INTERVIEW L24: AMANDA ROBINSON

Interviewer: Dr Fearghus Roulston
Interviewee: Amanda Robinson
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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.

FR: Okay, right, that should be us rolling now, so–

AR: Great.

FR: The first thing, if you could Amanda, is just say your full name and today's date.

AR: Oh now you're asking me the date [laughs], okay, Amanda Robinson and the date is Wednesday the seventeenth of February, 2021.

FR: Thank you very much, and then just, I know that you're going to send me the consent form and that, but if you could just say for the benefit of the tape that you know that this is being recorded and that you're okay with that.

AR: Yeah, I understand that this is being recorded and I consent to that.

FR: Thank you very much Amanda, that's great. Okay, so just to, just to start things off, like I said, it's kind of a life history structure, so to start with if you could just tell me where and when you were born?

AR: I was born on the eighth of April 1974. I was born in the Erne Hospital in Enniskillen, which is since demolished [laughs], and we lived in Fivemiletown, County Tyrone, up until 1984 when we moved to Enniskillen.

FR: Okay, so, so initially not, is that close to Enniskillen, Fivemiletown?

AR: Yeah, it's about fifteen, twenty miles.

FR: Right, okay, but a wee bit more rural?

AR: Yes, I'm a bit of a country bumpkin.

FR: [laughs] And do you have any memories of that earlier period then, before you moved to Enniskillen?

AR: Oh gosh yeah, we lived in Fivemiletown, Fivemiletown I suppose was considered a little bit of a loyalist village. I have memories of keeping watch while my best friend's older brothers would paint the kerbstones red, white and blue. We lived next to a police station and were, also you had the Valley hotel in Fivemiletown, which got blown up a few times, I can remember lying in bed and hearing the explosions, but probably the, the memory, I was just chatting to my best friend who's still in Fivemiletown, when Bobby Sands died there was riots and they came, a busload of people came down and in Fivemiletown started rioting, and our parents, we lived next door to each other, and our parents ushered, how many of us were there, five of us, five kids, into the pub, one of the pubs on the main street and, bearing in mind we were, I was like, six I think at that time, seven, six, seven.

FR: It would have been eighty-, '82?

AR: '81.

FR: '81, yeah.

AR: Was it '81, and we were all in there, our parents left us in the pub, we were high on Coca-Cola and Tayto crisps, while they went out and joined in in the riots, and I can remember seeing the petrol bombs through the frosted glass of the pub and I'll never forget, we were petrified and, you know, there was our parents away out doing this and, and usually in Fivemiletown you'd never get, you know, we'd have, I always say down in Fivemiletown and Enniskillen, we always got the bombings, you know, there was never much kneecapping or anything like that, so we always, we had plenty bombings to, to hear and to sometimes witness, but yeah, so that was probably my standout moment [laughs] in Fivemiletown. So I suppose we grew up in Fivemiletown, in primary school we went to the, there was a Protestant primary school and we went to it, and then there was a Catholic one and there was always that kind of divide, you never really mixed.

FR: Sure.

AR: Yeah, so then, I'm sure there's more to talk about and I can't remember. There'd be lots of fights between, you know, especially my best friend's older brothers and, you know, the local Catholics and everything, and there was, as there always are, there's, I don't know how many bands they had, they had a flute band, accordion band, bagpipes, you know, marching season was a very popular thing in, growing up to, you always went to the band parades and, yeah, we used to dream of being a flag girl, that never happened.

FR: Sure [laughs], I–

AR: Like you do [laughs].

FR: You stand at the front with the flag, yeah.

AR: Yeah [laughs], I mean, that's high aspirations, we near, we near, me and my best friend, we nearly did it, but we just weren't pretty enough, you see growing up with ginger hair has some setbacks I'm afraid, so–

FR: [laughs] That's really interes-, it's really interesting. I was going to ask, so your, your, you described it as a kind of a loyalist area–

AR: Yeah.

FR: And would your parents have been I presume Protestant?

AR: Yes.

FR: But also political or, or would you have sense of them as–?

AR: Well, they were, they were Protestant, they never, you know, they weren't like, in anything. I mean, my dad was in, oh Christ, I can't even think of it, what do you call them, the lodges.

FR: Aye, the Orange, the Orange Order, the Black.

AR: Yeah, he was the Black, the Black Order, so he was in that, but, you know, none of them were in anything, you know, like, and none of my family or friends were in the forces either, the police or army or anything like that.

FR: But they would have been sort of, I don't know, DUP, kind of?

AR: Oh aye, yeah, yeah, that kind of, and I remember the first day I had to vote, that was a big thing, oh yes, you must vote, you know, DUP or, you know, so it was all ingrained in you, like it was everybody I suppose from Northern Ireland, yeah, but it was just always thought that, you know, Catholics were X, Y, Z and, yeah, so, early on.

FR: It's interesting that you had that kind of explicit sense of difference like, fights and things, cos I suppose where I grew up it was quite segregated, but it was segregated in the sense that you almost never saw, I'm from a Protestant background and you almost never saw Catholics really, rather than it being a kind of fights or anything like that, it was just that [laughs] you didn't see any Catholics, which I guess is a different kind of thing really.

AR: I know, I suppose in, in Fivemiletown, in Enniskillen you had, you know, the, the Catholics and the Protestants didn't live too far away from each other and the odd one would accidentally appear in a council estate and cause all kinds of havoc and gossip and scandal [laughs], but in Enniskillen I suppose we lived in Chanterhill, which was considered a Protestant area, and it was right next to Cavanaleck and oh the, the hoo-ha that went on there, yeah, it was just always, Cavanaleck's the Catholic part and, you know, you just always knew what areas you shouldn't go walking around [laughs], and even, I remember in the eighties, my granny and grandad, they lived like, literally in the middle of nowhere, but I remember, oh this is, this is probably not even relevant, but it's quite funny.

FR: No, please go, go.

AR: You know, you'd go out, go to granny and granda's at the weekend and you'd head out for your Sunday drive and I remember my great-granny sitting in the front seat, my granda driving, me and my sister and my granny in the backseat and granda was not a very fast driver, he'd, he'd, he'd be, he'd be on the M1 doing like, thirty miles an hour, and then one time he took a wrong turn, I think it was in Portadown and all of a sudden we drove into this area that was all green, white and orange and, and, and my granny was having a heart attack in the back, she goes Jesus, Jimmy, what are you doing, we're going to get killed, and because it was never, you know, we never had all the murals and things to that extent down where we were, so oh my God, you never wanted grandad to accelerate so much in your life, we honestly thought we'd get, you know, dragged out of the car and beaten [laughs], the whole, the whole hysteria from my great-granny and my granny, so, you know, that was, I remember that quite clearly, me and my sister just going Christ, just accelerate because we might all die [laughs], so.

FR: There you go, so quite a big kind of extended family then in Enniskillen as well, you said your great-grandparents as well as your grandparents?

AR: So in Fivemiletown there was my mum and dad and my sister Vanessa, who's two years younger than me, and in Fivemiletown as well there was my dad's mum and dad and his grandmother, my par-, my mother's side, they lived in Newtownbutler, which is quite close to the border, and they'd always have the odd mortar or whatever found in a field up **[00:10:00]** around there.

FR: Yeah, yeah.

AR: So, and I remember, I suppose in, it was probably 1984, '85, my uncle, my mum's brother was, was going out with this lovely woman who, oh lo and behold, she was Catholic, and I remember my mum having a proper fight with my uncle and telling her, telling him to split up with her and, and everything and they did, you know, there was that, always that undercurrent that you shouldn't, you shouldn't be with somebody from the other side.

FR: Yes, and would, would your family have been sort of churchgoing Protestant or just kind of, you know, Protestant without, without church?

AR: Church of Ireland.

FR: Church of Ireland, yeah.

AR: Which everybody said was one stone away from being Catholic apparently, I didn't [laughs], I didn't, I did, I didn't, I didn't really know that, all I know is that I was forced to go to church until I got confirmed and my mum, I mean, we didn't have a very happy childhood, there was a lot of domestic violence and stuff and abuse, but they'd always send us off to these like, oh God, Bible evenings, I mean, we went to the Presbyterian church, we

went to the independent Methodist, I went away on some trip to Carnlough, came back in tears with a book about what's-his-name, Wesley, the Methodist bloke.

FR: Aye, John, John, John Wesley, is it?

AR: Yeah, came back with all these books being told by these people that because my mum and dad swore we were all going to hell. I just, honestly, I, I, I think when I emailed you, I'm practically an atheist now, I just, I could never get over it, and even at church in, you know, there was always, it seemed the most unchristian thing, you know, even the collections and the, you'd get that book every year where it would have your name and address and how much you paid that year [laughs], it ju-, it just always seemed like the most unchristian thing to do [laughs] and, you know, all the wealthy people would get the seats up at the front.

FR: Aye, aye.

AR: Yeah, so I kind of felt church was a bit of a chore and couldn't really understand it, and I remember in high school going to the chapel, the, cos in Enniskillen you've got the big Church of Ireland church right opposite the chapel, and I remember we went on a school trip and I remember walking in going oh this is much prettier than ours, oh I wonder if we, me and my friend who was Chinese, Mimi, we were like, I wonder if we could become Catholics cos that priest's very nice and it's very pretty in here, so that's about as in-depth my religion went really [laughs].

FR: [laughs] It's kind of interesting that, you know, you got sent to all of the Bible camps and Sunday schools and things like that, but it didn't really make an impr-, or too much of an impression, apart from maybe a negative impression.

AR: Oh my God, it scarred me for life, I'm telling you, no, it didn't, I didn't, no, and I do think my mum and dad just did it to get rid of us.

