours a day- that's a heck of a lot of tv viewing and the recent increase represents an additional million viewing hours each and every day of the year. The internet, which many predicted would undermine tv viewing, actually appears to be augmenting it - the medium has adapted and has never been more popular- and all this before the Secretary of State's local tv initiative kicks in – and Lord knows what impact that bizarre pantomime's going to have. Be that as it may, technology just makes it easier for people to access content – and it's content that I want to focus on because whatever the delivery system, it's content that's going to be key to the health of our cherished broadcasters, it's content that will always be at the heart of what we do. So – are we making enough tv that really matters? Well, the good news is that, yes, we do make some.. The BBC with



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its massive output and public service remit has had a number of strikes- some old, some new. I was fascinated to hear recently the originators of BOYS FROM THE BLACKSTUFF on Radio 4's 'Reunion' talking about the impact of their marvellous five-parter -the brilliant maverick Michael Wearing produced the 1982 series originating from Alan Bleasdale's 1978 Play for Today. It addressed issues of the desperation and despair related to recessionary unemployment in Liverpool. It resonated-. It was angry, accurate, uncomfortable and important in putting a big issue on the tv map...and it was a long time ago.

More recent issue-driven drama which illustrates that you can win audiences while tackling difficult subject matters include Paul Abbott's SHAMELESS, Channel 4's flagship drama and on BBC One DAD, the Lucy Gannon drama featuring Richard Briers and Kevin Whateley about elder abuse, which was linked to Comic Relief's agenda. These shows and work by Paul Greengrass and Dominic Savage amongst others demonstrate that issue-inspired drama can succeed if you adopt a creatively ambitious rather than worthy approach to difficult subject matters. As did the Tiger C4 drama OMAGH, the programme I am probably proudest of amongst the 500 odd titles during my time with the indie. The Greengrass inspired story, co-written with Guy Hibbert, was about the human devastation brought about by the perpetrators of the bombing. The terrorists were named at the end of the programme, having been protected until then: it was

bold, moving, provocative and important for the victims' families and friends as well as the wider public and for the cause of justice. On the drama front the ever-popular soaps continue to set the standards and weave important themes into their fabric- storylines in 'Eastenders' revolving around grooming and domestic violence; in 'Emmerdale' around drug addiction and in 'Corrie' around Post Traumatic Stress all demonstrate an admirably proactive approach to positive use of the medium. I suspect that it is the very solidity of these excellently crafted soaps in the schedules which allows for the incorporation of socially-motivated themes. They can afford to take the long view, having pre-identified and then addressed social issues which they clearly care about and it is to their credit that they often do.

On the factual front all the broadcasters can point to instances of campaigning and truly revealing programmes, although again they tend to be the exception rather than the rule. BBC Three's 'Our War' was bold and revelatory. C4 can champion Jamie's Oliver's 'School Dinners' and 'Secret Millionaire' as instances when the objective from the off is to produce engaging programming about topics that matter, as with ITV's and Paul Hayman's recent prison access programmes and Sky's work on the front line with Ross Kemp or John Pilger's work over the years. The BBC's recent BAFTA award -winning series set in Zimbabwe and Lagos illustrating the huge challenges faced by the communities depicted were instances of brave commissioning. At Comic Relief we have used our good offices to work with the BBC



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to commission documentary programmes such as BBC One's 'Rich, Famous and in the Slums', set in the densely populated Nairobi Kibera community -. Extraordinarily powerful, revealing, gripping and hugely impactful and popular. To give you a break from me let's have a glimpse at extracts from these programmes to remind us of their power.

PLAY CLIPS

The list could be expanded, and it is worth acknowledging the excellence of ambitious strands such as Despatches and Panorama (on a good day) , but in the context of overall annual output and spend of our public service broadcasters it is a fairly modest performance. If programmes like these can be made, and can be popular, why aren't there more of them? The ability to shake things up needs to be a higher commissioning priority..

