



Yannis Theodorou
Ofcom
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09 December 2008

Channel 4 PSB Review 2009

Dear Yannis

As we approach the next round of Public Service Broadcasting Review for Channel 4, we thought it timely to outline our thoughts especially in light of the current funding and structural challenges in the market that we – as independent producers of feature films such as *"Brick Lane"* *"The Wind That Shakes The Barley"* and television programmes such as Andrea Levy's *"Small Island"* (currently in pre-production) – are facing today.

Our starting point is the central and fundamental role of Channel 4 in the current PSB landscape across a wide variety of media, platform and genre, and the absolute need to promote a meaningful funding solution to bridge the present financial gap in order for Channel 4 to continue fulfilling its PSB role as well as stimulate creativity in the future.

We seem to be in real danger of forgetting the public's continued appetite for high quality, UK-originated programming including, importantly British feature films that Channel 4 excels in providing. We firmly believe that a publicly owned, not-for-profit / commercially funded Channel 4 must continue to remain at the heart of UK public service broadcasting. A strong Channel 4 is absolutely essential as time and time again they have successfully demonstrated their ability to connect with those viewers other channels find it hard to reach, including those 'elusive young viewers' rather aptly referred to as 'elves' - they don't watch much TV, but they do watch Channel 4!

A case in point is the hugely successful teen British drama series *"Skins"* which enjoys 40% online following to their terrestrial viewership in contrast to 5%, which is regarded as the industry's norm of success. In an increasingly competitive digital marketplace Channel 4 has arguably, more successfully risen to the challenge of transitioning into digital television than its competitors and is now best positioned to exploit this, provided that the necessary funding settlement, critical to a healthy public broadcasting is ensured and protected as quickly as possible.

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Last but not the least, we must underline the unparalleled importance of film as an integral part of Channel 4's PSB remit. The Film Four team punch well above their weight with the limited resources available and its continual commitment in this arena has only been met with an impressive track record of socially progressive and resonating films spanning from "My Beautiful Laundrette" to more recently, "The Road to Guantanamo", "Brick Lane" and "Hunger". As you may know, these films have all been multi-award winning, not to mention delivering a significant contribution to the health of the British audiovisual industry and value in the wider cultural context.

We hope, through our shared interest in maintaining and growing creative economy that you will give proper weight to our thoughts in favour of finding a speedy and meaningful funding solution to the current situation facing Channel 4.

We thank you for time.

Yours truly

Two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The first signature on the left is "Alison Owen" and the second, larger signature on the right is "Paul Trijbits".

Alison Owen

&

Paul Trijbits

Producer

Executive Producer

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