



PRIME MINISTER

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TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH MIKE CARLTON, 2GB, SYDNEY, 26/9/84

CARLTON: On the line from Kirribilli House in Sydney this morning. Prime Minister, good morning.

PM: Good morning.

CARLTON: Thanks for your time. Prime Minister, I want to respect the privacy of your family, but I think there are a couple of issues that may affect, if you like, the office of Prime Minister. Could I ask you just how long you have been aware of the childrens' heroin addiction.

PM: I want to say in respect of the question of my family that Hazel when she spoke did that as a result of the instigation of my children. And there is an agreement between us that that statement by Hazel would represent the last statement that would be made on this issue. It was made at their request. Neither Hazel nor the children nor myself will be going to the question again. That was a courageous decision that was taken by my children. We have an understanding and I am not going to do anything in any way which breaks that understanding and commitment so you can ask me, Mike, as many questions as you like. I will not be breaking that undertaking to my family.

CARLTON: Right, I don't want to intrude into that privacy at all.

PM: You are not going to.

CARLTON: OK, but I still wonder if there is not a question of how it affects the conduct of the Prime Ministership - if you like, your position at the head of the government.

PM: That's another matter. If you want to ask me questions about my Prime Ministership and the conduct of it, that's another matter. I of course seek to impose no limitation upon any questions you go into in that area.

CARLTON: Alright, is it possible at any stage that there could have been the chance of blackmail or pressure placed upon you as Prime Minister through the drug addiction of your children?

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PM: Of course not. It's a total misreading of not simply my character, but I think the character of any parent, that there be a suggestion that the thing uppermost in one's mind would not be the instigation of a situation in my case that would make it most likely that anyone connected with this abomination should be brought to justice. They would misread not just my character, but the character of anyone, I believe if they thought that sort of thing could happen.

CARLTON: Yes, what I am getting at again is that ...

PM: I understand, I mean, I am not unintelligent. I heard your question and I think that I made it clear, Mike, that the implication that anyone could - it's not just a question of me - that anyone in public life would be able to allow their concern not merely for their own children, but for the abomination of this drug traffic to be manipulated in a way other than to seek to have it destroyed is an absurdity and I find it offensive that there should be any continuation of that suggestion.

CARLTON: No, I'm not suggesting that at all, but I wonder if the drug trade is not so widespread now that a heroin pusher could deliberately seek to involve the Prime Minister's children to gain for himself some sort of advantage.

PM: Michael, I am not going to go into the situation that concerns my children.

CARLTON: OK, we'll forget it.

PM: I would wish you would have the decency to respect not me, but there are other people involved.

CARLTON: Alright, well, we will go away from it - to the politics of it. Why is the Costigan Commission being wound up when Costigan says he was close to big names and when he appealed for more time to go?

PM: ... we might ask you the question, Mike. Why do you ask questions which are based on totally false premises. Let me give you the facts. The Costigan Commission is not being wound down. It is not being wound down. Let me give you the facts. It was December 1981 when Mr Costigan produced his most devastating report about the growth of organised crime and particularly of the drug industry in Australia. That was December 1981. And in that devastating report he referred to the fact that in his investigations into the Painters and Dockers Union he had stumbled into the industry of organised crime which he said was the fastest growing industry in Australia, particularly - let me remind you - particularly over the past five years - that is from 1976 to 1981. Now what did the previous government do in those circumstances. Their next Budget after December 1981 was brought down in '82 which determined the financial resources made available to the Costigan Commission for 1982/83. Now those resources, Mike, were just under three million. Let me be precise \$2,963,805. Now that was the reaction of our predecessors.

The resources they would make available to the Costigan Commission. When we came in, in our first year 83/84, we more than doubled the financial resources made available - that was from their \$2.9 to \$5.9 million.

CARLTON: But now the Costigan Commission is coming to an end, isn't it, I mean ...

PM: I believe that you think you are asking - what you regard as an important question, in making allegations about the winding down of the Costigan Commission.

CARLTON: No, it is closing, it is. -

PM: Either you regard this as-important or not, Michael, and you will give me the opportunity of putting into full context the facts.

CARLTON: OK.

PM: Now the facts are that this Government in our first year more than doubled the resources available to the Costigan Commission. We strengthened it and we doubled its resources. Now we shared with our predecessor, Mr Fraser, the view which had been expressed by Mr Fraser and his Attorney-General and their spokesman, that the Costigan Commission had to come to an end and be taken over by a permanent authority. That was the view of the previous government and it is our view. And so we commenced the discussion within the community as to what should be the form of permanent authority, ongoing authority, to fight crime and the National Crime Authority so emerged. Now the important thing is that the Costigan Commission activities have not been brought to an end. All the material of Mr Commissioner Costigan is being passed over to the National Crime Authority, a permanent body. The 42 lines of investigation that Mr Costigan has specifically mentioned are being handed over to this new permanent authority which has been regarded by both sides of politics as necessary to take over the temporary work of the Royal Commission.

