

NEWS OF THE WORLD
- Rosalie Shann.
24.4.80.

I. Is this like your drawing room?

PM. Well, no, we don't use it as a drawing room, no we use the flat upstairs and we only use this for, as I say, when we are officially entertaining, either with a big reception or as a big dinner party, when we have a visiting statesman or we give a reception or something.

PS. It is also, of course, in effect the TV studio.

PM. This - we always do television interviews from here. Either against here or against there. This is very pretty. You see again we have light walls quite a lot of light, 4 windows - windows on 2 sides, and here we have not got a heavy building straight in front of us.

I. So you like lots of light about?

PM. Yes.

PM. Well (laugh) this is what we call the White Sitting Room, ahh this one the Blue Room.

PM. The rooms substantially the same ever since came to live here. The pictures are usually on loan from various museums a lot of them are

And then there's this room, too. At home they are reception rooms.

I. Well they are very grand.

PM. Well they are reception rooms, but they are beautiful. The yellow on the blue and then the white one.

Let's go in here. If we have a working lunch with a visiting statesman, then we have it in here. Because it's a small narrow table and you can talk easily across a narrow table, it makes an enormous difference. And this is the big dining room for if we have a bigger lunch or reception.

I. How many people can you get in here, about 25.

PM. Thirty-two. They are lovely chairs, look at them. And the carpets are lovely, you see they are beautiful, absolutely lovely.

PS. And the Persian carpet is in the White Drawing Room.

I. It is beautiful.

PM. Yes it is. And if we have a big _____, if we have a Prime Ministerial Dinner this is replaced with a horseshoe table, which goes all round. But in a way I somehow like this one. Do you know, these chairs, these Chippendale styled chair, gives a sense of stability.

I. I know.

PM. It really does.

PS. ^{How} Where these the chairs that were made for the Embassy in Brazil in Rio.

PM. I believe they were.

PS. We have got a little book about the House and I'll make sure you get a copy.

I. I'm fascinated about houses.

PM. As I say these are all the official entertaining rooms but they have been like this for a very long time. Dry rot in Harold McMillian's time, then I'm afraid it was torn apart and redone, but the furniture is lovely.

I. But you wouldn't want to change it would you?

PM. Oh No. Good heavens No.

I don't know how long they've had that Chandelier. This is a lovely Persian Carpet. I must just tell you about this Persian Carpet. It is nearly 400 years old.

PS. And the inscription is down here. Loose translation is "this was made by a slave". Oh you've got it there.

PM. I keep the translation here. This is what it says "I have no refuge in the world other than thy threshold. My head has no protection other than this porchway. This is the work of a slave of the holy place in the year (Muslim year) 1520 AD".

I. Really.

PM. Yes.

PS. And it's in remarkable condition considering that it is used for receptions and suchlike.

I. Yes, it has worn well.

PM. Well it takes so many people over it, it really does.

Right, now let's slip out of here now. Let's slip up into the flat, let me tell you about the flat. The front of the house which is offices, the back of the house is the receptions/study rooms. Through there we have all the appointments area and part of the armours area and then above them the switchboard and the odd rooms where people sleep if they are staying the night. (PM and PS talking together)

PM. And I had better show the Cabinet Room too.

Now my little flat is up here. I cannot promise that it's terribly tidy nor am I sure if my husband is back yet, and my secretary also works up here.

PM to Husband. Hello darling. This is from the News of the World. My husband Dennis. I was just showing her the very beautiful reception rooms.

PM to I. I love the soft lighting (referring to her room). So when we get to our room I have lots of I love the soft indirect lighting.

(PM to H. How are you love. H. I'm fine sweetie. PM. We've had some roses

sent us, for St George's day. (exclamations at the roses). Two people sent us roses, so I did them this morning. I. Did you do them yourself. PM. Yes, early this morning. You know they were put into have a drink and then I just quickly Oh they are not very expertly arranged but I. This is quite cosy isn't it.)

PM. This is, this is

I. Did you have this decorated?

PM. No ... No we didn't have anything decorated. What we did was move a lot of furniture around because there was some very nice furniture here but it didn't seem all to be in the best place. (General explanations)

PM. Yes that's very nice. You see I bought this picture up. It's a Lowry and I love Lowry. But you can imagine it was in the study with that green flock wallpaper, and of course it killed it. So I said please could I actually have it up in my flat. (Laugh)

PS. It's a beautiful Lowry isn't it. Great fun.

PM. Yes, yes. (general)

I. Is this the third floor, or is it

PS. Second floor.

PM. Basement, ground, one and two.

That's just a single bedroom and that's a bathroom there.

I. There's that picture of you on The Night.

PM. The night of the Election

And this is the whole cabin. Now this you see was taken, there's the inscription on the carpet, you know the one I read out to you and this was the one in Lusaka, where the Queen

PM. I like the dress looks nice and cool My bedroom is here.

I. This is nice.

PM. Yes ...

I. I like this ... Is that real material this umm pale sort of limey
.....

PM. Yes, it's a sort of mustard, yellow. I prefer that one - this
was used as the sitting room

I. Oh I see. And that was the bedroom ...

PM. Oh yes in time this was used as the sitting room and that was
the bedroom, but the other single room was used as a dressing room and the
bathroom is there, you see. But you will see its a strange arrangement, but
you see I love light and so I so much prefer that one because it looks out
on Horse Guards.

I. Where does this look out on?

PM. This looks out on the side, you see

I. That's over St James' Park.

PM. Yes, yes ..

