INTERVIEW G09: J. MARK PERCIVAL

Interviewer: Dr Jack Crangle
Interviewee: J. Mark Percival
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Location: Virtual
Transcriber: Naomi Wells

Textual Note: Annotations and observations appear in square brackets (e.g. [pauses], [laughs]). Partial, interrupted or unfinished utterances are denoted by a dash. False starts, filler words and non-lexical utterances (e.g. 'um', 'hmm') are not generally transcribed. Time codes appear at ten-minute intervals in square brackets in bold type. The interview was recorded across two audio files that were spliced together to create a single audio file.

JC: Well, I've–

JMP: So sure, yeah, I'll go ahead and, and do the recording, just cos I like to have these things, cos who knows, I might say something interesting [laughs].

JC: [laughs] Yeah, no worries at all, and we'll, we'll get it transcribed as well and you can, we can send you a copy of the transcript if you want to–

JMP: Yeah, that would be great, yeah, and I'm just happy to have it really, so yeah.

JC: Yeah, sure, absolutely. Okay, I know you've, you've already sent me the online consent form, but can you just confirm verbally that you're okay for this recording to go ahead as well?

JMP: Yeah, absolutely fine for the recording to go ahead, complete, completely happy with that.

JC: Great, okay. Could you just start then by saying your name and also today's date?

JMP: Ah yeah, my full name is James Mark Percival, it is the twenty-first of August 2020.

JC: It is indeed, and so can you tell me when and where you were born, then, first of all?

JMP: I was born in Newry in County Down in, on the third of July 1963, and we kind of, I, I never lived in Newry, my mother was from Warrenpoint and we lived there for a couple of years I think, and moved to Belfast in probably the mid-sixties, I was a bit young to be sure, so as I say, I think we had, we maybe did maybe three years in Belfast and then moved to Portadown in '68.

JC: Yeah, so you would have been still quite young when you moved to Portadown.

JMP: I re-, I just about remember the move, I can sort of remember a couple of fragments of Belfast in kind of the mid-sixties, including a Twelfth of July parade at some point, it must have been ’66 or ’67.

JC: Do you, do you know what area of Belfast you were living in?

JMP: Yeah, it was, we were on, oh it’s just by the motorway, what’s the road called, Stockmans Lane.

JC: Oh okay, is that sort of to, sort of west?

JMP: It’s just beside Musgrave Park.

JC: Right, oh yeah, yeah.

JMP: So it’s kind of the row of houses that face onto the park, but on the other side of the road.

JC: Yeah, sure.

JMP: And that’s the road that gets to that kind of on-ramp onto the M1.

JC: And then you moved to Portadown when you were about five or sixish roughly?

JMP: I’d say five probably. I remember the summer of ’68 because we were in, we moved to, like, what became a notoriously kind of, loyalist estate, Brownstone Park, which is where Mad Dog Adair turned out to be from, somewhat after my time, and I mean, obviously my parents didn’t clock that at the time, but it, it was clearly a thing, and it became obvious in the first couple of years we were there I think.

JC: Yeah, I was going to ask that, like, what type of area it was to grow up in?

JMP: Well, the summer of ’68 thing, just to finish that minor anecdote which was why, I remember that because I remember asking my grandfather who was alive in the summer of ’68, but dead by the end of it, my Northern Irish grandfather, what year it was and I remember him saying it’s 1968 and I thought that seemed terribly modern, something, I don’t know, it seemed like the sort of year that would be in a science fiction film, I’d already started to read Marvel comics when I was, like, five or six.

JC: Oh right, I see, yeah.

JMP: I was already starting to, but I couldn’t really read them, I was looking at the pictures for a bit, but, yeah, it was, it was a solid loyalist area, Brownstone Park, and then kind of the, there’s, there’s slightly more kind of hairy estates kind of in the immediate area, but, and again when I was a kid I didn’t quite register that until, it must have been very early on when, when, when we were there and I was a, I was a little kid, I was playing with some of the other kids and we, we got stuck in, in the estate on one side of a pitched battle between

older youths, they were obviously Protestant and Catholic, although it hadn't occurred to me what was going on, so they were throwing stones in the middle of the estate and we were, I was on the wrong side of it to get home, so apparently it was the little kids' job to find stones for the big kids to throw.

JC: You were one of the little ones, were you?

JMP: I was a, I was a little kid, I must have been six, and my parents must have been frantic cos they could probably see what was going on right in front of the house. I don't, I don't remember how it, how it ended or how I got home, but I remember this specific incident cos I thought, I found a bit of, like, foam, like, packing foam at the side of the street and handed it to the guy and he sort of looked at me and swore at me and clipped me around the head and said, get my a fucking stone, so I remember the, the, the weird vio-, cos I thought it'd be absolutely hilarious to give him some foam cos obviously that wasn't a stone.

JC: That's interesting.

JMP: When I was six, and obviously my life was potentially in danger, but as a six-year-old it hadn't occurred to me it was a problem.

JC: Yeah, you sort of didn't really know any different, I guess?

JMP: No, I mean, that's, I mean, the thing was, like, we, we were far enough away, I mean, I remember, like, seeing stones coming in, but not actually being hit by any, and I don't actually remember being afraid either, which I probably should have been.

JC: I was going to say cos, like, '68, '69 was kind of around the time when the, the Troubles and stuff would have started to kick off.

JMP: So this probably would have been maybe seventy-eigh-, '70 maybe, when that happened because definitely something had started to kick off when, we moved into the estate before it was finished, I mean, they hadn't finished putting tarmac down the roads or stuff like that, and I remem-, I remember seeing soldiers in the street for the first time, which must've been some time in summer, maybe late summer of '69, and all the people on the estate were making them cups of tea and going out and giving them a cup of tea and my grandmother made a sunhat out of a newspaper and gave it to me to give to one of the soldiers because it was hot and sunny and she was worried about them getting sunstroke, that kind of stuff, so it, cos if, if you look at some of the histories of the era there was kind of, both communities thought that soldiers coming in was going to be a good thing for about six months and, and then the shit really hit the fan and there were some real, like, vile atrocities and the battlelines were just drawn like that, so.

JC: And was that in Portadown specifically, you remember there being quite a divide?

JMP: Well, I wasn't really aware of the divide exactly until I was a bit older, but I mean, it became obvious that Portadown was a very profoundly divided town. I mean, you probably know yourself, it's a, it was actually one of the towns that was quite, I think demographically

it wasn't that kind of, like, huge Protestant majority thing, there was quite a substantial, almost equal number of kind of Catholic kind of families in the area, so yeah, I mean, it's, I don't think, I must have been getting on for, like, twelve or thirteen before I really understood what was happening, you got the used to the, the soldiers [indecipherable], if you've talked to other people you know that, you, you know, it's kind of, there's armoured cars and armoured, you'll have seen any amount of kind of archive footage of, of that era and you just totally accept it as a kid, you just go, well, that's just what it is and I remember being, you know, you see soldiers, I've been, I've been fascinated by them carrying guns around and looking at the flak jackets and going wow, it's like on TV, so yeah, the, the first time I realised there was a thing maybe was when, you know, I was aware of kind of explosions happening in, in the town, there was famously a pub called the Chalet, which is a lovely exotic French name, but was pronounced, I didn't know it was, like, French at the time, I just thought it was the Chalet, but it was a Protestant-owned business, sorry a Catholic-owned business in a Protestant area and it was, like, bombed every eight or nine months or so, throughout the seventies and, but everybody went to it cos it was the only place that had a, I didn't cos I was too young but the older kids went there because you could drink and there was a disco on a Saturday night, so both communities tended to go, it was kind of weird–

JC: Oh okay, so it was kind of, like a mixed pub, then?

JMP: It was kind of mixed because it was Catholic in a Proddy area and, I don't want to sort of, like, mess up the continuity of the, the chronological kind of element of this, but towards the end of the seventies, when I picked up a guitar for the first time in, like, '79 and joined a band briefly, there was one guy wrote a song about that pub.

JC: Oh okay.

JMP: And about the fights that would inevitably occur at some point in the course of the evening and, but yeah, I mean, there, there were jokes about it, about this, you know, Catholic-owned pub in a Protestant area, like, so did you hear that the Chalet got bombed at the weekend, yeah, they wanted to do a new kind of interior decoration thing, they need to update their paint or whatever, it became, like, a joke about insurance, and as far as I can remember, although would probably be worth doing some research on it, nobody actually got hurt, they tended to bomb it when nobody was in it.

JC: Oh right.

JMP: The, the objective appeared to be to drive them out of the area rather than to actually injure or kill.

JC: That's interesting, the way you say people made jokes about it. It must have just become, like, so normalised that, that sort of thing happening.

JMP: Yeah, well, yeah, I mean, there's, the only one I remember for sure cos we, when we moved out of the estate which was a good move by my parents in maybe '71ish, I'm never sure, and we, at that point it was like council accommodation and we, we bought **[00:10:00]**

our first place in Portadown in a sort of much more middle-class strip on Armagh Road, really only a few minutes' walk from where we'd been before, but as you probably know things could change, like, within a, you know, thirty or forty metres there, but it was kind of, it was this weird kind of shift into kind of middle-class world, but we were probably about, maybe eight or nine minutes' walk from the Chalet at that point and I do remember, like, one of the bomb nights, being woken by the, the explosion, sometime in the mid-seventies and not, and just going back to sleep and the next morning finding it was the, I mean, I didn't think, oh my God there's a bomb, I thought, well, that's a bomb probably, went back to sleep [laughs].

JC: Yeah, yeah, it's very–

JMP: It's, it's probably, I don't know, I mean, it's, it's, I think I've turned out okay, but it probably did a, a real number on a lot of people, psychologically, in the long term.

JC: Yeah, well, I know there's a lot of stuff, a lot of research coming out now about PTSD in people who grew up through that era and things like that, so I'm, I'm sure you're right.

JMP: Well, my, my father saw a drive-by shooting, you know, he, he was a small business guy, he had a shop in Portadown, Percival Menswear.

JC: Yeah, I was going to ask that, about what your parents did for a living and, and stuff, yeah.

JMP: Well, it probably informed a lot of my kind of experience of it. He was, is, my father was a, a small businessman, he was, he had this menswear shop which he kind of ran himself, he occasionally had some extra help in, but it was mainly just him, so he had people from I guess both communities coming in there to buy clothes, he did a, a roaring rental trade in sort of, like, dinner suits and kind of wedding suits and stuff as well. My mother was the district nurse for most of her time there and then a health visitor right at the end, she kind of, like, kind of changed to doing this, like, more specialised version of that, but what that meant was both of them were in regular contact with kind of both communities and, and being a, like, a district nurse my mum was going into some of the worst areas as well as out into the countryside where all kinds of crap was going on, to help people with whatever was going on in their homes and again with health visiting, so and that, yeah.

