INTERVIEW M05: DAVID ANDERSON

Interviewer: Dr Barry Hazley
Interviewee: David Anderson
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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.

BH: Okay, that's us off. Okay, so I'm back again in Frodsham after speaking with Jackie last week, and I'm here today with David Anderson. Before we begin, can I just say thanks very much for agreeing to do the interview and taking time out of your working day to do it. So as I said this takes a broadly life history format, whereby I ask you questions about your childhood and so on, but before we get into that, I'll just ask you a very general question about why the project interested you.

DA: I suppose it's of interest to myself because, I suppose, it's stories of people like me, so there's, you know, it's interesting to me cos I've gone through it and it's interesting for other people who've gone through it as well. People have had different experiences coming over here from home, so, plus I like to try and help, and plus in my occupation as a journalist I think it's hypocritical if you don't let yourself be interviewed when you spend your whole life asking other people for interviews and wanting to speak to you, so, no.

BH: Sure. I'm glad Jackie came down and knocked on your door, you know. So I'll ask you a bit now about your family background, so where were your parents from?

DA: My dad was called Trevor Anderson, he was from Coleraine. My mum was Olive Anderson, well, Olive Bickerstaff, she was from Rathfriland, County Down, little, little town there. They met, my dad was a policeman you see, so they met when my dad was stationed in Milltown near Rathfriland and, yeah, married in '65, I came along in 1970. I've got a bigger brother and younger sister. I was born in Newry in 1970, May twenty-second 1970, and then because of my dad's job we moved round a lot. We were in Bessbrook, left Bessbrook, went to Antrim, left Antrim and up to Drumahoe near Derry, did five years there, then moved to where we are now, Waringstown, near Lurgan, in 1982, and that's where the family are now, although it's only my mum, my dad died ten years ago, so it's just my mum now. My big brother Neil, he lives in Edinburgh, he lived in America for about ten years, but he came back to Edinburgh there about eighteen months ago, but then my sister Laura she still lives in Waringstown, just down the road from my mum, so yeah, that's the, that's the family.

BH: So that's quite a lot of moving around then, it sounds like, yeah?

DA: I think I had three primary schools and two secondary schools.

BH: Is that right?

DA: Yeah.

BH: And is that, as you say, cos of your dad's job?

DA: He'd obviously be, you know, stationed in different places and you'd have to move then, so I suppose it makes you resilient, you get to used to change and coping with change and making new friends and stuff like that there. I think so, I like to think, cos, you know, coming over here as well, it just makes you, say, you know, get used to sort of walking in somewhere, not knowing anyone and getting on with it really, you know.

BH: Yeah, what was your dad's job within the RUC?

DA: He was just a policeman. He went up through the ranks, so I suppose that was part of the moves as well really. I think by the time he finished he was, he was superintendent, he was in Cookstown.

BH: Superintendent, right.

DA: Yeah, subdivision of commanders, Cookstown, so that was, yeah, he did very very well actually cos just a, you know, left school at, you know, young in Coleraine and did some jobs and then just found a vocation with the police.

BH: And what about your mum then? What did she do?

DA: Mum was just a, mum was stay at home, she was a housewife, she stayed at home and looked after us. You're very lucky, you don't think that now really, but at the time it was great having someone at home, you were never on your own, always someone there to help you, make your tea, keep you on the straight and narrow, whereas nowadays everybody works and kids are left to their own devices literally [laughs], iPads, phones, whatever devices you want now.

BH: Sure, and were you the first born then?

DA: No, I was the middle one, there's big brother Neil, he's what, four years older than me and then my sister, she was just forty-one there, but she's eight years younger, seven and a half years younger than me, eight, eight years younger than me, yeah.

BH: Yeah, and what was your schooling like then? You said that you moved around quite a bit, but was school something you enjoyed or–?

DA: Yeah, I liked school, two in Antrim and then P-, by the time went to P4 we'd moved up to Derry and Drumahoe, Drumahoe primary school for the last four years, and I really liked

it, and I did one year at Foyle Londonderry College up there, and then moved down to Waringstown and I did the rest of my schooling Banbridge Academy, there until obviously until I left in ’88. No, I liked school, yeah, some good friends, still keep in touch with.

BH: Yeah, did you have any hobbies or anything like that outside of school?

DA: Just football.

BH: Just football, yeah.

DA: Football. When I was really little built Airfix kits and stuff, but I think football was always the, the big passion. You’ll find that’s a bit of a thread through my story.

BH: [laughs] Sure, did you play football?

DA: Yes, oh I loved football.

BH: For the school teams, like?

DA: Yeah, school teams, yep, whoever would have me, other teams as well, then got older, you know, some like, in the Mid-Ulster League, they’d [undecipherable] and stuff, so I played for them a bit and all that there, so yeah.

BH: And was that an aspiration to become a professional footballer?

DA: Oh yes, yes, until about the age of eight when I realised I was no good [laughs], so then that’s where, you know, for me, I couldn’t be a footballer so the next best thing’s writing about football, so that’s why, you know, sort of turned my hobby into a job, really.

BH: What about your parents then? Outside of your dad’s job then, did he have any hobbies or interests?

DA: He liked to garden, he liked gardening, he was a family, no, he didn’t do any of that sort of golf or none of that sort of thing, no, they were quite family orientated that way, yeah, just, yeah, just sort of working and just stuff like that and then doing things with us, you know, it was all quite simple and boring, really, you know, just little Sunday trips, Sunday afternoon trips out and all that, we did see the family a lot, we were very close to the extended family on my mum’s side in particular cos she was one of six, so our cousins we were very close to and our aunts and uncles, so you saw, you’d see a lot of them if you lived at home like, every week, which is a very Irish thing, isn’t it, every weekend or most weekends in the summer holiday you’d be back and forth and staying over and all that there, so spent a lot of time with them I suppose, as well.

BH: Yeah, what about things like church then? Was church important?

DA: Yeah, we were taken to church [laughs]. We were Presbyterian, so we were taken to church, which [sighs], what did that do to you, eh, I suppose it gives you a sense of right and

wrong, but I found the fire and brimstone stuff a bit off-putting, you know, sort of at a young age being told, you know, repent or you're going to burn in hell type thing and you think, that's a bit grim, isn't it, you know, when you're sort of young, so yeah, that, that put me off a little bit I must admit, although ironically now I go to church here, I go to the Anglican, the Church of England. My wife's a Catholic, so in some respects you could say it's a compromise cos it's quite high church, in fact, I find it quite Catholic, you know, the way they do, the way they celebrate the service, but, you know, the kids go to the local school which is Church of England, which is affiliated to the church, so, but, you know, so it didn't turn me off completely, but I suppose you still, it gives you quiet time sometimes and I don't know, I suppose old-fashioned values like, I think we try and teach the kids right from wrong [laughs], give them some sort of moral perspective on things rather than just think about themselves all the time, and there's a big world out there and there's people less fortunate than themselves and all that, which they ignore, but try and say it anyway.

BH: And was this something that you had to go to on Sunday or was it through the week as well?

DA: Yeah, nah, well, Boys' Brigade, I did that as well, it was Sunday school, really, and then church. I think my world record, I once did three services in one day which was tough.

BH: [laughs] And did your brother have to go to this as well?

DA: No, he got out of it earlier than me, I think I was the soft one. You know what it's like, it's just that sermon, sitting through a sermon was always the one, although I used it as thinking time, usually thinking will Liverpool win the league this season, really worried about this game on Saturday, what we going to do about it, will Ian Rush be, will it be okay, things like that there, but yeah, that's a typical thing, you know, it's quite a high church-going place, you know, not all my friends went, but, you know, a lot of people, especially compared to England, you know, go to church and still go to church, you have that rammed down you, and then like, you know yourself, right, Sundays in Northern Ireland were [sighs], I don't think there's a more, there'd be a more boring place than, you know, Northern Ireland, 1980s on a Sunday afternoon where everything is closed, and not only is everything closed, but if you were even to, say, take your football and go and have a kick-about, that'd be frowned upon, you know, the neighbours would tut-tut, that's disgraceful, out playing football on the Sabbath and all this here, and you weren't even allowed to cut your, you couldn't cut your grass on a Sunday, you know, so all that. I used to always remember about 1983 when they had the first live football match, ITV and BBC, the first time they ever started showing live football matches, and they put on a Sunday afternoon, that the big showpiece game about three o'clock or something, and this was just like the greatest thing ever, suddenly there was a focus to your day, you know, with the football and you'd watch anything, even if it was Spurs or something, just watch the football, so that was a big deal, but no, Sundays were, were a tough day.

BH: Dreary, like.

DA: Yeah, yeah, dreary, yeah, go for a wee, what was it they used to say, go for a wee run, shall we get in the car **[00:10:00]** and go for a run, drive.

BH: So did you like, did your family attend the same, with your father moving around and stuff like that, did you attend the same church or did you go to–?

DA: No, we went to different–

BH: Went to different ones?

DA: Yeah, different [interrupted by ringing phone], different churches really, yeah, it was the same Presbyterian, one was I think Clon-, I think, Glendermott was the one up in Drumahoe and then Antrim, no, it was called Grey- [pauses], name of the church in Antrim, I can't remember it, it was a new church, sort of built about the sixties, yeah, one in Antrim and then, so there, and then now at the minute would be the wee Waringstown Presbyterian, where my mum goes now. It's a very, she took me there back in May, I was home, don't know the hell we did it, but very youthful, vibrant, young congregation, you know, unlike round the corner where I go it's all, you know, something out of *Vicar of Dibley*, they're all just hanging on.

BH: Yeah, I got the impression from speaking to Jackie that this was a fairly ageing population and quite a middle-class kind of background round here.

DA: It is a bit here, yeah, and unfortunately it does have its less desirable elements, but you need to go down, down the hill, across the main street down towards Ship Street and all that, you know, but no, that's, yeah, it is a bit middle class and twee, isn't it, ha ha.

BH: So when you were at school and growing up then, did you have any particular aspirations for yourself or did your parents have certain expectations about what they thought you should do?

DA: No, it was just do your best, at that stage it's all still vague. There was no, I talked about the football thing, but I knew that was never going to happen, yeah, just do your best at school, try hard, that was always the values, do your best and then just see where it takes, and then, to be honest, I went through O-levels and then you did your A-levels and it was only, you know, when I did my degree, and even when I was choosing my degree I didn't really know what it was going to lead to, I did a modern history degree just cos I liked history, but I didn't think, didn't really know at that point where I was going and it was only funnily enough when I went to Liverpool University in 1988, and I went to the freshers' fair and, you know, you see all the freshers' stalls and they had a student newspaper and I remember thinking I'll have a go at this and off it went from there.

