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**E&OE TRANSCRIPT
TELEVISION INTERVIEW
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DEBORAH K NIGHT: Things are going from bad to worse for the Government, still reeling from claims that he tried to influence a police investigation into Minister Angus Taylor. The PM has been blindsided by Pauline Hanson, with audible gasps in the Senate when she voted down the controversial union busting bill. The Government's, Peter Dutton joins me now along with Deputy Opposition Leader, Richard Marles. Good morning to you both.

PETER DUTTON: Good morning.

RICHARD MARLES, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY: Good morning to you, Deb.

KNIGHT: Pete, what an absolute shocker. You must be so dirty on Pauline, she's played you guys.

DUTTON: Don't read the Canberra press gallery reports.

KNIGHT: I'm not, I'm watching the Senate. There were gasps.

DUTTON: It was a vote we wanted to win.

KNIGHT: And you lost.

DUTTON: We have CFMEU running around building sites in the country completely lawless.

KNIGHT: So, how dirty are you on Pauline Hanson?

DUTTON: I hope Pauline Hanson can tell us what she wants so that the bill can be recommitted in a form that is acceptable to her. But I think her membership base, her support base—particularly in Queensland will be waking up today quite startled by the fact that she hadn't supported this bill. I think she has made a mistake. I hope she can reengage with the Government and support a sensible bill.

KNIGHT: What do you do here though? Do you have to get everything in writing from her, because up until the vote you were expecting it to be a yes from her?

DUTTON: We have a good relationship with the crossbench Senators.

KNIGHT: You clearly don't have a good relationship with Jacqui Lambie, she was very annoyed you weren't even talking to her. She said the vote from her, you thought you had it in the bag with Pauline. She wasn't happy at all.

DUTTON: I think there have been a lot of discussions with Jacqui as well but in the end what does it come back to? The Government wanted to get a bill through which essentially had a rule of law being reintroduced to the CFMEU and to other unions. Being part of a union is a fine thing and if people are abiding by the law, the union leadership, nobody has any problem with that. But we are talking about people acting completely outside of the law. The fact the Labor Party wouldn't support it tells you about how deeply they are affected and owned and operated, frankly, by some of these union bosses.

KNIGHT: You must have been cock-a-hoop from Labor ranks last night partying hard?

MARLES: Not partying hard. They have had a terrible week. And I think what we have seen a Prime Minister distracted trying to defend the indefensible Minister, frankly, ringing the NSW Police Commissioner and the like and he has taken his eye off the ball of his own legislation.

KNIGHT: Were they too cocky though because Anthony Albanese was dealing directly with Pauline Hanson on this, wasn't he?

MARLES: It is up to the Government as to how they deal with Pauline Hanson. Obviously we talk to all the crossbench, and this was legislation that needed to be defeated. Because it really reflects an obsession on the part of the Liberal Party in relation to trade unions. Trade unions, if they engage in some breaches of paperwork, could have the whole union deregistered. It made no sense when you compare that to what's been going on at Westpac and 23 million breaches of the law and 'that's just a matter for the board' according to the Government. That's why this was so out of kilter. Even the crossbench could see it. This is a Government that's taken its eye off the ball. It has been completely focused on Angus Taylor and it stopped governing.

KNIGHT: And what do you do from here, Pete? Do you bring the bill forward again or what's the plan?

DUTTON: I think there is a strong argument to bring the bill forward. Richard's point about the paperwork is nonsense, to be honest-

MARLES: It is not. That's what it says.

DUTTON: It is targeting the most egregious actions by builders. You have got Workplace Health and Safety officers who won't go on to a site where the CFMEU is working because they are worried about the impact of interacting with these people who have no regard for the law. You have got a big problem. We are trying to fix that problem. And that's why the Independents had a conversation with us. They recognised there is a problem. We now need to narrow down to the points of difference, work that out, recommit the bill, and have a common sense situation restored.

MARLES: Can I just speak on that, Deb. There are a range of laws right now which apply to trade unions as they apply to everyone in relation to the kind of activity that Peter was talking about. This was a legal regime that went way over the top. Talking about paper breaches could have the whole union deregistered. That's ultimately why the crossbenchers rightly saw this should not law which should become the law of the land.

