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SECTION ONE: CULTURAL STUDIES

**PUPPETS ON STRINGS:
HOW AMERICAN MASS MEDIA MANIPULATED
BRITISH COMMERCIAL RADIO BROADCASTING**

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Abstract: *The article demonstrates how the American mass-media system manipulated British off-shore commercial radio from 1964 to 1967, in link with dissent elements within the British Establishment. This demonstration undermines the popular re-rendering of the “radio pirates” as rebels against the Establishment, and shows thereby that cultural change requires dominant-interest collaboration to be effective.*

Keywords: *British off-shore radio; Miller, Beatrix; Queen magazine; Stevens, Jocelyn; Radio Caroline*

“I may win on the roundabout, then I’ll lose on the swings, in or out, there is never a doubt, just who’s pulling the strings, I’m all tied up in you, but where’s it leading me to?” Sandie Shaw’s winning performance of *Puppet on a String* at the 1967 Eurovision Song Contest (Puppet) - could have been a lyrical description of British commercial radio broadcasting during the nineteen-sixties under manipulation by American interests. (Gilder 2003: 69)

Beginning in 1964 the staid domestic daytime radio airwaves of the British Broadcasting Corporation were continually joined by commercial programs beamed from transmitters located in international waters. The origin of these broadcasts began in the editorial offices of an Establishment magazine in London owned by a member of the younger set within British Establishment itself, albeit to be later tied in to an often-uncontrollable alliance with external American partners. (Gilder and Hagger, 1965: 214)

Challenging the BBC radio monopoly

Almost since the birth of broadcasting in Britain, the American advertising agency J. Walter Thompson (JWT) has had an interest in sponsored broadcasting capable of reaching British ears and eyes. (Wilson, 1961: 135) By 1954, under pressure from a lobby with assistance of JWT, (*ibid*: 52) a Television Act had introduced licensed British commercial television stations with limitations. (*ibid*: 191n) and leaving active, a commercial radio pressure group.

Brash young giant

Following the debacle of the Suez Crisis in 1956 in which a rift developed between UK and USA, the younger generation within the British Establishment began to denounce the older generation in a rising crescendo of satire and criticism via the stage and television and print media. (*The Queen*: August 30, 1961: 118) By 1962 the media doyen of British publishing giving aid and comfort to critics was 30 years old Jocelyn Stevens, headlined by *Time* magazine as a “Brash Young Giant” (02-23-1962: *Online*). *Time* described him as being “fresh out of Cambridge in 1955” and thanks to “a background of wealth and all the right schools” he “had access to the highest palace circles”. Stevens was “blond and dashing ... throwing lavish soirees and slewing recklessly about in one Aston Martin after another ...” Then Stevens did an about face “(s)uddenly ashamed of his playboy past, he toured newspaper libraries, surreptitiously destroying all unflattering clips about himself.” This change seems to have been brought about by his interest in the woman he married and perhaps by pressure from his wealthy uncle, publisher Sir Edward Hulton.

Stevens enrolled in London's School of Printing and Graphic Arts where he “crammed a three-year course into twelve months.” When Sir Edward closed down *Picture Post* magazine in 1957, Stevens was 25. On February 14 he bought the *Ladies' Newspaper and Court Chronicle* that first saw light of day in 1861 with the blessing of Queen Victoria. Until 1962 it became known as *The Queen* magazine (Coleridge: 6) where over the years “Hitler is praised for his kindness to animals, pneumatic tyres are dismissed as a passing fad, jazz is written off as a temporary craze.” (Crewe: 1961: 8) Stevens brought the same kind of screeching halt to that editorial approach that he had previously practiced when driving his Aston Martin.