JC: Did she talk about that a lot?

JMP: She said that there, we used to, when we got old enough to understand enough about it to worry, we would sort of say are you sure it's safe to go to these places and she assured us it was because there was a sort of, like, an informal truce, so she could as a Protestant woman go into, like, a Catholic kind of area of an estate, and because she was a healthcare professional she was considered to be neutral, at least that's what she told me, whether that's borne out by more kind of hard evidence is probably difficult to say at this stage, so yeah, she was, she would've been going to kind of both and she'd been brought up in Warrenpoint which was a very kind of mixed community, so she had, like, Catholic friends which would have been relatively unusual at that time and my dad was profoundly non-

religious, we were Church of Ireland which is the kind of the mainstream strain of Protestantism and generally fairly progressive, and my dad, I'll maybe come back to the church thing in a bit cos that's one of the things that fascinates me about ever going back there, it's just the level to which, as you'll know, religion infuses every minute of every day.

JC: Oh absolutely, yeah.

JMP: And, like, you know, the posters of the kind of the visiting evangelical, you know, speakers, the fact that it dominates kind of, it's in the news every night still, so that's one of the reasons I'm very glad that I'm not back there, still, after all these years.

JC: Right, okay.

JMP: But my dad, yeah, but to, to give you an anecdote about my dad's experience of it was, cos he was a small business guy and in the early seventies the so-called general strikes, the, the loyalist strikes, happened, I think it was '72, '73, maybe have to check on that as well.

JC: Yeah, early seventies, yeah.

JMP: Yeah, it was round about that period and the idea was that it was a protest led by Ian Paisley's kind of, kind of more hardcore unionists, well, it was actually very hardcore unionist as it turned out, loyalists, cos the idea was that all these, you know, towns across the province would close down completely to make a point about why the government wasn't doing the right thing by Protestants in Northern Ireland or something like that, and my dad got together with the trades guys in town and said we're not going to do this, right, we're not going to get pushed into doing something we don't want to do cos we don't believe in this, but he told me this story because eventually he, he said, he said something, I sort of remember what he said, it was something like some of Paisley's thugs came round to tell me to close and they, and they threatened my dad who'd been in the army in the late forties and he said no, I'm going to open. I, I don't know what the nature of the physical threats were, but what they actually ended up saying to, to my dad was, we know where your kids go to school, so he closed on, on the strike day, against what he wanted to do and sort of, like, so any kind of resistance to that had just vanished, so a lot of my kind of, my take on it is, like, was filtered through both my parents kind of experience of what was going on, so that was my dad as, on the face of it a Protestant, even though he didn't care, now certainly married to an active church-going Protestant woman, therefore, expected to tow the line by the kind of, the extremist kind of, like, shadowy end of kind of loyalism.

JC: And did he ever receive any sort, any bother from the republican side of things?

JMP: Not that I know of, which is interesting, that's an interesting question cos it never occurred to me to ask him that, I think, well, the trigger event in getting us out of the province in July of 1980, would have, I think there's probably in early '79 he saw a drive-by, where some guy in the street was shot by two guys on the back of a motorbike, and he was just walking out of work and he saw it happen and he probably hadn't seen anybody with a gunshot injury since 1949, when he came out the army.

JC: And was that, was that person killed, do you know?

JMP: Yeah, the person was killed, yeah, they, they bled out in the street.

JC: Right.

JMP: That, again I'd need to check the exact incident, but he came home quite traumatised and presumably that was the thing that really kind of pushed him into thinking, we need to get out of here and take the kids, take the kids somewhere that isn't here.

JC: Yeah, yeah, that's interesting and, and we'll definitely come onto that in a bit cos I've, I've talked to people who've, some people who've said the Troubles was the reason why they left Northern Ireland and then other people who've said that it was just kind of incidental, yeah, be interesting to talk about. So you, presumably you went to school in Portadown, is that right?

JMP: I did, and that's a, a classic, which school did you go to question, although you kind of know where I am on these things, so that's fine [laughs]. I went to, primary school was Millington, which was a new, Protestant-dominated primary in, which part of town was that, it was probably about ten minutes' walk from where I lived in Armagh Road, and then because of the slightly weird north Armagh education system, which had junior high schools and senior high schools, it was called the something plan, it was developed in the sixties as a kind of a, getting round the removal of the A-plus, yeah, whatever the, exams that kids did at eleven back then, but we didn't, we didn't do them, so there's, kind of, like, the junior high school thing was like a comprehensive school and they were formally or informally either Protestant or Catholic, and mine was obviously the Protestant one which was Clounagh, and my, my first three years in Clounagh were vile, and I kind of hated school.

JC: Right, okay, how come?

JMP: Got bullied, bullied extensively, I was kind of a naive nerd, which I kind of still am, but.

JC: Nothing wrong with that.

JMP: Well, yeah, it's like, it's something I have become very proud of over the years, but, you know, kind of naive and a bit stupid and kind of, like, always in the top stream, but because it was a fully comprehensive school there were kids from primaries that I had no idea who they were and they just didn't want to be there and I was, like, a so-, a very soft, obvious target, so that's mainly why I hated it, but yeah, it was, it was pretty grim, I couldn't wait to get out of there because at that, there was sort of a selectivity thing that happened at the end of third year, when you were, like, fourteen, and, and then people would split into kind of, like, an academic kind of route or a more practical route, and I went to Portadown College, which is a highly respected school in the area still, and the, the kids who were less academically inclined would go to Portadown Tech, the technical college, and sort of, you were channelled into sort of like trades and whatever.

JC: And were your frie-, your sort of friendship group, was that mainly from school, or in, in the area?

JMP: Yeah, yeah, yeah, absolutely from school. I didn't, you know, there's nobody in either, once I was old enough to make my own choices in these things, there's nobody in the area that I wanted to hang out with, or wanted, or wanted to hang out with me, probably, no, and then, I think, I'm still in touch with one guy that I met **[00:20:00]** in primary seven.

JC: Right, yeah.

JMP: Because we bonded over Marvel comics very quickly and, like, a, we developed a, he lived in a super hardcore kind of Protestant estate which my mother was always worried about me cycling over to, the one that's kind of out, just off Tandragee Road, where St Columba's Church is which is where we were members, at least I was till I was fifteen and decided that God didn't exist and which caused all kinds of problems down the line.

JC: So you, you went to church growing up, then?

JMP: Yeah, yeah.

JC: Just with your mum was it, or–?

JMP: Yeah, yeah, my dad would just, kind of went a bit in the early seventies, but then just didn't, stayed, stayed home and listened to classical music.

JC: Fair enough, and did you enjoy church as a child, or was it always just a bit of a chore?

JMP: It was a chore, but my friend Merv, Mervyn Dowd, he's the guy I'm still in touch with, and who I ultimately joined a punk band with in '79, briefly, he, he would, he would go there as well, so we'd go and we'd hang out and we'd sort of, like, I'd go and sit with him and we'd sort of, he, he had a, a way of measuring the length of the sermon by mumbling the words of 'Bohemian Rhapsody', so the number of times you would get through the entire lyric of 'Bohemian Rhapsody' was the measure of how long the, the sermon was, and, and I thought, that's brilliant [laughs].

JC: That's, yeah, that's a novel, novel way to measure it.

JMP: I mean, we had watches and all, but it seemed funnier if you did it with 'Bohemian Rhapsody'.

JC: Yeah, you're just, like, where is it on the 'Bohemian Rhapsody' scale.

JMP: Exactly.

JC: Yeah, yeah.

JMP: Yeah, so, so we bonded over kind of music, and so we'd go to his place and listen to cassettes and music and he was the first person who played me Sex Pistols in, must have been '78, and that was kind of a, one of the life-changing moments.

JC: Cool, and–

JMP: Yeah, go ahead.

JC: No, I was just going to ask was the church, you'd mentioned your mum was quite religious, was that a big part, big part of her life, then?

JMP: Very much right up until the end of her life She died in 2004 here, in, in Scotland, and she's buried in Dunlop churchyard, as is my father now as well, he died three years ago, 2017. Yeah, very much part of her life, she was deeply involved with the church, very good friends with the minister and his family, Reverend Herbie Cassidy, who ended up being Bishop of Armagh a bit further down the line, both he and his wife are now gone as well, but Herbie Cassidy was an interesting, an inspirational figure, I liked him very much, he was very much sort of conservative-voting kind of guy and he thought I was a dangerous radical cos I was kind of liberal and progressive, at least he would make fun of me about that, I'm not sure if he thought I was, like, really dangerous, but he was a great guy, very funny, but also during the seventies he would work with the local Catholic priest and they would organise peace marches and they would walk down the middle of, like, you know, very dodgy areas of Portadown arm-in-arm, like, daring people to sort of like throw stuff at them, which didn't happen, although both he and the priest had death threats on numerous occasions for consorting with the enemy.

JC: Yeah, that must have been a very brave thing to do at that time.

JMP: He's an astonishingly brave man, you know, I can't imagine what kind of strength of character it would need to do that, I mean, I, I wouldn't, I wouldn't have the balls to do it.

JC: No, and then you said you left, or you stopped going to church when you were about fifteen.

JMP: I was, yeah, I got confirmed at fourteen, did the whole thing with the, you know, down the front, First Communion, bishop's hand on my head, welcome you into the body and the church, and because I was a science nerd I was still, you know, borrowing books on cosmology and the universe from the Portadown library and reading stuff in the, the school library as well, cos it was safer than being in the yard and I'm, like, looking at stuff going this doesn't really fit with the stuff in the Bible, and by the age of, like, fifteen I kind of understood things like scientific method and evidential kind of research and I'm, like, going, well, you know, the weight of evidence suggests to me that this a myth, now I'm not saying that's a problem, but at the time I was, like, so I'm, I said to my mum, I'm not going to church anymore cos God doesn't exist, which she had a bit of a problem with, and so she asked Herbie Cassidy to come over and have a chat with me about it, which was really weird.

JC: Yeah, how did that go?

JMP: Well, we sat in the dining room at the, you know, at this beautiful polished kind of rosewood table and, you know, where all the nice china was and I was sort of sitting there waiting for him going what the hell am I going to say, and he said, yeah, over a cup of tea, your mother tells me you don't want to go to church anymore, why is that, so I told him and he goes oh okay, I'm like, ah what, and he said yeah, that's fine, I mean, you know, just keep in touch and, you know, come if you feel like it, you know, it'll, so again incredibly, despite his conservative politics he was a very progressive religious figure who I thought was amazing until quite late on his life, he died in, seven, eight years ago I think, maybe something like that.

