INTERVIEW G12-SG3: DANIEL BLAKELY

Interviewer: Dr Jack Crangle
Interviewee: Daniel Blakely [pseudonym]
Interview date: 22nd October 2020
Location: Virtual
Transcriber: Naomi Wells

Textual Note: Annotations and observations appear in square brackets (e.g. [pauses], [laughs]). Partial, interrupted or unfinished utterances are denoted by a dash. False starts, filler words and non-lexical utterances (e.g. 'um', 'hmm') are not generally transcribed. Time codes appear at ten-minute intervals in square brackets in bold type.

JC: I've started that recording, again.

DB: Do you want me to start again?

JC: Yeah, now, I think we've, yeah, just for the purpose of the recording, probably best to start off again, so again can I just get your verbal consent that you're okay to be recorded?

DB: Yeah, yeah, that's fine.

JC: Great, and your name and today's date.

DB: So, my name's Daniel and it's the twenty-second of October 2020.

JC: Yeah, and yeah, so if you just start off then by saying when and where you were born.

DB: Okay, I was born in Newtownards hospital, on twenty-first of December '76.

JC: Okay, and you, you grew up, or, or your family lived nearby, did they?

DB: Yeah, so my family was in Donaghadee. My mum's side of the family as my dad's was from, from Scotland, in Glasgow, so mum's side of the family, her dad was a, a farmer, and on her, her mum's side, my nana's side, her dad was actually a lighthouse keeper.

JC: Okay.

DB: Aye, so, we've got quite, quite a few of the records for him.

JC: Right, okay, and they were all from the, the same sort of area around Donaghadee, were they?

DB: Well, my, my, my grandad was, my nana was from Limerick, Cork.

JC: Okay.

DB: And kind of moved about with my great-grandfather who was a lighthouse keeper and he was kind of in lighthouses the kind of length and breadth of Ireland.

JC: Right, mm hmm, and your, what did your mum and dad do for a living in Donaghadee?

DB: Well, my mum, my mum actually was an Irish international amateur golfer, but she did kind of secretary, short-, shorthand work. My dad was a professional footballer, but by the time he got to Donaghadee, he was working kind of as a draftsman in the kind of oil industry side of thing, working for a heat exchange company in Bangor.

JC: Right, okay, and you were saying just beforehand that your, your parents originally met in South Africa?

DB: That's right, yeah, my mum was on holiday and my dad was playing professional football at the time.

JC: Right, so he was, he was playing in South Africa, yeah?

DB: He, he was actually playing in Rhodesia, but, and was on holiday himself in South Africa. He ended up playing professionally in South Africa as well for a short time after.

JC: Right, okay, and then do you know when and why they chose to move back to Northern Ireland?

DB: Well, what it was is, as I said, my, my grandfather was a, a farmer and he had a bit of land and they were going to build a house on it, so they ended up, that kind of fell through and they ended up buying a place in Bangor, but with all the Troubles kind of ongoing at the time and the kind of bitterness and stuff like that, mum and dad didn't want me to be affected or taking sides in terms of the Catholic-Protestant sort of thing, they wanted me to kind of be completely away from it, so they actually moved to London when my dad got a job there, but my mum didn't like it in London and they didn't want to go back to Northern Ireland, so they found a place in Paisley which was very close to the airport and it meant that my dad could stay within the oil industry and then go back and forward quite easily, which was fairly difficult to do in Belfast at the time as well, if they decided to go there that would've restricting my dad's work opportunities as well.

JC: It's interesting you say that they were very conscious about the decision to move away from Northern Ireland, that they didn't want you to be caught up in that sort of thing.

DB: Yeah, well, it came, I think it came about from my mum's upbringing. What happened is my, my grandfather was Presbyterian, but my nana who was Limerick, Cork was Church of Ireland and as a result even though they're kind of, I guess they're both kind of Protestant kind of religions, my grandfather was ostracised cos he married into Church of Ireland.

JC: Right.

DB: And also as well, the neighbours to them next door were Roman Catholic, so any time it came to the kind of celebrations on the, if you can call them that or whatever you say is in the, when they do all the kind of marching on the Twelfth, they actually, the Catholics stayed at my grandfather and grandmother's house during it, so they used to watch all the bands there because it were kind of safe, my mum thought that was really good, but it was really quite exceptional, compared to the rest of Northern Ireland. Donaghadee was a very small village at the time, so it didn't, the kind of rest of Northern Ireland was kind of, and all the kind of issues the religions was kind of alien to the folk in Donaghadee at the time, and my mum seen roundabout elsewhere and think, well, I don't, it didn't affect me when I was growing up, I don't want it to effect obviously myself, so they thought, so originally they were, they were going to go out of Northern Ireland, they tried London, didn't like it then thought, well, Glasgow, and they got a place in Paisley which was, as well the Glasgow Airport is actually in Paisley, so it's, was very handy and it helped my dad as well for work.

JC: Yeah, and do you know how your mum felt about moving to Scotland?

DB: She was fine, cos it wasn't London, she really hated, she really hated London, but also as well it was quite easy to get back. I mean, I remember when I was younger we used to take the flights from Glasgow Airport, the Loganair flights over to Belfast City Airport, we didn't really use, go to Aldergrove, it tended to be Belfast City and then you were another couple of minutes or you got the ferry, Townsend tourism at the time from Stranraer or Cairnryan over to Larne and down, so, we, we were over an awful lot, it was, it was, it was handy that way, so when my dad had to work away my mum basically took, took me and we were, we were actually went to Northern Ireland, whether it was the ferry or the, or the plane, and stayed at my, well, I say my, I say grandma and grandpa, it's really nana and, and my granda.

JC: Yeah.

DB: At their place cos they had a farmhouse, so we were able to stay there and we were there an awful lot.

JC: Yeah, how often do you think you went back?

DB: Oh well, when my dad worked away, so any time my dad got a job overseas, I was back quite a bit. I mean, I remember up until even, maybe eleven, twelve, certainly I remember it was a couple of months, the summer holidays in terms of the school, I was over there the whole time.

JC: Right, okay, and, and what did you think of Northern Ireland as a place, did you like it?

DB: Yeah, well, my cousins were there and my cousins were the same age, so, yeah, for me it was, I still think of Donaghadee as home.

JC: Really, yeah?

DB: Yeah, I still think of it as home, it's the one place that I've kind, most kind of affinity with and, and my cousins and stuff like that and because of the way it actually works, my, I didn't exclusively stay in Scotland, there was a couple of years with my dad's work we kind of moved away, so I was away for a year and a half I think cos my dad was in Malaysia and rather than doing anything we went out over with him, but I really had a kind of Northern Irish accent up until I was about ten or eleven.

JC: Really, yeah.

DB: Yeah, and then it disappeared because of the sectarian abuse that you kind of get in the west of Scotland.

JC: Okay, that's interesting, so do you think, you had, presumably you had the Northern Irish accent kind of through your mum and then through being in Northern Ireland so often during the summer and stuff?

DB: Yeah, and I'll be honest, if, if I go back, if I'm back there for a week, the kind of twang comes back a bit for me. I mean, I don't particularly, I, I think it's mostly because Donaghadee and the accent there is very soft and very kind of quiet, quietly kind of spoken and certainly, yeah, my family's certainly that way, my uncle sounds exactly like my granda, and my cousin is going the same way as well and it's a very kind of soft, it's not a harsh, like, Belfast accent, it's a very kind of softly spoken and I've actually went to Port Patrick in Scotland, which is kind of the closest point, it's, like, twenty miles away, over the sea, and the accent is almost identical over there as well in terms of the softly spoken sort, sort of way that it is, it's quite strange.

