

## INTERVIEW OF Patty

INTERVIEWER: JESS HUFFMAN

JULY 2024

**0:00:02.1 Jess Huffman: Okay, so we are here at [REDACTED]. We are interviewing Patty, and it's Jess Huffman that's doing the interview. The date is Tuesday the 30<sup>th</sup> of July 2024, and we are here today to find out a little bit about Patty's experience of being an American citizen that's lived for the last...**

0:00:30.9 Patty: 45 years.

**0:00:31.4 Jess Huffman: ...in Devon? Or in England? So Patty, let's start with... You grew up in Boston; tell us what life was like growing up in Boston, Massachusetts.**

0:00:44.7 Patty: Well, I grew up in a town just outside of Boston and it was a real classic 1950s/1960s childhood. Boston Red Sox games, barbecue hot dogs, hamburgers, swimming in the lake in the summer, skiing and ice skating in the winter, just going to the local school, hanging out with your friends. I grew up in what was probably a middle-class immigrant neighbourhood. So I grew up in a fairly multinational community in a way, because we had Jews, we had Greeks, we had Irish, we had Italian. They always used to make a joke that I was a very good cook, and I was open to all sorts of cuisines, because basically, as children we just ran up and down the street eating in everybody else's houses. So I got used to Italian food very early. The one place we didn't go was the Irish Catholics because they had too many children and the food was all corned beef, was all cabbage and potatoes.

0:01:59.7 One of my friends, Carol [?Kobayashi 0:02:01.2] actually had a Japanese father, so I even learned, ate Japanese food then. The Chinese was... Actually, the Chinese hasn't changed much, here anyway. The Chinese we had back in Boston,

probably no Chinese person would recognise it, and it's a bit like, you go into the Chinese takeaway here now and it's got nothing to do with actual real Chinese food.

**0:02:31.4 Jess Huffman: So tell me a little bit about culturally, other than food, what other things were you exposed to, growing up in that multicultural community?**

0:02:41.3 Patty: It was very American, very American. I mean, America...

**0:02:46.2 Jess Huffman: What does that mean?**

0:02:48.1 Patty: Insular. I did know people... It's like, Americans are still very much like that, which is probably one of the reasons Trump gets so... Americans are very insular and they don't really care about what goes on outside their own country. The America I grew up with - which is probably still there - the majority of a lot of the Americans is, they just don't consider other cultures. They will take a trip to Europe as long as they're in a tour guide, everything prebooked and buses and boats and whatever else. Package holidays. Then there are some Americans who are open to new experiences, and it's mostly Americans who live on the coast - west coast or east coast - because you're basically facing the ocean and the horizon. In the Midwest, in the middle of America, you're just surrounded by cornfields. Some people have never even seen the ocean.

**0:04:05.7 Jess Huffman: So the landscape...**

0:04:07.7 Patty: The landscape defined you too, and the history.

**0:04:11.8 Jess Huffman: What is the history of that part of America?**

0:04:12.9 Patty: America? Well I mean obviously it was one of those original colonies. Salem, Boston, Plymouth, Plymouth Rock. Sailing from Plymouth here. It's very British as opposed to New Orleans, which is very Spanish and French. In Boston, this British tradition still lingers. People still drink tea. After throwing it off the boat that was, after the Boston Tea Party they just... So a lot of British traditions and behaviour, what they call WASP, White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, stayed, remained in Boston. When I met my

husband, who is Californian, it was more of a culture shock to go to the west of America, which was Californian beach boys and surfing, and tacos and enchiladas, and Mexican food, and avocados, and organic potato chips; all sorts of weird stuff. It was a totally alien culture, and I felt more disorientated there than I did when I came over here. I was used to British traditions, in a way, the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant way of looking at things. We used to sing English hymns at school.

**0:05:50.6 Jess Huffman: Crazy. So were you brought up religious? Was that...?**

0:05:57.2 Patty: No. Thankfully, no. That part of my education was blissfully neglected because everybody was too busy with their own problems to worry about my spiritual upbringing.

