Q: Okay. Can you remember the first time that you heard that there was going to be a referendum?

A: I think I was in Scotland. I moved here in 2011 in the summer. I think I was in Scotland when it was announced but I couldn’t tell you the exact date that I thought it was going to happen. I just remember friends and family starting to ask about it because they knew I’d just moved here and whether I’d get a vote, and I wasn’t sure if I’d get a vote yet. So, I feel like it was maybe late 2011 but there’d been muttering in the media before then. I mean, I definitely read about possibilities when I was still in England but when they actually set a date, I think I was in Scotland.

Q: I mean, when you found out that you were going to get a vote, what was your reaction to that?

A: I was quite excited, and then I felt a bit fraudulent because I thought, “Well, I’ve only lived here for a little while and I don’t know how long I’ll be here,” because I was only on a temporary contract then so I wasn’t sure, a) whether I’d be here to vote and b) how long I’d be in Scotland for. So, it felt a bit unfair that I’d be voting on these issues and then possibly leaving again, and then also because I’m English, like yes, I did feel like an imposter to begin with anyway. I felt like I didn’t have a right to vote on this. I didn’t have any roots in Scotland but then the longer I’ve stayed here and particularly it’s become clear that I’m going to be here a while, I got more and more excited at the prospect of being able to vote.

Q: Do you think that the criteria for who gets to vote should have been different then?

A: Well, I know lots of Scots who live in England who were really upset that they couldn’t vote and I know that was really hard, particularly some of my friends who are a bit older than me who were students in Scotland and spent a really long time campaigning and particularly campaigning against the Thatcher government, being really angry about Tory Britain, and then, you know, getting jobs and moving down to England and then they couldn’t vote. They were really upset and I know lots of people just came up to Scotland to be with their parents for the actual vote even if they didn’t have a vote themselves because they just wanted to be here because they’d been campaigning since they were 14 or 15 some people, and then this is their dream and they weren’t in Scotland to vote. I think that’s a little heart-breaking for them really.

Q: Do you think generally there were probably more people who couldn’t vote that wanted to support independence rather than the other way around?

A: I guess so. Of the people I’ve spoken to that’s the way it would’ve gone, but I don’t know more generally what it was like.

Q: What kinds of people did you talk to about independence?

A: Well, I talked to some of my colleagues who are Scottish to see how they felt and then I spoke to one of my best friends. She lives in Belfast and we had loads of discussions about it because, you know, Belfast has kind of been through, although not a vote, a similar kind of splitting off from the rest of the country, so we talked a lot about that, and then I guess if it came up in conversation, I’d talk about it but I didn’t really bring it up with my friends outside of work or people that I just had passing acquaintance with because it seemed a bit intrusive to say, “Hey, you’re Scottish. Tell me how you’re going to vote because I’m English and I don’t really know what’s going on.”

Q: So, you were only interested in talking to Scottish people about the issues?

A: I think so, because I felt that they were the people who’d lived here for a decade or grown up here. I don’t know, I feel like they had more roots or a more genuine contribution to make almost and all of the English people I spoke to had just said the same thing. They were all ‘No’ voters and it was different because all they get as a perspective of here is what they read in the newspapers and that’s really biased. I mean, I felt it was really biased towards ‘No’ and they kind of portrayed Salmond as this slightly mad-,

Q: Newspapers up here?

A: Sorry, the newspapers down South that my English friends were reading.

Q: I see.

A: Hence I didn’t really want to talk to them because I kind of thought, “Well, what do you know about it? You’re not really-,” I know they said, “Oh, we’ll be affected if Scotland breaks up,” but not half as much as the people in Scotland would be.

Q: It’s interesting that you said that you sought out a lot of people who are Scottish for their opinion. Did you feel an obligation to kind of represent their voice?

A: I felt an obligation to hear their voice, not necessarily to represent it because I’m English so I feel like I have a better sense of what it’s like as an outsider looking in but I don’t have any sense of what it’s like to be inside looking out, and so I felt that was the perspective I needed to know more about.

Q: And did that influence the way you voted?

A: I think it did because it pushed me closer to a ‘Yes’. I voted ‘No’ in the end but I was quite close to voting ‘Yes’ I admit, because of talking particularly to those friends who campaigned in the 80’s and seeing sort of how they had such a strong vision for Scotland and how it could be different, so it definitely did. When I moved up here, I was firmly a ‘No’ and it did make me waiver more towards ‘Yes’.