JC: And what was, what was Donaghadee like as a place? I mean, you mentioned it was quite a quiet sort of village and, and stuff and you say you felt, like, a strong affinity with it. Can you describe what **[00:10:00]** it was like as, as a town at all, when you went to visit?

DB: Well, basically we stayed with my, my cousins, so we were playing with them sort of constantly, we were out and about, we went to, well, the lighthouse was one thing as well, and I still have kind of an affinity with the lighthouse and I think probably more so now, knowing that my grandfather kind of worked, or great-grandfather worked in the, as a lighthouse keeper, so in Mew, in, in Mew Island, the Copeland Islands, which you can see from Donaghadee and the harbour and stuff, so, yeah, I've quite a, quite a kind, affinity with it there and, yeah, I guess it's just with my cousins and family being there, that it was, yeah, it just, you just felt home.

JC: Yeah, that's interesting, and did you, it's interesting you say you, you had the Northern Irish accent when you were growing up, did you feel Irish or Northern Irish at all, or did you still consider yourself Scottish?

DB: No, I did feel Northern Irish, and I, I still do. I mean, for me at the time, well, it was, kind of went full circle, but Northern Ireland had a, a really good football team at the time, so my, my hero growing up was Pat Jennings, the Northern Ireland goalkeeper, so I used to have that and I used to have the, I had the 1986, is it the first, well, actually, yeah, 1982

World Cup my dad, mum, you actually, my dad had, had a kind of short job in oil in, in Cadiz in Spain, so we lived there for a couple of months and I, I still remember when Gerry Armstrong scored the, the winner for Northern Ireland, my dad getting up celebrating and waking up my little brother at the time, but I, I know certainly '86, oh yeah, I was a big Northern Ireland fan, Norman Whiteside and, as I say, Pat Jennings was, was my hero as a, as a goalkeeper and I was a goalie, keeper when I was playing football at the time, but I still, I had a Scotland strip as well, so it was kind of a half and half and, and really I was quite proud of it until I started getting stuff around about primary five and the kind of sectarian stuff kind of hits in primary school and then you kind of, I went completely in my shell and it's only really, I guess since all this, the Agreement and all the Troubles and everything's kind of went and completely calmed down, I guess since the Belfast Giants ice hockey team sort of came about that there's, you'd actually say no, I'm actually from Northern Ireland cos you kind of hid it, especially in the west of Scotland, it's a, it's a kind of poisoned chalice sometimes, you just kind of stay quiet.

JC: Yeah, that's interesting, cos you were saying at first you were sort of proud of, like, both aspects of, of your identity, like, the Scottish and the Northern Irish aspect, but then, yeah, tell, tell me a bit more about, like, what sort of thing, you mentioned the sectarianism, like, what, what sort of things would you experience growing up?

DB: Well, it's just in school and as I this is, this is Paisley, so obviously there's, there's a mix of Rangers and Celtic and I kept getting asked the whole time, you know, it's, like, what's the accent, Northern Ireland, oh is that the good bit or the bad bit, and, you know, it wasn't, you know, and then it came, I, I guess primary school it wasn't too bad, there was, there was some of that kind of stuff, but it came to, came to stuff at, one of my, one of my good friends went to a Catholic primary school and we're really good friends and then I got, I think it was primary six or primary seven, I used to have sleepovers and stuff like that at his house and stuff and then I got absolute, I don't know, an absolute torrent of abuse, you know, what are you doing with that, well, I won't go into the sectarian sort of stuff, but you can kind of imagine it was, it was pretty bad, what you doing with the, Fenian, and all this sort of stuff and it's, like, it's stuff that was quite alien to me because my mum and dad had done a really good job of protecting me from that sort of stuff, and it ended up when, when my friend Mark went to secondary I never really spoke to him too much again, I still speak to him now, off and on, not so much because I don't stay in Paisley anymore, but it really did affect and, and the amount, I just feel an absolute shameful and sorry and, you know, as I was saying, and he said, well, he, he didn't want me to get the stick, so he said maybe it's better if we don't speak, it was quite disarming.

JC: Yeah, that's quite a sad story really.

DB: Yeah, and then the thing is it's not just Northern Ireland, the west of Scotland are, I'll be honest, I think maybe cos Donaghadee was slightly different, but I found some of the sectarian stuff actually worse in Scotland than Northern Ireland, but I guess it's the same as anything, if you go to the wrong areas you'll find it.

JC: So what, what type of area was Paisley growing up?

DB: It was kind of, it was kind of mixed, it was all kind of mixed, the, the thing is at the time and it's different now, everything kind of revolves around football sort of thing, and at the time, St Mirren, and that's who I support, all my friends kind of were St Mirren fans, so everyone kind of went with the Paisley team, I know now it's all Rangers and Celtic and there's very few people support the local team, I actually think it's probably ramped up and got worse again in terms of the kind of divisions and stuff like that, but at the time it was better cos everyone kind of supported the same team and it didn't really matter, it wasn't till a bit, bit kind of older on, and then it started to, to change slightly.

JC: Right, and you went to school in Paisley, did you, primary school?

DB: I did, I did, yeah, I did, yeah.

JC: And was it, was it a predominantly Protestant school you went to?

DB: Yeah, well, it was Protestant-Catholic school, so I would say that the school I went to, they say non-denominational, but there was a few Catholics in it, but there was mostly that because there was a designated, St Peter's, which was the Roman Catholic school, so I guess the Catholics, it just depended, I think that I would say the majority would have been.

JC: Yeah, that's interesting, and did, and did you enjoy school?

DB: Yes and no. I enjoyed bits of it, but, as I say, I do have quite memories about the kind of stick and stuff like that and they've certainly stuck in my mind that now I've got a daughter, I don't want her to go through any of the nonsense of kind bullying stuff that I went through, just cos of, I speak differently.

JC: Yeah, so it was very much focused on the, the accent then, was it?

DB: I think there was a bit of that as well, I think there was, I think there was a bit of that, but I'm not, I couldn't quite say it was, I would probably think, probably in primary school specifically that, I think in secondary it was probably more sectarian.

JC: Right, okay, and what, it's interesting you say, you sort of make the parallels between the sectarianism in the west of Scotland and in Northern Ireland, I'm wondering, like, how much did people in Scotland understand the conflict in Northern Ireland, understand what was going on?

DB: I don't think so much, cos I kept getting told, you know, when people were talking about stuff and I'd say, well, you're not quite right there, they say, well, you don't know what you're talking about, and you're sort of going, well, I think I actually do, I'm from, from there, I know kind of more sort of the stuff that's going on, I think, I think there's just a kind of blind sort of right-and-wrong-type thing, the way I'd compare is a bit like the US kind of politics at the moment, you know, they just agree and say oh yeah, that's completely wrong or stuff like that and they don't actually look at the kind of intricate kind of details of it. I think it's just, like, maybe the way they've been brought up, well, my dad supported this team or my dad did that, so I'm going to do that and not listen to any reason.

JC: It's interesting, cos you clearly obviously maybe have had a bit more of a nuanced understanding of it given that you did have family from there and you were born there and things like that.

DB: Yeah, yeah, so I mean, I remember thinking some of the things that I've seen and saying, well, you probably wouldn't say that in the middle of, middle of the Falls or Shankill, you wouldn't, you wouldn't say or be as kind of brave and, and openly sectarian I think as what, as what I would say, it was quite open the sort of stuff that you've seen, it's, I don't know if it was just cos it was Donaghadee, but I know certainly, I know certainly when my mum was looking at sort of stuff, she'd seen what Belfast was like and that's why she didn't really want to, brought up in Northern Ireland, cos they reckon I'd actually be pulled into one side or the other.