**0:06:06.9 Jess Huffman: What was it that took your family to America initially? We've found out a little bit, haven't we, through this project?**

0:06:11.3 Patty: I don't know. Because of my unusual family circumstances, I don't... I assume that they have the same immigrant outlook to go to America and have a better life. America was still desperate for workers then, for the... In the 18<sup>th</sup>, the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, it was to staff the cotton mills, and then industry, staff the industry. We were talking before about the Irish, and basically the immigrants started out in low paying jobs and that's why you had all these tenements and everything, in different parts of... My American cousin, who visited me last summer, she's a nun and she was the headmistress principal of an elementary school back in Boston. It was a part of the town I grew up in, and... Oh God, I can't remember the name of it, something 'Corners', but it was specifically immigrant.

0:07:24.1 Then then list of immigrants, the types of people who lived there in this place, it changes with every wave of immigration. Right now there are lots of Cambodians. There was a massive Cambodian influx. My cousin, who I consider one of the few Christians I really know - true Christians - she says, 'My little school, we don't care what religion they are, where they come from. All I care about is that they get the equal education of anybody else.' She also is brilliant at going up to rich Catholics and screwing them for money. No one does guilt like a Catholic. [Laughter].

**0:08:11.1 Jess Huffman: For you growing up in that multicultural society and community, you grew up seeing it as a positive thing?**

0:08:21.8 Patty: Oh, definitely, definitely. All my friends...

**0:08:23.4 Jess Huffman: We know that your family were Lithuanian.**

0:08:30.1 Patty: One part, my father's family. My mother's side was English but I never knew them very well because of family problems. There were rifts in the family. One thing I can definitely say, the great thing about... They were good, good people. It was the kind of neighbourhood where if you went on holiday somebody would mow your lawn for you. They were good neighbours, everybody helped out, but not spying and intrusive. Also, most of them, I would say mostly the Jews, were incredibly keen on education. They worked their fannies off to give their kids the best education. They saved; they sent them to the best colleges. My friends, they were doctors, they were lawyers, another Jewish friend is an incredibly successful novelist in America - my next door neighbour, my best friend that I visit in New York - and it was because they had a positive... They were urged, they were in some ways pushed but always encouraged and made to feel that they were important and their education was important. I think that is one of the strengths of America, or the way I grew up.

**0:10:04.7 Jess Huffman: So instilled within you, a strong work ethic and appreciation for education.**

0:10:08.1 Patty: Appreciation for education. Work ethic is [respondent makes sound implying 'shaky' or 'iffy' 0:10:10.2]. I mean, I've got one but it's not quite as robust as others.

**0:10:18.8 Jess Huffman: That ethos came from people who've moved there for a better life and to offer their...**

0:10:22.4 Patty: Uh-huh, and work to obtain it.

**0:10:24.6 Jess Huffman: Amazing. What was it that brought you to England?**

0:10:29.8 Patty: [Sighs]. Well first of all, my husband was doing a PhD at Cambridge and then it was easy. The wife of a PhD student, I could come over here while he was studying, so there was... I just wanted to live in England. I had studied English history and English literature, so for me it was just the natural progression of my life.

**0:11:00.5 Jess Huffman: Did it meet up to your expectations? Was it what you imagined?**

0:11:04.1 Patty: Well Cambridge was an experience. I thought Harvard was snooty! I was used to Harvard boys, but Cambridge boys? Wow! Talk about archaic snobbery, I mean, I couldn't believe it. The second thing that had me over here was that I was deeply, deeply upset and frightened by the rise of gun violence in America. I grew up with the Kennedy assassination - the two Kennedys, Martin Luther King - I think they even took a pot-shot at a couple of southern Democrats. America was really getting into this, 'If you don't agree with me, or I don't like you, or I'm just pissed off at the world, I'm going to shoot you.' No matter what happened, nobody legislated for gun control.

**0:11:59.3 Jess Huffman: It's interesting that you say that because knowing your son, I know that that's one of the reasons why him and his wife have chosen not to move to America.**

0:12:09.3 Patty: Yes.

**0:12:09.3 Jess Huffman: The problems are the same. So, you moved to England in the '70s. Is that right?**

0:12:16.7 Patty: Yes, oh gosh, 1975/76. I think it was '76. It was a bicentennial.

**0:12:25.6 Jess Huffman: Can you remember what your first perceptions were of...? I mean, to go to Cambridge...**

0:12:34.6 Patty: I can say it in three letters. WTF, you know?

