

# Polis – Top Grade?

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The surprising news that troubled ITV have poached BBC Chairman Michael Grade to be their new boss is a media moment of shock and awe. This is a rare occasion when the commercial TV sector has trumped its state-subsidised competitor.

It used to be the case that ITV and even Channel 4 could outspend the BBC, which was hamstrung by its dependence on the licence fee. But in the last five years or so as advertising revenue has crashed, the BBC reasserted itself and everyone from Mark Thompson to Jonathan Ross deserted the profit-driven sector in favour of the sprawling empire of the Beeb.

Hiring Michael Grade sends a massive signal that ITV are serious – a much-needed boost to morale at a time when being boss of ITV was about as welcome as coaching England's rugby players.

With Rupert Murdoch buying a stake in ITV as NTL circled like a vulture around the commercial station's carcass, what was needed was a hero to ride to the rescue.

And in Michael Grade ITV have a six-gun toting, white horse-riding corporate gunslinger with all the right showbiz credentials.

Things have just got interesting in mainstream broadcasting again.



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