Q: So, do you remember when you first heard that there was going to be a referendum?

A: I don’t think I can remember a specific point because it was such a long run up to it that I’d forgotten when it started.

Q: Do you remember any of the stuff about what the wording was going to be or what was going to be on the ballot paper?

A: I do remember them having big arguments about whether there was going to be a ‘maybe’ on the ballot paper and I also remember some discussion about whether or not the question itself was a leading question or whether it was unbiased enough. It seems so long ago, but it was so long ago, but no, I can’t pinpoint when they actually were like, “Yes, we are definitely going to have it and it’s going to be this date”.

Q: Do you remember at any point beginning to get excited about the prospect of it or interested in what was going on?

A: I was always quite interested in it. I would never say excited because I didn’t want it to be a yes vote. So, I was quite interested in the arguments for and against. Having some friends that were for and could argue quite well for it. I knew some people who were against just for terrible reasons. So, it was quite interesting hearing their sides of it even though I’d decided well before. So, it wasn’t that they were going to change my mind and equally the other way round.

Q: So, what were these convincing yes arguments or these disappointing ones?

A: It seemed to be the NHS side of things in particular. I do remember something on the news years ago about how the care for the elderly is better in Scotland and how Berwick upon Tweed wants to come back into the border because of-, but I think some of the arguments were concentrating on the NHS and care for everyone. Whereas in England, it seems to be going very much down there, “Lets farm it out and privatise”, and all of this. That was quite attractive. They seemed to also be talking the arts quite a lot. Obviously it’s something that generally interests me.

Q: Like the music industry?

A: I think arts in general. Although it could be because one of my friends who was a very firm yes is a musician. So, it might be that I was getting a slightly biased view, people saying this that and the other. But I was never entirely convinced by the financial thing based on oil revenue and it’s probably just as well, but there are other things like what they were going to do with the money seemed to be a really good thing, rather than where they were going to get it from. I think they do just-, they seem to give this impression about caring, to whatever degree of truth there was, caring about the people rather than just some kind of…

Q: Do you think that the campaigns were generally well run?

A: I get the impression that the political campaign was certainly quite well run initially from the yes. I think towards the end it got a bit, on both sides it got a bit, “Let’s have an argument and lets promise things”, and just in the last few weeks it seemed to be getting a bit silly. There seemed to be a lot of people that I came across that weren’t really bothered by the politics, were just “Oh, we’re Scottish. We’re voting yes”, or, “Yes, we are Scottish, but we want to remain part of the UK”. So, it didn’t seem-, a lot of the people I came across, particularly at work seemed to just make the decision on gut feeling rather than really looking into it and then would have great arguments about why they were right without actually having proper basis to it. So, that got a little annoying, but that was more the people that the campaign was aimed at rather than the politics itself.

Q: That’s interesting. Were people open to talking about it at work?

A: We certainly had a lot of people talking about it. We get a lot of taxi drivers through who are quite opinionated anyway, and a quite a few builders, and because we have papers in the shop, they’d read the latest thing from one side or the other and they would start off some kind of debate. The last few months were a bit cloudy for me because I was worrying about funding in the run up to it. So, it was kind of-, I’m interested in this but I’m rather scared it’s going to go yes, but for funding reasons.

Q: Okay. So, you’ve had your own reasons?

A: Yeah.

Q: Right, right.

A: Well before then I decided I was going to vote no for staying in the EU and-, I think if there had been a maybe or a devolution max option, I would have gone for that and I know quite a few people who voted yes who would have gone for devo-max. One person who was actually hoping it was going to go no, but was voting yes to try and get devo-max because you’ve got so many people who voted yes that you’ve got to consider it. Actually, I think that’s one of the-, I was glad it was tight just because of that reason. It needs to force more devolution, but when people started talking about having another referendum in three years’ time, it was just a little but ridiculous. They spent so much money on it the first time that we need to leave it for a few years [Laughter].

Q: Do you think it did help that it was so close, for extra powers and so on?

A: It’s quite difficult to tell because you-, without thinking well-, if it had gone a definitive no. Even if it had been 20%, I think Westminster would have had much more of a reason to rein in on all the promises they made. They are not exactly sticking to the timeline they had said, but they would have gone, “Well, maybe you don’t really want it”. I suppose they would have had to have done something having promised, but then maybe if it hadn’t been running so close in the weeks running up to it, they never would anyway.

Q: Do you think people are still paying attention to that now?