Q: Okay, and were there any particular aspects of the campaign on either side that were persuasive to you or engaging for you?

A: I got really frustrated with the campaign to be honest because it was never clear what would change because you’re not voting for a party, you’re not voting for a political party, you’re not voting for the SNP or for Labour, so even though there’s all these claims about, “Oh, we won’t have nuclear weapons in Scotland if we go independent,” I guess that one’s a bit more nationalistic but maybe, like we’ll have better taxes and we won’t have the bedroom tax. You can’t really say those things because what happened if Scotland went independent and then everyone voted Tory. I mean, it could happen. There’s a logical space for that to happen, so I felt frustrated because it became unclear what we were voting on and what the powers actually would be of the new Scotland. If you’re not voting for a political party then what are you voting for, and I just got a bit frustrated with these claims being thrown around about what would definitely happen should Scotland get independence and you, kind of, feel you don’t have a right to make those claims.

Q: Claims from both campaigns, from both sides?

A: Mainly from the SNP, I guess, but the ‘No’ campaign was just so negative and it was really depressing as well. I mean, I’m not sure if you’ve seen the trams, they have this sign at the moment that says, “Careful Now for the Trams” and I felt like that summed up the ‘no vote’ campaign. It was just be grey, be boring, be safe because we know it works, and who wants to vote for a party that says that? It’s just really demoralising and even if your head is telling you, you know, “I think ‘No’ would be better for Scotland,” but your heart is saying, “But you’re just going to be grey and boring if you do that.”

Q: Do you think that there was a better kind of approach they could’ve had?

A: I think there’s more positive spins they could’ve put on things, like what being in the UK could offer Scotland more and instead of saying-, I mean, it’s about spin really, isn’t it, so instead of saying, “Scotland will have no money if it goes independent,” what you could say is, “Scotland will be more financially strong if they voted ‘No’,” and then say why. So, there wasn’t very much reasoning about why Scotland would be better off being ‘No’ or being ‘Yes’ and that was another frustrating thing about the arguments is that there were lots of claims about enough support. Particularly, the ‘no vote’ you’re right, maybe they couldn’t have done-, no, I think they could’ve spun it more positively rather than just sounding like an angry school teacher telling off the other pupils and that’s how it felt. That really pushes your heart against voting ‘No’.

Q: Do you think other people probably felt the same way about those messages?

A: Yes, like informal chats with people, again people who were voting ‘No’, people who I knew would vote ‘No’, even Scottish people who I knew would vote ‘No’ and were rolling their eyes with every kind of newspaper story that came out with more doom and gloom rather than saying, “Hey, Scotland. We’d like you to stay.” Did you see that British comedian who went to America and he does the daily show?

Q: Oh, yes.

A: He gave such a good spin on it when he said, “Look, if I was English, I’d be begging Scotland to stay. I’d be pulling on their emotional heart strings and just saying, please, please stay, we’re better with you,” and the ‘No’ campaign was not like that. No one was saying, “Please stay. We would like you to stay.” They were just saying, “You’d be very naughty if you left.” There’s different ways of getting the same message across.

Q: Do you feel that the messages from the ‘Yes’ campaign were more persuasive then, or that they had a better tack?

A: I think they just had more positive-, it was more positive and people like positive things. When we’re coming out of a recession, people need more positive messages in their lives. It’s hard for me to judge whether that’s better because I didn’t necessarily agree or think that some of the promises we made would come through, however, it’s always nice to be on the side of change, I think. Yes.

Q: So, you said that there was quite a difference between, kind of, the media down South to the nationwide media, but what was the media like up here? What was the local media like in comparison?

A: I guess they had more Scottish people talking about it. There were more talking heads from people in and around Scotland. It felt more ‘Yes’ up here than it did down South and I know that lots of the papers were ‘No’ voting, however, it just felt like they gave more voice to the ‘Yes’, or they weren’t just interviewing the people who were extreme ‘Yes’s’ and it felt like down South, all the quotes that you saw in the papers-, I don’t have any evidence of this, it’s just what I felt but down South, you just got, you know, very extreme views and they didn’t really portray middle ground. It felt like they never put forward the story of a normal person with a normal job, a normal family, normal commitments who wants to vote ‘Yes’ and there were thousands of people like that in Scotland, thousands of people who weren’t foaming at the mouth and/or going out campaigning every single day. They were just living their lives and thinking, “Yes, I think I would like to be independent.” They didn’t get a voice in the Southern media, at least that’s how it felt to me. They did get a voice up here. You did get more people on the streets and yes, I felt like you got a bit more coverage of those people whereas in the South, they just wanted to see those really extreme views and they weren’t interested in what everyday mums and dads and teenagers had to think.

