



The Profumo affair in popular culture: The Keeler Affair (1963) and 'the commercial exploitation of a public scandal'

Richard Farmer

To cite this article: Richard Farmer (2016): The Profumo affair in popular culture: The Keeler Affair (1963) and 'the commercial exploitation of a public scandal', Contemporary British History, DOI: [10.1080/13619462.2016.1261698](https://doi.org/10.1080/13619462.2016.1261698)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13619462.2016.1261698>



© 2016 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 29 Nov 2016.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 143



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

The Profumo affair in popular culture: *The Keeler Affair* (1963) and ‘the commercial exploitation of a public scandal’

Richard Farmer

Department of Film, Television and Media Studies, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK

ABSTRACT

This article demonstrates that the Profumo affair, which obsessed Britain for large parts of 1963, was not simply a political scandal, but was also an important cultural event. Focussing on the production of *The Keeler Affair*, a feature film that figured prominently in contemporary coverage of the scandal but which has been largely overlooked since, the article shows that this film emerged from a situation in which cultural entrepreneurs, many of them associated with the satire boom, sought to exploit the scandal for financial gain. Many Profumo-related cultural products found an audience, and thus formed an integral part of, and helped to shape public attitudes towards, the Profumo affair. However, these products did not go uncontested, and resistance to them, and especially to the idea that Keeler might benefit materially from her role in the scandal, speak to concerns about cultural mediations of sex, politics and humour in early-1960s Britain.

KEYWORDS

Profumo affair; satire; cinema; Christine Keeler; scandal

In 1963, Harold Macmillan’s government became engulfed by a scandal concerning John Profumo’s relationship with Christine Keeler. The Profumo affair was a political, media and cultural event, and it is on the second and, especially, the third elements of the scandal that this article will focus. In particular, I will demonstrate that what began as a political scandal became a cultural phenomenon, and explore some of the many references to the Profumo affair contained in contemporary popular culture. Whilst these references might be understood as being political—many mention Macmillan, or the fact that Profumo was Minister for War and had deceived the House of Commons—most were rather more interested in, to use the phrase of the British actors union, Equity, which was asked to consider an application for membership by Keeler, ‘the commercial exploitation of a public scandal’.¹ As a result of the initial media frenzy concerning the Profumo–Keeler relationship, the scandal became quite extraordinarily prominent in British popular culture; this prominence worked to justify (and may, indeed, have necessitated) continued media interest in the topic. The ways in which the Profumo scandal was dealt with and treated in popular culture more widely appears to be linked to the decline in deference that facilitated or followed on from the ‘satire boom’ of the early 1960s, and many of the cultural products that deal specifically or

CONTACT Richard Farmer  r.farmer@uea.ac.uk

© 2016 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

obliquely with the affair intersect with people or institutions or places associated with those who sought to use humour to challenge the established sophistries of the Macmillan government and the static, elite society it was believed to represent. As such, just as the Profumo affair is often understood to mark a political watershed, the moment at which Macmillan's government became doomed, the popular culture that emerged from the scandal, with its willingness to lampoon and lacerate the political establishment, speaks to changing cultural and social values, even if the occasionally hostile reactions to such demonstrate that the old ways still had a grip on British political institutions and moral imaginaries.

A central concern of the article is to provide a production history of *The Keeler Affair* (also known as *The Christine Keeler Story*), a feature film announced and produced in 1963 and based on the life of its eponymous protagonist. *The Keeler Affair* has remained almost entirely unexplored in the scholarship focussing on the Profumo scandal, in large part because it was twice rejected by the British Board of Film Censors (BBFC) and has therefore never been given a general release in the United Kingdom.² However, as both my text and my references will demonstrate, the film was of great interest to the British media at the time of its production, and was discussed, alongside Keeler's more well-documented involvement in the press, as an element of the popular cultural formations that fed off and helped mediate the Profumo affair.³ Whilst it would be an exaggeration to suggest that *The Keeler Affair* was central to the turbulent events of 1963, the film does work to neatly concretise some of the more contentious elements of the affair, most importantly in terms of the media's insistent coverage of the story, the ways in which cultural entrepreneurs sought to exploit the scandal and some of its protagonists for financial gain, and the supposed moral implications of Keeler gaining fame and fortune from her role in the scandal and her involvement with the film. Keeler (to a much greater degree than Profumo) became a culturally prominent figure as a consequence of the scandal, and, as Frank Mort puts it, 'turned herself into a multi-media event': 'immaculately groomed for her various public appearances and exhibiting a deft sense of timing, she assumed the role of a fashionable celebrity'.⁴ Although initially Keeler's elevated cultural profile was entirely the product of her central role in the Profumo affair, and so made her a crucial element of it, her growing celebrity status after the initial political phase of the scandal meant that she transcended the event which had brought her to public attention (without ever becoming fully disassociated from it). Where she had come to public attention because of her involvement with Profumo, such was the interest in Keeler that Profumo remained (often implicitly) in the spotlight longer than he might otherwise have done because of his involvement with her.

On 22 March 1963, John Profumo, Minister of War in Macmillan's Conservative administration, issued a personal statement in the House of Commons denying that there was any 'impropriety whatsoever in my acquaintanceship with Miss Keeler', a young model and show-girl that he had met at Lord Astor's Cliveden estate in July 1961.⁵ When it became clear that he had misled Parliament, and that there had in fact been a very great deal of impropriety indeed, his fate was sealed, and on 4 June he resigned. The political element of the Profumo affair was therefore relatively simple, as the final lines of a contemporary limerick satirising the scandal make clear:

To lie in the nude
May be terribly rude,
But to lie in the House is obscene.

Here, what John B. Thompson has called a 'second-order transgression'—the abuse of Parliamentary privilege and procedure—was the cause of Profumo's downfall, not his adultery.⁶

A further political dimension was provided by Keeler's concurrent liaison with Yevgeny 'Eugene' Ivanov, naval attaché at the Soviet Embassy in London. Whilst it appears to have been extremely unlikely that national security was compromised, it was this aspect of the scandal that was exploited by the opposition Labour party. The spy angle was also of interest to the media, which used it—along with the various court cases involving Keeler and other (non-political) figures such as Stephen Ward, Mandy Rice-Davies and two of Keeler's former lovers, the West Indians John Edgecombe and Aloysius 'Lucky' Gordon—to keep the story alive. The national security aspect, and the criminal proceedings, permitted the newspapers to make the 'clearly disingenuous' claim that they were following the story in the public interest, whilst the other aspects—the sex, most particularly—made it of interest to the British public, which had always enjoyed the frisson of outrage and titillation arising from its prurient interest in the intimate lives of other people.⁷ The scandal, as Stafford Somerfield, then editor of the *News of the World*, put it, 'had everything'—sex and espionage, obviously, but also race, violence, drugs, politics and class.⁸ It was also the case that many British newspapers were gunning for Macmillan as a consequence of the fall-out from the Vassall affair, a spy scandal that had unfolded the previous year and in the aftermath of which two Fleet Street journalists had been imprisoned for refusing to divulge the sources of prurient and outlandish stories relating to John Vassall and his Admiralty employers.