JC: And did your mum come to terms with you leaving the church as well?

JMP: She was okay with it because Herbie was okay with it I think, but she always expected me to come back at some point, she thought that I would see the light and, and the error of my ways, like, very late on in her life. She died of ovarian cancer at the age of sixty-seven, and when, when she wasn't super ill, when she had just been diagnosed, I remember, like, sitting beside her bed and we were talking about religion and she said, you know, I'm, I'm okay with, so she was initially very unhappy, but then she, once she accepted diagnosis and what was going to happen, she said, well, you know, I'm going to go and see my parents, I'll be in heaven and there is an afterlife and I said, well, that's, that's, that's good, and, and then she said something like, she said you don't believe in the afterlife, do you, and I went no, she said, well, I'll come back and haunt you and I went you can't say that, and she said why not, I said, well, you've just planted the idea in my head that you're going to come back and haunt me, which means that I'll imagine that you've come back to haunt me, so I'll wake up in the middle of the night and I'll have dreamed it, she goes no, that'll be me, she said, I went oh, you see, you've just done it again. She's brilliant, brilliant, I had a good relationship with her, she had, she had a spectacular sense of humour, that really dark Northern Irish thing.

JC: Yeah, yeah, no, I know a lot of people with that kind of sense of humour.

JMP: Incredibly dry, right, so, I mean, I, I find that, cos you haven't even been really away for more than a year yet, have you?

JC: No, well, I'm, I'm actually still in Northern Ireland right now.

JMP: Oh you're still there, oh right.

JC: I was, I was meant to be based in Glasgow for this job cos we were meant to be doing all the interviews face-to-face and then Covid happened, so I know more people here, like, my girlfriend's from here and stuff, so I figured if I'm going to be working remotely anyway I may as well do it here, you know, so.

JMP: Well, quite right. The reason I mentioned it was, whenever I go back I feel like my brain's on slow because the speed of the banter with, like, when I, when I go and hang out

with the guy that, and his pals, Mervyn, that I was in a band with all those years ago, it's, like, the speed of the wit, like, and I, and I, I don't realise until maybe several seconds into it that they've been taking the piss out of me, you go, I've really got to get my shit together, it's so fast and I go, that's, that, I mean, it's, it's an element of that in Scotland, but I think there's a really distinctive speed and dryness about Northern Irish kind of wit and humour and it's, it's, it's more gentle in the South, I mean, it sort of exists there, that kind of wryness, but a really kind of hard-edged kind of thing that, that, that is there, I sort of miss that, I miss the way it keeps you sharp.

JC: Yeah, it keeps you on your toes, sort of thing.

JMP: You kind, you kind of have to be otherwise you're just left behind in the banter world.

JC: Yeah, no, I do know what you mean, and that, I know what you mean about it having a dark edge to it as well, which I think is probably a product of Northern Ireland's history as well.

JMP: Well, yeah, I mean, I went to, and this is chronological, I know you'd probably like to keep me on a slightly more chronological track.

JC: No, no, no, go off on tangents as much as you want, we'll, we'll come back to things as and when needed.

JMP: This is the, the Northern Irish humour thing, like, at some point in the nineties I went to visit, Mervyn said, and he said, oh why don't we go back to your mother's hometown for a couple of days and stay in a B&B, so him and me and his then-girlfriend and some of his mates went and stayed in a B&B in Warrenpoint and then the next morning over breakfast I went to talk to the guy who owned it, somewhere just down on the waterfront near where the, what used to be the swimming pool is, in Warrenpoint, and I said, look, my, my grandparents are buried up at Clonallon cemetery which is just a little bit outside of Warrenpoint, I said could you give me some directions, you know, obviously pre-online everything, and he looks at me and he pauses and he goes, what do you think I am, a fucking tourist board, and I went, what, and he goes, **[00:30:00]** just joking with you, it's, you go and I'm like, and he did it completely deadpan like I'd really offended him, and I'm like, oh yeah, that's right, they do that.

JC: That's just, yeah, how people interact.

JMP: Or, we do that, it's just I haven't done it for so long I forgot.

JC: Yeah, and so–

JMP: So yeah, yeah, go.

JC: Yeah, no, I was going to ask if your family, like, ever talked about politics growing up or, you know, if they were interested in it, like, if you got a sense of what their views were and?

JMP: Yeah, pretty much all the time cos we'd watch the news together, initially the sort of, like, six o'clock news and then the nine o'clock news when I got older, there was, they were, I'm not sure my dad had a particular dog in the fight really. He's from Birmingham, and his, and his, my parents met in London in 1960 at a party in Notting Hill, it's all very romantic.

JC: Interesting, and then they, they decided to move back to Northern Ireland then?

JMP: That was the only financial option they had, my mother was a, a midwife, she'd just finished her midwifery training and she was working at, she was going to go back to work in Northern Ireland, ended up working in Belfast, so my dad goes in menswear and he ended up working for, can't remember the name of the company, somewhere in, like, a menswear place in Belfast, before setting up on his own, so yeah, they moved back just as a matter of kind of practicality cos my mother's parents kind of helped them get a deposit together for their first place and they actually lived at my mother's parents' house for a bit after I was born, I think maybe, like, six months, a year or something, so they had, that was the only way they could do it I think.

JC: Yeah, and yeah, it's interesting what you were saying about him kind of not really having a dog in the fight as it were, like, as an English person, and I'm wondering what your, if your mum was maybe more directly–?

JMP: Yeah, she was, but, she, she was appalled because, she would, at the situation, because the way she saw it was growing up in a, what was a fairly rural economy, which is, and a quite a mixed kind of, as, as she told the story it's, like, I mean, the Protestant and Catholic division was not strong in Warrenpoint despite Newry just being down the road. I have no idea what level of truth there is, you know, forties and fifties, you know, but yeah, I, I think she was regularly appalled at the, the shootings and the killings and bombings and, but she took the view that terrorists on both sides were, were just equally reprehensible people and that sort of the UDA and UVF were just as evil and appalling as the IRA were, so that put her in a slightly awkward position, but I think she put herself on the side of what she would have thought was normal people who were kind of moderate in their political beliefs, but were being sort of pulled apart by the kind of the extreme ends of the conflict.

JC: Do you know who your parents would've voted for?

JMP: Yes, that did come up, I think they voted unionists, but my uncle, my mother's brother, older brother who'd gone to university in Trinity, got a first class in classics from there, he's a very bright man, he's also died a few years ago, he, he was an Alliance voter, so I'm guessing my mother might've voted Alliance as well, she'd, she'd have, she'd have prob-, I think she thought mainstream unionists were probably okay, but the DUP were a bunch of nutters, I paraphrase slightly, she used other words, but she thought they were kind of, like, unhelpful and dangerous, and, but she was, equally she was quite friendly through the church with people who were both kind of Presbyterian and Baptists and some of the guys I hang out with, hung out with at school were kind of Baptists or Presbyterians, and so I always thought they were slightly odd, and the Free Presbyterians were particularly odd, one of them accused me of being one of those evolutionists when I was reading a book about dinosaurs, she came up, she came, she came over to me specifically to tell me, this is

when I was in senior high, so I must have been about fifteen and she sort of looked at the book and then she looked at me and goes, I guess you're one of those evolutionists and I went, I didn't even know that was a term, I went, but, I mean, I think evolution is a thing, she goes yeah, right, well, yes, she goes no it isn't, it's a hoax, she sa-, she told me.

JC: Yeah, she meant it as an insult, yeah.

JMP: She did and I thought, well, yes, I am, so she was, she was, she was deep in the Paisley church, so I was clearly a dangerous radical intellectual as far as she was concerned, which again I'm quite happy with.

JC: Yeah, and did you ever, like, go to the Twelfth or anything like that?

JMP: Well, early on, yes, I mean, I sort of remember this Belfast one, so it must have been the last year we were there which had been summer of '68 maybe, maybe '67, and my mum walking up to, it was just by the Balmoral train stop, so there's that bit where the road dips underneath the train line and comes up and you can go onto the Malone Park zone if you go straight on and go into town if you go left, so we went up to that corner and kind of sat there, but she brought a little stool for me to sit on, she put the stool down on the kerb in front of people's legs which is the bit I remember, I mean, like, just sitting there, it was a flaming hot day and me just being impressed by the noise and not knowing anything about its symbolism at the time.

JC: Yeah, sure.

JMP: And I think, I don't actually remember actively going to any of the Portadown ones, I remember being aware of them happening cos Drumcree was just down, down the road, it's very close. In fact that's where my friend Mervyn's father is buried, in Drumcree [indecipherable], so, so not really, my mother realised very quickly that it was kind of a flashpoint and there was this, there was this farmer's boy kid at school who was kind of, not [indecipherable], it was, it's senior high again, he was, I always thought he was a nice enough guy and he was kind of handy to hang around with cos he was huge, so if I had any problems he would sort of, you know, step in, cos I'd, I'd helped him with, so, when I was, it's almost like an American teen movie high school sort of thing, where I would help him with some of his academic stuff and he'd watch my back if there was any kind of physical danger, so and, and, and he was quite a nice kid and he, he offered to, but he was in, his father was in the lodge, he was an Orange lodge guy, and he offered me, probably in the summer of '79, he said, I've asked my dad, and he says it's okay, you can help carry the banner, and I'm like, oh right, I'll ask my mum, I was something, like, sixteen, and I told my mum and the colour just drained from her face and she goes you are not going to do that.

JC: And did you un-, did you understand why she was so opposed to it?

JMP: I think at fifteen, sixteen, yeah, I kind of realised that it was a quite a serious problem, and, but I, I kind of needed to ask her, so I could then go back to this kid and say, I'm not doing it, cos my mum won't let me, so that, that was quite good.

JC: And did you mix much with Catholics at all?

JMP: Well, that's a good question, the answer is probably before 1978, no, but in the summer of '78 my church, which I've mentioned before, Herbie Cassidy was the minister and very progressive and liberal, for the previous year or two I think the church had been involved with an American organisation called Pacem in Terris, Peace on Earth, which was a charity that paid for Protestant and Catholic kids from different parishes to fly to America, to Delaware in fact, the smallest in [indecipherable] state, by some margin.

JC: I've never been.

JMP: And, and the idea was that it'd be easy for us to mix if we were not in Northern Ireland.

JC: So it was Protestants and Catholics from Northern Ireland who went?

JMP: Yes it was, uh huh, and–

JC: And what were your, yeah, what were your views on Catholics sort of before you'd met them?