In an interview with the *Observer* in 2006, (02-12-2006: *Online*) Stevens, by then Sir Jocelyn, said that in those early days he had come to the conclusion that he wanted to destroy society with his new magazine. He was asked why? His reply: “it was embarrassing!” He was again asked why? He replied: “Suez! Our fathers had no balls. They couldn't even pull off a little thing like that!” In the autumn of 1957, Stevens recruited Beatrix Miller as editor and it would be her job to actually transform the magazine. Miller had previously been employed by *Vogue* in New York where she would return as editor at the end of 1963. (Coleridge: 9)

Beatrix Miller

Miller is described by Liz Tilberis (1998) in her book *No Time To Die* as an “upright, elegant, and formidable editor-in-chief ... She was a

woman devoted to her career, with no mention of a significant other.” Beatrix Miller “staged revolutions” wrote Tilberis when she later worked with her after Miller had left *Queen*: “She’d stride down the corridor, hands on hips, pointing and declaring, ‘Today is a revolution.’ She would change all sections of the magazine, or all the layouts, or all the models, just to shake everyone up ... She derived great glee from doing it, with a lovely smile on her face.” (76 *supra*)

Stevens and Miller had an *ad hoc* methodology for editing *Queen*. When a young Mary Quant came into the editorial offices with a box of her own photographs featuring fashions she had created (which other fashion magazine publishers had dismissed), Stevens and Miller featured them and launched both Ms. Quant’s career and the miniskirt fashion icon of the 1960s. (*Observer Online*: February 12, 2006) Stevens also brought *Queen* into closer contact with Princess Margaret when he hired her husband Antony Armstrong-Jones (Lord Snowdon) as a photographer. He retained Robin Douglas-Home, nephew of the Prime Minister and elder brother of the editor of *The [London] Times*. Robin Douglas-Home established personal literary relationships with both Frank Sinatra and Jacqueline Kennedy before and after the assassination of the president, and in 1965 he engaged in a romance with Princess Margaret. Stevens’ magazine was run in a petulant manner where psychoanalysis could have been the required order of the day. When Jocelyn Stevens fired his Fashion Editor she threw her typewriter out of the window causing it to splatter upon hitting the ground. He heard the noise and decided to join her in throwing everything else out of her office window, and when they had finished, they both sat on the carpet for a rest. (*ibid*)

Her name is Caroline

Miller had the peculiar habit of naming things and this made an impression upon Liz Tilberis. “Miss Miller had nicknames for people and inanimate objects.” She called the British edition of *Vogue* magazine “*Brogue*” and her white Jaguar car she called “*Arctic*”. (Tilberis, 1998: 77) When *Time* magazine covered the rise of Stevens in 1962, it claimed that he had,

converted *Queen* into a magazine for “*Caroline*,” an imaginary young woman whom he conceives of as his audience: An ambitious, intelligent bachelor girl—or the same girl married to a young executive on the way up—who wants all the material things in life. To reach Caroline and her husband, Stevens filled his magazine with avant-garde photographs ...and appealed shrewdly to the intellectual and social interests of the smart crowd. (“Brash Young Giant”)

Upon turning the pages of *Queen*, readers discovered both published output in conformity with the “*Caroline*” style-sheet, and the name “*Caroline*” in big headlines: “A Christmas present for Caroline: The Queen.” (*The Queen*: Christmas Edition 1961) No other explanation is offered as to who Caroline is, but as *Time* reported in 1962, “*Caroline*” was at that time the name of the theme.

With the passage of time, obfuscation has taken over. On February 12, 2006, Clement Freud, the grandson of psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud and brother of artist Lucian Freud, told the *Observer* that:

Beatrix’s idea was: ‘This is Caroline’. Look at her carefully and don’t ever write anything Caroline wouldn’t understand. Caroline was the sort of person one ended up in bed with. Caroline had fair long hair, and went to school and thought ‘16 and out!’ – of school that is.” (*The Observer* 12 February, 2006).

In 1962 *Time* had reported that Beatrix’s *Caroline* was a stereotypical successful woman who could be married to a stereotypical successful man, while Clement Freud claimed in 2006 that Beatrix’s *Caroline* was an air-headed teenager. Clearly *Queen* magazine was intended to reach the former, not latter reader, but Freud often contributed to *Queen* as a jester using the pen name of “Mr. Smith” (Coleridge: 6).

However, in 1962 there was a real ‘Caroline’, sixteen years-of-age, who seems to fit the description given by Clement Freud in 2006. From July 1962 until October 1964, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (under both Prime Ministers Harold MacMillan and Sir Alec Douglas-Home) was Conservative Member of Parliament Reginald Maudling, who resided at his official home of 11 Downing Street. Sharing that address was his daughter Caroline, who was sixteen at the time.

