



15 September 1995

Joan Shenton
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London
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A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Joan Shenton'.

Thanks for your fax(es).

There's no doubt that the events of the last few days have put into very stark relief the current state of the AIDS debate. Three points, most saliently, come through; first, it has become more entrenched - if anything - than when we last transmitted an AIDS-related **Dispatches** (on Africa). Second, while the more intelligent and honourable of those who live and work by the HIV-orthodoxy do admit of some doubts, as far as the press is concerned you'd think there was no doubt at all, and that's how the public mostly see it. Third, although all the so-called 'breakthroughs' on the part of the HIV orthodoxy can be argued to be nothing of the sort, we really do lack something that the audience at large will regard as a true 'breakthrough' on the opposite side. We have some interesting arguments and there are some bigger guns who could be used to sow further doubts. But how, in **Dispatches** terms, do we achieve a clinching piece of investigative journalism?

This really sums up my doubts in a nutshell. **Dispatches** has moved on quite a bit in the last couple of years. Neither it nor the subject matter would be properly served by a polemic in your previous style, which was once so necessary against the Berlin-Wall-type HIV orthodoxy. I am sceptical that the current state of knowledge can yield a fair, duly impartial but seriously hard-hitting piece of investigative journalism.

I think, if you are not too discouraged by this, you should indeed draw up for me a basic programme outline, because I need to know whether you really could square this extremely difficult circle.

Cont/d

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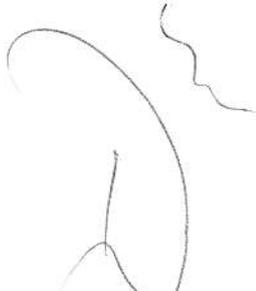
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If not, it's only right that the Dominican Republic beckon you back for a time. I don't like to disappoint anyone, least of all you and the redoubtable Michael, but that's the way I feel at the moment.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'David Lloyd', with a large loop and a wavy tail.

DAVID LLOYD
Senior Commissioning Editor
News & Current Affairs