JMP: I just didn't know any, and I didn't have any views other than it's probably not a good idea to walk through the Catholic areas by yourself, cos they would spot pretty quickly that I wasn't supposed to be there, so, you know, until that point, yeah, no, I didn't, I didn't really know anybody, yeah, cos that was the year before I went to high, senior high, in senior high there were a couple of Catholic kids at the school whose parents had decided that Portadown College was a better place to put their kids in terms of educational kind of reputation, than the Catholic schools in the area, so I think it was very hard for the Catholic kids cos there's, like, a fraction of a per cent of them were Catholic there and they had to put up with kind of day-to-day kind of, like, casual bigotry.

JC: Would they, yeah, yeah, cos I was going to ask what the **[00:40:00]** sort of general attitudes towards Catholics were amongst your peers and stuff.

JMP: Well, the, the summer of '78 I think was interesting because I ended up meeting a guy who just lived across the street and I didn't know that, he lived in one of the side streets off Armagh Road, Ridgeway Park, yeah, Ridgeway Park, a guy called Peter Fleming who was just this affable, smoking, drinking fifteen-year-old and I didn't really know anybody that did those things at that time, and he just, I don't know why he liked me, he seemed like a nice guy, quite relaxed, think we bonded over Thin Lizzy, yeah, music was important, it's, like, general attitude was in the more middle-classy world I was in, what I didn't really understand until I got a bit older and started thinking critically about these things somewhere in, post-my master's, was, like, how important class was, in those divisions and that in a lot of ways middle-class Protestants and Catholics had way more in common with each other than they had with the working-class people that were around them, and I think, you know, there's, I think there's been some good scholarship about the kind of the class stuff in Northern Ireland and the way in which that is kind of the forgotten part of the

Troubles, but I don't think, I mean, we didn't kind of, I mean, we'd, we'd, there was, we had this stand-in French teacher who was just off teacher college, just around about O-level time, so it would have been early 1980, just yeah, yeah, early 1980 and I remember her coming into the class and her name was Miss Teague, T-e-a-g-u-e, which is not a Protestant name, and so she became very quickly known as Miss Taig, as the kind of a, a casual bigotry thing, now I don't know what kind of level of crap she had to put up with in the staffroom, but she, I don't think she really got much nonsense from the students in the, or the kids in my class that I remember, but the possibility is that that level of kind of casual bigotry was still imbedded in me and everybody else, I didn't even notice it was happening, so I mean, it was kind of really helpful that I knew, I mean, like, I was friendly with the Catholic girl at school and I was, that was partly because I knew Peter, the Catholic kid who lived near me and she was called Áine McCreesh, which again, not a Protestant name.

JC: Yeah, no hiding that one.

JMP: Yeah, and, and I liked Áine, and she was, she was, she was great, I mean, she was, she was a pretty tough cookie because she'd put up with whatever she had to to be there, so I kind of, I mean, I lost touch with her and pretty much everybody else after I moved to Scotland, but, so I think there was, I, I was, I had the benefit of a father who was agnostic in lots of ways and a mother who was kind of a progressive Protestant religious person who had Catholic friends, so I didn't see Catholics as the enemy in any way, I just thought you just have to be careful in Catholic areas.

JC: Yeah, yeah, so it was more the, yeah, it wasn't the individuals that you were sort of wary of, it was more the, yeah, yeah, the areas and–

JMP: No, I mean, I mean, there was a, a follow up thing to the, the four weeks in Delaware business that we did, and it was in, there's a kind of a progressive kind of, it would have come out of, like, a hippy community place called Corrymeela, which you might know, it's up on the coast near, it's off the Antrim coast road somewhere near, ah I can't remember what it's near, but it's cute and it's on the coast, and so there was, like, a weekend there where Protestant and Catholic kids from Portadown would, would go and, and hang out, and I kissed a Catholic girl in late 1978 which is pretty spectacular, so and, so I mean, that wasn't, I mean, there were quite a, a, I mean, they were a good bunch of kids as I recall, I mean, there's quite a lot of mixing, but the thing about that was that was interesting for us as the Proddy kids was that the Catholic kids were folkies mostly and they were, like, singing old Irish folk songs and I had no idea of what these things were, my mother would occasionally sing kind of, like, neutral stuff like 'Where the Mountains of Mourne roll down to the sea', run down to the sea, whatever it is, or the 'Star of the County Down' or something like that which are kind of non-denominational folk songs, but the, the Catholic kids were singing kind of, like, quite obviously kind of republican songs and stuff and my God, I have never heard these things before, this is rem-, I've never even heard a folk singer up close before at that point, so that was pretty cool, and they, they were, I mean, I kept in touch with a couple of them, one of the things that came out of that weekend was Siobhán McCann, who, who I'd kissed, dropped me like a hot potato as soon as we got back to the real world, which was very upsetting and although it would've been quite hard to maintain it, but one of the Proddy girls from my school had hooked up with one of the Catholic boys

and they tried to make a go of it in sort of, like, sort of ’78 to ’79, and I remember that being just a real shit storm because they were getting death threats from both sides for, I mean, I’m assuming they weren’t, they might have been sleeping together, they were fifteen, it’s possible, I’m assuming they weren’t, but, but they were certainly being seen out in public together, which was a, which was a–

JC: Yeah, that was just a no-no, yeah.

JMP: Absolutely, you know, that was a profound kind of, profoundly dangerous and brave thing for them to do, and they act-, they made it last for several months before pressure from both of their families, they had to sort of knock it off, which is kind of a real shame cos they were, they were a great couple, they were the cute couple, they were the, you know, the good-looking kids who kind of hung out together, just happened to be on the wrong side of the fence.

JC: How do you think your parents would have felt if you, if you had have stayed with, is it Siobhán?

JMP: Siobhán, oh well, I think I wouldn’t go as far as to call it a relationship, it was, like, a, a few stolen kisses outside Corrymeela’s residential centre, I don’t know, I think my mother would have seen it as being a dangerous thing to do, rather than having a problem with whoever the girl was, you know, cos then, you know, if I’d had to go into that area to meet with her then I would have been in danger and equally she would have been if she’d been hanging, maybe not in Armagh Road which is this kind of middle-class strip, but certainly she would have to walk through areas that are not good for her, to get to me, so it would have been dangerous, so I think my father probably wouldn’t have cared other than my welfare and my mother probably would’ve been the same.

JC: Yeah, okay.

JMP: Maybe, that’d be my best guess, I mean, I didn’t really experiment with it, in fact I didn’t tell them about it cos it’s a Catholic girl, thinking about it, cos I hadn’t really kissed any girls at all, I was extremely excited about the whole kissing girls thing, this fifteen wee man, I was great.

JC: So this was kind of, like, mid- to late seventies, and I suppose, I suppose that was also around the time when your parents started considering leaving Northern Ireland?

JMP: Yeah, yeah.

JC: I’m wondering, did they, did they talk to you about that, the possibility of leaving, or consult you?

JMP: They di-, they talked to me, but not to my younger brother and sister, I have a sister Karen, she’s two years younger and a brother John who’s five years younger than me, so they talked to me about it as the older, the oldest person, the elder sibling, eldest sibling, and there were, I think there were a couple of specific things that, the shooting that I told

you that my dad actually saw, but I think there was, there was a notorious attack on some British soldiers on the road between Newry and Warrenpoint which was triggered from a line that had been run across Carlingford Lough which happened I think in '78 maybe, it was one of the kind of, the higher body count attacks on the British Army, I think seventeen soldiers were killed, or something along those lines, it was, like, it was well, it was well into double figures and it was a part of the world that my parents knew really well and it's where my mother had grown up and where she thought this kind of stuff couldn't happen, I think, so there was that, plus there was a bomb in the late seventies, my dad's shop was right on the edge of town, would it have been the western edge of town, on the corner of Thomas Street and Church Street and that's where the barrier was, the security barrier was, into the city, into the town, there was, like, a, like, a car barrier and you had to sort, a checkpoint, and there was a, so there was a little kind of checkpoint kind of guardhouse and there was, like, a, a huge kind of concrete thing on either side, the big circular concrete, kind of bases for the, **[00:50:00]** the barriers that raise and, and fell, and so they blew up the checkpoint which is right outside my dad's shop and it blew in his windows and destroyed all the stock and stuff, so I think there was a series of events that looked a lot like an escalation in things that were directly affecting the family, and I think my parents thought sooner or later one of us is going to get seriously hurt or killed, so we need to get out and, and, you know, we were in no way involved. I mean, not, like, you know, we were living next door to a guy who was a part-time UDR guy, so maybe that was kind of a problem, the, the son of the house would show me how to strip an SLR rifle in the shed, then you think he'd, and again I'm thinking, well, that's normal, but you tell it to anybody else who was fifteen in the late seventies that you watched a guy strip an SLR rifle and put it back together again in ten minutes, like, that's unusual.

JC: Yeah, it wouldn't have happened in, like, England or, or something like that probably.

JMP: Right, you know, it probably wouldn't have happened in most places and you know, and it, it didn't even occur to me that it wasn't particularly wise for an adult UDR part-timer to give his fifteen-year-old son access to firearms. Even if there weren't any bullets around it's, like, still, probably wouldn't have been that hard to find the ammunition if you wanted to, but, so yeah, I think there were a series of events that kind of, like, chained together and led my parents to think that the situation was only going to get worse, which in fact it did, the early to mid-eighties were kind of, like, the absolute nadir of the Troubles, there was some really awful stuff happening, so they were right that getting out was the right thing to do in terms of the escalation of, of the conflict.

JC: And how did you feel about that at the time, cos, I mean, you had friends in Northern Ireland, you were in, you said you were in a band for a while and stuff like that, so?

JMP: Yeah, I was, I was in the band at the time, and, so and the band was starting to, we weren't, we played our first gig at an Orange hall, which I'm sure my parents didn't think was a very good idea, the other band that was on the bill, his dad was big in the lodge, so we got access to the hall, which I'm pretty sure the local guys didn't like very much, it was two punk bands playing.

JC: Yeah, I was going to say, a punk gig at Orange hall, it must have been a bit incongruous.

JMP: Yeah, it was, the headlining band were called the Seamen, can you see what they did there.

JC: I see what they did there, yeah.

JMP: Yeah [laughs], which we thought was hilarious and we were a band called the Metoids, which we thought made us sound like a New York punk band from lower Manhattan.

JC: I could see that.

JMP: Yes, and we decided that, we, we had a choice of Sex Pistols songs to play, we chose not to play 'God Save the Queen' in case somebody killed us, so we, so we played 'Holidays in the Sun' instead.