A: I don’t know. My opinion is slightly skewed by my other friends who are still quite interested in it themselves and bring the topic up quite a lot and try an almost turn it into an argument because there are people on either side, but because of that it’s in my mind a bit more. The taxi drivers have certainly stopped talking about it. The Daily Record has stopped printing about it. So, I think it does seem to have disappeared into the ether a bit, at least in the general stories that they deal with, but with my friends it seems to be more…

Q: You mentioned the Daily Record. How do you think in general the media coverage was?

A: Certainly with the papers like the Record and stuff that we get in the shop, it was ridiculous because one day they would be pro and then the next day they’d be against. That’s not really the point of a balanced view is it? To be one side one day and one side the other. You’re supposed to present them at the same time. It’s a bit difficult to tell because when I read the news myself, I tend to go to the BBC and then I-, but everyone is going to be biased slightly, but I didn’t notice the bias everyone was going on about afterwards. The whole BBC doing this and that and the other. Perhaps also because I read the BBC website, but I also waken to the Today Programme. So, you get slightly different spreads of things.

Q: How is it different on the Today Programme?

A: I think because they’ve got more time than a short article on a website and also because they are trying to fill in time. You get a lot more interviews from either side, whereas you just get a small quotation on the website from either side, you would get the whole thing in the morning. So, you’ve then-, you’ve not got the editor bias of someone going, “Right, I’m going to pick out that quotation”, like they used to do with CD reviews. “This CD was the greatest travesty ever”, “This CD was the greatest…” I know no one does it that extremely, but say with the live interviews in the morning, you do get the editing that you get on a website and in the written form.

Q: Do you think that-, did you watch any of the TV debates?

A: I didn’t actually. I think by the time we got to the TV debates I was slightly sick of the whole thing going on for so long.

Q: Did you see any of the highlights or anything like that?

A: I don’t think I even did that. It was not just that I just didn’t want to, I think I was actively at that point. I had just had enough. There is only so much of something you can take before you start getting fed up with it.

Q: So, you’d been feeling media saturation?

A: Yeah. Especially in the last couple of months. It was just everything was about the referendum.

Q: So, in Edinburgh, on the streets and stuff, what was the mood? What did it look like?

A: From where I am, I thought it was going to go yes because there were so many yes posters in windows. I think there were quite a lot of yes posters around Merchiston as well. One of the things I’ve been wondering, a lot of people had posters for yes, but not that many people had posters for no. So, are all the blank windows no? In which case it’s going to go no, or are they a mixture of yes or no? Are people avoiding putting no in their windows to avoid getting eggs thrown at it or something? Equally, in highly no areas, the yes was the same thing.

Q: So, you thought it was quite regional?

A: It certainly seemed that different areas of Edinburgh seemed to have different-, at least from the spread of the yes posters.

Q: Do you think people were really afraid to advertise themselves as being no?

A: I don’t get the impression in Edinburgh, but I’m pretty sure they were-, there were some-, I know there was at least one example in Glasgow where a shop got-, certainly egged, I don’t remember if they got their windows smashed afterwards. They certainly had a lot of ball though because they had a no poster in their window. I mean there are going to be isolated things of that wherever you are. I don’t think it was particularly a Scottish referendum thing, but it was a bit of a shame.

Q: How about now? What is the mood in Edinburgh like now, do you think?

A: I don’t know. I mean, there are still places around me that have yes posters or-, one flat has got an E poster, because they had Y, E and S before. I think the S dropped off first and then the Y, so now they’ve just got the E. It’s like, Yorkshire independence, E.

Q: Maybe one day we’ll see that [laughter]! So, do you think that the SNP have done well out of the independence debate?

A: I don’t think-, they’ve certainly become a lot more prominent. They seem to have been become more known about down in England and its quite-, it was quite interesting hearing from my parents how their friends were reacting to all the media coverage of the referendum. I think they seem quite reactionary against it and were like, “Oh well, if they’re that desperate to go then they should just go”. What was the question again?

Q: About how the SNP did out of it.

A: Yeah. So, I was actually-, I was surprised Alex Salmond stood down because I don’t know if there was any need for him to do so. It’s great that we now have a female leader and everything. We nearly had all three major parties having female leaders, except the Labour woman resigned the week Nicola took over. So-, and I think they-, because of the focus on what they wanted for Scotland and all of the things like the NHS and stuff, I think they brought themselves across in a very good light and now that the referendum is out the way I would consider voting for them on that basis. They do seem so concerned about how people are living, whereas the other parties seem so secure that they, I don’t know-, but there are other-, the more nationalist side of the SNP I find harder to deal with, not being Scottish.