I. But it's nice though.

PM. Oh yes it's nice. But we have 2 windows here, whereas in that one you
see

Whereas this one you see Well everything goes in from one room to
another

It's a strange flat it's long. Now this is a little well inside, you see.
/are All of the offices/over there and its only when you get back to here that
we have any accommodation. This is a laundry room come flowers come dumping

ground which is absolutely marvellous. It really is very, very useful

I. Do you have much staff?

PM. No, I have no staff but I do have 2 people who come in, sometimes together, sometimes separately, in the mornings.

I. Presumably the housekeeper comes

PM. No, no. I don't have that. My husband

You see, if you notice the rooms are done

The other lot were done in a set of 3, my bedroom, my sitting room, a small bedroom and bathroom. Now this is a sitting room and bedroom.

I. This one of the childrens' rooms?

PM. Yes Bedroom and bathroom here.

PS. So they are all self-contained?

PM. Yes, so they are sort of self-contained.

That's the most exciting wallpaper in the house.

I. It is very modern black and white. It's a bit dizzy making.

PM. I don't know who did that

Just as we have the big sitting room and the small bedroom next door and the bathroom in that other one. So you've got the same thing here.

PS. It's a self-contained suite, yes.

PM. Then you go through an archway

This is my Secretary's little office where she my constituency secretary where she works

But that was once a single bedroom. And there's another ...

I. It goes on doesn't it ...

PS. It does wander about, doesn't it ?

PM. Oh that goes back into the sitting room you've just been into. That's upstairs into the attic, we never go up there at all And that's the other bedroom, you see.

I. Oh yes.

PM. Which, now you can see, we are getting to the Cabinet Office and it's gets darker as you come in here.

Yes Carol usually has this when she comes home.

I. This is a bit dark this room?

PM. Oh yes, it would be dark, well it is, because all the lights are out.

PS. Yes, you've only got one window.

PM. Well, yes it's a nice big bedroom, there's 2 cupboards here you see, to put your clothes in. So it's perfectly alright

So that's the fourth bedroom.

I. Carol's very tidy.

PM. Well she's not here at the moment That's the sitting room, which could serve either bedroom. So it could be a sitting room to either of the bedrooms.

PM. I'll just show you where we go down into the kitchen, which is up and down, up and down, but still And then the kitchen.

I. It's amazing, I've never seen a flat like this

PM. No, well, but you see Downing Street wasn't built really for to have a flat up here. The kitchen is very small ...

I. Do you think by any chance that this was the servants' quarters in the old days?

PM. Oh I've no idea (laugh).

PS. No, but there were occasions when the whole of the house was absolutely fully populated by the Prime Ministerial family - sons, daughters, grandchildren. Yes, I can't remember who it was but one or 2 Prime Ministers in the 19th century

I. Oh it is modest, isn't it?

PM. Yes, this is a sort of galley kitchen

I. It is only about 5ft wide I should think.

PM. Oh yes No room for a table or anything like that but you have to have it here because here is the dining room

I. Do you have a washing machine ...?

PM. Well there is a washing machine in here But then the washing machine is in that laundry come dumping room which is very, very useful.

I. It's very modest, isn't it?

PM. Oh yes, it is ...

And here's the dining room.

PS. That's nice - a small room.

PM. I can't bear this hard light.

I. And were they all here or did you bring in these lamps.

PM. No, no, no ... those were I bought some of the lamps ...

I. What from Street.

PM. Yes. Some were here and I bought some others, because again, I like plenty. I don't like the direct lighting.

Again, this is very nice paper It is a good background paper....
Look at that colour there

I. I like the sort of tangeriney, purple

PM. Yes, with the dark sage down there

I. Sage green carpet.

PS. Presumably you get the sun in here in the morning.

PM. In the morning we get more sun in here than in the whole of the house.

I. So it's the only bit of sun really?

PM. Yes that's right.

I. Do you have breakfast in here?

PM. Yes we have breakfast in here. Well you have got the kitchen absolutely next door.

I. Do you cook it?

PM. Sometimes, sometimes I don't have time

(PM. Good heavens, where has this come from. Oh, yes, St George's Day. That must have come with the flowers. I know where that came from. St George's Taverns on St George's Day. That's why we had so many flowers. Oh, well that's lovely. You don't very often get that with flowers.
I. Whose it from. PM. The St George's Taverns. I expect my husband was there. Yes. PS. They've been advertising all week. PM. They've been advertising all week. PS. Very nice.)

PM. So you can see it is quite a way from the main sitting room. Those are linen cupboards. So you see really, this end of the house is really dining room, kitchen, office and bedroom. With a little Now you see we come into this sort of set of 3 rooms. That's just a fire door. That's the laundry come dumping room

I. Where's your study, or is it downstairs?

PM. Downstairs.

I. Oh I see, so when you're working you You don't work up here.

PM. Oh, I couldn't work up here. At night, not in the day.

I. What in the sitting room?

PM. In the sitting room or in the study

And this is the other way into the flat, if you're not coming from the internal side. It's quite a nice way

(PM. Oh isn't it hot in here. I. Yes it is rather, isn't it. PM. There's no heat on It's internally. PS. It's because its an internal room.)

PM. That's my Crown ... that's my Crown Derby the china pot/in there, which is my favourite.

PS. Nice, isn't it.

PM. Otherwise..... you go through to someone else's office you see Once you enter this area you are into offices. Now and then I almost get lost here. We go down one flight. You see there's staircases all over the place It's alright I'll get you back somehow.

PS. I hope you will Prime Minister, because I haven't been down this staircase.

I. What this one?

PS. But I can guess It senses as if we ought to go through that archway and then turn left, with a bit of luck

I. Well I think that's the most amazing place It's such a little rabbit warren

PM. Yes it is. But once you get the hang of it. The whole of the offices, then you've got this sort of place which is this little bit above is for getting to the flat or for getting from one section to another. That's the lift you come up.

