



# Stories for the Train

Tales on the go

0:8:00

## Lord Knows

By Alan Goodchild

‘Ah, here you are, welcome, please have a seat, the Chesterfield perhaps? Whisky is your tippie I believe; I’ve taken the liberty and pre-ordered. There we are, water’s in the crystal jug, help yourself.

Now to business, why are we here?

No, no it was a rhetorical question, of course we are both aware of the many reasons we need this little ‘tête a tête’ and I am assured that, should it go well for you, there could be a fine future ahead.

Although you may have many questions for me, In order for you to gain full benefit from the advice I am about to impart, and to be expeditious with our time together, you will do me the kindness of keeping ‘shtum,’ as it were.

There are several who would oppose my intervention in these proceedings, who indeed would have you flounder in your current predicament. Conversely there are those, who have also suffered the innocent exuberance of youth and managed to avoid its bloodied teeth unscathed, and who wish you well. I am, fortunately for you, inclined to the latter, so listen up. Agreed? Good.

The Palace of Westminster is an anomaly even in politics. It does strange things to people, alters them fundamentally in ways no-one really understands. Power corrupts as we know, and it also bends

and hardens one by its influence. Were it not for the love of parliament and all things democratic, my patience with my cloaked and bewigged comrades would have been exhausted years ago. Bastards to a man each and every one, such is the way of the upper house. One sees, one tolerates and one must learn to live with it.

In comparison, life in the lower chamber, to which you aspire, is more transient. They come they go, but mindful must we be that our words and actions are remembered. They are recalled, normally at times least advantageous to us and to our Party, as it were.

No, please don't speak, it's a tad late for apology, there is no advantage to it at this juncture, just listen and learn, there's a good chap.

The weather in parliament is often inclement in the extreme but is considerably worsened by the hailstorm of honesty released by the do-gooder, the whistle-blower, in this unfortunate instance, by you. Yes, I know it was overheard, you meant no ill, 'Oh wherefore art thou good sense and justice?' I'll tell you; for you, as a prospective member of the oldest of parliaments, they do not exist, and they probably never have. Words are weapons there, occasionally resulting in mass destruction. Diligence is the arduous task of duty; consistency of message is a necessity not a nicety, we stay in line, together strong.

Oh I wish not to re-open the wound and repeat the horrid accusation befallen me because of your misguided comment, and I am aware that you were deceived, fooled, duped into releasing information you should have known to be corrosive.

What you must realise and commit to memory from this day forth, is that the art of deception is the lifeblood of the benches, it is

to be learned. Hear not what man says but what he means, they are seldom the same and, in all cases, must both be left with the possibility of the reverse manoeuvre, the U-turn in common parlance. Lying openly is defensible simply and especially when the only alternative is admitting a potentially harmful truth.

Deny everything, accept nothing at face value and your path to glory will be slow but sure. Speak unwisely and you land yourself, and in this case an exceptional other, in the jungle, not knowing which way is forward, or which way back, alone and completely undefended. There are Tigers, big beasts.

Male Tigers mirror politicians in that they occasionally eat their young. The instincts and actions of the females are altogether more palatable. They suckle then kick them out to fend for themselves before the age of five, much the same as we. The problem is that when one is young and fresh, by the time they are close enough to tell the one from the other, it is often all too late. There are no friends in the jungle young man, it's best avoided if we can. So, how do we go about that?

Let's move to the real messages of today's little parley, shall we? Another whisky would oil the wheels I feel.

James, if you would, two more of my malt please. One large, one small.

So, here we are, the crux of the thing, damage limitation in your job and for that matter, in mine too.

First, Financial Security. Ronald Kirby as you know suffered the indignity of de-selection. His wife Jean of thirty years is inconsolable. She wept for his status, but she sobbed for his salary. He was a man of meagre means and of working class, not an ideal combination in

our business, leaves you vulnerable, often honourable granted, nevertheless without a parachute. Old money is a gift from God, new money is the manna from heaven of exploitation. You have neither at present, so you are clearly without the silk necessary to get you down safely. Do not risk the drop, it hurts.

Personality is also a factor in survival, words can assist, make you popular, bring you friends, the wickedness of wit is a sharpened sword in many people's armouries. Sadly though, it is neither in the possession of the dishonourable Ronald, nor yourself. He has hit the ground with a thud, as would you, that will leave him reeling and from which he, and certainly his marriage, may never fully recover.

Think on, for this brings me to my second crux point; the question of fidelity. There is no sense in denying it and, no, I am not about to inform your good lady but If I were to say; 'beware the younger woman with the partisan view and the Chanel lifestyle,' would you recognise the inference? You would? Good. Stop it, you can't afford it for so many reasons, just ask Ronald.

Oh, please don't cry, we're all men here, we've all blotted our copybooks at some point.

Weakness is a disease of the lower classes. The phrase 'a stiff upper lip' could never be used with those under middle class, they wouldn't know what it meant. Never show weakness, least of all here amongst your peers, chin up man, blow your nose, there that's better.

I must shortly leave for the country on a well-deserved holiday. You however are about to be catapulted once again into the limelight of the media, for I understand that you are to contest Ronald's vacant seat.

A warning. Hustings are ugly, they lay bare the willingness of the individual to deceive and they unleash the dexterity of the whip to manipulate others, and occasionally to scar the contestants. Remain principled. Do not go against your beliefs or more importantly, do not change your allegiance to the Prime Minister's policies in anything you say or do. There'll be plenty of time for that once you're incumbent.

Pre-empting every thought of action, statement or comment that enters your head from here on in must be the words, 'what would the good lord do?' By that reference I of course mean myself, not the almighty, I am easier to reach and significantly more important to you. Should you in any way doubt your direction or your commitment to a matter, I command you to consult me, preferably here at the club and most obviously in private. I will be your mentor and your guide and in return I will expect your full support in future in the other place, should I require it.

I am prepared to consider your flagrant disregard of my confidentiality as a one-off and an unfortunate, if potentially grave mistake.

Now, straighten up, go forth, be as successful as you may and remember always, never refer to me as daddy, neither in the confines of my gentleman's club nor anywhere else, ever again.'