The founding father of the BBC, Lord Reith, stated that the Corporation had the 'responsibility to carry into the greatest number of homes everything that was best in every department of human knowledge, endeavour and achievement' – I am not going to claim there was a golden age of tv where this responsibility was fulfilled but I do maintain that this responsibility still applies and that we need to fulfil it.. In a similar vein, the sexily-named Digital Economy Act of 2010 states that Channel 4 will 'provide access to material that is intended to inspire people to make changes in their lives.' I suspect that these fine, if paternalistic, values were largely shared by the founders

of ITV, especially at Granada, and I hope they are shared by Channel 5 and by Sky but have these early ideals been maintained over the decades? Despite the production of a meaningful number of high impact programmes which have left an indelible mark on the change agenda or our understanding of the world, they have been dissipated. It is because of these lofty goals, ingrained in our broadcasters, that we still have the best and most respected tv industry in the world. But unfortunately, these goals are not often enough at the heart of the producing and commissioning process.

I was amused that when I was researching the broadcasters' Corporate Social Responsibility policies three or so years ago the BBC was still citing the Ken Loach directed 'Cathy Comes Home' as a fine example of programming with a high social impact, highlighting the issues of homelessness, unemployment and maternal rights. It was arresting - but it transmitted first in the 1960's. A long time ago in terms of tv history.

It is encouraging that the key broadcasters have more sophisticated CSR policies than they used to and that through these policies they address community impact and a commitment to charitable work- this is to their immense credit but they fail to talk explicitly about the most powerful weapon in their armoury- the social impact of content itself. How much time is spent by the leaders of these organisations assessing and measuring the impact on society of their output? There are signs of life in this respect: ITV's recent 'Born to Shine' series was



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initiated altruistically and benefitted Save the Children and I understand there are more such initiatives in the pipe-line. Channel 4 has some laudable campaigning factual output and I will come on to the productive BBC-Comic Relief relationship later- however these are the exceptions not the rule and usually come to being as a consequence of agitation from the outside not as a consequence of demand from the inside.

So now on to the more difficult question? Why is this the case? We all have issues we care a great deal about: relating to health, or justice, or politics, or education or family or a cause close to one's heart for whatever reason. How often are these concerns the motivating factor for work? There are several things which appears to be holding producers back from translating passion to screen, but the bulk of what I have to say focuses on the commissioning process and what sells.

Let's be clear –commissioning is a tough job and it is easy to get things wrong or be given less than helpful advice. A couple of examples for fun.

“I am afraid I found this one as dire as its title- a collection of clichés and stock characters which I can't see as being anything but a disaster” – the BBC script report on 'Fawlty Towers'

“The central character was so unsympathetic I wanted to kick his other foot in” – 'One Foot in the Grave' by the incomparable David Renwick, who personally insisted upon

casting the non-star Richard Wilson as this central character despite much opposition.

There are many more of these in the locker- but you get the point- commissioning isn't easy and is inherently risky with multiple choices to be made. Since this is the case could we create a situation where more of the risks taken are done with the conscious aim of making programming which may change society for the better. Let's look what motivates broadcasters when it comes to commissioning the bulk of their potentially wonderful output and how their priorities and practises influence writers and producers when it comes to developing work. Due to increased commercial pressures, due to how success is measured and to how effectively but narrowly and professionally commissioners do their job, original or polemical programming is in the casualty ward. It is hard to sell.

I want to focus on three areas: the commercial pressure on professional commissioning – this will include thoughts about eyeballs and advertising and the twisted tyranny of data. Secondly, about what I perceive as a lack of faith in creative talent and finally touching on the schizophrenic nature of public sector broadcasting, particularly the BBC.

In an increasingly competitive and fragmented market, professional commissioning entails data driven, consumer-led, often imitative commissioning – copy-cat shows tend to prevail at the expense of the new and original- our screens are filled with very competently made life-



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style series; quirky factual reality efforts; comedy panel shows featuring the same cast of characters; chat shows with rotating guests; detective series and adaptations dominate drama output: producers are asked to imitate success rather than create it, with shows usually fronted by Top Gear presenters. The reality is that suppliers are asked to stick with what you and your audience know, grind the data, build channel identity and loyalty with a familiar diet – job done. Clever people producing clever rubbish. The dumbing down which the soothsayers predicted in the wake of the digital revolution has not happened – quite the opposite in some respects – we have dumbbed up, but for every ‘Downton Abbey’, great fun and brilliantly engaging though it is, lets ensure that there is a policy that something as informative and historically interesting as Melvyn Bragg’s ‘Reel History of Britain’ running in tandem, showing how people really lived a century ago. There is need for both.