Keeler became, briefly, one of the most famous women in the world, her name known from 'the communal farms of the Ukraine to the near-beer drinking huts of the Congo'.⁹ Newspaper headlines could refer to Keeler simply as Christine and confidently expect to be understood; *The Economist* put her photograph on its front cover with the headline 'The Prime Minister's Crisis' and no further contextual information.¹⁰ With Keeler so prominently involved in such prominent events, many Britons might have considered it entirely unexceptional that the story of her life was to be filmed or her exploits discussed in popular culture. If her physical attractiveness, and wardrobe, allowed her, in the words of one reporter, to 'be mistaken for your average film starlet', her more-than-usually colourful private life and high-media profile only served to underscore this.¹¹ By the time of Keeler's emergence into the spotlight, the nature of stardom had taken something of a confessional turn, blurring the boundaries between the private and the public parts of a celebrity's identity. In 1960, the *News of the World* had run a series of salacious articles based on interviews with Diana Dors, an established film star fallen on hard times, whilst in 1962, Elizabeth Taylor had cemented her reputation as sexual temptress by allowing much of her extramarital affair with Richard Burton to play out in full view of the media, a decision that did little to undermine her box-office appeal.¹² In such a climate, it was not inconceivable that a figure such as Keeler, whose fame and public persona was almost entirely tied to her sexual exploits, would use her fame as a springboard to possible cinematic stardom. As Keeler herself noted as the Profumo affair unfolded: 'I have finished with modelling. Now I shall concentrate on a film career'.¹³

The idea for a filmed version of Keeler's life was initially announced by Nicholas Luard in mid-May 1963. Although Luard had no direct experience of working in the film industry, he was a relatively well-known figure on the London cultural scene. An entrepreneur rather than a writer or performer, 'the Brian Epstein of the satire boom' had opened, with Peter

Cook, the Establishment Club, a satirical nightclub, and soon after became, again with Cook, a majority shareholder in the 'fortnightly lampoon' *Private Eye*.¹⁴ Luard was therefore a key member of the group that sought to use the mores and hypocrisies of British society and politics to make satire, and satire to make a living. By the spring of 1963, however, Luard's £20,000 trust fund was running low—helped neither by his poor head for business nor by the substantial losses run up by the short-lived arts and listings magazine, *Scene*¹⁵—and although he was forced to divest himself of his stake in *Private Eye*, he quickly sought out other opportunities to make money.¹⁶ *The Keeler Affair* was one such venture, although it is unclear whether the initial idea for the film was actually Luard's.

Luard, though his connections to London's burgeoning satire industry, would have been well aware of the Profumo affair. *Private Eye* was sufficiently knowledgeable—and sufficiently bold—to publish, on 5 April, a parody of Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, which featured, amongst a more general critique of British society in the 'eighth [year] of the Emperor Macmillan', an obvious reference to the Profumo affair:

At this time, too, the Chief of the Praetorian Guard, Sextus Profano, came under widespread suspicion for his admission in the Senate that he had been acquainted with Christina, a beautiful girl known to many of the great figures of society despite her lowly origins.¹⁷

This was all clearly based on information already in the public domain—note that there is nothing alleging impropriety, although the use of the phrase 'widespread suspicion' sails pretty close to the wind—but the illustration that accompanied the piece, drawn by Timothy Birdsall, contained other, more subtle references to the scandal, most importantly the words 'Per Wardua ad Astor'. This play on the RAF's motto brought Ward to *Private Eye*'s office, labouring under the misapprehension that the magazine knew the whole story, and eager to serve his own interests by offering a self-exculpatory version of events.¹⁸ Although *Private Eye* did not act immediately on this information—Ward's 'tangled tale' seems to have further muddled the waters—its staff, and no doubt its owner, Luard, could not have been unaware that the Profumo scandal had the potential to both further embarrass the government and enter more fully into the cultural mainstream.¹⁹ Luard would also have been aware of the likelihood that Keeler's cultural value would soon rise very sharply and, consequently, of the need to put her under contract. Luard's wife recalls that Luard knew Stephen Ward, the osteopath at whose Cliveden party Keeler had first met Profumo, because Ward supplied him with amphetamines and barbiturates.²⁰ This connection provided Luard with the means to approach Keeler, who later recalled being persuaded to 'sign over on the back of an envelope my rights to be played in a film for two thousand pounds' (although elsewhere she states that she was to be paid £3000 and five per cent of the gross profits).²¹

In one of the earliest press references to the film, the *Daily Worker* carried a story in which Luard insisted that 'the Italian picture *La Dolce Vita* [1960] gives a good impression' of what he hoped *The Keeler Affair* might look like.²² Although we might take such a statement with a pinch of salt—a month later the *Guardian* was told that *The Keeler Affair* was to be made in a 'documentary' style²³—it is not surprising that Luard initially sought to associate his film with Federico Fellini's, given that *La Dolce Vita* was often understood as a satire which contributed to the construction of a politically-engaged cinema interested in 'the problems, passions and scandals of the day'.²⁴ Luard's own involvement in the 'satire industry' was underpinned by what he described as 'an instinctive repugnance for the blandness and patronising condescension of the Macmillan years',²⁵ and his desire to situate *The Keeler Affair* in relation to *La Dolce Vita* should therefore be understood—as should his involvement in

Private Eye and the Establishment Club—as a salvo against the complacency and sense of entitlement of the sitting Conservative government.

The young satirists then enjoying such popular regard were much interested in the Profumo affair, even if the threat of legal action meant that many of the jokes that alluded to it had to be anonymised or teasingly ambiguous. The centrality of sex to the Profumo scandal meant that for all the moral indignation expressed by certain observers,²⁶ it also spoke to a long-established interest in sexual matters among British media consumers, and a similarly established tendency to use sex as the basis for humour.²⁷ However, demonstrating the contested ways in which the meaning of the scandal was constructed, the BBC sought to clamp down on ‘smutty’ jokes and innuendoes about Profumo, Keeler and Ward, a decision which serves to make clear not simply the slightly puritanical tastes of some BBC executives, but also the presence of such humour on the national broadcaster in the first place.²⁸ David Frost, presenter of the satirical BBC television show *That Was the Week That Was* (TW3), later recalled that ‘the rumours [about Profumo] were not so much shocking as fun ... the Profumo affair was not a national disaster waiting to happen, it was a national joke waiting to happen.’²⁹

The work of the satirists was made simultaneously easier and more difficult by the ways in which the media and British media consumers whipped themselves into a hysterical frenzy with tales of decadence, degradation and vice in high places. The British tabloid press, and its readers, have always enjoyed a good sex scandal, and the relationship between Profumo and Keeler proved no different; the combination of prurience and moral indignation boosted sales and kept the affair on the front pages.³⁰ As Christopher Brooker observed, the ‘drama of politics had been transformed into screaming entertainment’ and as the weeks went by ‘it became increasingly difficult to distinguish between the exaggerations of the satirists and the mounting absurdities of “reality” itself.’³¹ Popular cultural references to the Profumo affair therefore both grew out of and helped to construct popular understandings of the events then transpiring.

Several records were made which referred, with varying degrees of subtlety, to the scandal. Island Records distributed *That Affair* (ILP1007), an LP of ‘outrageous’ satirical sketches written and performed by Noel Carter and Joe Milner, who initially chose to remain anonymous for fear of the affect that being openly associated with the recording might have on their careers.³² Featuring Wendy Varnals, who had appeared at the Establishment Club, *That Affair* also contained a Richard Dimbleby-style commentary of Profumo’s initial meeting with Keeler at the Cliveden swimming pool, mocking not simply the scandal itself, but also the obsequious and partial way in which important events tended to be handled by the BBC.³³ Ember records, meanwhile, took the ‘subversive’ decision to put out *Fool Britannia* (CEL 902, also released as two EPs, EMB 4530 and 4531), a ‘merciless send-up’ recorded in New York and written by Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley, in which Newley, his wife Joan Collins and Peter Sellers could be heard joking about the Profumo scandal.³⁴ In one sketch, two film producers, representing Soho Metropolitan and Universal Travel and Interest Pictures (‘better known as SMUTI Films’), phone Keeler to discuss the possibility of making a film of her life story—‘You realise we won’t be able to make the film in England; they’re very old-fashioned about art films here.’³⁵ Although in contrast with *That Affair*, the ‘last names of the persons involved are carefully avoided’, the inclusion of a joke at the expense of ‘the ex-Minister of Whore’ left no doubt as to who and what was being discussed.³⁶ Despite such caution, major English distributors such as Decca fought shy of the LP, believing it to be too controversial

to put out in its current form and insisting that they would only handle it if further cuts were made. 'Too many cuts,' said Newley, 'We could have released a long-playing silent record'.³⁷ As it was, the LP made the Top 10, and spent 10 (non-consecutive) weeks in the chart, beginning on 28 September.³⁸

