**Interview 4**

Q: Hi, so the referendum?

A: Yes.

Q: Were you involved in it at all, in the campaigning or anything like that?

A: No.

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

A: Yes, the SNP got, after they come to power, they put something to the Clerk. They said they were going to do it and they put something to parliament, so I knew that it was happening and then I knew when they announced it, Salmond announced it.

Q: When it first came about, did you think that it was going to have any legs? Did you think it was going to be likely?

A: I don’t know. I’ve been supporting independence since I was 14, so I thought that we probably wouldn’t get it but initially, I thought there would be a third option on the ballot. There would be a vote for devo-max and I thought we would get devo- max.

Q: Were you disappointed that devo-max didn’t get on there?

A: Yes, I think that would’ve been one that easily passed and that would have been a settled vote but people in the commission, probably of independence, might not have come up for quite a while. A lot of people wanted devo-max, I think.

Q: Why do you think that devo-max didn’t get on the ballot paper in the end?

A: Because Cameron didn’t want it. He’d done a sort of major gamble on his part but I think the main reason is that it definitely would have got through, and Westminster politicians and England didn’t really want a Scotland that had its own financial powers, that that level of free autonomy would, based on the oil revenue, I think it comes down to that they want to control that money from England. They don’t want that money to be controlled from Scotland.

Q: Yes.

A: So, I think that that’s the major reason why, one of the reasons why that would have gone through but it wasn’t offered.

Q: I mean, obviously we don’t know what happened in those negotiations but do you think that there was a gamble on the part of the SNP as well?

A: No I don’t think-,

Q: Do you think they wanted devo-max?

A: They wanted devo-max on the table, yes, definitely, because the SNP’s policy, their consistent policy has been to increase the powers of Scotland. The more powers that Scotland gets, the more financial autonomy that Scotland has then more people want independence so they think that it will be a gradual move towards independence.

Q: Right

A: That’s their-, and if it doesn’t then you end up with the next best option anyway so that’s always been their strategy, I think, ever since I’ve followed them and Salmond’s been the leader.

A: Yes, and do you think that is still the strategy now?

A: Yes.

Q: It feels like it’s still kind of going that way, you know, slightly more powers?

A: That’s exactly their strategy. I think they are still doing that. I think they will still go for that and I think there will be a vote inside ten years, maybe ten years, ten years is a good number, maybe with a campaign two years before that.

Q: Yes. So, could you tell us what the feeling in the city in Edinburgh was like leading up to the referendum?

A: I think it got a little tense but I think that generally it wasn’t that tense. I mean, I think generally what it was, was people started commenting on either side and some people took it quite seriously. Some people were like, “Right, okay. Well, what are they going to do about this? What do people think?” Are we acting as a group because I want to find out what the people that I love, the interests of people and people had reasons that really affect them and if I think are genuine then maybe I’d vote differently. So, I think there was a lot of communication about it but it was-, well, Edinburgh is kind of low key so I think it was a kind of low level debate. It’s a low level debate and low level intensity, but communicating about how people thought it was going to actually affect their lives rather than sort of the bigger political concern of, “Oh, we should be independent because of the idea of independence.”

Q: So, did you get involved in any of those discussions and debates yourself?

A: Yes, there was quite a lot of talking just amongst my circle of friends, so people would actually talk to them about it and that two people, close friends that I had some conversations with, and then a lot of family, talking with family about what they wanted. I mean, my family was pretty already set for what they wanted. Everyone was really voting for independence anyway.

Q: Are most of your family SNP voters as well?

A: Yes, so two of my family have joined, applied for the first time since the referendum to join the SNP.

Q: Right, right. Do you get any sense why they didn’t join before and why they joined now?

A: Well, I think they joined now to give the idea of support that, you know, they think just because we lost the referendum, the SNP shouldn’t disappear, so they are still supporting what we want now, whereas beforehand, it didn’t seem-, well, yes, I think that’s why they’ve joined now while it was prompted for them to join, whereas before I think they were willing to help but not really that gung-ho about joining a political party.

Q: Do you think that was a really well ran campaign?

A: Yes. So, I think there was two things. There was a ground campaign and there was an air campaign. The ground campaign of the SNP massacred them, absolutely, and discussions in groups and just amongst social media and stuff, the union party got absolutely hammered. I mean, basically, I think the independence increased their percentage of the vote by about 15%, 12-15%, something like that from just the start to the end of the campaign and also it seems that that’s not disappeared either. So, they did really well.