FR: It's like a sort of a childminding thing, isn't it, for a lot of people.

AR: Yes, it was and you had to be sure to bring your little knitted hat to the independent Methodist or you weren't allowed in, or, you know [laughs], it was just, it's just, yeah, I wouldn't put my kids through it and I still haven't, so that was church.

FR: No, I remember the Sunday school from Ballymena growing up.

AR: Yeah [laughs].

FR: [laughs] So I was going to ask about, about primary school, you're still in Fivemiletown I suppose when you start primary school?

AR: Yeah, started primary school and went to nursery there and went to primary school, and primary school was, was grand, I don't really remember anything drastic, I mean, we were Protestant, there would be the odd like, quiz or something between us and the Catholic school at the far end of Fivemiletown, it was very, you know, the usual competitive stuff,

but, or you'd play some sports with them, but that was probably more in secondary school in Enniskillen, but I left Fivemiletown primary after, I'll have to get this right now cos it's different over here, P6, so I did, I did P7 in Enniskillen in the Model School.

FR: Was that strange to move, that's maybe a difficult age to switch for your last year of primary school or–?

AR: Oh God, it was awful because in Fivemiletown we weren't doing our eleven-plus.

FR: Right.

AR: And then I go to the Model in P7 and everybody's studying for their eleven-plus and the pressure's on to get into the Collegiate Grammar School or Portora and I think I spent most of P7 in the sickbay. I hated it, because I'd left all my friends behind in–

FR: It's really hard at that, at that age to come into a new school, I think that's really hard, yeah.

AR: Yeah, so yeah, P7 was a bit of a blur, and we'd had to move because of my dad's job, so, and then I remember not long after we moved we were driving through Enniskillen and the whole car shook, we were going past the Lakeland Forum and two, I think they were off-duty soldiers who were fishing, two fishermen blew, blown up from a device in the car. I remember that cos we were right next, we were on the road parallel to the Forum, and I remember that quite clearly, just thinking Christ, well, not Christ at that age, I probably said something less blasphemey [laughs] like oh no.

FR: Yeah, but I understand, I mean, to be at that proximity as well, to be so close.

AR: But, you know, that's, that's the thing because thank God I've never been in it and, you know, the Poppy Day bombing–

FR: Yes, yeah.

AR: I'll never forget that because me and my best friend Shelley were supposed to be at the cenotaph and, and my dad was running late, so as I was heading out to the car to get in with dad the bomb went off, so we could hear it and, yeah, that was like a near miss.

FR: That's 1987, right, the–

AR: Yeah, yeah.

FR: So you would have been still quite young, but, but obviously aware, yeah.

AR: Yeah, and you see some of the photos on it like, our headmaster, he was, he wasn't killed, he was really badly injured and was in like, a semi-vegetative state for years after it, Mr Hill, and then one of our primary schoolteacher's sisters, Marie Wilson, she died in it, our neighbours downhill a bit, they, a couple, they died, you knew people, and even one of the

photos had two girls I went to school with, Julie and Shirley Bridge, you can see them, one of them's got red hair, it's like, one of those iconic pictures of the bombing.

FR: Yeah, I think I know that picture actually, yeah.

AR: Yeah, so we would have all, could have all been there, but fate had a different path for me.

FR: It must have been, I, I, I can't really imagine the effect on the town as a whole, something like that.

AR: Oh it was awful, it was like a ghost town, it just, you could al-, when you heard the bomb and then the next thing you heard all the sirens, when the bomb first went off just everything just went silent, even, and we're like, a mile from the town centre, you could just, and we're up on a hill so, it was just the most bizarre thing. When we heard it, you know, dad said no, don't get into the car, don't, let's wait and see, see what's happened, but yeah, I remember phoning my friend Shelley and I think we were just relieved. I don't think I've ever been on time since [laughs], for anything.

FR: It's the best policy [laughs].

AR: [laughs] It is, yeah. Oh Amanda, why are you always late, I go well, if I had have been on time back in 1987 I would probably be dead now, it's, you know, people just, oh yeah, whatever Amanda. But that, that year, that year as well, in January, I was ironing at that age, God, I don't iron as much now.

FR: I was going to say, you were young to be ironing at that age, yeah.

AR: Yeah, I was thirteen, was I, yeah, I had the iron in my bedroom and I was ironing, heard another bomb and that was outside Hanna's toy shop on the high street in Enniskillen and me and my best friend Caroline from **[00:20:00]** Fivemiletown used to hang around with this bloke Roy Crawford, and it was his dad who was a RUC man had been blown up outside Hanna's, so there was like, all–

FR: Outside a toy, outside a toy shop?

AR: Yeah, the bomb was in the bin outside. I think there was him and I think another officer was across, I'm not too sure, but I know he died, so you can, with all these bombs you can remember where you were quite vividly, it's quite strange, but you do, yeah, and my dad, he works, he worked for, you know Mother's Pride bakery?

FR: I do.

AR: Yeah, he used to deliver bread all over the place around Enniskillen and stuff, and he used to deliver bread to the police barracks, so we got a call from the IRA a couple of times to tell us to watch out because he was delivering bread to the police station, so every morning you'd lie in bed and you'd hear dad start the car and you'd just wait for an

explosion every morning, and then one time they rang when mum and I were in the house and just sat there the whole night, and I wouldn't sit near the front window for fear they'd throw a petrol bomb through it or something, but yeah, I mean, from delivering bread to a police station, we got lots of calls about that.

FR: Yeah, it was a kind of a policy, right, to target businesses that served the security forces, so like hairdressers, people delivering bread, people like that would all be targeted or at least threatened with being targeted.

AR: Yeah.

FR: It must have been quite frightening I suppose.

AR: Yeah, particularly if he was driving you to school one morning [laughs], and my dad's not a small man, so it took quite an effort for him to get down and look underneath the car, so he had [laughs], he had to get down and just double-check, not that you even knew what you were looking for, but yeah, it's, yeah, it was always there in the back of your head, so yeah, that was, that was it, so I can't even think where I'm going now, where am I going now–

FR: Well, I suppose to go back to the chronology for a moment, you finished, you did your one year of primary school, now you've moved to Enniskillen, which you said you didn't really enjoy, and then did you do the transfer test at the end of that year?

AR: Oh yeah, yeah, I failed, surprise, surprise.

FR: I think it's the, I think it's one of the, it's such a ter-, it's such a terrible institution, it's something, I feel very strongly about it, it's such a terrible thing to make–

AR: Oh it's awful.

FR: An eleven-year-old or a ten-year-old child do and feel like they've failed, I mean, how can you fail at that age, it's ridiculous, but–

AR: Oh I know, and it was, oh it was just, I knew I would anyway, but I went to Enniskillen High School, and again it was Protestant, so in, in Enniskillen you had, the Protestant schools were the high school, the Collegiate Girls Grammar and Portora, who was boys' grammar, but I think it's now, it's now mixed male and female, and then you had, Catholic-wise you had St Fanchea's, St Joseph's and St Michael's, I think, so [extended pause], hello?

FR: Hello, sorry, I lost your, I lost your sound there for a second, can you hear me?

AR: Oh I can you hear you, yeah.

FR: Sorry, you were–

AR: I couldn't hear you.

FR: Oh that's strange, I don't know what happened there, sorry, you were saying the schools–

AR: Yeah, there was three, I think it's three Catholic and three Protestant, so I went to the high school and I suppose, I mean, I think the most difficult part of high school was being bullied for being ginger [laughs], if truth be told. I don't really remember, you know, I remember you'd hear about the odd fights between the boys from St Joe's and St Michael's and the high school guys and, and there'd be the usual competitiveness in netball, football, all between all of the schools, but you started to get a taste of kind of integrating a bit more, and I think it was 1989 I went on a school trip to France and it was, it was integrated.

FR: Right, so Protestants and Catholics.

AR: Yeah, I think they were from St Michael's, and there was a group of us from the high school and I think that was the first time I realised, you know, that Catholics are quite normal [laughs]. Indeed I think I, I went out with my first Catholic boy in 1989.

FR: Oh.

AR: Uh huh, controversial, controversial, but it was just a holiday romance, he split up with me in Paris.

FR: Oh no.

AR: Yeah.

FR: That's [laughs] a sad place for it to happen.

AR: Isn't it just Fearghus, I mean, how to break a girl's heart, up the Eiffel Tower and all, so we kind of did some more integrated things in high school and then I suppose I did my A-levels back in Fivemiletown High School, so that's, what, ninety-, it must have been ninety-, 1991.

FR: 1991, yeah.

AR: Or '90, yeah, and I used to go and stay at my best friend's house if I was skiving, and then, and then in 1992, Caroline's house was right opposite the police barracks in Fivemiletown that we all grew up around, and there was a massive car bomb outside it and I remember I was revising, like the good girl I was, for my A-levels and heard that a bomb had gone off and I must have spent hours trying to ring her and ring her because their house was literally a stone's throw from the station, but thank God nobody was in, nobody died, and it was quite, it was quite a big bomb too and the gable of their house, I'll never forget, there was a massive crack down it and all the shrapnel, and Caroline, Caroline's mum, my auntie Edna [laughs], she, she had this auld yellow teapot, right, a tin one like, a tin one and I'll never forget when we went to look round the house this teapot had landed from the back in the kitchen to the front door, and Caroline still has that teapot [laughs], it's like, we just, we

just used to always go on about this yellow teapot and, yeah, it was, it was our favourite thing [laughs], and it had survived the IRA, but, you know, Caroline was in bed and she was traumatised by that and they had to go and live in a caravan down, for a year or two.