PS. Another way of visualising it is that Downing Street was simply a row of 2-up, 2-down terrace houses and it has been joined by corridors to another building that was actually in Henry VIII's Whitehall Palace.

PM. Can we step back into the study now.

I. Oh here we are!

PM. Yes here we are back again, you see. That where we went out to the flat.

I think I've got it prettier upstairs than here because we've got more lighting, far more light you see.

PS. And the rooms are more of a human size

PM. Yes, they are not so tall, they are more ordinary ceiling height

(I. I'm wearing new shoes. PM. Oh well just kick them off. My dear, what height heels, but they go with the outfit marvellously. I. Well, I bought a pair too small and I kicked them off when I sat having lunch with my bank manager the other day and my daughter, and I couldn't put them on again. So we had to swop shoes under the table. PM. Yes it's a very pretty blouse. I. Thank you. Yes it's Windsmoor/ PM. Is it. It all matches together. I. It's separates. It's a different skirt I mean a different size. And then I've a skirt to match the top, £85.00 the whole lot. Which is not too bad, I suppose is it. PM. Well for what 2 skirts I. No. The suit was £85, this was £85 and the skirt £24 but umm. PM. Those are the kind of prices that they are today

/Civil
Service
Stores.

and I still get a sense of shock ... I. So do I. But look at what we're earning. PM. for the days when £25 for a dress or suit was enormously expensive ... I know but then, of course, you were earning then, what, £5 - £10 a week. Now will you have a drink.)

I. Thank you so much for showing us your flat

PM. But you can see the whole difference. That is a homely flat which anyone could have. That is exactly what I want, except it is a bit stretched out. You see it is totally different, I mean, I couldn't possibly live here in those grand rooms. I don't think anyone did. Well somebody used to.

I. I quite like the red ceilings.

PM. Yes. Now what are you going to have

PM. But you see the Lowry. I must tell you, the Lowry was over here. You know the Lowry picture I and of course the wall paper just killed it. It just killed it. So I took it upstairs and we got Sir Robert there. What I thought it would be rather nice to have in this room, to see if we could collect portraits of Prime Ministers. When I first came here, I think Harold MacMillan was the occupant and it was quite different in those days. You see when I came into this room, I looked at it and said I don't remember it like that - it was cream, when I came into it before - cream wallpaper, there was a bigger settee. Slightly bigger settee and bigger armchairs, in a sort of oatmeal tweed and a cream carpet. And somehow it suited this dark furniture

I. Do you mind me smoking?

PM. Not at all. I don't smoke myself.

I. No I know you don't.

PM. You see its quite quiet here

I. This is where you work.

PM. Most of the day I'm working here. And we will show you the Cabinet Rooms when we go down stairs on the ground floor.

I. But when you go up at night time you

PM. Oh no, well I'm very rarely back before 11.00 - 11.30. But I will take my work, I'll show you the boxes in which I'll take it upstairs and I'll sit upstairs and do it. You must change your atmosphere. If you live over the shop, which is what you really must change your atmosphere. At least, I think it's better here in a way, than the lights they have in the White House beautiful. But you see, at least we have to go across to Parliament every day, everyday, and meet a lot of people and do a lot of work over there, so you are constantly meeting people. Then we have a constituency to go to. Now the American government doesn't have to go to Parliament except once a year doesn't have a constituency and it is a capital, which is an artificial capital city, whereas we are in a thriving, changing commercial capital city.

I. When you go upstairs do you go into another atmosphere?

PM. You go into a completely another atmosphere, yes. Yes.
It's more like a home.

I. Does it seem like changing the year a bit.

PM. Yes, as you go up there you relax a bit. And you flop down. You don't sit down, you flop down. There's a difference.

I. Do you kick your shoes off?

PM. Always (sigh of relief) yes. I came back in the other evening, we had been to Birmingham to speak at the dinner.

PS. Monday night.

PM. Monday night. Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and I was in very high evening shoes fully dressed up. And we hadn't time to change before we came back. And we left Birmingham about midnight got in here, first thing I did

when I got in the front door was to take off my shoes. I couldn't stand them on anymore. They were very high here. I just
I got through the front door and just bent down and kicked them off and they roared with laughter.

PS. One of my first stories about you Prime Minister is at the end of the first reception I attended At the end of the reception you suddenly flopped down onto the settee

PM. Yes, we always do this.

PS. kicked your shoes off and said it's happily over with let's have a drink (laugh).

PM. At the end of a reception the success of a reception in a house like this is to get all the home team circulating and seeing that no-one is left out or not knowing anyone else. Now we can get about 350 in for drinks in these rooms, but some of them won't know very many other people and you've got to get them circulating. So, we will have all the secretarial staff and everyone up I should think we will have 10, 11 or 12, sometimes more, coming in of the home team to see that people are circulating. And as they go at the end we just saunter around and still see them out at about 10 or 11, and then we all home team. So at that stage we go into the end room and kick off our shoes and sit down and relax.

General chit chat.

I. This is exactly what you were talking about, you know, the human side pennies don't fall from heaven, pennies to be earned my typewriter But it is this human stuff which we have been talking already about. One of the things I wanted to ask you, is it true that you only have 3 hours sleep?

PM. No, no more than 3 hours. I average 5 hours. I would usually go to bed at about 12 o'clock.

I. You don't take sleeping pills, do you?

PM. Never, never, never, never.

I. You get up at 7.00, then?

PM. Seven o'clock I put out my hand and turn on the radio, sometimes a little bit earlier, about 7.20, and get up

I. Rodney Tyler sends his love.

PM. Oh how is he? Oh that's lovely, he is also very kind to Carol

I. Yes, he's a very kind person.

PM. He's a super person, absolutely marvellous.

