

## Bondi's Catch 22

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**Come autumn, our dear Mr Bondi must have been to be the hardest, albeit unofficial, bone of contention between PBS's Board of Directors and Editorial Board. After being left out of the TVM schedule by the latter, the situation of PBS's two-headed structure deteriorated into a lengthy public affray with the resignation of Mr John Camilleri, former chairman of the Editorial Board taking place and seemingly bringing the issue to a close. Bondi's persistence had outshone in a scenario where other presenters such as *Tista' Tkun Int's Rachel, Liquorish* and *Showtime's* producers had to give up losing the grip at earlier stages of the 'throw them overboard – All too high costs' manouvre alternatively adopted prior to the choice of programmes.**



Having secured a place on the schedule, the next step was to pompously announce the return of Bondi+ at the TVM launching. Leaflets were printed, interviews done and publicity was all triggered. Bondi+ was to be our favourite Tuesday past time as it had already been for God knows how many years.

However, no sooner had any decisions been taken another issue arose. Bondi suddenly hit the headlines again by thievingly snatching TVM's Monday prime time at the expense of the short-lived "*Tghanniqā*" producers' enthusiasm throwing them straight into professional shock and financial insecurity. As anticipated, no one came to *26<sup>th</sup> Frame's* rescue. Papers spoke and needled from all directions. However Bondi's triumph over-towered above all hurdles and, there he was again, sniffing at his make-up artist's brush on the first Monday of the schedule.

At that time everybody was blaming *Gizelle* for the change of mind. However, looking with hind-sight, *Gizelle* might have not been the only reason for Lou Bondi's struggle for TGIM's (Thank God it's Monday) euphoria.

The first programme passed by quite undisputed. What better than a buzz session between the two party leaders? However, since then, week in week out Bondi+ has haunted the newsrooms and the Broadcasting Authority alike with all its unprecedented moves and changes.

Lou Bondi might have been aware more than anyone else of the Mondays to come as election fever builds up. He might have been amongst the first to have known the exact date of the budget way ahead of anyone else close to PN.

Anyhow, even if Lou Bondi might have had it all his own way in re-establishing his territory at Guardamangia, he himself might have created his Catch 22 making him struggle to maintain his airtime week in week out with all the gods bubbling and breathing down his neck, needless to say, Labour Party being the major one of them.

Inspite of being supported from pre-birth stage to date by the Board of Directors, and whoever is behind, all hell was let lose for Bondi and Co.

The 8<sup>th</sup> October programme was meant to discuss afterlife. It ended up discussing PN's General Council. This fact alone attracted a LM2000 suspended fine by the Broadcasting Authority last week.

The third programme was hijacked (legitimately so) by the PBS News team after another open struggle.

The fourth programme, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October, was also aimed to be a fourth consecutive political programme in spite of being pre-listed as being about Alleanza Nazzjonali. Like the previous weeks, Bondi had again a change of heart and wanted to discuss the Leader of the Opposition's reply to the budget at all costs. The end-result was neither AN nor Sant's reply... but a discussion on abortion.

How much longer will the Bondi saga linger on? What do the coming Mondays have in store? Did Lou Bondi mean to do ONLY political programmes during this schedule? Who will stand by his side week in week out? Who else will have to leave the floor to accommodate the 'independent' political observer? What will happen come elections? Will Lou Bondi (along with his deluded sponsors) have to give up more programmes as happened already? Has Lou Bondi regretted having started all this skirmish which has cost him too much too soon? Or is he above it? Will he ever get tired? Or is he supported enough?

What is definitely sure by now is that having struggled so much for those Mondays, Bondi has definitely got entangled into a dangerous game of "programme or no programme", "politics or no politics", "sponsors or no sponsors" which might well deteriorate sooner than expected into a "Bondi or no Bondi".