FR: So it sounds like it did quite a lot of damage to the house, but that, but no one–

AR: Oh it did.

FR: But no one was, was harmed.

AR: No, thank goodness and it was–

FR: Or well, physically harmed I suppose I should say.

AR: It was in the middle of the night, so there was nobody out and about, but, so I don't know how nobody was killed. I'm sure this is quite dull because I'm sure you'll have more people's more gory stuff, but–

FR: No, not at all, not at all dull [laughs], not at all dull and it's, I mean, I, I suppose I've, I've talked to quite a lot of people now about just about living in Northern Ireland in the seventies and the eighties, and I suppose I always ask questions like were you frightened, but I don't know, is it kind of a stupid question because people always say well, it was just–

AR: Life.

FR: You know, there was, exactly, it was just, you couldn't really think yourself outside of it because it was the only place you'd lived, it was the only experience you'd had, so–

AR: That's very true actually.

FR: Yeah, I find it quite hard, I mean, obviously I'm from Northern Ireland, I grew up really in the, I was born in '88, but yeah, I find it quite hard to imagine really.

AR: I know, it's, because I often would tell people about it over here and they're like, oh, oh my goodness, it sounds awful and I was like, well, it, you know, it was, it was what it was [laughs] and thank goodness I can live to tell the tale.

FR: Absolutely.

AR: But I remember my uncle on my dad's side, he married a Catholic, and that was probably in the, when would he have married her, it must have been the early eighties.

FR: Okay, so still really the kind of the height of the Troubles. **[00:30:00]**

AR: Yeah, and he was threatened, she was threatened, but the wedding went ahead, but there was always that stigma and, you know, my mum and dad hated Maura, my gran and everybody hated her, you know, there was all of, all that hate, hate and just nastiness, and I

loved my auntie Maura [laughs], I loved her so much, but they used to give her such a hard time and my uncle, you know, all the names, oh you went and married that dirty auld Taig and, you know, you know, the classics, but it's, it's funny too cos even, I came over here in 1996 and I was going out with a fella from Cork and in ninety-, probably '97, I brought him home to see, to meet, well, we were, we were going to meet my best friend Caroline, and she's still going out with this bloke Derek, who's oh, you know, one of those staunch Glasgow Rangers supporters, so he heard I was coming over with this Cork boy and he put on his best Celtic Rangers football jersey and refu-, when we arrived he just walked out and said I'm not staying here for this and stormed out [laughs].

FR: That's wild [laughs], that's wild, that's wild.

AR: I know, I was like, oh okay then [laughs], he, you know, you just think God, it's 1997, you need to come and live in London son, because I'll tell you if you're worried about Protestants and Catholics come to London and it'll blow your mind [laughs].

FR: [laughs] Absolutely.

AR: Because, you know, it's like, even if they see somebody of colour in, back home it freaks them out, so I know when Caroline comes over here she's proper freaked out, it's, it's really quite funny.

FR: Well, the difference between Fivemiletown or whatever and London I guess is, it's a big difference.

AR: Oh it is, it's very big, yeah, so, oh I've lost my train of thought again Fearghus.

FR: Oh it's, it's quite alright, it's kind of the pleasure of doing the interviews is the digressions [laughs] more, more than anything else, so no, don't worry about that at all.

AR: And the one good thing, us Northern Irish people like to talk [laughs].

FR: [laughs] It makes the interviewing a wee bit easier now [laughs]. I was going to ask I suppose thinking about, I suppose I'm interested in like, did, would yous have talked about the Troubles as a family, talked about it among your friends? I suppose I'm thinking all of the bombings that you've talked about here are all IRA or Provisional IRA bombings, aren't they, so would that have been something that yous discussed at all?

AR: I mean, it was always the IRA were the bad guys, you know, and nobody really spoke about anything, any of the loyalist paramilitaries did, but I suppose though there wasn't very much of it down round our neck of the woods, I think it was more up around Belfast and Derry and stuff, I didn't, it didn't really, I mean, I remember one time somebody gave me a black scarf with like, the UDA on it when I was, when I was probably about ten, but I had, I mean, this is the thing that drives my partner mad, he, he knows Irish history inside and out and he, he just thinks it's farcical that I'm not (a) don't know anything about it and (b) I'm not even remotely interested, and I don't, I don't know why that is, I just never really wanted to understand it, I just couldn't get over the plain and simple fact that we're all

human people, human beings, and I know it's a very idealistic, simple way of thinking, but that we should all be able to get on together [laughs].

FR: No, absolutely, I mean, I, the Irish history thing is interesting because I think certainly when I left Northern Ireland I had no desire to learn about it or read about or study about it, I mean, obviously I'm doing this now, but when I was younger I, I, I did history as my degree, but I didn't do any Irish history cos I was just sick of it [laughs] I suppose because you can't avoid it growing up there, right.

AR: Yeah.

FR: I can understand that desire not to want to learn about it really.

AR: Yeah, it's very true, I, I mean, going to, I started nursing college up in Altnagelvin and it was nine-, October 1993, oh my goodness, those three years, it was, I was constant, you know now you're afraid to say anything in case it offends anybody all the time, but I think it all mostly started back then, because I'd go up to Derry slash Londonderry and, you know, when I'd come down home I had to be really mindful that I didn't say Derry in front of my Protestant friends cos they were really off-, and it's something so simple, it's so trivial, but it's easier to say Derry than Londonderry.

FR: It's shorter [laughs].

AR: Exactly and, you know, time is precious, and I just, oh I used to hate it, they'd judge me, they'd be like, oh look at you, talking about Derry, it's like you're, you're converting to be a Taig, and I suppose in my nurse training, initially my friends were mostly Protestant, but by the end of my training ninety-nine per cent of my friends were Catholic.

FR: That's interesting.

AR: Yeah, and I think through nursing, when you're looking after people, everybody's the same, everybody's, you know, regardless of what faith they are, what colour they are, everybody's the same and, and I, to be quite honest, I had better craic with my Catholic friends. I used to go off for weekends to Buncrana, Castlebar, where else did we go, Galway and, you know, even, you know the nightclubs down south, they used to play the Irish national anthem at the end, and just, just to save me being picked on I would stand for that, you know [laughs], I just, I just thought really I don't, I don't care, I'm just doing the easiest thing to get through this night without somebody, but, I mean, you'd always get, all throughout, you'd get what's your name, where did you come from, that whole thing, and they were almost taking out a measuring tape to measure the distance between your eyes, you know.

FR: [laughs] What school did you go to, all that kind of thing.

AR: Ah yeah, they'd suss you out, even over here, to this day, you meet somebody Irish and they're sussing you out straight away, oh are you are Catholic, everybody thinks I'm Catholic

and that I love a priest, it's, it's really quite, quite funny, but throughout my training I, I'd say I was really integrated and I was away, well, I di–

FR: It's interesting because you, you mentioned also at high school a feeling of slightly more kind of integration.

AR: Yeah, starting, definitely halfway through high school, so that was 1989, then things were definitely becoming more integrated and I think the integrated school in Enniskillen opened probably around that time or maybe the early nineties, but things, and then there was talk starting about the Good Friday Agreement and all that through there, I can't remember the date of that, but I remember listening about it on the radio in the car to school.

FR: And what about, I was just going to ask before we get on to sort of nursing college, kind of like, the kind of social world of, of, of growing up in Enniskillen in that period. Would you have been to pubs and things or–?

AR: Yeah, yeah, you had the pubs you would go to, the Protestant pubs, and you'd never, you'd never go to the Catholic ones, that was more high school, and then when I was doing my training we went to all, Protestant, Catholic, whatever, but during my late teens you always went to certain places, you would never darken the doorstep of the Bush bar in Enniskillen.

FR: [laughs] Yeah, I know what you mean, sure, there's some pubs are coded as Catholic pubs and you don't go in, yeah.

AR: Oh yes, no, never go there, you'll, you'll be murdered, but going to, cos I actually moved into the nurses' accommodation in Enniskillen at the Erne Hospital because that's where I did most of my placements, so we were out on the town quite a bit, no, obviously we were studying, but yeah, but definitely, there was definitely a shift, just being freer and being away from Enniskillen and meeting different people and a lot of my friends were, were not political, you know, were not, we don't have really strong views, you know, we're, I've, **[00:40:00]** I've kind of been lucky, I've got some really, really good friends who, who don't see the Protestant-Catholic thing.

FR: Yeah, well, I mean, I think, you know, there are many, many, many people in Northern Ireland who, who feel like that I guess, but they don't always get, get a say [laughs] basically.

AR: No, because we all hate each other, God forbid, you know, the, it's quite, skipping a bit forward, probably about ten years ago, my friend over here, Helena, she's from Offaly, Catholic, we were in a pub in Paddington one night and we were chatting and of course we, I seem to have a magnet for weird drunk people, and this boy comes over and he goes you two sound different, but Irish, and then he goes where are you from and what religion are you, and then we said oh she was brought up Catholic, I was brought Protestant, I always say that, I always say I was brought up–

FR: Brought up rather than I am, yeah.

AR: Yeah, and he goes well, you two shouldn't be talking, you know, why don't yous hate each other, and this is only like, ten years ago, maybe not even, not even ten years ago, but some people just still think we can't be in the same room together.

FR: Yeah, no, absolutely, you've seen it around the kind of Brexit thing, there's still that view of Northern Ireland as being implacably divided along religious lines–

AR: I know.

FR: Which has kind of never been true really, but certainly isn't true now.

AR: No, it is not and, yeah, my younger sister, she moved to Dublin.

FR: Okay, yeah, she's two years younger.