Although the formal London debutante balls hosted by the Queen had been abolished in 1958 (“we had to put a stop to it; every tart in London was getting in,” Princess Margaret is reputed to have later explained [cf. “Buckingham Palace”]), that inconvenient fact did not stop writers from identifying Caroline Maudling as a “debutante” (“Grey to Black for the Tories”).

Thus known to the staff of *Queen*, much of the noise surrounding young Caroline Maudling came from Nigel Dempster (later a writer for Stevens and a contributing source to a gossip columnist at the *Daily Express* famous for exposing the peccadilloes of high society). Dempster’s 2007 obituary claims that he “cultivated his relationship with Caroline [Maudling]” and “found himself dining at No. 11 Downing Street before he had reached the age of 18.” Dempster also attended parties at the home of Prime Minister Harold MacMillan and those “significant functions he was not invited to, he gate-crashed.” Later still, Dempster gained his own newspaper column and became a close friend of Princess Margaret and other members of the British Royal Family (The Times Online, Obituary [Nigel Dempster])

On June 8, 1963, *The Times* reported that Caroline Maudling had jaundice at the time that she was scheduled for filming a part in *The Chalk Garden* and had thus failed to make her movie debut. However, Producer Ross Hunter said, “She is a fascinating beauty with a great deal of ability.” She later appeared that year as herself in a musical in which a stagehand and his friend attempted to live out their dreams of seeing all of the London shows. Featured were Dusty Springfield, The Hollies and several other popular music artists and groups of that time, (IMBd). The film also starred William Rushton who on October 25, 1961 as both layouts artist and cartoonist created the first edition of *Private Eye* magazine in his bedroom at his mother’s house in Kensington. Jocelyn Stevens later aided this satirical endeavor by turning over two pages of *Queen* to *Private Eye* content (Rushton, Willie Obituary).

Radio Caroline

By 1960, the British Government had commissioned a committee under the chairmanship of industrialist Sir Harry Pilkington to consider the future of broadcasting in the United Kingdom. Its 1962 Report stated that the British public thought that commercial television was dreadful and that commercial radio would be just as bad so they did not want it. *The Pilkington Report* was a slap in the face to the aims of the National Broadcasting Development Committee which lobbied for licensed commercial radio. (“Ship Broadcasters: The Witch Hunt Begins”).

In 1963, Jocelyn Stevens met an Irishman in his twenties named Ronan O’Rahilly. Ronan dabbled in acting classes, club management and he associated himself with some of the well-known popular music performers of that time. O’Rahilly was a rebel looking for a cause. As a very young man his father had fought the British in the continuing struggle to liberate Ireland. His Grandfather called himself ‘The O’Rahilly’ and died during the original 1916 Uprising at Dublin. Ronan was not without access to means: his affluent father had bought a disused British Railways port facility at Greenore on the borders of the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland. (Venmore-Rowland, 1967: 24)

The purpose of O’Rahilly’s meeting with Stevens was to show him plans for an offshore commercial radio station. Ronan had been given them by Australian music publisher Allan Crawford who was working in London and looking for investors (“Radio Pirates”).

Crawford commissioned these plans partially upon advice and direction from Gordon McLendon, a legendary “top 40” radio pioneer in Dallas, Texas. McLendon had already engaged in a similar venture off Sweden and due to changes in Swedish laws his Radio Nord and the ship that it was located upon were up for sale at Galveston, Texas. (“Radio Pirates”)

O’Rahilly had previously met Crawford in his Soho office on Dean Street. But instead of persuading his father to invest in Crawford’s project, Ronan decided to interest Stevens in a new venture that would trade the use of Crawford’s studio where Crawford planned to record radio programs for later transmission, for use of the O’Rahilly family port in Greenore which could be used to outfit both the Crawford ship and a rival Stevens-O’Rahilly venture.

It was at this juncture in time while Beatrix Miller was still editor of *Queen* that the idea of Radio Caroline was born. (ibid & cf. “Commercial Radio: Dial 199 for Caroline” & “World in Action”.) Radio Caroline began broadcasting on March 28, 1964 and claimed to be “Britain’s first all-day music station.” It was not all-day ‘rock and roll’, but a mixture of the same fare that the BBC might play, if it had one network devoted to popular music – which it did not.

