

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 122. Question Time: Leaking Liz Truss, the funniest person in politics, and 'Killing Thatcher'

Thank you for listening to The Restless Politics for ad-free listening, early access to episodes, membership to our chat community. Please sign up at TheRestlessPolitics.com.

Or, if you're listening on Apple Podcast, you can subscribe within the app in just a few clicks.

So, welcome to another episode of The Restless Politics Question Time with me, Alistair Campbell.

And with me, Rory Stewart. And we're here in Belfast, but I wanted to start with one question.

So, what do you make of the current crisis befalling the CBI? What does it say about corporate Britain?

Is there a better way for the business community to be represented and have their voices heard and Westminster Whitehall? Is that a question about Tony Danker's support of Labour or has he done something else?

Oh, this is just the classic Tory party, negative campaign, sort of sinister smeary that you build.

No, I think, I'm sure this is about the allegations against Tony Danker, the head of the CBI, that have led to him departing his post. So, I'm guessing that's quite serious.

And then, whether there is something deeper about the culture there or not, I don't know.

I'm a very, very close friend of his predecessor, Carolyn Fairburn.

Oh, I think she's great. And she was one of the few people who was prepared to make really constructive, detailed proposals on a soft Brexit, which I thought was absolutely vital.

And businesses failure to do that. And I really think business did fail to do that.

I kept saying, you guys have got so much riding on Brexit. You've got untold resources.

You could be spending millions funding think tanks and campaigns to come up with a really constructive proposal on a good, compromised customs union Brexit.

And none of them did it. They either privately backed second referendum remain, or they just kept quiet. And that was terrible, I felt, for someone like me trying to campaign for something more like a customs union Brexit, that there were no voices out there really producing the papers.

Boy, the ERG had them. They had Brady arrangements and Malthouse compromises and Sangara agreements

and all these weird things that we've now fortunately forgotten being produced a lot of them by Tufton Street think tanks.

But Carolyn Fairburn was one of the few people prepared to engage in trying to produce concrete details

on what a better Brexit deal would look like. But even she didn't actually produce what we wanted, which was the 500 page chapter and verse campaign, which would allow us to go to the Guardian and the Times and others saying, this is what it looks like and get the MPs behind it.

I'm very pleased that you fell into my little jab there of turning a question that you were pushing to me,

trying to suggest that anybody who supported the Labour Party was involved in some sort of terrible sex scandal

into a discussion of how brilliant by very good friend Carolyn Fairburn is.

Thank you very much for that, Rory. Now moving on, Alison Golding.

Is Rishi Sunak really any better than Trussell Johnson?

The scale of government financial losses during his watch has transferred PM.

His failure to stop utility profits going abroad rather than to the UK infrastructure

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 122. Question Time: Leaking Liz Truss, the funniest person in politics, and 'Killing Thatcher'

and he's deliberately leaving the NHS to rot, all say not to me.
Tellinore, could Rory explain why he's a fan of Rishi Sunak?
I applaud his efforts on Northern Ireland EU relations but could never be a fan of anyone who enables and reinforces Swallow Braverman on asylum seekers.
Brackets, Rory is correct on Labour's attack ads so we can park that.
We've talked a lot about that last week but fair question, isn't it?
I think the first question is a good question and obviously people who are strongly Labour are going to be against Rishi Sunak and absolutely I do agree that I find Swallow Braverman's stuff around boats and asylum and Rory and are deeply, deeply uncomfortable and one of the things that has made me uncomfortable with Rishi Sunak is the fact that Swallow Braverman is home secretary.
I hope he's now going to move to get rid of her as he becomes more confident in his position and I think that's something that people should judge him on.
So you said on the main podcast that you think that might happen.
Is that wishful thinking?
Well, it's to do with and this is something we've talked about a lot and we've talked particularly about here in Northern Ireland which is how much you can say no to your party and confront your party and that's the genius of politics, isn't it?
Because you can be like Boris Johnson just feeding the very worst instincts of your party all the time or you can be, I'm afraid to be honest, like Theresa May, ending up very isolated from your party not really bringing them with you and it's very difficult to judge from the outside how tough you could be but I think and this is something I can give you credit for you've been pushing Rishi Sunak on being tough for a more confrontational towards Boris Johnson on this trust and I think we'd like to see it with Swallow Braverman.
On the plus side very quickly, I'm very struck by the fact that ministers I admire and cabinet ministers too just say to me consistently he is the first grown-up Prime Minister they've seen in a long time and what they're talking about there is number 10 is run much, much more professionally and thoughtfully he really masters his briefs but he's not strangely like Gordon Brown and some people would have accused Theresa May of this somebody who masters his briefs but doesn't delegate he's somebody who masters briefs and seems to be able to allow people to get on with their job first time we've had a Prime Minister I think that I've felt for a long time where the people who work with him closely really admire him but he is I guess in the end still quite private, quite introverted and he's still very much a conservative you know more on the right conservative party than I was a Brexiteer, more comfortable leaning in on the immigration boats thing than I would have been doing