Q: So, you said there is like the ground campaign and the air campaign?

A: Yes, so the air campaign is just media. It’s media based.

Q: Okay.

A: I mean, there was no way they were ever going to win that one because all the media in Britain comes out, the British broadcasting coverage, so it includes on the net.

Q: Yes, yes. What about the media in Scotland, like the newspapers and things like that?

A: Well, there- I mean, what is there? There’s the Herald and there’s the-,

Q: Scotsman.

A: The Scotsman’s dead. That was killed 10 years ago, 20 years ago by Murdoch, so that’s not really an independent voice. That just kind of reports other people’s news, I think. The Herald is, yes, was kind of Glasgow. I think the Herald was quite pro-independence in the end, which was surprising because Glasgow’s always been more leaning towards Great Britain.

Q: But in the end, Glasgow voted.

A: Yes, so that was a massive turnaround there. I mean, I put a lot of it down to the realisation now in Scotland that their traditional party are Conservative. So, Blair just destroyed what was left of the Labour Party and made it a centralist based, slightly left side centralist based party and it’s kind of the fallout of that that Miliband is suffering from. So, Brown had a bit more of old Labour about him and he’s Scottish, so I think he connected with that old kind of voting. In the end, they used that card well and that might’ve swung it for them, the way they used Brown in the last two weeks.

Q: I mean, he certainly hung out until the end. Do you think that was a deliberate strategy?

A: No, I think it was mass panic.

Q: Right.

A: It just grew [laughter] absolutely. It’s when that poll got published, I think they just threw absolutely everything they had in to make sure that it didn’t happen.

Q: Right. I mean, I guess from a work sense, I can kind of understand it, but I mean why do you think Scottish Labour wasn’t in favour of independence?

A: Well, because they are unionists. They believe in Britain. I mean I’ve got a couple of very close friends who are Socialists, who don’t believe in divided countries really. They believe in Socialism. They believe in old fashioned socialism. If you believe in old fashioned socialism then you don’t believe that we should split up in that case. If you come from that kind of background then you’re like “Well, we are a union of hope,” so why split our power as a collective.

Q: Yes.

A: Also I think-, so, the Labour party is about targeting the whole of Britain, not about gaining from Scotland, so what you’re doing is breaking off a bit of your support, which is key to you-, well, it’s a help for you holding onto the whole lot again.

Q: Now, I mean in the polls at the moment, it looks like the SNP are going to wipe the floor with Labour?

A: Well, Scottish Labour, yes, I think they suffer from the major problem that, you know, in ’97, there was a lot of genuine hope. The return of the Labour government after 15 years of Conservatism would restack the books. We would change, we would get back with-, and actually they just totally led the country into a mountain. Fair enough, they did invest money in schools and they did invest money in hospitals, but it’s really a kind of betrayal. I mean, is that really what we waited, people waited and held on for that long to be served up that from Tony Blair.

Q: Yes.

A: So, a lot of people think “Well, okay, so the option for that’s gone now, so there is no point in supporting-, it doesn’t matter what I think, there is no party for me to vote for in Westminster,” so therefore one way of looking at it is to say “Well, I’ll use my vote elsewhere. I’ll look for-,” There is enough power in Scotland to move towards the left. There is party that could do something so why not vote for them? So, I think that’s how my thinking goes and I think it’s a lot of people. I mean, I thinks that’s why Labour is now in real trouble because they’ve identified with what they did in power for 14 years or however long it was.

Q: Do you think that, I mean, how the referendum went had any impact of how people saw the SNP?

A: I think so. The referendum does one thing, it focuses you on a single issue whether you think you should be an independent country or not, and a lot of people up until that point hadn’t probably not even have really considered the thought. So, then you’ve got a lot of people actually saying, trying to make a convincing case for it, and there is a convincing case for it and a lot of people bought into that. I think a lot of people just fancied something new as well. You hear something new that you can do that actually has the potential to work that has a chance of us having better lives, and let’s do it, you know, so that kind of positive argument, I think, has worked. It’s led to an increase in the SNP voting, sort of genuine optimism around that. I’m not sure how long it will last. I mean, it’s difficult to know that.

Q: Do you think it will survive to the actual general election?

