Q: Okay, so how do you think that Edinburgh, as a city, was feeling in the run up to the referendum?

A: I think it was quite energised actually. I would say it was a slow burn because I think for a long time, nobody really cared that much but, you know, once the momentum built up, I think almost everybody was involved at some level and had an opinion. Whether they wanted to discuss it or not, everybody had an opinion.

Q: Yes. When you say, kind of like, things built up, do you have a sense of what drove that?

A: I don’t really know. I mean, I suppose it must have been campaigning by the people who were standing for the elections but I think it got beyond the normal bounds of politics and actually got involved, everybody sort of took it into their lives. A lot of people would say they really have no interest in politics, they’re all as bad as each other, and yet they’d be driving around with a ‘Yes’ or a ‘No Thanks’ on their car. Farmers were putting them up in their fields and things just outside of Penicuik. It’s rare that you see something from the political sphere spilling into people’s everyday lives.

Q: Yes, so why did that happen, do you think, with the independence debate rather than the general election or local elections?

A: I think because people felt that whatever happened, it’s probably going to impact them directly and I think people feel a bit helpless in general elections and don’t feel represented, and just feel, “Well, does it matter what we vote for in Scotland?” For example, we tend not to vote Tory in Scotland and we have a Tory government so is there actually any point in voting, but I think in this one people felt it would impact on them and I think also as it got closer and closer and it started to look like every single vote was going to count, people were sort of roused from their apathy and thought, “Actually, yes, my vote could be the one that counts,” and did what they thought they should do.

Q: So, you think how close it got in the end was important?

A: I think so, yes, yes.

Q: Were people discussing this? I mean, you said that a lot of people weren’t really-,

A: I think everybody was discussing it. I think some people were not necessarily wanting to put forward their own point of view and say, “Okay, I’m voting for,” or, “I’m voting against,” which is fine because the whole point is it’s a private vote, but that doesn’t stop people discussing it, you know, just in more general terms. I think, all the different places I went into, everywhere and people from all spectrums, you know, it wasn’t just university educated people, it was everybody, I think, was discussing it.

Q: Do you think that that was like a good level of debate that was going on between people?

A: Yes, I do actually.

Q: Like a high level of debate?

A: I think the fact that there was a level of debate is higher than most things [laughter] but I mean there were occasionally remarks and points of view that you just felt, you know, it’s idiots just repeating what they’ve read in ‘The Sun’ or something, but I think the fact that there was debate going on amongst so many people, and I think a lot of people did make an extra effort. I mean, I didn’t read all the white paper because it was really long. It’s like that thick [laughter] but I actually read quite a chunk of it and I have never done anything like that before.

Q: Right.

A: And it was because I thought, do you know, I need to be informed about this and not just take my opinions from my friends or the newspapers. I wanted to actually read the source.

Q: Yes. So, what kind of things were you reading in the newspaper? What was the kind of tone of the local media, the Scottish media?

A: Well, I guess, I got a feeling that-, I think the Glasgow Herald came out as being quite for independence and the rest, to a greater or lesser degree, against it. I would say that I think the tele was reasonably unbiased, I think.

Q: The local news or the national news?

A: Both, either. I think there was actually a lot more social media about this than I’ve ever seen about any other political things really, you know, not just things were coming up on news feeds on Facebook but people were actually attaching tags to their cover pages and things saying, you know, ‘Yes’ or ‘No’.

Q: Yes. Is that something you engaged with?

A: I personally didn’t. I didn’t have a ‘Yes’ or a ‘No Thanks’ tag anywhere but, you know, people were wearing badges and things, weren’t they?

Q: Yes, it felt to me like a very visual thing in the city.

A: Yes, because everybody had-, well, not everybody but a lot of people had their flags up in their windows and things like that, yes. Yes, I guess there was a lot going on.

Q: And do you feel that it was generally kind of good campaigning on both sides?

A: I have to say, I did think that the SNP came out a bit better. The thing that I didn’t like about the campaigning was the fact that the other parties were all against it and all against it and then what was it, a week or 10 days before the election, they suddenly started making all these grand gestures and big offers and all the rest of it and really that sort of changing everything at the last minute, it just made me hate them.