Q: Do you think it was still a big deal for most people, you know, if you didn’t have a particularly strong view one way or the other?

A: I think it was a big deal for people even if they didn’t have a strong view because if it was a ‘Yes’ vote, it would be a really big change. It would be a big change to life up there. Well, maybe some people felt, “Well, I don’t think things will be different one way or the other,” but I bet those people still went out and voted one way or the other even if they didn’t feel there was going to be a change.

Q: What do you think the biggest changes would’ve been?

A: Well, I’d like to think that the NHS would’ve become more independent if Scotland voted ‘Yes’. That was certainly something people were campaigning for and there seems to be a lot more pride in the NHS up here. There’s free prescriptions and I wonder whether-, Scotland’s always had slightly different priorities to England, and the education system seems to be more valued up here. People don’t seem to mess with it as much as they-, in England, it feels like the syllabus changes every other year, whereas in Scotland, it feels a bit more stable. Yes, it still changes. I’m not saying it’s stagnant, I’m saying that it’s stable. I wonder whether those would be the things that we would see the main differences in. You’re right. I mean, there already was a bit of a divide but I wonder if that would’ve become more pronounced.

Q: But you voted no in the end, what do you think would’ve been the negative things that would’ve outweighed those?

A: I think I was really worried about the finances and I know it’s hard to make a call as to how it would’ve been but the thought of the kind of voice Scotland would have, say in the EU-, yes, so I guess politics and finances. So, if you think of a country like Greece which gets very little say in big decisions in the EU, has very little money and has very little say and I was just worried that Scotland would become-, one of my friends said it would be like Greece with haggis. We’d have no influence in European politics, no one’s going to listen to a country with no money, you get pushed around a lot more and then end up being more dependent on those kind of more powerful countries for money. Whereas, it feels like if you’re part of Britain, you’ve just got a bit more clout in those kind of international domains. I guess a combination of the politics and that kind of face of Scotland within international politics and how that’s kind of intrinsically tied to how much money Scotland has made me vote ‘No’ in the end. I think I was closer to coming to ‘Yes’ than I would admit and on the day, I was a bit sad I didn’t vote ‘Yes’.

Q: So, how did things feel in the run up to the vote? What was your impression of the kind of mood?

A: It seemed really happy until about two days before and then it just felt a bit aggressive, which is weird. I mean, Edinburgh is not aggressive. It’s not an aggressive place but that Orange march really flipped me. I mean, I know the Orange march was for ‘No’ but it was almost really scary having all those people march through our streets with banners and some of them-, I don’t know, it didn’t feel like my city anymore. It didn’t feel like Edinburgh and I thought, if Scotland becomes independent, will we see more of this? Will we see more sectarian marching? The atmosphere was horrible. It was a really unpleasant atmosphere that day and it didn’t feel like the city that I know and love. That was one of the turning points for me. I think for me realising what if this does open the door to more upset, and then I guess, like at work, there was more banter about it and although it was always jolly, nearly always jolly banter, there was one guy who was a ‘No’ voter that was a little bit noisy about it, and it got a bit annoying. You’d try and make sure you didn’t see him in the corridor, so stuff like that.

Q: Did the atmosphere also change in work in the run up?

A: Not so much in my particular department because we only have three Scots in it but in other departments which are in the same building, I think there definitely was a change, just talking to colleagues, they reported that it was a bit different, but I think our department was unusual because we had so few-, I mean, English people are in the minority let alone Scots. I think we have a few more English people than Scottish people but really not. Everywhere else is from the rest of the world.

Q: Okay, and do you have some sense of, like how it would have affected your work or your career?