AR: Oh no, Melissa was, is tw-, is, she arrived when we were in Enniskillen.

FR: Oh right, okay.

AR: She, so there's twelve years between me and Melissa, and Vanessa's two years younger than me.

FR: Okay, I was thinking Vanessa, okay.

AR: Yeah, no, I hadn't mentioned Melissa. God, she'd be mad if I'd forgotten about her.

FR: [laughs] So she moved to Dublin.

AR: She moved to Dublin probably about five or six years ago, but she, she loves nothing more than going up to the North and so do many other people to do their shopping [laughs], yeah, there's a lot of good cross-border, it's so funny, they used to call them Mexicans, do you ever, do you know some of the names, have you heard of that because–

FR: I have heard that, yeah.

AR: They used to call the people coming up over the border the Mexicans from the South and, oh the Free Staters.

FR: The Free Staters, yeah.

AR: Yeah, I mean, some of the things, yeah, you could–

FR: I guess the same as calling it bandit country, right, that kind of thing.

AR: Oh aye, bandit country, that's more Warrenpoint, isn't it, and round there.

FR: Yeah, kind of Armagh way. So would you, would you have gone, would you have crossed the, you mentioned going over to Ireland when you were a student, but would you have done it as a younger person, would yous ever have gone on holiday in Ireland or–?

AR: Oh we only, we only went to Rossnowlagh and Bundoran once or twice, that was the height of it, never went across the border, no. I mean, my mum from Newtownbutler, I mean, that's pretty close to the, to the edge, but we never, we never went, no, we didn't actually, do you know I never actually thought of that before, we never did.

FR: People think it's strange cos you're so close really, but then people, people didn't.

AR: Yeah, they didn't. I only started when, yeah, you're right, when I was in my nurse training, hmm, I've never thought of that.

FR: That's interesting.

AR: Isn't it.

FR: And then so, so just quickly you mentioned I think you did you're A-levels back in, was that–?

AR: Fivemiletown.

FR: Back in Fivemiletown, yeah, was that any particular reason or–?

AR: Because my best friend Caroline had promised to go back and resit her GCSEs and then we could have a jolly together, but she didn't, so [laughs] I had, I had to get up at six o'clock every morning and get a stupid bus all the way to Fivemiletown to do my A-levels for two years, needless to say I didn't do very well in them either [laughs], it's a wonder I got through and got a job [laughs], yeah, so I went back there just, and I had some friends from primary school that were there as well, so, and, yeah, I loved my auntie Edna and going down to her house and the yellow teapot and stuff, so, and the only, you could've done your A-levels in Enniskillen, but you'd have had to go to the Collegiate.

FR: Which is the grammar, the kind of the grammar.

AR: Yeah, and no, I wasn't going to do that, with all the posh rich girls.

FR: I was going to say, is there a kind of a class thing or a kind of a, a posh thing?

AR: Yeah, yeah, they were posh, I'm not [laughs], you know.

FR: It's the uniforms and stuff, there is, there's really that sense of like, difference.

AR: Yeah, oh the blazers and all that jazz and, yeah, I know, I think everybody has blazers nowadays though.

FR: That's, that's maybe true, yeah.

AR: Yeah, so, go on.

FR: So no, I was just going to say, so okay, so you didn't want to go to the sort of grammar school to do your A-levels, so you went on to Fivemiletown.

AR: Yeah, yeah.

FR: And then on into nursing training.

AR: Well, during my A-levels one summer I got a job in a nursing home in Enniskillen and I started off cleaning, and then the next summer I came back and I was upgraded to work in the kitchen. I'd never made porridge in my life and here I was, here I was making po-, a vat of porridge for all these poor, vulnerable old people [laughs].

FR: I used to have to make the porridge in Antrim Area Hospital and it's one, one of the hardest jobs I've ever had in my life [laughs], cleaning, cleaning the vat of porridge, oh my God.

AR: Oh it's awful, isn't it, that stuff, it's like wallpaper paste.

FR: Oh yeah, seriously, what a horrible job [laughs].

AR: [laughs] I bet you we could still make a fine pot of it though Fearghus [laughs].

FR: Absolutely, absolutely [laughs].

AR: Not that we would want to, and then because I did so badly in my A-levels I decided to then get a job as a healthcare assistant, or a nursing auxiliary in the nursing home, oh hold on, are you there?

FR: I can, I can hear you.

AR: Oh grand. So I got a job as a healthcare assistant and I was working there, again, quite a mix of staff, Protestant and Catholic, I was friends with all of them really, there was never anything nasty, and one of the nurses there said why don't you go on and do you nurse training, and I did, so that was, yeah, I started in October '93, I think I worked in the nursing home for about a year before that, and I'd gone to try and get in in the City hospital in Craigavon, but didn't get in, but then I went to Altnagelvin and I got in there.

FR: And what was that, what was that like, the, the training in Altnagelvin?

AR: Well, I didn't actually manage to work in Altnagelvin, I worked, oh God, what was the, I think I did a placement in one of the mental health places up there, which was awful, but I did most of my placements in Omagh and Enniskillen.

FR: Right, so you kind of ended up back or, or staying really around Enniskillen, Omagh area.

AR: Yeah, and we'd go up to Derry for college, you know, for our study.

FR: How did you get, how would you get to Derry, did you drive?

AR: Oh I had a fabulous car Fearghus, she was, she was called Betsy, she was a mark one blue Fiesta that had a hole in the floor of it on the passenger side and if you went through a puddle too quick you had a water feature, and I used to race over the mountains up to Derry in that [laughs].

FR: It's quite a nice, it's quite a nice drive I think really.

AR: Oh it's lovely, it's lovely, but, yeah, my gra-, my, my auntie Edna, she was, she was stopped by the IRA a few times when she was out in the car with some friends, so she'd always be warning me don't you be driving around them areas at night cos the IRA'll stop you. They were particular fond of, was it the Seven Ladies around Coalisland, they were always doing vehicle checkpoints there.

FR: Aye, roadblocks and–

AR: Aye, yeah, but thankfully I never got stopped, but there was always that fear in you if, it's scary enough when you get stopped by the police, I found, but during my training I was going out with a fella who was in the UDR back then and, yeah, you'd hear all the chat about, you know, certain people they'd actually take pleasure in pulling over and, Catholic people usually, pulling everything out of their car cos they know they're up to X, Y and Z, and **[00:50:00]** that's when I fell in love with helicopters really [laughs]. It sounds really weird, even now when I hear a Chinook like, sometimes you hear the odd Chinook in London and it's like, oh I just love it, I love the sound of a helicopter.

FR: That's interesting.

AR: I know, it's really weird because when I was really young and I remember staying up, it would have been in the late seventies, eighties, I remember wakening up one morning at my other grandparents' house and there'd be these big boot prints along the grass and the helicopters used to land in a field out the back, I remember wakening up and just thinking oh they've been out, the big soldiers have been out and, and then I was just like, fascinated with helicopters and, and soldiers and, yeah, soldiers were like, they would protect you, you know, and I suppose from the Protestant side of things that's what they were there to do, if you know what I mean.

FR: Absolutely.

AR: But I just, yeah, any Lynx, Wessex, you name it, Chinook, I was, oh and even, you know, Mike laughs, my other half, he laughs now because I'll be sitting in, honestly, nobody else would hear it and then I'd go here, listen, listen, there's a Chinook, there's a Chinook, so I even went on a school trip to RAF Aldergrove and I sat in a Chinook, but it never took off,

but I was just like, this is it, this is what I'm going to do, I'm going to fly a Chinook, but then realised I'm practically blind, so I, I couldn't be a Chinook pilot [laughs].

FR: [laughs] That's disappointing.

AR: It is disappointing Fearghus, I can't tell you.

FR: But I do understand what you mean about the kind of romance of, of the army and of soldiers and of stuff like that.

AR: Yeah, I know, a lot of my friends would, yeah, swoon after soldiers and my best friend's bro-, brother he was in, I think it was still called the UDR, and then they'd have some of the Brit soldiers and they'd always come into my auntie Edna's house for a cup of tea while they were out on patrol, so they were always around.

FR: Yeah, there's a few, there's like, two army barracks I think as well, near.

AR: Yeah, you've got St Angelo and, where is the other one, well, yeah, but in St Angelo, when I was going out with Mark from the UDR I'd always be going down into it with him if he was going to pick up stuff or whatever, so it was nothing ever to be scared of, and there'd be the odd helicopter sitting there waiting to take off, which was, yeah, I loved going down there, that's so weird [laughs], but you see, see what I mean though, you know, people think all kinds of things about growing up in Northern Ireland, but actually there was, you know, there was a lot of peace sometimes [laughs], there was, was a lot of, yeah, just people getting on with their everyday lives.

FR: No, sure, and I think that sort of everyday life stuff is actually one of the things that we're really interested in in the project, in talking about. So what, what did you make of Derry then?

AR: So Derry when I went, it was, yeah, I heard lots of stuff about Derry, the Waterside, the Bogside and Bloody Sunday and they don't like Protestants up there and, so it kind of just went in and went out because obviously Altnagelvin's on the Waterside side, so rarely went over to the city or the, you know, the Bogside area, except the odd time when we'd go out and, yeah, it's, I don't, it was scary going, but then once you did and you realised it's not that bad, I think I saw more people snue gliffing or snu-, glue sniffing.

FR: Glue, glue sniffing.