BH: Mmm, what about your friendship groups and things like that when you were growing up? Obviously you played football, you mentioned the BB. What about your neighbourhood and things like that? Who did you play with basically outside of school?

DA: Outside of school was a bit tough because where we lived in Waringstown, if we were at school in Banbridge, Waringstown would be six miles away towards Lurgan, so in Waringstown most of the people had gone to Lurgan like, the junior high or Lurgan College,

so you didn't really know anyone outside of school cos it was just a couple of lads who you went to school with who knocked about Waringstown, so that was a bit tough cos Waringstown was just one of those archetype, sleepy little, you know, Ulster villages where not much happens, and people would just literally walk about, you know, once you got to about fourteen, fifteen you just hang around the park benches, not even, there wasn't a park, but just on the bench in the main street, so yeah, just the same folk that a couple of lads I knew from, there was one fella in particular I knew from school, who I'd have knocked around with, I think he was BB as well, but that was it, but there wasn't that much socialising because there wasn't anyone to socialise with, a lot of it was you went to school and you came home from school on the bus and you just came in and you either did your homework or you just sat and watched telly, you know, and that would be it, and then you wouldn't be going out, BB on a Monday night and that was about it, and then again at the weekend, as I say, playing rugby from the ages of about twelve to fifteen on Saturday morning, then apart from that again not much happening, go and to see my granny in Coleraine once a month, it was all pretty humdrum, family oriented, there wasn't much excitement really.

BH: Yeah, well, I take it from that then that meant that there wouldn't have been a huge amount of opportunity for interaction with Catholics.

DA: Well, that, yeah.

BH: At that age, like.

DA: That would've, I would say, it was only, no, not at all and it was, you know, everything you do was segregated and it was only really in lower sixth, cos I went to Banbridge Academy, it was only in lower sixth when a few guys came in from the local Catholic high school, they just wanted to do their A-levels at Banbridge, that you met more then because their number, they were very much a minority in our school, you know, for reasons, although I, I–

BH: At Banbridge Academy, this is?

DA: Yeah, although there's a mate of mine who I went to school with and he was a Cath-, he lives not too far from here actually, who I, we got on very well with another fella, Dominic McAleenan, who I got to know as well, so you're right, that, your scope for meeting people from the other religion was very limited, certainly for me, cos even where I lived in Waringstown, cos it was like, a little Prod village, as it were, so again, you're not going meet too many other ones and then, as you say, if you go to church, you go to your school and then sure, you know, even when you're playing football you're playing for the school team and the BB team, so it's all separated unfortunately, which I always thought was very sad, I always thought BB could've done more to try and, you know, cos at the end of the day over all else everybody likes football, don't they, but.

BH: Yeah, I mean, did you encounter sectarian attitudes when you were growing up?

DA: Yeah, probably the, well, when we lived in Bessbrook we had to get out basically cos that's when it was all kicking off, cos this is obviously '71 and all that there and internment was coming so that was, that was an area which was sort of mixed, but we had to leave there quite quick.

BH: Why was that?

DA: Just we were in danger.

BH: Right, is this because of your dad's job, yeah?

DA: Yeah, yeah, cos it was all kicking off really, and it wasn't the case that it had been up to, you know, just live wherever you wanted, but then it was, the lines were beginning to be drawn, you know what I mean, between which bit was going to become Protes-, which bit was going to become Cath-, and you had to get behind the line, the right one.

BH: And was this coming from like, the loyalist side or the other side?

DA: No, this would have been from the republican side at that point, but like, I'm talking about stuff when I was eighteen months old, I don't remember it, but, and then funnily enough when we went up to Derry then, that was between '77 and '82, that was hairy cos obviously that's through the hunger strikes. It's weird actually because, you know, all of a sudden you're part of the majority community, but you're going to somewhere you're the minority, and of course in Derry it's almost like, all the, all the, no Protestants lived on the Cityside, very few, maybe the Fountains estate, and they'd all retreated onto the Waterside and then they were even then retreating from the Waterside to places like Drumahoe, places like Limavady, but, you know what I mean, so, and then we had to go right across that to Foyle and Londonderry College, which was almost, you know, literally, what, two miles from the border, as we went to school, so of course you've got your very distinctive blazer on, so that made you a bit of a target, but it, you know, but that's the way it was and everybody, you know, each community was sort of getting that from, you know, morons on either sort of side really, so there was that, but there was different, you know.

BH: Well, that's what I was going to ask you about, cos obviously your childhood falls right slap bang in the middle of probably the most intensive period of the Troubles, in terms of the seventies and early eighties and so on.

DA: Yeah.

BH: Did the conflict have any impact upon your life really at that time?

DA: [laughs] It completely shaped it [laughs], you think with my dad's job, you know, and then we having to move, but yeah, no, you're right, it's only now you look back you can actually sort of see. I always talk about the abnormal normality of the life that you led, so it would be things like, you know, you could never say what your dad did, you couldn't, it was always drilled into you, dad works for the, I'll probably get hammered for this [laughs], your dad works for the civil service and all that there, you know, cos you had to be so careful, you

know, my dad had to do all the checks, you had two different number plates for the car, had to lock the car in the garage every night, you had to check underneath his car every day before he, you know, before he set off, and we had to drive different routes to and from where he was working. He didn't go to work in his uniform, he wore civilian clothes, all that sort of thing, so I think at the time you don't really appreciate what's going on because, as I say, that abnormality is your normality, so you just think that's the way it is, but of course if you were speaking to someone who, say, a contemporary of mine who grew up in England at the same time, you'd tell them all this and they'd think it's nuts, you know, you'd be walking down the street and there'd be like, soldiers, fully armed soldiers, you know, doing a patrol down past you, you know, that's the way it was, or there'd be a, you know, a check-point, you'd be driving along at night and the only thing you'd see would be the red light, doing that, and you'd think right, and you couldn't see anything, cos obviously they didn't want to illuminate themselves, and you'd say right, that's an army check-point, better, I hope to God I've got my driver's licence on me or else I'm in trouble here, you know, all that sort of thing. So yeah, no, I completely, and then not only that, but I think the big, cos it shapes you, it's like it turned the Troubles into like, a war, and it was like, them and us, which was really bad because it was like, you'd watch the news, you'd come home and watch the news every night, you'd watch the news and you'd be like, what's happened today, who's been killed today, what's been the latest atrocity, and I'm ashamed to admit this that, you know, if it was someone, a republican or IRA was killed you'd be like, yaay, you know, one of them bastards gone, you know what I mean, and then by the same token if it was a member of the security force, particularly if it was someone that you knew or a family that you knew, that was, obviously it was just, **[00:20:00]** you know, really bad [pauses], just reflect on that.

BH: I'm just thinking, you know, I mean, the abnormal normality, but I mean, with your dad being in the RUC, he was obviously a target, you know, I mean, that must have been something that, if not at least for you, for your mother produced an anxiety.

DA: Yeah, if you heard my mum's side she would, she could tell you better about that cos she's the one who, you know, who lived that everyday, going out to work and will he come back. As I say, especially those years, say, up in, up in, dad was stationed in the Waterside, so he was stationed in Waterside, so on the Waterside they had an estate called Gobnascale, so obviously during the hunger strikes they used to riot every night, and so he'd be sent out to try and sort of quell the situation, and being out when the soldiers would be there too, and half the time he was like, trying to keep the soldiers in check, trying to keep a lid on it cos obviously it's a very, it's a tinderbox situation, and that was every night, and I remember we went on holiday in summer of 1981, it was a very good holiday, went to Spain, the first time we ever went abroad, and we arrived back and my dad was no sooner in through the house and he put the suitcases down, the phone went and he was, get yourself up to Gobnascale it's kicking off, get yourself in there, it's all kicking off again. So he, we barely saw him those years, he just worked, worked, worked, you know, cos obviously it was, you know, dangerous times, but no, it does shape your view and it moulds you in a certain way and I think, I think the biggest tragedy of the lot, I think people of my, sort of my generation were born with like, sectarian DNA, it's in you, you know, you come here and you get away from it and you think you're lovely li-, but it's there in you and it's a battle sometimes to, you know, although things are obviously a lot better now, but unfortunately,

and that's a really sad thing, and then for anybody who's left there then they just perpetuate that, and they can't get away from it which just shapes, shapes everything, you know, about your outlook on people and life and that there, and you think oh this and them 'uns, oh them 'uns, they get whatever they want, they get all the benefits, God they never did any bloody work, you know, this sort of horrible, prejudiced, you know, sectarian attitudes, you know, but then cos it's all fuelled by ignorance because the two communities are just kept, kept apart, which is so tragic like, it's such a small place, what is it, a hundred miles by a hundred miles or something, you know.

BH: It's a tiny place, yeah.

DA: Yet there's such a split, when there's so much more in common than should separate us.

BH: Sure, yeah. In terms of school then you said you stayed on to do A-levels.

DA: Yeah.

BH: And you chose, history was one of the subjects, what was the others?

DA: I did history, geography and economics. I've always been fascinated by Irish history.

BH: Yeah, well, that's what I was going to ask next. What history did you learn and what interested you about it?

DA: We did it all really like, I've, I love history, even now, you know, I think, something really interesting, so we did, obviously growing up you know all about King Billy and all that, you got that side of it, but you're not, you don't really understand the context of it really, you obviously just get one side of a story, you know, you don't, it's only later on that you sort of get the full picture of Irish history. I think that's the problem, I think each side grows up thinking that they've got a monopoly on right and a monopoly on injustice and murder, you know, and then you realise well, actually do you know what, there's some bad things done to those people in that community as well, and ooow, that wasn't very good, so, so that was quite good, you got, you know, more full round, and then the things which I really enjoyed, stuff like studying 1798 United Irishmen rebellion, and you learn that the people who were leading the first republicans were actually Presbyterians who allied with the Catholics to try and usurp the established Ascendency and the Anglican church, the Church of Ireland, cos obviously they were discriminated against, they weren't allowed to do anything, and they were trying to upset that sort of order, then you sort of see that, you know, and that puts a different perspective on things, and then you go right through into stuff like the Famine and, you know, obviously go right through with the Easter Rising and, you know, what then happens, the creation of Northern Ireland, and you look back at Northe-, you know, your Northern Ireland history and again you sort of think that, you know, there's Northern Ireland, a little country trying to get on and why are these nasty terrorists trying to destroy it, only to realise it was like a [pauses], you know, that state that was created was almost, you know, it was a permanent Protestant majority, so that's not true democracy and, you

know, all that sort of stuff, and then you sort of see well, there was not, it wasn't black and white at all, as you thought it was.

BH: I mean, that must be a complicated thing to learn at school when you're doing A-levels. Meanwhile, outside of that there's a conflict going on and also, you know, your father's centrally involved in that, that's a complicated picture, like.