JC: Yeah, that makes sense, and did your, did your mum and dad, or your mum especially, talk to you about, about the conflict or anything like that, cos obviously you would have been growing up when the Troubles were **[00:20:00]** still going on, did you discuss it at all?

DB: To be honest, we never really have, it's not been something that's actually, because none of, none of our family was really ever involved in it, up until my cousin, I think everyone was kind of, well, this is actually far later on, but everyone knows about Drumcree and my cousin in order to make a little bit of money decided to do, to, to enrol in the Territorial Army and then he was spotted helping out in Drumcree and ended up getting a silver bullet in the post and that's the first time that anything, and that's, that's, only then was a couple of things talked about because none of our family were involved in any, anything at all, which from my understanding is fairly rare as well, it was not anything we really kind of discussed, it kind of, I think I'm possibly one of the fortunate ones that our family wasn't involved in any of the, that sort of thing at all because they came from a farming background, that was all kind of, just kept on going with the farm, they weren't involved in any kind of other sort of stuff in that way, and, and cert-, certainly my grandfather, my grandfather, didn't exclusively, but majority of the time he actually employed Catholics as well, which, I guess, I don't know if that's a kind of twist in sort of respects as well.

JC: It's interesting that he, cos obviously you said he was Presbyterian, but then he married Church of Ireland woman and employed Catholics, so he sort of went against the grain a little bit in that sense I suppose.

DB: Yeah, I mean, I mean, I think the thing is he ended up, he was ostracised cos he married into Church of Ireland, so he was very, I just remember him being very firm that night that he wasn't interested in any of that stuff, to be honest, none of the stuff ever really came across and got discussed, I think it, I think certainly and, again, I spoke to my mum fairly recently about it and it's like they made a conscious decision not to, to do anything, they said, well, it's not going to affect anything that you do and we don't want it to affect anything that you do, so that, I've only heard a couple of stories here and then recently and that's, certainly the story about my grandfather was one that I only found out fairly recently.

JC: Yeah, and did your mum ever talk to you more generally about her upbringing and, and what growing up in, in Donaghadee was like?

DB: Not as much, but you see my mum was a golfer and she basically golfed the whole time, as I say she was an Irish international, she was, I think Ulster girls' champion at one stage as well, so my mum's whole focus was golf more than anything, she was playing golf the whole time and obviously helping out on the farm, you know, driving the tractors and stuff, so in terms of meeting up with people and going out, the farming thing tends to be, yeah, you tend to have to work the whole time on the farm whether you're actually doing manual jobs, or, or you're helping cook meals or something like that, you know, that's, and actually my, my cousin has, she married a farmer as well, so that, it's kind of, it's still in the family.

JC: It's interesting, it must have been quite a contrast, that sort of rural Northern Irish background compared to growing up in Paisley?

DB: Yeah, yeah, completely different cos I mean, yeah, Donaghadee's kind of easy-going, sleepy kind of fishing village, or it certainly was at the time, it's not now, I think it's now about three or four times the size it was, it was only a small village and now it's quite a fairly big town, cos you used to be able just to walk from one end to the other within about ten minutes and now it's, it's far, far more than that, so yeah, no, just quite a contrast and I've actually, it's actually went back the kind of other way now because I've moved from Paisley and I'm now in Strathaven, Strathaven's got the same kind of village-type vibe that kind of Donaghadee has, kind of local shops and I think everyone knows what you're doing before you've done it, or could tell you what you're going to do.

JC: Yeah, yeah, it's that sense of, everyone knows each other's business I suppose.

DB: Yeah.

JC: And, so I'm thinking, yeah, growing up and stuff, like, what about outside of school, what, what did you do sort of in your spare time, were you into any, like, clubs or, you said you played football and stuff?

DB: Yeah, so I played, played boys' club football, but also golf as well, I [indecipherable], I played a lot of golf, certainly during the summer holidays if we weren't in Northern Ireland I was playing fifty-four holes a day at golf, spent the whole day up at the golf club, but yeah, I guess the thing is what, what I found is apart from the football. Stuff like that, I think a lot of the stuff I did was kind of individual sort of things, or with my younger brother.

JC: So what, did you, like, sort of play out in the street and stuff, or was that–?

DB: Yeah, yeah, we played football, football, we were able, well, that's when you could play football in the street, so, so we were able to do that, but not, not too much, not too much else, as I said I did have a friend who used to do, used to have a sleepover sort of thing every so often, but I guess from secondary school onwards it was just, you know, I was like, oh I think I ended up giving up the football, I did swimming as well, I was in a swimming club as

well, so in terms of sport was quite a big thing and I guess that comes from the background of my dad being a professional footballer and my mum being a really good amateur golfer.

JC: Yeah, and you took up both those sports I guess to a degree as well, so.

DB: Yeah, yeah, I ended up, I ended up being mediocre at both rather than good at one [laughs].

JC: [laughs] Yeah, and what about church and religion, was that a part of your life at all growing up?

DB: Yeah, it was, yeah, I was, I was in the BB, so I remember, actually that reminds me, yeah, so Church of Ireland kind of ties in with the Episcopal church in Scotland, so my mum was thinking oh well, that's, that's what we could do, we'll do that and they went along to, to see it and it was completely different, you know, it was, it was, Episcopal was the Church of Scotland, is very, very similar to the Catholic church in terms of everything that it does and the set-up, but that's not the case in Church of Ireland, Church of Ireland is, even though it's the same kind of villagey church, it's kind of more like a Presbyterian-type thing, so I ended up in the BB, which is Church of Scotland, so I was, yeah, I went, I went to the, I was in the BB for ten years, and again, BB was that, a lot of that comes down to football as well, cos it's a big thing, the BB was quite a big thing for football.

JC: Right, okay, so did you enjoy that, then?

DB: I did, yeah, yeah, no, I, I really did enjoy my football. I guess the thing is, background I've been in, the church sort of side of it I knew pretty good as well, but towards the end of it there was a lot of people that weren't interested, they were only there for the football, and a lot of them got thrown out once. I remember that story, this is probably showing my age a little bit, they went, it was church service on Sunday and they were, I think the, the minister asked what is faith and someone shouted out, it's an album, an album by George Michael, and basically the whole lot got thrown out, including myself cos we got thrown out as a grown, as a group and that was it, another lot, a lot of folk banned for it, but that was, that's my kind of memory of that, but we did an, we did an awful lot of stuff with the Sunday school and that, so I mean, I guess, I don't feel particularly religious, I do to a certain extent, but I don't like forced religion, if you know what I mean.

JC: Yeah, and were you, were you, did you believe in it and stuff when you were younger, like, you've, you've mentioned that the sort of BB and stuff was more for the football than anything else, but were you interested in the, the faith side of it?

DB: I think yes and no. I think I was quite, more interested in stories and the kind of, the moral side of it, you know, the right and wrong, whether I kind of believed all the sort of stuff, well, I would say that I didn't because my first, when I went to uni I, I did chemistry, so it was more of a kind of scientific sort of thing, so, which kind of, like, proved me, sort of thing, but I do, I believe and I don't believe, it's difficult to say.

JC: And were your parents strongly religious as well?

DB: Not at all, not at all, no, I mean, my mum, I mean, I mean, I'll be perfectly honest, if I was, if I was back and it was Northern Ireland I would probably go to, I'd probably go to church the whole time. **[00:30:00]** Over there it's kind of, it's a strange sort of thing cos it's more a kind of family and there's more to it, over here it's kind of, like, it's almost like a lip service sort of thing.

JC: Right.

DB: I do think, and I certainly, and my wife as well, my wife, she's kind of went away from it and also if it was the right sort of thing, we'd probably both go.

JC: So would you have gone to church a lot in Northern Ireland, then, when you were a kid, when you were over in the summer and stuff?

