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

A: I think it was actually when-, was it in 2010 when the SNP won the majority?

Q: Yes, yes.

A: We’re all quite interested in politics, but I was actually-, my youngest son, it was just after he was born so I had to spend that day with him [laughter]. We’d been out in the car and he was falling asleep in the car, so I was just sitting in the car. It was a couple of hours at least. It was actually after playgroup and I was just listening to all of the results come in and they were talking about the implications of a majority in Scottish parliament and that was one of the things they talked about. Obviously they were included in the manifesto, so probably there.

Q: Yes. That’s kind of cool you remember even listening to the results coming in.

A: Yes. I mean, I’ve always been SNP inclined because I’ve always felt that Scotland should be an independent country so it was quite an exciting day just getting that in. I think, even if you weren’t an SNP supporter, you know, the way the Scottish parliament is set up, we didn’t really expect anybody to have a strong majority and a real proportional representation.

Q: Yes.

A: It was quite a momentous thing at that point and I don’t know, I certainly didn’t know, you know, the implications at that time of what would come from that were huge, so I suppose it was quite an exciting day for anyone interested in politics although it might not be your flavour [laughter].

Q: No, no, you’re right. It’s interesting anyway. I mean, were you involved in the campaigning or anything like that for SNP at the time?

A: Not at all. I’ve never, up until the referendum, I’ve never really been involved in that. I’ve always had my views and I’ve always shared my views with people, but I’ve also been from a position where I think people should develop their own views.

Q: Yes.

A: So, I’ve never felt like I’ve ever really wanted to influence other people’s views unless they came to me. So, I wasn’t involved in that but I was an SNP supporter and I voted for them, you know, because I remember that was a big, like yes, yes, not yes, yes but it was the two votes and they really played on that, I think, in that campaign because there was the whole second vote Green thing from the Green side but they were very strong on that that, you know, if you want SNP in then it’s two votes for SNP, which I suppose is some of the nuances of the Scottish Parliament.

Q: Yes.

A: That was kind of the first point and I wasn’t as active as I was certainly in the referendum.

Q: So, what made you feel that you wanted to get more involved when the referendum started?

A: I think I’ve always had this inclination towards independence, so that was an initial thing. It’s one issue and I think the implications of this will be far reaching, so there’s a sense of urgency and a sense of importance that I don’t think we generally have around the general election. I think that was a marked difference in that, you know, that felt really important and the fact that it was something that was important to me anyway.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Was compounded by that.

Q: Do you think people are more interested in things like a referendum compared to a general election?

A: I think there’s an immediacy of, you know-, so, you get promises from a general election campaign and I think there’s almost a sense of these might happen or they might not happen. There is some Sinicism around a lot of politics as well, you know, when you get these promises before an election but I think the definite of this is a vote and this will happen, although would it? I don’t know. I think that made it very different and bear in mind constitutional change, which is not often very fashionable in politics and I’m not 100% sure why but it seems really important to change the rules of the game [laughter].

Q: Yes, yes.

A: That’s really important and, you know, that you never really hear anything that seems to be-, maybe because the scale of it is never that great, it’s not as important and something else where it’s a complete change of the landscape then it becomes very important. I mean, I think the first political system that we have is-, I mean, it’s archaic and it’s so open to abuse, I think, with the way regions can be changed and you end up that you have a huge body of people voting one way but have limited representation. So, I think that was something, you know, ask now in a referendum, I’d be like, “Yes, definitely,” but no, I actually cannot remember. That’s probably part of the problem with being at home with two kids. I mean, I think that’s important and I think the context of what’s going on at the moment made an issue of constitutional change even more important because there is a lot of people that, I think feel dissatisfied with the political system.

Q: You mean like Westminster rule in particular or-?

A: I think so, and I think there’s a general feeling that-, I don’t think you can hide the fact that politicians are controlled greatly by business.

Q: Do you think that’s as true in the Scottish parliament?

