

Bob

Stewart

STEWART Would it help, do you think, if I tried to clarify the situation a little?

BOB How do you mean?

STEWART Perhaps she feels she's being kept in the dark. Does she? Is that the problem, do you think?

BOB Something like that, yes.

STEWART Well, in that case, it's a problem easily solved. (*He smiles; pause.*) By the way, I meant to ask: somebody was saying that you and the Krogers have got the same sort of car – is that right?

BOB Yes.

STEWART You've both got black Ford Consuls?

BOB Yes.

STEWART How extraordinary.

*No response.*

Or perhaps it isn't. What do you think?

BOB There are plenty of Consuls about – 'specially round here.

STEWART Yes, true. (*brief pause*) Nevertheless – to find two black Ford Consuls owned by such close neighbours – I must say that strikes me as being rather...well, rather surprising.

*No response.*

How did it happen? Whose car came first?

BOB Ours. Helen said how nice it was, how smart, and so on – and then Peter told me they were going to get one exactly the same.

STEWART Uh-huh. (*brief pause*) Is he a car person? Is he interested in cars?

BOB No, not particularly.

STEWART He just took a fancy to yours...

BOB Well, yes.

STEWART (*smiling*) Well, why not? It's a very nice car. What are his interests? Does he have any hobbies?

BOB Nothing special. I don't think, um... (*pause*) Books, of course. Apart from that...nothing much. (*pause*) He likes music. He listens to music a lot.

STEWART On the radio?

BOB And records. He's got quite a collection.

STEWART Don't tell me he's one of these hi-fi fanatics.

BOB Well, a bit, I suppose – stereo sound, FM radio, headphones, you know, rumble filters. All that sort of stuff.

STEWART Headphones...?

BOB He likes classical music and she doesn't. She can't stand it. So he listens to his records through the headphones.

STEWART Well, that's one way of avoiding domestic strife, I suppose. What about Mrs Kroger? Does she have a hobby?

BOB No, not really. She's too much of a Dizzy Lizzy to do anything properly. Poor old Helen. She makes us laugh.

STEWART How often do you go to the Krogers' house?

BOB Hardly ever. Barbara pops in for a cup of tea most weeks, but as far as I'm concerned – well, four or five times a year – birthdays, Christmas, that sort of thing, you know.

STEWART *nods, pause.*

Peter works at home – I think we told you. That makes it a bit difficult. We're always afraid of disturbing him.

STEWART Yes, quite. Apart from you, does Mrs Kroger have any particular friends?

BOB She's friendly with everyone. She's a very friendly woman.

STEWART In what way?

**BOB** (*not understanding the question*) What?

**STEWART** How does this friendliness manifest itself?

**BOB** (*irritated*) She's just an ordinary friendly woman. She pops in for a chat, she worries if anything's wrong, she takes an interest in people, that's all.

**STEWART** Takes an interest...?

**BOB** Well, you know.

**STEWART** Perhaps you could give me an example.

**BOB** (*angrily*) I don't often see her, Mr Stewart, I'm at work when she comes round; Barbara's the one she talks to, not me. I don't know what she does or what she says. Anyway, there's nothing sinister about being friendly, is there?

**STEWART** Nothing sinister, no. It just adds to the pattern.

**BOB** Pattern?

**STEWART** Well, if the Krogers are mixed up in this business – and I say if – if they are, then it would be essential for them to know what's going on. Any change of routine, any change of neighbour...it could be dangerous for them.

**BOB** You can make anything look suspicious if you try hard enough.

**STEWART** True.

**BOB** I mean, all that stuff about the cars. Why shouldn't they buy a car like ours if they want to?

**STEWART** No reason at all – on the other hand, it could be construed as an extremely clever thing to do.

**BOB** Clever, why?

**STEWART** Because it would certainly confuse anyone who might be watching them; I mean, if one of my chaps saw a black Ford Consul parked in Cranley Drive he couldn't be sure, at a glance, whether the Krogers were at home or whether you were. Might be useful, that.