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BROADCAST EXCERPT

BARRY GRAY: Good evening. The program is Special Edition. Each night, a different national news organization. And tonight, the focus on "People," the great magazine about people. And my co-host, or do I say co-hostess? -- Mary Dunn, Picture Editor of "People." What do I say? Co-hostperson?

MARY DUNN: Co-host is just fine, thank you.

GRAY: Allright. Mary, good evening.

DUNN: Good evening, Barry.

GRAY: Our guests tonight are Richard Staley, the Managing Editor, who is going to do a report. . . . Let's start with Richard Staley.

DUNN: Allright, surely. This is our Managing Editor, Richard Staley, who is just back from England, where he conducted an interview with Britain's Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. This is the first interview, I believe that she has given to an American magazine, so it's quite exciting for us to be able to talk about it today. Richard?

GRAY: And last week I do recall -- last week you were in the hotel room standing by, you had just arrived, jet lagged, et cetera, and we were under the impression that you had been there for two days lolling about Piccadilly. (LAUGHTER)

RICHARD STALEY: I had been there for about twenty minutes when I tried to get you on the phone.

GRAY: And those are the best kinds of interviews, because you're just filled with information from the cab driver and all that good stuff.

STALEY: I interviewed the cab driver all the way in from Heathrow Airport. I knew exactly what was going on in Great Britain at that moment.

GRAY: Okay. Now, each day that went by in Great Britain, you
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felt that you knew less and less, because the cab driver was giving you his point of view. Right?

STALEY: Correct. That is until I met Margaret Thatcher and she straightened out all my misconceptions about that country.

GRAY: I want to ask you a very dumb question. What does she look like, in the round?

STALEY: Slightly that, but small, tall -- no, slightly round. She's short, with a beautiful complexion -- that so-called British peaches and cream complexion. Her hair is blonded, but attractively so. She uses very little makeup, a change I'm told from a few months ago, or before she was Prime Minister, when she used eye shadow rather heavily. Now she uses makeup quite subtly. She's a very attractive woman.

GRAY: And you met her where -- at 10 Downing Street?

STALEY: We met her in her office on the second floor of number 10 Downing Street.

GRAY: And what's it like -- how's it furnished?

STALEY: It looks -- it's not dissimilar to the Oval Office. It's rectangular, it's furnished very quietly but tastefully. It has pale green flocking(?) on the walls, which she detests and apologizes for it to everyone who walks into her office. But under the British Austerity Program, she doesn't want to spend public money to change the wall-paper at this point. We sat on....

GRAY: Nothing like our administrations. They would have torn down the building if it'd been Washington.

STALEY: She offered us tea, sherry, or coffee and apologized again because it would have to be instant. And we sat on couches and chairs, and conducted the interview for over an hour.

GRAY: You say "we"?

STALEY: I was joined by "People's" London correspondent, Fred Halpeur(?). We had a stenographer from our office with us, and her press secretary was in there also. And he was tape recording the interview.

GRAY: And how do you address her?

STALEY: Well, that's a good question and I asked. You don't address her "Madame Prime Minister" as I thought you might. It's either "Mrs. Thatcher" or just "Prime Minister." So I called her Mrs. Thatcher most of the time.

GRAY: Which did she seem to prefer?

STALEY: I think she probably prefers Prime Minister, but it seems so abrupt, kind of like, hey you. But she answered to both.

GRAY: And how long were you together? An hour?

STALEY: We were there over an hour.

GRAY: Over an hour.

STALEY: Yes.

GRAY: Was she -- did you get the feeling of nerves, tenseness?

STALEY: Well, before we conducted the interview, we had briefings by two people in London who know her well. One was David Frost, who has interviewed her, and is someone I've known for some time. And I talked with him. And their Ambassador, Kingman Brewster. We also had a briefing from him, and they both said that this woman is a difficult interview. She is....

GRAY: Gives you nothing.

STALEY: Well, she gives you nothing, she does not like personal questions, she makes you sound like a fool when you ask one. But she can bully interviewers if she doesn't like the way the conversation is going. But, in any case, she is very unforthcoming and not to expect very much.