Q: Do you think that they will do well generally out-, in the general election? Do you think with the independence on the back of the rest of it all?

A: I think it’s possible, yeah… They now seem to be going for the lets fight for devo-max. So, I would think that that would push them forward a bit more, but I always find it very difficult to tell how these things are going to go.

Q: What about Labour? What is the fallout for Labour of the referendum?

A: I don’t know. Labour seem to have become such a non-party in a way since Tony Blair. It’s hard to see them really being forgiven by the electorate for all of the stuff they did for them. So, I don’t feel like Scottish independence or not is going to make a huge amount of difference in their-.

Q: So, what kind of things are they not being forgiven for?

A: I don’t-, well, things like the Iraq war and partly the crash, although I know that’s mostly America, but the booming economy or the inflated economy over here didn’t help either. I always think that their party doesn’t seem that cohesive with-, no one seems to like their leader.

Q: Is Ed Milliband a major problem, do you think, in Labour?

A: I guess so. In the same way that in the end Gordon Brown was a great problem for Labour, despite the fact that actually it-, those last few weeks before the independence run, he really showed me what an intelligent person he is. He became such an object of derision really up to the last general election and I think Milliband seems to be going the same way.

Q: Why?

A: I don’t-, the impression I get from clips of him speaking is that he doesn’t really seem to be as open minded to that much, never mind what his party’s policies are. I mean, the latest one, talking about-, yesterday I think, was in Prime Ministers Question Time or something, making some comment about-, it might have been Afternoon in Parliament, but he was talking about how Labour are supporting business and how he was having some fancy meal with business leaders and he couldn’t remember their names. He was like, “Oh yes, Darren somebody, he used to be the CEO of such and such”. I was like, well, I do that occasionally, but I’m not on TV-, and also, I’m not in the Houses of Parliament trying to run the country. He could at least have-, if he was going to make a point of it, he could at least have written something down. The fact that, okay, he delivered his party conference speech from memory, but then he forgot part of it. So, actually he didn’t deliver it from memory and he would have been better using the autocue as a safety net. So, its silly things like that that are not necessarily anything to do-, in fact, are nothing to do with his policies most of the time, but because he is making such a hash of other things, it makes it difficult to get past that to find out what their policies actually are. It’s just part of their general media I think.

Q: They are focusing on those blunders?

A: Yeah.

Q: Right, and the Tories?

A: I don’t-, I mean-.

Q: How did David Cameron come out through the independence debate?

A: I don’t know. I didn’t get the impression that he really did that much apart from the last week when he say, “Oh, actually no. We’ll give you this and we’ll give you that and we’ll give you-“. I think I remember more about Boris talking about stuff. I can remember anything particularly specific, but I remember he was talking about how Scotland should stay with the UK and the advantages of the EU, and then he was the one who seemed to actually be making proper argument rather than just going, “Oh yeah, well the queen doesn’t want this and blah, blah, blah”. Just like Gordon Brown was making some very good arguments as to why all those-, devo-max should be great, but we’ll just stay in the union. It seems to be some of these people that are on the side lines, at least the cabinet ministers and so on. They were actually making valid arguments and then the actual leaders were playing up a bit more to the media.

Q: Right, right. Do you think Nicola Sturgeon is going to do alright?

A: I hope so. She seems-, she comes across as very capable and very intelligent. Hopefully that will stand her in good stead and she won’t just turn into another pauper and start making silly mistakes, but she seems to be doing well. I think the thing that she was talking about recently about lifting the ban on SNP MP’s voting in English debates when there is something that will affect Scotland in the long run, I think it’s a very good idea. It’s a great principle to say, “Okay, no. We’re only going to vote on Scottish stuff”, but actually, there are some things that if they happen in England they will affect Scotland.

Q: What about the new Labour leader in Scotland and that process.

A: I don’t know. It kind of passed me by slightly. I think as it was in the middle of the hype about the changeover between Alex Salmond and Nicola Sturgeon and then-, I knew that the previous leader was resigning, but I missed the new person coming in. So, it hasn’t really come across my radar that much, which perhaps is telling in its own right.

Q: Yeah, maybe you’re right. Okay. I think that’s pretty much everything.

A: Awesome.

Q: Thank you very much.

**[Transcript Ends 00:25:22]**