It is instructive to examine how broadcasters measure success because this largely determines what is commissioned. We all know that the dominant factor here is ratings- the dreaded overnights. The Twitter effect will speed up the response and judgement time even more as consumer reaction rather than cultural impact dominates decision-making and becomes the only meaningful measurement of success.. Ratings are clearly a vital currency for commercial broadcasters but wholly inadequate and still far too dominant for broadcasting with a public service remit, especially the BBC and Channel 4, with their

particular statutory purposes and accountability.

The obsession with ratings is definitely getting worse. The first question asked after transmission of any programme is: ‘How did the programme do?’ ,which has become the equivalent to: ‘How did it rate?’ At Tiger I could invariably tell whether a pilot would spawn a series within a nano-second of seeing the overnight of the pilot or first programme . ‘Only Fools and Blackadder would not have survived beyond the first series in this age I fear. .Audience appreciation (stats of which were largely hidden from us) or a measurement of purpose and impact tend to be afterthoughts. Clever schedulers- largely out of sight but not of mind- wield a huge and single-minded influence in this process. Their task is to maximise eyeballs- little else matters to them and they do this very well but I think that they have too much hidden influence in the commissioning process. Scheduling is known as the dark art – I would love a little more light shed upon the processes behind it and accountability for decisions made for suppliers and viewers alike.- such as the decision for the drama titans to clash head-to-head last night. It could lead to more adventurous and broader output because, as I mentioned before, the net effect of all this is a tendency to follow, adapt, imitate and repeat what has succeeded before in the chase for ratings and this inevitably stifles originality. Break-out new hits do crop up but rarely and randomly and when they do, they tend to be mistaken for a pattern rather than as a unique achievement. This is certainly the case with comedy. A single



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studio-based comedy hit such as ‘Miranda’ triggers an appetite for more of the same, replacing the appetite for single-camera comedies in the wake of ‘The Office’. This kind of behaviour is infuriating for those of us involved in content creation – it shows a lack of imagination and faith and a lack of understanding about the creative process. The truth is that these hits are not replicable – they are the product of a few people’s individual imaginative and comedic talent. Back the individuals and their talent and it will pay dividends with more unique achievements. Test creative thinking but do not try to dictate it.

Obviously commercial broadcasters need secure revenues but commercial pressure is only part of what drives the tyranny of data. Returning to Edinburgh, at this year’s MacTaggart, Eric Schmidt argued that statistical analysis of viewing habits and data should guide programming. He doesn’t just think this makes commercial sense – he thinks this is the best possible way to govern programming. His pragmatic reliance on consumer-led data analysis had a Gradgrind aura to it- he relies on data, on facts as he would see them, while James Murdoch relies solely on profit to determine success. Neither suffices and it strikes me as peculiar that there are almost no other areas in which past or current behaviour would be used as a golden guide for determining desirable future behaviour. His solution to the potential monotony of programming? Serendipity- the fluke factor.. It’s just not enough.

I want to look at the alternative methods for programming that Mr Schmidt cast aside

without a second glance. The ‘lucky dip’ method can be ignored. But what about what he called the ‘nanny model where someone else has the power to dictate what you should and shouldn’t see’. Let’s get one thing straight – the stigmatized and degraded ‘nanny’ is still exercising that power under Schmidt’s model, it’s just that her decision making is guided by data. So what’s he really driving at? I think he’s saying that broadcasters should stop exercising any judgment about what makes good television. There are two problems with this – firstly, if you’ll allow me to be so Victorian, I believe in progress and that means I believe in making informed judgments about quality and purpose which data modeling doesn’t really accommodate. The second problem is that Schmidt’s suggestion precludes socially motivated programming, or at least reduces it to an indulgence and we shouldn’t accept that. Social impact should be one of the things at the forefront of our thoughts (and as I’ve already argued, I believe there is a proven appetite for this kind of tv). I’m not saying ignore the data – I’m just saying don’t have so much faith in it, and stop asking Picasso and Michelangelo to paint by numbers! Instead, trust your judgment and trust the creative talent that abounds in this industry which brings me onto my next topic.