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 122. Question Time: Leaking Liz Truss, the funniest person in politics, and 'Killing Thatcher'

but I think a huge improvement on this trust and Boris Johnson
Now we've got a very good question here which I think could be an absolutely brilliant idea
from somebody with a brilliant name as well
Laurie the anti-growth collator
I think this is a point about Liz Truss
Could we get a one-off special podcast where Shashana and Fiona discuss Rory and Alistair
Do you think they want to do that?
I think Fiona would love it
Really?
And do you think anyone wants to listen to that?
I think they might
Fiona's had quite a few offers to write books about the hell of living with me
Okay, well we could picture that
I mean they're both definitely more interesting than us
I think we have to accept that probably the podcast in the future would be done by them
as soon as people hear them
He's a bad idea because he would put us out of a job
Okay, so Laurie, it's not happening
Go back to your little fantasies about Liz Truss and her anti-growth coalition
I think it's quite threatening
I think they're both considerably more appealing personalities than we are
but we could try it
Paddy, who would be the presumptive Democrat nominee if not Biden, comma Alistair?
I just don't know
I mean people talk about Gavin Euston but I just don't know
I think people got used to it, Biden's going to run for it
and I can see people, Rory is shaking his head and looking rather alarmed
I think he's going to go for it
and I don't think it's, as you said before
there are people in the Democrats who'd think, oh god, no, please, no, he's too old
but at the same time, I think if Trump does get the nomination
I think Biden might be the guy to beat him
It's a big decision, though
It's a huge decision
Can you imagine how stupid we'd feel if Trump defeated Biden
and how we'd all be beating ourselves up
Let's ask yourself this, when he was in Ireland
did he look like a guy who was on a victory lap of departure?
He didn't, to me, look like a guy who was starting a new campaign
so I think it's going to be Joe and I hope to God he wins
Now, Rory, I'm going to ask you this one
James Thomas, Rory, knowing what you know now
if you had your time again, would you vote for the chaos of Ed Miliband in 2015?

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 122. Question Time: Leaking Liz Truss, the funniest person in politics, and 'Killing Thatcher'

Ed Miliband, no, I would vote for David Miliband, possibly
I would not vote for Ed Miliband
Marty, who was the funniest person you met in politics?
I'll tell you what popped into my head straight away with that question
was Tony Banks, do you remember Tony Banks?
Two of the reason I love Tony Banks
he was a massive, massive Chelsea fan
that's not something I loved about him
but he was the MP for West Ham
and he never pretended to be Eddie
he used to walk around his West Ham constituency with a Chelsea scarf
some people get on their heads kicked in
and one of my favourite memories of Tony
and here's a shout out for Rory, by the way
at Tony Banks' funeral
David Meller made one of the best funeral rations I've ever heard
Made for a Chelsea sport but you're telling me did not wear a Chelsea strip in bed
I don't want to talk about conservative MPs in bed
but I think it's well recognised that that story about
David Meller wearing a Chelsea shirt in bed
while having sex with somebody called Antonia DeSanche
I think her name was
Who was who was the girlfriend of the England manager, no?
What are you talking about?
Is that not it?
Sven
It wasn't Sven's girlfriend, no
No, you're talking about Nancy Delolio
I don't understand at all
I mean, this is staying in
This is staying in
They're so...
So I have a vague memory of scandals about Sven in bed
I'm talking about Tony Banks
And scandals about David Meller in bed
but they weren't the same scandals at all
There were a lot about scandals involving Sven
in fact, here's a little confession for you Rory
his most famous scandal was an affair with Ulrika Johnson
Swede
Yes
Sven's a Swede and I introduced them
Oh my goodness