A: You see it’s interesting. I think Scottish parliament welcomes more third secular representation. They seem to bring in other groups, you know, so there’s a debate with interested parties whereas my understanding from Westminster is that that’s harder to break into but there is certainly donor situation where people are given a lot of money and have the ear of politicians and have influence. So, all the seats are different. My perception is that they’re different, so it’s not bad to have influence, it’s the type of influence, at least be able to influence and there seems a bigger scope for that in Scotland whereas Westminster, it doesn’t feel that way and I suppose proportional representation is a reflection of that as well where if we’re going to accept it-, I think if an amount of the population vote this way and they’re going to allocate seats according to that. It feels more like a closed shop at Westminster where it’s like, “We’re safe guarding,” you know, “We’ve got power and control here and we’re looking to safe guard it in various ways.” So, it’s a tough one but without knowing the ins and outs, but from little bits that I’ve picked up, it seems that there’s a different type of influence up here and people seem to be invited more in.

Q: Yes, and have you had any other-, any kind of direct contact with your MSP or even your MP?

A: Not direct. I mean, I’ve emailed off a couple of, if you like-, but it’s more questions like, “Why didn’t you vote on that issue?” you know, “You state that you’re this on this issue but yet you didn’t vote,” or questions like, “Were you in parliament [laughter] today or not?”

Q: Did you ever get any replies?

A: Yes. I mean, you get replies. You get a few, sort of, general replies and stuff. I think that comes more out of frustration at times and I suppose it’s where your allegiance is by but I think with being a Labour person, I think they’re in a very difficult position in Scotland at the moment. I think they’re kind of playing both sides, you know, they’re trying to promote that they’re a Scottish party looking after the interests of Scotland, but we’re also part of a bigger organisation that’s looking at the needs of the UK as a whole or a particular area. So, yes, I think I’m more critical of them at the moment because from an SNP point of view, I can see that they are there and they’re focusing on Scotland’s needs, so I suppose that’s an easier game to play. They have a more consistent message, I suppose, a more consistent stance on stuff.

Q: Yes. I mean, how do you feel that Labour did out of the referendum?

A: I think it was disastrous for them. I think it really was. I don’t understand their position. There’s only one argument that I’ve heard that I can reasonably understand about why Labour didn’t support independence in Scotland but the Scottish Labour party didn’t vote independence and that was from someone who asked them for their support in a big, kind of, I suppose a social aspect, felt that we needed to stay together in solidarity. It was like, “I don’t want to abandon issues that are important to me in certain areas, and I think we should stick together and deal with these issues. I think we should get excited about the whole of Britain and not just Scotland.”

Q: Kind of like welfare reform and things like that?

A: Welfare reform, yes. It was almost-, I think he almost felt like he would be abandoning people that had supported him and would have supported but I think in Scotland and in England, I suppose, I think Labour, their position was really unclear. They stand for these values but will support a situation that doesn’t try and equalise out injustices in these areas and I think that was disastrous for them.

Q: Right.

A: I think the SNP were quite canny in taking up a position where it’s this kind of left of centre position because I think that was a move for them and I think there is this kind of feeling where Labour have, from even before Tony Blair, kind of abandoned this stance on being a party of the people. They will still say it and they will still use that angle but when you actually look at policies, I don’t think they have really got a defendable position.

Q: Yes, and do you think they’re record in power as well has kind of worked against them in that kind of way?

A: I think it was difficult in Scotland because since the Scottish parliament has come in, I think we’ve seen quite a shift in the context, you know, in the early days, there was quite reasonable times where there was quite a bit of money about but then with the financial crisis coming in and everything being cut then I think people look back and think, “What the hell happened there?” Blame’s kind of a scribe to that type.

Q: Yes. So, I think they’ve taken a hit on that but I just get a feeling with Labour in the referendum that it was highlighted that the values that people perceive them to be about, they’re not really about anymore, and I think they were found out. I think there was almost a lag in people really catching on to what Labour are about and I think that really kind of caught up with them in the referendum because people got involved and people were thinking, “Well, what does it mean to be Labour?” and they’re like, “Wait a minute,” whereas you and there’s, you know, Ruth Davidson [laughter] and your, you know, they’re coming from the same line. People would look more in depth at policies and think, “Oh, you’re supporting austerity. Wait a minute, what’s that about? You’re supporting these things that we don’t think Labour are about.” So, I think things that have gone on in the past have really, really caught up with them, which is interesting. That’s interesting that, you know, I remember voting for Tony Blair and voting for Labour and being delighted that the Tories were out of power and then actually when you look back at Tony Blair’s record, he’d done as much as Margaret Thatcher did to, you know, things like privatising the NHS, welfare reforms to sanction individuals rather than looking at structural problems within society.