**0:12:43.6 Jess Huffman: What was that based on?**

0:12:44.4 Patty: Cambridge, but then Cambridge is cloud cuckoo land. My first night at Cambridge, we got there in August and it was hot and the windows were open, and we were exhausted from travelling and everything. We finally got ourselves settled, went to sleep, and we heard this girl screaming outside. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. In Boston you hear ambulances, you hear police cars, you hear... You just learn to sleep through the racket. The next day it turned out it was apparently some - I had no idea what it all meant - but apparently some exam, it must've been maybe GCSEs results came through? Does that come back in August? Or A levels? Well this girl was screaming, in hysterics because she hadn't done very well, and in Cambridge that was mea culpa, mea maxima culpa.

**0:13:51.7 Jess Huffman: Your experience was unique to Cambridge initially.**

0:13:55.4 Patty: Cambridge. Then of course I met your uncle and your late aunt, and Kirk started bringing us down to Devon, and I thought, 'Oh my God. Normal people!' People in Cambridge are not normal. They're competitive, they're one-upmanship, they're not quite of this planet. They're so obsessed with their work that they've got no idea what real life is all about. Just thinking about the future, it was a good fit. I didn't want to bring children up in Cambridge; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Yes, whatever happens in their life I want them to have a couple of years of like what I had in America. Just innocent, fun, no pressure childhood, which I think you guys got, you guys had down here.

**0:15:11.2 Jess Huffman: Definitely.**

0:15:11.2 Patty: We did put a little pressure on the kids by sending them to St John's private school. We've always valued education, but other than that they could go off and go wandering, like I did when I was a kid, without, you know, being a parent who panics

and not under, 'Where are they? Where are they? Oh my God, they're going to be shot! They're going to be kidnapped! They're going to...!' That's the way it was when you guys were growing up, so that's what I'm very happy about. You did have some normal years.

**0:15:47.0 Jess Huffman: Yes, we were very lucky to grow up here.**

0:15:49.2 Patty: Oh, tell me!

**0:15:49.2 Jess Huffman: What did you, if anything, feel was missing? What did you miss about your life in Boston that wasn't here or that you valued?**

0:15:58.0 Patty: What I missed from Boston? God, I missed the baseball games. I think I missed... Americans are more easy-going, and I think also, well anyhow, until I really got clued up about how things ran here... I mean, if you haven't grown up here, you have to figure out, 'What the hell is this education system?' It was different in America.

**0:16:32.2 Jess Huffman: In what way?**

0:16:34.0 Patty: I don't know... The way they'd structure it. When I was growing up, I don't think there was any sort of national curriculum or any plan telling you, a nationwide plan of what was expected. They certainly didn't have all this battery of tests. Until I got used to it, I did feel like I was constantly wrongfooted or that... A lot of my concepts remained American. I treasure my easygoingness, my democratic spirit, in a way. I don't like English snobbery. I loathe English snobbery. Jacob Rees-Mogg is my idea of...

**0:17:42.7 Jess Huffman: The epitome of... [Laughs].**

0:17:44.6 Patty: The first in line at the guillotine, you know. Did you hear that he's going to do a reality TV show?

**0:17:50.9 Jess Huffman: Oh God. How [?embarrassing 0:17:50.6].**

0:17:51.8 Patty: With about six children and his nanny. They've been filming it for a year.

**0:17:58.6 Jess Huffman: I remember talking to you a little bit... You still identify as American, is that right? But you went...**

0:18:06.3 Patty: I identify as mid-Atlantic. I think that's the best way of putting it. If it's working well, it's the best of both worlds. If it's not working well then I'm totally confused.

**0:18:19.9 Jess Huffman: We had a conversation once and you were saying you still felt like your heart was in Boston, and you went back a few years ago, because you felt like you maybe didn't belong here in the same way you felt like you belonged in Boston. Then you went there and...**

0:18:36.5 Patty: And I didn't belong in Boston either.

**0:18:38.4 Jess Huffman: How did that make you feel?**

0:18:40.7 Patty: Well, gosh...

**0:18:42.4 Jess Huffman: What does that do to someone?**

0:18:44.5 Patty: I think the only thing you can do is just not worry about it. You can get your knickers in a twist about that. Am I American? Am I English? The thing is, I'm a dual national. I think I learned that from Americans too. If you're an Italian American, you still have, you know, a lot of them speak Italian in their homes, they still eat American food and have hotdogs and beans every day.

