

***PLEASE NOTE "THE ANDREW MARR SHOW" MUST BE  
CREDITED IF ANY PART OF THIS TRANSCRIPT IS USED***

# **THE ANDREW MARR SHOW**

## **INTERVIEW:**

**MARIA MILLER, MP**

**CULTURE SECRETARY**

**NOVEMBER 3<sup>rd</sup> 2013**

**ANDREW MARR:**

Now the Royal Charter to begin the process of press regulation was agreed last week. It's going to be printed on vellum no less. That's calfskin, though the calf has long since died. Parliament and the public support the new system, but most of the press regards it as a dangerous act of political interference. Which way we go is a genuinely important moment for Britain and the woman in charge, Maria Miller, joins me now. Maria Miller, thank you for coming in. What actually happens now? You have your own system up and running. The press are going to ignore it completely. They have their own system, Ipsos. Are you going to make them join or what happens?

**MARIA MILLER:**

Well I think the first thing to note is that there is complete agreement about the importance of self-regulation and there is complete agreement that that self-regulation should be overseen by a set of principles set out in a Royal Charter. Both the Government and the press agree with that. I think the most important thing that happens now, and is happening I think very well, is for the press to go forward with their own self-regulatory body and to establish that.

**ANDREW MARR:**

*(over)* But it can't be self reg... it can't be self-regulatory if it's a body they won't join. Can it?

**MARIA MILLER:**

Well the body they're setting up is for them to set up. It's for them to ...

**ANDREW MARR:**

*(over)* Are you relaxed about that just to go ahead and happen and see how that goes?

**MARIA MILLER:**

Well self-regulation has to be that. It has to be determined by the industry. The industry are setting up their own self-regulatory body. Really the only role of the Government in this was to oversee the traffic of the Royal Charter being put in place, which is a set of principles that will guide that. I think what it is for the industry now is to set up that self-regulatory body. And I think when you look at the ...

**ANDREW MARR:**

And if their body is seen to work, as it were the Royal Charter body - if we can call it that - it doesn't need to happen at all presumably?

**MARIA MILLER:**

Well ...

**ANDREW MARR:**

You don't have two bodies.

**MARIA MILLER:**

Well no, the self-regulatory body needs to happen and I think the press need to set that up and they need to show that they are making real progress with the sort of million pound fines and prominent apologies when things go wrong.

**ANDREW MARR:**

But if they do - sorry to come back to this - you won't make them join the other body?

**MARIA MILLER:**

No, I don't think it's right ...

**ANDREW MARR:**

*(over)* That's interesting.

**MARIA MILLER:**

... in a country that has at its heart freedom of the press and is a very ... it's an integral part of our democratic system. It's important that that is a self-regulatory approach.

**ANDREW MARR:**

The reason I'm interested is this seems to me to be a change of tone from those people who were saying if the press doesn't join, they'll be facing huge swingeing fines, massive costs and effectively they may be bankrupted, so they'll have to join our system or else. That's not what you're saying?

**MARIA MILLER:**

Well what I want to do is to guard against some of those people who are trying to foist upon this country statutory regulation. And ultimately that's what was happening in March of this year and I think the best way to stave off that statutory regulation, which I'm afraid too many people in Parliament were free to talk about, is by having an effective system of self-regulation. I think the press appreciate that and I think the press are pressing forward with putting their own system in place.

**ANDREW MARR:**

So if Ipsos (the press's own system) works fine, nothing else needs to happen - if it works?

**MARIA MILLER:**

Yes. And you know ultimately, yes, there are opportunities for the press to be able to be recognised and I would encourage them to look at that because it does mean that

they can get the sort of incentives that were being talked about in the previous interview around costs and also exemplary damages.

**ANDREW MARR:**

An organisation like Hacked Off and indeed Steve Coogan will be bitterly disappointed to hear you say that because they thought the press were being pulled into a new system come what may.