Those early broadcasts from Radio Caroline were a very formal affair with only two radio personnel on board. One of them introduced records from a small booth facing the second person sitting behind a glass screen in another booth, and that person played the records, or played recorded programs on a tape recorder. (“The First Radio Pirate”)

Shortly after Radio Caroline began to pepper the headlines of the British press in March, Nigel Dempster successfully promoted 18 years old Caroline Maudling in April with two newspaper photographs showing her clad in a bikini and nightwear on behalf of a British charity group. *Time* reported:

the Daily Mirror headlined it as ‘Caroline Maudling’s Budget Look,’ while *The Daily Express* [which carried Dempster’s social notations] observed that ‘Far from damaging her father’s career, she probably added hundreds to the votes he will get next general election day.’ (“Grey to Black for the Tories”)

On May 12, 1964 Radio Caroline was joined at anchorage off south east England by Crawford’s radio broadcasting ship. Crawford called his station Radio Atlanta, a name that seems to have been inspired by McLendon who graduated from school in Atlanta, Texas where his family-owned drive-in theatres and radio business had begun. (However, it was not an auspicious time for Gordon McLendon of Dallas to make his presence felt because it had only been a matter of months since President John F. Kennedy had been assassinated there on November 22, 1963, and his identified assassin had then been slain just two days later while in the custody of the Dallas Police

Department. The assassin's assassin had gained access by claiming to represent McLendon's KLIF radio station in Dallas.) (Gilder, 2003: 97:45) By July 12, 1964, with neither offshore radio station making enough money to justify their rivalry, the two sales operations merged into one organization. As part of this arrangement, the original Caroline ship moved to a location in Ramsay Bay, Isle of Man as Radio Caroline North, while Atlanta became Radio Caroline South, thus eliminating further questions about the origin of its former name.

Until this time Stevens and O'Rahilly had been joint managers of the Radio Caroline sales time as seen on the Grenada TV program "World in Action". But under the new arrangement, O'Rahilly and Crawford became joint managers and the sales company representing the radio venture and Radio Caroline was moved out of the offices of *Queen* into a new office address in the Mayfair district of London. Actual ownership of the two stations remained the same for some time after this. (Venmore-Rowland, 1967: 57)

While Crawford's blueprint had been obtained from one of America's most successful broadcasting companies, Crawford did not follow the business formula that made McLendon's radio stations successful. However, 142 miles west of Dallas in Eastland, Texas, Don Pierson read about Caroline and Atlanta and decided to offer competition to them. (Gilder, 2003: 54:97)

Using the name *Wonderful Radio London*, Pierson's own offshore venture took the best ideas from McLendon's programming and hired a former New York employee of JWT (McMillan and Harris, 1968: 183) to sell airtime in London. (Gilder, 2003: 87) During that time 'Big L' took listeners away from both the BBC and Radio Caroline South. In desperation Caroline turned to the USA for a new format and knowledge of how to sell it. The sound of British commercial radio was now decidedly American while its voice became a hybrid known as the "transatlantic accent": further defined as an Americanized English accent.

Nunc pro tunc: birth of a myth

When the original offshore era (1964-1968) was brought to an end by legislation, Beatrix Miller had been editing *Vogue* in New York for several years; Caroline Maudling was planning her family in South Africa, and Jocelyn Stevens sold *Queen*. O'Rahilly was left then with a free hand to engage in *nunc pro tunc* by substituting his mythological version of events for the documented record of how Radio Caroline had actually begun.

Via interviews in print and on the BBC airwaves, Ronan claimed that he alone invented the concept of Radio Caroline, and that he had named the

station after Caroline Kennedy as a result of reading a magazine article while flying to Dallas. Ronan's version became undisputed with no references to Beatrice Miller's adoption of the name Caroline at *Queen* - long before Radio Caroline was born in its editorial offices. ("Commercial Radio: 'Dial 199 for Caroline'"). However, in 1964 Caroline Kennedy was but a child and her mother Jacqueline shielded her daughter Caroline from manipulative publicity. (In fact the photojournalism story that Ronan cited was not about Caroline, but about her brother John Jr.) Some have recently reasoned that Ronan named the station after Caroline Maudling because he was infatuated with her. By 1967, Caroline Maudling had vanished from the headlines and the name of Caroline Kennedy had taken her place. (Venmore-Rowland, 1967: 27)

Jocelyn Stevens moved on to edit newspapers and became Chairman of *English Heritage*. Unfortunately no one was safeguarding the story of how Britain's quest for commercial radio had not come about by an external youthful rebellion, but by the younger faction within the British Establishment who had in turn seen their venture hijacked by Americans because they knew "how to sell in England" (PAMS).