GRAY: And so you proceeded to change all that.

STALEY: Well, we went in there quite apprehensive, thinking we could wind up with very little. And she could not have been more charming and candid.

GRAY: What stated did fail(?)

STALEY: Well, I tell you, we were aided by one thing, aside from our own charm and interviewing techniques -- she had won a very important vote in Parliament the night before and she was on top of the world at that point and it made all the difference.

GRAY: How does she conduct her personal life -- what is she like when she is indeed, Mrs. Thatcher?

STALEY: Well, I think the thing that has to be said about her is that she is almost never not Prime Minister. One of the things she is criticized for in Great Britain, by the papers, is that she never relaxes. And she admitted that was true. She felt -- it was her feeling that the minute you let go, kind of fade out of being Prime Minister, you lose things, you lose control, you lose track of

things. And she said it wasn't worth it to me. She wants to know what's going on all the time -- make all the decisions. And, be informed all the time.

GRAY: Was ~~Fred Husland~~^{her husband}(?) in evidence at all?

STALEY: ~~Fred Husland~~^{Her husband}, as a retired businessman was not there. He's having some back trouble. And she admitted that he didn't like living in the goldfish bowl very much, and often tends to go to their house in the country in Kent. And that's his way of getting away. She prefers it if she's not at number 10 Downing, to go to their house in Chelsea, in London. She doesn't -- she's not a country girl. She doesn't feel the need to get outside London.

GRAY: As I recall, she's the daughter of a British shopkeeper.

STALEY: He's a grocer. That's right.

GRAY: And, tell me about the family.

STALEY: Well, she grew up with I think, one other sibling -- in very, sort of lower middle class surroundings. Where her parents were apparently great taskmasters about their children. They demanded -- the father was a politician -- so she got immersed in that very early. And they made great demands on their children -- that they earn their own way, that they develop character, that they not do things simply because other people did things. And she came out of her adolescence I think, a very directed person. She knew what she wanted to be, and that was something.

GRAY: At which point did she become so positively conservative? So Tory?

STALEY: She was that from the beginning. Her parents were Tories and under the British political system and under the British social system, once you're set on that path, you don't really change much.

GRAY: And, did you ever ask her about our leaders -- our Jimmy Carter?

STALEY: We asked her -- we were told beforehand, please don't get into the election because she can't talk about it. Well, but of course we had to ask, to get her on the records. So, we asked her about Reagan, Carter and Reagan. All of whom she had met.

GRAY: Reagan, Carter and Reagan, you said. You have Anderson.

STALEY: Reagan, Anderson and Carter. We asked about all three. And she was very complimentary about President Carter. She had met him here in Washington in December, and over there, too, before he became President. And in the summer in Venice. She says, she found him very easy to deal with, extremely well briefed, thoughtful and

considerate. Obviously likes him personally.

GRAY: What did she think of Mr. Anderson?

STALEY: She met him -- it was the first time she had met him. And she found him a perfectly intelligent man. The real question is why she saw him. And, we asked her that. She said, "Don't you realize, this would give his candidacy a certain boost, or at least not seeing him would give his candidacy a rap." She said that she, before she became Prime Minister, she did alot of travelling, and was extremely grateful that leaders around the world saw her, even though she held no official position, and she felt that she could think of no reason not to see Mr. Anderson. And remembering her own experience that way, she wanted to see him, so she did.

GRAY: We keep hearing -- I talked to a BBC fellow today, who's over here on assignment covering our Convention. We keep hearing that the British are scared to death of Ronald Reagan. Did you find that to be so?

STALEY: I asked her that question precisely, and she said, to be diplomatic, I intend to work with anyone that the American people under their will, choose. But she did have some kind things to say about Reagan, mostly his plain spokenness. She felt that -- she'd met him a couple of times, said that "here's a man who expresses himself very clearly, and I have no difficulty dealing with him whatsoever." And many times, in many ways, her own political philosophy and economic philosophy is Reagan's.

GRAY: I was going to say very much of that, birds of a feather...

STALEY: I tried to bring her out on the subject and she refused to be baited, as obviously it would be very inappropriate for her to say so.

