

Stewart

BOB No...no, I'm not much of a drinker.

STEWART Neither am I. Shockingly expensive these days.

BOB Yes, isn't it.

STEWART Shocking. (*Brief pause; he smiles.*) Well, now, let me apologise for barging in on you like this. It's a bit alarming, I know, when a complete stranger rings up out of the blue, and I'm most grateful for you, ah – for your allowing me to come here – most grateful. The trouble is, it's a bit difficult for me to explain – precisely – what all this is about, what I do, and so on, because so much of my work concerns confidential matters, and I'm simply not allowed to discuss them in any detail.

BOB Fair enough.

JULIE Are you a policeman?

STEWART Not really, no – although some of my duties – do tend to overlap with those of the police force. In actual fact, I'm a civil servant – (*He grins.*) and that, as we all know, can cover a multitude of sins. (*He laughs; nobody responds to his joke; he rises to his feet.*) Do you mind if I wander about? I find it so much easier to, um...

BARBARA }
BOB } (*together, giving their consent*) No, please.

STEWART Thank you. (*He paces slowly across the room.*) Now, then...the reason why I'm here. Well, we need your help, it's as simple as that. We've become very interested in one particular chap and we're anxious to find out what he does, where he goes, and so on. And the only way we can do that is by asking a lot of rather boring questions. In other words, it's just a straightforward, routine enquiry. There's nothing to be nervous about – it's just routine.

BOB Who is this man? Do we know him?

BARBARA Does he live round here?