Q: I mean, even Scottish parliament came under Tony Blair’s watch, didn’t it?

A: That’s right, yes. I mean, that was something we delivered and I can’t remember who it was picked up on that but it was like, “No, actually, it was the Scottish people because they voted for that.” Yes, it was Labour, but I think that’s tied into how it was set up and, you know, the proportional representation and the idea that you would never really have a clear voice in Scottish politics and maybe that’s cynical to think that it was set up in that way, but yes, I think it’s kind of grown arms and legs. I can’t remember who-, it was maybe Donald Dewar that said that at the time that it was like a kind of step process. I think that’s happened really quickly that people have gone from having a devolved parliament to wanting more than that.

Q: Yes. Do you think that’s happened quicker than even the SNP anticipated?

A: I think so. I mean, I think people looked on it that this would be a gradual thing but I think there’s just been an absolute rush and maybe that was the fact that people’s living conditions have really changed dramatically.

Q: Do you mean recently, or like even over the lifetime of the parliament?

A: Even since-, I mean, I would say the last ten years, I think people have seen a really big difference in just the spending the councils have, the money that’s about, jobs, not just for themselves but for their children, opportunities that are around. I think people feel a real contraction in it and I think the referendum really galvanized that in people and I think people were feeling it and then there was a powerlessness around us and it was like, “Oh, yes. it’s the credit crunch, we can’t do anything” and it’s almost like we just let it happen and like, “Well, we don’t really have any power to do anything about that,” and then the referendum came along and people were offered an alternative to say, “We don’t need to spend money on this. We can prioritise that.” So, I think it really, you know, so Tory kind of saying there is an alternative. I think it opens people’s eyes that you might not get an alternative but the idea that an alternative is possible was almost re-ignited, you know, “Well, actually we can change this and if I go along and vote, and we get enough people, this will happen.”

Q: Yes. Do you think that was the strongest message from the ‘Yes’ campaign, the sense of an alternative?

A: I think so. I mean, I don’t really think they play on the whole national identity thing, you know, they were looking and it wasn’t about being Scottish. It was like, if you live in Scotland. I didn’t feel like it was playing into national stereotypes or anything. I think it really played on the idea of different opportunities for redistribution of wealth and power. I think that came in at a time when people were really looking for the opportunity for change and I think the way they went about it, the kind of long played, grass root movement, because there is a kind of distrust, I think, of politicians and mainstream media, particularly with the younger generation. So, hearing people chatting about these issues and picking up bits of information from social media, I think people were more inclined to believe it because it was coming to them in that way, but then also more inclined because they had the means available for being able to share it and I think that was a-,

Q: Did you have lots of discussions with people about the referendum at the time?

A: Absolutely. I mean, obviously in the university but even-, I mean, I think towards the end, it got really picked up by the media, but yes, it was getting to the point where it was like, we should probably stop talking about this as much, but it just felt really important.

Q: I mean, were discussions going on around the dinner table and with friends and at work?

A: Yes, I think so. I mean, even just people you bumped into in the street. You’re maybe walking down the street and you see somebody with a ‘Yes’ badge on, you know, and there was a connection there. It might not necessarily be a chat about the referendum but it inclined you, you know, there was a solidarity there just to say, “Hello” to somebody or, “I like your badge,” and then you get talking and it might have been about the referendum or it might have been something else, but it kind of galvanised it. My wife worked in a cafe and so she had the little blue book and she put it out on the counter and people were coming in and chatting and there were stalls. That was a real hub. Although it was just a café, that was a real hub. It ended up becoming a real hub, an unofficial hub for people that were voting ‘Yes’ and they would come in and be like, “How are you doing?” and [laughter], “Are you getting stressed out about it? it’s getting close,” [laughter] so it really brought people together and even people who were inclined to vote the other way, you know, there was good humour in it.

Q: Do you think the city felt-, what was the kind of feeling in the city in the run up?