Bricusse had also been involved in another record put out by Ember (EMB S175), 'Christine' by Miss X, which had been released on 5 July. Produced by John Barry, this single troubled the Top 40 only for a single week during the second half of August, and much of its success might be attributed to the fact that it was banned by both the BBC and Radio Luxembourg (the first time that the commercial station had taken this course of action).³⁹ The identity of Miss X remained a mystery to many until 9 August 1963, when on the first ever edition of ITV's *Ready, Steady, Go* Joyce Blair—sister of Lionel—admitted that it was she who had given breathy voice—and giggles—to the 'good girl' who could be heard on the record. (In Jamaica, independent as of August 1962 and happy to cock a snook at its former imperial master, the Skatalites released a song called 'Christine Keeler', a title that indicates the Profumo affair's global reach and also its particular resonance in specific locations; two of Keeler's lovers were, of course, West Indian, and it was suggested in one Jamaican newspaper that the two should be included in the honours list 'for their contribution to English public life'.⁴⁰)

On television, a 'leitmotif' of suggestive references to Christine Keeler⁴¹ ran through *That Was the Week That Was*, and the show included a sketch in which a 'model'—a job title that was considered by some to carry more than a whiff of euphemism⁴²—was shown reclining in dark glasses and a negligee whilst delivering a monologue:

I was on first-name terms with top politicians and we often had discussions which went on far into the night ... It has been an interesting and exciting life and though I am temporarily broke I am sure that one day my luck will turn again. Especially with all the information I am ready to spill if it doesn't.⁴³

Millicent Martin, who played the model, remembered the process of making the sketch—which went out live—as having been 'really terrifying': 'I was given a script and the lawyers made a point of warning me that I mustn't change one word or we could be open to the most terrible lawsuit'.⁴⁴

The Keeler Affair was, therefore, just one attempt amongst many to exploit the Profumo scandal, although it was unusual in that it produced with input from one of the main players. In an attempt to drum up money for, and interest in *The Keeler Affair*, Luard and Keeler flew to the Cannes film festival on 17 May. Keeler's departure was covered both in the press and on television, and the media's interest in her international travel plans contained echoes of an earlier focus on Keeler's whereabouts in mid-March when, due to act as a witness in the trial of Johnny Edgecombe, she disappeared, only to turn up 10 days later in Spain.⁴⁵ It was as 'the missing model' that Keeler gained widespread notoriety, and it was suggested that 'people in high places' might have spirited her away, presumably in order to prevent her embarrassing the government.⁴⁶ Interest in Luard's announcement and the pair's trip to France was magnified by the threat of legal action hanging over direct references to Profumo himself. In his personal statement in the Commons, Profumo promised to initiate libel proceedings against anyone repeating publically allegations linking him to Keeler, and had successfully sued the English distributors of *Tempo Illustrato*, an Italian magazine, and brought a case against *Paris Match*.⁴⁷ In this situation, stories of a film concerning the life of Christine Keeler were seized upon by the press as a means of keeping the wider Profumo

story alive, whilst keeping themselves out of the reach of Profumo's lawyers, not least because Profumo need not be mentioned by name.⁴⁸

Whilst at Cannes, Keeler also gained valuable publicity by posing for photographs on the beach. Wearing what by 1963 might have been considered a 'prudish one-piece'—Brigitte Bardot had worn her famous bikini on the same stretch of sand fully 10 years earlier—Keeler's swimsuit, as well as allowing for some fairly generic cheesecake photos, also served to highlight the corporeal nature of her celebrity status.⁴⁹ To those in the know, the swimsuit also acted as a subtle nod to the swimming pool at Cliveden where she had first met Profumo (although on that occasion she was wearing considerably less). The trip, however, proved to be very disappointing from a financial point of view: Luard found that 'Hollywood producers had no interest in British political scandals', particularly ones that had the threat of potential libel or defamation suits hanging over them.⁵⁰

Luard might also have found it difficult to raise capital because, even before he had flown to France, he and his fellow producer John Nasht, operating as Topaz Films, had been informed by the British Board of Film Censors that the proposed film was not in 'the public interest'.⁵¹ Probably acting on information provided by Luard and Nasht, both the *Daily Mirror* and the *Daily Mail* covered the story, intimating that Keeler was to be gagged, just as those wanting to write about Profumo were gagged.⁵² For Luard, the BBFC's statement must have sounded strikingly familiar: only weeks before, an identical phrase had been used to inform him that the American comedian Lenny Bruce, who was booked to appear at the Establishment Club, had been refused entry into Britain by the Home Office.⁵³

Although it is possible that Topaz received discouragement from other quarters, the BBFC's condemnation of the project, even before it had gone into production, was most likely the event that led the *Spectator* to repeat Luard's claim that 'forceful pressure' had been applied 'to make him give up filming the life of Miss Keeler'.⁵⁴ In his memoirs, John Trevelyan, Secretary of the BBFC, states that he was asked by a journalist from *The Sunday Times* if the Board had discouraged production 'on direct instructions from Downing Street'. Trevelyan denied that this had been the case, but it is clear that the idea that the government was willing to lean on the BBFC in order to suppress a film concerning Christine Keeler was not considered to be particularly outlandish.⁵⁵ Indeed, in late 1963, the news that *TW3* had been cancelled was accompanied by reports that the BBC had succumbed to 'the government's wish' that the show should end.⁵⁶ Earlier in the year, Lord Radcliffe's report into the Vassall affair came to be regarded as proof that Macmillan's Conservative administration was prepared to use the powers at its disposal to protect its position and guard its influence. The press 'accused Radcliffe of a whitewash about spies in Whitehall', and some of the subsequent hysteria that attended the Profumo scandal might be attributed to the fact that coverage 'was steeped in Fleet Street's belief that the Establishment had something to hide'.⁵⁷ Despite having been informed by the BBFC that the film was likely to be rejected, Luard and Nasht decided to press on: 'We shall go ahead nevertheless'.⁵⁸

In the wake of Profumo's resignation, the floodgates opened. On Sunday 9 June, the *News of the World* carried 'The Confessions of Christine' whilst the *Sunday Mirror* ran both the 'Darling' letter—which Profumo had sent to Keeler, and which Keeler had taken to the paper in January 1963—and a black-and-white photograph of a naked Keeler, shown sitting back-to-front on a chair, taken by Lewis Morley. The picture, which Morley insists was stolen from him and published without his permission, was taken at a session arranged by *The Keeler Affair's* producers.⁵⁹ Further demonstrating the close connections that existed at this time

between *The Keeler Affair* and the satire boom, Morley's studio was located directly above the Establishment Club, and another photograph taken during the session, and which was not made public at the time, was the basis for a lewd caricature of Macmillan by Gerald Scarfe published in *Private Eye* in mid-June.⁶⁰ Although it was intended to act as a publicity still for *The Keeler Affair*, and was recreated on many of the film's posters when it was exhibited outside Britain, Morley's photograph became far more famous and memorable than the film it was intended to promote: the photograph and the film are now almost entirely divorced from one another. Morley's picture effectively became visual shorthand for the scandal, and was subsequently much parodied and reproduced: similar pictures were taken of David Frost, Joe Orton and Dame Edna Everage (Barry Humphries performed at the Establishment Club and contributed to *Private Eye*). The photograph exemplifies the Profumo affair's strong visual identity: the longevity of the scandal's hold on the British imagination relates not simply to the political import of the situation, but also to the clarity with which people are able to bring Keeler, and to a lesser extent figures such as Mandy Rice-Davies, to mind. Because various media outlets and cultural producers were able and willing to exploit and parody Keeler's obvious photogenicity, her image—and that of the scandal—has remained with us, part of the bricolage that assists in the construction of Britain's political and cultural imaginary.