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 122. Question Time: Leaking Liz Truss, the funniest person in politics, and 'Killing Thatcher'

At, it gets worse, at a party for Richard Desmond's birthday
This is the sort of thing I had to go to in the olden days
and Fiona was giving me a very, very BDI
Can we just remind listeners, Richard Desmond
made his name as a publisher of porn, right?
He actually owns a copyright to some of my work
That's right
and then went on now owns the Dave Express
No, he sold them now I think
but he's basically a media guy
and he had this birthday party
and I was talking to Ulrika
and Fiona was giving me a bit of BDI
And also he bought down Robert Generic, didn't he?
He was the guy who sat next to Robert Generic
to get a planning permission for a building
He didn't bring it down, did he?
Generic, I think, in the end resigned because of the seat
Did he?
Yeah, Desmond had paid money, sat next to him at an event
This is getting so far from Tony Banks
Tony, RIP, we're going to come back to you eventually
What was it?
It was a joke, have you got a joke from Tony Banks?
Wait a minute
So, I said to Ulrika, I saw Sven arrive
and I said, have you met the other famous Swede in London?
And I introduced them and a few weeks later
it's all over the front pages of a bloody affair
Was that, that was the son again?
I think it might have been the mirror
And phone tapping?
No
Well, around that period, very good point
Very, very, very good point, very good point
Anyway, so David Mellor made this fantastic speech
about Tony Banks, which is interesting if you think about it
David Mellor was a Tory MP
and he was invited to do one of the main speeches
I think Margaret Beckett spoke and possibly said he can't
I can't remember, but anyway, but David Mellor made
an absolutely brilliant speech
But my favourite memory of Tony Banks

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 122. Question Time: Leaking Liz Truss, the funniest person in politics, and 'Killing Thatcher'

was at a Labour Party conference
where we were working on Tony Blair's speech
for the conference
and I got a message on, this was back in the days of Pages
I got a message saying that Tony Banks
had caused this terrible stir
because Tony Banks had done this speech
where he'd said Labour would definitely go to win the election
because William Hague was the Tory leader at the time
and he said, nobody's ever going to elect a foetus
Prime Minister
which was truly horrible on one level
but when we sort of told Tony, he said, Tony, what the hell is this?
and he said, ah, Guy, you know, I just got a bit carried away
am I going to get bollocks, am I going to get bollocks?
So the thing is, he just wanted those guys
you couldn't bollock him because he was so funny
So that's my, who's your funniest MP?
Actually, I thought Labour MPs were generally funny
Well, they're generally better people
Well, funny, I was on
Leak Politics, Alexander Kay
This week, again, has been all about a new wave of leaks
What do you make of Leak Politics
and how the unintentional, or apparently unintentional
leaks impact modern politics?
Well, this of course relates to this American stuff
which does seem amazing
that it's on, I think we're on Discord, aren't we?
You can get on to Discord to talk about the rest of his politics
So this guy has got access to stuff relating to some pretty sensitive material
and he's discussing it with his mates on Discord
and he's now being tamed
and so whether it's part of some sophisticated intelligence operation
against Americans or not, I don't know
So he's been described as a leak
but I think when people think of what we mean by leaks
I think the word gets used way too much
A leak to me is when you're in possession of usually a paper
or a piece of information
which you should not necessarily be going into the public domain
and you put it into the public domain for your own political purposes
Yeah, and often that was something that comes across in your diaries, isn't it?

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 122. Question Time: Leaking Liz Truss, the funniest person in politics, and 'Killing Thatcher'

Suspensions that Damien McBride and Gordon Brown were leaking things to the press to try to bolster Gordon Brown's position against Tony Blair
Yeah, but sometimes what the press would sometimes do is have a conversation with a guy in a pub who sort of shrugs your shoulder or raises an eyebrow in a different sort of way or says a few sort of choice words and that becomes viewed as, you know, leaking, briefing against when sometimes it's just journalists kind of hoovering up information I think when...