Actually, before we move on, I’m going to invoke Lord Reith again, as he has some valid wisdom on this issue:

“He who prides himself on giving what he thinks the audience wants is often creating a fictitious demand for low standards which he will then satisfy.”



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A word next on the relationship with the creative talent on which our industry relies- the story-tellers, the entertainers, the actors and directors and other vital disciplines. The people without whom most of us here would not have a job. Michael Grade's admirable advice to budding agents was 'to grab on to the coat-tails of top talent and never let go': it is one I have tried to strictly adhere to over the years. We in the UK are blessed with an extraordinary depth of creative talent and broadcasting gives it much support and many rewarding outlets. My principal plea is for the folk in charge of engaging them is to trust your programme makers and stars, to back them with consistency, to listen to producers more carefully, to allow writers to express their views in a non-formulaic way, to be conscious that they are often victims of the Controller and Commissioner whimsy and merry-go-round. I have always been clear in my own head that my role has been, and still is, as a facilitator, as someone who helps makes it happen. I have never made the mistake of thinking that I myself am a creative genius. I suspect many of us wish the muses spoke to us as they seem to speak to some but we shouldn't let that ambition interfere with our roles as producers and commissioners. With this in mind, I ask that we all try to be a help, rather than a hindrance to talent – and I mean that to apply across all genres.

But let me focus on the issue of social impact again because I think that this is an area where listening to the passions of others, rather than on data and precedent, is crucial.

Clearly an appreciation of the creative process – the facility of individuals to create new material, to think originally, to discover new ways of examining and exposing important issues which can challenge, provoke, stimulate and on occasions offend audiences- is key to getting to grips with the subject. I perceive a symbiotic relationship between talent and social impact because the most rewarding aspect of my working life has been playing a role in helping passionate writers and producers with a clear sense of what they want to say and achieve – the Paul Greengrass's, Richard Curtis's, Howard Goodall's and Kay Mellor's of this world- to get their passion and often polemical projects on screen in the most powerful and positive manner. All artists need their champions. Especially artists who provoke, who agitate for change and engagement and create television that matters. I am not saying that every writer or television practitioner is or should be motivated by a desire to change the world but often these individuals do possess the vision and ambition so to do and they should be encouraged and fostered. They tend to test your patience- but it is worth it usually.

There is also great satisfaction to be had with working with brilliant writer-comedians, who inevitably bring a new rather than a reflective slant on how we view the world. Life working with Armando Iannucci on his splendid political series 'The Thick of It' and with Chris Morris on his extraordinary C4 output over the years, has always been challenging, never dull and neither is the fruit of their labours. They are passion producers



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with a clear agenda to shake things up, to be constructively mischievous. They are television alchemists. It is critical that we create our new gold by remaining creatively and socially ambitious in a world where the easy option is expertly to dish up the tried and tested formulae and formats; to fish in too small a pool of established talent; to be misguidedly led by perceived consumer taste and demand rather than by radical ambition; to say 'no' for fear of causing offence or troubling the regulators. Let's set risk bar a little higher, rather than just propping it up.

A word in memory and respect for the great comedy producer and commissioner John Howard Davies, who died last month. Current operators could all learn from his combination of experience, judgement and confidence in backing work and people he believed in. He oversaw more comedy hits than any other individual in British television because he believed in and backed talent and then worked them hard.

John came from a theatre background and I think that there is much to be learnt about how theatre goes about its business. New writing and work-shopping remains a priority amongst our producing theatres, despite the relative paucity of funding. Contemporary issues are tackled on a regular and often radical basis- take the environment as a current issue. Both the National Theatre and the Royal Court, under the inspired creative leadership of Nick Hytner and Dominic Cooke respectively, commissioned plays about the environment for 2011 productions – one, 'Greenland' involving four young writers, the other 'The Heretic' by the brilliant

Richard Bean, who's previous work had included 'England People Very Nice' about social history and integration in the East End. His current hit is the incomparably funny 'One Man, Two Governors'. This is a writer you can make you laugh, make you cry and above all make you think. We tried at Tiger to develop an ambitious social drama for the BBC with him- in the end after months of work it proved to be institutionally and creatively incapable of recognising and realising his talent- television's loss was the theatre's gain. Maybe there is a clue in the titles of our creative leaders: in the theatre we have Artistic Directors. In television we have Controllers. I advocate more direction, less controlling tendencies, and more commissions about issues we care about from people who are passionate about them.

