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

A: To be honest, no [laughter]. I wouldn’t have said I was terribly politically aware because it started, sort of, impinging your consciousness when you started to worry, “Oh Lord, there’s a chance that we actually might get it right now.”

Q: Right, okay. So, that was, I guess, probably closer to the day when the polls were coming out and things like that?

A: Yes, well I read The Independent every day and there was more awareness in the press, so the more you read, but I can’t honestly say when that started happening.

Q: Okay. What kind of things were The Independent saying about it?

A: Well, they’re always nice and valid, so you always get a good picture to be honest and it was really interesting. At the same time from somebody that was a wee bit wary of Scotland going independent at that point, a wee bit scary as well, and at work and even amongst your friends, we became aware that this is an issue that people feel really strongly about. Again, I can’t remember exactly what The Independent was saying. They were putting the case forward for both sides, which is what we all needed to know and to be honest, both sides of politicians are a waste of time.

Q: Did you get any sense, I don’t know if you read any of the other newspapers or watched the TV debates or anything like that?

A: Yes, I did watch debates and Newsnight. I think there was in Inverness possibly that was quite well attended and again, strength of feeling and the fact that they had young people’s debates as well because there was the great thing about the 16 year olds being involved and the initial reaction was maybe 16 year olds couldn’t care but they did. The schools and everything were good at putting forward what this is all about. I think it was a great thing for Scottish education as well.

Q: Yes. Would you approve if the age of voting in the general election was reduced to 16?

A: Probably. Well, before the referendum, I would’ve said no but now that I’ve seen how engaged they got, it’s probably a good thing, isn’t it?

Q: Right, yes, and do you think that the rest of the media was as balanced as The Independent maybe?

A: No [laughter] the media is the media [laughter] and I’m biased because I like The Independent so I’m not unbiased either.

Q: Well, it’s not particularly biased to say that you like The Independent. Do you feel that the debates have any impact on how you saw the issues?

A: Yes, they did. As I say, I wasn’t greatly politically aware before that and I wanted to know what is this going to mean for us, so I did read and I did listen, and it kind of confirmed my gut feeling at the time that it was useful to hear all the stuff and also to hear what the politicians-, it astounds me how they drivel on and there’s nothing to back it up at all.

Q: Right.

A: As you get older, you begin to realise that these aren’t grown-ups running the country, they’re just people like you and I and they do not know everything and they come out with things that they think people want to hear a lot of the time and it’s all the party line and I do wish they would concentrate on their jobs instead of their perception in the media which is huge at the moment, you know, Twitter-, these things are all instantaneous and I think it’s colouring their actions far too much.

Q: Okay, so they’re trying to say things that are-?

A: They’re watching what they say. They’re toning it to what they know they should say.

Q: Right.

A: And it’s not useful to the people asking the questions who don’t get the answers that are true. We get what the party line is or what the politically correct, you know, in every sense of the word.

Q: Yes. Do you feel that-, so, if not from the politicians, did you feel that you did get the kind of facts, as it were?

A: It was really difficult, to be honest, even the daily papers, because what is the source of this information and how do you trust it? Everybody’s got their own wee agenda.

Q: Yes, absolutely. Did you feel that there were particular messages that were important for you?

A: The welfare state, I think, it was a big deal for Scotland because we have many needy population groups and my concern is, how are we going to pay for it? I don’t like the way that things are going in the country as a whole. I think the Conservatives are another thing, you know, you should be looking after the poor in society, not punishing them. It’s just not the way Scotland likes to see itself. At the same time, there’s the economics of it, it all has to be funded. Are there enough taxpayers in Scotland to pay this? So, I think that’s a point, we needed a lot more information on how they thought this was all going to work, and now that the oil’s going down the tubes, they’ve all gone pretty quiet.

Q: Really?

A: Do you think that’s deliberate, the Saudi’s? Well, obviously it’s deliberate from their point of view but do you think there’s any kind of [laughter], I’m getting conspiracy theory here.

Q: They can afford to do that. So, the economic arguments were very important for you?

A: Yes. As a taxpayer, somebody who saves and lives within my means, I wouldn’t mind paying a higher rate of tax if I knew it was going to be spent properly, and I do not trust politicians as far as I could throw them.

Q: Yes. Did you feel that the political parties ran a good campaign on both sides, the ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ campaign?

A: I’m trying to think back what they were all burbling on about. I think Gordon Brown did a good job. They pulled him out and that’s possibly quite telling because he is somebody that you listen to as you know, he has integrity I think. What he says might not be popular but it’s what he believes and I trust his maths as well.

Q: Do you think that he had a big impact in swaying people?

A: Well, I was already swayed, so I’m not sure. I’m not entirely convinced that we are still ‘Better Together’ because things have just gone from bad to worse. I didn’t think they’d done the ground work to enable us to go independent and make a good job of it at the time.

Q: It sounds like some of those messages about being independent from the south at least politically, are those kind of-?