**0:19:17.0 Jess Huffman: Or Italian food, they'll still...**

0:19:16.4 Patty: Proper Italian food. They quite comfortably keep their own culture and assimilate it into the American system. It isn't that difficult because the American system is designed for it.

**0:19:40.3 Jess Huffman: Do you think it's the same here in England or is there...?**



0:19:44.0 Patty: I think immigrants have a tougher job. I think it also doesn't help that most of the immigrants have a colour problem; it's racial.

**0:19:55.2 Jess Huffman: In a way that it isn't in America?**

0:19:58.3 Patty: [Sighs]. Now that's a good one actually, because I know with the immigration, the border in Texas especially. The Spanish, the Mexican and the South Americans and whatever.

**0:20:17.4 Jess Huffman: America is a big country so it will vary state to state.**

0:20:20.6 Patty: I mean, it can assimilate a hell of a lot of people, but there is... There's obviously a very strong white supremacist population there, and all the different communities behave in different ways. The Chinese used to be completely shut away, like Chinatown in San Francisco or something, and police wouldn't even go in there because they had their own gangsters, they had their own laws, they had their own ways of doing things, and their own culture. It's the same thing with the very orthodox Jews in New York City. In fact, Rosie was telling me that, like one problem they have in London now is, because the orthodox Jewish community is very, very, it's a small community, and it's very, very insular. They're actually having problems with inbreeding now, because they only can marry another orthodox Jew. Leaving the fold, it's like you're kicked out for good, and so they're actually having inbreeding problems. She got this from somebody she works for in the Cabinet Office.

**0:21:43.8 Jess Huffman: Do you think that your experience of living most of your life in England, and that experience that you had of living in a multicultural community and moving to another place, how does that help you as a person to empathise with other people that have experienced that? How does that play out?**

0:22:07.7 Patty: Well I do. I think the only criticism I would have is, anybody who comes here - and I'm not saying conform completely to English standards - but make an effort. Don't lock yourself away. I would say this about, maybe about some of the Islamic

communities where... You know, keep your own culture, your own religion, but also just realise that you're part of this culture now, and you've got to make a stab at joining in or respecting the rules, not getting angry, not getting into a fuff if you feel slighted or... I mean, does that make sense? I think every immigrant just realises that it's not sink or swim but you know, you can dogpaddle your way in.

**0:23:12.2 Jess Huffman: What makes that process easier? What can we do as a nation of people, to make that process easier or to support that, support communities to feel...?**

0:23:28.7 Patty: If I had one thing it's concentrate on the children. The first generation of immigrants, I mean, they're still... They're off the boats, so to speak, and their task is just to survive. It's the children who go to the schools, who learn their English, who acquire their Englishness almost by osmosis, unless they're prevented by their family or parents or religion or whatever. Look at the Ukrainian children who came over. They're practically fluent in English now, through the schools, and I think it's really the second generation who goes through the school system, goes through the English system, and it starts out from the beginning on how the system works and how the English world works, that is the way of... So if we care about their education and consider it a priority that they speak and learn good English, that their schools are supported, that they are supported, then these children will become good, functional citizens.

**0:24:55.0 Jess Huffman: Do you think schools also have a responsibility to provide a diverse picture of history that maybe isn't there currently, or to celebrate multiculturalism?**

0:25:08.3 Patty: Well I think schools are doing that now. Celeste's pre-school, or was it her nursery? I can't remember which year it was, maybe it was last year, they did a project on Easter.

**0:25:22.9 Jess Huffman: This is your granddaughter who lives in London?**

0:25:26.8 Patty: Yes, who lives in London, and is at a small local pre-school. They did a project on Easter, about the meaning of Easter, the cultural implications of Easter. They brought up little chicks and stuff like that. They also did a whole week on Islam and Ramadan. Is it Ramadan at the same time as Easter? I think so. That's when everybody fasts and... So they did a whole week and they made cardboard mosques and things like that, and ate foods you would eat at Ramadan, because there were Muslims in her class. They read stories. The only fly in the ointment was one American Jewish lady who got upset about the whole thing. There was only one. They said, 'All right, come...' So she came in and read them something about Passover or something and everybody was satisfied. The Hindus didn't say anything, you know?

