

Ploys to make a politician look bad

I try to accept interviews on topics I know something about and have well based or distinctive views on. Usually the media want to offer an interview on a topic where I am not an expert where they think I will have difficulty supporting the position of my party or government so they can create a split which does not yet exist. When I do get an offer that is worth accepting I spend my preparation time not on the topic itself, because I know the subject and know what I wish to say. I spend the time thinking about all the other things the interviewer might wish to deviate to in the hope of ensnaring me.

There are a series of regular ploys.

1. The creation of a caricature. The BBC often claims to know the views of the interviewee better than the interviewee knows them himself. When the person explains their view to them they counter argue by asserting they must believe something else because they have invented a caricature of the person as a "right winger" or "left winger", or "Eurosceptic" or whatever. It makes the interviews foolish, with the BBC setting out their version of the person's view and the interviewee denying it. They then seek to suggest that their version of the view is the real view and so the interviewee is in some way dishonest to say otherwise.
2. Undermining by false association. The BBC quickly diverts the interview of a politician who is doing well into an interview about the worst or stupidest thing some other member of that person's party has said or done recently. The interviewee is forced to deny what the person has said or done to avoid contamination. An original interview about an important subject then becomes instead repeated pressure to get the interviewee to set themselves up as the moral arbiter and disciplinarian for their party with questions about whether the person who misspoke should be sacked, prosecuted etc.
3. Subverting from past quotations. Someone setting out a cogent and appropriate case for current conditions is confronted with something they said or wrote many years before in different circumstances. It may be that the two views are fully compatible because circumstances are different, but precious interview time is lost trying to establish that. It may be that the interviewee has changed their mind owing to new facts and insights. This should not be a crime unless it is one of those cases where a party does do a major U turn in a dishonest or flagrantly political self serving way.
4. Setting the interviewee up against others in his or her party. Someone making a good recommendation or providing informative background to policy may suddenly be faced with a contradictory quote from another senior person in their party, as if this invalidates their position.
5. Quoting so called experts and insisting that because they are experts their opinion is correct and the politicians must be wrong. The politician is never allowed to debate with the experts and will not have advance warning to be able to explain why these particular experts may

have flawed judgement or be coming at the problem from a biased vantage point.

6. Mistaking fashionable viewpoints in media circles like Remain and a particular version of Green for facts and attempting to shout down or crowd out a politician who has a considered but different opinion.
7. Trying to ascribe base motives to any politician expressing a different view from those deemed acceptable to the BBC. The interviewer alleges motives of personal career advancement or party interest when someone is putting forward their best judgement of what is in the public interest or the interests of their constituents.