A: Definitely, and I think it will definitely survive until the next Scottish Parliament. I think the SNP will probably get returned with a majority quite easily in the next parliament and also I think Labour has got a real problem. They’ve got no real talented people with them, not really a strong party of people, so I’m not sure whether they are going to get it or not. I mean, Johann Lamont is terrible. She was one of the worst political leaders that I have ever seen. I mean, she might have been good behind the scenes or something, she might have had good policies but actually, as a front man, she was the worst political person that I have ever seen. She was almost [laughter] almost non-existent. She did have a party speech when she was walking away, you know the leaders after their speech, they go round and they shake hands with people and they’re kind of confirming their alliance? Well, people were hugging her and trying to give her the strength, shall we say, shuddering about saying, “Who is this?” and she got through her speech anyway but she needed support, and that’s not a political leader.

Q: Do you think the public are onto that kind of thing? They want to see everything, like strength and function?

A: Yes, I think they want an image of someone who is capable and who fits the image of what they think a Prime Minister should look like or a leader should look like.

Q: Yes, and what about Salmond stepping down?

A: Yes, I think that’s a good move. I mean, he’s getting older now anyway and he’s quite a decisive figure, although I’m not sure that Sturgeon is any less decisive, but he’s quite a divisive figure and he’s a true politician, but it allows him to creep sideways a little bit on some things that were said as well. Salmond said, “Ah, you know, it’s a generational thing. It’s 10 years. It’s maybe once in a life time, once in a generation.” He said that so he can’t really turn around and say, “In six years’ time, our generation is up,” you know.

Q: Yes.

A: It’s just going to get round again. So, it’s not about moving on, so there’s not going to be something for now for a while, so you get your leader in place, you get people liking them, get people identifying with them, and then in 10 years’ time switching someone in or in six years’ time, switching someone in that might not work out, so you’ve got time to live or die.

Q: Do you think Nicola Sturgeon is going to have that longevity?

A: She’s good. I mean, she’s good. She’s a good politician. I mean, I’m not sure she is very likeable. I’m not sure if she is that nice a person but she’s a strong politician. She’s good. She doesn’t get knocked about too much. She doesn’t get knocked off that policy too much. She’s strong, she communicates reasonably well, and I mean, I think that’s about as good as she can do. I mean, she’s not got like charisma of like Blair or somebody. She’s not like that but she’s miles better than someone like Lamont, or Miliband who is basically just an electoral.

Q: Yes, and do you think that charisma is important to get-?

A: Charisma is very valuable in a politician somewhere. A bit of charisma is very valuable. I don’t think it’s necessary. I think what’s necessary is-, I would think a capable leader would have a face that people think, I can vote for you. I think, you look like you’re strong enough to deliver what you say you’re going to deliver and you present an image in which people don’t feel opposed to it, or people aren’t thinking something is wrong with it and then if you’ve got that, it’s enough.

Q: What about the level of individual MSP’s in Scotland?

A: I think they’re alright. I don’t think they’re great but I don’t think the MP’s in London are great either. I think it’s about the same. I don’t think there is a big drop down of level there, but I do think at the higher level-, you see, I think there is a problem with British politics about the level of candidates as well. So, I think it’s much worse than what I tell you and I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that power has moved away from Westminster and to large corporations in globalisation. So, what does that matter, you’re the Prime Minister of Great Britain but, you know, when Google comes calling, you get down on your knees, what’s the point of that?

Q: But the same thing’s not true of Holyrood here?

A: No, it is true of Holyrood. The same problem exists in Holyrood that exists in Westminster so there’s a problem that the level’s got because power structures have moved and the talented and ambitious people who want power have gone into business. They haven’t gone into government now, they have gone into corporations. So, you’ve not got Scottish people in those things, but I think you’ve got talented enough people. I think, it’s okay. The level’s alright but I think Labour’s got a problem because it draws off its best people to Westminster. So, Douglas Alexander who is a pretty good politician. I don’t like him but again, he’s like Sturgeon. You can ask him a question on anything and he can give you a politician’s answer to that question and he can sound alright. He can get out of it, right. I suppose maybe there are some politicians, I couldn’t really name one but again, every time you see him, he will get out of that question and then he’ll get in there, he will change it around and give you the point and you’ll be like, you know, he’s good. He can do that. There’s another guy, a Labour guy, guy with a funny name. I can’t remember. Anyway, he’s really good as well. He’s like party chairman or something. There’s a couple of guys in Labour that are quite good and Balls is quite good. He’s a bit like Salmond who’s just punchy. He’s like, you know, just give him a line and he’ll just punch it through and stuff it, you know, “Okay, I’ll get that line in.” I don’t know how they ended up with Miliband and his disasters. There was a great thing about that he is the only person who is fidgety in a still photo [laughter]. It’s like a photo of whatever he does, he still looks like he’s fidgeting. It’s amazing.