Now, onto one thought about the cherished BBC's peculiar nature. I have long observed that at our dominant broadcaster, the national asset that is the BBC, there is a schizophrenic fault-line in its make-up and management which I would argue is part of the problem which is minimising radical programming. On the one-hand the BBC is a very distinguished provider of news on a global scale, impartial to the core in its superb reporting and universal in its news-gathering and delivery. This vital journalistic function and the current affairs output related to it tends to determine the Corporation's relationship with its paymaster, the government of the day (and after the recent backroom deal for the Licence fee settlement let's not be coy about who is calling the shots), and it is this relationship rather than



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the relationship with the viewer which determines many of its key policies. Most of the genuine rather than inflated crises which the BBC faces are as a result of differences with government, with the Hutton debacle being the most recent and damaging. As a consequence of this dispute new draconian compliance rules were implemented across all output, and the BBC went on the defensive as it perceived there was a need to regain viewer trust. I do not believe they ever really lost that trust and an ironic consequence of the perceived system failures was the unwritten policy of appointing individuals with a journalistic, news and factual background to most of the key posts within the BBC- on the grounds presumably that they are trained and best equipped to avoid future compliance and editorial breaches. The unintended consequence of this is that by and large we have DGs, their Deputies, the strategists, the Controllers and policy police all appointed with little or no experience of showbiz, of scripted drama & comedy or of talent management. Producers and their responsibilities have been neutered in the process. The aggression of the newsroom and its dog-eat-dog culture which apes the political world it is immersed in, does not suit the more brittle and ephemeral world of showbiz. Impartiality, so crucial to news, is the enemy of the passionate dramatist or comedian. There is a different culture and there should be a different set of rules and measurements of success in these contrasting areas. I would argue that the majority of licence fee payers are ultimately more attracted to the BBC by its entertainment, sport and scripted

programming than its news and current affairs and journalistic output- in fact the viewing figures speak for themselves in this respect- but they are not being best served by the way the BBC is often commissioned and complied, by playing it safe and thereby avoiding offence or controversy as the default position.

News standards of impartiality are imposed and policed inappropriately on scripted and entertainment content as John Lloyd lucidly argued a couple of weeks ago in the Radio Times. BBC One's QI, this most eclectic of programmes was policed to death,- 'blanket proscriptions, passed down from on high, which reduce everything to a bland vichyssoise that suits comedy programmes not at all.' Fear of causing offence or upsetting viewers, politicians and regulators has straight-jacketed much original output. The BBC Trust's 2007 report on impartiality claimed that this vital quality involves a mixture of – wait for it- : 'balance, context, distance, even-handedness, fairness, objectivity, open-mindedness, rigour, self-consciousness, transparency and truth.' What a cocktail. Scripted and comedy material should often be partial, be provocative and be offensive to some parties- there is an obvious argument for balance and providing platforms for contrasting view-points, from the rabid right to loony left and all else in-between- but not for taste censorship for fear of offending – we patronise the audience by being so protective and prissy. The attitude and rules governing all this need relaxing fast if the BBC is to retain first call working with the best creative talent, not just the best news



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people. All producers of scripted and factual have their own nightmare tales to tell about content approval and there needs to be a major correction or even perhaps the cleaving of the BBC into 2 distinct entities – journalism on the one hand and entertainment on the other.-, with different governance, commissioning processes and accountability ...as with ITV and ITN.

Those were my criticisms. But I want to point out that I do think we get it right sometimes – and that's what justifies in calling for more ambitious standards across the industry and better evaluation of what we collectively produce. There are fiefdoms within broadcasting where there exists great clarity of purpose and vision which is systemic rather than personal. Radio 4 is one example, brilliantly led over recent years. I have another in mind and will read out an edited version of its mission and see whether you can guess which area of activity I am talking about: the aim of this broadcasting entity is:

- to inspire imagination
- to help the viewer understand his or her place in the world
- encourage viewers to be responsible citizens
- inspire viewers to be creative and active
- provide laugh out loud moments
- provide positive role models for viewers

These are a loose set of fine ideals and outcomes which the commissioners in question seek from suppliers and producers are made aware of them.