Morley remembered that Keeler was extremely reluctant to pose naked but was contractually obliged to do so by the film's producers, who were eager to 'highlight the sexual implications' of the 'web of intrigue' that surrounded Keeler, Ward and Profumo.⁶¹ Nevertheless, the photograph helped to cement a particular image of Keeler in the public consciousness, encouraging her to be thought of in highly eroticised terms, and presenting her as sexually confident almost to the point of wantonness. It also served to give an indication of the type of film that *The Keeler Affair* was likely to be, or at least the advertising strategies that the production company was likely to pursue as they sought to sell it. It might be suggested that the picture was perfect for a film holding out the promise of total exposure but which, in reality, delivered little beyond mild titillation ('only eight breasts seen simultaneously for only four seconds'⁶²). In Morley's words, Keeler 'was there, but she was hidden.'⁶³

Although Luard's name stops being associated with the film after the trip to Cannes—Nasht is the only named producer in the final credits—*The Keeler Affair* remained newsworthy, and details concerning its production quickly began to emerge. The *Daily Mail* reported that the film's budget would be in the region of £100,000, a sizable sum to the paper's readers, but one which actually meant that the film would be made on a relative shoestring.⁶⁴ It is unclear who put up the money to make the film, but the limited budget ensured that the film would be shot in black and white, a decision that Nasht defended by asking, 'Does this story need colour?'⁶⁵ Indeed, although many critics would go on to lambast *The Keeler Affair's* aesthetic and narrative failings, the film seeks to hide the pecuniary circumstances in which it was made behind some inventive and surprisingly effective stylistic flourishes.⁶⁶ At one point, all the guests at a party are played by mannequins, a surreal touch that serves to underscore Keeler's assertion that she, Ivanov and Ward were 'the only real people' at the gathering. Elsewhere, set design is almost Brechtian: a minimally dressed stage, at the rear of which can be seen a cyclorama of a city skyline, provides the backdrops for sequences as varied as Peter Rachman's flat (featuring synchronised dancing gangsters) and a courtroom in which Keeler is judged by her own conscience. All in all, the film is, as Elliott Stein informed readers of the *Financial Times*, 'more than trash, if less than art.'⁶⁷

The Keeler Affair was directed by Robert Spafford, from a script that he had written with Ronald Maxwell and Matt White. Maxwell and White were staff writers at the *Daily Mirror*, and this might go some way towards explaining that paper's interest in, and access to, the film and those associated with it. The *Mirror*, under the chairmanship of Cecil King and the editorship of Hugh Cudlipp, was notably hostile to the conservative establishment (despite the fact that King, who attended Winchester and Oxford, was the nephew of two press barons). During the Profumo scandal, King and Cudlipp used 'premeditated, coherent tactics to accomplish their strategic aim of damaging the reputation and confidence of Macmillan's government' in their ongoing attempt to 'kill off a political class'.⁶⁸ The script did not live up to the producers' initial claims for absolute authenticity—the likely involvement of lawyers in the scripting process cannot have helped—but, in addition to Keeler, it was reported that Ward, Edgecombe and Gordon were all engaged to contribute to the development of *The Keeler Affair*.⁶⁹

To add to the verisimilitude, and to allow cinemagoers to gawk at the woman at the heart of the scandal, it was announced that Keeler was to play herself in the film. This development was of great interest to the media,⁷⁰ and on 18 June, Topaz wrote to Equity, the actors' union, to ask whether it would 'accept an application for membership from Miss Christine Keeler'. Union membership was a prerequisite if Keeler hoped to take paid acting work in Britain, and failure to obtain it could have resulted in the set being declared 'black' and union-affiliated staff refusing to work on the production. Equity's Executive Committee replied to Keeler's application very quickly, and very definitely, 'in the negative', but insisted that its decision was 'not a moral judgement':

the private life of an individual person is no concern of Equity unless it affects us professionally. The Executive Committee felt that it was being asked to condone or indeed to facilitate the making of a film, the result of which would have been the commercial exploitation of a public scandal. They believed that this would bring grave discredit upon both Equity and upon the film industry. This view is widely shared within the industry.⁷¹

When considering Equity's rejection of Keeler, it is also worth noting that Profumo's wife was Valerie Hobson, a high-profile former actress who had starred in a series of films and stage plays, including the first British production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The King and I* in 1953. When they were first married, Profumo was far less recognisable a public figure than his wife, and was, in many newspaper stories, described simply as the 'husband of Valerie Hobson'.⁷² As such, Equity's sympathies were much more likely to lie with Hobson, the wronged spouse and long-time union member, than with Keeler, the scarlet woman and theatrical arriviste.

Equity's decision to reject Keeler's application was front-page news in many national newspapers on 19 June, with the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Daily Express*, the *Guardian*, and the *Daily Worker* all carrying the story (and other papers such as *The Times*, the *Daily Mirror* and the *Glasgow Herald* featuring it on inside pages). ITV news also ran the story.⁷³ The union's decision was made public on the same day that Profumo and Hobson emerged from hiding, and so coincided with especially intense media scrutiny of the scandal. Whilst most of the papers reported the simple fact of the rejection, the following day the *Daily Mirror* took a different approach, and criticised Equity's moralising by publishing a cartoon, by Franklin, that skewered what it clearly regarded as the hypocrisy of the union's, and the film industry's, position. In the cartoon, one glamorously dressed woman says to another, 'My darling, Equity's absolutely right! We don't want *her type* giving show business a bad name'. In the

background are posters for productions such as *There's no Business Like Sex Business* featuring 'Miss Gloria Affairs' ('with a terrific cast of co-respondents') and *Any Number Can Play* (starring Sir Lover-boy Six-Times-Married-Divorce-Pending' and 'bags of young starlets').⁷⁴

Equity was not alone its concerns about the 'commercial exploitation of a public scandal'. The *News of the World's* decision to pay Keeler £23,000 for the rights to her story was condemned in many quarters, not least in a leader in *The Times* which pointed to its rival's efforts 'to make Miss Keeler a more affluent member of the affluent society' as proof that there was something amiss in contemporary British values and standards.⁷⁵ The amount of tax that Keeler should pay on the income she made through the sale of her life story exercised the minds of some parliamentarians; none was payable on the sale of physical materials (e.g. the 'Darling' letter that appeared in the *Sunday Mirror*) but tax was due on any services (e.g. tape recorded reminiscences) that Keeler provided to the newspapers.⁷⁶ Keeler swiftly moved to incorporate herself, prompting Harold Wilson to ask if he should 'refer to her as Miss Christine Keeler Ltd';⁷⁷ and 'a flood of protests' followed Joseph Mourat's offer to pay Keeler as much as £5000 per week to compère at the L'Hirondelle Restaurant in London, where it was proposed that she would 'introduce acts satirically "like Mort Sahl or Bob Newhart" and might answer customers' questions'.⁷⁸

The financial benefits accruing to Keeler as a consequence of her involvement in the Profumo affair stuck in many a craw, and in August 1963, a Gallup poll found that 85 per cent of those surveyed disapproved of 'newspapers paying large sums to people like Christine Keeler to publish their stories'. When in June Gallup had asked a series of questions about various aspects of the Profumo scandal—political reaction, national security, press coverage—opinion had been much more divided: distaste as to Keeler's new-found wealth, and the means by which she had earned it, was clearly one of the few elements of the scandal that the British public came close to agreeing upon.⁷⁹

Keeler's unsuccessful application to join Equity might, though, have been little more than a publicity stunt orchestrated by Topaz. From the off, Luard had stated his intention to make *The Keeler Affair* in Denmark, and this would not have required Keeler to have membership of British union.⁸⁰ Shooting *The Keeler Affair* overseas also had the potential to 'generate more publicity' as it gave the implicit suggestion that Topaz had been prohibited from making it in the United Kingdom, whilst also seeking to take advantage of Scandinavian cinema's growing reputation for sexually explicit imagery.⁸¹ Filming took place at Novaris Studios just outside Copenhagen, much to the consternation of many Danes: a petition, organised by a schoolmistress called Inger Hansen and which attracted some 14,000 signatures, claimed that the film would be 'harmful to youth and to the character-building work of Danish schools'.⁸² Having received and considered the petition, the Danish government insisted that there 'was not at present any legal basis for intervention against the production of the film' and that to stop filming would constitute 'unlawful advance censorship'.⁸³