A: That’s attractive?

Q: Appealing, yes.

A: More maybe in a federal way. I think Scotland gets quite a good deal, whether that continues is another thing that’s possibly up in the air, but I also like the fact that it’s being European. We’re better, bigger than we are individually and I think that’s the way to go, otherwise we’ll have no say in world affairs at all.

Q: Yes.

A: It’s a shame to knock back all the history that we have with England just because the Tories are not good at running the country.

Q: Yes. It does feel a little bit like, you know, throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

A: Yes.

Q: So, you said that people were starting to talk about it. Were they talking about it at work?

A: Yes, not hugely.

Q: In your friend circles and things like that?

A: Yes, but you were very aware of people meaning, shall we say, and there was a nasty couple of elements, not amongst my friends who are quite intelligent but there was a certain amount of social bullying in Scotland, people going, “What do you mean you don’t want independence?”

Q: Where did that come from?

A: I assume the tabloids, some of the nationalism and patriotism getting muddled up, and there’s a nasty side to that as well, isn’t there? I think you can go too far. Some people do like waving flags, Alex Salmond for one [laughter].

Q: What do you feel the mood in the city was like in general in the run up?

A: In the city?

Q: Yes.

A: I have no idea. Do you mean in town?

Q: I mean around you in Edinburgh in general, I guess.

A: I don’t work in Edinburgh, I work in a small village outside Edinburgh.

Q: Okay, what was the feeling like there?

A: Some of the older staff were more moderate but the younger ones were very gung-ho and obviously with the papers they read they were pointing them that way and also it sounded like a great new thing, you know, exciting that Scotland would be its own country and run it, whereas if you were older, you would ask more about, “Well, wait a minute. How is this going to work?” so I think people did get a wee bit carried away maybe with the thought of it.

Q: Yes, and were people who came into work, were they talking about it at all?

A: Yes [laughter], usually in the, “Oh Lord, where’s it all going to end?” type of thing.

Q: Right, okay.

A: I think that’s possibly the outlook of the people who come in, they’re not feeling great anyway.

Q: So, after the results came out, did you feel relieved, happy with that?

A: I was relieved and I kept very quiet about it [laughter]. I keep very quiet on opinions anyway. I don’t feel it’s my place in the workplace to sound off about my opinions.

Q: Yes, sure.

A: And besides, I’m too busy doing my job to be honest, I don’t get the opportunity and I have to really focus, so the chat goes on around me and I contribute and we have a nice time and we have lots of laughs but I tend not to hold forth about politics to be honest. I don’t know enough for a start.

Q: Do you feel that now-, I mean, are you generally happy with the Scottish government and the way that’s run?

A: [Laughter].

Q: I mean, it sounds like you have mixed feelings-,

A: Yes, I do.

Q: About health specifically but I don’t know if you think more generally about education and welfare and things like that.

A: I don’t know enough about it. I just see what happens on the ground, if you like, and go by people’s experiences and what I read in the paper about how things are going with the NHS down south and I think in Scotland, we’re doing quite a good job. I don’t know who’s arranging for that but I think there’s good initiatives so more power to them really.

Q: Yes. Do you get the impression that, I mean, have your views of the political parties in Scotland changed after the referendum, during the referendum?

A: Yes. Well, it sort of changed anyway because the SNP have blossomed into this wonderful thing whereas there used to be the Tartan Tories, so their membership has changed and Labour which was traditional, sort of, Scottish heartlands. They’ve lost that and I think that’s a shame but then it’s only fair for goodness sake, and Ed Miliband, I believe, is very intelligent and well-meaning but he comes across just awful.

Q: Right.

A: I was watching him on television the other day and I listened to him on the radio and it was holocaust memorial day and he has a huge stake in that and yet his story was awful, like it had come as a surprise to him. He knew he was going on Five Live and what they would be asking about and it was just really poorly presented. I just felt ashamed. I thought, “He should’ve done a better job of that.”

Q: Yes, and do you think things like that are important to swing voters?

A: Yes, in general they are. If you listen to this person and think, “Ugh”, whereas Cameron, you know, in public does the job.

Q: In what way, that he’s more confident?

A: Yes, a private schooling. I don’t know if Ed Miliband was privately schooled, but there’s a difference in their performance, if you like, and it’s sad because it’s not how I would like to see things but these days that matters as well.

Q: So, why do you think so many people have joined the SNP after?

A: Disillusionment with the other parties?

Q: Right, just Labour in particular?

A: Well, yes, because there wasn’t a huge Tory following in Scotland anyway. I take it we’re still talking about Scotland, yes?

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Yes, just in general. I would like to see more from the Green party to be honest and the Lib Dems have quite a large following and again, because they sort of lost face with the coalition, I think people have swayed from that as well.

Q: Right.

A: Yes, that’s a shame as well.

Q: Yes. Do you get the impression of why people are swaying from the Lib Dems?