A: The University voted-, we got a flyer, like an email thing that said, “As a university,” whatever that means, but we, the university, are in favour of a ‘No’ vote and they cited research funding as one of the main issues of that. How it would’ve affected funding for research, I’m not entirely sure and again, it was just one of those unknowns that you wouldn’t know until it happened. I think there would’ve been a lot more paperwork. I know there would’ve been a lot more paperwork. Imagine if you wanted to put forward a collaboration with colleagues in Sussex or something and then you’re spread across two countries, what does that mean? Are you then eligible for a grant that counts as having two countries or not and just jumping through all of those hoops would’ve been tedious, and I know that’s a terrible reason to say I didn’t want to vote because there’d be more paperwork, but there hadn’t been a lot more paperwork.

Q: And did that actually influence you, do you think?

A: It did actually because it’s my career that’s on the line ultimately. I do a job that I love and it’s tough enough for women doing what I do. I don’t need any more hurdles right now.

Q: Do you think gender was a particular issue in the debates? Was there a gender bias between one campaign and the other?

A: I think Nicola Sturgeon did a lot for the SNP and is still doing a lot for the SNP. I mean, regardless of what you think about the SNP’s policies, I know she wasn’t-, I know Alex Salmond led it but she was so prominent and she was on all the papers and she just seemed a much more level headed, sympathetic figure than any of the women in Westminster right now. If you had to choose who you wanted to have a cup of tea with, I’d easily choose Nicola Sturgeon over Yvette Cooper or Theresa May or any of those people. So, I guess from that perspective, like having a woman that people can relate to and empathise with is important. I certainly felt like I could relate more to Nicola Sturgeon than I could to Cooper or May. In terms of bias, I mean did you see that terrible ‘No’ campaign advert which basically portrayed women as brainless. It was really frustrating. It was on the tele. I’m fairly sure-, you’ve got me thinking now. I’m fairly sure it was for the ‘No’ campaign and it was this woman and she sits down with a cup of tea looking more flustered and says, “Oh, I’ve just sent my children to school,” so obviously she’s a stay at home mum and, “I just don’t know how to vote, it’s so difficult to decide,” and it was one of the most patronising pieces I’ve ever seen for women and I think it was the ‘No’ campaign. You’re just rolling your eyes thinking, “Good lord, is this really how they perceive women in England?” It was really depressing, so at least within the ‘Yes’ campaign, women were portrayed-, there were competent women involved and I couldn’t name a single competent woman who was tied to the ‘No’ campaign. I still can’t think of a single competent woman tied to the ‘No’ campaign.

Q: Post the referendum, has that changed how you think about politics and voting for the general election coming up? I mean, with Nicola Sturgeon now in charge of the SNP, you know, you’re saying you can relate to her, have a cup of tea with her, but does that kind of filtrate up to SNP in general?

A: It has a little bit actually because I feel like the SNP-, I don’t know whether this is new or not but I feel like the SNP has become a bit less extreme and a bit more manageable now that the hubbub from the independence election has died down. Now that’s not their only-, it’s not their raison d'etre, like they have other things that they can contribute. I guess I’m sitting on the fence and then waiting to see what will happen and then waiting to see whether-, I’m curious to see what the SNP will be like under Nicola Sturgeon because I do have time for her. I do like her claim that she’s going to get more women into politics and try and help-, it doesn’t seem to be an empty claim either. I mean she’s talking about things like childcare and she’s talking about things like making sure women have those opportunities really early on, like at primary school and high school level when you know it really matters.

Q: What kind of opportunities?

A: Well, I think just letting them know that they don’t have to be the primary carer, and I also like that she doesn’t seem to be an idealist, so she’s kind of saying, “What we have now isn’t working and it’s totally disadvantaging women and I’m not entirely sure what policies need to be in place.” Just reading interviews with her and hearing her on the radio and she’s saying, you know, “Women are primary carers,” and she’s not saying, “Women, stop being primary carers,” but more saying, “We need more opportunities for people, or we need to make sure that there’s alternatives to having just the women in the family being the primary carer, and what do we need to put in place to make those opportunities available. Whether she makes good on those promises, I don’t know, but I’m much happier that she’s leader of the SNP than Alex Salmond. I don’t even know who the leader of Scottish Labour is or who’s doing very much for Scottish Labour right now.

Q: Did the representation of labour change post the referendum or during the referendum?

