

THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Head Office: Broadcasting House, London, W.1

Television Service, Lime Grove Studios, Shepherds Bush,
London, W.12

TELEPHONE: SHEPHERDS BUSH 1244 TELEGRAMS & CABLES: BROADCASTS, TELEX, LONDON

8th October, 1952.

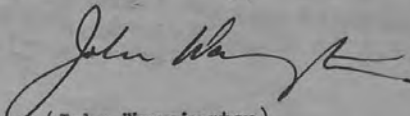
Dear Mr. Hughes,

Mr. Newbiggin-Watts has passed your name on to us as a willing challenger for "What's My Line?" We hope to use you as early as possible.

Naturally, all your out-of-pocket expenses to London will be paid.

Thank you for so kindly volunteering.

Yours sincerely,



(John Warrington)

W.G. Hughes, Esq.,
Chief Preventive Officer,
H.M. Customs,
Liverpool.

FILE No. 19

Huskinson Dock,
Liverpool, 3.
11th October 1952

The Honourable Commissioners of Her Majesty's Customs
and Excise,
Honourable Sirs,

Personal application for permission to appear on a
Television Broadcast.

May I be granted permission to appear
on Television in the series programme "Whats my Line",
as per attached letter.

In view of the wording thereof, it
should be explained that when on leave recently I
visited the Lime Grove Studios on the invitation of
Mr. Newbiggin-Watts of the B.B.C. Television Service.
I was present when various programmes for the same
evening were being rehearsed, including competitors
for "Whats my Line?". In conversation whilst watching
Mr. Watts suggested that mine was just the type of
occupation likely to baffle the panel. He asked
whether I would be willing to volunteer as a challenger
and I said yes, subject of course to my being able to
obtain the necessary approval. The producer's letter
is the outcome.

Appearance on the programme, which is
unscripted, would not involve my speaking on Customs
matters; the panel would be simply endeavouring to
deduce my occupation, and replies to questions designed
to achieve this would be limited to Yes or No.

All challengers are required at the
outset to do a small piece of mime indicating something
done in the course of their work (in my case eg.
examining a seal, a duty which could be undertaken by
any Preventive grade) and sometimes they are asked at
the conclusion what this mime represented. Here would
be the only possibility for impromptu remarks and in
this connection I respectfully submit that my discretion
can be relied on not to say anything that would be
likely to embarrass the Department in any way. I
would add further, that several personalities of
similar and perhaps higher standing have already
appeared on this programme.

Attached also is a copy of my reply to
the B.B.C. Producer. Having regard to the second
sentence in his letter, may I respectfully request an
early decision, which I trust will be one of approval.

I am, Honourable Sirs,
Your obedient Servant,

William Cecil Hughes
William Cecil Hughes
Chief Preventive Officer.

Radio Times 17 OCT 1952

TELEVISION

SUNDAY

October 19



9.25 WHAT'S MY LINE?

Chislaine Alexander
Joan Greenwood
Jerry Desmond
Gilbert Harding

trying to find the answers
and Eamonn Andrews
to see fair play

'What's My Line?' was devised by Mark Goodson and Bill Tedman, and is presented by arrangement with C.B.S. of America and Maurice Winnick.

This is a weekly programme on Sunday evenings and Gilbert Harding has been in the team on each of the last four Sundays.

Mr Barrett.

If there is any danger, it lies in Gilbert Harding's unpredictable temper, his well-known hostility to the Civil Service, and his devastating power of lightning repartee. If, when Mr Hughes' "line" is discovered or disclosed, Gilbert makes one of his nasty remarks about the Customs or the Civil Service before Eamonn Andrews can blanket him, such as he often and regularly makes in his column in "The People", (see Cutting No. 42-19.9.52 annexed), Mr Hughes might be made to look foolish or embarrassed. Gilbert has repeatedly done this very thing on the radio and television, - *though not so far against this Dept on the radio or television.*

I often have to argue on publicity files that to gain public esteem and avoid the hostility that grows up against public officials and prominent personalities, we must pocket our dignity, descend from our pedestal and take part in the knock-about of controversy. I hold that view strongly, but if we do it, we can and ought to choose our appearances so that our dignity does not run unnecessary risks, as indeed all ~~most~~ prominent personalities do. In this case I feel there is a risk with Gilbert Harding, and I personally would not take part in a programme with him. I wish Mr Hughes had chosen a programme for his television appearance in which he could appear as Mr Hughes and not as a Customs Officer.



The Collector
Liverpool.

In view of the nature of the Television
Programme "What's My Line" I see no objection
to permitting our Hughes CPO to take part in his own
time.

G. Gray



Section.

M. J. Con.



Press & Information Offs.

Have you any news please? H.G. 2/10

Mr Bennett

I agree this occasion would give
Gilbert Stanning a great opportunity to tilt
at bureaucracy and knowing Hughes doesn't
think he is the ideal person to appear in this
type of programme.

I think we should refuse permission.

H.G. 2/10

72052/52

8
—
30th October, 1952.

Confidential

Sir,

With reference to your report of the 14th October the Board direct you to inform Mr. W.C. Hughes, Chief Preventive Officer, that they are not prepared to give him permission to appear in the Television item "What's my line?".

I am, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

(sd) A.H. GARRETT

The Collector,
Customs and Excise,
Liverpool.