I. And he's had a little girl called

PM. What a lovely name. Lots and lots of love. He hasn't been here, now. Has Rodney been here?

I. I was coming to that, because he came at Christmas, and he said to me that he said to you, how do you do it. Work so hard and look so relaxed and unhurried. And you said that it was adrenalin.

PM. Well its a drain on one's own adrenalin

I. you enjoy it so much

PM. You enjoy it and therefore, um, don't forget its a perpetually interesting life. We haven't stopped today. What have we done today? This morning, got up, breakfast, I ...

I. You got the breakfast?

PM. Yes. I, in fact, it was easy, my husband was away last night so there was only me, so there really wasn't much breakfast to get, with Dennis being away last night. So instead of getting breakfast I made myself coffee and orange juice. I did arrange those flowers. Then I came down ... we had a

media meeting. That is to say, in the morning we have a media meeting, we go through the papers to see what's in, what's the news, what are the issues for the day. What sort of statements are going to be covered. Have we any good news are we to face any bad news. Media meeting. Then we had a Cabinet Committee meeting, starting at 9.45 am. That did not finish until 10.55 am, when we went into a Cabinet meeting at 11.00. I had done all the papers, paperwork, for this last night. You must have done your papers before you go in. The Cabinet meeting ended at about 12.40; Mrs Kennedy came in, the wife of one of the hostages, at 12.45 pm and we went to meet her at the door because there were lots of photographers outside. She sat just where you are sitting now. Tremendous inner strength, you know, I think you need a certain amount of inner strength to to her. Then soon after one o'clock on Thursday, I answered questions in the house there she is, you see. Very, very tall. About 10 inches taller than over 6 feet.

I. Had you done all this on no breakfast then?

PM. Yes, but we had some lunch. You have to be very careful not to put on weight. Tuesday and Thursday, always, we have lunch in here on laps. Someone gets it for us. Now the whole lot was in here Tuesday and Thursday lunchtime.

I. Who would that be, your ministers

PM. No, Tuesday and Thursday's I'm answering questions in the House. We don't know what the questions will be

I. So, who are the people who are having lunch here?

PM. So, who has come in, my Parliamentary Private Secretaries and their member of Parliament, he comes in. And one of my Private Secretaries here, whose job it is to look after Parliamentary questions and to try to spot what they'll be and try to get the answers. And one of the Press Men, Derek Howe.

I. When you eat off your laps, what do you have?

PM. Lunch on laps, well, it comes in from the dining room. Tuesday and Thursday they do lunch for the Private Secretaries here, only Tuesday and Thursday.

I. Then would it be like a salad, or something?

PM. No, you know salad is an extremely difficult thing to eat on laps. Its something you can eat with a fork. It might be Shepherd's Pie, it might be a fish pie, it might be a chicken pie. It might be Chicken on Rice. Something you can eat with a fork. The girl who cooks it for the Private Secretaries, Judy, brings it in here Tuesdays and Thursdays. Pops it on there and we just help ourselves. In meantime, until about 2.30 we are going through the questions that might come up. Now today we had, ahh, we didn't know - we through practically everything - you need to go through the papers, because when they are deciding what to ask a Prime Minister a lot of them look in the news for the day. We had 5 questions on Europe today, one of the Isle of Grain power station, one on Iran, ...

PS. One on Iran, possibly there were 2 on Iran, certainly one, maybe 2
.....

PM. One on the persecution of dissidents and minorities by Russia, one, also, on the Rabbs' report, which on a curious point in the report a suggestion that there should be attacks on armaments. Fortunately, I had looked it up beforehand. Its a pretty obscure section and didn't I say a pretty cursory reference ...

PS. You said a pretty cursory reference in the context of exports generally

PM. Of the tax on exports, generally.

I. So you were discussing this over

PM. Well, no, I don't know what the questions are going to be But over lunch we will discuss what has been the news yesterday, what has been the news today, what people are going to be worried about. And I don't know, I have to answer on foreign affairs, on economic affairs

on energy affairs. You don't know where the questions are going to come from at all. And so what we try to do in an hour and a half is everyone who could be asked about the cost of living today, unemployment today, manufacture and production, you could be asked there's a social security bill, you could be asked about that. You could be asked about the Isle of Grain power station, which is in the news, almost certainly we'll be asked about the hostages. I haven't got to what happened later, then. I was going to receive a fishing deputation today, so I could have been asked about fish. What we do is try to go round us, over that lunch, and try to spot the question, and if we spot

I. I should think that's quite interesting?

PM. Yes, it's extremely interesting. For an hour and a half we do that, letting you know all our secrets. With lunch on laps. Sometimes we guess them, sometimes we don't.

I. So you off the cuff?

PM. We've often one of textiles, and you know who the first 5 members are going to be who will ask. And you will try to say well he has a constituency in Yorkshire and he might be interested in textiles. There was an AGR in that might be what he is going to ask about. Today we thought there was going to be a question about a particular road, it didn't happen, it didn't come as it happened. Because one of the members has had a road scheme, one road scheme stopped, and another one started and there is a great deal of argument. All of this in an hour and a half. 2.30 we go along to the House of Commons, and we do questions, we answer questions. We come after questions, I stayed for a little time what is the next thing that's going on. And then I came back here at 4.30. At 4.30 I had another Cabinet Committee meeting here. At 6.00. At 5.30 I had a whole deputation on fishing from Hull. They had come down to see me. They have great problems in the fish dock town, and they had come down, and we had that meeting for an hour. I then, had an interview with someone else who had come in to see me. Then we had to go back to the House of Commons for the remainder of the debate and a vote. Then I came across here. Do you see, you see, it is a very full, very interesting day.