AR: Yeah, glue sniffing around the hospital than anybody else beating up any Protestants, so it, yeah, it was, and I know periodically they'd have bomb scares and stuff like that, but that was just like, part of the, part of the, part of life, wasn't it, there was always bomb scares and like, part of the bridge going over to the city, sometimes we couldn't go over if we were going shopping because there was a bomb scare around the bridge or, so it was all, yeah, it was, I mean, we were there probably, the longest time I was there might have been about three to four months, and then you'd have blocks of like, two weeks or four weeks up there, so, but we were, we were out at Altnagelvin, so–

FR: You're kind of outside of the city really, aren't you?

AR: Outside, and that's, that's when I discovered my love of Benone beach.

FR: Beautiful.

AR: Oh that's, that's my place, that's my happy place, you're just away from all the madness and you're standing on this, you know what the beaches are like up round you either, you know, but yeah, it's just lovely and we used to go up that north-west coast a lot, and then my friend who I trained with, she lived in Buncrana, so we used to get the Lough Swilly buses, God help us, through, through Muff and up into Buncrana.

FR: I know it, I know it very well, I know that route very well, aye.

AR: Oh do you, and them Lough Swilly buses, I mean, back in my day, I'm surprised any of them passed an MOT, you were, you know, and I'd go out there and there was never, I mean, there might've been the odd word or two, but there was never, never any real memorable nastiness towards me, you know, cos I was with Caoilainn and all the Furey family, you know, I was kind of an adopted Catholic, so–

FR: I find it really interesting that like, I don't know, that, that, that you would have been around a kind of sectarian-sounding kind of culture growing up, but it doesn't seem to have had any influence on your, on the way that you talk to people or met people or anything like that.

AR: No, I know, I know, I just, I, well, yeah, I've, yeah, I don't, I just, I'm glad I'm like that really, but I suppose I split up with the guy I was going with in the UDR in 1995 and then, then I went a bit wild and there was lots of Catholic boys in Derry and Enniskillen to entertain [laughs], entertain me and go out and party and stuff and it was just, that's just what we did, and I think being a nurse kind of helps too, you know [laughs], I don't know, people seem to like nurses, and not be that interested, but yeah, so nursing college was, was pretty uneventful, we had the odd, oh there was one girl who was a very staunch Presbyterian, who just hated me, hated me because I had so many Catholic buddies, absolutely, I forgot about her, she was very short with ginger hair [laughs], she was, she was really, oh my God, she was just nasty, so I just ended up avoiding her and, but you'd still get the odd little bit, but most of the time everybody just got on, it was grand, and then the funny thing was when I, I qualified October '96 and that's when, some of my friends who were six months ahead of me had qualified before, they'd came over to Ashford in Middlesex next to Heathrow to work.

FR: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AR: And they said right, Amanda, go and have an interview and come over here, so got the interview, went to Dublin for the interview and vowed I would never go to Dublin again cos me and my friend were walking down O'Connell Street and some mad woman came up and slapped my friend in the face and called, called her a Northern Irish Protestant bastard, and

the best thing, the best thing was, she was actually the Catholic and I was the Protestant, so we thought oh we don't like Dublin very much, never had this up north, and, and then when I came over to London we were all going out to Covent Garden and we were on our way back on the tube and this white English man was sitting behind me, there was four of us, two opposite each other, and I could feel something at the back of my head and, and then he started, he jumped up and he goes, just straight to me, and he goes, he was starting to give out and he's going you're a fucking IRA lesbian bitch, you are, and took a knife out to me.

FR: Jesus.

AR: I know, never had any of this growing up in Ireland, never and, and I was like, oh my God, and I realised he had stuck a big wad of chewing gum in my hair at the back, yeah, and he goes why don't you just fuck off back to Ireland and fuck off, and then my friends, we were all half-cut and, and there was only one person on the tube, this, oh bless him, this little Chinese guy and he goes come and **[01:00:00]** pick on me, I'm Irish and I was like, well, I really don't think that's going to work, but try, and then the tube thankfully stopped and he jumped out of the tube waving the knife at me going you IRA bitch you, you IRA bitch and I was like, oh okay, I've, I've lived all my life in Northern Ireland, never have I been threatened with a weapon [laughs] and (a) I'm not a member of the IRA, I was actually brought up Protestant, (b) I'm not a lesbian, but (c) bitch, possibly, but I was just like, I was just like, ready to turn and go back to Ireland.

FR: That's, that's really, really shocking in the, in the nineties as well, I mean, you wouldn't expect that kind of anti-Irish–

AR: Yeah, I know, and then we'd go, we went to Amsterdam and any time we were out there was always something, I remember going to Amsterdam in probably ninety-, oh, '98 and there was a mixed group of us went. Now I have to say I find people who are from the arsehole hole of Ireland, you know, like, from Waterford and Kerry and they are just clueless when it comes to [laughs] what happens in the North, that's a very wide exa-, but any, this girl Maria was from Waterford or somewhere, we were in the middle of Dam Square in Amsterdam and she starts shouting up the IRA.

FR: Jesus.

AR: And I was like, what the fuck are you doing, excuse my language, you can bleep that out.

FR: No, it's, that's quite alright.

AR: But I nearly lost my shit and I was going, why are you doing that, why are you doing that, what gives you the right, oh up the RA, up the RA, and I said do you even know what it's like to, you know, know of people who've been blown up or to be in the middle of it, you know, do you know what it's like to wake up every morning and wait for a bomb to go off under your father's car, no, she hadn't a clue, but a lot of them are a bit like that, they're very up the RA and they've never witnessed anything which really irritates the crap out of me, they're the people that irritate me the most [laughs], but yeah, this doll and I had a big

commotion and then two, one of my Protestant friends took her side and I was going what is going on here, and then I ended up wandering round Amsterdam by myself trying to find the hostel back home, or to get back, I just couldn't understand because the next night we were out we were in Burger King and, like you do, getting my chips and mayo, and these guys, these guys came up to me and kept going have you a bomb up your jumper, I was like, what, have you a bomb up your jumper, you're, you're, you know, you're Irish, you must have a bomb up your jumper, I was like, no I do not, and I do think, weirdly as it may sound, because I had ginger hair, I'm pale with freckles and an Irish accent, they just all assume I'm some terrorist [laughs], and I had it so many times even going out in London, you know, they'd all be like, oh, you know, are you, you into blowing people up or do you not speak to Protestants, and I'm like, it was just crazy.

FR: And really frustrating to sort of get it both, both ways in a sense, you know.

AR: Yeah, because I couldn't understand it, I never had, I suppose like, I thought come on, it's the mid-nineties, just stop, but I will say coming over here I've realised that there is a strong affinity between West Indian, you know, Jamaicans and, and the Irish, because I remember the first time, oh I was working in a hospice and I loved, I had to cover the day hospice and these, this bunch of, you know, men from Jamaica would come in and play dominoes and they'd sit and talk to me and tell me stories about how back in the day, you know, no blacks, no, no Irish, no blacks, no dogs.

FR: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AR: Used to tell me stories about how Irish people are very similar to them and, you know, but I found you'd get it more from English people, the kind of abuse, probably because I know there was lots of bombings and things that I wasn't, I never witnessed over here. Mike, my other half, he was in London during the Troubles here, and he said it was pretty hairy being Irish, I mean, he learnt how to speak with a proper Cockney accent very quick when he first over to, to London, but there was one in, there was an IRA bomb, the last one I remember over here I think was in Ealing.

FR: In '96, was it, maybe?

AR: Yes, I think it, it was '96, '97 and I was living in Acton, which is literally a stone's throw from Ealing, and I was clean, here I go again, I was cleaning my teeth Fearghus and, and I heard the bang and I was like, that's a bomb, and I said to James, who I was living with at the time, I said that's a bomb, a bomb's gone off, bomb's gone off somewhere, it's amazing how you just know, that's one of my skills, is that you know what a bomb sounds like, and it went off and, yeah, lots of, yeah, I don't remember anything being said, I mean, I think everybody spoke about it, but, you know, I was just as disgusted about it as anybody else that it had happened, and in Ealing where I used to go and do all my shopping, it was an inconvenience and I think that's the thing, a lot of these bombings and bomb scares were just so bloody inconvenient, if they didn't kill somebody, then that was a lot worse, but, but that was probably the last one over in London while I've been here.

FR: I was just going to ask about sort of, sort of the decision to move and stuff, so, so as you described it some friends had got this job in Middlesex, did you say?

AR: Yeah, Ashford, Middlesex, Ashford Hospital, yeah.

FR: And they said to you why don't you, listen, why don't you apply basically?

AR: Yeah, because there was no jobs really in nursing back then back home because lots of people kind of stayed in their job forever. You know what they d-, they do, there's no movement and, you know, and I obviously didn't get on with my parents and stuff and I was like, the first Robinson to, to leave the country.

FR: Wow, that's quite, that's quite a big deal.

AR: Isn't it just, yeah, I know, so, you know, my poor granny, God rest her soul, would be sending over these little boxes of Fivemiletown creamery cheese and Nambarrie teabags for fear of going to the big city, you know, there'd be no food [laughs] and I'd starve to death, but yeah, it was, it was a big thing, but I think it was a combination of work, to get away and to kind of get away from my parents really, so there was nothing like I was threatened and told to leave the country, not that traumatic, but there was just no work for nursing and I didn't really want to work in the hospitals back home.

FR: Yeah, okay, no, that, that, that makes sense, I mean, no, it doesn't have to be that you were threatened, I'm interested, we're, we're just interested in the reasons why, you know, why people–?

AR: Why people left?

FR: Yeah.

AR: Yeah, no, it was definitely because there was a, a lack of jobs and no, you see, back then you could get a, I always think of it as like, a, a D grade post, you'd be a newly qualified nurse and you could be in that post for donkeys' years because nobody ever moved, so you would never progress up or–

FR: Right, I see what you mean, yeah.