A: Again, there was a lot of slagging off going on in the press, so people are swayed by what they read.

Q: Yes.

A: And they don’t know how much of it is based on anything at all really.

Q: I mean, in general, do you think that the process has been beneficial for Scotland?

A: I would like to say yes for exactly what people think and that’s a good thing and become more aware of what the issues are. I don’t know on the ground if it’s done anything at all yet [laughter].

Q: Do you think the Scottish parliament might get more powers then or anything like that?

A: Yes, they have, haven’t they? I mean, we were promised more but the taxation thing, that’ll be interesting. Interesting, as in scary. What are they going to do but we’ll see.

Q: Yes, yes. Do you still feel some apprehension about-?

A: Oh, yes. I will spend my life scared of what’s going to happen next. I’m a professional worrier [laughter].

Q: So, were you quite nervous in the run up to the referendum?

A: I did think about it and I thought, “Well, just look at it as I do with all my other worries. Look at it as it’s going to be interesting.” [Laughter].

Q: Yes.

A: These are interesting times.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: I’ll deal with it when it happens.

Q: Yes. Did you feel that-, were there any kind of positive messages from the ‘Yes’ campaign that resonated with you at all?

A: [Laughter], I’m thinking hard. Well, I think Westminster is far away and very London centred and they don’t know about how we live up here so much. So, I think it’s good that they’re raising taxes in a country that they are spent proportionately on what’s needed, so I think it should be a good thing but as I said, I’m not sure I trust, you know to process who’s going to be doing that as they will have their own interests. Nepotism is human nature. It’ll be jobs for the boys and is it better the devil you know [laughter].

Q: Yes.

A: Change for the better always seems to have unintended consequences. For instance, the twenty miles per hour limit that they’re proposing in Edinburgh, I think that sounds like possibly a good thing but in practice, what is it going to do? My daughter, she’s got that nice job I told you about. She does a bus run and they have to do scoop people up who are obviously suffering. There can be delays for whatever reason getting these people out of their houses and onto a bus but they have a time schedule that they have to stick to and she went back the other weekend to do a volunteer day to see how they were getting on and the boss was telling her that because the twenty miles per hour limit would mean that the bus run would take so much longer that it would need two buses. They don’t have the funding for two buses so they would not be able to provide the service.

Q: At all?

A: At all. I said, “Are you sure?” and she said, “That’s what I’ve been told,” so they got in touch with the MP who did talk, but that’s an unintended consequence that you could see maybe a knock on effect. It’s meant to be a good thing but what actually happens in practice is something totally different.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: I’m always apprehensive about change. Nobody likes change.

Q: Yes, and what about Nicola Sturgeon, and the change there? Do you think there’ll be much change?

A: I think that’s a good thing because she’s a woman, she comes across very sensible, she’s good at putting things across. Alex Salmond, a lot of people had a problem with, me one of them, but the party itself hasn’t changed so again from my point of view, I still have reservations. I wouldn’t vote SNP right now [laughter]. No, I think she’s doing a good job.

Q: Okay, because I mean you’ve mentioned jobs for the boys. I mean, one of the things she has promised is to greatly increase the number of female ministers in Scottish parliament.

A: Well, that would be good but I would like to see a meritocracy rather than a quota of, yes, we fulfil 50% are women because they were there, you know.

Q: Yes.

A: We should all be getting the right person for the job, not just colour, sex, whatever.

Q: Have you ever had any engagement with your local MP, letter or been to a surgery or something?

A: No, not to that extent. Years ago, I had an issue when my husband was running a service and the local board wanted them to open on Saturday mornings and there was no benefit, however it was in line with Lothian guidelines that they should be open on a Saturday morning. We produced a letter of appeal to the local MP to take it forward and he was very helpful and very supportive. It didn’t work but we did our best.

Q: Okay.

A: That was the extent. No. As I say, here, we have good services, we have nice facilities and no complaints really. I believe there’s an issue going on down at Crammond with building on what used to be greener ground sites or something.

Q: Right.

A: There’s a lot of, “Not on my backyard!” pertaining with difficulties with transport but people need houses so, you know, it’s a nice part of the town, it’s got to expand somewhere.

Q: Yes, and there’s no plans for anything like that round here at the moment?

A: I’m terrible with directions. It’s out towards the airport.

Q: Oh, yes. Crammond. I know Crammond, yes, yes. That’s a bit further out, isn’t it?

A: That way and Cammo, and again towards the airport as well, I think, so they’re planning on expanding housing stock but it’s needed, isn’t it?

Q: Yes. Yes, absolutely.

A: There might not be transport links at the moment but then they’ll need to build the infrastructure as well. It would be nice to see them building houses instead of shopping malls. I don’t know when shopping became a pastime, you know.

Q: No. Okay, well I think that’s everything actually.

A: Well, thank you for listening.

Q: Thank you for coming out. Thank you so much, that’s really great.

**[Transcript Ends 00:25:02]**