**0:26:43.8 Jess Huffman: So you feel it's changing and that's a positive direction?**

0:26:46.9 Patty: I think, yes, and like I said, whatever is happening now, I think the next generation that's been through the English system schools - if they're encouraged, if they're treated decently - I think they're the ones who will be the best integrated into the English system, but still maintain their identity, if they're encouraged to do that, or allowed to do that.

**0:27:14.4 Jess Huffman: Yes, and you value that? That's really important?**

0:27:16.9 Patty: Yes, I value that very much.

**0:27:19.5 Jess Huffman: I remember once you mentioned, just having an accent. Obviously you can still hear your Boston accent, it's probably even stronger forty years ago!**

0:27:29.7 Patty: Nobody likes a fake Brit. [Laughter].

**0:27:33.0 Jess Huffman: You mentioned once how - you put it very eloquently - but you said, 'My accent can make me stand out in a way that makes me feel like I'm interesting because I'm from another place, but it can also make me aware of my difference and that I'm from a...'**

0:27:48.7 Patty: Yes, yes.

**0:27:49.5 Jess Huffman: Tell me a bit more about that. Unpack that.**

0:27:51.7 Patty: This weekend when I was in hospital. I mean, everybody, the nurses, the patients, everybody, 'Oh, where are you from?' 'America.' You know, I was suddenly the ward jester. [Laughter]. I had one old lady who would say, 'Oh my God!' - she was Irish - [adopts Irish accent] - 'Oh my God! You're a tonic to me system!' I was telling her jokes, like, I'll tell the joke about, like, the Trump assassination, 'Should've gone to Specsavers!' If you can lighten the load for someone - it's pretty boring in hospital - so if you can make somebody laugh...

**0:28:29.8 Jess Huffman: Yes, it's important.**

0:28:32.5 Patty: So yes, it initiates conversations. I haven't had much of a negative response. Occasionally I think maybe there was a little during the Iraq War, and then I still get the odd American... Interesting, I was talking to some lady who was from Dunkeswell, this old lady, and I mentioned the Red Cross girls, and she said something about the Americans and immigrants, and she said, 'Oh, we all hated... The men all hated them because they took all the girls.' That is complete cliché.

**0:29:13.5 Jess Huffman: Tell us a little bit about this story. It's really lovely, we're interviewing, but you also volunteer on the project, and one of the things that you discovered was that this group of Red Cross...**

[Over speaking 0:29:27.4]

**0:29:27.3 Jess Huffman: Donut Dollies. Tell us the story.**

0:29:29.3 Patty: Oh, the Donut Dollies. Well the American Red Cross women, and they were quite extraordinary, they were recruited in America to come over and support the GIs here, you know, the servicemen, the army and navy and whatever. It was very, very strict. They all had to be college graduates. They were chosen very, very carefully, very, very

stable temperament. Obviously they didn't want somebody sort of like panicking or going nuts or something. They were given incredible training and they came over here and they had these vans and they dispensed... They went around, they were based around these bases, like at Dunkeswell, towards the end of the war when it was a US Navy base, for bombers, and they were based there.

0:30:31.0 Basically their job was to have coffee and doughnuts waiting when these poor guys came back from these absolutely petrifying missions, exhausted, cold, miserable - and they were considering themselves a miracle that they actually came back alive - actually just to talk to another American girl and feel they were understood. They could talk about anything, they could help write letters or just play a pack of cards, play a card game, and basically just being there, and just being the moral support for these poor guys. Some of them, I mean, they were 18, 19, 20. They were so young.

**0:31:19.0 Jess Huffman: Some may never have been away from home before, I imagine.**

0:31:21.8 Patty: Oh God, no. If you were from Iowa in the middle of America and had never been off the farm, to find yourself in a mudflat on the top of a windy, cold hill in England, about to go up. Every time you go up you're not sure if you're going to come back again.