A: Energised. I mean, I’ve never felt the place like it, I really haven’t. I mean, Edinburgh is quite a reserved place anyway and people don’t tend to go out but I mean, you just felt it. I think the visual presence of a lot of the ‘Yes’ hype were particularly up on this. I remember thinking to myself that I could walk into any street in Edinburgh at the moment or probably Scotland and if I look around I will see a ‘Yes’, particularly ‘Yes’. So, there was this visual thing that constantly reminded you that something was going on with people and badges, on houses, on cars and it almost focused people, like it’s ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. There’s ‘don’t know’ I suppose but some people had a position. There was not like a myriad of loads of positions. So, I think you had the feeling that there was a lot of people in the city, do you know what I mean, even though you were just seeing it. I was amazed at the amount of ‘Yes’ stuff that was out there and I suppose when it’s a general election, there’s a bigger range.

Q: Yes. I wouldn’t think there’s as much. I mean, you don’t see many posters in the windows.

A: I mean I still see-,

Q: Yes, that’s the other thing, people haven’t taken them down.

A: No, it’s not going away and that’s something that’s interesting to me because my feeling about it has never really changed. I’ve always been pro-independence and I still am, but the depth of feeling that I have about that now is stronger and part of that’s because I’ve looked into it, I’ve researched it, and I’ve found out more information. When you’ve went through this process of wanting there to be this positive change and the emotion of it not happening, so that’s my depth of feeling of how important it is to me. It’s even stronger now.

Q: Yes. I mean, were you surprised at how close it got, I mean at any stage of the campaign?

A: I remember thinking in the early doors, you know, there’s no chance. I mean, there was just no chance and that’s what people were talking about, and you got a lot of that from listening into the politic debate, you know, “There’s no chance.” The expectation was, sort of, 30% and I remember-, you know, like you kind of pick up sound bites and that and I suppose, maybe through that, I was like, “No, if people ask me, I don’t think we’re going to get it,” and then I went to a community education seminar around independence. There were people from all different third sector organisations and we went off to meet groups to talk about it and I was saying that I hope it is but I don’t think it is, and there was this one guy there who said, “You don’t?” He was a ‘Yes’ person as well and he was like, “Alright then, so tell me, who’s voting ‘No’?” He was like, “Tell me somebody you know that’s voting ‘No’?” I was like, “I’m struggling. I’m really struggling” and then it was, “Well, I know this person” and he was like, “So, who do you know that’s voting ‘Yes’? Look around this room” and it was like, he was right. Everybody in that place, almost everybody was, and then there was a sense of actually, you know, I see it. When I look around I see it, when I talk to people I see it, like who is against it?

Q: Yes.

A: There’s an element of, you know, you move in circles of people who are like minded, I suppose, but I think that was the point for me when I actually thought, “This is up for grabs.” My sense of what I see around me is that people really want this and I don’t see. So, I don’t know if part of that was that people that were talking were from the ‘Yes’ side and there maybe was a quietness about people who didn’t want change, but the people that seemed active and motivated and that were talking and showing visually what they wanted and it seemed to be all on the ‘Yes’ side and that was the point where I thought, “Actually, yes, this could happen,” to the point, I think, where actually, and social media had a lot to play in that because it picks up on what you post and what you look at, you know, as more ‘Yes’ stuff’s coming through, it’s like are you in a bubble here? You just become in a bubble of-, surrounded by people who want the same thing or posting similar information and it’s hard to break out of your bubble, I think, at times.

Q: Were you following the polls or any of the TV debates or anything like that?

A: I watched the TV debates, yes. I mean, actually as it got nearer, the last two months was like I’d watch pretty much anything that was coming on about it. I would definitely be watching the debates, you know, I’d be listening in to the radio phone in’s or whatever. In fact, it got to the point at one point where I was actually annoyed because they were talking about-, I can’t remember what they were talking about. It was some really trivial kind of thing on the phone in and I was like, “Why are we talking about this?” [Laughter] Why are we always talking about, you know, should Phillip Scofield dye his hair? There’s important stuff, like why is this getting played on the BBC radio.

Q: What did you feel about the media coverage in general?