DA: Yeah, well, one of the things I'd say about, the good thing about my dad, he was, my dad when I was, was liberal. I remember there was somebody who once approached me and he said oh do you want to come and join our Orange lodge, and my dad said look, under no circumstances are you, you know, getting mixed up, and to be fair he, even as a family we were always, we've always been vehemently opposed to Ian Paisley, Free Presbyterians, DUP, all that sort of lot because we understand them for the rabble rousers that they are, and in fact, today when you look at politics, it is that right-wing, evangelical, you know, conservativism, well, I suppose, capital C as well as small c thing about, you know, denying people their rights, you know, women's rights and stuff like that there, that sort of thing, so to be fair we had that, that was always our compass, you know, if anybody was saying what were we politically we would have been like, the Ulster unionists, they would have voted Jim Mullen and David Trimble, so there was a bit more moderation there, there was an attempt to try and speak, whereas I've always, to be fair even now I'm as anti that lot, you know, and of course naturally all the paramilitaries, cos the loyalist paramilitaries are the biggest scum of the earth ever, because what did they do, they weren't, cos you used to think they're not even interested in trying to fight for the Prot-, they're just gangsters and racketeers who're more interested in controlling the drugs trade and stuff like that there.

BH: Yeah, presumably, I'm guessing, given your dad's job, that would set limits on the kind of politics you could become involved in. I mean, you know, a question I would ask is, to people, did you become involved in political activism in Northern Ireland during those years? It's probably not something that was open.

DA: It's funny you say cos tomorrow's the, I always th-, November fifteenth is always a day that I remember cos it was the Anglo-Irish Agreement, and when you were growing up in Northern Ireland, I was fifteen at the time, that was obviously a big deal. At the time it was portrayed to us as a sell-out, Maggie's sold us down the Liffey to the Republic, and I remember at school it was a highly politicised time cos obviously there was all that big campaign, Ulster Says No, there was days of action, I remember some people didn't come into school, they were driving tractors up and down Banbridge high street, don't know why like, but, you know all that, so you, you, you know all that, but, and again, that was a time, you know, when a lot of people were rabble rousing and, you know, well, this is what we've got to stand up, we've got to fight, we've got to do this, we've got to do that, but thankfully we had the common sense to see through it really, and see that's not the answer really.

BH: Sure.

DA: I always remember, going on from that, in 1988 and I, as I say, I stayed in the BB and I did a thing called the Queen's badge, which is the highest award you can get, it's like a Duke of Edinburgh gold thing, and we had a special presentation for all the boys who got it. I think

Lord Thurso, the head of the BB was there, and it was down in Belfast, there was a big civic reception, and the various mayors from all the places where the boys had come from were all invited to be there, and I remember at this ceremony, and then I think Brian Mawhinney at the time was a Northern Ireland minister, was there and he was invited there to, you know, to speak and stuff and because he, minute he came in and got up to, the minute he got up to speak the various mayors who were there representing us got up and walked out, as a protest of the unionist protest against the government for the Anglo-Irish Agreement, and that was a moment for me, cos I remember thinking at the time, I thought how petty can you be, what has that got to do with anything, you know, we're not here about politics tonight, you know, we're here recognising what we've done and we're all here together and why don't you just sit and listen to that man, and then bizarrely, you know, on that story, there's a little anecd-, a little postscript to that. When I got my first job in Chester, on the *Chester Chronicle*, I met Brian Mawhinney again, he was then Lor-, he was then Health Secretary and he came to the council at Chester and I actually mentioned, I mentioned that incident. I says do you remember such, he says I do, he says but don't be bad about that because from that we then put out feelers and tried to re-engage and actually re-establish lines of communication to end that petty, petty boycott really, so little things like that, you know, you shake your head and just think, you know, what are you doing, you know, what're you doing, that's not right.

BH: I mean, it sounds like you were quite, you know, an astute and observant adolescent, in the sense that these things were happening, it sounds like you had a grasp of what the politics were, in other words that you were engaged with this, that you understood.

DA: Yeah, I must, I've always been interested in politics even from a very early age, followed mainland pol-, mainland, used the word mainland there, you know, following what's happening over here, very interested in when Margaret Thatcher became prime minister, what was happening then, and I think you were because politics was affecting your daily life, wasn't it, you know, and, you know, what was happening in Northern Ire- was, you know, was just almost partly determined by what was happening in London, so I think, I think **[00:30:00]** you saw, but I always like, I'd like to think that my parents, you know, instilled in us the right values, that you were taught you were open-minded, you know, you weren't just blinkered and, you know, and Ulster Says No and Ulster's right, all that sort of nonsense and, cos I must admit even, you know, when we were younger and you would, I think once or twice you were taken to watch the Twelfth or something out there and you just thought, you would look at these banners and just think they've all got like, Old Testament references and stuff and used to think, you know, I thought what, I just thought what, this just does not seem to, what relevance is that to now, and stuff like, you know, Moses by the burning bush and all this here, and then all this romanticised King Billy and his white charger and all, you know, you just thought, mmm.

BH: Yeah, was that something that began to kind of dawn on you more as you got older?

DA: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, you know, and then, then when you come to England that's when the penny really drops, cos I remember when I went to Liverpool University, and so you arrive over here and I suppose being an Ulster Protestant you think I've come to the motherland now, so it's almost like I've come from somewhere where I'm not quite sure,

you know, I've got one half's against us or whatever, but I've come over here now, but I'm in the homeland, so I'm with my kindred spirits, aren't we, and I thought, and I quickly realised, no, people in England do not give [sighs], I suppose you can't swear.

BH: You can, yeah, course you can.

DA: They don't give a toss about the people of North-, if they had their way they would happily be rid of Northern Ireland, it's a drain on the public purse, they don't really see much benefit of it, and so I was expecting them to be thinking, you know, they would be brothers in arms, it's like, you know, you're all a bunch of nutcases, we were really don't want anything to do with you, and you then realise that only people who support you or support the unionist cause over here are sort of like, right-wingers, like, English Defence type, National Front types, cos I can remember at university, couple of them, you know, you bumped into one and thought you're alright, you're, you're from Northern Ireland, you're a Prod, and you just think I don't want to associate with you, I do-, I'm, I felt appalled that you felt you could associate with me, with your views, so yeah, that was that was a sort of a moment then when you just sort of realise that, you know, nobody [laughs], nobody wants you.

BH: Well, that's very, very nicely put, you know, when you were growing up in Northern Ireland, in terms of national identity or nationality, presumably it was explained to you that you were British.

DA: Yeah, yeah, and it's interesting, that's a very, I thought Rory McIlroy summed it up quite well when he had that dilemma over what do I do for the Olympics, because obviously he's from Northern Ireland, but cos golf is an all-Ireland sport, you know, he'd always played through Ireland, and then he was torn, well, I suppose I'm a British citizen but who do I play for, and then it did strike a resonant point because I genuinely think there is such a thing as a Northern Irish identity and it is distinct from rest of Ireland and it is distinct from Britain for many of the reasons, you know, just, and also the cultural thing, in that a lot of stuff we do they just don't get, you know, whether it's our sounds, whether it's, you know, behaviour, and you're right you, you, you know, there's always that dilemma, how do you reconcile British and Irish, and I, I, I find British and Northern Ir-, I don't find a problem with that because obviously, you know, if in terms of Britain at the Olympics and stuff, you know, I'm cheering for Britain, I've always done that, British Lions, don't have a problem with that, Ireland rugby, not a problem with that, the Northern Ireland football team, yep, they're mine, you know, I can put those two easily together.

BH: When you first moved over to England, did you have a problem with it, in the sense of did you think of yourself as wholly British, without any reference to Irishness, or did you have a–?

DA: No, I, yeah, I think, no, it wasn't that neat, I think there are some people who try and disavow all Irishness, and then you think, it's almost as if, the, the way I would put it, if you admit you're Irish therefore you should be part of a united Ireland, therefore, you know, off you go, sonny Jim, and it was almost [undecipherable], but then, as I say, you realise well, no, that Irishness doesn't sort of mean that, that Irishness just means a love of the country

where you're born, where you come from, and that hasn't changed, funny thing, you feel more passionate about it now than ever, really, but yeah.

BH: What about your parents and your brothers and other relatives and things in Northern Ireland? When you were growing up did they have sense of themselves as having an Irish background as opposed to being a purely British unionist background?

DA: Yeah, no, no, my, I suppose my sister would because she's, she's lived there now her whole life and she's in her early forties, so yeah, she would, you know, and I think it's different as well because you think I bailed out in 1988, you know, that's like, the, the Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland from 1988 compared to now, you know, especially the Republic of Ireland, it's totally transformed, you know, without being too, there's no threat anymore, it's not like before, you used to see them as a hostile place. There was like, a very hard border, there was almost like, you know, that lot want, want to take control of, you know what I mean, that, you know, they want to tak-, whereas now it's, you know, there's just two, sort of two countries and it's great to see there's proper links between them and all that. That was a weird thing growing up as well really, that it's almost as if two people are standing with their backs to each other, and even as a child my knowledge of England and geography of England, and I can drive you anywhere in Britain, and even then, down in Ireland after getting to some places I genuinely wouldn't know, I think we went across the border, well, you'd go to Donegal when we lived in Drumahoe cos obviously everybody went to Donegal cos that's where you go on holiday and caravans and stuff like that, Dunfanaghy and stuff, but beyond that, trip to Dublin to watch a rugby match, trip to Dublin, had a school history trip to the Dáil, and then we did a school geography trip to Clare and Limerick, Lisdoonvarna and all, that's basically it, you know, which is again quite sad.

BH: That's actually not bad, compared to mine, but [laughs].

DA: Yeah, but still, you know what I mean, you know, whereas, you know, and once I got to Britain I've been to almost every bit of it, you know, whereas there it was weird, you just, you just didn't look that way, you know, even when you went to, to go to Britain you would get the ferry from Larne, Stranraer, that sort of thing or Cairnryan or something or even Belfast to Liverpool, you know, whereas now if I ever get, you just go Holyhead to Dunleary. It wasn't an avenue that was really, you know, open then, it was sad really cos, you know, cos it's, it's one island, really, isn't it, yeah.

BH: So you mentioned there, you say you bailed out in 1988.

DA: Yeah.

BH: So that was after you finished your A-levels, is that right?

DA: Yeah.

BH: So when you're filling out your UCAS forms then, why did you elect to go to Liverpool rather than the usual, Queen's or Coleraine?