**0:31:42.2 Jess Huffman: There was a Kennedy that was based there, and I think he...**

0:31:48.2 Patty: It was John F. Kennedy's brother, older brother, the one whose father was grooming to be president. I mean, his father was, you know, always considered... Actually, rumour has it his father always considered JFK the weakling of the group. Joe Kennedy Junior was the golden boy. His father also brought all nine children up to be extremely competitive, extremely. So Joe and John, John Kennedy was in the South Pacific and got some sort of big medal for rescuing a bunch of, when his PT-109 boat was shot down, so rescuing his crew and stuff like that. He swam, apparently, to this other island and got natives to get in touch with the Americans, and they were all rescued. He got a fancy medal for that. His brother was intensely competitive and felt, 'Well I've got to go off on this mission because you can't have a great medal and I can't... Because I'm the one who's

supposed to run for president.' He volunteered for this basic suicide mission, and his plane blew up over the Channel. He was flying out of Dunkeswell.

**0:33:05.4 Jess Huffman: Did he write a letter home that describes the conditions?**

0:33:07.5 Patty: Yes, I've got the letter. I found it in the JFK Memorial Library, which I visited when I was in Boston. It was wonderful. You can find all sorts of things in it.

**0:33:18.2 Jess Huffman: Doesn't he describe Dunkeswell?**

0:33:19.9 Patty: Mudville. [Laughter]. They all call it Mudville. It was horrendous. You drive up there in the winter and it's... I don't like being out there at night. You can almost hear the old planes rumbling.

**0:33:36.1 Jess Huffman: We don't really know much about the American soldiers that were based there at Dunkeswell, do we? There isn't a huge amount written about it.**

0:33:42.5 Patty: I think it became American in 1943. I think it was only a couple of years. Before then it was RAF, and the American Navy took it over. They basically flew these bombers and it was anti-submarine, so they basically flew out and tried to find submarines that were going after Merchant Navy ships, and trying to bomb these submarines before they could blow up convoys. I think they also did bombing raids over Germany and things. It was a terrifying life.

**0:34:34.1 Jess Huffman: So these Red Cross Donut Dolly women...?**

0:34:37.1 Patty: They were there when these guys needed friendship, consolation... I mean, there was no dating or anything. That's why they chose them so carefully. They were chosen for their... They could empathise. They were intelligent, they could empathise, and they could handle the situation because they were trained. They just provided what was needed, just basic friendship and comfort.

**0:35:15.1 Jess Huffman: We discovered that they were actually all living in Eglad House, which is on St Cyres Hill, just outside Honiton, and you found this amazing photograph of one of them swinging from a lamppost off Silver Street, didn't you? [Laughter].**

0:35:27.1 Patty: Yes, yes!

**0:35:28.6 Jess Huffman: I think you also found some letters by a young American soldier, who talks about befriending a farming family and...?**

0:35:38.6 Patty: Yes. It was a young guy and he was probably desperately homesick, desperately, and I mean, they were all probably missing their girlfriends, their families, their homes, their Americanness, playing baseball and football and watching, doing whatever you... Being normal, having Thanksgiving dinner and all the American cultural things that defined them. So this young chap was befriended by a local farming family. I'd love to find out who they were, if anybody does remember them. I don't know how I'd do that. He got really friendly with the family, and he had his mother send over popcorn from America. This family had never seen popcorn before, and they were fascinated and they actually made him take the lid off so it popped everywhere, just so they could see it. If there was a birthday, he'd raid the American rations, or the American kitchens, and bring the kids ice-cream. So I mean, honestly, there must have been lots of good relationships formed. It wasn't all, you know, 'over-sexed, over-paid and over here'.

**0:37:06.5 Jess Huffman: As the saying went.**

0:37:10.6 Patty: Yes. I think there must have been interactions in a pub, because they did get their 'liberties', which was... 'Liberties' were leave in the Navy. So they must have interacted. The thing is, because of health reasons I haven't been able to get up to Dunkeswell, but they do have a little museum there and I'm sure there must be some records of...

**0:37:43.1 Jess Huffman: I don't think there's a huge amount, but definitely, we need to...**

0:37:46.9 Patty: Yes. It's almost like, it'd be interesting to sort of put something in the paper, 'Does anybody remember your family in Dunkeswell befriending American Navy guys?'

**0:38:03.5 Jess Huffman: You've done some amazing research Patty. The stories are great.**

0:38:07.5 Patty: I love them all. I love that little dog... I mean, that guy who just had that little Jack Russell.

**0:38:13.2 Jess Huffman: Oh, which story is that?**

0:38:14.6 Patty: It's a picture, yes. Just a little bit of comfort, you know, for your buddy. Miss Dunkeswell, I mean, that had to be American, a beauty... They set up a Miss Dunkeswell pageant.