JC: Yeah, good choice, what did you play?

JMP: Yeah, I played guitar and I sang some of the songs and the bass player sang some of the songs.

JC: And then, yeah, so, I mean, how did you feel about leaving all that, everything you had in Northern Ireland behind?

JMP: I didn't want to go, I mean, I, I wanted to sort of do my A-levels at the college and then decide to go somewhere, I'd always thought, imagined I'd go to Scotland to university, in an ill-defined kind of way, but I didn't think I would be sort of skipping over two years ahead of that, so I didn't, I didn't want to go, I was pretty upset about the whole moving business.

JC: And did you tell your parents that?

JMP: Yeah, they were like, no, then they were like, it's for the best, trust us, and it was a, you know, it was kind of hard for me and my siblings, but it was even harder for my dad because he didn't have a job to go to, and my, my mum had a job, she got a nursing management job but at Ayrshire Central in Irvine, so we lived in a staff house for the first three months of being in Scotland between July and December, I think [indecipherable].

JC: So is that why they chose Scotland then, cos your mum found a job there?

JMP: Well, yeah, that, that, and I think they thought, it's close, it's easy enough to get back, we took my grandmother as well, it must have been awful for her, my grandmother would have been in her, she was into her seventies at that point.

JC: Oh so she moved with you?

JMP: Yeah, she moved, she, she was already living with us after the death of my grandfather, so, which is quite a Northern Irish thing to do, now that I think about it.

JC: Yeah, it is quite.

JMP: Yeah, having three generations in the house rather than two, so yeah, she was with us and, so it must have been hard for her, really hard for her, I know it was, and, but my dad was working in some, it's a little shop that still exists in, in Argyll Street in, in Glasgow and they sort of, like, they treated him as a kind of, like, a shop assistant, and he'd been his own boss for at least ten years, fifteen years nearly.

JC: So did he have to sell the business, then?

JMP: Yeah, he sold the business, yeah.

JC: Yeah, yeah, it must have been tough.

JMP: Well, I think, yeah, the business was doing okay despite everything, you know, it was turning over and he was, he had an income, so he could support his family, so, but, but they needed both of them to be working I think to afford the mortgage, so yeah, it was very, very hard on him cos he'd never been unemployed ever, and eventually he had, he, he quit the job because the money was terrible and they were treating him like crap and, and it was very, very hard for him, yeah.

JC: And so you were seventeen, were you, when you moved?

JMP: Yeah, that's right, I was seventeen, we, we moved about a week after my seventeenth birthday, so we actually travelled on very, overnight between the eleventh and the twelfth because it turned out it was quite cheap to go, to go to Scotland overnight cos we were going the opposite direction when everybody was piling over from Ayrshire, to, to go to the marches, and as you, I mean, you probably know there's kind of, can we just pause, just for a second?

JC: Yeah, of course. **[00:56:26]** [The two interview audio files were spliced together here].

JC: Great, yeah, that's us going again.

JMP: Yeah, okay, yeah, okay, lovely. Yeah, yeah, so we, but it was weird cos it was, we, it was me and the moving guy and my dad crammed into the cab, cab of this thing and we went over night between the eleventh and the twelfth, so we kind of arrived early, I think my mother and my grandmother had gone over early to get some stuff set up, but they didn't have any of our stuff, I mean, we were the last, like, everything in the back of the lorry that we were going to take, but one of the weirder things about it is I remember listening to the radio, and cos it was the summer of 1980 and I was, despite being into punk music I was also really into ACDC and Motorhead and metaly things and they, they played the new ACDC single, which was I think 'Back in Black', or 'You Shook Me All Night Long', can't remember which one it was, whatever the first single off *Back In Black* was, and I'm going ooh it's the new ACDC single, that's the only thing I can remember about sort of driving overnight between, I don't remember anything about being on the ferry, I remember

coming off the ferry and it being sort of dawn, and never having been anywhere that early in my entire life, my parents let me have a seventeenth birthday party in the house.

JC: In the new house or–?

JMP: No, in the old house before we left, at that, at that point lots of stuff had been packed into packing cases and a lot of stuff was either in storage or just ready to go, but they said, you can have a party as long as nobody smokes or drinks.

JC: Sounds like a great, great party.

JMP: Well, so, of course people showed up and they, they had, they had concealed their cans of cheap lager and their cigarettes and, and I'm like, oh you can't do that and they're like, no, it'll be fine, I'm, oh you can't, my mother, so, so I remember stuff like that which is fun and we, we played, the band played, much to the maybe lack of amusement of the people who were there, we set up in the corner of a room and played.

JC: And then, so when you moved you, presumably you went back to school when you were in Scotland?

JMP: Yeah, yeah, I, and the thing about being in Scotland was school starts about a, a month earlier than it does in Northern Ireland, like, it was, like, mid-August that school started instead of early September.

JC: Yeah, so you didn't get much of a holiday, then.

JMP: I had no real holiday, I mean, I didn't have too much time to be depressed, although I was, maybe about a week, and my mother, being a stickler for detail, had made sure I had the correct school uniform at Irvine Royal Academy where mostly school uniform I think was optional, Irvine Royal isn't there anymore, I think it merged with one of the other Irvine schools, the, the, one of the buildings is still there, I think it's been converted into something, the other one's gone, the older building, the red sandstone from the early 1800s one, it's still there, the late 1800s building, the new campus, it was kind of flattened and there's, like, modern flats there now, but Irvine Royal I think was chosen, there was, there was one that was further away in Irvine and I found out later on that Irvine Royal's kind of, like, the, the, the middle-ranking school, or was the middle-ranking school, and it was also full comprehensive which was new, I absolutely remember my, my first day there like it was a video I can play back in my head.

JC: What, what happened then, on your first day?

JMP: Well, it's, you know, they took me in and I'm wearing my immaculately pressed uniform, they took me to the school office and then they took me to the first class which was an English class, Mrs Kennedy, maybe, and she said oh right, and stood me at the front of the class, like they do, and said and this is Mark, he's just joining us, he's from Northern Ireland, so, you know, be nice to him or something like that, and I'm, like, sitting there, I'm looking round and, like, half the class isn't wearing the uniform and I'm wearing this

absolutely immaculate uniform, and I'm, like, I think I might be sticking out a little bit here, and there's actually a couple of people who were in that class who I'm still in touch with, at least one person, so there was Susan who's fantastic, she lives in Brighton and, so like, whatever that it, forty years on I'm still going to Brighton occasionally and getting hammered with her and her husband, so that's kind of good.

JC: So you made, you found it okay making friends and stuff?

JMP: Well, actually Susan and her pals were the only ones that I kind of really got on with, there was a, there was a new kid as well who'd come down from Giffnock, so it must have been like hell on earth for him, cos he was this sensitive high-achieving kid from Giffnock, you know, kind of, as, as you probably know it's kind of, like, one of the more upmarket kind of suburbs of Glasgow, in fact it doesn't even consider itself to be a part of Glasgow, and, so I'm not quite sure what, what his, I can't remember, I know his father was a bank manager, that's what it was, so his, his father had taken a job in Irvine, or been offered a job in Irvine, instead of Giffnock, and so the family moved, and yeah, looking back it would have been a pretty easy commute if you'd wanted to do it, but–

JC: What, what was the school like, was it fairly sort of–?

JMP: It was a, it was a mix of, I, I, in, in a lot of ways I got off lightly compared to my brother and sister because I was in the Highers, I went in to do Highers, and they were going in, my brother went into first year and my sister went into third year, so they were in the fully comprehensive, everybody's there kind of thing, including the kind of lower-income kids, the kind of kids who were likely to punch you in the face for being from somewhere else, so, and the only problem I had was, I think I mentioned it in the emails, like, day one at lunch time I think, I, I got a, yeah, maybe day two, day three certainly, I got pinned against the fence in, in the schoolyard by three non-uniformed sort of blokes in the same year asking me where I was from and I thought that's it, it's all over for me and this is going to turn into an unpleasant kicking and I, I at that time had been practising karate, I'd been doing karate for a couple of years, so my, my dad thought it would be good for his boy to know how to fight, cos clearly that was going to have to happen at some point, and actually it was true cos it gave me a physical confidence that I, I, as a skinny nerd I didn't have before, so I knew that if the worst came to the worst I could at least inflict some damage on them, even if there was three of them, I wasn't sure whether it would be wise to fight back that hard, but still, anyway, so it didn't come to that, they realised I was from Northern Ireland and they said oh that's good, if you'd been English we would have kicked your head in.

JC: That's interesting, so Northern Irish was alright, then?

JMP: Yeah, apparently Northern Irish was alright and, but what they didn't go to the next thing which was, you know, Rangers or Celtic, which is kind of what I expected, and they didn't, they didn't do that.

JC: Yeah, I was going to say, was there much of that sort of Rangers-Celtic, Catholic-Protestant stuff around?

JMP: I think Irvine Royal was probably mostly a Prod school cos there was a, a Saint something school in Irvine and what I obviously didn't realise, I don't think my mother had any inkling of, was exactly the level of kind of sectarianism that kind of is in embedded in Ayrshire, particularly south Ayrshire, you know, that was novel to me, you don't see, like, red hands of Ulster painted on rocks in, you know, Girvan or some things, like, hey, what, I thought we left that.

JC: Yeah, it must have been strange.

JMP: It was kind of odd, I mean, it was kind of, I, I don't think people were that bothered about it in, I don't remember much discussion about that at school, and very quickly one of the good things that happened to me, which gave me some distance from the potential of being randomly attacked, was that they made me a prefect, which on the face of it, after two weeks I was a prefect, and you have to sew this, this yellow kind of, like, piping sewed into your blazer, so that you're even more of a target, but what it, it meant was I could access the sixth form common room, cos I was a prefect, even though I was in fifth year, so that meant there was a, I had a safe haven to go to every single lunch time, so I'd go there and I'd meet people and hang out and talk about stuff that wasn't work and music and whatever and the people there were okay, I got to hang out with the drama people, they were quite a good bunch as well, as you might imagine a bit more progressive and interesting.

JC: Yeah, sure.

JMP: So, yeah, that, yeah, that was pretty good.

JC: It wasn't too traumatising then, by the sound of it?

JMP: Initially it was, I mean, I hated, I didn't really like Irvine Royal very much, but I mean, the, the bit that was kind of, once I figured out a way of staying safe there it was alright, and then, you know, and eventually people would, I got invited to a couple of parties and I said oh was there other parties before and they went yeah, but we didn't invite you cos we thought we'd have to invite the other guy and they didn't like the sensitive guy from Giffnock for some reason, I thought he was okay, but, you know, they said oh we thought you were friends with him, no, we just started on the same day, right, so they thought I was quite [indecipherable] and through going to, like, **[01:06:27]** parties there it was kind of interesting going oh right, so this is what gin is and this is what proper, the thing that struck was people there seemed older, that, that was an overwhelming impression, that people who were the same age seemed more mature.

