

= Nick Robinson =

Nicholas Anthony " Nick " Robinson (born 5 October 1963) is a British journalist , former political editor for the BBC and a presenter on BBC 's Today BBC Radio 4 . Robinson was interested in politics from a young age , and went on to study a Philosophy , Politics , and Economics degree at Oxford University , where he was also President of the Oxford University Conservative Association . Starting out in broadcasting at Piccadilly Radio , after a year as President of the Conservative Party youth group , he worked his way up as a producer eventually becoming deputy editor of Panorama , before becoming a political correspondent in 1996 .

He became the BBC 's chief political correspondent in 1999 . Between 2002 and 2005 he worked for ITV News as political editor , but then returned to the BBC assuming the same role .

Noted for his confrontational and provocative approach , Robinson has on several occasions caused a stir with his style of questioning , particularly of national leaders such as George W. Bush . He has presented a variety of programmes , including Westminster Live , Weekend Breakfast and Late Night Live on BBC Radio 5 Live , and Newsnight .

= = Early life = =

Robinson was born in Macclesfield , Cheshire , in 1963 , to a translator mother and a sales director father . His mother was born in Shanghai , where her German Jewish parents fled during the 1930s . His father was of English background . His parents first met at Geneva University in Switzerland and married three months later .

Robinson was interested in political journalism from the age of eight . He was educated at Cheadle Hulme School and University College , Oxford , where he read Philosophy , Politics , and Economics .

In 1982 , while travelling in Europe , he survived a car crash in Lille , France , in which the car , a two @-@ door Beetle , exploded and his friends James Nelson and Will Redhead (son of Brian Redhead , a journalist and co @-@ presenter of Today on BBC Radio 4) were killed . Robinson was " severely burned " , spent five weeks in hospital and had to defer his university place . Brian Redhead became Robinson 's mentor , and later encouraged his career in political journalism , giving him a copy of Tony Benn 's Arguments for Socialism for his birthday . However , Robinson 's early political affiliations were to the right .

= = Political activism = =

Robinson was a founder member of Macclesfield Young Conservatives and rose through the ranks , becoming Cheshire Young Conservative Chairman (1982 ? 84) and became a key activist in the moderate controlled North West Area organisation . National YC Chairman , Phil Pedley co @-@ opted Robinson onto the Young Conservative National Advisory Committee in 1983 and appointed him National Campaign Director of Youth for Multilateral Disarmament . Robinson was elected National Vice Chairman in 1985 ? 87 and succeeded fellow moderate , Richard Fuller , when he was elected Chairman of the National Young Conservatives on the moderate ticket against strong right @-@ wing opposition (1987 ? 88) .

At university he was President of the Oxford University Conservative Association in 1985 .

= = Career = =

= = = Early career : 1986 ? 1996 = = =

Robinson 's first position in broadcasting was at Piccadilly Radio in Manchester , which he took up while recovering from his injuries . He joined the BBC in 1986 as a production trainee , and later worked extensively as a television and radio producer for a variety of shows including Newsround

and Crimewatch . He then became an assistant producer for On the Record , and in 1993 was promoted to Deputy Editor of Panorama , a position he held for three years . In 1995 , while Robinson was at Panorama he wrote an internal BBC memorandum questioning how an interview with Prime Minister John Major could be defended in the run @-@ up to the Scottish local elections . When leaked it gained attention from the Labour Party , who perceived it as the legitimised denial of equal time in the run up to local elections .

= = = Political correspondent : 1996 ? 2002 = = =

In 1996 he became a political correspondent , presenting Weekend Breakfast and Late Night Live on BBC Radio 5 Live , and in 1997 he covered the general election for BBC Radio . In October 1999 he became BBC News 24 's chief political correspondent , and also presented Westminster Live . In the run @-@ up to the 2001 general election , Robinson started keeping a daily diary of the campaign . Entitled The Campaign Today , it later became Newslog , and continued to be updated until Robinson left the BBC . When he returned in 2005 he began a new blog with the same name .