**0:38:33.3 Jess Huffman: Oh, I don't know that! What, involved local people in that?**

0:38:39.4 Patty: I've got no idea.

**0:38:40.1 Jess Huffman: Oh, we need to find out.**

0:38:41.3 Patty: I just have a picture of a copy of the paper. It was an American in-house newspaper for the American servicemen.

**0:38:52.4 Jess Huffman: Amazing. We need to find out more.**

0:38:54.6 Patty: God knows what it... And they did have... I mean, that list of pictures I sent you, there were pictures of some of the American staff, I mean, the English staff that worked there, and there were pictures of the parties, and I assume staff was invited to them. So they got to chomp on all the American rations, which must have been amazing.



**0:39:15.7 Jess Huffman: Which would have included?**

0:39:18.1 Patty: God knows.

**0:39:17.8 Jess Huffman: Tights?**

0:39:18.0 Patty: Anything canned.

**0:39:20.1 Jess Huffman: 'Hosiery', do they call it?**

0:39:24.5 Patty: Hmm?

**0:39:24.6 Jess Huffman: What do you think would have been in those?**

0:39:25.2 Patty: In one of the pictures they have a Thanksgiving menu and it is... [Sighs]. So they made sure that these guys had their American comforts and stuff. They were remarkably well fed, which is... I'm sure, a lot of them snuck out rations for the locals that you couldn't get on the rations here. The joke they were always getting nylons for girls. What they thought these GIs were going to do with the nylons, you know. [Laughs]. I mean, now they'd think, God...

**0:40:18.8 Jess Huffman: Parachutes!**

0:40:19.7 Patty: [Over speaking 0:40:20.0] tramps, you know? [Laughter].

**0:40:21.9 Jess Huffman: They use them as parachutes.**

0:40:24.8 Patty: Oh yes, the parachutes, wedding dresses made from parachute silk and everything. Yes, it's lovely to look at the pictures and the girls all sitting in that nice cosy room in Eglands, where they were stationed, bivouacked.

**0:40:45.7 Jess Huffman: Yes, because it's a stately home; would you consider it a stately home? It's a large residence, isn't it?**

0:40:51.5 Patty: A small stately home.

**0:40:52.1 Jess Huffman: A small stately home. It's not a large residence.**

0:40:54.4 Patty: It's almost like a dower house, isn't it?

**0:40:55.8 Jess Huffman: I don't know what a dower house is.**

0:40:57.8 Patty: A dower house is when, you know, when like at [Tracey], if the owner, if the man died and the widow was given a dower house so the husband... The son and his wife could take over. So that was called the dower house. The widow always moved in to that. I don't know whether it's dower house or a separate... I don't know. I'd have to go back and look at all the land deeds and stuff. It wasn't as grand as Tracey, was it?

**0:41:30.7 Jess Huffman: No, and Tracey is the large house next door, so no, it's not. So Patty, one of the questions I like to ask everyone when we're interviewing them is, why do you think it's important to share your story and your experiences?**

0:41:46.2 Patty: Knowledge as understanding. If you listen from an outsider's perspective of what the experience is like, it will make you more empathetic to anybody else who's in my position, like coming to a different country and making a home, making a life, learning the ropes, trying to make friends, trying to live a normal life, you know?

0:42:31.2 Sound of the BBC News theme tune.

**0:42:34.7 Jess Huffman: Woah! That was amazingly well-timed, that noise! What was that?**

0:42:40.8 Patty: That was my BBC app.

**0:42:46.1 Jess Huffman: Brilliant. Anyone would think that we'd actually, I'm from the BBC and recorded you live!**

0:42:51.2 Patty: It was the BBC! [Laughter]. I've got the BBC app on my...

**0:42:54.7 Jess Huffman: Maybe they're listening! That's amazing. Oh Patty, thank you so much.**

0:42:58.4 Patty: Is that what you wanted?

**0:42:59.4 Jess Huffman: Yes, it's brilliant, and for all your time and your energy today, because I know you've been unwell, and there's so much in there.**

0:43:06.5 Patty: Well one thing I've noticed, no matter how ill I am, I can still talk. [Laughter]. It's going to be the last of my faculties to go. [Laughter].

**[END OF TRANSCRIPT]**