DA: Well, to be fair, Queen's was my number one choice, Liverpool was number two. The thing about Liverpool is that, you know, going back to the football, I love Liverpool football club, and I will always remember, I filled them all in and I thought, right, we'll go to Liverpool open day, it's over a weekend, and I said to my dad, dad that's the same day as Liverpool-Everton match at Goodison, this was the season '87-'88 and Liverpool are going twenty-nine games unbeaten, they were going to set a new record for thirty, so my dad got tickets for that game, through a contact, so it says it all about how interested I was in Liverpool that we missed the open day on Friday, but we were for the football match on the Sunday, but then that weekend was very interesting because that weekend was the weekend in March 1988 where the two army corporals were killed by the mob in Belfast, do you remember when they stumbled upon the funeral.

BH: Yes, yes, yeah.

DA: Where they had said to them, hey come and have a look at this, you know, we're doing a bit of sightseeing and they ended up, you know, and it's weird that out of various murders in Northern Ireland those two resonated with me at the time. I think it was just the fact that it was all caught on camera and it was all so graphically done. Normally when people were killed you just heard about it and that was it, it's terrible and all, but I think that one because you saw that and that last desperate image of one of them shooting the gun in the air to try and ward the crowd off and then, you know, then they're taken away, stripped and beaten and shot. I think it was weird that weekend cos then we flew over from the South, I remember thinking when we got, cos my aunt lives in Liverpool, you see, I remember we got there and I just suddenly thought to myself, I thought Christ, do I really want to stay there anymore, if this is what they do to each, you know, that really, you know, the weird, why should, I don't know why that at that particular moment should have res-, but I remember thinking then, I've got a chance here, I can go to Liverpool University, you know, and I always joke about people and say oh I came to Liverpool to watch, I came to England to watch Liverpool play football, which was true, I got a season ticket for three years, in fact, I was on the Kop when we last won the title in 1990, in May 1990, I'm hoping I'll be there in May when we win it back and, but it was just, that was a little moment really, where you just thought, you know, there's a chance, and but even then I had to then change the option because I'd put Queen's number one, I had to then to get Liverpool number, first choice Liverpool, and then the thing about Liverpool they only offered me a place to do history and politics, I wanted to do history, so in that August when I got my A-level results and they were good enough to go, I remember my cousin, who used to be a long-distance lorry driver, and he used to drive over to Britain, so I got a lift with him on his lorry, he then dropped me up at Skelmersdale on the junction of the M58, my uncle David picked me up, took me down to Liverpool University offices, dumped me outside the history department at nine am, I went in, knocked the door and said hello, you've offered me a place to do history and politics, I want to do history, will you swap, and I think they were like, who is this crazy man, and I sat there, I said well, that's what I'd like to do and after **[00:40:00]** much pleading then I got a letter back saying okay, we'll do it then, and so then I went to Liverpool.

BH: Did you go home after that?

DA: Yes, I went home, that was August, so I went back, I missed my journey back with my uncle, sorry, my cousin Alan, so I had to get the boat back, which was horrendous, the Liverpool-Belfast boat, it's not for the fainthearted, and then that was then decided, I thought yeah, I'm going to go to Liverpool then, I just thought I've got a chance here, and I don't want it to sound negative, as if to say oh what a horrible place, I can't wait to get away from it. I just thought, you know, you can go to Queen's with everybody else, all my friends from school were going to go to Queen's and it would have been brilliant, and I know Queen's is great and a beautiful university and all that, and south Belfast and all that would have been a real buzz, but I just thought but I can do something else here, there's a chance to do something else, and then the football was obviously a big thing for me, you know, and I could do that as well, and the way I reasoned was that a history degree is pretty rubbish, so whether you get one from Queen's or you get one from Liverpool, what's the difference, I wasn't really thinking any longer term than that at the time, so I just thought yeah, let's go to Liverpool, and I think it helped because my aunt lived in Liverpool and my uncle, so I was copping out a little bit, I was going somewhere where I had a safety blanket, and they were very helpful to me at the time, very supportive, you know what it's like, I'd go up there now and again and get the comforts of home, like central heating and cooked food, you know, as opposed to like, students now don't know they're born compared to what we had back then, which was basically prison cells, you know, with nothing. So that's what brought me over to Liverpool.

BH: What did your parents say about you choosing to go to Liverpool?

DA: My mum [laughs], mum was not happy and I think to this day she, she'll never forgive me, cos why do, why, you know, and it's hard for her, I understand because a lot, everybody else stayed at home and they're still at home, and I think, I think what really, really, really hurt was that she was very upset because at the same time my brother was leaving. My brother had done a degree at Queen's, but then he then went to Imperial College London to do a postgrad, so we both left at the same time, in that autumn of 1988. My dad packed up the car, drove over to Liverpool, dropped me off at the, my student halls and then took him down to his house in London, and for my poor mum, you know, at the time this was devast-, she'd lost her two boys, she was only left with my sister at the time, who was only about eight. I remember she then, they put her on a flight, she came over to see me, cos she was so upset [laughs], and they came down to see, and I was having the time of Riley, I was laughing, I was loving it, cos of course you've just arrived, it's freshers' week, everyone's there, you're meeting all these new people, and of course for me I'm quite, I like to meet people, I like to travel, like to experience things, so of course all of a sudden you're in this like, world where there's people from all over Britain, Scottish people who I knew, cos obviously been to Scotland a lot, but people from Britain and England and, you know, different accents, and oh are you Manchester, you know, from Wales and all that there, you know, so I was loving it, and she saw this and I think that made it even worse [laughs], I think she wanted me to be miserable and missing home and saying I'm going to come back, but no, I loved, and then the problem was I think once I'd taken that step, at the time you don't realise it, what a big step it was, but then from there, that then, I've set on that course, my course didn't diverge and there was no coming back, I didn't know it at the time, but there was no coming back.

BH: Sure, what about your dad then? What did he say about it?

DA: He was very good. My dad was always just very supportive, just do whatever you want to do.

BH: Yeah.

DA: Yeah, I think he might've preferred me to stay, but he never, he would never have interfered or said look, you know, don't do it, he'd always support you, always very supportive.

BH: Yeah, so you said when you arrived then you were meeting lots of new people and things like that. How did you find that, the people that you were meeting?

DA: I loved it.

BH: Yeah.

DA: Loved it.

BH: Did they ask about your background?

DA: Not really.

BH: About Northern Ireland, no?

DA: Not, not really, just a little bit, but I think [pauses, sighs], again I come back to this point, I think a lot of the English stroke British, again they didn't really want to know because it was just, they didn't really understand it and they didn't really want to understand it, they just thought right, there's an island over there and I've never been there and I don't really want to go there, but there's two communities trying to kill each other, are killing each other and really, they didn't really want to know anymore than that, just wanted to know, you know, do you drink or not, that sort thing, you know, so no, there wasn't that, you know, there wasn't sort of oh tell me all about it, it must've been bad and stuff and in some respects it was quite refreshing cos when you went from Northern Ireland you went to England and the dynamic totally changed, cos when you're in Northern Ireland it's all about you meet someone for the first time and it's almost like you play the game, don't you, you start looking and going, hmm, hmm, Catholic, hmm, yeah, name, yeah, school, yeah, hmm, eyes a bit close together [laughs], and then all of a sudden you go to England and it was all, it's, none of that matters, those rules don't apply, it's just do whatever you want. But then what divides England, Northern Ireland's divided by religion, England's divided by class, and still is, America's divided by race, and horribly so and still is, but then that's what England's defined by, it's all about, well, so are you working class or are you middle class or what does your dad do, and then that's how they would then size you up, and then the, the thing being if you're middle class then you're obviously, you know, softy, whereas if you're proper working class then you're a real earthy, authentic person, which is rubbish, everyone's

themselves really, so yeah, but that was different, being able to leave behind the baggage of your religion and not being defined by your religion.

BH: So this was actually quite a liberating thing then.

DA: Well, that is liberating, yeah.

BH: In the sense that you no longer are entrapped in that kind of binary way of thinking.

DA: Yeah, definitely.

BH: And you can think in new ways.

DA: Because if I'd stayed in Northern Ireland, for example, and if I'd, say, gone and got a job, somebody ended up, say, dating a Catholic and trying to marry a Catholic, that would have caused all sorts of merry hell like, you know, whereas that didn't apply, well, ironically, I met my wife at Liverpool University in the second year and she's from just above Liverpool and she's a Catholic, although that's only because her mum, huh, the way I reasoned at the time was it's alright, she's a Catholic cos her mum's French, so that's okay, she's not a Catholic cos her dad's called Seamus O'Flaherty and he's from Ardoyne or something like that there [laughs], or Camlough [laughs], you know, that was alright. But it didn't matter, you see, over here that doesn't matter, that, that you're right, that is quite sort of liberating, really, where you're not, you know, you know, you're not defined by your religion.

BH: Sure, what about other Irish people or Northern Irish people in Liverpool or England then?

DA: Yeah.

BH: Did you meet any whenever you went over?

DA: We, there was quite a wee community of us because even from my school there was about three or four of us went and then there was I remember–

BH: Really, yeah?

DA: A couple who came the next year and we would, we would, I even met a lad who I had gone to school with up in Derry, it was before Londonderry College, Stevie Caldwell, bumped into him, in fact, I still see Stevie, he's a big Liverpool fan too.

BH: Actually at Liverpool University?

DA: Yeah, yeah, I bumped into him too, so that was really nice, you know, making his acquaintance again, and then a few of the guys from Banbridge, and then there's one of my best mates from home who resat his As, he then came over as well a year after me and so there was a real community of us, and then you also then met other Northern Irish folk over, and again going back to your point about being liberated, I met a couple of lads and

they would have been Catholics, one was from Belfast, Denis, and then Stevie from Derry, over there and when you met them in Liverpool in a nightclub or wherever, a bar, you just chatted and it was quite good not having that, oh should I be speaking to you, you know what I mean, that sort of thing, whereas, you know, it didn't matter anymore, so that was quite good.

BH: Before you decided to make Liverpool your first choice, were you already aware that there were people from your school that had went to Liverpool University? Was there–?

DA: Yeah, well, that, no, that wasn't a factor for me cos I was hap-, I knew Liverpool cos, as I say, with my aunt and uncle living in Maghull in north Liverpool we had been over, you know, that's my dad's sister, we'd been to visit them, they lived in Carlisle, lived in Newcastle, we had always gone to visit them and we'd visited Liverpool of course, you know, cos I love, we love Liverpool, so we'd been over a few times, we'd stayed there, we'd been to Anfield, we'd been round the city centre, so it was the place I was most familiar with in England and so it didn't feel daunting. It wasn't like London, where I'd never been, it wasn't like, you know, I felt I was going somewhere which was all strange, I felt as if I knew Liverpool and I liked Liverpool and of course liking the football team, so you sort of, you're naturally well disposed to Scousers and you think oh this'll be good fun, you know, so that wasn't really a thing, I would've just gone, I didn't sort of go because it was other people going there, I did my own thing really.