Well, you also see, I mean, also I felt this with my colleagues that it's clearly a basic bit of self-promotion One of the reasons that Liz Truss made it to be very briefly Prime Minister is she was very well known along with Gavin Williamson and others for being one of the first to come out of cabinet which is meant to be confidential internal conversations

I talk to the media I hear from journalists that they used to get messages during the cabinet of who was saying what

And it was a very odd practice because it was something that somebody like me or David Gork who were kind of more boring cabinet ministers didn't do but it was clearly an absolute necessity for the political career of certain kinds of people

I remember when journalists used to take me out as a young politician how disappointed they'd get if I didn't say anything interesting and how those people who did say interesting things pretty per tell

Liz Truss found their careers rocketing up because the media developed them and convinced the Prime Ministers the day that these were the great media stars

So there's a sort of slightly strange relationship to it Well, just related to that

I would say that one of the reasons that Michael Gove has been such a survivor within Conservative Party politics

is he's very good at making sure the press reflects him in a reasonable light

I mean, Fiona, my Fiona has a sort of running joke about you know, whenever she reads a story about Michael Gove in The Times or The Sunday Times he basically just puts his byline on it

You know, the Prime Ministers thinking of asking Michael Gove to take over X problem, Y problem or some amazing observation Michael Gove made

Did you have ministers who tried to do that to Tony Blair and Gordon Brown?

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 122. Question Time: Leaking Liz Truss, the funniest person in politics, and 'Killing Thatcher'

Oh, yeah
I don't think...
I think by and large we run a pretty tight ship
But if you read an article saying Prime Minister thinking of appointing X or Y
to run this, your suspicion would have been that that minister was briefing out
and trying to get their name in the press
Or somebody else was doing it so that they'd hope that you'd think that
So in the end it's best to just ignore it
Unless it becomes a problem
I mean, how does it work?
Can it sometimes help an MP to get stories out?
Does it backfire and just make everyone a number 10 think you're a dick?
I think if somebody over does it
One of Tony's strengths, I think, is the leader
He wanted other big figures around
He wanted people to kind of have a profile and get noticed for the right reasons
But I think if people start to do what I kind of...
The puff piece stuff
I think we'd find that pretty tiresome
Look, there's no doubt, particularly in the modern age
Getting noticed, having a profile
So you said recently, for example, we were asked at a show
Who do you think on the Labour side should be
If not Keir Starmer would be leader
And you said Peter Kyle, who's here at the moment
Because he's the Shadow Secretary of the State of Northern Ireland
Now I think Peter's terrific
Peter doesn't have a big profile
You need a big profile to be viewed as
And therefore to be one of the big beasts
And so interestingly, people like Jess Phillips
Or Stella Creasy, who've had more social media exposure
Can end up in a stronger position than Peter Kyle
Although Peter is in the Shadow Cabinet
So that says to me that, you know
So sometimes it can go either way
And ultimately, we still operate in a system
That's essentially the patronage of the leader
With David Gault, because I thought he would have made
A brilliant, brilliant Prime Minister
And yet the only response I got out of colleagues
When I was trying to canvas for him
When Theresa May was stepping down

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 122. Question Time: Leaking Liz Truss, the funniest person in politics, and 'Killing Thatcher'

Was he just doesn't have enough of a public profile
You know, nobody's heard of him
This goes back to our argument about the ads
Is that in our media world, I'm afraid
You either get noticed because you are
People recognise a sort of supreme talent
I would put Tony and Gordon in that category
Johnson got noticed because he'd built
Very carefully built his own profile
Under years of journalism
He was a celebrity politician
And then, obviously, Sunak now
Is incredibly high profile because he's become the Prime Minister
I would argue that it's possible to make the case
That Rishi Sunak's elevation to become Prime Minister
Actually goes against some of that stuff
And I think that's a good thing
But I think I can see why something like David Gault
Because he didn't cause scandals
He didn't say stupid things
They had people talking about him on the phones
He didn't polarise
He didn't go out there and try to
Say look at me
He tried to be a serious bloke doing a serious job
And I think that there is a part of our politics
That doesn't take those people seriously enough
There are loads more questions to come
Take a quick break
Australian referendum
Here in Australia are Labour Prime Ministers
Planning to hold a referendum to change the Constitution
To admit, acknowledge Aboriginal
And Torres Strait Islander people
Conservative Party back the no vote
And as such I can't see it
Getting up as a double majority is required
What will be the damage to our reputation
If the no gets up
So I think Frank is more on the Labour side on this
And then Helen would be interested to hear your view
On the upcoming referendum in Australia
To amend our Constitution to give First Nations people

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 122. Question Time: Leaking Liz Truss, the funniest person in politics, and 'Killing Thatcher'

And Torres Strait Islanders a formal voice to Parliament
There's a vigorous debate in Australia
About this proposed change to our Constitution
Among both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians
Any thoughts?