Capitalising in the continued interest in the possibility of Keeler's film career, a screen-test was arranged for her in London on 26 June. The *Daily Express* carried news of the test, including details of what was ordered for lunch ('steak and kidney pie, salad, and sandwiches'), and quoted a Topaz executive as saying that Keeler had been 'Excellent. She has natural acting ability. She stood up very well to the cameras. She wasn't a little bit nervous'.⁸⁴ Even though, as the *Express* noted, 'visitors were not welcome' at the studio whilst Keeler was inside, in late July the *Daily Mirror*, in another example of the paper's privileged status in

relation to the film, carried a series of 'exclusive pictures' of Keeler taken during the test itself: 'the general verdict afterward was that she was very good at being Miss Keeler'.⁸⁵

Keeler, however, was fated not to take the lead in the film of her life. Her final decision to turn down a role in *The Keeler Affair* was, according to *The Sunday Times*, prompted by the death of Stephen Ward, who took his own life at the conclusion of his trial for living off immoral earnings at the end of July.⁸⁶ The script had already undergone several rewrites in order to incorporate new developments in the scandal, and was amended to include Ward's death: he is shown comatose, following his overdose, being carried away by stretcher-bearers dressed identically to the two who were photographed in the course of performing their duties. Although she was not able to exploit what one interviewer would later call 'her natural gift for acting', Keeler does introduce the film, and at its conclusion reads the cast and crew credits in voiceover.⁸⁷ As such, she delivers the line 'I was portrayed by Yvonne Buckingham', a young actress who had appeared briefly in *The Benny Hill Show*, *Our Man in Havana* (1959) and *A Kind of Loving* (1962) and whose resume contained a number of roles as prostitutes and barmaids.⁸⁸ Buckingham's casting was apposite, for in addition to her slight physical resemblance to Keeler, she possessed the reputation of being, as the *Daily Express* had put it in December 1959, a 'premiere celebrity', not in the sense that she was in the front rank of British acting talent, but rather because she was a starlet 'seen at every premiere, but rarely in a film'.⁸⁹ It was this air of unearned and possibly unwarranted fame that she brought with her to the lead role in *The Keeler Affair*.

Buckingham described playing Keeler as 'a very challenging part and a very interesting one', and was hopeful that Keeler might ensure the verisimilitude of her performance by visiting the set.⁹⁰ This would, however, prove impossible. In early September, just days after filming began, Keeler was charged with conspiracy and perjury in relation to the trial of 'Lucky' Gordon and her passport was confiscated as a condition of her bail arrangement. When Buckingham flew to Denmark in late August, her departure was noted by papers such as the *Evening Standard* and the *Daily Mirror*, both of which mentioned that the actress claimed to have 'no qualms about the moral side' of making the film.⁹¹ When her appointment had been announced, Buckingham had been similarly defiant: 'I suppose there will be a lot of people who will say that I shouldn't have become involved. But I don't see why. Many great actresses have portrayed true life characters who had a lot more to be ashamed of'.⁹² Buckingham's departure also featured on the ITV news, and *The Keeler Affair* was well-known enough by that stage to be introduced by presenter Peter Snow in a familiar and casual manner: 'Now the Christine Keeler film'.⁹³

Stephen Ward was played by John Drew Barrymore (a.k.a. John Barrymore Jr.), rumours of whose appointment had featured on the front page of the *Daily Mirror*.⁹⁴ Barrymore was the scion of a notable American acting family, and his involvement in *The Keeler Affair* did not impress the *Daily Express*'s Leonard Mosley, who was sent to Copenhagen for the film's premiere:

as I watched the inadequate performance of this young man beetling his brows and trying to look profound I could hear a whirring sound behind my shoulder and I am pretty certain it was his late, great father spinning in his grave.⁹⁵

Barrymore himself wondered, somewhat mischievously, 'who is going to play the part of Mr Profumo', but the answer remains something of a mystery: in the film, Profumo is only shown as an anonymous pair of legs and is later represented by a typewriter, a shot of which is shown as Profumo's letter of resignation is read in voiceover. The lack of screen-time

afforded to Profumo was most likely the product of the film's genesis during the period in which Profumo was litigiously protecting his reputation. Consequently, *The Keeler Affair* focussed on Keeler's relationship with Ward rather than with Profumo, and as such should, according to Barrymore, be understood as 'a modern cross between Svengali and Pygmalion'.⁹⁶

Filming lasted six weeks, and the speed with which *The Keeler Affair* was produced and released make evident the degree to which, as *Variety* put it, 'timeliness is of the essence ... Quick shooting and release while the notoriety is fresh in public mind give the picture a fast-pound prospect'.⁹⁷ The possibility of earning pounds, fast or otherwise, was stymied by the BBFC's decision, made on 18 December 1963 and communicated to Topaz two days later, not to certify *The Keeler Affair* for public exhibition in Britain. The Board pointed to the film's content as the basis for the rejection, describing *The Keeler Affair* as 'an almost continuous picture of sordid vice, including sexual perversion', although, as with the cancellation of *TW3*, it was also suggested that political pressure might have had some small influence on the BBFC's decision.⁹⁸

Given that the BBFC's decision prevented exhibition of *The Keeler Affair* in what surely would have been its most lucrative market, it is not clear if the film was able to turn a profit. *The Keeler Affair* was also banned in New Zealand, and was screened in Australia only after being subjected to 'heavy cuts'.⁹⁹ However, suggesting that this British scandal had global appeal, American trade papers carried claims that JaGold Pictures had purchased the rights to distribute the film in America and Canada for a reported \$150,000 (slightly more than £53,500 at 1963 exchange rates),¹⁰⁰ and an advertisement for the film noted that distribution deals had been agreed to exhibit *The Keeler Affair* in Italy, Holland, Denmark, Japan, Greece, Switzerland, Israel, South Africa, Argentina, Uruguay and France.¹⁰¹ Indeed, in Paris, despite attracting a pretty dismissive review in *Cahiers du Cinema*, the film was said to have played to 'packed houses',¹⁰² whilst in Malaysia it was said to have been particularly popular with women.¹⁰³

Writing about the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Anna Clark has observed that 'scandals began when gossip became public'.¹⁰⁴ In other words, a scandal was not so much the moment when a criminal and/or immoral act is perpetrated, but rather the moment at which knowledge of that act became widespread: a scandal is, in other words, an inherently mediated event, brought into the public domain and then put to work for various masters and for different purposes. During the Profumo affair, British newspapers might have played a major role in breaking the story, but filmmakers, record producers, television comedians or nightclub performers all worked, in their different ways and speaking to different constituencies, to exploit and therefore propagate the scandal and ensure that it maintained its cultural prominence. It was in the financial interests of these entrepreneurs to ensure that the Profumo affair remained culturally relevant until every last penny had been wrung from it.

That so many of these entrepreneurs approached the Profumo affair as a source of humour does not lessen the cultural or even political impact of their work. Indeed, the fact that the scandal was a wellspring for comedians indicates both that jokes about the scandal could expect to be understood across a wide societal spectrum, and that there was an audience for humour of this type. However, although the prominence of jokes, and other exploitative cultural products, about the Profumo scandal is suggestive of the decline of deference and the hostility towards the status quo associated with the satire boom or the theatre's Angry Young Men, this should not be taken to mean that old attitudes had been supplanted, or

that the Establishment had been vanquished. The rejection of *The Keeler Affair* by the BBFC, the cancellation of *TW3* and the refusal of some record companies to distribute the *Fool Britannia* LP all make clear that although change was afoot, it did not go uncontested, and was not always allowed to take root. The cultural products that emerged from the Profumo scandal therefore lie at the boundary between an old culture and a new one. Made by people seemingly intent on thumbing their noses at the deferential attitudes and expectations of pre- and immediately post-war Britain, and encapsulating the excitement and ambivalence felt by many about the emergence of a more commercial, more youthful, more energetic, more open country, such products, and the attitudes they promoted, were regarded with suspicion or even hostility by those who sought to cleave to the established notions of propriety, morality and social order. Furthermore, both humour and scandal can be understood as occupying positions between the acceptable and the taboo—at the place where one might be simultaneously shocked and excited, repulsed and intrigued, where the pleasure one might take from knowledge is infused with a frisson of dangerous or discreditable impropriety.¹⁰⁵ In this sense, the Profumo scandal and the satire boom are linked phenomena, emerging out of, and drawing upon, a shared cultural climate.