JC: More sort of sophisticated?

JMP: Not necessarily sophisticated, just more grown up, they looked more grown up, they talked more about smoking and drinking and sex than any of the kids I hung out with in Northern Ireland.

JC: I'm wondering if the religious aspect was an influence on that at all?

JMP: What, you mean back in, in?

JC: Yeah.

JMP: In, in the province, oh probably yeah, yeah, yeah, and, you know, there was, I think I, I went to a couple of church things with my mother, just to sort of keep her company, cos nobody else was going, and met a couple of nice people there, but nothing that turned into anything, yeah, it was kind of, it was okay and yeah, at the end of that run of being at Irvine Royal was, you could tell that they were quite an aspirational school because they had the *dux* and the *proxime accessit* thing going, so *proxime accessit* is, for the record, second best and *dux* is best and I, I got the *proxime accessit* cos there was this kid called Clyde something who was just, like, he was a super smart guy and he was my kind of nemesis in terms of academic achievement, I mean, like, coming, coming second out of a whole school is not bad, but it annoyed me cos I should have been first.

JC: Yeah, if there's someone better then–

JMP: But he was, he was just a bit better at pretty much everything, I always kind of wonder what happened to Clyde, I lost track of him.

JC: And did you have a favourite, like, subject or anything that you enjoyed the most?

JMP: Interesting question. I was really good at English and I wanted to do English at university, but I was persuaded not to do it by my parents and my careers guide, she said, well, what are you going to do with an English degree, you know, I work in a department of kind of media and communication, I teach popular culture, I mean, English looks pretty mainstream by comparison, but, so yeah, no, I kind of, I did, I did an unusual suite of Highers for that period which was three sciences, English and French.

JC: Right.

JMP: And, no that's wrong, I wanted to do, I wanted to do six and they wouldn't let me do six, I wanted to do French, they wouldn't let me do it, English and mathematics, so English, mathematics and three sciences and you're not really supposed to do three sciences.

JC: Okay.

JMP: At least at that point you could choose two, so there was kind of, you can choose two, two from each kind of group, so I did, I was quite good at, I quite liked sciences, but that was before I realised how hard university sciences were actually going to turn out to be.

JC: Is that what you did at uni, then?

JMP: I started off doing chemistry at university, and I kind of really wanted to do English cos I love writing and I love reading and I thought, like, English literature or language would have been a perfect degree for me, but as I say I was persuaded against it.

JC: And where did you go for uni?

JMP: Edinburgh University.

JC: Edinburgh, so you moved, did you move down to Edinburgh?

JMP: Yeah, yeah, Pollock halls of residence in October of 1981, maybe it was September, no October, yeah.

JC: It's interesting you said you'd always thought you might want to go to Scotland for uni and then, then you ended up there, but in slightly different circumstances I guess.

JMP: Yeah, and I, I kind of, a lot of people who were in the same class as me at Irvine Royal, most of them went to Glasgow University, which as you may know had I think one of the highest percentages of home, people who lived at home going to.

JC: Yeah, along with Queen's I think.

JMP: Oh yeah, that's true, Queen's was a, has an enormous number of those.

JC: Yeah, absolutely, still does.

JMP: I think Queen's might be higher even than Glasgow.

JC: I could believe that, yeah, I, I remember weekends as an undergrad were, as an English student, well, a student from England were quite quiet to say the least.

JMP: Yeah, yeah, so, well, exactly, and, and partly for, for that reason, partly cos I wanted to be further away from home, but not, like, miles away from home, I went to Edinburgh, I had a, I was accepted for St Andrew's as well which I was quite chuffed about cos, well, it's St Andrew's and, but I did, I did the visit day to the chemistry department at St Andrew's and I got to St Andrew's and I thought, this is very pretty, but my God, it's dull, if I'm, if I'm going to be a student I don't want to be in a town that's got three streets in it, that's even smaller than the place I grew up in, regardless of its status in terms of, you know, like, the hierarchy of university, and my, my day trip to, to Edinburgh, I was like, oh my God, this is brilliant, there's a, there's a comic book shop, there's a science fiction bookshop, so I went there and I walked round the city and it, like, it had the historici-, the historic kind of, like, weight of St Andrew's, but it was a proper place to be, it had, like, pubs and bars and clubs and a live music, live music scene which didn't exist in St Andrew's cos I wanted to be in bands and go and see bands all the time, so Edinburgh was, it was a no-brainer. I only applied for those two cos they were far enough away to be in easy reach from home if I needed it, but also to be quite separate from it.

JC: And so you had a, you had a good time as a student, then?

JMP: Ah yeah, it was fantastic, changed my life completely, yeah, I, I failed two out of three courses in my first year, including chemistry, which is what my major was supposed to be, and I went to see my director of studies and I said can I change courses completely and he said, well, yeah, because back then you could, and he said what do you want to do and I went oh I don't know, something sciencey, but not, like, physics or chemistry or biology, he goes what about geology, what about something applied sciencey, I went oh yeah, geology, I like rocks, so I did a four-year degree in geology, got a 2:2.

JC: Okay.

JMP: And that was great and, but, you know, as with, as I'm sure you will find and you probably have met people in a similar situation, you make lifelong friends as an undergraduate, like, my, my absolute closest friends in my fifties now are people that I met when we were all seventeen, eighteen, nineteen and hung out, got drunk, went to shows, you know, all of those things that you do and form those kind of bonds, so yeah.

JC: I imagine you had, like, a lot more freedom to go out and do those kind of things than you would have ever have done in Northern Ireland?

JMP: Well, in Northern Ireland I didn't go out, I mean, it's, like, I was sixteen and seventeen and I never, ever went out, I'd never even been vaguely tipsy until I went to university at eighteen, so yeah, it's, it's, like, the nearest to going out, I'd go to somebody else's house, but I wouldn't go out out, never. I mean, some of the more adventurous kids had found ways of getting into pubs, but I, I never even tried. In fact, pubs in Portadown in the late seventies were like bunkers, you know, they didn't have, like, windows to the outside world because of religion, so there was kind of, like, these kind of windows high up, about eight feet off the, the pavement, so some light got in, but you couldn't see in, because if you could see in then that would corrupt the seer, I believe that was the underlying principle of having pubs you couldn't see into in Northern Ireland, but as a, as a brief aside, as a tangent, one of my favourite pubs in the world is the Crown.

JC: Oh really, yeah.

JMP: Crown bar, because my mother used to drink there in the fifties when she was a, a student nurse in Belfast.

JC: Oh right, yeah.

JMP: I used to like quite going there and imagining her in her, you know, young studenty nurse, girlfriends, chatting up boys in, in the Crown in 1952 or whatever the hell it was.

JC: Yeah, it is, it is a lovely pub, like, I think it's, it's more a of a tourist trap now, but–

JMP: It is. I was there about three years back and I went oh right, I can see who, this isn't really a locals' bar anymore.

JC: No, unfortunately, but it is, like, really nice as a, as a venue.

JMP: Still looks the same, unless they've changed it recently. They still maintain the kind of Victorian wood and the little kind of booths and stuff, yeah, yeah, so yeah, that's, so no, I, I never got to go out at all. I didn't even go to sort of, like, youth club stuff because those people were mental, and the only times I ever went out were when the more evangelical kids invited me to kind of, sort of evangelical youth club events, so two things I remember for sure was there was, like, a Christian rock band, whose name I can't remember, but they were basically Status Quo except Christians and they would do, like, more or less a whole set of Status Quo songs, but with evangelical lyrics substituted, which may be something you've ex-, you've experienced, I don't know, it's, like, so, like, Status Quo have got a really famous 1970s hit called 'Caroline', which is, the chorus goes, you're my sweet Caroline, or something like that and they changed it to, you're my lord up above, oh yeah, and I remember, like, going, well, that's stupid, those aren't the words and we were, like, we were all sitting on kind of, like, foldy chairs in this kind of church hall watching this band belting out these things and then doing kind of evangelical kind of kind of speeches in between songs, about how we should all get saved and if anybody wanted to get **[01:16:27]** saved they could sort it out for them. Then the other thing was a film which I'd quite like to see again, like, a mid-seventies American evangelical film called *The Cross and the Switchblade* which sounds, it sounds like a *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* episode, but tragic-, tragically it's a song about street kids who are saved by the local minister who brings them into the church and takes them away from a life of evil on the street.

JC: I see.

JMP: That's all I can remember about it.

JC: Is it one of those so-bad-it's-good kind of–?

JMP: Well, I remember, like, seeing it and thinking this is propaganda and, like, sitting, and then at the end of it when I was getting up to go, instead of letting us go they put up the house lights and they started saying if you've seen anything in this film that makes you want to come down to the, and there was a minister who would, you know, save you, you know, so they were, they were, I, I watched these kids who'd just watched this piece of, like, fairly fundamentalist propaganda walk down to the front and get up on the stage, it was a town hall, and, and sort of get down on their knees and they were saved by the laying on of hands and I'm going wow, this is awful, I never went to any of that stuff again. I would have been, I think maybe fifteen, so that probably fed, fed into the God doesn't exist thing.

JC: Yeah, it's a bit of a contrast to the punk gigs you would have gone to.

JMP: Yeah, actually, I know, I know this is going back a little bit in time, but I saw three concerts in the Ulster Hall which is now the–

JC: It's still Ulster Hall I think.

JMP: It's still the Ulster Hall?

JC: Yeah, I think so, it's probably, like, sponsored by a beer company or something, but.

JMP: Ah right, yeah, so when I was finally allowed to go to shows by myself although my parents insisted on coming to pick me up outside the Ulster Hall after the concert because actually you couldn't really easily get home to Portadown from there anyway, so that's fair enough, so I saw a metal band called UFO, and I saw Dr Feelgood supported by John Cooper Clarke, the punk poet, which was a, which was a total eye-opener, that was brilliant, and in very early 1980 I saw the Undertones for the first time, and I remember a conversation in the queue outside, overhearing somebody else's, I was there with a couple of girls from school in fact, and hearing these kids behind me discussing the fact that the Undertones were Catholic and one guy going I don't care if they're Catholic, what, what matters is it's punk music, and the other kids go, and I'm like, yeah, this is, like, punk and, had a really important role to play in, like, bringing Protestant and Catholic kids together.

JC: Have you seen *Shellshock Rock*, the documentary?

