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DEAR SAJID JAVID by Toby Miller

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Dear Sajid Javid

Please accept this column as my application to become the next Chair of the British Broadcasting Corporation's Trust. I know the monarch ultimately makes such decisions, but between you and me, I believe [you have a part to play](#).

I am a straightish, whiteish, maleish subject, so I come from the kind of background that has been favored in the past for such jobs. Actually, cut out the 'ish.'

But I have even more qualities than those estimable qualifications. Read on.

First of all, I write academic and wannabe popular articles, columns, and books about radio, television, and the internet. (I think we both know how much the BBC values media studies.) Second, I never thought much of Whispering Bob Harris. Third, I was sad when you lost Brian Moore to football commentary and Mike Selvey to Test Match Special. Fourth, I always found Guy Burgess and Jimmy Saville a touch oleaginous. Fifth, Paxo sends me to sleep. Fast. Sixth, I thought John Peel sniveled into the mike. Seventh, I paid my last license fee, while [protesting vigorously](#) at the corporate state surveillance to which I was subjected.

And eighth, I live near the C2 bus route, which runs just by Broadcasting House and associated watering holes. If appointed, I swear to take the C2 and hence save on the usual transport budget allocated to Chairs. I suspect the *Daily Mail* would run very positive stories about this, given [its interest in containing the spiraling costs](#) that your people incur. In addition, the C2 will allow me to confirm my status as an organic intellectual of the working class by raising a jar with members of the Corporatariat as they stagger breathless from studio to bar, then discussing what I've heard on the bus home with ordinary people from the *barrio*. Those latter discussions might be broadcast on line, perhaps via [Radio Bloke](#).

But there is more on offer, and here I truly warm to my task.

When I wrote about my impending candidacy on Twitter, the tweet drew no interest. But *dozens* of my closest Facebook 'friends' have [endorsed my quest to run the Trust](#). It's clear that I am the people's choice. Reading between the lines, I'm the guy the [Voice of the Listener & Viewer](#), the *Grauniad*, and [Harriet Harman all want](#). They're not quite out in front of the story yet, but you sense they'd like to be.

Actually, anyone reading this, including the above, is invited to spearhead a letter-writing campaign to you, the Prime Minister, the monarch, and even the Trust itself on my behalf. Crowdsourcing is my speciality and may even replace the license fee as a source of revenue if your Tory colleagues remove the penal code aspects to the latter and stop [sending little old ladies to the clink](#) who can't afford to pay.

That's not all.

Here are some of my plans for evaluating the Corporation.

First, I'd limit scrutinizing programs in favor of scrutinizing people who neither make them nor maintain the equipment that does so. An audit based on the principles of Marxist theories of the labor process should sort out *apparatchiks* with improbable bureaucratic titles and their lunatic kiss-up, kick-down routines and retinues.

Second, I'd initiate research into the oft-heard claim that the BBC is the best at what it does in the world (recent incantations from your employees to this effect can be found [here](#) and [here](#)). I'm interested to know how these remarkable utterances come to be and their conceptual and empirical bases. They are classically heard from English-only speakers who have spent their entire lives in the UK. I think (actually this is not true of James Harding). Might there be other views, and other criteria, for making such statements? Gee golly.

I am heartily sick of being told how fucking wonderful everything is. You oligarchs have appointed a succession of bizarre white men as Directors-General. In this century alone: a headbanger (literally) who is now helping destroy gender equity at the *New York Times*; a chap who lasted less than eight weeks due to an inability to answer questions on the radio (John Humphrys interviewed me about Michael Jackson and child molestation in 2005 and I excelled, according to the [Communist Party of Great Britain](#). I know, the link is broken—make of that what you will, Sajid); and

now the Baron of Birkenhead, some opera dude who is [evidently in thrall to Clarkson, J](#) and the £150 million that his petrol-head product placements bring the BBC each year.

John Reith, your first Director-General, [famously intoned of the desire](#) to generate profit from broadcasting that *'somebody introduced Christianity and printing and the uses of electricity. And somebody introduced smallpox, bubonic plague and the Black Death. Somebody is minded now to introduce sponsored broadcasting into this country'*. Well said, old thing. We need madmen like that back at the head of public media. I can be one of them.

You have the chance to stand out by appointing me *now*. I'll settle for three-quarters of the already discounted, cut-rate £110,000 salary as a goodwill gesture to the cognitariat and precariat of UK media, domestically and abroad.

Let me make this more personal, Sajid.

We both worked for Chase Manhattan after college and have lived in Gotham, the Asia-Pacific region, and Latin America. [You are young and bald, where I am old and gray](#). You're a Tory, I'm a socialist.

But are we so different, having experienced life at a bank that has helped bring the world to its knees? After all, you think Ed Miliband is responsible for Russia invading the Crimea, so my loony leftism isn't so far distant from your [fucking bat shit crazy beliefs](#).

You know in your heart that this is your one shot at getting out ahead of history, Sajid. Like [Flaubert in Madame Bovary](#), you can simultaneously index and change modernity, reflecting and transcending (all at once—limited tie offer) our shared yet conflictual moment. Don't pass up this great opportunity. Seize it. Make the conjuncture your own. You know you want to. Do it. For the children yet to be born and their future.

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