The British media's interest in *The Keeler Affair* (and, to an extent, the other cultural products described in this article) was an integral part of, and closely connected to, the media's interest and involvement in the Profumo affair itself. Press interest in *The Keeler Affair* not only imbricated the film within the scandal, and therefore legitimised the contemporary focus on it, but also suggested that Keeler had become a celebrity in her own right, semi-detached from the immediate concerns of the fall-out from her relationships with Profumo and Ivanov. This, the press argued, justified intrusion into her life. Once Profumo had resigned from office, he was no longer of particular interest to the press; they had their man. But in pursuing Profumo, they had unearthed Keeler, and she was too fascinating a figure to let go.

Consequently, Keeler found herself positioned—sometimes against her will, sometimes without reward—at the centre of a lucrative media and cultural maelstrom that has continued, and continued to be contentious, to the present day. However, the ways in which the scandal has been discussed have evolved. In 1963, when the Profumo affair was at its height, ambivalence about the cultural products associated with the scandal often centred on the question of how much Keeler was to be paid; the story was news, and the fact that it was exploited in the media and in popular culture was not especially surprising. Yet by the end of the 1960s, there were signs that attitudes were changing. For although some of the furore that attended the *News of the World's* serialisation of Keeler's memoirs in 1969 related to the issue of payment, controversy was also generated by the fact that it was considered inappropriate, and unfair on Profumo, to drag an old scandal back into the limelight. Indeed, both of these factors contributed to the BBFC's decision to reject *The Keeler Affair* for a second time when it was resubmitted in the hope of exploiting Keeler's return to the front pages; the film has still not been certified by the Board for release in the United Kingdom.¹⁰⁶

The Profumo scandal continues to fascinate and has remained a feature of popular culture, media conceptualisations of the 1960s, and academic research into British politics, culture and society in that decade. Most of those involved in the scandal have given their versions of events—in some cases, more than once. In the theatre, Hugh Whitmore's *A Letter of Resignation* was first staged in 1997, whilst Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical *Stephen Ward* opened in the West End in December 2013. In 1989, the release of *Scandal* finally brought

Keeler and Profumo to the big screen, and whilst a quarter of a century had passed since the events it depicted, the film's production was still capable of provoking fierce arguments. Although the BBC, Channel 4 and ITV had all shown interest in developing the project, support was withdrawn in each instance, in the last case because the narrative was deemed 'unsavoury' by the Independent Broadcasting Authority, the regulator of British commercial television.¹⁰⁷ As Anthony Aldgate and Jeffrey Richards note, *Scandal's* production divided opinion, with these divisions speaking to the way in which the meaning and mythos of the 1960s as a 'permissive' or 'liberalising' decade was coming to occupy a contested position within British political discourse by the late 1980s.¹⁰⁸ When the time came to advertise *Scandal*, Morley's photograph of Keeler had become so emblematic of the Profumo affair that it was the obvious, and seemingly natural, image to use in promoting the film. Although the photograph was not, in 1989, popularly associated with *The Keeler Affair*, its use acted as (a possibly unintentional) tribute to earlier efforts to bring the Profumo scandal into the commercial and cultural mainstream. Furthermore, when Joanne Whalley-Kilmer posed as Keeler in order to recreate Morley's photograph on posters for *Scandal*, she was also recreating posters for *The Keeler Affair* in which Yvonne Buckingham had done exactly the same thing.

Because the Profumo affair 'had everything'—sex, politics, spies, country houses, court cases, imprisonment, death—it contains something for everyone; each generation can assess it afresh and read into it what it wants. Consequently, what the scandal is believed to be *about* mutates in response to the time and place in which its meaning is debated. And because the relationship between Christine Keeler and the Minister for War retains its hold on our imagination, helped in no small part by the regular attempts that are made to exploit the affair and its protagonists for commercial gain, it seems likely that it will remain secure within our popular culture for many years to come.

Notes

1. *Equity Letter: A Quarterly Report to the Members of the British Actors' Equity Association*, August 1963, 18.
2. For detailed analysis of the BBFC's handling of *The Keeler Affair*, see Farmer: "An Almost Continuous Picture of Sordid Vice."
3. On the Profumo affair, and Keeler in the British press, see: Bingham, *Family Newspapers*, 147–151, 254–257; Thomas, *Popular Newspapers*, 38–40; and Williams, "Bringing Popular Journalism into Disrepute," 220–221.
4. Mort, *Capital Affairs*, 325.
5. Profumo, Speech in House of Commons, March 22, 1963.
6. Thompson, *Political Scandal*, 17.
7. Bingham, *Family Newspapers*, 150–151.
8. Somerfield, *Banner Headlines*, 139.
9. Howard and West, *Making of the Prime Minister*, 42–43.
10. *The Economist*, June 15, 1963, 1099.
11. *Daily Mirror*, July 23, 1963, 11.
12. The Taylor-Burton romance is discussed in some detail in Cashmore, *Elizabeth Taylor*, esp. 105–161. Taylor was, coincidentally, for a time one of Stephen Ward's patients, and after his death the American gossip columnist Sheilah Graham wrote 'with the Dr Ward case disposed of, I suppose Liz and Dick will be getting in the news again, one way or another.' Quoted in *TV Radio Mirror* (US), November 1963, 72.
13. Quoted in *Daily Express*, June 6, 1963, 2.

14. Ingrams, *Life and Times of Private Eye*, 9.
15. On Luard's failings as a businessman, see Cook, *One Leg too Few*, 207–209. Luard was also the publisher of the first incarnation of *Movie*, a magazine of film criticism which suspended publication when Nicholas Luard Associates filed for bankruptcy in June 1963. *Movie* was a strikingly well-designed publication, and made use of a typeface that Luard had commissioned from Matthew Carter for use in *Private Eye*, and which can still be seen in *Private Eye's* masthead. Carter, "Carter's battered stat," 80–1.
16. Luard, *My Life as a Wife*, 91.
17. *Private Eye*, April 58, 1963, 8–9.
18. Marnham, *Private Eye Story*, 63.
19. Carpenter, *That Was Satire That Was*, 256.
20. Luard, *My Life as a Wife*, 107–108.
21. Keeler, *Truth at Last: My Story*, 188; Keeler, *Scandal!* 175. Keeler does not name Luard as having been present at the meeting, but Elisabeth Luard claims that Keeler succumbed to a 'double barrage of charm' from Luard and his friend Dominick Elwes, who Keeler *does* remember being in attendance (and who later stood bail for Ward). Luard, *My Life as a Wife*, 107.
22. *Daily Worker*, May 18, 1963, 5.
23. *Guardian*, June 19, 1963, 1.
24. *The Times*, December 7, 1960, 15.
25. Quoted in Carpenter, *That Was Satire That Was*, 130.
26. See, for example, *The Times's* leader "It is a moral issue," June 10, 1963, 13. Emphasis in original.
27. On this tradition, see for example Orwell, "Art of Donald McGill," 153–163.
28. *Daily Mirror*, July 19, 1963, 24.
29. Frost, *Autobiography*, 80.
30. When the *News of the World* published Keeler's story in June 1963, sales are reported to have increased by 250,000 copies. Thomas, *Popular Newspapers*, 39. On the 'long tradition' of British newspaper's interest in, and publication of, sex scandals, see Conboy, *Tabloid Britain*, 139.
31. Brooker, *Neophiliacs*, 197, 201.
32. For a review of *That Affair*, see *Sunday Mirror*, July 28, 1963, 20.
33. David Frost also performed a sketch in a similar style about the sinking of the royal barge. He had been performing it since his time at Cambridge, but it was only broadcast nationally as part of the final TW3 in December 1963.
34. Fiegel, *John Barry*, 111.
35. Another sketch discusses the newspapers that Keeler reads: "She takes a *Mail*, two *Mirrors*, Several *Observers* and as many *Times* as she can get."
36. *Billboard* (US), August 17, 1963, 14.
37. *Billboard* (US), August 31, 1963, 4.
38. Chart information from: <http://www.officialcharts.com/artist/4961/peter%20sellers/#albums>. Accessed April 6, 2016. Demonstrating the ways in which the Profumo affair sat at the cusp of a new era, the Beatles had the top selling album for every one of the weeks that *Fool Britannia* was in the top 20, first with *Please Please Me*, and then with *With the Beatles*.
39. *Billboard* (US), July 27, 1963, 44. Chart information from <http://www.officialcharts.com/search/singles/christine/>. Accessed April 6, 2016.
40. Jamaica Star, cited in Mort, *Capital Affairs*, 325.
41. Brooker, *Neophiliacs*, 197.
42. Moncrieff, "Journalist Looks at a Political Scandal," 68.
43. Carpenter, *That Was Satire That Was*, 255.
44. *Daily Express*, November 26, 1992, 9.
45. See, for example, ITV evening news bulletin, March 17, 1963 (Accessed March 26, 2016. http://jiscmediahub.ac.uk/mediaContent/open/scripts/1963/19630517_EE_01_ITV.pdf).
46. Barbara Castle, "Speech to House of Commons," March 21, 1963. Edgcombe was arrested after having taken a taxi to Wimpole Mews and, after Keeler refused to see him, firing shots at the door of the flat, owned by Stephen Ward, in which she was living. Edgcombe was sentenced to seven years for possession of a firearm with the intention of endangering life. Edgcombe