Q: Do you think that actually helped them?

A: I think it probably did. I think there’s a certain type of person who is afraid of change.

Q: Yes.

A: I think they were afraid to vote ‘Yes’ and I think those kind of last minute promises that were made, I think really reassured those people that, you know, the change would be very gradual and very manageable, whereas if you voted ‘Yes’, it could all be different this time next week. I think in a lot of voters’ minds, that probably did work for them but I think a lot of people just got really naffed off and just went, “Well, look actually, if you’d said this six months ago or a year ago or at any point when you weren’t absolutely terrified of losing,” [laughter], “then we might take you seriously.”

Q: Do you have a sense of what was behind that kind of growth in the ‘Yes’ movement? I mean when the first polls came out, you know, it looked like it was not going to be much of a battle.

A: I think that as time went on, I think the people in the SNP came across as quite reasoned most of the time and quite capable, and I think rightly or wrongly, a lot of Scottish people had anti-English feelings in them and feel that the country is being ruled by a foreign country. I’m not saying I necessarily agree but there’s a lot of that feeling. I think most people do not trust politicians at all and almost just kind of think, “Well, if they’re all going to be as bad as each other, let’s at least have ones that we know where they live and it’s going to be easy to go to Edinburgh Parliament and tell them what we think,” you know, whereas I think sometimes London is so far away that it’s just out of people’s sphere completely.

Q: It looks and feels to me like that momentum has kept going.

A: Mm.

Q: Do you think that’s-,

A: With the 45-, is it 45+ thing, is that what you mean?

Q: What’s that?

A: There’s a group and I’m sure it’s called 45+ or 45 and more and it’s for people that voted ‘Yes’, the 45% that voted ‘Yes’ have got a big thing going still to try and keep the momentum because I think having generated so much, they now don’t want to lose us.

Q: Okay, so specifically that momentum is for independence?

A: Yes.

Q: Right, right.

A: I’m sure it’s called 45+.

Q: Right. Right, okay.

A: And people have that on their Facebook’s as well, a little tag that says 45+.

Q: Right.

A: You just thought that was for ages, didn’t you? [Laughter].

Q: No, no, no. I’ve not heard of it.

A: Yes, definitely.

Q: Right, right. Okay, and so do you think that that’s-, do you get a sense of what the outcome of that is going to be? Do you think there’s going to be some other referendum in the future?

A: I think there will be. I mean, I don’t think anybody can face it right now but I think so many promises were made, and I don’t really believe they’ll keep them and I think they’ll wriggle and squirm because that’s what they do.

Q: The new powers and stuff like that?

A: Yes.

Q: Yes.

A: I think sooner or later, unless those promises are fulfilled, yes, there will be another referendum and I think at that time, it probably will go independent, but I think if they do keep all their promises then probably not for, you know, a generation or whatever.

Q: I mean, how did it feel for you, or what do you think the mood in the city was as the results came out?

A: I wasn’t here, I was in London.

Q: Oh, right. Okay, okay.

A: In London, the mood was, they were absolutely ranting about having, like basically independence for London and all their local papers and things were saying, “Oh, today’s the Scottish independence referendum,” but they were saying, “Look, there’s many more people live in London than there are in Scotland so we should have our own powers and our own devolved taxes and everything,” so it was a real eye opener for me because, you know, I live in Scotland and it was always Scotland and you go down to London and they’re just, you know, kind of a bit horrified, I think. They’re like, “What are you talking about? There’s much more-,” That’s what they were saying, “If Scotland goes independent, the big cities in England will.”

Q: I remember reading about, like Cornwall wants independence and all this kind of thing?

A: Oh, definitely Cornwall do. They’ve got their own language and everything, and the Shetlands want independence from Scotland. It doesn’t matter how far down the line you go, I think there’s going to be a point where Glasgow’s going to want independence from Edinburgh, you know.

Q: Why is that? Why do all these regions want independence and from what?