KNIGHT: What happens now with the other big hope, too - the repealing of the Medevac Bill. You need Jacqui Lambie's support to get that through. She says she has one condition for her vote. Is third country resettlement an option here?

DUTTON: I have had discussions with Jacqui and the Prime Minister has. We will continue that. We are not going to talk about it at the moment.

KNIGHT: New Zealand has made an offer for refugee settlement on a number of occasions. Why not consider that?

DUTTON: Deb, I'm not going to comment on what we're in discussion on with Jacqui Lambie on other than to say we aren't going to compromise on national security. We aren't going to compromise on border security.

KNIGHT: Are you willing to lose the vote on that issue?

DUTTON: We will hopefully get the vote through with the support of Jacqui, but we are not going to compromise our position on boarder security. We are largely now in a position where we have cleaned up Labor's mess. We have got all of the kids out of detention, Manus Island detention centre is closed down. We are getting people closed down. We are getting people close to zero on Nauru. I don't want boats restarting. I don't want people drowning again. We have got issues in Sri Lanka and elsewhere in the region at the moment where people smugglers are trying to put ventures together. We are not going to make any decision that will sacrifice the success that we have had in our border protection policies. It would be great if Labor could support us and we wouldn't need the support of the Independents then, because we have got now 16 people of questionable character that are either here or on their way under the Medevac laws. They would have received medical attention in Nauru or Papua New Guinea before, and this is now a very serious situation. Labor was warned about this and the bill is completely flawed.

MARLES: The idea the sky was going to fall in because of the Medevac laws has now been shown to be bunkum. The thing people need to understand, hundreds of people came under Peter's administration seeking medical attention in Australia from Nauru and Manus before this was even the law. I think it was 900 people who have come seeking medical attention to Australia. It is about 100 people who have come on the Medevac laws. It is a small fraction of what the Government was doing. There was nothing actually particularly controversial about this Bill or the idea of it. And it doesn't give rise to a breakdown of our border security.

DUTTON: It is good that you kept a straight face with that you kept a straight face with that.

MARLES: It sounds like Peter is having actually having a conversation with Jacqui on whatever that mystical condition is.

KNIGHT: Are you disappointed with the way the PM has handled the Angus Taylor saga. He shouldn't have made the phone call.

MARLES: He shouldn't have made the phone call.

DUTTON: It is a storm in a tea cup. The Prime Minister has responsibility, all of us as Ministers signed up to a ministerial Code of Conduct and he wanted to get the facts for himself to understand whether or not he had to stand the Minister aside. If he hadn't availed himself of the facts, he would stand accused of not properly informing himself and how can he make a judgment about whether Angus should stand aside or not.

MARLES: Why didn't he get the department to find that out?

DUTTON: I've seen overreach in the Parliament over the years on a number of occasions. Anthony Albanese is so desperately scratching around for success at the moment, and a win. He is going to fall in a heap - just wait and see it over the next few weeks...

MARLES: This ain't over. You were a policeman.

DUTTON: A long time ago.

MARLES: When you are a policeman and the local politician rang up about a case, wouldn't you be a bit surprised? It never happened.

DUTTON: It didn't happen.

MARLES: Exactly. So what was the Prime Minister doing making that call.

DUTTON: He spoke to the Police Commissioner to get the facts of the case.

MARLES: He spoke to the head policeman in New South Wales.

KNIGHT: We will see how this plays out, there will be more to come on that. I want to end on some Friday fun, with you fellas. Because Donald Trump we know tweeted an odd image yesterday photoshopping his face on to the body of Rocky Balboa. And we have done some photoshopping of our own. How about this, Marles, Richard Marles. Would you be happy as Daniel Craig in James Bond? What a rig!

MARLES: That comes from the land where the pigs are flying.

KNIGHT: Peter, are you feeling lucky, punk? How about you as Clint Eastwood. Look at all that hair?

DUTTON: I went to the gym this morning and I felt like Clint Eastwood in The Mule, not that version. There you go. Can you please get that off the screen?

KNIGHT: We will put it on the Facebook page later just to relive the dream. Fellas, Thank you so much, enjoy for your weekend.

ENDS

Authorised by Paul Erickson, ALP, Canberra.