I. That's goes on day, after day, after day?

PM. That goes day after day. I've not yet done the paper work.

I. And you do that later?

PM. I do that later.

And this morning, early, I saw Joy my secretary, as well as

I. Do you get tired

PM. You don't get tired until you stop.

I. When you stop it's about 2.00?

PM. Yes. But I think the reason why I sleep so well is that I don't have a lot of sleep. Now in the recess I do have a little more sleep, but I find that I soon get slept out. You know you don't sleep as soundly.

I. Do you have a hot drink?

PM. No.

I. You just go to bed, straight from your work?..

PM. Yes, yes

I must just take a detective story to take my mind off what I've been doing. Or do some

I. What are you reading at the moment?

PM. Oh, a John Le Care one, ahh, The Honourable Schoolboy?

PS. Is that what you are reading now? You haven't got on to Smiley's People yet?

PM. No Dennis has read Smiley's People. Dennis said that the Honourable Schoolboy was better.

PS. Well, in order of priority, I think Tinker, Sailor, Soldier, Spy is the best, because it is the tightest. The Honourable Schoolboy is a superb read, but its a little self-indulgent

PM. I love the detective stories, or the spy stories, that kind of story to take ones mind off

I. Just to swing back to when you get the breakfast for Dennis in the morning, what would he have, what would you give him?

PM. Usually, we don't have a cooked breakfast during the week, unless both of us have been out late the night before and not had very much and then you don't want a meal just before you go to bed, so then we will have a cooked breakfast.

I. What, like bacon or eggs or something?

PM. Yes, oh yes. In that little kitchen if you started to cook kippers or haddock, it would smell all over the flat.

I. Yes, so you can only have

PM. Egg and bacon, or poached egg. Um. But normally we would have half a grapefruit and toast. But I try not to have the toast.

I. Yes, ahh, one thing I was going to ask you, was about diet. Do you, umm, you obviously watch your weight.

PM. You watch your weight, yes.

I. Because you are invited out to so many dinners ...

PM. Because you are invited out. Tuesdays and Thursdays, no. Never out to lunch on Tuesday or Thursday because then

I. What you do go to do you weigh yourself?

PM. Oh my dear, no, your clothes tell you. You don't need to weigh

yourself. But your clothes tell you.

I. So you only eat a little do you?

PM. Yes, but then again I like good food, and there are times when you are tempted, so there are times when I have to cut out meals. If you come in late, you know, and you pick something up the chances are that you pick something up starchy, because

I. I read about you, is that hunger and cold, you said, is good, because it makes the brain

PM. Well let's put it this way. Never, if you've got a lot of work to do, never work in a hot room, it'll make you sleepy and you know, I often go and speak in a hot room and you find people are nodding, it is that what you say is not interesting, it is just that there is no air in it.

I. You think it's best to be hungry too?

PM. It's best not to be too full, put it that way

I. Because as you say the blood goes to the head

PM. Yes. blood goes to digest your food. If you are speaking at a dinner you don't really want, it's the worst thing to do is speak at a dinner, you don't really want to eat a very hearty meal before you speak. But if you work in a room that's too hot you will get sleepy. It is difficult, sometimes if you get a cold and I put on the electric fire upstairs, you know, the atmosphere dries up and you get, it takes a lot of oxygen, and so you get sleepy. I know sometimes I just have to put it off fairly quickly and open a window.

I. But do you get tired?

PM. Yes, I do. I have one or two low points during the day, you're not tired providing you are working flat out, ever, this is why I say the adrenalin flows inside you. But I will come back from the House of Commons, quite often about 10.45 in the evening, quite tired and you go into a room and its relaxing, I know I've got a lot of work to do and there's no point in fighting against the tiredness, it is much simpler

to sit down in an armchair, or one of those long chairs, and just snooze for about 15 minutes. Churchill used to do that, I'm always told he did. Then I wake and then I'm alert again and that will take me right through until 2.00 am. But if I tried, but if I try when I'm tired to do the work I will not do it properly and I'll nod and nod, so its simpler just to nod off for 15 minutes.

I. Have you changed much since

PM. I've no idea. Do you think I have (addressing PS)?

PS. Well if I've only been here 6 months, no I don't think I've seen any significant change.

PM. Oh I just think I am the same before as I am now, the whole time. I think I have, but I'm not quite sure how. I think it is that um like every new job, you are a bit fearful at first you don't

I. Attempt the protocol

PM. Tense

I think we've seen most things now, over the course of the year. We've seen the summit change, we've seen European Summits, we've seen Economic Summits, we've travelled around a good bit, we've seen Commonwealth Summits, we've met almost every known world statesman and they tend to come through London. We've had rows, we've had problems, we've had the march into Afghanistan. It has been a pretty full year

PS. Yes, indeed.

PM. taken to it like a duck to water, you know you feel as though you are in your natural habitat.

I. Then you were made for it, weren't you?

PM. I do feel as though I am in my natural habitat. I miss Flood Street, because that's home

I. Do you go back there?

PM. Now and again, yes I do go back there, because some of my clothes are there and I sometimes want a change. Lots of the summer ones or we go in and have a look sometimes they will say you know, you've got a bit of maintenance work to do or

I. So you nip back there?

PM. Yes, I do.

I. What about once a week or?

PM. No, nothing like as once a week, could not be more than once in 3 weeks, sometimes longer than that. But I just go back sometimes. Straightaway it's home. I mean it's a different atmosphere.