A: The mainstream media, I think it was a bit caught out a little bit. I think it was a really different kind of process, and I think that social media has come along. For me, it’s the first time it’s really felt that that had a huge influence in a political campaign. So, the classic example of that would be when Alex Salmond and Nick Ross had the kind of stooshie at the conference centre and then Nick Ross said, “Well, Alex Salmond never answered my question on it,” and there was a short clip on the BBC about, you know, and it was edited to look like he never answered the question, but I actually listened to that on the radio, the full thing, and I know that he did answer it and then there was loads of posts after saying, “Well, actually, this is the full response,” and I think, was that a tactic from the BBC or did they just have 30 seconds they could put on and that’s what was edited? People’s access to information has grown dramatically, so I think the influence of the mainstream media has waned considerably and I think they were a bit caught out on this and having this money and kind of top down campaign that’s worked in the past isn’t quite as effective. I think maybe, if you look at the breakdown of the vote and you had proportionally a lot older people who perhaps don’t access social media sites, who rely on the papers, the six o’clock news. There was heavy-, and there was obviously loads of other factors, but I think that was a big part. I think the mainstream media, you know, it’s the British Broadcasting Corporation, you know, [laughter] it’s in the name. They’re supposed to be public broadcasters and they’re supposed to be neutral but it’s really difficult to be neutral and I think I felt there was a bias towards a ‘No’ vote.

Q: Even on BBC Scotland?

A: Yes, even on BBC Scotland. I mean, and we only get what we get up here but you’d be watching-, I remember there was an academic, kind of, watched what he did and he had looked at the media coverage, mainstream media coverage, and there’s obviously guidelines about how it should be. You can’t have too positive stories for ‘No’ and so you’ve got to keep a balance but what he was saying is that it was a sequencing of stories.

Q: Right.

A: So, you might start on a positive note from the ‘No’ campaign or something around the ‘Yes’ campaign but then that might be sandwiched in between two messages from the ‘No’ and he said when he looked at the sequencing of it and the message that you were left with at the end of that and the message you got upfront, there was more message-, so, somebody might want to catch the headlines for the year, you know, Alex Salmond’s not been able to answer questions and then there would be a more in-depth bit saying, “But he said this, that and the other,” because people rarely move away from and then it looks finished and to make it-, you’re balancing, you know, Jim Murphy says whatever and he said the sequence of it was very favourable towards the ‘No’. I was looking out for that after I heard it and I thought I can see that point of view. Now, my bias as a ‘Yes’ person might affect it, I don’t know, but again, it’s another way that social media was giving people tools to think critically about what they were hearing and the message they were hearing, “Why are we hearing this message?” and I think a lot of ‘Yes’ supporters I talked to feel the same that there was a bias particularly in the last few weeks.

Q: Once it started getting close?

A: I mean, so the poll that put ‘Yes in front, I was extremely sceptical about. They’d only polled 800 people and all the polls were like 1,100 people, you know, and this was a poll of 800 people that put ‘Yes’ in front. So, why was this number reduced when all the other ones have been the same? Was that a manipulation? A good time to, you know, you’ve got to get your voters out.

Q: Yes, okay. Yes.

A: Why did that message come across? Is it just because that’s a controversial news story? You know, that’s better news perhaps? I don’t know. There was bits and pieces that came out at interesting times about how the vow was portrayed. The vow was portrayed as devo-max home rule but it was only portrayed that way by the media. It wasn’t portrayed that way to the same extent by the politicians. They were talking about, you know, there would be changes, substantial changes, something close to this or that. The BBC picked that up almost as, you know, devo-max has been offered, and it felt almost to me like, “We can’t see this. We can’t sell this as devo-max,” but they turn around now and say, well the politician can say, “Well, this is what we offered.” What did the mainstream media portray that as? It was different and it was exaggerated. People will say, “Oh, the politicians,” but it wasn’t. It was the media that portrayed it in that way and that to me almost felt like collusion. It did, and it was quite concerning at the time. It’s like, is this actually being offered, and are they allowed to? A politician would not be allowed to offer something different at that time. That would go against the Referendum Scotland Act (Scottish Independence Referendum Act 2013), so what happened there, because the media certainly did, if you go back and look at how many times devo max was mentioned on those days after the vow, so that was the message people got. It was the safe way of getting, you know, the power you want without the dangers of believing the media.

Q: Do you think that was influential to people?

A: I think there was a lot of people who had a fixed point of view right from the start and they, like myself, it was never changing. I think a lot of people for a lot of valid reasons, maybe a lot of invalid reasons, there was never going to be any movement. I think there is always fear around change. People’s natural default isn’t really-, like change is a bit scary and there was a lot of things thrown up that, you know, you could lose your job and Sainsbury’s put a letter out to staff that they were moving. So, there was a lot of fear and all of that around so to be offered a safe alternative that seemed to offer the same kind of things that you wanted would be appealing to a lot of people.

