

Robin, Bernard, Claire, Jim Hacker

Bernard It's the BBC ...

Jim stands - his unfinished whisky is left on the coffee table

(On the phone) Oh, I see. Fine. *(He hangs up)* That was actually the Press Office. BBC Television's devoting their Sunday morning programme to you, Prime Minister.

Jim Devoting it to me?

Bernard No other stories. A full hour about you.

Jim Should I be pleased?

Bernard I fear not. It will be called "Government In Crisis".

Jim Christ!

Bernard They want to interview you about the rumoured Cabinet reshuffle and the deadlock in the Summit at Lancaster House.

Claire You're not going to do that, Jim. *(To Bernard)* He's not doing that.

Jim If I could mention the Kumranistan loan -

Claire You can't! Not until Kumranistan has definitely signed on the dotted line and not until this euro business with the European Central bank is sorted out.

Jim Phone them back. Pretend to be helpful.

Claire Whatever they ask, just give them one of the replies in the red binder by the phone.

Bernard crosses to the phone and peruses the red binder with interest

Bernard I haven't seen this before.

Jim Supplied by the Press Office.

Claire At my suggestion. I worked on it with them.

Bernard Good. Right. *(He dials)* Yes ... may I speak to Robin Simpson? *He listens)* Yes, it's Bernard Woolley here, the Prime Minister's Principal Private Secretary ... He can't speak to you himself, but how can I help?

He presses the speakerphone button so that Jim and Claire can hear

Robin *(v.o.)* Well, it seems he is losing the support of his cabinet and his backbenchers.

Claire Number three.

Bernard turns to page 3 and reads a reply from the red binder

Bernard "The Prime Minister is not interested in Westminster tittle-tattle. He has the full support of his colleagues and his party on all matters of substance. It's business as usual."

Robin (v.o.) I see. But has the Prime Minister thought of resigning in the interests of party unity?

Bernard (turning the page) You're *seriously* asking me that?

Claire Number four.

Jim joins Claire on the sofa and reads the red binder with her. Claire lip-mimes along with Bernard

Bernard "The Prime Minister was elected to do a job and he intends to get on with it. It will mean tough decisions but that's what the country expects and that's what he's going to do." (He smiles happily at Claire) Next?

Robin (v.o.) What about the awful state of the economy?

Jim } (together) Number one!

Claire

Jim now lip-mimes along too

Bernard "This isn't a British crisis, it's a *world* crisis. Many countries are worse affected than we are. We intend to play our part within the Community."

Robin (v.o.) But what exactly is he doing about It?

Jim Two?

Claire nods

(to Bernard) Two.

Bernard (into the phone) Number Two. (Reading) "The government will do everything that needs to be done. He will not flinch from his duty and a statement will be made when the time is ripe."

Robin (v.o.) Why do you think the European Financial summit has got nowhere?

Bernard I don't think that.

Jim } (together) FIVE!

Claire

Bernard What?

Jim }

Claire (together) FIVE!

Robin (v.o.) Is the Prime Minister there?

Bernard No, sorry, that's the TV you can hear. (He mouths "Shhhh" as he switches off the speakerphone and turns a page) Um ... "The Prime Minister was elected to do a job and - " Oh no, not that, I've done that one already ... (Flipping the page to read number 5) "The meeting -stroke-conference has certainly not been a failure. There has been invaluable groundwork and a blueprint has been drawn up for the next phase. Rome wasn't built in a day!" (He listens) Thank you.

Jim What are you thanking her for?

Bernard *(with his hand over the mouthpiece)* She says I've been thoroughly unhelpful.

Jim Well done. Well done, both of you. *(He pours himself a Scotch)*

Bernard *(into the phone)* What? *(To Jim)* "How happy is the Prime Minister about his future?"

Jim He's as happy as a rat-catcher on a rubbish dump.

Bernard The Prime Minister is as happy as an environmental health officer on a civic amenity site. *(He hangs up)* *Jim and Claire are enjoying drinks after dinner*