BH: Sure, what about people from the South then? So you met people from the North when you were there. Did you meet people, Southerners there?

DA: Not that many, to be fair, not in my time, although I've obviously met more now through my job and I've got a couple of good friends, you know, from down south, as we'd say it, but no, yeah, no there weren't that many at the time that were at Liverpool, no, no, just from Northern Ireland really, in fact, Liverpool is mainly composed of people from the north, very few Scots, which surprised me, very few Jocks, a couple from the south, mainly northerners, you know, whether it be Yorkshire, Manchester, north east, whatever, Wales, and then quite a big Northern Ireland, relatively speaking, contingent, or most Northern Ireland people if they didn't go to Queen's University would go to Scotland and if they didn't go to Scotland they would maybe tend to go to Manchester or Liverpool, stuff like that there, yeah.

BH: And did you ever encounter, and it's 1988, so the Troubles still quite, quite serious–

DA: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

BH: There were bombs on the mainland, as you said, did you ever encounter any backlash or hostility in the aftermath of any of those things?

DA: No, no, no, thankfully not, no, no, people were very good about that sort of thing. I think they could understand it was nothing to do **[00:50:00]** with me, no.

BH: Yeah, cos obviously the Birmingham bomb in 1974, there was a big backlash then.

DA: Yeah, yeah.

BH: But I suppose Liverpool's quite a different place, there never was a bomb there.

DA: Yeah, you're right, Liverpool, you know, was left, although funnily enough I had just moved to Manchester when they had the Arndale bomb in 1997.

BH: In '96.

DA: No, yeah, sorry, I was just bel-, yeah, '97 I went, that was just after so, so after, but there was never, not, not, nothing like that, although funnily enough I was working in Chester when they had the Warrington bomb that killed Tim Parry and all that, but no, no, there was never any.

BH: Never anything, okay. What about, so there was a pre-existing Irish community in Britain, sort of really established after the Second World War, and it's usually visible in terms of, you know, Irish clubs, Irish associations, this kind of thing.

DA: Yeah, yeah.

BH: Were those ever places that you were, that you ever gravitated towards?

DA: Oh yeah, cos that was the whole joke, you see, cos I'd never been in an Irish bar until I came to England, cos I suppose we didn't, they were just bars at home, weren't they, but that was the whole thing like, Flanagan's Apple in Liverpool, you'd go down, and then of course then that would be the thing where then they would see my sort of Protestantism come out, because they would take you to an Irish bar and they'd say oh there's your music, and then they'd all be, you know, playing the fiddle dee dee music, as you call it, I'd say that's not my music [laughs].

BH: Is that right, yeah?

DA: I must admit I never, I was never really a fan of all that sort of thing, but still, you know, you would go along because, and I suppose you learnt, I suppose, I suppose, you said a bit about it before, I think the attitude I got would have been, was patronising because any time anyone met you, you know, oh you're Irish, and then they would immediately try and imitate your accent, which I found intensely irritating, cos it's like, if I meet someone from Manchester I don't immediately do a Manchester accent, and then they would say ridiculous things like oh I've got a cousin who lives in Dublin, do you know them, and you think no, there's like, five and a half million people probably live in Ireland, I don't know them all, you know, things like that, and then there was the, you know, well, this is all your sort of music too and all that there, and you go well, no, not really, but you went along with it because they weren't being malicious they just, they just, for them, that's what Irish was, you see, they just thought well, you're, you know, and the whole, I don't drink, you see, so of course the whole thing was you don't drink, you don't drink Guinness, you don't like

Guinness, no, I don't, I don't like the taste of alcohol, and it was like, that was, you know, they couldn't get their head around that either you see.

BH: So that's quite an interesting observation then. In addition to maybe some British people identifying Ulster Protestants as this kind of, you know, far right, right-wing kind of ideology or whatever, the other experience you seem to be saying was being, you know, instinctively perceived as part of this sort of Irish stereotype.

DA: Oh yeah, the whole, the Irish cliché about drinking and partying and dancing and, you know, all that sort of stuff, you know, and they always used to say oh there's just me and Ian Paisley don't drink, there's another, not all Irish people drink, me and Ian Paisley don't drink and, you know, they couldn't get their head round that at all, why don't you drink.

BH: Yeah, so do you think some of them didn't even distinguish between Catholic and Protestant?

DA: No, I, well, certainly not, or they, again a lot of them didn't really want, they didn't have a great knowledge of Northern, I don't think they really wanted to because they just found the whole thing confusing and it's almost like, well, you know, your community should be better than that, you know, I don't think they really wanted to know cos they were more focused on issues more relevant to them, and I can, listen, I can say the same thing back because things like, growing up, say, the miners' strike, you know, for me, you know, I looked at the miners' strike, I didn't really understand it, you know, I looked at that and I just thought it was lots of people protesting and striking and they're closing mines down cos they claim they're not economical anymore, you sort of like, shrug your shoulders and it didn't bother me, but it's funny, it's only when I've moved over and you've now spoken to people who went through that and you can understand how devastating that was for those communities at the time, and even now how those wounds, from something which happened what, thirty-five years ago, are still very raw, you know, places like south Yorkshire and stuff like that, so in the same respect they would have looked at Northern Ireland and just sort of, I can see there's some bad stuff happening, but I don't really understand it, I don't really want to understand because it doesn't really affect me, it's not really relevant, you know, which I think was a lot of the attitude.

BH: I mean, when people made those assumptions about drinking and this is your music and so on, and then you had to correct them, was that frustrating to have to do that or did you simply go, well–?

DA: Yeah, a little bit, but because they did not mean it badly, it's not like they were, you know, being malicious in it, they just genuinely were ignorant, you know, although it does then pose that question which I then asked myself, well, then okay, well, then can you explain your culture to them, am I going to say my culture is people with Orange sashes and bowler hats, cos of course they knew that and then they just thought those people were ridiculous, which they are, and then you would say mmm, mmm, yeah, not that, and then you'd sort of scratch your chin a little bit and you'd think well, Northern Ireland football, you've seen that. Billy Bingham, Gerry Armstrong, you know that, don't you, and then, you know, people might go oh yeah, yeah. That's us, that's us.

BH: Right, so were you ever called upon then to justify or explain in particular the like, the Ulster Protestant or the unionist position, in any context?

DA: [pauses] No, the weird thing was that the friends I made at Liverpool, and they're still my friends now, we see each other quite regularly, what I quite liked about it was almost just that, just accept, everyone accepted for what we were and we just got on with being friends and whatever we did with each other type thing, there was nobody was having to dig into your back history or try and explain your, you know, was portraying you as a white Afrikaner or Jewish settler or something like that there, you know, it was quite, it was quite welcoming and that, again I would say it was quite refreshing, there was no like, the only thing I ever got into a heated argument was with the Socialist Workers' Party at one of the fairs, cos they had one of their Troops Out movements and you'd just go round chatting and I was having this conversation with them and he was going on about this here and he insulted a friend of mine whose uncle was killed by IRA, so I didn't take kindly, and I must say I lost my temper and I grabbed him by the throat, which I shouldn't have done. But again he had summed up for me, cos he was English, he just summed up his, he didn't know what he was talking about essentially, which a lot of them don't, and on both sides I think, cos you got a lot of that, you know, people on the left wing of politics, you know, going on about, you know, troops out and, you know, troops out, troops, what does, what does troops out actually mean, you know what I mean, you know, do you wan-, well, what about the, what are you going to do with your eight hundred thousand Prods, what are you going to do with them, you know, do you not think you should ask the people first, but like, at the end of day I'm a unionist, but I'm a democrat first, and if the people voted for a united Ireland, totally respect that because ultimately otherwise what are you then, you know, but, that's interesting.

BH: Well, that's what I going to, that was actually a question I was going to ask you. Did you ever encounter or were you involved with any of these political movements in Britain which kind of were defined with the Troubles? So Troops Out would be certainly one of them.

DA: Yeah, I would think that would be the only really exp-, again it would all be at univ-, cos as you know university is so political in many respects, it's all there, although I'm, was never really, I've never been a member of any political organisation, the only thing I'm a member of is the National Trust, you know, and the Northern Ireland Football Writers Association, that's about it, but no, no, but you saw it in Liverpool and as I say that was my only real experience where, you know, the, the my mates would pull my leg if they saw, say, something and they says oh look, we've got a guest speaker who's really, you know, whatever, such and such, oh look, there's one of yours, Dav, you know, you go and tell him [laughs] what for type thing, you know, but you sort of get that anyway, but most people were very, they were quite understanding about that, so they didn't sort of, you know, say silly things really.

BH: Sure, at that time, at university and even after, I suppose right up to the present, did you continue to follow what was going on in Northern Ireland?

DA: Totally, yeah, cos the thing about me, I'm going home tomorrow, I've always gone home regularly because we're a close family and because partly through my job I've been able to wangle it where I've I covered Northern Ireland for five years for one of my previous companies, and I'm covering them now for the *Mirror*, so I'm going home tomorrow and on Saturday I'm going to do the Northern Ireland-Holland game and then Saturday I'm going to go to Germany and do the Northern Ireland-Germany game, so I've, we've always been able to go home and I've always taken the kids, when we went home over in the summer and we're going to go again in new year, so we always go home as a family, say, once or twice a year, and then I would pop home two or three times on top of that so, you know, I've always kept closely in touch, and then, you know, we speak to the family, we speak to my mum regularly, maybe four or five times a week, you know, message my sister and all that there, so, no, I've always been in touch, you know, with what's going on, try and get a feel for it, it's changed quite a lot though.

BH: Yeah, did you follow the politics and stuff like that?

DA: Yeah, you follow the politics, although it's harder over here because obviously it's not on the news as much, you have to go looking for it, unless it's really bad, cos over here obviously it's north-west news and sort of the mainland news, or the British news, whereas, but you do, you know, you'll speak to people and say what's happening and, you know.

BH: So that's quite interesting how when you're over here, at that time at least, you're not getting as much of it on the, you know, the English or the British news.

DA: No, no, you don't, just if it's–

BH: But then you're on the phone to your dad or your relatives and you're getting something via that channel presumably, like.

DA: Yeah, yeah.

BH: Right, okay.

DA: Cos it'd be stuff like, for example, like, you know, you'd be asked what's happening around the election, what's happening with Stormont, **[01:00:00]** you know, the collapse, are they ever going to restart that thing, you know, that sort of, you just, just stuff like that you just, not all the time, but just, you're more interested in how people are getting on, more local news rather than that, but yeah, that would be a way of just keeping in touch with that.