Any ideas? If you replace the word viewer in the list and replace it with children you will realise that it is CBBC; it has a great and well-thought through clarity of purpose and responsiveness to the demands and desires of its audience. This is reflected in its excellent output.

Now – they do not hold to these slavishly or insist upon all of them or even of some of them all of the time but it does provide a useful purpose check-list to work to. Some aims, such as making the viewers laugh out loud, emerged as an occasional priority from the quarterly dialogue CBBC has with a 1000 of its viewers. As a direct result its programme 'Horrid Histories' was made funnier while retaining its informative element. It worked – it is laugh out loud funny and what a wonderful and deserved hit this has been, jointly manufactured with purpose by broadcaster and programme makers. CBBC's drama output also manages to accommodate relevant social themes without being heavy-handed- I witnessed this with Tiger's production of 'Summerfield', a drama series about the Suffolk school run with a fair amount of pupil power and which the government of the day tried to close down. It is a great story but made all the more effective and relevant a drama by the introduction of themes about relationships, bullying and diversity into an already cracking tale.

Despite unwarranted funding cuts, with more to come I fear, CBBC remains robust, producing quality output for tv, web and radio in an area of potential market failure due to a measured commissioning system not reliant



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on individual taste and prejudices; to clearly identifying and communicating to suppliers the outcomes they are seeking ; to implementing a meaningful dialogue with its core audience and to thinking through the consequence for its young viewers of spending time with CBBC and CBeebies. All this without seeming to be dogmatic or prescriptive. Laudable and instructive.

Now, at long last, my concluding remarks come limping over the horizon. UK broadcasters have much to be proud about in respect of their commitment to charitable causes and have implemented sophisticated and meaningful CSR policies to good effect. They can also all point to output, public service inspired in some instances, which makes a difference as to how we understand and behave. However, they need to think beyond the metrics of audience size and AI's and instead think about the social or educational purpose and consequences of what is being commissioned and viewed. I was shocked a few years ago when I had a bold BBC Big Idea pitch involving the wonderful Kwame creating a work to be staged at the National Theatre involving new young talent –it was rejected by one channel on the grounds it would not rate and by another on the grounds that there was a surfeit of aspirational television on it already. I even got this ground of rejection in writing. You can never have such a surfeit! What my years overseeing Comic Relief has taught me is that broadcasters and ambitious programme makers with a cause and passion and something important to say can enjoy a virtuous relationship to the public benefit. To get to where we are now, with

£750 million raised and carefully spent addressing poverty in the UK and internationally ; 98% brand recognition; a range of highly-regarded and rated programming addressing serious issues or involving extraordinary challenges by the likes of heroes Eddie Izzard and David Walliams; to get to this position has involved commissioners and Controllers sharing the amazing Richard Curtis's and his cohorts' passion and desire to deliver change; backing talent; acknowledging the purpose and motivation and allowing us to deliver the goods across a broad range of tv, radio and web activity and programming. It has worked to date on every level- informative, popular, powerful and important .May there be more, please. Let the legislative intent 'to inspire people to make changes in their lives' apply to all our major broadcasters as they prioritise the social impact of this wonderful and still dominant if at times dormant medium. My plea to writers and producers, dramatists, comedians documentary makers , reality tv producers is to pursue your passions; agitate; convince; focus on what change you want to make, what views you want to be heard and shared, and make this the starting point of a television development. Create a legacy and Commissioners- don't be happy unless somewhere on your stations all the time is something trying to make this world a better place. Let's have a new BAFTA awarded to campaigning programming. Please, Sirs and Madams, I want some more and for you to back the individuals who can deliver more and agree a method which effectively measures its impact.



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It seems appropriate to end with a short film about Comic Relief with its unlikely cocktail of high-end entertainment and gut-wrenching appeal films and documentaries- it demonstrates the positive power of our glorious medium.

Thank you very much for listening.