DB: Probably, I think I would have, but I don't quite remember it, I just kind of remember more the kind of fun and games that I had with my cousins.

JC: Yeah, sure, no, I'm just interested cos you, you saying, like, maybe that people seem to be a bit more committed to the church in Northern Ireland.

DB: Yeah.

JC: It's interesting.

DB: And also it's, I think it's more of a family thing, so it's, like, if I was doing it over here then I would go, but I probably wouldn't know anyone or I'd probably meet never meet them again outside of church, it was slightly different in, certainly a couple of friends are Northern Irish, when they go to church they meet their friends and they meet their family and stuff like that, so it's more like a, a big kind of day out gathering, obviously not at the moment because of the, the pandemic going on, but, but, but it was more, like, well, you can meet and you chat to people and do stuff, whereas basically I think from the church that I went to in Scotland it was a case of go in and go out again and don't, you know, there was no kind of chatting, or no sort of, didn't, there wasn't that kind of family feel where it was kind of, like, you had the BB, that was all the young people and then in terms of the church there was all kind of older people.

JC: Yeah.

DB: There was no ki-, there was no family sort of thing that, to it.

JC: That's interesting.

DB: That's just my experience.

JC: Yeah, sure, and then, so we talked a bit about primary school, what about secondary, was that in Paisley as well, yeah?

DB: It was, yeah.

JC: Yeah, and how was that experience?

DB: Well, I basically didn't kind of interact too much, cos of some of the stuff I would get. I mean, I remember getting abuse said to me when I was, from top, from the, from building while you're doing kind of PE and stuff like that and everyone kind of, you know, basically taking the mickey out of my mum which I, but I just tended to keep quiet and just go into a shell and just ignore everything, you know, you know, I didn't get involved in scrap or doing any of those sort of things, I just kind of stayed completely out of it and just ignored or blanked people, because of it, so in terms of, I enjoyed it and enjoyed the work and, and doing all the sort of stuff in school, but outside of actually doing that, when it came to the recreation, the other side of it, it was, yeah, not a good experience, at all.

JC: And that was purely based on your background being from Northern Ireland?

DB: I think that and the thing is by then, I mean, I quickly learned that, I mean, I learned in primary school, the accent had went by the time I went to secondary, but even still it was just, you know, so you meet folks and then they see, they heard my mum's accent, you know, when they were up at a parents' night or something like that and then kind of things escalated, so it was sort of a little bit, so yeah, it wasn't a pleasant experience, but I think that, I think in general the west of Scotland, as I say, probably gets it more than anywhere else in the UK, outside of Northern Ireland.

JC: Yeah, and I suppose you've got the whole football rivalry and stuff as well?

DB: Yeah, yeah, yeah, it's amazing, it's amazing, people that seem quite sane are not when you come to talking about that.

JC: So was, was there a lot of Celtic and Rangers fans at your school, then?

DB: Yeah, yeah, I mean, basically what it came down to is the fact, is that, well, I know, I know certainly when we were a good team, but by the time I joined the secondary school they were starting on the decline and people were just kind of, oh I want to support a winning team, and so the Rangers-Celtic thing sort of came, came up and it just depended on, I guess your background, who you supported.

JC: Yeah, and that kind of became, became I guess like a proxy for a load of other–

DB: Yeah, I mean–

JC: A host of other things.

DB: You know, cos I mean, I remember saying oh you support St Mirren, who do you really support, yeah, that's, so that's the sort of question you'd always get.

JC: And did, I mean, I'm interested, did people know what religious background your family were from in Northern Ireland, or did they make assumptions about that?

DB: No, no, I was called, I think no, it was just anything to be abusive, you know, so it depended who it was. I was either Orange or I was a, or I was a Fenian, depending who was wanting to have a go at me.

JC: That's really interesting though because you would have thought that, like–

DB: Yeah.

JC: Yeah, you were sort of getting abuse from sides, if you–

DB: Yeah, yeah, so I think it was, it was kind of like that and I think it's, obviously it's lack of knowledge, but also as well it's, I think it says more about the upbringing, you know, it's, like, Scotland used to be contained to, like, ninety-minute bigots, you know, and that was it, but then I experienced slightly more than that at school, but, but that was just at school, and kids are quite cruel anyway, so they'll al-, if they pick something different they'll always kind of do that.

JC: Yeah, for sure, no, I'm just, I just find it fascinating that you would have been, been called, like, from, being from both sides cos usually it's one side or the other, you know.

DB: Well, I just didn't say, so you didn't actually, I just went quiet and never said a thing, I didn't, and, it's cos my mum and dad never brought it up, so I actually never knew really, it wasn't really discussed at all, as I was saying, it's only fairly recently that I found out about my grandfather being ostracised and this and that, because my mum was an Irish international.

JC: Yeah.

DB: And stuff like that and, and didn't really care, you know, cos I know people that are Rangers and Celtic fans, they refuse, they either refuse to wear green and blue, whereas my mum wore, didn't care, wore anything, so for me I wasn't really affected. I didn't, I didn't, I really didn't know, which I think's credit to my mum and dad.

JC: Yeah, so they wa-, they wanted to sort of deliberately shield you from, from all that sort of thing?

DB: Yeah.

JC: Yeah, and did you have much unders-, I mean, you said you, you didn't really know that much, did, did you have much of an understanding of what the Northern Ireland conflict was about?

DB: I did, yeah, especially when I got to secondary because, I mean, I got a one for geography, the reason I got a one for geography is part of the geography exam is about

land, I can't remember, it's urban renewal and stuff like that, but one of the things, and the year that I got my, the, I can't remember what it is, cos you got one, two, three and four, it's not GCSE, it's, I can't remember the Scottish kind of equivalent, but basically the, the more advanced kind of exam where you got a one or two, the, the main question on that was on Belfast and why there would be problems and why there were things, and so I got a one for that. I think I ended up, you know, with a hundred per cent in that, it was just, just a bit of luck, so I did know about it, yeah.

JC: Yeah, and did you have any, like, particularly strong views yourself on, on the conflict and things like, you know–?

DB: I think, I think it's more embarrassment cos I di-, I wasn't, because of all the sort of stick and the abuse and stuff I wasn't really saying, I wasn't proud to come, oh no, I'm from Northern Ireland, I'm doing that, so that was, really, really went into the background until, oh I don't know, it must be after I came back, aft-, after I, I worked in Dublin I think, so you're talking probably 2002, 2003 onwards where I actually went, well, I'm actually quite proud of being from being Northern Ireland cos I just never really said too much before and the, and the thing is with all the things that were going on, all of the, all the various other sort of problems and issues and I never kind of associated Northern Ireland with kind of car bombs and that sort of thing, it wasn't something that, you know, certainly something you didn't want to bring up, it was something you were kind of a bit embarrassed about, I think.

JC: Yeah, and, and did you follow, did your family follow the news much from Northern Ireland, like, when things like bombings and stuff happened?

DB: I think they did, but they didn't really say too much to me. I mean, I still remember the news the whole time and I remember asking my parents the whole time, like, that doesn't sound, how come that guy's voice doesn't, it doesn't look as if he's talking properly, and it was obviously, it was Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, cos they used to dub their voices on the BBC news, but I used to watch the news all the time, but I also remember going over and I remember coming back **[00:40:00]** from Donaghadee, or going to the boat on, at Larne we got stopped on the bridge and we had to roll down the windows and the first thing through the window is a soldier with a machine gun, you know, doing the checks and they're saying now, well, what's going on, with us sort of thing, and it turns out there's reports that there's a bomb on the bridge and we had to go a huge divert to go to the boat in Larne, so, yeah, it's, like, stuff that. I actually had forgotten about that, I remember rolling down the window and was, I was quite young, it was, I don't know when, I was younger than ten anyway, but I remember rolling down the window and the first thing in's a, a machine gun from a soldier on a bridge in Belfast.