BH: You mentioned there you met your future wife in your second year at Liverpool. What happened after that then? Did you get married after university?

DA: Well, from, once I had finished my degree in '91, as I say, by then I had done the student journalism, I thought I'd like to pursue a career in sports journalism, I thought right, well, what I need and then I looked at what I'd need at this point and I was told oh you need a postgraduate diploma in one of the top colleges really to prove that you, you know, that's

the best thing you can do rather than going straight in, so I looked round and the best one was in London, City University London, so I went there, did a year down in London, and then when I was there I did work experience on the *Northwich Chronicle*, but also the *Daily Express* sports desk, and the *Express* was brilliant because they were in Blackfriars Street at the time, in the centre of London, right on the Thames. There's a guy, Kevin Moseley, who was brilliant to me, he took me round and he let me shadow him at matches and press conferences and I met Paul Gascoigne and stuff like that, and did a few matches down in London and, you know, covered the London marathon for him, even got a piece in the *Daily Express*, which I've still got in the attic back home, you know, one of the, first piece in a national newspaper, so that really fuelled it, once you've done that then you're thinking wow, I want to do this properly because, every journalist would probably deny it, but what's true is that that ego trip of seeing your name and then your picture, by-line in a newspaper, knowing that maybe hundreds of thousands of people have looked at that on any one occasion, you know, that's a big buzz, so I wanted to do that. So then once I'd finished my newspaper postgraduate programme I thought I need a job. I'd done my first work experience in the *Northwich Chronicle*, which is a weekly series up here, so then I wrote to the editor-in-chief, said hi, do you remember me, I did work experience, blah, blah, blah, any jobs going, and he said fair enough, there's one in Chester, *Chester Chronicle*, so then that was the first job. So there was never a conscious decision not to go back home, it was just, it was just that that led to there, led to there, led to there, but the things were over here, and then it got to the point where my mum, why don't you come and work in a newspaper back home, but by then what I could do here was better than what you could do back there, and then of course by '97 or '96, '97 I was working sort of on a national level, covering Premier League football and all that, and of course Premier League's, you know, it's the biggest league in the world, isn't it, so then you think well, there's no way I'm going to leave that to go back and cover Irish League or something like that there, although I'll always say that the best time of my career, the best five years ever was covering Northern Ireland. I just loved that so much because it was when Lawrie McMenemy and Sammy McIl-, it was a very unsuccessful period in our history, but it was eventful, all sorts kicking off and it was just great because I loved going home, maybe this is maybe a bit of an ego trip, but I loved going home to cover Northern Ireland, and everybody would say you're covering, you work over in England for the newspaper, you're coming to cover Northern Ireland, you get to go to Windsor, and then, you're going away with them, you're going to, you know, and that, I loved that and, you know, getting to know the players and some of the managers and stuff, that was a great experience, cos at the end of the day I'm very, very proud, you know, of where I come from and I'll always try and, you know, portray ourselves in the best possible light, and I know a lot of people have got a negative opinion of us, and probably rightly so in some respects, but I always think at the end of the day, you know, it's where you come from and you'll always fiercely defend your home.

BH: Yeah, it sounds as also like, you went and done your postgrad in London, but then the papers that you where applying for after that were kind of north-west based.

DA: Well, that was the first one, yeah, I think that the issue I had, I started, journalism is very poorly paid, especially the start, so I was then working up there and my wife by this stage became a teacher and got her first job down in West Sussex, in Horsham.

BH: Right, okay, so she was down south then?

DA: She was down south and I did look at, you know, when I was in Chester, could I get a job down south with her, and then the problem I found then was that because London was so big, London had developed so big that it's not like the north west of England, say, where, the north west of England you've got big cities and big towns within literally thirty minutes, if you take Liverpool, Manchester and then you've got places like Chester, you go to Bolton, you go to Blackburn, you know, it's all, and they were, you know, places with proper newspapers you could pick up, but down there there was nothing, there was just, it was very hard and then also the pay was so bad as well, you know, you'd be almost breadline because the cost of living down south and stuff. So I tried to do it, but there was nothing came up, and then I went to Cardiff briefly, and then I did a bit of freelancing, and then I worked for a year in Leicester, and, as I say, it was only about '97 when then I got a job in the Press Association, PA, that's a big operation, they were operating out of Leeds at the time, and again that's when I started covering north-west football properly and doing the Northern Ireland thing, so that settled me in Manchester for a year and then, as I say, my wife got the job in Bebington, then we both came back up. But I think we would always have done that because she's from the north west and she was quite a homebird, she wanted to be near her parents, so she was quite, you know, happy to come back up, and I've always felt an affinity with this region, as I say, the Liverpool thing going back to coming to see my aunt and uncle, and then Chester was the first place I worked and Chester's a lovely city and, you know, it's a lovely little intimate city and I got a feel for it, and through that I got to know Frodsham so that's pretty, you know, here, so that it was all, this is almost like, you know, the second home for me that I love, you know, I love it round here, it's where I know and I think they're good people as well, so that's where I ended up.

BH: What about when you met your wife at university? Presumably at some point you met her family and parents and things like that. Did they make reference to your Northern Irish background?

DA: No.

BH: No, were they quite curious about anything?

DA: Do you know, I can't remember that if they were. Her father was a big Liverpool fan, so the conversation was just about Liverpool, and then Marcel was French, she's like, if you can imagine Madame Cholet in the Wombles, she just cooked massive meals.

BH: Yeah [laughs].

DA: Yous just eat them. She'll maybe do me an extra potato, cos he's Irish, maybe you'll have another one, and that was about it.

BH: And what about then, cos obviously the person who was going to be your wife's a Catholic, when you bring her back to your parents what's the reaction to this, like?

DA: Yeah, aga-, it's a weird thing, it's almost as if it doesn't matter cos she's English and you live in England, that was almost how it, it works, which would be, and I know that would be a complete different scenario if we tried to move to Northern Ireland and bring our kids up there, but no, there was no problem.

BH: Sure, on that, did you ever think of moving back?

DA: No.

BH: No, and why was that, just for–?

DA: Just career, just, I think once I'd diverged on that path there was no real going back and there was nothing that would have taken me back, you know what I mean, because then once I started doing what I'm doing, you see, you're not going to stop covering the Premier League, you know, cos I, when I worked for, I was covering Manchester United through the treble-winning season, you know, you're not going to turn your back on that and go and watch Glenavon v Coleraine, are you, you know, when you're literally travelling the world with Manchester United, you know, winning the Champion's League in '99 in Barcelona, you're going with them to Japan, you're going with them to Brazil, you're doing all that and then you're travelling with, you know.

BH: Yeah, sure, you went back quite often with your wife and your children. What did they think of Northern Ireland whenever you took them over? What were their impressions of it?

DA: Well, they've got their cousins, they like playing with their cousins, they like seeing granny, and I think they quite like it when you go out and you do stuff with them, and I think they quite like Tayto cheese and onion crisps and stuff like that there, yeah, they don't mind it, you know, I'm not saying that, I know what'll happen, I know with a lot of Irish immigrants is that once, you know, I'm gone I don't think they'll go back. They only go because I take them type of thing. I'm not saying they would go back then in their later years and, you know, take their children and say oh this is where your grandad's from or whatever like that there.

BH: Well, that's what I was going to ask next. I mean, were they interested in your background?

DA: Not really, not really.

BH: Presumably then, it sounds like you didn't try to inculcate an identity.

DA: It's interesting that, yeah, now you're bringing me onto the plastic Paddy thing, and I've always been of the opinion, I'm fiercely proud to be Northern Iri-, and if Northern Ireland were playing England in this house those four are English and I'm cheering for Northern Ireland, if Northern Ireland win I will rub it in their faces type thing, that's the way I am, but they're English, you know, and I've brought them up as English, funny there's, there's a, there's a fella I know, and funnily enough he's from Northern Ireland, but he's got the kids supporting Northern Ireland and wearing Northern Ireland kits and I'm sort of thinking yeah,

if you, but not when they're dead young and, you know, you don't want to be indoctrin-, I just think like, you're born in England, you're raised in England, your friends are English and you speak with an English accent, you're English. You've got Irish blood in you, but in the same respect your moth-, your grandmother's French, you know, but, you know, I don't really like that, you know, where the immigrants or sort of the children of the first generation are almost more Irish than the parents type thing, and, you know, so, but maybe [laughs] I've gone too much the other way because they've got so little interest [laughs].

BH: I know. Would they understand anything about the politics of Northern Ireland? Could they explain–?

DA: I suppose it's different now because they haven't witnessed the Troubles, cos it's been, you think the Good Friday Agreement was 1998, so Northern Ireland's been on the back burner a lot, you know, for their whole lifetime, so they're like, more, Brexit's exercised them more, so no they're not really, they're not really interested in the politics of it.

BH: On that then, the peace process, what did you think about that whenever it happened? **[01:10:00]**

DA: I remember at the time I was living in Manchester, I remember even Gordon Brown, Gordon Burns, who obviously was from Northern Ireland, did *The Krypton Factor*, was presenting on BBC North West at the time, and even he said like, you know, a little bit of editorial, which he'd never do, you know, as someone from Northern Ireland I must say this is a, you know, an emotional, proud moment, a great moment hopefully for Northern Ireland that peace has been agreed, that can only be positive because I'm so happy now that there's maybe been, say, over the last twenty years, there's bad things still going on, but generally speaking that those, the people who've grown up, say, in the last twenty-five they haven't had to go through what, you know, we went through growing up. There's obviously still, you know, divisions and stuff, but certainly in terms of the threat level and the violence they haven't had to witness that and, you know, the way that Belfast has, you know, prospered, and you know, it's just, it's like Leeds, Manch-, like, you know, one of those northern, always reminds me of like, just another northern city, and people now go there and you speak to people and then they'll say to me, oh I've been over to Belfast, and that's quite nice when then people say, you know, they're now going there for like, hen weekends or just trips, they'll go oh I was in the Titanic Quarter and did such and such, and what do you call that bar down, down past Queen's University, what is it you call it, I was in there and I was in that one opposite the Europa, that was great, you know, and then they're doing all that and if anything they're being positive about it, which is really good.

BH: Yeah, yeah, I'm wondering as well about, you know, you said you, when you were growing up the abnormal normality because you're actually in it, but then you move away and obviously your perspective or your relationship to it changes. Did you begin to think anything diff-, think differently about Northern Ireland when you were away?