Q: So, what’s you predictions for basically Scotland and Britain now? The general election is going to come up-,

A: Right, so I think there’s two things that might happen relatively quickly. There might be a complete re-settlement of fixed sort of federalism over the next 10 years. That’s kind of what’s been talked about and the Lib Dem’s pulled in the whole thing about the House of Lords and all that so in other words, it’s very long grass kind of stuff, but if someone did come up with a good settlement for that, the Scottish people would probably vote for it.

Q: But everybody come to power saying they were going to reform the House of Lords. I mean, not just-,

A: Yes, reforming the House of Lords as part of this the whole federalism of power, so it’s a proper settlement for Northern Ireland, a settlement for Wales, a settlement for England. So, that’s so difficult but if it did come about, and I don’t think it will come around because it’s too difficult, but I think probably what will happen is that there will be a long grassed area where nothing is really happening and then again, a push by the SNP if they get elected, not this time but in five years after that, again for a thing within their parliament. So, it would be five years, 10 and then five years they would be in power, four years they would be in power so they’ve got nine years and then they can say, “Okay, well, it’s going to be nine years, and we’ll push again for it now,” and then I think Westminster will put some form of devo-max on the table and Scotland will vote for that.

Q: What about in the meantime? Do you think the SNP will engage with Labour?

A: They won’t need to.

Q: Do you think they will stick it out themselves?

A: They won’t need to. They will get a majority. They’ve got a majority now, so they will get a majority next time. I think, as I say, Labour will be in trouble. I mean, they might get wiped. They’ve made an interesting move with this guy-, what’s his name? He’s really prominent for the ‘No’ campaign, the new leader of Scottish Labour. What’s he called?

Q: Oh yes, yes.

A: I’m really bad with names. I think he will really solidify the ‘Yes’ vote and a core ‘Yes’ vote will really come out against him because they hate him, and the ‘No’ vote will get some of the traditional Labour ‘No’ vote. He’s doing a lot of stuff like going round, you know, ‘man of the people’ stuff like food banks and all that kind of thing, you know, putting out stretched hands and all that crap. I think he will get a lot of the Labour core out, so that might hold them a bit. They might not completely collapse but they’ll not get in, I don’t think, and I think the SNP will get a clear majority, but not with the mandates that do anything more than haggle with Westminster about the powers that they’ve been given and I think that’s actually-, I think they’re best not to even bother with that, just concentrate on being in power, doing a good job-,

Q: In Scotland, yes?

A: Yes, with the powers in Scotland, do a good job with that until the next parliament, solidify their thing and get ready for-, yes, I think the real poll of the SNP next time will not-, securing independence will be keeping devo-max off the shelf.

Q: Right.

A: Or maybe not even devo-max, but a better offer like, you know, a second offer. So, the unionist parties have got time to put something in place that looks like devo-max, but isn’t really devo-max. They were shouting devo-max when Brown came out with his thing. George Galloway described it as devo-max plus, which is quite interesting how you can have maximum devolution plus anything else, but even the title gives it away that it’s just total nonsense or something, but it wasn’t even anywhere like devo-max they were offering and what they ended up giving was almost nothing. So, I mean it’s ridiculous. So, I think they might come up with a decent devo-max plan and say, “Look, these are your options, three options that reflects the votes,” Scotland’s quite cautious so they will always go for the middle vote.

Q: So, did it feel disappointing after the referendum?

A: Oh, yes. People were gutted. A couple of people told me it was like someone had died. It felt like that. It felt like a lot of hope and a lot of love had died there. I think that’s actually not the case. I think, it’s not died and I think people will get over that. It’s very disappointing. I think the major thing that people felt disappointed about was not the negative campaigning or the difficult way of the media in the two weeks before but the fact that the Scottish people didn’t go for it. A lot of people thought they would go for it.

Q: It got really close. It could have gone either way on the day, I think. Did it feel like that?