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ABOUT THE PRECEDING ARTICLE ABOVE

The article reproduced above has not been amended. It was written in 2008 and originally published in 2009. At that time, the authors believed that they knew enough about the true origins of Radio Caroline to write the preceding document, while at the same time continuing with their research.

Between 2009 and 2014 the book called ‘Radio Man’ came to their attention. It was published in 2002 and styled as the biography of Charles Orr Stanley and the group of companies that he managed which were collectively known as Pye of Cambridge, England. The author of this book is identified as the grandson of C.O. Stanley.

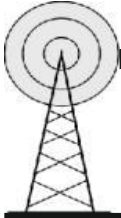
The article which follows explains the problems that arose in 2014 after reading that book. Controversy began with one paragraph on one page when attempts were made to reconcile its contents with the accepted version of the same events.

The following article explains what transpired.

A follow-up to this article and an expanded account will also be published in a new book. Research is still ongoing at the time that this information has been placed Online.

Transmitting

The Museum of Communication Foundation Members' Newsletter



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£2.00 to non-members



The day I read page 276 my knowledge of radio history imploded

By Mervyn Hagger

It wasn't even the whole page, just one paragraph on that page. But just like Jimmy Durante who decades ago made a record about never forgetting the day he read a book, I could not forget a single paragraph in a book

I was on a train and on my way to the Communications Museum in Burntisland to deliver a scheduled talk all about the origins of Radio Caroline. It was Saturday, October 25, 2014, and maybe you were in that audience when I had to tell everyone that I had come totally unprepared. It was very embarrassing.

But what else could I do? Again, like Jimmy Durante I can claim that it was not just any book that I had read, but one privately funded by the grandson of a major British electronics company. He raised almost £100,000 to fund research for this book that was published in conjunction with the now defunct Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE), and published as part of their Technology Series.



The primary author was Mark Frankland. He had read history at both Cambridge University in England and Brown University in the USA. He then worked for the 'Observer' and twice won British Press Awards for foreign reporting. Mr. Frankland was assisted by Gordon Bussey as technical advisor, and he also had a solid background in his field of expertise.

The book is called '*Radio Man*' and subtitled '*The remarkable rise and fall of C.O. Stanley*'. It was about the man who built the Pye Group of Companies with his son John. Then, in the late Sixties his empire collapsed, and it was gobbled up by Phillips.

But on page 276 of '*Radio Man*', I read this paragraph:

Preparations for the launch of the British pirate radio station Radio Caroline in 1964 gave C.O. the chance to become involved in a more effective demonstration of commercial broadcasting. Radio Caroline evaded the Post Office's grip on the airwaves by broadcasting from a ship outside Britain's territorial waters. Determined that it should succeed, C.O. and John agreed to provide all its equipment, but because the operation was illegal they set up a fictitious radio manufacturing company complete with its own stationery, invoices and bank accounts. Everything Pye made for Caroline was stamped with the logo of the nonexistent manufacturer. In the year of Caroline's debut the Stanleys succeeded in opening on the Isle of Man Britain's first legal commercial radio station. Their partner was Richard Meyer, who had been involved in the start of ATV and then gone to Mozambique to set up, with Pye equipment, Radio Lourenço Marques, the world's first pirate broadcaster targeted at South Africa. John Stanley conducted prolonged negotiations with the Post Office to extract suitable frequencies for the new Manx Radio, whose advertising revenues put it in profit within 2 years.