JC: Must have been quite scary.

DB: I wasn't actually scared, for some reason, and I'm still not really, really by it, but I think maybe that's just cos it, and I think possibly now I probably, I probably would have been had it not been for the job I've done the last two or three years, where I've had to go overseas and you've had to have all these sort of check things whereas my colleagues were quite,

well, scared about it, I've already had someone do that thing in the past when I was younger.

JC: Yeah, and what about in Donaghadee itself, was that affected by the Troubles much, or did you experience anything when you went over?

DB: Not at all, not at all, there wasn't anything at all. In fact, there wasn't really anything associated with Donaghadee for a long time, until I think Ian Paisley bought a building somewhere and that was, that was a lot older by then, he bought a building somewhere and then that, there was a few things, but even still Donaghadee, when I've went back, you wouldn't know, you just see it as just a small fishing village, not unless you go asking and looking for it, I don't think you'd know. I mean, obviously there's, I think there was one pub that everyone knew was infamous, which is now changed and gone, but it was everyone knew, right, that's, you don't go there.

JC: Yeah, and was that–?

DB: It all seemed quite contained.

JC: Yeah, and was that pub a, it was just a, a dodgy, a place that was known to be dodgy?

DB: I think it was known as, I don't know if it's UVF pub or something like that, I think it was, I want to say, it was either the Ocean or the Oceanic I think it was called, I think, I'm not sure. I don't think it's there now, I think it's been completely done, it's gone, but it was, it was well known, so, so if you went, if you went in there, that was it, you know, you knew what you were going in for, that sort of thing, but I think that was, that's the only one that I re-, I remember, but then again, I think it's, you would only have that sort of thing if you went looking for it, it was, there was nothing openly you would know, apart from obviously round about marching season when all the bunt-, bunting would go up.

JC: Yeah, did you ever experience that, like, did you ever watch the Twelfth or anything, or participate at all?

DB: No, not until I think three or four years ago, we went and that's the first time I've actually experienced it and that was quite interesting and all that, that sort of thing, but I think it, it was quite a spectacle, but I think the problem is the people and idiots that hang about it, because the problems rather than maybe obviously some of the folk would be innocent themselves doing the kind of marching, but it is quite a spectacle.

JC: Yeah, for sure, and I mean, I've, I've been to see it as well, like, and it is, yeah, it's something that, that you won't see anywhere else.

DB: No, no, and we went over cos the, I think the way they work it is different regions, so say, say it was County Down or something, they have a big celebration in one town and then next year it's another town, and when we went over Donaghadee was the big, was the main thing and that's, that was where the main parade was for, for the, for that region, that time, so it was quite, was quite interesting, probably seeing all the stuff and reading the news

afterwards and seeing all the problems about that, okay, I've done it once, I don't know if I'd like to do it again, I'd maybe watch it on TV just to see what, what it's like, but yeah, there was, my daughter was quite young and we actually were fortunate to stay at a house that was actually on the parade route, so we were actually able to keep her out of the problem sort of area, the sort of idiots that were hanging about.

JC: It's interesting that you kind of sort of experienced that for the first time as an adult, so it wasn't part of your culture or your family's culture or anything when you were younger?

DB: No, no, and the thing is is if you actually looked at my dad, my dad's grand-, my grandfather, who I didn't know cos he died when I was very young, but he was, he was in the Masonic Lodge in Scotland, so the whole family is kind of from the kind of Protestant side, but my dad didn't like the Masonic Lodge at all, he just thought it was, cos when my grandfather died they didn't, they're supposed to help each other and didn't help with anything, so my dad was kind of firmly against the, the idea and that sort of thing and being subservient to a few people and stuff like that, so I'm quite fortunate cos it could easily have been, well, I could easily have been in one side or the other, but I think it probably would have been just, it would probably would have been the Protestant side to be honest, but I mean, I'm really grateful my mum and dad have kept me completely out of it and I think I've quite a reasonably neutral perspective on it.

JC: Oh that's interesting and it's, yeah, it's an interesting background that your parents deliberately sort of tried to keep you out of it. Did you ever get a sense of, like, what their, I mean, you said they, they didn't talk about it much, but if they had any political views on Northern Ireland or if, if they supported sort of British involvement there, or was it just not discussed at all?

DB: It wasn't really discussed. I mean, I've discussed it a little bit more recently, but I wouldn't, I wouldn't have known. I mean, certainly, certainly things have kind of changed and I think it's more to do with the British government sort of thing, I can't really, their views have certainly changed, on certain things [pauses], but that's more, I think that's more to do with the, the politics of everything that's going on, I mean, and certainly I know, they're all, I think, quite proud to be kind of, my side of the family are reasonably proud to be British, but I think with Brexit they would probably, if there was a vote they'd probably join, what's it going, the Republic because it would be in the EU, because it's better for jobs and family and sort of stuff, so it's, it's, as I say it is, I think, I think my family in general's quite pragmatic about stuff.

JC: Yeah, so they weren't sort of, like, hardcore unionists or, or anything like that?

DB: No, no, I think they just kind of liked it to be, now, you've got centre, centre left and centre right sort of stuff when it comes to politics, they're kind of reasonably central.

JC: Right, and then, so kind of moving on, like, when you finished secondary school, you said you, you went to university?

DB: Yeah, I went to university and that was in Paisley, so, I did, I did chemistry there and then I did a, they call it a sandwich degree where you have a kind of placement and I ended up doing a kind of, a whole load of IT sort of stuff there, so I ended up doing a postgrad in IT and after that I struggled to get a job and got contacted via Monster I think at the time and I ended up working for IBM in Dublin.

JC: Okay, so you moved to Dublin, how old were you then?

DB: Yeah, that would have been, yeah, that would have been twenty-, twenty-two, twenty-three.

JC: Okay, and what, what did you think of Dublin at the time, what was it like as a city?

DB: Well, I was, I was interested in it, but when I went there, yeah, I, I found it to be quite intimidating. The one thing that, I think I was reasonably sheltered, but the one thing that I couldn't get my head round was we had to, we were put on a placement sort of thing and the placement was in Blanchardstown, you know, until we got our own sort of digs and every single lamppost had a hunger striker on it, a different, a different hunger striker from the kind of Maze prison days, so I knew, by then I knew sort of thing, so it was a wee bit kind of intimidating, that, that, that sort of side just going oh what have I got myself into here, **[00:50:00]** you know, am I, am I going to be in trouble even though I don't, you know, cos the first thing they ask you with a Scottish accent, do you support Rangers or Celtic, you say neither, so they automatically assume you're a Rangers fan, but, no, Dublin, there's a lot of sort of sides to it. The one thing I didn't, I guess was one thing at, at the time when I was there is, it was just about the start of the, I think, the Celtic Tiger, so, so you'd all these different nationalities coming over and the amount of racism and things and I was fortunate when I was there cos, well, I say fortunate, I mean, I had a Scottish accent, I had friends that were English. In fact, I'd, one of them was from Amble, which is close to Berwick, in between Berwick and Newcastle, but the accent, with a Berwick-Newcastle accent half the time you sound Geordie and the other half you kind of sound southern Scottish, he just said he was Scottish and he was fine, but his other friend who was English, oh you had to kind of, some of the, the abuse that they got about sort of stuff, there was still quite raw about sort of things, and Dublin in general, I mean, it was a big eye-opener for me, I mean, there were, I think drugs, was an awful lot of things going on in Dublin there and I was really uncomfortable with that.

JC: And was this sort of in, like, social situations or at work, or–?