= = = ITN political editor : 2002 ? 2005 = = =

In 2002 , Robinson left the BBC for Independent Television News (ITN) as ITV News ' political editor . Tom Bradby , who later succeeded him , described the appointment as " bold , imaginative and instantly successful " . Robinson stayed with ITN for three years , and caused a major stir early in the 2005 election campaign at the unveiling of a Labour Party poster . The poster claimed the Conservative Party would initiate cuts of £ 35 billion to public services if elected ; Robinson challenged Prime Minister Tony Blair , claiming the poster was misleading , which forced Blair to admit the £ 35 billion figure was " disingenuous " .

Later on in the election campaign , Labour announced that Tony Blair would be making " the most important speech of the campaign " on immigration , with a specially invited audience . Robinson asked Blair why there were only white people in the audience , and Blair pointed out a single Asian man to disprove Robinson . Later , Robinson stated : " We know that the big two parties carefully select audiences to give a particular appearance . Is it a great controversy to point this out ? That 's informing the audience . " On election night , Robinson joined presenters Jonathan Dimbleby and Alastair Stewart to reveal the results with political analysis .

= = = Return to the BBC : 2005 ? present = = =

Robinson left ITN and was appointed as the BBC political editor in preference to fellow journalist Martha Kearney in August 2005 , replacing Andrew Marr .

Robinson continued his provocative approach to journalism , and on more than one occasion had run @-@ ins with powerful politicians . During Tony Blair 's visit to Israel in 2006 to discuss the Lebanon War , journalists were asked not to bring up the ongoing rift with Gordon Brown . Bradby , then the ITV political editor , asked a question on the subject but was told it was " disrespectful " . Robinson then followed on the same topic , asking a difficult question on the feud between the Chancellor and Prime Minister . He was criticised for distracting from the main issue of the conference , but he argued that " I 'm paid to ask questions ... particularly at a time when there are incredibly serious allegations ... I react very badly to organised attempts to stop journalists asking questions . " Robinson later criticised Blair 's announcement of his intention to stand down . He explained how he considered the setup " stage management " , and how no journalists were allowed to ask questions .

In December 2006 George W. Bush showed dissatisfaction when he was asked if he was in denial about the situation in Iraq (since the most Bush had said about the situation was that the increase in attacks was " unsettling ") . Bush replied " It 's bad in Iraq . Does that help ? " . He had another run @-@ in with Bush at a press conference at Camp David , when Bush asked him " you still hanging around ? " . He then suggested to Robinson , with reference to the heat , that " next time

you should cover your bald head " . As Bush walked away Robinson replied " I didn 't know you cared " , to which Bush responded " I don 't " . Robinson described his quip as a " fatal error " on his blog . In a final encounter in 2008 , Bush joked with Robinson about still not wearing his hat .

Robinson continues to keep a political blog on the BBC website . On 5 May 2006 he said that when hearing of Charles Clarke 's sacking in the 2006 Cabinet reshuffle , he was " naked in bed . " He later apologised , saying he was " merely trying to add authenticity . That 's the naked truth . " Another post , dated 25 February 2008 , criticised MPs defending Michael Martin against allegations of expenses misuse , which caused controversy in parliament .

As political editor , Robinson worked across the BBC 's politics @-@ related programmes , such as The Daily Politics , Newsnight and Today on BBC Radio 4 . He has been a key member of BBC election night coverage .

He has also appeared as a guest in other television programmes , including Children in Need , Have I Got News for You , and Top Gear .

Robinson has made several documentaries . In May 2011 he presented The Street That Cut Everything , where residents of a street in Preston , Lancashire had their council services withdrawn for six weeks as an experiment . In 2014 he presented The Truth About Immigration for BBC Two .

For radio , he made The Prime Ministers ? a 16 @-@ part biographical series for BBC Radio Four . Ahead of the 2015 general election , he made a three part documentary called Can Democracy Work .

It was announced on 9 July 2015 that Robinson would become a presenter on the early morning BBC Radio 4 programme Today from Autumn 2015 , taking over from James Naughtie .

In October 2015 he interviewed Sir Alex Ferguson .

= = Criticism = =

Robinson has been criticised for allegedly reporting with a pro @-@ Conservative bias . Alastair Campbell brought up his history of Conservative affiliations during an interview . Bias was claimed particularly in the 2010 United Kingdom general election coverage ; a Facebook group entitled " Nick Robinson should not be the BBC 's political editor " was set up in August 2010 . In a 2005 interview with David Rowan , the UK editor of Wired News , he insisted " that his involvement [with the Conservatives] ceased twenty years ago " .

