



ESTABLISHED 1791

THE OBSERVER

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19th October 1990

FOR THE ATTENTION OF MR PAUL STAINES

Dear Paul Staines,

On May 31st 1986 I published in the Guardian an article about you and a letter you wrote which purported to be an attempt to forge links between the British National Party and Conservative students at the Humberside College of Further Education. You were then a student at the college in the first year of your studies.

Since that time I have come to know you and I would like now to state for the record that this article plagues my conscience. I realise it has caused you some distress and embarrassment since it was written and I hope now with this letter these effects may come to an end. You have my permission to show this letter to anyone if the matter of the article should be raised at any future date.

I wrote the article after speaking to you but did not then accept your explanation of what you had done: to wit, a letter to the local BNP proposing 'possible joint future activities' on the basis of your sharing the BNP's objectives. You told me then that you wrote this letter as an attempt to trick the BNP, in the hope perhaps of gaining intelligence of its activities and that your motive was only to damage this extreme right-wing organisation.

At the time I regarded this as absurd, but as our acquaintanceship has developed I believe you were telling the truth. I am certain you do not in fact share the odious objectives of the BNP and that in no sense are you a racist.

I think your letter to the BNP was, to say the least, unwise. But you were young and inexperienced and with hindsight, I think I should have accepted your explanation. I do now regret the possible lasting harm that the Guardian article may have caused you for what was at worst an act of youthful folly.

Yours sincerely,

DAVID ROSE
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