was also tried, but acquitted, of assaulting Aloysius 'Lucky' Gordon, with whom he fought over Keeler.

47. The front cover of *Private Eye* on 5 April 1963 shows Profumo sitting on a bed, saying 'And if *Private Eye* prints a picture of me on a bed—I'LL SUE THEM!'
48. Adrian Bingham notes that concerns about libel proceedings stayed the hands of several newspaper editors as far as direct references to Profumo were concerned. *Family Newspapers*, 255.
49. *Observer – New Review Supplement*, March 21, 2010, 18.
50. Luard, *My Life as a Wife*, 108.
51. BBFC Archive: *The Keeler Affair*: John Trevelyan to John Nassht (*sic.*), May 6, 1963. John Nasht, who had produced the television show *Orient Express* as well as several feature films, had established a reputation for 'underhanded dealings' when working with blacklisted American practitioners. In 1959, for example, Howard Koch noted that 'One of Nasht's favourite tricks is to profess sympathy for progressives ... hire them at bargain-counter prices, then default on payments, using the black-list as an excuse.' Quoted in Prime, "The Old Bogey," 482.
52. *Daily Express*, May 17, 1963, 1; *Daily Mirror*, May 17, 1963, 3.
53. *The Times*, April 9, 1963, 6. See also the written answer given by Home Secretary Henry Brooke to the House of Commons, 11 April 1963.
54. *Spectator*, June 14, 1963, 4.
55. Trevelyan, *What the Censor Saw*, 176.
56. *Birmingham Post*, cited in Carpenter, *That Was Satire That Was*, 279. See also Jeremy Bray's statement in the House of Commons on 14 November 1963 that the government had been 'able to close down *TW3*'. *Private Eye* spoofed the BBC's decision to cancel the show, and had Director-General Hugh Carleton Green say of *TW3*, 'What I really wanted was something reminiscent of Berlin in the thirties; now that I've stopped it, I feel I have at last recreated that atmosphere.' *Private Eye*, November 29, 1963, 5.
57. Williams, "Bringing Popular Journalism into Disrepute," 221.
58. Crawford, *Profumo Affair*, 93.
59. Morley's recollections of the photoshoot can be found in his *Black and White Lies*, 56–63.
60. *Private Eye*, June 14, 1963, 16.
61. Morley, *Black and White Lies*, 58.
62. *Financial Times*, July 23, 1964, 22. For those wanting to see more, 'Christine Keeler' featured in a couple of nudist films in America, *Christine Keeler Goes Nudist* (a black and white picture that, its distributor claimed, 'really shows Christine Keeler – in the nude!') and *The Naked Tales of Christine* (a 'naughty-nudie movie – in color!'). Details of these films can be found in *Film Bulletin* (US), November 25, 1963, 22; *Gettysburg Times* (US), December 3, 1965, 4.
63. Morley, *Black and White Lies*, 62.
64. *Daily Mail*, May 17, 1963, 8.
65. *Variety*, August 14, 1963, 1.
66. See for example, *Daily Express*, December 14, 1963, 4; *Observer*, December 15, 1963, 3.
67. *Financial Times*, July 23, 1964, 22.
68. Davenport-Hines, *English Affair*, 212.
69. Crawford, *Profumo Affair*, 93. Ward also had a share of the film, and this asset was, as well as a television film he made before his trial 'depicting a typical day in his life', was administered by his estate after his death. *Daily Telegraph*, August 6, 1963, 9.
70. *Daily Mirror*, May 17, 1963, 3; ITV evening news bulletin, March 17, 1963 (Accessed March 26, 2016. http://jiscmediahub.ac.uk/mediaContent/open/scripts/1963/19630517_EE_01_ITV.pdf).
71. *Equity Letter: A Quarterly Report to the Members of the British Actors' Equity Association*, August 1963, 18.
72. Profumo, *Bringing the House Down*, 139.
73. ITV news script for 9 pm bulletin, June 18, 1963 (Accessed March 26, 2016. http://jiscmediahub.ac.uk/mediaContent/open/scripts/1963/19630618_LE_01_ITV.pdf).
74. *Daily Mirror*, June 20, 1963, 5.

75. *The Times*, June 17, 1963, 13. The *News of the World*'s made a profit of £1.4 million in the first half of 1963, an increase of £550,000 from the same period the previous year. Much of this increase was believed to be linked to the rise in circulation that accompanied the Keeler memoirs. *Guardian*, December 11, 1963, 14.
76. See National Archives: IR 40/16656: esp. memo by E. J. Norman, June 11, 1963. See the same file for discussions about whether any tax was liable on Keeler's supposed 'immoral earnings' as a prostitute (a status she always adamantly denied).
77. Speech to House of Commons, June 17, 1963.
78. *Daily Mail*, June 15, 1963, 10; *Stage*, June 20, 1963, 3.
79. *Gallup International Public Opinion Polls*, 700, 692–693.
80. See for example the script for ITV news, 5.55 pm Bulletin, May 17, 1963 (Accessed March 26, 2016. http://jiscmediahub.ac.uk/mediaContent/open/scripts/1963/19630517_EE_01_ITV.pdf).
81. *Variety*, September 4, 1963, 15. Swedish and Danish films had been attracting attention for the (relative) frankness of their sexual content since *One Summer of Happiness*, which was released in the UK in 1953. On the Scandinavian cinema of this period, and its appeal and reputation outside its domestic market, see Stevenson, *Scandinavian Blue*, esp. 8–39.
82. *Daily Mail*, September 12, 1963, 3; *The Times*, September 12, 1963, 9.
83. *The Times*, September 12 1963, 9; *Observer*, September 29, 1963, 2.
84. *Daily Express*, June 27, 1963, 11.
85. *Daily Mirror*, July 29, 1963, 10–11.
86. *The Sunday Times*, August 4, 1963, 3. Keeler, *Truth at Last*, 222.
87. *Sunday Times Magazine*, November 9, 1980, 50–51, 53, 55, 57.
88. Buckingham had also appeared in *Sapphire* (1959), a film about a black woman passing herself off as white, that had sought to expose racial tensions and hypocrisy in contemporary London, and which might be thought to prefigure some of the racial concerns, especially surrounding miscegenation, that attended Keeler's emergence into the spotlight.
89. *Daily Express*, December 9, 1959, 6. When she was 20, Buckingham had taken out an insurance policy which would have paid out £4000 if she failed to achieve stardom in five years; her prominent roles in *A Question of Suspense* and *Murder in Eden* (both 1961) had led to her forfeiting the money. *Sunday Mirror*, August 18, 1963, 5.
90. *Evening Standard*, August 28, 1963, 12.
91. *Evening Standard*, August 28, 1963, 12; *Daily Mirror*, August 29, 1963, 4.
92. *Sunday Mirror*, August 18, 1963, 5.
93. ITV news on 28 August 1963 (Accessed March 26, 2016. http://test.jiscmediahub.ac.uk/mediaContent/open/scripts/1963/19630828_EE_01_ITV.pdf).
94. *Evening Standard*, August 28, 1963, 12; *Daily Mirror*, August 20, 1963, 1.
95. *Daily Express*, December 14, 1963, 4.
96. *Miami News* (US), October 13, 1963, 4. When the film was resubmitted to the BBFC in 1969, it was said by the Board's examiners to contain 'a certain amount of new material (about Profumo)'. BBFC Archive: *The Keeler Affair*: Examiners' report, March 11, 1970.
97. *Variety* (US), June 26, 1963, 1, 79.
98. BBFC Archive: *The Keeler Affair*: John Trevelyan to John Nasht, December 20, 1963. For more, see Farmer, 'An Almost Continuous Picture of Sordid Vice'.
99. *Variety* (US), April 22, 1964, 11.
100. *Boxoffice* (US), May 18, 1964, 9.
101. *Variety* (US), October 30, 1963, 19.
102. Review of *Le Scandale Christine Keeler*, *Cahiers du Cinema*, June 1964, 65; Haworth, "Story of My Life," 15. Keeler's screen-test was broadcast on French television, and 'millions of viewers saw her in a tight-fitting blouse answering the door, watching TV and saying on the telephone, 'How nice to hear from you again'. Sydney *Sun-Herald* (Australia), September 8, 1963, 2.
103. *Straits Times* (Singapore), August 1, 1964, 10.
104. Clark, *Scandal*, 208.
105. John Garrard describes scandals as existing on the 'borderline' between differing and changing conceptions of public morality. "Scandals: An Overview," 25.