DB: Oh no, social situations, so you're, you're at a, you're at a bar and people are just openly either snorting or taking stuff on the bar and you're just going, I don't want to be here, and it was kind of a, a blind eye was sort of seen to it, and I know as well, cos basically what used to happen as well is people used to just go, put a, I think it was a, a P or an L thing on their car and just go out and drive, if you phoned the police station about anything because we had a break-in one time, they used to just hang up the phone on you cos they couldn't answer, it was just, it was quite a mayhem I think at the time and certainly I did go to the Temple Bar area, but I wouldn't go back, as I say, I think it's just, it's, it was, it was just unfortunate the places I had to stay cos the rent was very, very high, so you had to stay in

kind of the, kind of worst areas, you know, and you're, you're in a kind of new estate and then you just walk and go round the corner and there's burnt out cars and burnt out caravans sort of stuff, you know, from the Travelling community and you're just, but yeah, it was huge eye-opener for me.

JC: So it sounds like you didn't feel an affinity with Dublin in the way that you did with Donaghadee, then?

DB: No, I think it's a sort of similar sort of thing to big city sort of type thing. I mean, I've been to London and I don't like London either. I think it's just, there's a different attitude in big cities, Belfast is probably the same although I don't have much experience, but I know certainly the Glasgow-Edinburgh rivalry is, is like that as well, you know, you just don't, I think it's less personal when they're [connection abruptly interrupted; ring tone]. Hello?

JC: Hi Daniel, sorry, not a hundred per cent sure what happened, I think it just cut off through, it was, it was something at my end, so apologies about that, but yeah, we were talking about, yeah, I guess your experience of, of Dublin and big cities and, and what that's like.

DB: Yeah, yeah, so I think that's just my experiences, you know, of kind of big cities I think, Dublin is pretty similar to kind of London, it's very, very expensive and anywhere that you had to stay, it's not going to be in the best of areas if you don't get an awful lot of money.

JC: Yeah, yeah, that makes sense and what, what about work, did you enjoy the work in Dublin?

DB: I did enjoy it and it was really good up until September eleventh when, obviously the twin towers thing, that, that happened and I was in at that time, but after that they stopped any, IBM took the kind of decision to stop all training and to stop any [indecipherable] or any promotions and the last six or twelve months that I was there I was having to rely on kind of food parcels from my mum and dad and I ended up, I had, I ended up coming back to Scotland cos I couldn't afford to stay, even though I would've been better done training, you know, doing something else I think, basically I think the experience outside of work made it kind of impossible for me.

JC: Yeah, so how long were you in Dublin for in total?

DB: I think about a year and a half.

JC: Right, okay, so not that long then, and how did you feel about moving back?

DB: I think it was a bit of a relief as well, I always felt as if I was on edge in, in Dublin. I think maybe, you know, some of the people that were there, unemployed and stuff like that, it was just a bit, because I wasn't in the clique that went out drinking and stuff like that and did all the sort of socialising, basically cos I couldn't afford it, I just kind of felt kind of on the outside.

JC: Yeah, that makes sense, and then did you move back to Paisley?

DB: I did, yeah.

JC: Yeah, was that–

DB: I moved back, back with my parents, yeah.

JC: Right, okay, and what, what was next in terms of work, then?

DB: I ended up with a, a job in a whiskey company in East Kilbride through a friend of mine.

JC: Yeah.

DB: His dad, Steven, he gave us a tip and I went, I went for an interview. I wasn't his area, but he gave a tip to say oh there's a job coming up, you should apply for it, and it ended up I got the job and I was there for, oh how long, maybe nine, nine years, something like that.

JC: Right, okay, and you mentioned your wife and stuff as well, like, when did you meet her?

DB: I met her in that, that job.

JC: That job, yeah, is she, is she Scottish then, yeah?

DB: Yeah, she is.

JC: Yeah, and yeah, so, so you met, and she, she worked for the company as well, did she, or–?

DB: Yeah, yeah, a different, different department, so we didn't, there wasn't that much kind of interaction between us, in terms of work, but it's a small company, there was only two hundred and fifty in the company, so you do bump in and stuff like that, but that was, yeah, it came about after that.

JC: And when you started going out did you, did you ever bring her to Northern Ireland?

DB: Only in that time, only a couple of times, we went over for the ice hockey before, the Belfast Giants.

JC: Yeah.

DB: And then obviously went over one time just, my wife wanted to see the experience and I never actually had it, so we went over, over a few years back to see, there, what this [indecipherable] was actually like and she was the same as me, that was quite nice, but I probably wouldn't do it again.

JC: Yeah, it's just, it's interesting, like, somebody who, like, from outside who's never been to Northern Ireland to kind of think of, of how they would experience it for the first time.

DB: Yeah, I think that, quite liked it, but I think it's, one thing that we did notice is it's probably about ten years in the past [indecipherable], you know, in terms of right, that's, a lot of it sort of revolves roundabout a Sunday, things are basically closed and stuff like that.

JC: Yeah, it's, it's still a bit, a bit behind what you would have in Scotland and England.

DB: Well, it's funny you say that, we went to Manchester on a Sunday once, and it was exactly the same.

JC: Oh really?

DB: Yeah, and it was, we went to the Trafford Centre, going oh this'll be great, but I think we chose the wrong weekend and it was completely closed on a Sunday. It was one of the, I, I can't remember what it was, it was one of the holiday weekends.

JC: Ah that's interesting, and so, when did you get married then?

DB: Five years ago.

JC: Okay, and did your family from Northern Ireland come over or anything?

DB: They did, yeah.

JC: Yeah, mm hmm, and you've got, did you say you've, you've got kids as well, yeah?

DB: I've got one, yeah.

JC: One, yeah, yeah, and it's kind of one of the questions we have is about, like, identity and, and passing that on through the generations and stuff, and I'm wondering is it important to you at all to, for your child to have any kind of sense of their Northern Irish or Irish identity, or does it not really matter to you?

DB: I think I would, I want to let her know, I mean, about it, whether she cares about it or not I just, I think the one thing that, that I've got from it, I mean, **[01:00:00]** I knew cos I was born in Northern Ireland and that was the sort of thing I questioned, it's something that I'll certainly say to her, if she's got questions I'll ask her, but I think I'll probably take the same approach as my mum and dad, if she wants to know something or whatever or more, I'll go into it in a bit more detail, but I won't force anything on her.

JC: Yeah, that's interesting, cos I've talked to some people before who've, who've made a conscious effort to get their kids involved with, like, Irish cultural activities and stuff. Have, have you ever sort of joined anything like that or any organisations that are sort of linked to that kind of culture at all?

DB: Not particularly, I do have an interest in the Ulster Scots stuff and the reason being is that my grandfather was, well, my dad didn't understand him, but my grandad, I didn't, grandad did understand, my grandad was a pure Ulster Scots speaker.

JC: Right.

DB: So he was what, gowf, and your, your, your een for your eye, and stuff, he was pure Ulster Scots and my dad, who's Scottish, couldn't understand, so all these Scots words, but I do have an interest in Scots words, and I guess a little bit more with my daughter because part of the curriculum in primary school and stuff is that you have to learn this kind of Scottish language cos the Scottish government, so an awful lot of the stuff in terms of the words and stuff like that, yeah, Ulster Scots and Scots, there's, there's not much in it.

JC: Yeah, it's interesting with Ulster Scots, it's kind of that crossover between cultures of the, the two places.

DB: Yeah.

JC: Do you think there's mu-, a lot of, a lot of similarities in the culture between the west of Scotland and Northern Ireland?