It claims that Pye was secretly behind the creation of Radio Caroline and a lot of other offbeat commercial broadcasting ventures. Now it is provable that Stanley was indeed the primary driving force behind the formation of the Independent Television Authority (ITA). It was a monopoly and commercial rival to the British Broadcasting Corporation, but unlike BBC, ITA franchised all broadcasting operations to several companies, but remained in control of all transmission facilities.

Pye had a lot of BBC, ITA and UK military contracts, and the last thing it could be seen to be doing was pioneering offshore 'pirate radio'. But the big problem caused by page 276 is that it contradicted scores of books; hundreds of newspaper articles and more than a few BBC and ITA documentaries. They all claimed that a renegade young Irishman created Radio Caroline to promote a pop singer.

So, I called C.O. Stanley's grandson and asked him for the source of the information in the book, because that paragraph is sans references. Nicholas Stanley told me that an 'engineer' provided the information, but all of his notes are now in Bradford at the adjunct facility to the Science Museum in London. I called Bradford many times and eventually discovered that none of Nicholas Stanley's notes had been processed. Worse still, they were being stored at a disused RAF airfield near Redding.

Now jump ahead two years and my colleague eventually found the 'smoking gun' at that remote facility. It contained the original text which had not come from an engineer, but from Nicholas Stanley during his personal interview of a long-term Pye designer. This is what the authentic text had to say:

The other very exiting piece of work I did for Pye (you must remember that by the late '50's your Father had organised or encouraged me to set myself up as a freelance contractor) was the top secret work on Radio Caroline. It was many years before anyone at all outside the Board Room knew that Pye had supplied all of the radio broadcasting equipment for Radio Caroline (as well as Manx Radio, Lourenco Marques Radio, and Radio Luxembourg). As you will remember Radio Caroline was an unlicensed "pirate" radio station, who Pye had no business to be dealing with, or supplying. Therefore, binding me to complete secrecy, your Father came to me one day and asked me to create from scratch an entire new corporate entity for a company manufacturing radio equipment. We made up letterheads, invoices, he opened bank accounts, we made up die-cast metal logos to affix to all the pieces of radio equipment, and even all the packing cases were made up specially in this livery – all to avoid any possibility of Pye being seen to be supplying this unlicensed Radio operator who Pye were determined to support, and were determined to see should succeed. Both your Grandfather and particularly your Father were obsessed with the idea and possibilities of local commercial Radio broadcasting before most people had even heard of the concept.

Compare the published text with the original interview. Two key words have been changed. Pye did not set up a 'fictitious' company and Pye did not manufacture anything for Radio Caroline. It supplied Radio Caroline with equipment that was all manufactured in the USA. None of it was made by Pye.

But why would the fake story about an Irishman named Ronan O'Rahilly have been spread by the news media, and if Pye did not manufacture anything for Radio Caroline, then why did page 276 say that it did? Why did Nicholas Stanley mislead me, and why did it take over two years to begin to uncover the true story, which to this day the majority of people in the UK do not know?

Not knowing any of this back in 2014 was the reason for my own embarrassment when I arrived to deliver my speech. But this is only the beginning of what we have since uncovered, and what will follow in the next installment will amaze you.

But here is a tease: The primary purpose behind the creation of Radio Caroline was not to play pop music, or to even force the licensing of land-based commercial radio. It was part of a plan to test national jurisdiction over international waters of the North Sea.

This offshore project dated back to a secret and successful plan to develop onshore oil in England during World War II. The extraction engineers came from Texas and their success led to discovery of the offshore natural gas and oil fields. But back then, due to the limitations of technology, there was no way to extract their riches. The continental shelf under the North Sea was a no man's land not subject to national law, and this prompted a surreptitious move to claim mineral rights.

So in 1964, a ship sailed from Galveston, Texas under the control of Texans, and it became the home of Radio Caroline South. On its British board of directors managing sales, was the grandson of Henri Deterding who had built-up Shell Oil. Behind the scenes was a complicated multi-national rush to claim ownership to the underwater wealth in natural gas and oil fields, and all of this tied back to the oil

capital of the world in Houston, Texas.

At that time the North Sea was like a Wild West underwater mineral grab because the U.N. Law of the Sea had not as yet been adopted for incorporation into national legislation. It is an amazing story which so far has not been put together, and our discovery was triggered by that embarrassing speech back in 2014.

More in the next edition.