Well I, as you know
I'm a regular subscriber to the conversation
And because of that
I've always been sent
Even though I've never asked for it
But I really enjoy it
I get sent the conversation Australian version
And this week
I didn't know this was coming up
This week I listened
As I was walking here yesterday
To a podcast on the conversation
With somebody called Michel Grattan
G-R-A-W-T-A-N
Who was interviewing a well known
Indigenous campaigner
And writer about this issue
And I found it
I think I sent you a message saying that
You know, this might be an interesting one for discussion
But it's a very difficult debate to get your head around
Because it strikes me
All that it seems to be
Is that Albanese is trying to say
We need to put into our Constitution
Something that gives proper recognition
In the voice of the Indigenous population
Which seems so blindingly obvious
What's wrong with that?
But as often happens in referendums
People are sort of taking it to other places
And developing arguments that look
Kind of slightly off to one side
On the question about what damage it does
I think it would be quite damaging to their reputation
But presumably constitutionally
Or I suppose philosophically
The challenge is that generally

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 122. Question Time: Leaking Liz Truss, the funniest person in politics, and 'Killing Thatcher'

Liberal democracies are very, very blind
Their fundamental
History is total equality
One person, one vote
No special treatment
And so we're always dealing with this
Tension between majority representation
And protection of minority rights
And the question of how much
You can lean into minority rights
And in this case on the basis of ethnicity
And history
And to what extent special treatment
Is the correct way to think about discrimination
And injustice or not
Well, I think it's something we should
Come back to because I was fascinated
Listening to the conversation
But at the end of it, I was slightly left thinking
I can't understand why this is
Proving to be such a contentious issue
So it's one that maybe
We should come back to
When I do a bit more research
What small wins have you had recently?
This is from Dom Fertado
Life these days says
Dom is made up of small wins
For me, a small win
Is covering the daily hate mail
With other newspapers doing convenience
The little Englanders desperate for their daily
Hit of small boantry
What small wins have you had recently?
I used to do that at airports all the time
You just hide the daily mail?
I used to really know them about British Airways
The only paper that they have
They're sometimes at the F.T.
But basically, you've gone to the British Airways
And they just have stacks of the daily mail
So I used to go to
I'll go to the Luftwaffe

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 122. Question Time: Leaking Liz Truss, the funniest person in politics, and 'Killing Thatcher'

I'll find a load of Develte
And carry them off down
And cover the daily mail
Is that childish?
You've actually made me think
I've made me think about an answer to a previous question
Funniest MP
Paddy Ashton, I thought was pretty funny
His one to me
Which exposed my vanity and ludicrousness
He gave me a copy of his book
And I looked it up
And there was no inscription on the front
I thought it was a bit odd
And then I got to the index
Paddy
What's the
The other great index story, of course
He puts somebody in the index
But then he wasn't in the book
I think it was Govindar
Mark Grubowski
If you both had to sing karaoke
What song would you choose?
Have you been watching Succession and Sonny?
I realised IOU and Apology
I was a bit snooty about Brian Cox
He was quite nice about me
So I was feeling a bit guilty about that
It is an extraordinary performance
In Succession
Completely blows me away
There's a question we had this week
On who our favourite actor is
The stage of Stockwell asks this
My favourite actor
I guess is Mark Rylance
Who I think is extraordinary
From Wolf Hall and Incredible Hamlet
But my goodness Brian Cox
That is quite a performance
By mentioning the conversation
Somebody wrote a piece

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 122. Question Time: Leaking Liz Truss, the funniest person in politics, and 'Killing Thatcher'