I. Has it affected I mean, like obviously your family life and your marriage?

PM. I have very little. Dennis, mercifully is just as busy as I am, he, as I say, he has a study upstairs as well and we are both busy, we've both always been busy and it has always been recognised that home is the base, both the base and the refuge, you know you go out from it, in inspiration you go out from it. We are always together at breakfast time and we go out from it and whatever time of day, we sort of merge back in the evening. And that was the way we all worked and ... I always thought it was an enormous comfort. It was like my children stayed living at home as long as they did. My son still lives at home, he lives here.

I. And Carol she's

PM. They didn't want to shoot off and find flats in London. But then don't forget they had a degree of freedom because I was not always there and standing over them.

I. Were you a strict mother? Are you a strict mother?

PM. Was I a strict mum. Nothing like as strict as my parents were with me. Because when you have been brought up very strictly yourself you tend not to bring up your children so strictly. But right is right and wrong is wrong and you certainly bring them up in that ...

I. Are you a close family?

PM. We are a close family. Even though we are far-flung, Carol's in Australia ...

I.

PM. Yes, she came home, she came for Christmas, for 3 weeks holiday which she decided to take over the Christmas period. And then she heard I was going to Washington and it was in her holidays and she said please could she come as well and we took her, and, of course, she can do secretarial work or anything. She was working as a Solicitor's secretary and a journalist and she had a marvellous time.

I. You paid for her?

PM. Yes, I paid for her fare and I said alright I'll give it to you as a Christmas present.

I. But are you your close in this sort of

PM. We're very close. My friends, and my extravagant friends, used to ring Carol up on Saturday or Sunday.

I. How much is that?

PM. It depends how long

I.

PM. No its not as much as you would think it is.

PS. The basic charge these days is quite cheap per minute

PM. Well it was on a Sunday, you see, yes.

PS. But you can have a long conversation

PM. Usually

I. Do you ring her every Sunday?

PM. No alternate Sundays, alternate Sundays.

I. So you are close to her?

PM. Yes.

I. So you talk to her?

PM. So we never get out of touch.

I. Of course, I feel, if you don't mind me being a bit blunt about it, that a lot of people in the public think that you are so sort of career that you aren't like a proper mum

PM. As I say, we were always together in the morning and evening and we always used to flop down at the end of the day and started to talk to one another about what we had been doing

I.

PM. No, no he can sleep like a dormouse anywhere, fortunately. Umh but when I come back always, yes, or sometimes he will come and from the first evening's engagement

I. So, you, then you can have a chat in the evening or you might for you

PM. Yes, sometimes he'll come across to the House of Commons, 'cause mostly I'm there and he'll come across. Frequently he has engagements of his own in the evening he does quite a lot of travelling about the country at the moment. We both have always lived very full lives.

I. Is there any particular time of the week when you are together.

PM. Well, weekends, usually. Weekends. Sometimes if I'm in the constituency he'll come with me. He is marvellous with them too. And usually . He loves Scotney, too. in a little flat in Scotney, it had a lovely garden.

I. That's Scotney in Kent?

PM. Kent. Beautiful gardens, a National Trust garden, that's lovely. I went down there at Easter

I. I live in Kent, I should know

PM. Scotney in Kent, not far from Tunbridge Wells. I went down there at Easter because I can wander in the gardens

I. Is it in a big house?

PM. The flat is in a house, in a National Trust House, and we have a little flat there. But the whole property is National Trust. And you wander, you know, you can always wander in the gardens in the morning.

I. Do you go there often?

PM. I don't go there often. Dennis lives down there more than I do, but again it's a refuge. Normally at weekends, you see, I will try to get back to Chequers because that's a beautiful garden. It was really left as a country house for Prime Ministers to get away to.

I. And you work there, of course?

PM. Yes I do work there and there are a lot of people down there. But that is marvellously looked after, and I don't have to get the meals there. So that really takes an enormous

I. You don't have to cook down there, then?

PM. That's right. Yes, but I mean cooking is a relaxation. You know yourself as a career woman. Housework, sorting out the cupboards, sorting out your clothes, turning out your handbag, sorting out the airing cupboard, go pottering into the kitchen, moving things around that's relaxation. It's not work, it's relaxation.

I. So you have a day?

PM. Yes. Well sometimes they will both come in together, sometimes one.

I. But will they sometimes have a jolly good go over

PM. Yes,

I. You tell them what to get for the evening meal? Do you cook it?

PM. The evening meal, we don't have very many cooked evening meals, not more than about once a week, because we are out so much. When we do have an evening meal, its a simple one.

I. Do you cook it?

PM. Frequently.

I. I see. And they'll shop for you.

PM. Yes. And also we'll put some things in the deep freeze so that I can quickly take something out of the deep freeze and just pop it in ...

I. So your relaxation is really cooking, walking in the garden

PM. Yes, yes reading, entertaining friends.

I. Yes, I was wondering about that I don't mean the big entertainments we have talked about.

PM. No, no friends at home or down at Chequers, sometimes here. Quite often here.

I. Do you have time to keep up with your friends?

PM. No, umm. No, you don't have nearly time enough, but somehow you do but you don't have quite a lot of people in. They tend to be people with whom have political business as well or contacts, yes.

I. But if you really relax and away from the whole thing

PM. Well the weekend is a complete change. But sometime over the weekend I've got to sort out clothes from the last week, the ones that need to go and be replaced, sometimes if it's a little job I will do it, but you know, you can't press suits. You've got to sort out what sort of clothes have to go to the cleaners, you've got to get your handbags orderly, you've got to put your gloves and scarves back, you've got to take your dresses out and have a look at them, if there a button that wants sewing on, you've got to do that. You know

I. Do you sew it on yourself?

PM. Yes, the small jobs, I always do myself, the bigger ones I haven't time to do. The things, you know, that you can do quickly and easily ...

