

Secrets of the Taxman - Dispatches, Channel 4, 8pm this...

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[Dispatches on Channel 4 this evening](#) is on what it calls the Secrets of the Taxman. [As the Mail noted about the programme](#) yesterday:

When George Osborne attacked tax avoiders as morally repugnant last March, he must have thought this would bring him easy political gains.

It has not worked out quite like that. Rather a lot of Tory donors and sympathisers have turned out to be tax avoiders.

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Now, thanks to Channel 4's Dispatches programme, we learn that members of HMRC's board have links to companies which themselves face suggestions that they engage - quite legally - in tax avoidance.

If this is morally repugnant, as the Chancellor says it is, then it is quite clearly a conflict of interest for anyone connected with the tax system to be even remotely connected with such activities.

The public are entitled to wonder if HMRC, or the Government as a whole, really have their hearts in reducing avoidance to a bare minimum. Or are they merely pretending to be concerned, in the hope of diverting the anger and discontent of ordinary dutiful taxpayers?

Quite so.

I should add, I do appear in the programme for the good reason that regulatory capture seems to me one of the biggest threats to democracy that exists and it seems to me that it is happening at HMRC right now.