A: I guess they don’t want to be homogenised, you know, and I think there is a feeling that the whole world is going a bit that way. You can go into the shopping centre in Dubai and you’d see exactly the same shops as you see in Edinburgh, and I think people like their own quirks and identities and differences, and fair enough, you can be proud of your quirks and your identities without becoming a screaming nationalist, you know.

Q: Yes. Do you think that was a big thing in Scotland as well?

A: Yes, definitely. I mean, in a way, it’s almost the not so serious things that get-, like it’s when you get you know, Brussels telling you that haggis is not fit for human consumption and things like that. I mean, that drives folk mad, you know. I mean, obviously it’s not on the same scale as human rights laws and all the rest of it but that’s the stuff that makes the headlines, isn’t it, silly ones?

Q: Yes, and how do you think that Scotland is now, kind of like, after the referendum? Do you think that’s been a good thing for the SNP or a bad thing?

A: I think it ended up being a good thing because I think 20 years ago or 10 years ago, it wouldn’t have even seemed possible. I think the fact that they achieved so much and they’ve obviously got all the other politicians, I think that’s really shown that they are seriously a power to be reckoned with and they’re not a sort of fringe party or a weirdo party anymore. Actually, this is real. Lots of people believe this and follow this. I think they did well. I think they did well.

Q: Do you think they ran a good campaign?

A: Yes, I think they did actually, better than a lot of the other ones anyway.

Q: Better than the ‘No’ campaigns?

A: Yes. I think the ‘No’ campaign had real problems getting anybody as a sort of figure head. I think they ended up with Alistair Darling and I don’t think he did a very good job of it. I got the impression that he was picked because there was nobody else rather than because he was actually really fired up and dying to do it.

Q: Yes. Yes, and do you think that that’s going to have a lasting impact until the general election this year, the SNP campaign, I mean?

A: Yes, I think it will. I think an independent Scotland seems much more realistic and not just a pipe dream anymore and I think that will affect what people vote.

Q: So, do you think it’s changed the attitudes people had toward the other political parties?

A: I think a lot of people are a lot less keen on Labour and Lib Dem in Scotland than there used to be. That’s just my feeling. As a whole, I don’t think Scottish people like the Tory’s very much but I don’t think that that’s changed at all and I don’t think the referendum has impacted on that. I just think they’re kind of a bit of the enemy and that’s just the way it is and that hasn’t changed but I think the ones that have really lost out are, I think probably the Labour party worst of all because that was a lot of Scottish people used to really like the Labour party and I think they haven’t done themselves any favours in the referendum, you know. Ed Miliband coming up at the last gasp but not actually knowing where the Fife was and things like that and, you know, things like that. I don’t know where his constituency is but then I’m not trying to tell anybody there how to vote.

Q: That’s true, yes.

A: If I was going to come to your constituency then I would actually try and find it on a map first, you know.

Q: Yes. Did it change how people in Scotland viewed the Labour party?

A: Yes. Yes, I think there’s probably a lot of reasons but I think the Labour party are now seen as more of an English thing than they used to be, you know, because we now have a choice. I mean, it used to just be like, “If you dislike the Tories, you had to vote Labour,” and then you kind of vote Lib Dem but now the SNP are a realistic choice as well. I think they’ll suffer for probably more than-, well, they have to suffer more than the Tories because they can’t really do worse in Scotland.

Q: Well, that’s true. It seems to be what the polls are suggesting as well that Labour are probably going to lose seats. I mean, that’s what they were saying about a month ago or something like that.

A: Well, I think they deserve to because they didn’t really stick up for the Scottish people amongst all of that.

Q: Right. What about kind of leadership in the whole process because both Labour and the SNP have new leaders? Do you have any perception about what happened with the new Scottish leader of the Labour party?

A: I don’t even know who she is, I have to say. I knew it was a woman but I don’t know anything else about her.

Q: Right, okay. Okay, fair enough. That’s fine, but what about the SNP? I mean, do you think that Salmond going is going to have an impact?