JMP: I have, yeah.

JC: It's great, yeah, there's a lot of, a lot of that kind of sentiment.

JMP: Yeah, absolutely and, I mean, the funny thing was when I saw it, I thought, yeah, I heard people talking like that at the time, and I mean, and they were talking about how they'd been to see Motorhead the previous week, which I wasn't allowed to go to, and I really want to go and see Motorhead.

JC: Yeah, that's a shame.

JMP: I saw Motorhead by, by '84, '83, '84, I saw Motorhead, so they were still in their pretty much prime at that point.

JC: Yeah.

JMP: Cos I last saw them about six months before Lemmy died, I went to London to see them at, at Wembley Arena, that was a great if sad show. Anyway, but, so yeah, so this idea that kind of, and I'd listened to people talking about music and how the music was more important than religion and I thought yeah, that's me, music is more important than religion.

JC: You'd be interested actually, as an aside, my colleague who's, he's doing the interviews for the people who moved to London on this same project, he did his PhD on the Belfast punk scene.

JMP: Oh right.

JC: The extent to which it was a, like, a unifying force I think was kind of what he looked, like, looked at.

JMP: I might know that.

JC: Yeah, well, he's got, I think his book's coming out next year, so keep an eye out on it, his name's Fearghus Roulston, so.

JMP: Roulston, eh?

JC: Yes, he's on, on the website for this project, it's got me and mine and his name and stuff as well, so yeah, yeah, no, I'd, I'd definitely keep an eye out for his work.

JMP: That'd be great cos I, I absolutely think that's, I mean, my area's popular music studies, so.

JC: Yeah.

JMP: I do music and identity stuff, so that's exactly where I want to be, yeah.

JC: Yeah, no, his, his details are on the website, so if you fancy dropping him an email, I'm sure he'd be interested.

JMP: I will do, he's, he's probably part of the punk studies, punk scholars network, which is–

JC: I, I think he is, yeah.

JMP: Based out of Manchester I think.

JC: But yeah, no, I'm, I'm sure he'd be interested to, to talk to you as well.

JMP: Oh yeah, that's, that'd be super cool and also, I say Roulston because my mother's cousin was a Roulston, Edna Roulston, and my, my second cousin is Pamela Roulston, whatever her married name is, who's something of a media presence there, she must be in her sixties now.

JC: Right.

JMP: She married a DJ and then divorced him, damn it, she married a DJ from Downtown Radio, it'll come back to me, but I'm not in touch with her, but one of my students who, who is herself now thirty-eight, thirty-nine, maybe forty, is, is a huge fan of, of Pamela and she went I can't believe you're related to her, she's a goddess, I'm like, ah okay, I haven't spoken to her in twenty years.

JC: So–

JMP: So yeah, sorry, yeah–

JC: Yeah, no, kind of drifting–

JMP: There's family stuff there, yeah, cos my mother was very, when I started working at BBC Radio Scotland in '88, '89, alongside my academic stuff, my mother made a phone call to her cousin to say that I was now in the media too and how was Pamela doing, so there's a little bit of competition there.

JC: Yeah, yeah. So you, once you finished uni, what, did you go straight into media work or was–?

JMP: Well, no, I didn't, summer of '86 when I finished was one of the several eighties recession and the big employers of geologists were laying off experienced geologists all over the place, so there just weren't any jobs, and I'd also decided quite early on that unless I could be a television palaeontologist I, I didn't really want to be anything to do with geology because all the jobs were really hard, you'd have to work out on the oil rigs, you'd have to work on ocean floors surveying, you'd have to go to somewhere remote, like, I mean, some of my friends ended up working in the middle of nowhere in Australia, some of them went to the British Antarctic Survey, you know, all very exciting things to do, but you can't see many bands when you're in those places, you can't be in a band when you're in those places and you can't just pop out to the pub at eleven o'clock at night, I'm like, so why would I want to go somewhere where, so I ended up, I worked for BP for that summer, as a kind of an ass-, a geologist's assistant and it was pretty grim, cos they were looking for gold in the, the hills of East Lothian.

JC: Right.

JMP: So I was part of the survey team that was helping them drill holes and bring samples back and put them into the machines that would analyse for gold. It was gruelling work, really boring and really hard, which is not a good combo.

JC: So you clearly decided that wasn't for you.

JMP: So I decided I didn't want to work in geology, then I did a bunch of, about a year's worth of doing sort of casual work through an agency. I worked in, mainly for the Bank of Scotland actually, the Bank of Scotland warehouse, where I would kind of just help people move boxes, open things, move things from A to B, so the Bank of Scotland stationery warehouse out on the west side of Edinburgh, which is still there I think, and after a few months of that I felt, and I, I would be looking at these guys who'd worked there their entire lives and going wow, is this really, it was really good in the sense of giving me a feel for what real working-class life was like for a lot of people cos up until that point I had no idea, so that was really useful kind of in the long term, but also kind of towards the end of that I worked in an office and either way it was just, like, it was really grim, and I could just feel my brain kind of just withering, so in the summer of whatever year that was, summer of '87, I started looking for funded master's projects, master's programmes to get on, it, it was really important to me they were funded, so I just looked at the funded list and did a, saw that Strathclyde had something in information management which was kind of some technology and some management stuff and did my master's there between '87 and '88 and made enough of an impression one way or the other that there was a research project that had come up and they asked me if I would be a research assistant on it, so I ended up–

JC: And that was in Glasgow?

JMP: That was in Glasgow, yeah, Strathclyde uni, so I stayed in Glasgow, Strathclyde for, between ’89 and ’92 as a research assistant and that allowed, allowed me to be in a band and it also allowed me to, I had a relationship at the time, I was, I was actually in a band with my girlfriend, which, you know, for future reference probably isn’t such a great idea if anybody’s going to be in a band.

JC: I’ve heard, I’ve heard people say that, yeah.

JMP: It’s not super good, the, the, music is littered with relationships that failed **[01:26:27]** cos they were in a band together.

JC: What was your, what was your band called, out of interest?

JMP: That band was called Yes Yes Juliette, and we were a band from about ’87 till about ’91 and we, we played, we never put any records out, we had a sort of a few sniffs of interest from record companies, but they, they didn’t pursue it.

JC: I’ll have to mention to my dad cos I think he would still have been in and around the Glasgow punk scene at that time, so.

JMP: Oh right, well, we were, we were kind of post-punk rather than, yeah, we weren’t doing straight ahead punk cos we had, like, like, female vocal, guitar, keyboards, drums, bass, and we played, we played a lot between ’88 and ’90ish around Glasgow, Atholl bar, various places like Tower studios were kind of setting up for us to play, we played Fury Murry’s one night, that was pretty cool, and that was part of a band package, and there was a little, a little venue appended to the Barrowlands, there was an upstairs which is now the bar, the upstairs bar at the Barrowlands, but that was like a venue with a stage and we played in there a couple of nights, that was kind of good, but we never really got that far, but we kept plugging away.

JC: And what did you think of Glasgow as a city, did you–?

JMP: Oh I loved it, I absolutely loved it and it was just such a contrast to Edinburgh.

JC: Yeah, I was going to say, it’s different to Edinburgh.

JMP: Yeah, I mean, there was, it was really, I found the live music scene which was kind of really where my head was in terms of identity at the time, it was much more open, and there was many more places to do things and to meet other bands and to get on the same bill as them, whereas Edinburgh was quite cliquey, I think, my band in Edinburgh was pretty uncool, the band called Hats in Their Heyday.

JC: What type of band, type of band was that?

JMP: Well, I would say probably not quite post-punk in the sense that post-punk means this kind of fractured, experimental music, we were kind of more kind of straight forward sixties garage rock, I guess, like, two guitars, bass, drums and sort of just short songs, short solos, lots of harmonies, so no, we, we couldn't get anywhere near the cool places or the cool bands at the time, people like the Shop Assistants, Jesse Garon and the Desperadoes. I mean, I met some of them cos I, I fulfilled my English by joining the student newspaper, which I think's still a thing at Edinburgh University, but I was, I would, I'd review bands and films and stuff for student, so that was, that was nice, so I got to hang out with a whole bunch of new people who were, some of whom have gone on to pretty impressive careers in the media, so I hear kind of, what's her name, Imogen Foulkes, who is a correspondent for the BBC, she was on the paper at the time, Emma, Emma, second name's gone, Northern Irish person, who's a business correspondent for the BBC now, so I mean, these are people I was hanging out with and going to parties with and getting drunk with, they were great, a lot of people that I knew that were very interesting indeed.

JC: Yeah, and whereabouts in–?

JMP: So, sorry, Glasgow.

JC: Yeah, I was just going to ask where you were living in Glasgow?

JMP: My first flat in Glasgow was in the West End, on Barrington Drive, just off Woodlands Road, and me and Craig, the bass player from the band, moved into this, it was a guy who was, who owned the flat and needed some help with the mortgage, so we had the spare rooms, were there for a few months, then we moved across the hallway into a student rental flat which was pretty grim, cockroaches in the kitchen, that kind of thing, and moved again a few months later to a place called Belmont Street which is off Great Western Road and the street that Glasgow Academy's on, so we were right next to one of the posher schools in the city which was quite interesting, and we were in Belmont Street, I was in Belmont Street, no, me and Craig were in Belmont Street, probably '88 to '89, then when I got my research assistant post towards the middle of '89 I was able to, to get a mortgage, which was pretty surprising, and bought a place at the age of twenty-, whatever it was, seven, eight, yeah, so I bought a place at the end of '89 and moved in the beginning of '90 which is something that, and again, as I'm sure you might be aware is probably beyond the reach of most people in their mid-late twenties now.

JC: Yeah, well, that's me really, I guess, right now, but–

JMP: Well, yeah, I mean, you, you're, is it a postdoc or research assistant thing that you're–?

JC: Yeah, post-, postdoc research associate, yeah, so.

JMP: Yeah, so I mean, kind of on the equivalent of whatever your kind of monthly income is I was able to get a mortgage and the gap between income and house prices has, has gone insane.

JC: Oh yeah.

JMP: So yeah, so, anyway, so I figured that if I could buy one I would, I mean, it's actually really, really, I had to rent out two rooms and it was super low, it wasn't a classy way of living, but I gradually upgraded the flat and through the university I got PhD students and research people in to the spare rooms, so they were good people generally speaking, and that was great. I mean, at one point I had a French girl, a PhD student, in one room and two Italian girls who were PhD students in the other room, so the food was great that year.

JC: Oh yeah, I bet.