I. You've got somebody who will take something to the cleaners, of course

PM. Yes, we are lucky, the cleaners come and collect

I. How do you are you absolutely bored stiff I wasn't going to go too much into the looks business, you must have been asked that

so many times. But how do, you know, everybody says, how do you keep your hair so super.

PM. I don't always. You..... Well it's done Monday morning, it's washed, it's shampooed and Thursday morning its Carmen Rollers.

I. Someone comes here and does it?

PM. Yes. All the rest of the time it just has to be alright.

I. So, you do it yourself.

PM. Yes. For television, someone usually comes in and does my makeup, but normally For television its a little different sort of makeup, its much heavier and the lights drain all the colour out of your face so you have got to have more colour put in.

I. And when do you buy do they come here?

PM. I would buy which is usually about twice a year. Not so much in shops but I know. This is Mansfield and I'll dash up to Mansfield wholesale house and

I. You actually go there?

PM. I actually go there, because then I can just look and see and say please could I try that on, but they know I am an absolutely standard 14. Marks and Spencer's always sends one down for me to look at, they know what I like.

I. What have you got

PM. Suits, blouses

I. That a Marks' blouse?

PM. Yes. Blouses. Mansfield, Marks Lots of blouses. And they do some excellent suits and I have one overcoat from there.

And, of course, everything

I. What, all your undies are Marks?

PM. Yes, yes, I'm sorry, please don't put it like that, but you know, yes we all do, stockings are Marks

I. Yes well they are so easy aren't they. But about twice a year you'll have a sort of

PM. That's right, for winter and the spring.

I. Have you

PM. And then I have a friend of mine who makes some clothes. But my best, best clothes are made, in a sense for the Lord Mayor's Banquet or you are doing a mass meeting on television, or you have a major overseas visit, you will have one or two things made and they are and I always go for the classics. Classic suits are made. Oh, this is a Mansfield, this is the sort of thing which I will wear everyday, but the classics when you are representing your country.

I. Do you have yourself, sometimes?

PM. No, no, because it stays. If its

I. It's permed?

PM. Its a light perm, about once every 4 months, but if it is shampooed and set once a week then I just Carmen Roller it It only takes half an hour you see.

I. Its organisation, you must be pretty well

PM. Yes it's organisation and method, and, yes, getting yourself..... but it has been like this for a long time, it wouldn't know how else to go.

I. Do you ... you very rarely I have never seen you in slacks.
Do you wear slacks?

PM. Only if I have to go and inspect a submarine, or something.
(laugh)

I. What about do you wear jeans or something?

PM. No, I will just wear a tweed skirt and top.

I. Why do not wear slacks?

PM. I haven't got the figure for it.

I. Haven't you?

PM. Nearly (laugh)

I. I think you'd look super in slacks.

PM. at home, because I don't know how you are going to do, I don't know if my colleagues will like it

I. Oh no, no.

PM. Mansfield, Marks and Sparks, Marks and Sparks Homes
but we had difficulty, I sort of started to notice that some of the things I've worn the fabrics weren't British, but then I was given some fabric when I was in Yorkshire and I had it made up into a suit. The blue suit that I wear a very great deal made for me from that fabric and that's why I wore it at the party conference, /it I've worn/to see Carter, I wore it to see Helmut Smitz, I wore it when Giscard came. Marvellous British fabric and I just notice the other fabrics I got weren't as good. Anyway we've now tracked that down, its Soltaire, its a French name but its a British worsted fabric. We've just got another couple of lengths upstairs, but really a British heavy worsted you cannot beat, because they are heavy

and they don't crease. You see one things that crease.

I. But do Marks use brute force, for a type of word, bring along a load of stuff?

PM. They will send some stuff down for me, but they know what I like, they know that I like classic suit, they know the kind of blouses I like. And if they have got something in that they think I will like they just send it down on approval

I. Do they send down mad things?

PM. No, never. Yes, Clive we are nearly through. You want me to go over to the Foreign Office.

Clive. No, he can't arrange it, but he would be grateful for 5 or 10 minutes.

I. Can you tell me, do you umm, has the umm, job affected your family life, with Mrs Thatcher, your children. I mean do they, are they great support to you.

PM. They know that they can get at me, as it were, if they really liked over the weekend, but we all know that we have always, all of us lived a very, very active life.

I. Do you ever have rows?

PM. No, I never have time for rows. But I don't row

I.

PM. Well, I don't know, but once you've said things, its jolly difficult to take them back so its better not to say them.

I. So you don't have rows?

PM. No, I think we all let of steam sometimes, but not against one

another

I. So you all, sort of get, Do you ever, do you get nervous sometimes

PM. Always, a lot, often. Oh yes. Of course you do, you never get rid of it and if you didn't get tense you wouldn't be doing your best.

I. Is there any way you can

PM. No. No way I know

I. You just have to live with it?

PM. You just live with it.

I. Do you ever wake up in the night and worry about some problem?

PM. If you've got ..., yes, if you've got something very big on, yes you would, the night before. Maybe its a very, very major speech, a very, very major international conference where you, umm, I think I spent a very uneasy night at the Luxembourg conference this weekend. Complicated arguments to put about the budget, and it doesn't matter what you are reading, it won't take it out of your mind.

I. So any particular thing, like unemployment or

PM. If you have a really heartrending personal case, and I still do get um in my little book, interviewing personal cases from my constituency, you can get some very bothersome cases.

I. Somebody who is going through a very bad time?

PM. Yes, someone who is having a very bad time and who has come to us for help. There are all sort of problems. You sometimes wish you could have got at them earlier so you could have sorted them out. I used to think those were the most emotional evenings spent, when I

first became a member of Parliament, and I used to do them every week.