Q: Do you think the Scottish parliament did get anything out of that process, out of the vow?

A: Nothing has been delivered yet. You’ll get Labour. Labour are on that at the moment, “We’ve delivered this, we’ve delivered,” No, they’ve had a consultation and there is proposals that are going to be looked at, so certainly they’ve not got anything hard at the moment. They might have a different negotiation position because of it, but they’ve certainly not-, to my knowledge, nothing has changed to the present date. That’s going to be debated after the next election as far as I’m concerned, so other than change in the political landscape, I don’t think they’ve got anything out of it at the moment.

Q: Do you think the SNP have done well out of it?

A: I think they’ve done well out of the referendum. I think they’re going to have problems keeping-, from last year, there was a broader ‘Yes’ movement and then after the referendum, people have looked around and said, “I still want this, what do I do?” I think a lot of people did join the SNP. Probably a lot of that has fallen back as the direct debits have come out, but I know people that have gone along to SNP branch meetings and have felt that the people that were there originally are looking to kind of maintain the little bit of power that they had as being part of the SNP and although they have been invited in, people are a bit concerned about new ideas, changing their party. So, I think it’s a double edged sword. I think they’ve definitely, you know, their popularity has increased, their membership has increased, but I think the SNP have always been quite a tight knit political party and I think that’s going to be challenged with the size of their membership and the involvement of how many people are going to come in. That’s going to change and it’s going to change the party, and how different branches are reacting to that is quite interesting. It’s very interesting.

Q: So, some are more open than others do you think?

A: Undoubtedly, but I know people that’ve gone along and said, “They have absolute resistance to new people coming into that branch,” and I think some people are-, you know, the SNP conference came up quite quickly after it and some of them weren’t allowed to vote to say what motions were going to be brought forward.

Q: Because they were new members?

A: Because they were new members. I don’t know if that happens-, I certainly know of a branch that that happened in, so what’s that all about? So, I think they’ve definitely, in terms of their vote share, I think they’ve benefited hugely, but I think with that comes a lot of different issues for them and they’ve also got a pressure now to kind of-, people have got their hopes and their dreams that they want to come out of this and they have aligned themselves with a party that they believe is going to represent them. So, you’ve got to be able to do that at some point to keep somebody involved. I’m actually probably more aligned with the policies of the Greens.

Q: Right, right.

A: I kind of like their structure as well of how they run things, but that’s kind of-, I would like to have independence and then be able to vote for a party within Scotland. To me at the moment, voting for Green is not going to change the game, whereas I think voting for the SNP and supporting the SNP could change the game, but if it went on issue by issue-,

Q: You’re taking a much more strategic approach, I guess?

A: Yes, and I think the referendum has put that issue on the table and that’s an issue that’s brought everybody together and that’s always been important for me. I think that’s something that the ‘Yes’ movement talked about. It’s not about voting for the SNP. This is about voting for constitutional change.

Q: Do you feel that it’s a step closer now, or is it a step backwards?

A: I worry that-, I think the establishment at Westminster had a real fright. I don’t think any of them thought that there was any chance that Scotland would go independent. I don’t know if you would get an agreement for a referendum, do you know what I mean? I mean, if you look at the economics of it and I’m not an economist but how does the UK finance its debt without the projected earnings of the oil industry? What does that mean for the UK’s financial rating and the amount they pay on interest on loans?

Q: Yes.