AR: It was a bit limited, whereas over here you had a lot more opportunities.

FR: And what were your first, first of all how did you, did you, would you have flown?

AR: Yeah, I flew from Belfast International to Heathrow and somebody from the hospital that had recruited me was supposed to be waiting at Heathrow and they didn't arrive Fearghus.

FR: Oh no, that's terrible, that's terrible.

AR: I'd ne-, I'd never been to London in my life and I landed at Heathrow, which you know yourself when you go from Belfast International [laughs].

FR: It's a big, it's a big airport, it's a scary airport, yeah.

AR: It's a scary airport and I had, I just remember standing there and going oh no, there's nobody here, what do I do, do I go back on the plane back to Ireland, but I rang my friends and they got in a taxi and came and saved me, so yeah, it was, it was quite scary and then the nurses' accommodation, whene-, Concorde used to fly back then and because Heathrow was so close I was in this like, little room which had hardly any daylight, but when Concorde took off or landed the windows nearly came in, you know, and I just remember sitting there thinking God, what am I doing here, this is, this is not as nice as I thought it was going to be.

FR: And I suppose you're, you're not really in London, are you, you're kind of–

AR: Outside.

FR: It's a kind of suburb or even, yeah.

AR: Well, you know, the, I don't know if you know the Piccadilly line in London, it goes from–

FR: Oh it goes all the way, it goes all the way, doesn't it?

AR: Cockfosters to Heathrow, so our, our **[01:10:00]** nearest tube station was the one nearest to Heathrow, Hatton Cross, so it felt like you were travelling to, I think you could have flown to Belfast quicker than getting to the centre of London.

FR: You're probably right [laughs].

AR: It's true, so we were out there in the middle of nowhere, all we had was a massive twenty-four-hour Tesco and a Happy Shopper, so, and a couple of pubs, which was grand, but yeah, there was a mixture of us and there was girls from Australia and everything, you know, a real mix, there was, yeah, and I suppose, I don't, I mean, we went out and I remember I met a bloke, the bloke from Cork, he was Catholic and I started going out with him, and then a lot of my friends were planning to go back to Ireland, but I was still with this bloke from Cork, so they all went back to Ireland and I got a job more in central London, in Charing Cross Hospital in Hammersmith.

FR: Yeah, okay, I know where you are, yeah.

AR: Yeah, so I went there and I moved in and lived in Acton, yeah, with a Catholic boy and that's the one I brought home where my best friend's partner put on his Glasgow Rangers outfit and marched out of the house.

FR: [laughs] I still can't get over that, that story.

AR: Oh it's, yeah, it's true [laughs].

FR: It's interesting then that a lot of the people who'd initially come over with you wanted to go back to Ireland, but you, you wanted to stay.

AR: Yeah, they, I mean, they all now have of course their own houses.

FR: Well, yes, that's the [laughs], that's one of the differences, isn't it, yeah.

AR: Yes, I'm still, we're still renting [laughs], you know, couple of my friends have built these massive houses in the middle of nowhere and, and then they have the audacity to buy a campervan and go camping down the road every weekend just to get out of the house and I'm thinking I would just live in your house all the time, what is wrong with you, you've practically got a football field as a garden and, so I do feel pangs when, you know, I'm living like a battery hen in London and they're free range, but yeah, they all went back, got married, and I was the one that stayed here, I was only going to stay for a year and then, yeah, I just got sucked in, went to Charing Cross and then just started to embed myself into London living.

FR: And did you, did you, did you enjoy London as a change from Enniskillen?

AR: Oh I loved the anonymity, nobody knows anything. Sure, back home my mother knew I was drunk before I knew I was drunk.

FR: Absolutely.

AR: Yeah, she knew what I'd got up to, but over here there is something really nice about nobody knowing and nobody caring, you know, and there's so much to do, and I love gigs, so I was going to gigs all the time, you know, back home you had to go to Belfast, didn't you, to the King's Hall or whatever [laughs], it was an excursion in itself, but yeah, made, you know, made friends then, even in Charing Cross Hospital, it's quite funny, I looked after a man who was good friends with Martin McGuinness, he proceeded to tell me this [laughs].

FR: Wow, wow, okay [laughs].

AR: Well, he was a very grumpy man, so he was, and you'd have the odd one, they'd, all these patients would suss you out, but my name's so screamingly obvious, it's not a Catholic name, you know, but anyway this boy, I don't know, he just had such a chip on his shoulder and I was, I was looking after him one day and he calls me over and he goes you do know I'm very good friends with Martin McGuinness, and I went oh good for you, good for you, and [laughs] I just, you know, and apparently then Martin McGuinness's wife came to visit him and all this and he was like, you know, Martin, Martin's wife came to see me and I said oh that's very good, good for you, I wouldn't even go into it with him.

FR: No, just, just not kind of get, turn it into a conversation.

AR: Yeah, but, you know, they all, a lot of my Irish patients, I've even had to pretend sometimes that I'm Catholic just to, you know, just to get on the right side of them, the

older generations, you know, or I always say, oh Mike, my other half, he's Catholic, he was born in Galway and he came over here when he was a kid, so then they're like, oh okay, that's alright, you're not a big staunch Protestant, that's fine, but yeah, and I also had this man, because I do palliative care more recently, I had this guy who was dying and oh I had a real soft spot for him, he was just, you know, a big, burly Irish guy, and he goes, he goes to me one day, he goes Amanda, I know I'm on my deathbed and all that and he says and I have been a bad, bad man in my life, and he said if I had've known you maybe twenty, thirty years ago I probably would have shot you, I was like [laughs], oh thanks very much.

FR: Jesus.

AR: Apparently he was, he's told me he was in the RA and stuff, but it's, you know, it's funny how you can have different relationships with people when you're nursing them and they're so vulnerable and stuff.

FR: Absolutely, yeah.

AR: It's quite a privilege actually, in a way, but I think even him, he was like, you know, you're such a lovely girl for a Protestant [laughs], I was just like, I know.

FR: How strange to have that conversation in a hospital in London though, what a strange thing.

AR: I know, I know and it's, they pop up periodically, but, you know, and I think, I think it's, it's, do you know with the whole terrorist activity, you know, from the Islamic groups, it's almost, it sounds weird, but it's taken the pressure off the Irish. I think I can relate a lot to people who get abuse now because of the activities of the Islamic extremists, you know, cos they're all painted with the same brush, you know, they're all, you're, you're a terrorist and it's like, yeah, that's exactly how the Irish were treated.

FR: No, I totally, I totally understand what you mean, and that, that thing about the Irish not really being the kind of suspect community anymore because it's switched to Islam and to Muslims is, I think, I think I see what you mean.

AR: Yeah, I mean, last year out in the garden I had somebody, oh a neighbour of ours, who basically called me white privilege and that I don't know anything about discrimination and racism or whatever, and I just, you know, I think there's a lot of all this talk and you're worried about offending people and everything and I was just trying to say well, listen, growing up where I grew up there were differences and you were treated differently, you know, and there was prejudices and, and stuff like that, so there are some similarities, well, I don't know, maybe that's just me being a bit naive, I'm not very into it, but I just think there's similarities and wherever you look there's prejudice, for goodness sake, I got such abuse being ginger and that was bad enough, but, you know what I mean, I just, I can't cope with this, this hypersensitivity to, to things at the minute, I just think why are people so easily offended, why can't people just get on, that's my, that's my whole mantra, just get the hell on with it and life's too short and I think it's because I do the work I do.

FR: Sure, absolutely, yeah.

AR: People don't lie on their deathbeds going oh I wish I had've been meaner to that black person or I wish I had've been meaner to that dirty Catholic, you know, they don't think things like that, they just wish, wish they had their friends and their families around them, it's just, I know it's very simple and–

FR: No, I mean, I, I think doing that kind of work is probably quite simplifying in a good way to how you think about things. I, I can imagine it kind of focuses the mind quite a lot.

AR: Yeah, it does.

FR: I was going to ask about going back to Enniskillen when you were living in London. So you mentioned that story about taking your, your then boyfriend or partner back.

AR: Yeah.

FR: [laughs] But you, would you have travelled back fairly regularly in this period or–?

AR: I used, I, when I first came over to London I probably did, I would try and go maybe every other month.

FR: Right, oh that is quite regular, okay, aye.

AR: Yeah, because we were really close to Heathrow and you could fly with BMI for sixty quid return, that is not the case anymore [laughs], so I did, I used to go back because, and especially then when my friends went back I would make an effort of going back, maybe not as often, I think initially because you're homesick it was more frequent, but it gradually, the, the time between visits got longer.

FR: So were, were you homesick then, that's interesting.

AR: Well, homesick is probably a bit strong, I would say **[01:20:00]** just the difference in the way of living over here I suppose, you were kind of confined, I had no car and I love driving back home, that sounds really weird, but I do.

FR: No, it's, it's, I know what you mean, it's quieter roads and–

AR: And you can go and see people and pop in and see people and, and I think it was a bit of a culture shock coming over and it was my first job qualified and it was really stressful. I think the first, I don't think I'd ever laid a dead body out the whole three years I'd been training in Enniskillen and then within three months I'd laid out twelve in this ward, and I was just, and it was all, you know, I was a new, newly qualified, in charge of people and I had, it was just all really stressful and I think sometimes you just wanted, and I didn't necessarily go home to my parents.

FR: No, sure.

AR: I'd go to my friends and just to see them and chill out and that was therapy enough, because, yeah, that's, that's what I did mostly I think.

FR: Yeah, okay, no, that, that makes sense.

AR: Yeah.