106. See Farmer, "An Almost Continuous Picture of Sordid Vice." So far as I have been able to ascertain, *The Keeler Affair* has to date only been shown once in Britain, in February 1971 at the New Cinema Club, a private venue in London.
107. *Financial Times*, July 25, 1985, 22. See also *Broadcast*, August 2, 1985, 4, which quotes Maurice Gran, who with Laurence Marks wrote the script about which the IBA was so concerned, as saying 'Our movie is set in 1963, and is about how the British Establishment covered its tracks. Now it seems it is happening again'.
108. Aldgate and Richards, *Best of British*, 219–231. On *Scandal*, see also Babington, "Scandal", 197–206.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Funding

This work was supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council [grant number AH/L014793/1].

Notes on contributor

Richard Farmer is a post-doctoral research associate at the University of East Anglia, working on the AHRC-funded 'Transformation and Tradition in Sixties British Cinema' project. He has published widely on various aspects of British cultural history, and is the author of *The Food Companions: Cinema and Consumption in Wartime Britain, 1939–45* (2011) and *Cinemas and Cinemagoing in Wartime Britain, 1939–45: The Utility Dream Palace* (2016).

Bibliography

- Aldgate, Anthony, and Jeffrey Richards. *Best of British: Cinema and Society from 1930 to the Present*. New edn. London: I. B. Tauris, 2002.
- Babington, Bruce. "Scandal." In *The Cinema of Britain and Ireland*, edited by B McFarlane, 197–206. London: Wallflower, 2005.
- Bingham, Adrian. *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life, and the British Popular Press, 1918–1978*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Bray, Jeremy. Speech to House of Commons, 14 November 1963. *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th Series, Vol. 684, Col 477, 1963.
- Brooke, Henry. Written Answer to House of Commons, 11 April 1963. *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 675, Col. 194 W, 1963.
- Brooker, Christopher. *The Neophiliacs: The Revolution in English Life in the Fifties and Sixties*. London: Pimlico, [1969] 1992.
- Carpenter, Humphrey. *That Was Satire That Was: The Satire Boom of the 1960s*. London: Faber and Faber, [2000] 2009.
- Carter, Matthew. "Carter's Battered Stat." *Eye* 82 (2012): 80–81.
- Cashmore, Ellis. *Elizabeth Taylor: A Private Life for Public Consumption*. London: Bloomsbury, 2016.
- Castle, Barbara. Speech to House of Commons, 21 March 1963. *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th Series, Vol. 674, Col. 741, 1963.
- Clark, Anna. *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Conboy, Martin. *Tabloid Britain: Constructing a Community through Language*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2006.
- Cook, William. *One Leg Too Few: The Adventures of Peter Cook and Dudley Moore*. London: Preface, 2013.

- Crawford, Iain. *The Profumo Affair: A Crisis in Contemporary Society*. London: White Lodge, 1963.
- Davenport-Hines, Richard. *An English Affair: Sex, Class and Power in the Age of Profumo*. London: William Collins, 2013.
- Farmer, Richard. "An Almost Continuous Picture of Sordid Vice: *The Keeler Affair*, the Profumo Scandal and 'Political' Film Censorship in the 1960s." *Journal of British Cinema and Television* (Forthcoming).
- Fiegel, Eddi. *John Barry: A Sixties Theme*. London: Faber and Faber, [1998] 2012.
- Frost, David. *An Autobiography: Part 1 – From Congregations to Audiences*. London: HarperCollins, 1993.
- The Gallup International Public Opinion Polls: Great Britain 1937–1975 – Vol. 1: 1937–1964*. New York: Random House, 1976.
- Garrard, John. "Scandals: An Overview." In *Scandals in Past and Contemporary Politics*, edited by John Garrard and James L. Newell, 13–29. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006.
- Haworth, J. D. S. "The Story of My Life." *Tribune*, August 21, 1964: 15.
- Howard, Anthony, and Richard West. *The Making of the Prime Minister*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1965.
- Ingrams, Richard. *The Life and times of Private Eye: 1961–1971*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971.
- Keeler, Christine. *Scandal!* London: Xanadu, 1989.
- Keeler, Christine, and Douglas Thompson. *The Truth at Last: My Story*. London: Pan, 2002.
- Luard, Elisabeth. *My Life as a Wife: Love, Liquor and What to Do about the Other Women*. London: Timewell Press, 2008.
- Marnham, Patrick. *The Private Eye Story: The First 21 Years*. London: Andre Deutsch, 1982.
- Moncrieff, Chris. "A Journalist Looks at a Political Scandal." In *Scandals in Past and Contemporary Politics*, edited by John Garrard and James L. Newell, 61–76. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006.
- Morley, Lewis. *Black and White Lies – Self-Exposures: Some Long, Some Short, Some Indecent*. Pymble: Angus & Robertson, 1992.
- Mort, Frank. *Capital Affairs: London and the Making of the Permissive Society*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010.
- Orwell, George. 1941. "The Art of Donald McGill." *Horizon*, September: 153–163.
- Prime, Rebecca. "'The Old Bogey': The Hollywood Blacklist in Europe." *Film History* 20, no. 4 (2008): 474–486.
- Profumo, John. Speech to House of Commons, 22 March 1963. *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th Series, Vol. 674, Col. 810, 1963.
- Profumo, David. *Bringing the House Down: A Family Memoir*. London: John Murray, 2006.
- Review of *Le Scandale Christine Keeler*. *Cahiers Du Cinema*, June 1964: 65.
- Somerfield, Stafford. *Banner Headlines*. Shoreham-by-Sea: Scan, 1979.
- Stevenson, Jack. *Scandinavian Blue: The Erotic Cinema of Sweden and Denmark in the 1960s and 1970s*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010.
- Thomas, James. *Popular Newspapers, the Labour Party and British Politics*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2005.
- Thompson, John B. *Political Scandal: Power and Visibility in the Media Age*. Cambridge: Polity, 2000.
- Trevelyan, John. *What the Censor Saw*. London: Michael Joseph, 1973.
- Williams, Kevin. "Bringing Popular Journalism into Disrepute: The *News of the World*, the Public and Politics 1953–2011." In *The News of the World and the British Press, 1843–2011: Journalism for the Rich, Journalism for the Poor*, edited by Laurel Brake, Chandrika Kaul, and Mark W. Turner, 213–228. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
- Wilson, Harold. Speech to House of Commons, 17 June 1963. *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th Series, Vol. 679, Col. 53, 1963.