DB: I think, I think there is and I think, I think a lot of it's down to the fact there's, well, certainly around the Glasgow area and stuff like that, there's an awful lot of families that are, you know, a bit like myself that have got relatives over there and they go over. I mean, I know numerous folk that have got the same sort of thing and then you've got some of the, we're close to an infamous place called Larkhall, it's well known in Scotland as being kind of the, the Orange or union-, unionist capital of Scotland, it's, it's made the butt of jokes in all the, so we've got *Only an Excuse?* that done at New Year, which is kind of like a, a sketch show-type thing, it's always Larkhall that's the butt of the jokes, so, yeah, there's a lot of people travel over as well, you know, as well, and, yeah, like, I think there's a, there's such a close sort of thing, as well with people travelling backwards and forwards, even for work, there's a lot of the, a lot of the, the sales and regional stuff now, it's Scotland and Northern Ireland is the coverage area, you know.

JC: Right, yeah.

DB: Or, you know, how you thought, yeah, alright, I'm the regional manager for [indecipherable], but the region is Scotland and Northern Ireland for a lot of the jobs.

JC: Yeah, that's interesting, and I suppose there are, well, in normal non-pandemic times there are so many link, transport links as well, like, through flights and the ferry and so on.

DB: Yeah.

JC: Do you, do you still visit regularly, I mean, you mentioned you've been with your wife a couple of times, do you visit on your own very often?

DB: No, no, and I think it's, I'd like to be over more often, but, you know, with work and stuff it's kind of in, in the road, I think, I think for ourselves when we've been going and taking holidays, they'll always have tended to be to foreign destinations rather than, than over, I'd like to go over a bit more often cos I, cos I miss my cousins, I was very, very close to my cousins, certainly growing up, certainly two of my cousins, they were basically like brother and sister, certainly over the summer holidays and stuff, so I don't see them much, but and we, I guess with their jobs and stuff like that as well it's difficult to stay in touch, but I'd like to be over more often.

JC: Do you think you'd ever be tempted to move over there?

DB: I would be, but I wouldn't move my daughter and family [indecipherable], I'd be tempted to move, but then again I think it's more to do with, the fact is that generally my dad travelled all over, so I'm quite comfortable with travelling in general and, and in my job recently I've been, I've been to Kenya, I've been to Sierra Leone and I've been, you know, but cos of the stuff that I do for work, I've been different places, so I've got quite a, I'm still always travelling.

JC: Yeah, and how did you get into the job you're in now, and tell me a bit about that?

DB: Well, basically, it's IT that I kind of work in, so, and basically the job, I was made redundant from a job, which was a bit unfortunate, and, and a job came up, I applied for it and I managed to get it which is, well, that's, that's really how it came about, there wasn't anything else, it was just an advert and I was actively looking for jobs at the time, and to be honest if it, if it, it's not something that I would have considered cos, it's, it's, I'd always worked in the private sector and, and then this came up and I just went, well, looks quite a good opportunity, but, and it has been so far, and so far, to be honest, I'll say that it's run far better and more efficiently than the private sector.

JC: That's interesting.

DB: From, from the jobs I've been in.

JC: Yeah [laughs], and so I'm kind of wondering, obviously you say you don't maybe get over to Northern Ireland as much as you'd like to, do you still sort of follow the news or anything from over in, over in Northern Ireland?

DB: Yeah, I do, I do, yeah, so, like, BBC Northern Ireland and bits and pieces and stuff like that, so, I occasionally watch *Newsline*, but it, it's not, it's not that often, I think I've actually kind of moved away from kind of the BBC and it's more kind of Twitter feed and stuff like that, so.

JC: Right yeah.

DB: But I do follow, I mean, I follow the Northern Ireland the football team, and, and I have, a friend of mine played ice hockey for the Belfast Giants for years, he's recently retired, so I follow, follow the Belfast Giants as well.

JC: So you're still, in football terms you're still a Northern Ireland fan over, over being a Scotland fan, yeah?

DB: Yeah.

JC: That's interesting, would you support Scotland at all, or are you not bothered?

DB: Yeah, I do, I do, but if it came down to Northern Ireland-Scotland, I support Northern Ireland.

JC: Okay, yeah, to be honest, that's probably a better bet at the moment anyway [laughs], to be honest.

DB: Yeah, yeah, yeah, no, [indecipherable], the one, the one thing that I've always been is an Irish rugby fan, but I do know that an unc-, an uncle of mine, oh he's not an uncle, he's one of those uncles that's a friend of the family, is, he's, well, let's just say he's that bitter that he supports Scotland over Ireland even though he's from Northern Ireland.

JC: Right.

DB: So I have experienced a bit of that sort of thing, but–

JC: And that's just cos it's an all-Ireland team?

DB: Yeah.

JC: Yeah.

DB: And, and I know things as well, like when it comes to certain things I know people in Northern Ireland, like, in the farming community, that don't actually buy John Deere tractors because they're green, over other brands, it's just, that's the way it is, it's just, it's just crazy, to me it's just insane.

JC: Yeah, it, it does get taken to such extremes. Did you, I mean, you still follow the news now, did you, presumably, did you follow the peace process much as it was unfolding?

DB: Bits and pieces of it because you get a kind of diluted thing, I think the thing that I found very, very interesting and this is when I was in Dublin, we used to watch the BBC and used to see the news about Catholics getting killed all the time, and there was always Catholics getting killed in Northern Ireland, when I went to Dublin and was watching RTE and TV3 it was the opposite way around, and I noticed this because when I, I used to fly back, so I used to get a flight, it was when Ryanair were doing those crazy fares, you'd get a flight for a pound, so I was able to get return for the weekend for two pounds, go, go back, a flight to Prestwick, so I used to see similar sort of news, you got all these Catholics killed if it was on the BBC, when you went to RTE or TV3 it was all about these Protestants getting killed, which was, to me, I was like, that kind of opened my eyes, and just saying oh well, there was

different reporting going on, you know, this is, it can't, it can't be, they're talking about the same thing, but they're reporting it completely differently, and probably the opposite way of what I thought it would be.

JC: That is, yeah, the opposite of what you might think, **[01:10:00]** yeah.

DB: Yeah, so yeah, and that really confused me, but no, I did, I did follow that and obviously the Brexit thing is very concerning for them.

JC: Yeah, well, it add, it adds up so many questions, doesn't it, around what's going to happen to the border and things?

DB: I, well, I don't think it's so much that, I think it's the fact is that it gives an excuse for these extremists to come back and I think that's, I, I think that's what's going to happen. I would not like to be in certain areas, you know, obviously Manchester's very, where I think you are at the moment, was devastated by the, the bomb that went off and everyone kind of still remembers that. I've, I've, I've cousins that live near Sandbach and they were almost caught up because they were in Manchester at the time, and obviously you've got London as well and different places, I just, it just scares me cos I don't, certainly I don't think anyone wants to go back there, but you've got extremists that I think'd cause problems and that does concern me.

JC: Yeah, so you're not positive about the whole Brexit situation then, no?

DB: No, no, and it's not whether I'm for or against it, it's just the, the consequences it's going to cause. I mean, I can understand bits and pieces, personally I don't think, I don't think, I think everything's been better when everything's been joined together and we've had a completely di-, divisive sort of thing in terms of the referendum in Scotland as well, so there's, it, it's quite strange, you know, you've got people are arguing for a union yet they've broke away from the European Union, you've got people arguing to break away, but they want to be part of a bigger union, it's kind of confusing and to me it's slightly contradictory, some of the sort of stances and that being taken. I just think it'll, eventually it'll work itself out, but I think it, I think there's an awful of people who're kind of bored by it all, I just, the only thing that worries me is the system is an excuse for extremists to come back and cause a problem.

JC: Yeah, well, I suppose we'll see in the coming years. Have you, have you been involved in the politics at all yourself, like, any, any campaigns or any organisations, or do you, you keep out of that sort of thing?