DA: Oh yeah, definitely, because what, when you're in it you only see your side of it, so you think you're right and they're wrong, you think that you're, you think that sort of the Protestant community that you're the victim, that the IRA are trying to kill you and the IRA,

you know, are trying to bomb, blast to bring about a united Ireland, you just think well, they're wrong, they're evil, they should be stopped, you know, if you don't put them in prison just shoot them, you know, either will do. But then it's like any situation, when you're in the middle of a row if you step, take yourself out of it and then look in from another perspective and you sort of see well, no, there's not, there's fault on both sides and one side doesn't have, as I say, a monopoly on right or the other side doesn't have a monopoly on, you know, injustice or whatever, you start to get a more balanced picture of it, and I think when you travel in the world too you then sort of see other places where people have had disagreements and maybe they've come together and you can see what happens when you do come together, and then especially when you come to Britain you see there used to be a problem, say, in Liverpool of sectarianism, and it's weird because you asked me about the reaction of my future in-laws when I first met them, but ironically it was when I met one of my sister's aunts, cos they were big Protestants, she'd say to me oh do you know, Robbie, as they call my wife's dad, Robbie's aunt was big in the Orange Order, so and then, but of course that, that's all gone and then it sort of makes you quite interested and you sort of see that can be bred out of people, you know, that with enough time, now Glasgow is behind in it, but certainly in somewhere like Liverpool, which was sectarian if you're going back to, say, twenties, thirties, you know, it had it, but it's been bred out of people to that point that my wife's, so the irony is, although my wife was a Catholic the family were all big Protestants, you know, I don't think, they weren't from Northern Ireland, but they were just, they just were, as I say, some of them, we used to, cos of course the Orange Order used to be very strong.

BH: Is this the auntie and uncle you referred to when you first moved over?

DA: Oh no, sorry, this is my wife's family, not my family, this is my wife's family, see, her family, cos her dad was from Bootle, and then that family they were, you know, her, her, so I'm talking about my wife's grandmother on her dad's side being big in the Orange Order.

BH: Is that right?

DA: And walking in the Orange Order and her, one of her aunt's saying to me hey you're alright, you're one of us type thing, even to me.

BH: Even over here in Liverpool?

DA: And then, that's a weird thing to say, and then, but of course the thing is though, but then the next generations all sent their kids to Catholic schools because they're the best schools in their area of Liverpool, which then made me think that's quite interesting because that's been, as I say, bred out of them, that sectarian attitude has been bred out of them when they've realised that there's bigger things in life to worry about, like your family, having a job, all that sort of stuff, but unfortunately that happening in Northern Ireland is very difficult because of the education system, because it's segregated which means like, you were saying to me like, you can get to maybe sixteen or eighteen before you meet someone from the other relig-, you know, it's only when you maybe go to work that it maybe sort of, but of course by then it's too late because anything, you know, they sort of basically say you're shaped almost by I'd say, maybe by the age of like, twelve, thirteen,

fourteen, whatever you're going to be a lot of it is there, certainly by the time you're eighteen, when I think of myself by the time you're eighteen you're basically finished, you smooth off a few rough edges, but essentially that's you, that's the way you're going to be.

BH: Yeah, I'm wondering as well, when you moved over to Liverpool were you more conscious of the, how dangerous your father's situation was? Were you anxious about the safety of your relatives whenever you were living over in England?

DA: No, it didn't change, again this sounds a really weird thing to say, but I didn't worry about it because it was like, then again going back to that having a normal normality, for me it was maybe it's because I always try and be an optimist, glass half-full and just, you know, like, I talk about my mum, will he come home, will he come home today, and it was really yeah, he'll come home cos he came home yesterday and he came home the day before that, you know, so, so there was almost, in many respects maybe it's one of those issues that like, I would sometimes think, you know, life's far too serious, too grave a matter to be taken seriously, so don't worry about the really big stuff, the big stuff that you can't control, cos I suppose you could say then that I can't control that, so why worry about it, just, just, you know, we'll think well, no, just think it'll be okay.

BH: Sure, you mentioned when you were growing up that almost coercively you had to go to church on Sunday and you went to the BB and so on, but you sort of intimated that you were dissatisfied with sort of the restrictiveness of some of that, certainly the monotony of it anyway. When you moved then to England did going to church remain an important part of your life?

DA: No, no. I've got my Sundays and I played football on Sundays, it was very liberating [laughs]. I discovered that the pubs were open on a Sunday, again not that I drink, but when you're at university Sundays just became, you know, you'd do sport in the morning and then you'd go to the pub with your mates or, you know, do whatever, and then, as I say, Flanagan's Apple was always the thing on a Sunday night in Liverpool, end up down there, something like that, that's what I mean, it was such an exciting time when you go to university cos as you know all of a sudden it's twenty-four-seven, do whatever you want, nobody's telling you to go to bed, it's up to you to take responsibility, go to your own lectures, you know what I mean, it's just, and you can go out every night if you want, you can go to the bar, you can go to the cinema, you can go to the theatre, you can do whatever you want, and there's so many opportunities, so many different things to do, you know, it's just wonderful. No, I didn't, that all stopped, as I say, it's only really with the children coming along and, as I say, going to the Church of England school and then at year four they're asked do they want to do their first communion, and then you say do you want to do it, and I remember it was actually the eldest, she says yeah, I do dad, and she says and, you know, and we should go to church beforehand, which I thought was very big of her because I don't like people who just roll up to church just for Christmas and bap-, you know, christenings, all that, you know, she, and then we've sort of gone since, and then I thought again well, it's not a bad thing to maybe, again teach them a bit of right and wrong, maybe to show them there's a big world out there, to show them there's people less fortunate than themselves, and I thought if nothing else just get them off tech for two hours of a morning, give my wife a bit of peace cos she needs to do some marking, so it sort of stuck from there really.

BH: Yeah, what did your mum and dad think about that then? Presumably they, I'm guessing they kind of hoped that maybe you would–

DA: Well, my, yeah, mum still goes to church, I mean, my dad he died by that point, but my mum still goes to church and I think she probably quite likes it, you know, cos she thinks you should go to your church.

BH: Yeah [laughs]. Now I think I've asked most of my questions, so I'll just ask the last few questions then, okay. So do you think has the Troubles had an impact on your life?

DA: Oh yeah, undoubtedly, yeah, cos it shaped, it shaped my life, yeah. It sort of made me into the person I am today, you know, whether I like it or not because, as I say, that's what you grew up with, that was your experience, you know, there was negative effects, but like, the only thing is I'd say is because I left home at eighteen it allowed me to, you know, forge maybe a different path to, you know, I haven't been wholly shaped by it, I've been exposed to other influences, you know, after then, but yeah, no, it has shaped, how could it not, you know, when you're living in the middle of it.

BH: Sure, well, what would you say then is the significance of your migration out of Northern Ireland in relation to that experience of growing up in the Troubles?

DA: Well, I think, I think like, we made that point where I think it was, it was liberating to move to Britain and to be not defined by your religion, to be allowed to make friends with whoever you wanted really, go wherever you wanted, there were no no-go areas, you know, where I grew up in Northern Ireland there was certain bits you just didn't go to. **[01:20:00]** I remember we moved to, say, to Derry, to Drumahoe and some of our friends at the time took us over to the, like, I would have only been about eight, and they took us on a little drive over to the Cityside and took us to the Bogside, and they said you're now in the Bogside [laughs], and you're like, what, you know, quickly get back over Craigavon Bridge and, you know, stuff like that there, and even, you know, in Belfast, the only bit of Belfast that we ever, we'd go to Windsor Park or you'd maybe go into the city centre, you never went to some of the bits of Belfast, and then you take other areas, say, where there would be, south Armagh, you just didn't go, you know, these places you didn't, it's remarkable when you think back, it certainly like, it's not a big place, but there's so much of it you didn't, you didn't sort of go to really, you know, when you sort think back you only sort of had a little bit exp-, open to you really. Yeah, so I suppose when you look back that wasn't sort of like, a, and again, you make, I make the point about, you know, even just embracing the rest of Ireland, you just didn't, you didn't consider it really, you looked, I'd say Scotland was a place you looked to like, we did a lot of trips over to Scotland, you know, with the Boys' Brigade and we went to Motherwell and did school trips to Edinburgh and stuff, so that was the place you felt the most affinity with, you thought oh Scottish people are most like us. In fact, even growing up you'd identity with the Scots because you felt, whether I think whether you're a Protestant or a Catholic you identity with the Scots, cos you think they're most like us cos of obviously, that's the migration, isn't it, back and forth, because obviously with the name Anderson that's where we originally came from. In fact, there's Scottish blood in the family on my dad's side if you back, back a bit. In fact, if anything,

growing up there would be, there would've been an anti-English sentiment, you know, among us cos you just thought oh England, eurghhh, you know, which persists to this day, and if England lose at football or like, in the Rugby World Cup final I think the Celtic chip on the shoulder means you do take particular delight in seeing England, cos England have always been arrogant when it comes to sport, cos they think they invented all these sports therefore they think they're the best at them, so when someone has a high and lofty attitude, when you come a cropper from such a height it is amusing for us Celts, be we Irish, Scottish or Welsh.

BH: Yeah, so are you glad you took that decision to move to Liverpool back in 1988?

DA: Yeah, of course, yeah, definitely, cos I met my wife didn't I, and it opened up opportunities which I wouldn't have had if I'd stayed, stayed in Northern Ireland, and I think I've always been someone who wants to know what's over the next hill, what's round the next bend, so I've always been curious to travel anyway, and by coming to England and getting the job which I've had I've been able to see an awful lot of the world and I've enjoyed it. Now I'm not going to sit here and think oh yeah, I've now know how life ticks, I've got it sussed, I know the answer to life's big questions cos I've seen everything and I've experienced everything rather than somebody who's stayed at home. Well, you would, you'd never do that, you know, cos knowledge comes in different forms, but I've enjoyed seeing different places, different countries, different cultures, different peoples and, you know, what they do, and I don't think I might have been able to do that if I'd stayed, you know, where I was really.

BH: Yeah, then my next question is, do you think migrating out of Northern Ireland and settling over here has changed you in any way?

DA: What's changed, I have noticed, for example, my uncle's grandson, the migration's different now, people are migrating from the North down south cos there's job opportunities, and he works for a company in Dublin, cos initially you're thinking, oh he's going to Dublin, you wouldn't come over here, no, no and then when you start to ask questions because, it's like I said, the whole thing's changed, there was, whenever I grew up in the seventies, Northern Ireland was part of the UK, Northern Ireland was perceived to be richer than the South, which was priest-ridden, backward, you know, everybody went round on turf carts and donkeys and they didn't have any traffic lights in Donegal. That perception has changed enormously because of European Union and obviously the Irish economy's really boomed over the last twenty years to the extent that the Republic of Ireland is sucking in, I suppose the tragedy of what you're talking about is the brain drain really, it's now sucking in bright young people from Northern Ireland and then, so they're not only are they going to Britain they're also going to the Republic, and then it brings you back to that point, well, if Northern Ireland is ever going to progress and not almost be like, this ailing part of United Kingdom, which is only, you know, exists cos it's subsidised by British taxpayer, you know, it could do with those sorts of people staying there and making a success of it, you know, these entrepreneurs, these people having these, setting up these businesses, you know, doing it there, but that's the economic reality, isn't it, where people will go where the best opportunities are, as I say, so now not only is it Britain, but they're going down to Dublin as well and work in these big, you know, international blue chip companies.