CARLTON: Yes, but didn't Costigan himself plead though for more time. Did you just see you had to draw the line somewhere?

PM: Let's put that into historical context. Mr Commissioner Costigan asked the Fraser Government in the middle of 1982 for an extension of two to three years. He asked the previous government. He wanted to be extended for two to three years. And the previous government would not give him that extension. He has asked us for an extension and we have given him, not to the extent that he asked for. And in that we were at one with the previous government in that you can't have a Royal Commission which is regarded and acknowledged as a temporary institution.

CARLTON: Right. What of Mr Peacock's claim that Costigan was in fact getting too close to a scandal which could embarrass the NSW Government?

PM: Absolutely untrue. For that proposition to have any validity at all, you would have to say you were going to be stopping Mr Costigan handing over and making available, not only the material, but all his resources to the National Crime Authority. Everything that Mr Costigan has got, all his lines of investigation, will be handed over. They have it already, much of it has been handed over. And I would just ask you this question, Mike. It is a fundamentally important question. Any suggestion that the National Crime Authority cannot or will not continue the work of Mr Costigan involves a most fundamental attack upon the integrity and the capacity of the members of the National Crime Authority. They are going to have all Mr Costigan's material.

CARLTON: But not all his powers of investigation and can't a state government veto a line of enquiry?

PM: The point there is that there are single path tracks that can be taken, but what you have got to understand and what has been understood by the people who have been investigating in the period leading up to the establishment of the legislation - people have understood that if you are going to make a national authority work, you have to have the co-operation of the states. And that has been made quite clear. Let me refer to what Special Prosecutor Redlich has said about this because this makes the point crystal clear as to how you are going to have an effective National Crime Authority. This is page 48 of his report, Michael. He says throughout its long history, the debate on the configuration of the Authority has been influenced by three factors. He referred to three. That is the optimum means of detecting and investigating organised criminal activity. Secondly, the protection of civil liberties. And thirdly, the integrity of the States and their law enforcement agencies.

CARLTON: Yes, it just seems to me a State can chuck a spanner in the works if it wants to.

PM: I don't believe that that is the case because if all the material has been passed over, as it has been, then what you are going to have is what is happening now is that you have got Counsel investigating all that material and making recommendations to the members of the National Crime Authority itself. And then that goes to the inter-governmental committee. Now look at the reality of it. Do you believe that there could be a tenable situation where all that process has been gone through, the material has come through Mr Costigan, it has come to Counsel, it goes to the members of the National Crime Authority itself. They examine it all and they make a recommendation to the inter-governmental committee. Do you think in political terms a government could possibly survive which in the front of all other government members of a politically opposite character, said, oh no, because we want to protect a situation, we are going to put a veto on it. It is a political insanity. No government would survive that process when the Costigan Commission has seen

the material, the members of the National Crime Authority have seen the material, Counsel Assisting have seen the material, and ...

CARLTON: And it has been leaked in the National Times.

PM: in the National Times. But you are saying its political real that when you have got all that spread of knowledge about a situation any political leader would say I'm sorry I'm going to put a kybosh on it. Now let me just make one other point about it so that you're not just having me say this, but I am terribly concerned, Mike, and I believe you should be and anyone who is concerned as I am, and I want to get everybody concerned with organised crime in this country behind bars. I don't want reputations destroyed by innuendo. I want the proper processes of a trial. And my commitment is that any person concerned with organised crime in this country and involved in it should finish up behind bars. And I am terribly concerned that as a result of this politically stage-managed exercise that is going on at the moment, the authority and the integrity of the National Crime Authority is being undermined in its capacity to work.

CARLTON: You know why that is. One reason - we have had so many Commissions and Enquiries, particularly here in NSW, and yet the big fellows, the big fish are still on the loose, aren't they.

PM: Let me just make one point. Commissioner Costigan made his report, as I say, in December 1981 and in talking about the growth of organised crime, the fastest growing industry in Australia, he said it had particularly flourished in the last five years. Let me make the point, that if you want to talk about the last 35 years in this country, since 1949, out of those 35 years 30 of them at the Federal level have been in the hands of non-Labor government. Now it was only when this government came in that we double the resources of the Costigan Commission, that we established an effective national continuing permanent crime authority which as far as I am concerned, while I am Prime Minister, will be under the constant instruction and initiative to do everything they can to bring every single person connected with organised crime to trial and if found guilty put behind bars. Let me make the point about Senator Chipp and what he has said.

CARLTON: Prime Minister, I am going to have to finish in just a second. Will you wear the idea of putting Costigan before the Senate?

PM: Look, the question of Mr Costigan going before the Senate is a matter for the Senate. If anyone has got anything to be worried about in respect of Mr Costigan it is not this government.

CARLTON: Mr Hawke we will have to leave it there.