GRAY: How did she feel about the British system that asks for a vote of confidence, is denied, gets kicked out, new election, new Prime Minister -- all within the space of weeks. And we take months, and months, and months of millions of dollars. Did she react to that?

STALEY: Well, we didn't ask her that specifically, but I think, those of us who have covered politics over the years think that the parliamentary system has alot to recommend it. And we have to wait four years and then spend millions of dollars, as you say, to change presidents. (CROSSTALK) And their campaigns over there last three or four weeks and then they're over.

GRAY: Yes. And the new government takes over and has witnessed the fact that she's living with green (UNINTELLIGIBLE), so what?

STALEY: She's doing very well, and as far as we can tell, opinion polls have shown that despite her very austere economic policies, her

popularity is on the upswing.

GRAY: I am told, there is more unemployment, however, than ever.

STALEY: It's reaching post-war record heights and probably 1.9 million unemployed in a work force of only about twenty three million. And it probably is going to get worse. It's going to get close, I think, to ten percent unemployment, which is very severe in a small country like that.

GRAY: And then of course, welfare costs are enormous.

STALEY: Well, that her attitude is, that she said, "We're going to have to go through this, if you elect me and my policies take effect." And she is good to her word. Now, whether or not the party feels that they'll be able to stick with these very tough measures, is something else again. Everyone is very worried about the miners. Their contract is coming up in a few months. Under Edward Heath, the miners struck and brought the Conservative Government down. And I think everyone was a little concerned that that could happen again.

GRAY: Who's her opposition -- in Parliament?

STALEY: Well, the problem is, the Labor Party is in terrible disarray right now, presumably it is still Callaghan, who is the nominal head of the Labor Party. But, he is under severe attack both from the extreme left wing and some of the people on the right. So, it's possible that -- there's Marsha Williams, there is a woman on the Labor side who conceivably could become the leader. And then we would have two women running.

GRAY: That would be a first in history as this adventure is(?)

STALEY: That's right.

GRAY: We keep hearing from all the American tourists how expensive London is. And I keep wondering what about the rank and file Englishmen -- how do they make it, how do they get along when the costs are overwhelming?

STALEY: Well, they live very frugally. I mean, they don't eat meat and they don't go out, and Lord knows they don't go to the places that people -- our editor would go to when he's in London. She recognizes that and she recognizes people are losing their jobs. She also worries about their high prices keeping tourists out of England now. She says we've got to not only bring prices down but increase our productivity -- make the hotel rooms better, make the meals better. She says we're not going to keep tourists in this country if we can't offer them more money for their dollar. She's very pragmatic about those things.

GRAY: Well, how do you do that though? Because everybody I talk to comes back shaking their head (CROSSTALK).

STALEY: Well, she knows it, but what she's going to say is that we're going to get more work out of the waiters and (UNINTELLIGIBLE) so that we won't have to have as many and therefore the prices won't keep rising as high. And we'll get more work out of the chambermaids and that means they can make do with five fewer. She is that practical about all of this.

GRAY: Is there a family? A Thatcher family?

STALEY: She has twins -- a twenty six year old boy who is a race car driver, a hobby that worries her alot, but she has not tried to dissuade him. And, a woman, who is a journalist in Australia.

GRAY: And how does the -- did you talk to people in the street, in covering this story, about the reaction to Mrs. Thatcher?

STALEY: I only talked to my taxi driver.

GRAY: Ah. How does a race driver go down in British society? (UNINTELLIGIBLE) a little frivolous.

STALEY: Well, not when you think of them. I mean, race car drivers in Great Britain have been a real national hero.

GRAY: Of course.

STALEY: So, he is, I think he's not considered frivolous. Though he got in a little difficulty a few months ago when he endorsed a car, a Japanese car, bad I think. And there was some human cry that....

GRAY: Sounds like his name might be Billy. (LAUGHTER, CROSSTALK)

STALEY: But he's quite serious about what he's doing. It may be a frivolous sport, but he's not approaching it that way.

