

## **GATHERING INTELLIGENCE, Listening, p. 10 (00:00–03:57, 06:00–08:06)**

You can find this video, titled *The Real Life of Spies* on BBC's website: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06pnd71>

### **The Real Life of Spies**

INTERVIEWER: You're about to hear an interview I recorded with six people who work for the UK's intelligence agencies. It is the first time ever that spies from MI5, MI6 and GCHQ have been interviewed together about their work. We spoke about the unique pressures of the job, the difficult vetting process and how you keep your job secret from the vast majority of people you meet. We also talked about what happens in the immediate aftermath of a major terrorist attack. And of course we couldn't let them go, could we, without asking about bodyguards, *Killing Eve* and their choice for the next James Bond.

We recorded the interview at MI5's headquarters in central London, in the agency's own private museum. Let's define what each agency does. MI5 is the agency that deals with threats to the UK, including counter-terrorism. MI6 or SIS collects intelligence overseas and GCHQ based in Cheltenham is the government's listening agency. Now that deals with communications, including cyber security. So let's meet the spies and it's worth pointing out that, as part of measures to protect their identity, none of them are using their real name.

JO: So my name is Jo. I've worked for MI5 for over fifteen years now. I came here to initially start off as a linguist and then I've gone into all sorts of other things since I've worked here.

JOHN: Hi, I'm John. I work for MI6. I joined about 15 years ago. I started off in operational work so I've worked on counter-proliferation. I worked on counter-terrorism. I did a couple of jobs overseas and I came back. I worked really closely with our Chief for a couple of years and now I work in HR.

LILLY: I'm Lilly. I work at GCHQ. I've been there for about seven years, having transferred from a different government department. I currently work in research and engineering.

AMEESHA: Hello, I'm Ameesha. I work for MI5. I've been here around two years and I currently work in analysis.

KATE: I'm Kate. I work for SIS or MI6 as we're better known. I have worked for the organization for ten years, just under. And I've been a case officer in my career, which basically means recruiting and running agents and I'm currently in training, so helping some of our staff, new and existing, to learn that skill.

DIA: Hi, I'm Dia, from GCHQ, it's gonna be ten years since I joined the organization. I came in as a linguist and worked in operations before going into training, doing a stint working with our international partners, and I'm currently working in HR.

INTERVIEWER: Why did you want to speak to us?

JOHN: I think it's the chance to actually talk to the public. We don't get much chance to do it, we want to come out of the shadows a little bit, want to sort of normalize what we do. I mean, we work at a great, really interesting place with fantastic people but it can be quite hard to get that across to people and it's just hitting a wider sort of audience, saying a little bit about what we do, how we do it, the kind of people that work in our places.

INTERVIEWER: Jo?

JO: This is a real first for us and we're really excited to get this chance to speak to you guys. You know, we know people don't really always know a lot about what we do and so we want to use this opportunity to reach out to people who maybe have never considered applying to us, who think that you know this is not the sort of place for them and that's really important to us and we want to try to reach people who have essentially ruled themselves out.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any, Ameesha, misgivings about doing this?

AMEESHA: Em, I think as a new-joiner, especially compared to my colleagues sitting around the table today, I really really didn't know what to expect and it's something completely different to what I thought it would be having joined the organization. No, I think it's important to do this, as my colleagues have said, to come out and actually humanize what we do a little bit and bring a little bit of our personalities out and show everyone that actually we are just ordinary people doing extraordinary jobs.

[06:00]

INTERVIEWER: Dia, what was your perception vs. reality at GCHQ?

DIA: I didn't realize the scale of the work that we did, I guess. The realization of the scale of the work that GCHQ actually does only came I guess maybe a year or two into to the job.

JOHN: I remember my first weekend in the job I was shown my first piece of intelligence, like real intelligence from an agent, which was completely awesome. And only at that point did I actually realize "Oh, this is what we do, this is the stuff we know. That's what's going on in the world. I had absolutely no idea."

INTERVIEWER: That's an interesting word, John, you said – awesome. It's kind of – wow.

DIA: It is pretty awesome.

INTERVIEWER: Do you all remember that moment when you first kind of thought 'This is awesome'?

LILLY: So I thought I knew the place quite well because I'd worked with GCHQ from the organization I came from and, a bit like Dia said, when I got in I discovered there was always stuff I wasn't aware of before. When I met the mathematicians and they were working on a particular problem. And I'm not...I did maths at school but I'm not a mathematician and just seeing them at work and how they worked together and solved this problem was amazing.

AMEESHA: Yeah, I think...Honestly, I'm not going to lie, I have those moments pretty much every week. You know, I'll wake up in the morning and I will be like 'Oh my gosh, I actually work for MI5' and...

INTERVIEWER: I hope you don't say that loudly! That's a security breach just to be clear. I'm stepping in now. Other people should have stepped in quite frankly.

AMEESHA: No, it is supercool. I'm fascinated by my work every day. Sounds cheesy, I know, but it's true.

INTERVIEWER: Kate, what was your awesome moment?

KATE: The time probably that I realized what I was doing was on my training course when I came in. And there was twenty of us sitting in a room with a spin lock on the table and being taught how to unlock and lock a spin lock...I was in my late twenties, I've lived a life and I find myself sitting in a room in a classroom with a spin lock. This is *odd*. This is not what I thought I'd be doing.

## LISTENING

**IV You are going to hear six people talk about working in UK's intelligence agencies. Connect the ideas on the right with the correct service or speaker. There will be one additional idea in each question that you do not need to use.**

1. According to the interviewer's introduction, what does each intelligence agency do?

A	MI5	
B	MI6 or SIS	
C	GCHQ	

1	gathers intelligence outside of the UK
2	collaborates with foreign countries on behalf of the UK
3	deals with threats to national security such as terrorism
4	monitors communications

2. What does each officer do or what have they done over the course of their career?

A	JO	
B	JOHN	
C	LILLY	
D	AMEESHA	
E	KATE	
F	DIA	

1	has worked on preventing the spread of WMD
2	works as an analyst
3	is still in training to become an intelligence officer
4	has changed jobs several times in over 15 years
5	currently teaches other people how to recruit agents
6	transferred from another government job
7	briefly worked with an international organization or organizations

3. Why did each person decide to do an interview with the BBC?

A	JOHN	
B	JO	
C	AMEESHA	

1	to show people that intelligence officers are not very different from them
2	to make the general public more familiar with the work of intelligence agencies
3	to give the public a sense of how exciting and extraordinary their job is
4	to encourage people to come work for these organizations

4. What does each person express about their job?

A	DIA	
B	JOHN	
C	LILLY	
D	AMEESHA	
E	KATE	

1	being surprised by the work of their colleagues
2	being annoyed because they had to learn new skills
3	being surprised about the extent and amount of the work done by their organization
4	feeling that something was strange about their job
5	being amazed and excited about working with real intelligence for the first time
6	being constantly amazed that they work where they work