FR: And that thing about the, starting a new job, newly qualified, as stressful makes sense as well.

AR: Yeah, yeah.

FR: And then I was wondering I guess about the kind of Irish community or whatever, as they call it in, in London, and you mentioned your partner being sort of originally from Galway.

AR: Yeah, he, I think he, his family came over here like, in the early seventies, so he was still in single figures agewise when they came over. They came over and they ran a pub in Stoke Newington and Mike got terribly bullied and picked on for having an Irish accent and now if you hear him he's like an extra in *EastEnders*, but he, he used to say he'd, he got picked on so badly and, you know, there was, he was working in the city when, you know, all the IRA bombs and things, so I don't know anything about the Troubles in London like that, but yeah, and I met him, God, how long have we been together, 2003, through work and we've got two kids.

FR: Okay.

AR: Yeah, Niamh, Niamh will be fourteen on Friday and Dara's twelve.

FR: Irish names.

AR: I know [laughs], you can imagine my granny's shock when I, when I first, it was hilarious Fearghus. I rang her up and she said, I said oh she's called Niamh, and she goes how do you spell that, is it N-e-v-e, I said no, gran, it's N-i-a-m-h, and she said what kind of bloody name is that, is that a dirty auld Irish name, oh my God, because Mike's surname's Brennan and Niamh, Niamh Brennan just sounds a gorgeous name.

FR: It's lovely, yeah.

AR: Not Robinson, yeah, and Dara, Dara is, sadly I heard the English translation for Dara was Dudley after I'd named him, but–

FR: Is it? That's strange.

AR: Apparently.

FR: There you go.

AR: I know.

FR: Dudley.

AR: Dudley, I'll only call him that if he annoys me, but my friend Caoilainn who lived in Buncrana, one of her brothers was called Dara and I just always loved that name, but I've since discovered now it's used as a female name in Asia and female name as well, so Dara's not too impressed, but yeah, he's proper Dara Martin Joseph Brennan.

FR: Very Irish, yeah.

AR: Yeah, I know, but they do sound better [laughs].

FR: [laughs] Well, so I was going to say did you sort of, would you have felt part of that kind of Irish community thing in London?

AR: Yeah, we all went to the Irish pubs, we'd go to O'Neill's and, oh God, what's, Waxy O'Connor's and, what do you call it, oh we just would always go to the Irish pubs. There was a place in Northfields, what was it called, and it had a nightclub and it was all Irish people, and I suppose out on a drunken night sometimes you'd get the odd, usually a person from the arsehole of Ireland giving you abuse for being Protestant, but nothing too drastic that you couldn't handle, you just ignored them really, yeah, and I, like I said, a lot of my friends were Catholic even at that point, so I just blended into their culture [laughs].

FR: And I guess there's a lot of Southern Irish people work in nursing maybe as well.

AR: Yeah, I mean, there's very few Northern Irish and then–

FR: That's interesting.

AR: Yeah, because as soon as I hear a Northern Irish accent I'm like, oh where are you from.

FR: I do the same thing, yeah.

AR: I know, and I learnt, oh I got burnt one time, I was in a pub and this barmaid, she was, you know, I said oh where in Northern Ireland are you from and she nearly went through me for a shortcut, I am from Ireland, not Northern Ireland, and she, oh I was just like, okay, I don't really want to start a fight, but she just wouldn't let it go, so we went to another pub [laughs].

FR: It's been an issue with, with this project because we said Northern Ireland in the title, some people say oh well, it's not Northern Ireland, it should just say Ireland, but then also because we've said migrated some people who are more kind of, of a loyalist persuasion say well, it's not migration because you're just moving from one part of the UK to another part of the UK.

AR: Oh.

FR: So we're getting it [laughs], we get it from both, both sides.

AR: God love you, you must be walking on eggshells all the time [laughs].

FR: It's as you said before about like, minding your language I suppose.

AR: Oh it is, you have to be so careful, you don't know who you're going to offend [laughs] or get annoyed, more, it's just, yeah.

FR: But it's interesting that you did, that you were kind of part of that kind of Irish culture in London and you felt kind of comfortable in it I guess.

AR: Yeah, and who, I think my first boyfriend over here, here, he was Irish, so, and do you know what I love the best is like, my old Irish patients I meet at work, they all met in the Galtymore which was like, a big Irish club that they used to go to and, you know, Kilburn, you know, those areas of London that are pure Irish, but not now, you know, it's more diluted now.

FR: But that's like, an older generation of migration I suppose, those people that moved over in the fifties, sixties, yeah.

AR: Oh I'm terrible, everybody at work says I'd end up taking all the older Irish patients home with me because, oh I just, I just love listening to their stories and stuff and, you know, a lot of them would always laugh when I say how long have you been over here, oh I came over in 1956 or, you know, things were very different back then.

FR: Oh it must be, it must be fascinating.

AR: Oh I love it, if I get away with just chatting to them for hours I would [laughs], it's just, it's just really interesting and, you know, you hear the odd one, you know, they're all, yeah, there is the odd couple who, you know, were mixed, but it was frowned upon and everything, but not very many, you, so then they're always quite intrigued by me and my mixed relationship, but it is really hard, you know, when they're talking about religion, they are very passionate about their religion the older generations, and that's like when I said to you earlier sometimes I just say I'm, oh I'm very Catholic, just to [laughs]–

FR: Just to avoid the–

AR: Just to, just to avoid the whole, well, actually no, I'm not, yeah, but my kids, bringing them up here, it is quite weird having them with English accents.

FR: I'm sure, yeah, I'm sure.

AR: When you bring them back to Northern Ireland, people do treat them quite differently.

FR: So you would, that was actually going to be my sort of next question–

AR: Oh sorry.

FR: No, it's good, it's good, so about going back to kind of Northern Ireland now, so you would still go back and you'd go back with your kids and that.

AR: Yeah, not very often, but when we do, you know, even my own family are like, oh listen to the twang on them, and even me, they call me posh now because, oh listen to you, you Londoner.

FR: Everyone says the same thing to me, I don't think my accent has changed at all, but everyone says it has.

AR: I know, I don't either Fearghus, I think they're just jealous we escaped, but the kids and Mike obviously as well, you know, in the early days when I used to bring Mike over we'd go to the pub with some of my friends and some p-, some people would get their feathers ruffled hearing a British accent, but he can hold his own, but yeah, they would **[01:30:00]** definitely try and suss him out and they didn't really like the accent and what it represented, but the kid–

FR: Although it's kind of complicated because he's Ir-, he's both Irish and British, which is in a kind of, say like, a sort of Protestant-type pub in Enniskillen is quite a complicated position to be in.

AR: Yeah, exactly, so we don't try and go into too much detail about it [laughs] if we can avoid, you, if we can avoid it, we just skim through all of that Protestant-Catholic thing, but the kids, I mean, I've made it, Mike, you know the whole oh do you bring them up Protestant, do you bring them up Catholic or whatever, and I just said I'm not bringing them up anything, they can decide what they want to be when they're older, because I kind of felt growing up, religion was kind of forced on you.

FR: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

AR: So my two haven't been baptised, much to granny's disappointment, and I haven't signed them up to go to a Catholic school or anything, and lied about anything like, some people are avidly going to church to get their kids into the religious schools, don't do any of that.

FR: I've heard about that, yeah.

AR: Oh they do, it's brazen, brazen like, a couple of my friends who've never set foot in church and then all of a sudden they have all the paperwork signed by some random priest and they're–

FR: You've got to spend six months or whatever going to mass and then you can get your kids into the fancy school, yeah.

AR: Yeah, well, Mike had these dreams of the kids doing that and I said well, you can then start taking them to mass because I won't and he, that soon knocked the notion out of him, so yeah, my kids are probably the most broad-minded beings on earth because at school they've been to Sikh temples, they've, they've been to, oh God, what, synagogues and–

FR: Synagogues, yeah.

AR: And a whole, they've done loads of stuff, they grew up in very mixed, you know, mixed, diversity, oh I can't even speak now.

FR: Multicultural.

AR: Multicultural Fearghus, that's it, they're, you know, their school's very multicultural and indeed Niamh is like a, a warrior girl for everything LBGQT whatever and, yeah, so I'm quite proud of that.

FR: Absolutely, and it must be so interesting compared to I suppose growing up in Fivemiletown, Enniskillen, yeah.

AR: Yeah, where if you, if you saw a person of a different colour, never mind religion, you were like, what is this.

FR: Although you mentioned having, your friend was of Chinese origin, didn't you?

AR: Oh yeah, Mimi, she, her family ran the Silverlock Chinese restaurant in Enniskillen.

FR: Ah yeah.

AR: Oh I, yeah, I loved Mimi, she's over in England now, she became a nurse as well.

FR: Oh really?

AR: But not, we, we kind of lost contact for donkeys' years, but she went into nursing a bit later.

FR: There you go.

AR: Yeah, indeed my friend who sent me the link to this, I think she sent it to Mimi as well, so you never know [laughs].

FR: Ah there you go, that would be good, that would be good [laughs].

AR: Yeah.

FR: So I think, I mean, that, we've kind of covered a lot of what I wanted to cover, but just maybe a few kind of reflective questions now, some of these questions might be a bit like, kind of big questions that are not answerable, so it's, it's fine to be like, oh I don't know [laughs].

AR: Okay, alright.

FR: Because I always feel bad when I ask questions that I think I couldn't answer that.

AR: Oh okay, thanks Fearghus [laughs].

FR: But actually this one maybe not so much, so just thinking about going back to Northern Ireland, I suppose since the peace process really, do you find it, do you find it changed, do you find Enniskillen changed?