BH: What about you as an individual then? Did your migration out of Northern Ireland change you in any way, do you think? Has living over here changed you?

DA: I think it, I think it, I'd like to think it has in a positive sense, I'd like to think I've got away from that tribalism, I'd like to think I'm more open-minded and, like I said before, if you're in the middle of something it's only when you step out and then you have the perspective from afar where you can sort of see well, no, no, that's not the right way to think, and now you can see the other person's side of the argument and you can see the other person's side in general, and then not only that, but you see other people's, you see other like, I, you know, I said make the thing about I wouldn't have had a lot of sympathy, say, for the miners during the miners' strike type thing, you know, cos you get everything so very black and white, you know, but now you understand more different people's concerns, different people's dilemmas, what they went through, their struggles, it does give you, you know, cos I think when you're young you only know what you know type thing, you only know what you've experienced, and it's only when you come across and you meet other people and you meet with different experiences, you know, for example, I'd say over here it's a lot about class, they'll maybe tell you what it's like to try and be working class growing up, you know, in Britain where it's, social mobility's become harder and harder, and if your parents haven't got the money to put you through university that maybe you're not going to get a very good job and therefore your kids aren't going to get, you know what I mean, you perpetuate that sort of thing, stuff like that there which you didn't think about in Northern Ireland, because of course class doesn't exist in Northern Ireland cos it's just religion where, you know, you don't worry about that, where almost like, working-class Catholics, working-class Protestants were told, you're alright, tell the working-class Prods you're alright cos you're better than the working-class Catholics, you'd just accept your lot, you know, you're on the right side of it, and yet, you know, the big thing is you look at Northern Ireland and you think a lot of people are living in poor conditions, but that's not been addressed and nobody wants to address that because that's not an issue at all, it doesn't even have an Executive at the minute, so there's nobody to do that, which is again another part of the tragedy.

BH: Yeah, do you think your sense of national identity or cultural identity has changed, and presumably when you grew you thought of yourself as British?

DA: Yeah, it has indeed because things like, you know, you become proud of all Ireland if any-, the golf, for example, take the golf. I was so pleased when the Open was in Royal Portrush this year because we all know Royal, we know that it's a beautiful part of the world, it's somewhere I always take the kids when we go home, in fact, it's one of my favourite parts of the world full stop because I just love that coastline, it's also near Coleraine where my dad's from, I love that coastline cos it's real, I love the beaches, love everything about it, lots of childhood memories from Portrush, and then for that to get, for the golf to go there was just fantastic, and then Shane Lowry won and if it wasn't going to be Rory, you know, that was brilliant.

BH: You were happy that Shane Lowry won.

DA: Very, and not, that's not just me like, I talked to a lot of people about the golf cos obviously the golf was the biggest thing that's happened in Northern Ireland this year, probably last year and it'll probably be the biggest thing which'll happen next year as well, and everyone was delighted, everyone was really pleased about it, and things like that make you proud too because the crowds were the biggest they've had for the Open, and everyone behaved themselves, and they portrayed themselves and the place in a great light, and Shane Lowry won, I just thought well, that just put the icing on the cake really, that he did that.

BH: And would you say that's a reflection of change in your sense of identity? Does it reflect a gravitation towards Irishness in any way?

DA: Yeah, again I come back to that definition of Northern Irish as well because I think if you're born on the island of Ireland you're Irish. Now you can then argue whether you're Irish from the Republic of Ireland or Irish from sort of North, but you're Irish and you're not the same, cos that's what I've realised, cos see I came to Britain thinking I'm coming to my kinsfolk here, they'll be like me, and realising they're not like me, and then you say okay, so, I don't think I'm like Catholics in Northern Ireland, but I've now discovered I'm not like British people in Britain, so what are we then, and then I say what are we, are we Camus's *L'étranger* or something like that, do we not fit anywhere, you know, does nobody want us anymore, does nobody want the *pied noir*, so what are we, and then you sort of scratch your head a little bit and you think okay, so then you do reassess yourself and say well, where do I belong and what are you, and then you sort of think well, do you know what, we are what we are, you know, we're, we're Northern Irish folk and maybe we, we say funny words like scunnered and buck eejit and we like doughy bread, like wheaten and soda, and we eat funny food like champ **[01:30:00]** and Ulster fries, which would give you heart attacks, and we like really, really strong flavoured Tayto cheese and onion crisps, but we do, and maybe that's what we are then.

BH: So that's how you resolved that potential conflict in identity, the concept of Northern Irish identity.

DA: I think, and I think it was Rory McIlroy said it and I think he was right, cos I hadn't really thought about it too much till he said it where, when you are trying to fit in and you think to yourself, you know, I don't really fe-, you know, I don't really feel British, but then I'm not Irish Irish, if you know what I mean, and there is a Northern Irish identity, cos Northern Irish I'd say, things, it's like, a black, dark sense of humour, which you have to have, you know, when you grow up where we grew up, you know, you, I still think you can retain your sense of humour, unless, Irish people are, you know, I know that's a cliché, but Irish people are famous for, you know, comedians and having a sense of humour, and I think that you do have that sort of, you know, almost gallows humour where you can, you know, have a joke even in the most dark of times, which is not being disrespectful, it's a coping mechanism, whereby if I don't laugh then I'll cry at the sheer tragedy or bleakness of this scenario, so let's try the latter, you know, really, so that, that for me would be sort of like, a Northern Irish sort of characteristic, it's almost being a bit self-deprecating as well and poking fun at each other. There's a good book, what's it, is it *The Ulster Fry* or something, if I remember it's sort of, you know, pokes fun at Northern Ireland and everyone's great at, you know,

taking the mick out of the culchies from west of the Bann who all drive tractors and check, wear checked shirts and stuff like that there, and then you've got the posh people of north Down who talk awfully, awfully and drink coffee and drink red wine, drink chardonnay with their tea and all that there, and then all that sort of different, different categories of it. No, I think we are a little distinct people now.

BH: Sure, right, I've asked all my questions. The last thing I should ask is, is there anything that I haven't asked about which is important and that you think I should have asked about?

DA: [pauses] I can't, can't really think [extended pause]. The only thing I'd say just in summation is I would, I didn't come to England and think I'm the big man because I'm here, it just worked out that way, you know, all my family are back home and [laughs] the only thing is when I go home I get accused of being English because apparently my accent sounds English, yet when I'm over here I get, you know, are you from Scotland.

BH: Yeah, I get that quite a lot.

DA: Yeah, you get the Irish bit, and I must admit I did have to round my English, Irish, sorry, I had to, have to moderate my accent a little bit because I couldn't be understood initially at first, in fact, I think one of my history lecturers, you know, almost a version of racism, used to say oh have you been over, back home over the holidays, oh your accent'll be indiscernible then, won't it, and I think thank you very much, Mr Brummie, but no, yeah, no, I wouldn't want to think that, you know, that just by coming to England it's like, oh no, I'm the big man, it's better over here, because, you know, you still go home and you see the family and the one great thing about family is it's a great leveller, and you, you know, you would never want to think of turning my back cos, as I say, I'm very, as I say, I go back regular and I'm very proud, and in fact, if you were to say, ironically in here, if you were to say to me, what is your defining characteristic living in England, then I would say number one is the fact that I'm Northern Irish [pauses] and I would never hide away from that, I would never shy away from it, in fact, I'm very proud of that cos it makes me sort of distinct, so obviously if you go back to Northern Ireland it doesn't really stand you out very much cos there's quite a few.

BH: Yeah, a question that I sometimes ask people at the end of the interview is, what does home mean to you now? Where is home and what does home mean?

DA: [pauses] I once remember in, we were in P7, and the teacher at the time was saying where are you all from, he says where's your hometown, and I was confused by this because at that time I'd lived in Bessbrook and Antrim, two places in Antrim, two places in, no, Bessbrook, two places in Antrim and then Drumahoe, where I was at the time, and I was only ten at that point. I says I don't know, I'm from all over, and he turned round to the class and he said do you hear that, Davey Anderson says he's from all over the place, and I, but I suppose I do, because even now people will say where are you from, the classic question, where are you from, and then I'll say okay, where am I from, well, I was born in Newry but I didn't really live there, and then I was in Antrim for a bit, and then I went to Derry for a bit, which defined me a little bit cos that was important between the ages of seven to twelve, and then my folks moved to Waringstown in 1982, but I left there in 1988, so although

that's where I go back to, it's weird, I don't feel as if I'm from there, if you know what I mean.

BH: Yes, yeah.

DA: Because I felt I'd been shaped before, almost before I got there, in what are the things I'd sort of do, and then you sort of get confused and think well, what, what should I say to all of that, and then you say oh I know, back home I always liked to talk about counties, so I'd say I'm a County Down man, I'm from Down, cos a lot of it in Ireland you referred to your county, so I suppose generally I like to think because my dad's from Coleraine and my mum's from Rathfriland, I like to claim the whole of Northern Ireland, I'm from the whole of Northern Ireland, I'm relevant to it all, I lived there, my dad's from there, and I go on holiday there, and take it like that. I like to feel as if I'm sort of like, an unofficial representative for Northern Irish Tourist Board, I like to talk about and I used to, in fact, there's somebody who I know in school, one of the teachers, and she says oh I need to speak to you, we're planning a trip over to Northern Ireland, where should we go, alright, fly to Aldergrove, hire a car, get yourself up to the Causeway, it's only about an hour's drive from there, make sure you do the Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge, stay in Portrush, go on to Mussenden and drive on into Derry as well, see the walls, drive on into Donegal as well if you want, hook a left down to Sligo, come back through Fermanagh and then round and back up to, to go through the Mournes. I suppose though if you said where are you from, if there's one place, I suppose where my mum's from, because with her being from a rural background, there's a house where my uncle Ed lives now and auntie Doris and that's where they were all born.

BH: Yeah [laughs], right, I think I've asked everything. Is there anything else you want to add?

DA: [pauses] Speechless for the first time [pauses].

BH: [laughs] Okay then, I'll just finish off by saying thanks very much again David for agreeing to take the time today to do this. I really appreciate it and I know you're busy and you've things to do, so I understand it's time out of your day. Thanks very much.

DA: No problem Barry.

INTERVIEW ENDS