I'm not angry, I'm a bit angry
But somebody wrote a piece
The headline of which gave the ending away
Oh, of Succession
With Mark Grubowski
If you both had to sing karaoke
What song would you choose?
It would either be
When it's ace in all in three languages
Simultaneously
Which I can do
I can do the French and the German
Very, very, very, very, very close
Are you alone tonight?
And I do the Elvis version
Where he laughs
Which one are you going to do
For us to close the question time?
Which one of the two?
My thing has got to be how you learn
We need the laugh
I can't do Elvis's laugh
Although I will say, Elvis's laugh
People can check this out
Elvis's laugh is almost identical to Bill Clinton's
And to your impression of Bill Clinton
I can do quite good Clinton
I'm not doing it
I can sing quite well Elvis
The other one I think is Johnny Cash's
I'll keep a close watch
And this Howard Amman
I like that one as well
You've got to sing something
Well, Johnny Cash has performed some Falsum Prison
If we're looking for a cultural reference to drive people out
Absolutely extraordinary
You can hear the prisoners in the background
And that's a great movie actually
We've recommended the Elvis movie
Joachim Phoenix
Really a pretty cool Johnny Cash impression
You can actually get a tape

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 122. Question Time: Leaking Liz Truss, the funniest person in politics, and 'Killing Thatcher'

Of him singing Johnny Cash's songs
The guy doing Elvis as well
The film is Walk the Line
With the prisoners
Raging as he sings
What book are you reading at the moment?
Ireland, I read in a single day
Rory Carroll
The island correspondent of The Guardian
He's written a book called Killing Thatcher
I actually think they could have done with a better title
That's a pretty good title isn't it?
Well, the only thing is that Thatcher wasn't killed
That is true
But it makes you wake up
It's very very rare that I read
A 300 page book in a day
Because I just don't have the concentration
To keep going but I was lucky
Because I was on a train, I was on a plane
I was travelling about the place
But it was gripping
It was quite fitting in a way
Because I was picked up at Dublin Airport
To come here and I read the last 80
To get it finished by the time we got here
So I read the last pages coming into Belfast
To celebrate the 25th anniversary
Of the Good Friday Agreement
And it's basically the story of the
Brighton Bomb
Which I covered as a journalist
And then the police hunt for the bomber
And then we'll have to measure it
Remind non-specialist listeners
Brighton Bomb, IRA Attacks, Conservative Party Conference
Date
What almost kills Mrs Thatcher
Date
It was 2.5401
I've never forgotten that
2.5401
And he's got some incredible accounts

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 122. Question Time: Leaking Liz Truss, the funniest person in politics, and 'Killing Thatcher'

Of the police investigation
What is 2.5401 made?
54 minutes past 2 in the morning
And that was Norman Tebbett's wife was killed?
No, John Wacom's wife was killed
And four other people
And Norman Tebbett's wife Margaret was paralyzed
It's extraordinary
But it's the story of the bomber
And his life and his background
What about Jerry Adams in it
Who doesn't give an interview
And then there's the story of Thatcher's rise
And why Thatcher took the approach to the IRA
That she did, that's got the hunger strike story
But he writes it like a thriller
Look, I know the ending
I knew the ending of the book
But it's literally you're turning the pages
To see where it goes next
That's a great recommendation
Well, I've been reading Making Sense the Troubles
A History of the Northern Ireland Conflict
David McIltrick and David McVeigh
I mean, to manage to write a book
That produces something pretty close
To a balanced account, given how raw
And passionate the views of both sides are
In Northern Ireland
A hell of an achievement
They were also two of the authors on this extraordinary book
I think in nearly a million, million words
On the dead of the troubles
Following the story of every single story
Of everybody who was killed
We talked a little bit about the victims
So I'd recommend anyone who wants to understand
The troubles, Making Sense the Troubles
A History of the Northern Ireland Conflict
Good. Final things to put in the newsletter
I think it would be lovely for people
If they hadn't seen it to see the picture
Of Joe Biden in the office

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 122. Question Time: Leaking Liz Truss, the funniest person in politics, and 'Killing Thatcher'

Of the Irish president, Michael D. Higgins
It's one of the greatest photographs
I've seen for a long time
What sort of desk policy do you operate?
Are you a tidy desk person?
I go for tidy, yeah
I'm moderately tidy and where I'm not tidy
Everything's in quite neat piles
Some distance probably
This has got an enormous desk
That is just absolutely
Covered
And obviously made no effort whatsoever
To tidy it up before the president came in
It's a beautiful picture
Very good. Well, thank you all very much
Thank you. See you soon