I. You still do them?

PM. Oh yes, I still do them, yes

I. About every other few months?

PM. Oh, 3 weeks.

I. Every three weeks?

PM. Yes.

I. If it was like one person who had some problem come out, or something, I'm just making it up now?

PM. One person who I can remember had an acute problem, usually it might be that they had got into debt, they hadn't got a job, they hadn't been able to get on with their family. You get an awful accumulation of problems, that are built up one on top of another, because they haven't really got anyone to help sort out the first one in time. And if you fall into debt (End of First Side)

..... I don't cry in relation to me, I don't cry in relation to criticism.

I. You are tougher, are you?

PM. I will cry in the relation of something that I am watching, yes.

I. You have to be tough, don't you for this job really?

PM. Well, yes what's tough about it. You see what you learn is that if someone says something horrid about you, you notice it and it stays in your own mind far more than it stays in anyone
/If
elses. /I read something horrid about someone else, and I don't really

take very much notice of it, I just gloss over it, and its just passed out of my mind.

I.. But if its you, you do feel it?

PM. If its you, one's self feels it, but you know that it doesn't mean very much to anyone else. Of course you feel it. Honestly, you just, you might Oh Gosh I might have done that better

I. on your self doubts?

PM. No-one can go, no-one can go out to the wicket and score a hundred runs every time, and you know no-one paints if you are the most marvellous picture you can't paint a marvellous picture everyday. Even the most wonderful speaker didn't make a wonderful speech every day. Everyone performs less than their maximum

I. Do you ever make mistakes?

PM. Yes, of course you do, you will never learn if you don't.

I. And is Mr Thatcher, is he a great help to you?

PM. He's marvellous. Home is a safety valve for both of us.

I. So you can talk to him?

PM. Absolutely, and we always, you know, if you are less than, if you really are less than your top effervescent self you can

I. You can be yourself?

PM. Yes, yes, yes. You can let your hair down.

I. Do you have much political chat between you?

PM. Oh yes, quite a lot. Oh, good heavens, yes.

I. Does he argue with you?

PM. Oh it isn't arguing but you can talk it over, say oh something happened today and I felt strongly about it. He'll say, oh aren't you being too sensitive about it. Or, really you can't bother about little things like that. You see someone else can put things back into perspective for you.

I. Can I just ask you something my daughter wanted me to ask you? Can you say what you think is the main thing that you have done for women and children this year and what is going for the future?

PM. Who was this?

I. My daughter.

PM. I think the most important thing I have tried to do is to bring about the change of attitudes and its working, the change of attitudes so that people don't look to Government for everything, they are able to look for themselves, their performance, you know what they can do for themselves and to give them the opportunity to do it. And to give more people the chance to own their own home.

I. Despite mortgages?

PM. Despite mortgages, despite mortgages. There's still a demand for mortgages, we'll get mortgage rates down. But look at all the people in council houses, with the opportunity to buy their own home, and what they are taxed at. We've given them a hope for the future, but their own future, built in their own way.

I. What do you think is the best moment of your year?

PM. Well when I went to Paris and was offered a seat on the foreign government.

.... and I would never, you know, I would never, I didn't say we won until we got the results of the seats. We didn't.

I. But that moment when you met the Queen?

PM. And then I came back here and I'll never forget the first 2 days here we actually got stuck into and we formed one faster than anyone else.

I. Is that the moment you knew?

PM. That must have been the best. And then we felt reasonably confident when I went at about 5 o'clock in the morning

I.

PM. I was tired and it was difficult to go to sleep, one didn't seem to need sleep at all, then. And even though, this is why I say adrenalin works, even though you'd had the most strenuous run up to the election. It had been 4 years, in a way when we had been on tenterhooks because there could be an election any time, and a very strenuous election time, 4 weeks. Strenuous in nervous terms ...

I. And when you got there you couldn't relax perhaps?

PM. You couldn't relax. The thing is you must have been physically tired, but you never felt physically tired. You came in here and you had as much energy as if you had never been through the election campaign.

I. Did you not feel tired

PM. No.

I. May I ask, you probably will say, no don't ask? But when you visit the Queen do you talk about personal things and children sometimes?

PM. Oh no, don't ask. We can't say.

I. And what was the worst thing?

PM. What was the worst thing? I think that the thing that I will not like to go through again was the Dublin Summit.

I. How much higher can you go?

PM. Oh you can't. You can only just try to achieve things for your country you look to your own efforts, your own standard of living and you don't reckon that your duty to society is finished when you have just obeyed the law, you know you believe in doing something that bothers I am personally ambitious, which is to go on being here for a few more years, yet and then after that, ex-Prime Ministers do have their uses, but Prime Ministers often find that they could do with an ex-Prime Minister to do a job.

I. But you would go on working, wouldn't you?

PM. I couldn't live without work. This is what makes me so sympathetic I don't know if I could live without a job.

I. Your relaxation, in a way, is work?

PM. A different form of work.

I. Yes, like cooking,

PM. Yes, that's right, yes

I. What sort of things do you cook for Mr Thatcher?

PM. Oh well, I'm afraid that he just likes simple things, really simple things, we will go to bacon egg or poached egg or an ommelette you know that kind of simple thing. Fresh food, fresh food, cook something fresh.

I. You garden don't you?

PM. Well I used to garden, I love it. I love the azelaes and rhodendrons in the garden.

I.

PM. Yes I do, we take a great interest in the

Thank you for coming.

I. I'm sorry I bombarded you like that.

PM. That's alright.

Goodbye and thank you very much for coming, thankyou. No you come this way and Neville will see you out.