**MARIA MILLER:**

Well I think they need to examine what Lord Justice Leveson actually said, and he said very clearly that a sign of success would be to have a system where we could take both the public and the press with us. And that's been at the heart of the way I've approached this and I do hope that the press see the charter as an opportunity for them to I think really demonstrate to the people who read their newspapers that they take responsibility very seriously indeed in terms of what they print, the way they print it; and when errors and mistakes are made, that they have a system of redress in place. And I think what's advantageous about being recognised under the Royal Charter is that it would involve having a low cost form of arbitration in place - the sort of thing that the Dowlers ...

**ANDREW MARR:**

*(over)* If I'm a newspa... Sorry.

**MARIA MILLER:**

... and the McCanns I think were calling for.

**ANDREW MARR:**

But if I'm a newspaper editor and I say okay, yes, there are advantages in that way, but the disadvantage of feeling that the politicians are standing behind this process tapping their truncheons is so great that I prefer to take my chance in the courts - you're comfortable with that?

**MARIA MILLER:**

Well I think that's misunderstanding the role of the Royal Charter. I mean what we

wanted to do, and one of the reasons why we didn't take the Press Charter forward, was because it didn't exclude politicians from, ministers from the process. We want to make sure that this process is absolutely outside of the political process. That's why it's set up through a Royal Charter. That's why the Royal Charter can only be varied if the regulatory panel and actually Parliament agree.

**ANDREW MARR:**

But if the press's system works, the Royal Charter is redundant really because they've got their own system working, up and functioning.

**MARIA MILLER:**

Subject to them ...

**ANDREW MARR:**

Subject to them doing it.

**MARIA MILLER:**

Yes exactly.

**ANDREW MARR:**

Okay, that's absolutely fascinating. Can I ask you about another big media issue? Grant Shapps, the Conservative Party Chairman, said some pretty swingeing things about the BBC recently - basically there has to be really radical reform or you'll lose a big chunk of your licence fee to other broadcasters and so on. Do you broadly agree with that position?

**MARIA MILLER:**

What I want to see is the BBC doing exactly what they're doing now, which is looking at a root and branch review of the governance. I think the thing that's happened over the last year - all the issues that have come to the surface have really shown a weakness in understanding of the relative roles of the two different elements of the BBC. The work that Tony Hall has put in place to look at governance, I think is exactly the right thing to be focusing on now. Other issues around licence fee - you know those are for charter renewal, which is some way off in the future.

**ANDREW MARR:**

Okay. Can I ask about a few other arts related questions? First of all, the discrepancy between per capita funding between London and the rest of the country seems absurd. I think it's fifteen times per capita higher in London. Twice we could understand, five times might seem a bit much, ten would be ridiculous. *Fifteen* times must infuriate people all round the country from sort of Norwich to Glasgow, to Edinburgh, wherever, where the arts are frankly being starved. It can't carry on, can it?

**MARIA MILLER:**

Well I think imbalance in funding between London and the rest of the country, you're absolutely right - it's something that we've inherited, something that we're already doing something about. The Arts Council have already changed the balance of lottery funding to increase the amount going outside of London. But I think we also need to perhaps look in a little bit more detailed way at the sort of figures you're quoting because whilst you're right, the per head funding is as you've set out, when you look at the per visit funding, the situation is very different. And of course the capital has a huge magnet effect for tourism. It's also incredibly important for our creative industries and a training ground for the future. I went to the National Theatre last night to see the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that incredible institution which has been at the heart of some of our great successes both in film and in broadcast.

**ANDREW MARR:**

We're right in the middle of kind of prize giving season all across the arts at the moment. Everyone is saying the Turner Prize this year in Londonderry or Derry is the best for many, many years. Any reflections on that - who might win, the kind of art that's on show there?

**MARIA MILLER:**

Well I think that that would be ... I wouldn't want to ever pre-empt that sort of an event, but what I think we are seeing is an absolute renaissance of Britain in arts and culture - not just domestically within our own shores, but internationally - and that's what I'm using to take Britain around the world, to sell Britain around the world. You know the arts is not something we should just keep at home.

**ANDREW MARR:**

Maria Miller, thank you very much indeed for that. We're out of time for the moment.

**INTERVIEW ENDS**