A: If it breaks up, and there was lot of talk that Scotland couldn’t survive, what happens to the UK as a whole? It’s not going to be good [laughter]. I think there was always going to be really difficult times ahead after a separation and I felt things would get worse, you know, times would probably get harder and there would be difficult decisions and difficult sacrifices to make but the idea being represented by your government, having more representation by your government, it was a worthwhile campaign to go through. So, I worry that-, getting back to your question, I worry that, politically, I’m not sure that you would get an agreement to have a referendum at the moment. If the SNP put it in their manifesto saying, “We’re going to propose a referendum if we get into power,” and they do, I don’t know if-, that would be interesting. David Cameron came under a lot of criticism for agreeing to it in the first place but then again, they were just-, the Scottish parliament sent them the question, re-elect this parliament and that’s part of their manifesto, the issue is part of their political process then that should be adhered to, but I worry that they’re frightened that the closeness of it would mean that there’s a lot of people who would try and stop that happening. Do I think that people want it in Scotland? I think, it’s probably 50/50. I really think it is. I think there’s as many people that feel strongly against it. I think something maybe further has to change for that to really click and that might be a generation where things continue like they are and the proportion of the generation that voted ‘No’ die off [laughter], but I think there has to be a much stronger desire for it across the board for it to happen. I don’t think 50/50 is enough to-, because I think when you’re trying to change something and there’s a political establishment, it almost has to be an irresistible force. You’ve got to be 20% ahead, you know, and it’s never close like that, I think, the power and the influence that the establishment has will always-, and you’ve seen it come into play with things like the vow. My friend was on polling stations. He went round the polling stations one day chatting to folk. He was a ‘Yes’ supporter and he said people were bust up. There was people coming up from the Labour party from Liverpool. They were bussed up on the day and there was three or four of them had been involved at polling stations in Kilmarnock. There was three or four people. Another one for Scotland, it was all people brought in for the day to speak to people, you know, that last message is so important. If you’re undecided and you’re standing and what’s the last message you hear? There were people drafted in to deliver that message at that key time, so I think power is always going to, when it comes to the crunch, be able to be exerted to keep the status quo and unless you’ve got a really strong majority that wants that change, I can’t see it coming.

Q: Do you think it would have been difficult for Alex Salmond if-, it passed very closely, if it was like 50/50, like 51/49 or something like that?

A: I don’t think it would have happened in those circumstances. I don’t.

Q: Really?

A: I don’t. If it was going on that one vote, because he was asked that question, you know, “What kind of majority do you need?” He said, “Well, it’s a referendum. It’s essentially one vote.” I think it would have been difficult without the kind of majority that the ‘No’ vote got to actually-, I don’t know why. I just feel if it was that close, it would have went into a legal battle and there would have been ways of it not happening. I’ve just got a sense of that, you know, that it might not have been a help to it. It could be a way the votes could have been called into question or, you know, I just feel if it was really close that it wouldn’t have happened, just like I think if it was a lesser margin, there might have been scope to challenge it the other way. I think if it had been a really small ‘Yes’ then we would have seen it going into a legal battle. It wouldn’t have just been, “Yes, okay. There you go, off you go. You won,” [laughter]. I think it would have got even dirtier than maybe it was, but I don’t know. I don’t know if that’s just my opinion [laughter]. I think it would have been interesting if that line was taken after it or if there was just a ‘Yes’, “It’s a ‘Yes’ vote so on you go.” I don’t know how that process would have unfolded.

Q: And Nicola Sturgeon taking things forward?

A: In terms of the SNP, I think it’s probably a good thing. I think she came across really well and the referendum-, yes, I think she’s really competent and I think that it’s a clever move as well. I think that Alex Salmond comes under a lot of criticism. He’s, I suppose, a stereotypical politician in some sense. He’s a middle aged, kind of middle classed, white male, so I think a woman First Minister, that’s appealing to a lot of people. A lot of things the SNP were criticised for, I think really hit on the fact that she’s competent and does a good job and people have a good opinion of her. It’s good. I think the fact that people that are in power, handing on that power and moving on after a certain period of time is a good thing. So, I think it’s a good thing and I think that’s all backed up by my feeling that she’s competent. She’s never appeared anything other than that. I can only say from what I’ve seen of her on the tele but I think for politics as a whole, that’s a good thing but I think for the SNP, it’s a good thing as well. It’s not often people give up a power that they have. I think also it frees up Alex Salmond if he wants to take it. It’s not worked for him as First Minister and the leader of a ‘Yes’ campaign. It didn’t work, so if you want to do this again, do something different, or you try the same thing and it almost takes the kind of shackles off him as well as First Minister. There’s certain things you can’t say and you can’t do, so for him, I think it frees him up to kind of take his own personal things forward, but I think it also moves the party on and kind of moves politics on as well.

Q: Okay, I think that’s everything.

**[Transcript Ends 00:49:25]**