AR: [pauses] I suppose not really, I don't [pauses], I'm trying to think, it's been a long time since I've been back. I do know when I started going back after the peace process in Belfast it was so weird not having to open your bag when you went into the shops and that they're not being, oh I don't know, it just was, it just was weird, that was the silliest thing, but I don't, I don't think so, and I don't really spend much time back there, to be honest, if we do go we're zipping around seeing everybody and, but no, I don't think it's, I'm, I've lost the plot now Fearghus, it's been too long since my last coffee.

FR: Okay [laughs], sorry.

AR: Rein, rein me in or guide me [laughs].

FR: We'll start to wrap it up soon, but no, you don't feel it's changed very much, Northern Ireland or at least kind of the bits of Northern Ireland that you see.

AR: Yeah.

FR: Okay, that's interesting.

AR: I don't, no, because you still have all the, the separate areas in Enniskillen.

FR: You've still got the kerbstones and you've still–

AR: Yeah, you do.

FR: No, I mean, I, I, I don't know that Ballymena, where I'm from, has changed all that, all that much really either.

AR: No, I don't, I don't think so, it's just the same as it's kind of always been.

FR: The segregation and stuff is all still there.

AR: Yeah, there's certain shops and things people won't go into, and the pubs as well, certain people, maybe the younger generations are more, but I don't know because I haven't been part of that scene when I've been back.

FR: No, sure, and then thinking about your, your, your two children, would you talk to them about Northern Ireland, about, about growing up in Northern Ireland? Cos again–

AR: Oh yeah.

FR: I think this thing about the, I don't have any, any children myself just yet, but I, the thing about having children and them growing up in a very different environment to the one that you grew up in, it's just a strange, I find it a strange thing.

AR: Oh I love telling them about it and they love listening to it. I think it's really important that they know and have some idea and, you know, Mike will do, cos Mike's got a history degree and he knows all the history, so he can do that side of things, whereas I just talk about, look at me, the plain simple lady just trying to have a life, you know, but tell them about all these things that happened and they were always fascinated like, oh my goodness, mum, you mean every time grandad went out to the car there could have been a bomb under it and, you know, and when we'd go home, you know, you'd kind of do like, a little history kind of tour maybe as well if you could. I think it's really important and they're actually very proud to have Irish parents, or Northern Irish, or whatever.

FR: Ah whichever, whichever you want [laughs].

AR: Whichever, because even, even my daughter is like, you know, oh, you know, my teacher, she's from Northern Ireland, mum, maybe you know her, you know, she [laughs], and if, if they have an Irish teacher in class, you know, she's like, oh miss, miss, my mum's from Northern Ireland [laughs], you know, there's like, that proudness of being, being Irish, it's–

FR: That's great, that's great that they, that they're interested and that you're able to talk to them about it, yeah.

AR: Yeah, and Niamh, we, Niamh, the first time I brought Mike over to Northern Ireland we went to Portr-, or to the Giant's Causeway, like you do.

FR: As you do.

AR: As you do, and we named Niamh after that cos I think, was she Finn McCool's daughter?

FR: Ah okay, right, right, right.

AR: Yeah, so she's named after the Giant's Causeway's tale [laughs], myth.

FR: That's a good, that's a good connection with, with Ireland.

AR: Yeah, she loves that story, whenever she was little we got her a Irish myths book and her name was in it, is it, she went with, was it Owen and took him to Tír na nÓg or something.

FR: Right, yeah.

AR: There's a whole big myth about it, but in primary school I remember she had to do about myths and she brought that in and she was all very chuffed about it, it was sweet.

FR: Ah, so they've, they've definitely, they've definitely got a sense of like, Irishness then, your children.

AR: Yeah, they've been to the Giant's Causeway, they've, yeah, we've, we bring them over, we went to, brought them to Benone beach, which they absolutely loved. I think it's just, it's just lovely, you know everybody says to you, I don't know about you, but it isn't until you go away and come back you realise just how stunning and beautiful the place is.

FR: No, that is, that is true actually, yeah.

AR: And I think being cooped up in London, you know, it's such a hassle to get anywhere and you're still stuck in quite a built-up area, I think there is just something lovely about going back and driving, getting over, getting into fourth or fifth gear is quite exciting [laughs].

FR: For, for a change, aye [laughs].

AR: [laughs] And the road, oh the roads have definitely got better since, cos there's a great road all the way from Dungannon down to Enniskillen, or sort of Fivemiletown, it's fantastic now, but yeah, it's just, it's just that, getting out into the, the beauty of the countryside and **[01:40:00]** driving [laughs], little things.

FR: A change from London, yeah.

AR: Yeah.

FR: And I was just, and then this is maybe the question where I'm always like, God, I couldn't, why am I asking this, but [laughs]–

AR: Oh God help me.

FR: What, do you think you could say anything about like, what kind of, how do you think mov-, how do you think moving from Enniskillen has kind of changed you, or what impact has it had on you as a person?

AR: I, I think it's made me in some ways a better person. The whole, I was just brought up like, my early years, it was all very narrow-minded and it was very, Protestants are good, Catholics are bad, you know, you never, that was it, that's all people could handle in Northern Ireland, and then coming over here, the diversity of it all and you just realise hey,

this, the stuff I grew up with was just, oh I don't know, it's just ridiculous. I know that there's people who don't think it's ridiculous and they've got a, a mission to prove X, Y, Z and to continue to blow up people and shoot people, but I don't know, I just, I just feel that there's a lot more out there and there's, I don't, what am I trying to say, I don't know what I'm trying to say Fearghus, but I do think getting away from the narrow-mindedness of it all is, is not a bad thing, and I think there's some of my friends that have never left Ireland and they need to move away for a bit.

FR: And I, I suppose I feel like, growing up specifically in Enniskillen, and again, you've described to me several kind of instances of being in Enniskillen during the IRA bombs, you can see how that would leave some people kind of embittered or, I don't know, unwilling to accept the kind of, say, power-sharing in Northern Ireland, but it sounds like maybe not living in Enniskillen has given you a slightly different perspective.

AR: Yeah, I just, you know, recently I'd, Arlene and what's the other woman, I don't, you see I'm so not interested in the politics, but–

FR: Michelle O'Neill is the–

AR: Michelle, and you just think come on, it's the same auld crap [laughs], just change the subject, just stop, just, I know it's not, if it was that easy obviously I would be the prime minister of Northern Ireland and Ireland, I know it's not that easy and it never is, but I just, I just don't understand how people can waste so much energy being so bitter and twisted about stuff and so, I don-, it's a very, ugh, like I said, I don't think too deeply into it, I just–

FR: No, I mean, I think I understand what you mean, I mean, you, when you hear about there still being kind of arguments between the two parties during the Covid thing.

AR: Yeah, I, and Brexit and all of this, oh they're like children, they're like children, I mean, do you reme-, back in the day it used to be Ian Paisley and Gerry Adams and oh my God, the amount of jokes we had from that was, you know, their carry on.

FR: Those, those pictures of them sort of laughing and smiling together are kind of one of the things that I always associate with the peace process happening, such a, so strange to see the two of them making friends, yeah.

AR: Yeah, indeed, so in answer to your question, I can't remember what the question was, but moving away has, has been better for me and, yeah, it's, it's nice to get out of that bubble, cos it is a bit of a bubble.

FR: Yeah, no, I know, I know exactly what you mean, and that's, that's brilliant Amanda, thank you, thank you so much.

AR: You're alright.

FR: I really appreciate it, and just before I finish then is there anything that we haven't talked about that you thought we might talk about or that you wanted to talk about?

AR: God no, I think I was just so worried that I wouldn't have anything to talk about that would be of any use, so I just–

FR: No, it's been great, it's been so, so interesting and so useful really.

AR: Oh I hope it has, but no, I don't, I don't think so, well, you'll see, as soon as I put down the phone down going ah I should have told Fearghus this [laughs].

FR: Aye, always the way, always the way [laughs], but–

AR: No, I, no, it's been grand, it's quite funny, I never honestly, I never even realised that we'd never gone to the South of Ireland as children [laughs].

FR: Aye, well, there you go, that's a–

AR: See.

FR: One of those things.

AR: Yeah, alright, well, thank you so much Fearghus and–

FR: Thank you.

AR: And what happens with all of this now, so how many interviews have you done so far?

FR: I've done twenty, well, I've done about thirty.

AR: Oh God.

FR: We're almost finished doing the interviews actually, so there's going to be ninety interviews in total, I'm doing thirty, someone else, someone else, and then we'll transcribe them all [laughs], which is a bit of a job.

AR: Good luck.

FR: Bit of a mission, and then we're going to write a book hopefully.

AR: Ooh exciting.

FR: But I can, I'm happy to send you anything that happens with the project, I can, I can keep you–

AR: Oh that would be great.

FR: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AR: That would be really good.

FR: And if you wanted to look at the transcript as well that's completely fine, just let me know.

AR: Alright.

FR: It'll be a wee, it'll be a wee while before the transcript is done, but–

AR: Oh don't worry, don't worry, just keep us posted with what's happening with it all.

FR: I will do and, yeah, thank you so much for your time, it was a really, really interesting–

AR: Oh my pleasure, it's lovely to listen, to chat to somebody with a good auld Northern Irish accent.

FR: Yeah, it's one of the, one of the pleasures of the job.

AR: Yeah, you've brightened up my day [laughs].

FR: Enjoy the rest of your week off.

AR: I will, darling.

FR: And thank you very much, alright, take care.

AR: You take care, good luck with it all, bye.

FR: Thanks very much, bye Amanda.

AR: Bye.

INTERVIEW ENDS