DB: No, and I've always kept out of it, I've never actually been involved, I, my late uncle was a, a union rep, so he was kind of heavily involved in that sort of stuff, my dad was, he was here and there, but he would never campaign against sort of things and my dad's kind of changed his mind about things, the way things have happened and stuff like that recently, for myself obviously, as a public servant I'm not supposed to give any political views on anything like that anyway, but I, but I don't really have any kind of strong views, I just, [indecipherable] in kind of the middle of sort of things, I just don't like any conflict.

JC: Yeah, that's, makes sense. So I have a couple more sort of, like, rounding up questions that I just kind of asked everyone, so I guess, I mean, we've talked about the peace process and stuff, and, and also the fact that you don't get over to Northern Ireland as much as you'd like, but I wonder if, if you have any perceptions just from your own personal experience on how Northern Ireland's changed since you visited when you were a child, if, if you think it's changed at all?

DB: Oh it's certainly changed a lot, certainly when it comes down to it, I mean, for me that I've certainly noticed is, is the shops and stuff like that, Belfast as well, Belfast you would, you would have been frightened to go anywhere near in the eighties and now it's, like, it's a big shopping place, it's the place where everyone wants to go, everyone, everyone, there's a lot of people here, it used to be the case that, oh you went to Dublin, that's where you went for your stag do or hen do, but people go to Belfast now and people prefer going to Belfast cos they feel it's a bit more friendly and, and that's certainly from folk that I've spoke to, I'm slightly biased cos I think it is as well, having been to Dublin, but, yeah, I think it has, it has totally changed, you can see it in the shops and bits and pieces, and certainly you've got all the sort of, all the sort of cultural stuff they do now, I mean, even having tours through the city, for the guided tours, that would never ever have happened. I guess you, you don't see any army, the only way you see some sort of army thing is if you're driving down to Donaghadee and go past the barracks near Holywood, you don't really see, you don't see anything like that at all because, yeah, it is a, it's a completely different place, like, totally different and I guess, it's not that I don't want to go over, I think it's, to me it's more about money and kind of restrictions with stuff, I'd love to go over and I would the whole thing, but I don't, it comes down to money and what, what you do.

JC: Yeah, sure, well, that makes sense, and I suppose one of the other questions that I like to ask is, is how you would describe your own identity in terms of your nationality, whether you see yourself as Irish or Northern Irish or British or Scottish or any of those or all of those?

DB: I, I would say, I would say Northern Irish.

JC: Right.

DB: I wouldn't say British or Irish. It's kind of, I guess it can be quite confusing that sort of thing, but I see myself as Northern Irish, I don't know, I don't know, I don't see myself, I mean, I've got a British passport and stuff like that, but saying you're British and doing stuff can have connotations, but I, I feel, I feel Northern Irish. There's, there's friends on both sides and stuff like that as well, but do I feel Irish, I don't think so and I know this from even people that I worked in Dublin with as well, they feel being Irish is kind of associated with Dublin and it's a Southern sort of thing, even though they want Ireland to be together, they still, and I know, I know a number of people as well, you know, they, they would say they're Northern Irish rather than that because they get, I guess it's the same as south and north in England and stuff like that as well, you know, it's just a different kind of, where would you say you're from, oh I'm from Liverpool, you wouldn't say, well, not necessarily say I'm British, I think there's a lot more of that now.

JC: Yeah, I suppose the Northern Irish thing's a way of, of distinguishing, like, your, your own sort of experience and your own locality of where you were from.

DB: Yeah.

JC: And what about Scottish at all, cos I mean, you mentioned you kind of support Scotland as a secondary team to Northern Ireland, do you, is there an element of Scottishness in your identity as well?

DB: Yeah, yeah, I mean, obviously my dad's Scottish as well, I've been, I've been brought up here, whole sort of thing as well, but, and obviously my boy's Scottish, my daughter's born in Scotland and Scottish, she likes, she likes all things Scotland, so I'm not going to force anything, or do anything that [indecipherable] sort of thing, so, yeah.

JC: Is she a Scotland fan, then, yeah?

DB: Well, it's through primary school and the school, cos that's basically what they teach you.

JC: Yeah, fair enough.

DB: So, but yeah, for, for me that's, yeah, I would say, I mean, I support Scotland in everything, except when they play Northern Ireland or Ireland in the rugby, but, yeah, it's, it is kind of a weird one, I guess it's kind of, like, I spoke to a friend, a couple of friends, you know, down south, you know, who do they support, oh they support Pakistan, but they also support England, who do they go to, well, one brother supports England and the other brother supports Pakistan, it's a kind of a toss up, they both kind of support both teams, you know.

JC: Yeah.

DB: I kind of, I, I certainly feel Northern Ire-, Northern Irish, but there's certainly, yeah, a large bit of me that's Scottish as well.

JC: Interesting you say that, do, do you know, would you have any idea how your brother would feel about that?

DB: Well, my brother's kind of supports [indecipherable] more Scottish.

JC: Right.

DB: That way, but, but the thing is is that my brother's been thinking of applying for an Irish passport. I mean, I'm, I', eligible for it as well, but with my job and what I do at the moment, it's not something I'd be interested in doing, especially, you know, you've got Scottish independence, I don't think you can have all these other sort of passports and stuff, with that, I, I just think it's a bit crazy cos I mean, obviously, like, my mother's from, I was born in

Northern Ireland, so automatic policy qualifies me, but my nana was from Cork, Limerick and my dad's side, my dad's side of the family, his, my gran, her family was from Sligo, so it's, yeah, I guess it, it just depends, but I mean, certainly I feel Northern Irish and, and Scottish I think, if you were to put that down, and more Northern Irish.

JC: Yeah, **[01:20:00]** it's a complex thing, and it's, it's sort of, I sort of deliberately frame it as a question that doesn't have an easy answer, if you know what I mean, so it's interesting how you can have different layers to your identity. I suppose the final one I had is, you mentioned at the start that you've always felt an affinity with Donaghadee, you've always called it home, where, where would you consider home to be now?

DB: It's a good question, cos my daughter was born basically in Strathaven, but I still have that sort of thing that Donaghadee is my home.

JC: Yeah, I suppose it comes down to what, what we mean by home, doesn't it?

DB: Yeah, yeah.

JC: Cos you've, you've obviously got your new family in, in Scotland and your existing family who are your sort of parental family in Donaghadee as well.

DB: Yeah, yeah, I mean, I know if I went over there and I was over for, for the time [indecipherable], if I was there a month, I would not be speaking like this, I'll tell you that right now, yeah [laughs].

JC: That's interesting, the way you've still kind of got that in the back of your, I don't know, in your subconscious somewhere.

DB: Yeah, yeah, I've been told it's more noticeable if I have a few drinks in me, but I've not been drinking that much [laughs].

JC: Really, yeah, well, that's interesting. Well, yeah, I think I've pretty much got to the end of my list of questions there. Is, is there anything else that you wanted to add, or that we haven't covered that you'd like to talk about?

DB: I don't think so, I think, I think we've covered just, just about it all, I think, as I said, my mum and dad, basically they wanted me to get away from the bitterness, it didn't quite a hundred per cent work out that way, but I think there's less serious problems facing us in the west of Scotland, cos you can't get roped in to doing something illegal, I'll put it that way, rather than, there'd just be kind of verbal sort of stuff you get in the west of Scotland.

JC: Yeah, I suppose that's a core difference between the way things went in Scotland and Northern Ireland is that, al-, although there was that bigotry that you were talking about, there wasn't the sort of accompanying violence, at least to nowhere near the same extent.

DB: Yeah.

JC: Well, listen, that's great, I'll, I'll end the recording there now.

INTERVIEW ENDS