A: I think he’s a pretty astute guy. I think he probably knows what he’s doing. I felt terrible for him, I really did [laughter] because I just kind of thought-, I felt like saying to him, “Well, don’t resign. You don’t have to resign just because you’ve lost, you know, because you’ve done so much anyway,” so I did feel bad for him, but I guess that he’s going to have some other plan whereby this is actually not the end of his career. I’m sure he knows what he’s doing, you know, and I think they probably want to put a little bit of distance now between themselves and the fact that they lost that referendum, and so putting in a new leader is a way to do that.

Q: I mean, do you think Salmond and the SNP genuinely see the referendum as being a failure?

A: I think on some level they must because that’s what they wanted, that’s what they were fighting for and they didn’t win. They didn’t persuade enough people that they could do this. I don’t think I’d use the word ‘failure’ but I don’t think-, it’s certainly not the outcome they wanted.

Q: In some ways, I mean, they swayed a lot of people.

A: They did, they did and they got it much closer, I think, than anybody ever really deemed was going to be possible.

Q: Even the SNP.

A: Exactly, yes, yes. I think we all got a bit of a fright when we realised how close it was actually going to be on the day.

Q: Mm, yes. Do you have any kind of opinion in the sense of how it’s going to be because, you know, Nicola Sturgeon is taking over? Does she represent kind of distance?

A: I think she does. I think she does. I mean, she’s very clear, quite calm and quite cautious, and she seems-, I mean, she’s very bright, she’s very capable, you know, she knows what she’s doing, she’s got experience of the whole political scenery.

Q: Yes.

A: She’s got the backing of Alex Salmond.

Q: Yes.

A: I think she could do it. I think she’s quite smart. I think she seems to give the impression of being a bit more trustworthy.

Q: Oh right, okay.

A: But it’s just an impression, isn’t it? That’s her job is to come across as being a bit more trustworthy.

Q: Yes, sure. Is that a slight hesitance about her?

A: Yes. Yes, I feel like she plays her cards pretty close to her chest.

Q: Right.

A: I think I hadn’t really formed that much of an opinion of her.

Q: Right, okay.

A: I kind of like Alex Salmond. You know when he was being quite, you know, not a lot of substance to what he was saying and even though I didn’t always agree with what he was saying, I found him quite charismatic. I could see why people would warm to him and I didn’t feel that way about Nicola Sturgeon but that could be a good thing because I think there was an element of showmanship that come through, you know, whereas I think she comes across as a bit more serious.

Q: Do you think you need that level of kind of level of charisma to be a leader and get people to believe in you?

A: I think maybe you do. You need some charisma. You shouldn’t, you know, people should vote for you because you’re good at your job and you’re honest, hardworking and decent, but that’s not how it works. I do think that one of the people that really suffered from that was Gordon Brown, you know. I think that was his problem more than anything was that he was not charismatic from the off and when it came to the crunch.

Q: Yes. What do you mean, like when he was Prime Minister?

A: Yes.

Q: Right, right.

A: I mean, he’s certainly bright enough and experienced enough, you know, but he’s not got that kind of spin, slippery thing going on and yet sometimes it’s almost like he needed a bit of that just to make people like him or believe him.

Q: Yes, yes. Did you watch any of the TV debates or anything like that?

A: I did watch one of them but I just got really annoyed with wee things. It annoys me when they don’t allow the other one to answer or when they don’t answer the questions or when they keep going on and on and on. I think the one I saw was the one about what currency we were going to have.

Q: Oh, yes, yes.

A: Alex Salmond was sort of saying, “Look, we’re going to have the pound,” and the other ones were saying, “Oh, you can’t say that, you can’t say that,” and it’s just the same argument. They just kept saying the same things over and over and over, and you’re thinking, “Right, we’ve got 45 minutes for this debate, could we maybe just move it on and discuss some other thing,” you know, because it just got into a circle I thought, so I got pissed off and put it off.

Q: Do you think those big messages, those big topics were important in the debate for people?

A: It wasn’t important for me. I don’t know about anybody else [laughter] but that wasn’t important to me.