GRAY: I'm not suggesting it is, it just sounds like it may be frivolous. It's almost like, and I happen to be a ballet nut, so I don't say this in any mischievous way. But it's like, they say, Ronald Reagan's son is a ballet dancer, as though he were some kind of a felon. You know, it's ridiculous. But, I wonder how that goes down in a society that's having such a tough time.

STALEY: I think race car driving probably goes down a little bit better than ballet dancing.

GRAY: Or you could do the two of them. (LAUGHTER) How does it affect the working journalist daughter in Australia having her mother the PM?

STALEY: I think one of the reasons that she went to Australia to be a journalist was to escape being the PM's daughter in....

GRAY: Of course in Australia they would never know.

STALEY: Well, they'd know but it wouldn't make that much of a difference to them, I bet.

GRAY: Certainly not to the Australians. (LAUGHTER, CROSSTALK)

STALEY: Usually not to the Australians.

GRAY: The Australians still having a tough time with Victoria. (LAUGHTER)

Her lifestyle -- is it a simple one, or the (UNINTELLIGIBLE) and the whole thing?

STALEY: No, she obviously has certain security precautions, which incidentally are so lax and minor compared to those that surround the American Presidents. You never see a gun, and you see a few bobbies hanging around number 10, but that's all. She lives very simply -- she cooks, sometimes cooks, not well I'm told, and....

GRAY: Why should she be better than most the British? (LAUGHTER) (CROSSTALK)

STALEY: I didn't say that folks. She works all the time. I mean, I hate the word workaholic, but she really revels in keeping, absolutely inundated in the job.

GRAY: I was there after one general election, maybe two days later, and I recall quite vividly talking with the new Majority Leader of the House and they had just won -- the Labor side. And he had just changed offices with his counterpart on the Minority side. That's the way it works. They clean out their desks and they move to a new office. The new office is maybe a foot larger than the old one. And the big deal on this job was, that he was going to get a full-time secretary, the other members of the House of Commons share a secretary. He was going to have a full time secretary because he was the leader of the party. And I thought about our Congressional staffs which sometimes number twenty, and (UNINTELLIGIBLE) tens of thousands, what millions at the end of the year. And we're talking about the Leader of the House of Commons who had a secretary and a little cubicle of an office.

STALEY: It would be just his luck that Liz Ray, or somebody like that would be secretary, too. (LAUGHTER)

GRAY: If you play your cards right. Is there anymore to add? Did you enjoy yourself?

STALEY: I enjoyed myself. I was very impressed and charmed by Mrs. Thatcher, and not intimidated as I'm afraid we were expected to be. She was very candid with us about herself and her family, and her attitude toward her life.

GRAY: How long does she think she'll remain in office?

STALEY: She has intentions of staying there for the full five years, and probably being reelected after that. She's a redoubtable woman, and she is not going to be dislodged from number 10 Downing very easily.

GRAY: I tell you, all I know about her is what I've read. She's a very impressive lady, she comes through as a very impressive, tough, lady in the best sense.

STALEY: I think our interview in "People" this week bears that out.

GRAY: I thank you, and I also envy you. (UNINTELLIGIBLE, CROSSTALK)...Where did they have you bidwacked?

STALEY: I was at Clarridge's(?). That's how I know about the chambermaids. (LAUGHTER)

GRAY: That happens to be one of the great hotels in the world. What were they getting, two weeks ago, per room?

STALEY: You know, I was afraid to find out, so I just said to them, send the bill to the office in London. I would suspect that it would be around -- I had a small room -- so probably one hundred and fifty dollars a night.

GRAY: Yes, if you had a small room. But that is one of the great hotels of all. If you go back in a hundred years, they will have a little card, under "S" that has the number of the room, what side of the street you were on, what you ate, what your preferences were, and what kind of a fellow you were. They really run a check on you.

STALEY: I will say, they asked me -- in my running clothes -- they asked me not to go through the lobby, however. I was offended by that and went through the lobby anyway.

GRAY: I've seen your running clothes. They were right. (LAUGHTER) Richard Staley, Managing Editor of "People." I thank you, sir for a marvelous report on Margaret Thatcher.

(END)