On 20 October 2010 , following a live BBC News at Six report outside Parliament for the 2010 Spending Review , Robinson silently took the anti @-@ war , anti @-@ cuts placard that had been waved directly behind him throughout , broke it in two and stamped on it . Afterwards , another protester , who had climbed the steps of the gantry where the BBC were broadcasting to film the protest on a mobile phone , said : " You should be ashamed of yourself , mate . Shame on you ! " Robinson replied " I 'm not remotely ashamed of myself . Why should I be ashamed of myself ? " . He wrote in his blog afterwards : " I lost my temper and I regret that . However , as I explained afterwards to the protesters who disrupted my broadcast , there are many opportunities to debate whether the troops should be out of Afghanistan without the need to stick a sign on a long pole and wave it in front of a camera . " Some days later , Robinson read out a jokily ambiguous " letter of apology " on Have I Got News For You ? , broadcast on 4 November 2010 .

On 22 May 2013 edition of the BBC News at Six Robinson relayed the news that the fatal stabbing of an off @-@ duty British soldier in London that afternoon was being treated by the government as a terrorist incident , but attracted criticism after quoting a source describing the perpetrators as being " of Muslim appearance " . The BBC received 43 complaints about Robinson 's use of the term , and he issued an apology on his BBC blog the following day .

On 11 September 2014 , as part of the coverage of the Scottish independence referendum , Nick Robinson had a dispute with Scottish National Party leader Alex Salmond . The previous day Robinson had reported that Lloyds Bank and RBS would be moving their registered offices from Scotland to London in the event of a " Yes " vote . In the exchange Robinson asked Salmond two questions : the first about the economic impact of RBS moving its headquarters , the second more general about why to trust a politician when CEO 's of certain companies advised against

independence . Salmond gave answers to the two questions , stating in answer the first that there was not a huge significance economically about where the registered head office of a company was and to the second he claimed that the media were recycling news from many months ago , he then claimed that an investigation into the BBC 's actions would be sought given that rules regarding the release of market @-@ sensitive data had been broken . After the 4 minute 30 second answer , Robinson continued , now off @-@ mic , to ask further questions and so was accused of heckling by Salmond . Salmond gave another 2 minute answer to the off @-@ mic questions . The entire exchange lasted for 7 minutes 40 seconds . A report was shown on all BBC evening news programmes later that day , edited to show only the second part of Robinson 's original two @-@ part question before cutting to his narration in which he claimed Salmond had not answered his question but had instead chosen to lay accusations against the BBC even though the accusations represented a very small portion of the overall exchange . The BBC received complaints from viewers for the implication that Salmond had not answered a question put to him , and there was protest in Glasgow , in which thousands of licence payers called for him to be sacked . The BBC responded : " The BBC considers that the questions were valid and the overall report balanced and impartial , in line with our editorial guidelines .

In November 2014 , Robinson was covering the count for the Rochester and Strood by @-@ election . He was seen smiling whilst posing for a photograph with Britain First candidate and deputy leader Jayda Fransen . The far right @-@ wing party promotes preserving " ancestral ethnic and cultural heritage " within the UK whilst being opposed to Scottish independence , non @-@ Christian religious interests and [social] Liberalism . Due to the fact that Robinson had been accused of bias on these issues before , he was now accused , by some , on Twitter , of being sympathetic to the party 's values and friendly with the leadership . Responding , he denied direct affiliation with the party leadership .

= = Personal life = =

Robinson met his wife Pippa , a relationship counsellor , at university and they married in 1991 . He has three children : Harry , Will and Alice . He lives in North London , close to Arsenal 's Emirates Stadium . He is a lifelong Manchester United fan , and enjoys sailing and the theatre . Robinson is a fan of the rock band Queen ; his ringtone of one of their songs interrupted a discussion during Daily Politics in 2014 .

In early 2015 Robinson underwent surgery to remove a bronchial carcinoid tumour ; returning to work at the BBC on 13 April 2015 as part of their coverage of the 2015 General Election and beyond . The operation was reported to have been a ? complete success ? .