Q: Were there key messages for you or key issues?

A: Well, you see this white paper, what I read of it, I don’t know that it was achievable but it showed what they were aiming for.

Q: Right.

A: What they were aspiring to for the country. They were aspiring to a society that seemed very equal, very fair, very just, very decent and obviously you’re not going to just turn a society into that immediately but a lot of what they were aspiring to were ideas that I approved of.

Q: Right.

A: So, things like that.

Q: So, that kind of resonated with you then?

A: Yes, that meant much more to me than whether we were spending euros or pounds or Nessie’s or anything else, you know. I don’t really care.

Q: Nessie’s would’ve been worth it.

A: Nessie’s would’ve been great.

Q: I never heard that. Was that a thing people were talking about? I think people would love that.

A: Well, we were talking about making up our own currency and you would have things like a hundred sporrans to a Nessie [laughter]. You’d have a mealy pudding note and things like that [laughter]. We don’t care if we don’t get the pound, we’ll make our own things.

Q: That would’ve been so hard core.

A: It would’ve been nice.

Q: I mean, were you disappointed afterwards, after the referendum?

A: I was pretty heartbroken actually but I couldn’t say anything because my husband was really, really against Scottish independence and so I didn’t really like to say too much because he got really upset and uptight, really uptight, and I was just like, “Never mention this at home ever again.”

Q: Right, so you couldn’t discuss it, you couldn’t at all?

A: Well, we did but we just had to be a bit careful. No, I was disappointed. I was heartbroken and I thought it was an opportunity missed and he was visibly relieved. It was just bizarre but we didn’t fall out about it. We just agreed to differ on it but when they were saying the nation was divided, they weren’t kidding.

Q: Even households.

A: Yes.

Q: Do you think that was difficult that there were households that were split down the middle?

A: Yes. It was funny as well because just for a laugh, we had a family gathering a few months afterwards and there was eight members of the family there and we did a vote on it. It was amongst the eight of us and it came out four and four and that was out of husbands, wives, mothers, daughters and brothers and sisters and all these, you know.

Q: And then was there a big barney about it?

A: No [laughter].

Q: Oh, right. Good, yeah, good times. I get a sense that it was disappointing. What was it for you that was lost?

A: I think just the opportunity to make a fairer, better, more just society and to have control over things like justice and I’m damn well against nuclear weapons and stuff as well so I’m kind of keen on the idea of getting rid of all that stuff out of the whole lot, not just Scotland. I don’t think it would’ve been a magic wall written in gold or anything like that but I do think it has been an opportunity that we just won’t get while we’re still part of the UK.

Q: Are you looking forward to the general election? Is it anything like the same level of interest?

A: I’m looking forward to it probably, and I’m interested, but I am looking forward to it with a degree of trepidation because what I am probably most worried about and it may just be a silly thing to be worried about but what I’m most worried about is UKIP getting lots of votes and then Scotland being ruled by a sort of Tory UKIP coalition in London. That is my greatest fear, frankly. Short of the Nazis, that would be my greatest fear, so I’ll be watching intently but not with any [laughter] great joy probably.

Q: Yes, yes. Do you think it will still matter as much what happens in Westminster?

A: I think it will because I think it depends who wins and where the power goes. I mean, if you got something like UKIP that wanted you out the EU, well one of the big arguments of the ‘Better Together’ campaign was that you have to be in the EU or you’ll all starve and die. So, theoretically we could be voting for a situation whereby [laughter] we get taken out of the EU whether we want it or not, you know. You just don’t know but I think the next general election is going to be really interesting because I think there are all these smaller parties now that could make huge gains and could have Scottish Ministers in Westminster, you know, then those people saying, “Oh, we don’t want these SNP people on our parliament, what are they to do with us?” It’s very messy. Gone are the days when it was just blue or red.

Q: Do you think that’s a good thing?

A: Yes. Yes, I do.

Q: I think that’s pretty much everything.

A: Is that enough?

Q: Yes.

**[Transcript Ends 00:33:44]**