A: No. I think the Labour party has lost its way at the moment and it lost its way during the referendum too. I mean, I know people say it was Labour that won it and that it was Gordon Brown and Alistair Darling who actually pulled it through for the ‘No’ vote but I don’t really associate Gordon Brown and Alistair Darling with the current Labour party. I’m not saying they’re old Labour because they’re not, they’re new, old-, old, new Labour, and Miliband is new, new Labour but I just see such a disjoint between Gordon Brown and Darling. I know Brown’s left politics altogether now but between them and who we’ve got now in Westminster.

Q: What about any of the other parties?

A: I’m interested to see where the Green’s will go. I’ve never voted Tory, I don’t think I could do it, so I can’t say it’s particularly changed my view of the Tory party. If anything, it’s made it more negative which is quite impressive given how negative I was to the Tory’s before the referendum.

Q: Why is that? Why did your opinion get worse?

A: I think because of the blasé attitude that Cameron had of, “Oh, it’ll all be alright in the end.” In a way, I was almost-, again, it was one of those heart versus head things in that you wanted to kick Cameron and say, “Pay attention, like something’s happening and I know you think that it’s happening in a part of the country that you don’t care about and that you think is just full of sheep and oil, small amounts of oil and you’re just eyeing it up for fracking purposes,” because that’s very much how-, I’m from the North of England so I feel like that’s how David Cameron views my family’s constituency and it kind of extends to the entirety of Scotland as well. He was just so dismissive of the whole idea, like “Your opinions don’t count. Why should I even listen to you? Don’t be silly,” that it made me feel even more negative towards the Conservatives. I mean, I’ve said I’ve never voted Conservative but say if you compare someone like John Major to David Cameron, I never thought I’d say this but John Major almost comes out as a more empathetic human person in contrast to Cameron. I think it’s hard to make that happen.

Q: Yes, that is quite something. So, what do you think will happen with the general election in Scotland?

A: I think the SNP will get stronger because they’re widening out their vote now. So, before SNP were synonymous with ‘Yes’ and now it’s not synonymous with ‘Yes’ or at least people who voted ‘No’, I think can still say, “Well, I voted ‘No’ but I do like the SNP and I would rather have the SNP running Scotland than Labour or the Greens,” for example. So, I think that they’re broadening their voter base now and that’s the right thing for them to be doing. Whether they succeed or not, I don’t know. I don’t know whether they burnt too many bridges during the ‘Yes’ campaign to get those people back. We’ll see.

Q: So, how did the mood in the city change after the vote?

A: Oh, it’s Edinburgh. Nothing changed. People just carried on going to work at RBS and Scottish Widows and Standard Life.

Q: I mean, you said that you felt a little bit disappointed.

A: Yes.

Q: Have you spoken to other people who have felt the same way?

A: I had one friend who I didn’t want to talk to the day after because I knew he would be really hung-over and miserable because he was such a staunch ‘Yes’ campaigner. I think that’s some kind of soothing of troubled waters. So, I go to Church and there were, like prayers for making sure people could still get on with their friends and neighbours even though they voted differently, and some people said that wasn’t necessary and I think I would rather that was in place and it not be necessary than no one thinking about it at all. I actually saw three of my friends wearing kilts the Sunday after the referendum because they voted ‘No’ but they were still proud to be Scottish and they wanted people to know that they were still proud to be Scottish even though they voted ‘No’, so they were wearing their national dress and I thought that was kind of cool. I mean, Edinburgh feels like its 90% tourist most of the time and there are still people crowding round Holyrood. It just felt like life was normal.

Q: Yes. I mean, were you aware of people falling out, or arguments, or frictions?

A: I knew someone at work who voted differently to his wife and I know that he had to do his victory dance outside out of sight of his wife because he voted ‘No’ and he really felt he couldn’t do a victory dance in front of her. He got it all out of his system and then went back inside to comfort his wife after he’d gone to get the daily paper. So, I think there was a little bit of that. There was light hearted teasing at work about people that voted ‘No’ but it’s just banter. Well, I don’t know, I wasn’t the subject of it. It didn’t look like it was causing bad feeling. I think people were just glad of the party.

Q: Do you think people have moved on now?

A: Yes. Yes, I think they have and maybe in 10 or 20 years, we’ll have another vote, and maybe those 16 year olds who voted will be back on the news as 36 year olds with families saying how they’ll vote differently now. I don’t think a lot has changed.

Q: Okay, thank you.

**[Transcript Ends 00:33:35]**