A: No, I think it felt on the day like it wasn’t going to happen. In Edinburgh, you could feel that it was quite a strong ‘No’ vote, but I think that a vote of kind of fear and of uncertainty and not really about wanting to stay in the union. I think some people had wanted that but I don’t really think it was about that. I think it was just about that it was too difficult to work out whether this was the best option or not. It was a leap of faith in a sense. As I say, this could be good. This could be optimistic. Let’s do that and people were like, “Yes, but we don’t know.” We don’t know.

Q: Do you think that’s because you think Labour’s been kind of scaring people or did the SNP not present what would be the consequences of independence?

A: I think the problem is that it is not quantifiable. I mean, it’s easy to say that Scotland would be a successful country on a certain level but it’s hard to say that you *would* be better or worse off under this system because it’s hard to work out where you’re going to be first of all on one side and on the other side, it’s hard to know exactly how all this stuff would work out. So, I don’t think anybody’s suggested that they could actually give you a definite answer to that question and there were lots of other things that were just like-, it made things more uncertain with a lot of things, queries about passports and things like that, which was just nonsense. I mean, you were born a British Citizen so you’re going to remain a British Citizen if you want to. They can’t take your citizenship away from you. So, there were lots of things that were silly but that just added to the overall, but I think the main problem was that that central question about whether this will be a better or worse place is not quantifiable. The more you think about it, the more you are like, “Well, what do you fall back on?” You fall back on whether you have a positive outlook and you think of how these things could be or you fall back on the concerns you have about them, and a lot of that comes down to how much you have to lose and that comes down to how much you have to gain, and a lot of it comes down to the fact of your basic psychology, whether you think that things will work, pursuing, per chance, or whether you think that, “No, we just stay where we are.” I think the only certainty was that it would have been a more Socialist country and so the people who were drawn to that, I think supported ‘Yes’ on that basis. At least a lot of people that think in those kind of letter terms, they were drawn to it on that basis. I think a lot of people just weren’t able to figure out for themselves the question of how they would be in 10 years’ time or whatever, and so they were just cautious. They were too cautious. They said-, well, they were just cautious. They said “Well, we don’t know, so we’ll just stick with what we’ve got.” It was an interesting thing about the regions. The strong ‘Yes’ regions were the ones where the turnout was lower.

Q: Right.

A: So, I think that was people who wanted to vote ‘Yes’ but at the end of the day got worried about it, didn’t want to vote ‘No’, so just didn’t turn up. So, Dundee and Glasgow, I think those were the low turnouts. I think that’s why there was a drop off in the figures, or one of the reasons why there was a drop off in the figures between the week before and the actual poll.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: They say that was always going to happen.

Q: I mean, even so, the turnout was amazingly high.

A: The modern politics is nonsense. You’ve got a vote between two parties which are practically identical and you wonder why nobody turns out to vote. The genuine choice is not there.

Q: Okay, so why did everyone come out to vote for the referendum?

A: Because it was a genuine choice. It was a definite-, it’s like why people vote on TV panels for this guy or this guy because your vote actually makes a different and that’s going to count for a start.

Q: Yes.

A: So, in most Scottish things, it’s always going up, so you don’t need to vote. Most places in Britain are like that, so turnout is always going to be lower, but just genuinely, it just directly affects like-, the question is, the things that would affect it were much more than anything that’s going to happen in a general election, right.

Q: Do you think turn out will be as high for the general election in Scotland?

A: No, because you’ve got big seats who have never voted anything but Labour.

Q: But some of them are predicted to swing to the SNP?

A: Yes, but still I don’t think that’s going to-, yes, turnout might be the same. I think that if you had independent issues, if you put independent issues to the electorate then the turn out would be high, the turn out would be higher, which is one of the important issues.

Q: I mean, is it time to switch to that kind of system?

A: Well, I would.

Q: Should we be voting not for parties but for policies?

A: Well, it’s in this system?

Q: Yes. I think some might turn out for those things, wouldn’t they?

A: I think it should, and I think it should be virtual. I think maybe they should have a half-way house, a party in government that’s like doing one thing but then have a sort of virtual House of Lords which people vote in and you could bring that in over like 20 years and then have a virtual Chamber, so the politicians put forward issues and if they start a manifesto, they would have to get it passed by the people. It then means we get proper manifestos being put forward rather than the nonsense that we actually get to vote on. So, I think if we are going to change the British system, that’s what I would do. It would probably take 20 years to warm it up. I mean, in 20 years’ time, we are going to be able to do electronic voting properly something like that, with just photo ID, so that would work.

Q: Awesome, cool.

**[Transcript Ends 00:32:08]**