JMP: That was fantastic [laughs], and weirdly, like, and, you know, I had a girlfriend at the time and my friends were, like, but you're sharing a flat with, like, three exciting Continental women, I'm like, yeah, so, it just means that the bathroom's quite hard to access sometimes, but otherwise it's okay.

JC: Probably nice and clean though.

JMP: Oh yeah, everything was clean and the kitchen was great and the food was just outstanding, as I say, but, so yeah, that was Raeberry Street which is a G20 address which is technically Maryhill, but it's in Kelvinbridge, it's about five minutes' walk from Kelvinbridge underground, so my, my more status-aware friends'll go you live in Maryhill, not in G12, which is the proper West End and it was really only about thirty seconds' walk to cross over that, but it also made it possible for me to afford the place cos, like, you know, prices were, like, thirty per cent higher if you lived in G12 than in G20.

JC: And I'm wondering how aware you were or how bothered you were by the kind of context of sectarianism that Glasgow has had and, and still does have to an extent?

JMP: Well, in that, was it 1990 one year, what I hadn't realised was, I, I sort of knew that the Twelfth was a big deal in Glasgow, but I, I stayed away from it, but what I didn't realise was how, how much of it there was in that part of Glasgow, in the Maryhill zone, that, and that the bands, the marching bands would practise up and down Maryhill Road for, like, many weeks before the actual Twelfth, so I'd be sort of, like, sleeping on a Saturday morning and I would hear the, the marching drums and think oh those bastards, I came here to get away from you and you're, like, a hundred yards away from my front door now.

JC: Yeah, it must have been a bit of a throwback.

JMP: Man, it was annoying, and we, I was in town in, probably it was the summer of '90, summer of '91, for the Twelfth and I was there with, I was doing the, the which girlfriend was I with arithmetic in my head there to work out which year it was, so I'd just started seeing somebody in '91, so that's how I remember, and one of the Finnish research guys was over cos we were on a EU-funded project and he was great, Pekka Rantonen, and I'm still in touch with Pekka, his son is at Dundee University now, it's all terrifying, and he said he was curious about the whole Twelfth thing and so we went to town and we were on Buchanan Street, a pedestrianised bit of Buchanan Street, and they, they come through onto Queen Street and onto George Square from somewhere a little bit further west, I'm

not sure where the exact route was, but they were, they were, the, they were between us and Queen Street station and I was watching it and I, I could feel the tension in my chest and my throat from watching them and the anger rising at the fact that this was even permitted and the, what I felt then and, and to a large extent still do now, the way in which it was a, an expression of straightforward bigotry dressed up in identity politics, which is, I know how to describe it now, but **[01:36:27]** then it just made me angry, so, and I said we, this is, this is terrible, this is really making, we have to get back to the West End and we have to go for a pint cos this has made me very tense and he said right, well, we could see the entrance to the underground station just across the road, Buchanan Street underground, and I said there might be some trouble if you try and cross, he said, well, why, I said you're not supposed to break the Orange line or whatever it's called, it's some kind of insult to the, to the entire Orange Order if you walk across in the middle of one of their parades and he said but look, there's a big gap between those guys and the band, and there was, there was maybe about twenty metres of nothing, I mean, there was people there and people there, but, you know, easy to walk across the road, so we started to walk across the road and this woman out of nowhere who was just watching ran towards us from the other side, like, shouting and swearing at us and I can't remember the details of what, it was all about how it was an insult and you can't do this and what are you, blah, blah, blah, fucking this, fucking that, and I'm, I'm like, what, and a local cop intervened, because they had cops all along there, and, and probably, not so much me, but they could see that the Finnish looked Finnish and, and said, like, oh can't you see they're tourists, they don't know the rules, or something like that, and she did a bit more swearing and backed off and the guy took us across the street and I'm thinking this is happening in a modern democracy, what the actual fuck is going on here, and I, I'm getting tense talking about it, something that happened thirty years ago, and we went, I think I was shaking after, I was so angry, and we went up to the West End and sort of just drank beer for the rest of the evening cos I was like, I am so annoyed about this, and I was so embarrassed that this Finnish guy, and the Finns are a progressive social democracy, they're socially conservative largely, but politically progressive for the most part, I think lately they've developed an unpleasant kind of right-wing kind of presence in their politics, but it's still marginal [indecipherable], but back then they were clearly, they, they were absolutely the, the progressive social democrats of Europe and I was like, I am so sorry you had to see that and be part of it, and he was, because he was, like, Finnish, he was like, oh it's okay, it was interesting for me to see it, like, okay, he doesn't really sound like that, but that's my, you know.

JC: Yeah, sure.

JMP: Like my pseudo-racist Finnish accent.

JC: And did you ever experience any sort, anything on, like, a more personal level? I mean, obviously there was that woman shouting at you, but was there any, yeah, anything directed, or people trying to find out what side you're from, cos obviously you've got the Northern Irish accent?

JMP: Yeah, that, it, it would, it happened from time to time and it always surprised me, it always surprised me. I mean, I'd started doing some work at BBC Radio Scotland and one of the reasons I got a job there, they told me was, I sounded a little bit Scottish and a little

something else, and the people from the Western Isles said that, you sound like you could come from Uist or something, I didn't hear it, but, so I was kind of a handy voice to have to be not straight ahead Scottish, but this kind of, this mix of things that I've got going on, but when I was out in the wild I was, towards the end of my time, my, my first stretch at Radio Scotland I started DJing at the Thirteenth Note which is kind of a legendary kind of venue, or has become legendary, it wasn't, it was just a pub with a couple of stages at the time, and there was a guy there called Craig Cannock who, who owned and ran the thing and I'd known him from, he ran some rehearsal studios and some recording studios as a kind of socialist collective thing and we went there and they were the nicest people in the world, so we formed a good relationship, and so I would be sometimes out, I remember, I would take taxis, so I could bring my boxes of records, I didn't have a car at the time, I think, and I could, so I could have beer when I was, I was DJing, so there's two things that happened, one, every now and again a taxi driver would pick up my accent and, and say oh how long have you been here, and you could sort of tell that they were aiming for the, what school do you go to, do you follow football, I get do you follow football and I go no, I don't like football, and they go oh come on, you must like football, and I, no, I really, genuinely don't like any team sports whatsoever and they went what, not even rugby, and I went no, rugby's even worse than football and that, that's true, I mean, that's, like, most people, most, particularly men and increasingly women that I know are, like, how can you not like any sports and the truth is I hate all sport. I like doing them, I like running, I like swimming, I like cycling, but watching anything just seems like a profound waste of time to me, always has done, most of my friends are into sp-, into sports and they're kind of, like, they think that's my major character flaw.

JC: [laughs] Each to their own.

JMP: Yeah, exactly. They, they try to say, you know, they make me go to stuff occasionally and I'm like, well, you know, it's okay, give me some more beer, I'll, I'll cheer at the right point, but I never really understood why it was interesting or exciting, I mean, I do from an intellectual perspective, but emotionally, no, it leaves me cold. So yeah, taxi drivers would kind of, like, you know, and, and you could, you could, you know, as I'm sure you know, it's like the Rangers-Protestant, Celtic-Catholic thing and I would just stay miles away from it, and if, if they're, if it's a longer journey and they're persistent I would say oh, yeah, yeah, my, my mother's maiden name was Murphy, and they'd go oh yeah, and I'd go but my dad's from Birmingham, and they'd go oh, because that could be either, so unless they ask me straight out to my face, then they won't know for sure, so I would always try and be as vague as possible about it, because I thought that even being asked about it was an insult.

JC: Has anyone ever asked you directly?

JMP: No, nobody's ever, well, foreign people ask me.

JC: Oh okay, yeah.

JMP: Cos I travel a lot as part of the job, international conferences, researchy things, sometimes music things, so people, people, like, in Finland and Denmark and Japan and Hungary have said, so, are you Protestant or Catholic, because then they can make sense of

whatever my stories are about home, and, and I still think about it weirdly as home, which might be something you want to get to, we've been talking for a long time, sorry.

JC: Yeah, no, I was going to ask you that, but, no, honestly it's, it's absolutely fine, you know, I'm not, don't have any commitments for the rest of the afternoon, so I'm more than happy to keep going.

JMP: Well, whoever's, yeah, the transcriber's going to have a nightmare with this.

JC: Well, it's not me, so.

JMP: Hey, so I just want to say a, a personal hello to whoever's transcribing this and my apologies, there's, I, I generally transcribe my own interviews and try and keep them shorter than this because–

JC: She's used to it, unfortunately.

JMP: I'm a habitual rambler, yeah, the, I was, I was DJing one night late, one of the Thirteenth Note venues which isn't there anymore, down on the River Clyde, it was a late-night thing, it was a twelve till three a.m. slot I had, so you meet all kinds of odd people cos it was a Sunday night into Monday morning and cos it was open for drinking till three, and I think sometimes four some days, there was, yeah, it was a challenging environment and they didn't always have security on the door, so it was kind of a bit iffy sometimes and this bloke, this kind of shavey-headed guy in his, Northern Irish accent, came up to ask me for something, to play something cos I was playing at that point a run of kind of punk songs, and he clocked my accent immediately and he goes oh aye, you're from home, and I went yeah, I am, he goes where are you from, I went here we go, and I said Portadown and he goes oh yeah, what street, and I thought if I say Armagh Road that's, that gets me out of it because it's kind of, it's a middle-class area and there were Protestant and Catholic families kind of dotted along it, so I said Armagh Road and he goes which end of Armagh Road, and I'm like, honestly mate, I can't remember, what song did you want, and, and he, he wouldn't, he wouldn't, it took a while for him to back off until I, I almost had to get security to get him to leave me alone.

JC: It's interesting that, the way you say that, like, people from other countries will just straight out ask, whereas Scottish people and Northern Irish people, it's all very coded, but you know exactly what they're getting at.

JMP: Yeah, exactly, yeah, yeah, very much so and as I say it would almost be easier if they'd just go I really want to know and I would go, well, I'm not telling you, why does it matter to you if it doesn't matter to me, because I mean, and I know that in, in a wider context it's really about, as much about kind of culture and belonging and identity as it is about religion, but because of my experiences of religion and what I regard as the insanity of religion in Northern Ireland it's, like, I, I kind of, I lump the two things together probably just from experience even though it's not strictly the case, they're kind of intertwined, but they're not the same thing.

JC: Yeah, and I was wondering, sort of on that note, what you thought the differences **[01:46:27]** are between the sort of Catholic-Protestant thing in Scotland compared to how it manifests in Northern Ireland, like, what–?

JMP: It depends where you are.

JC: Yeah, well, in Glasgow, then, for example.

JMP: Yeah, I mean, it's, like, I mean, even, I mean, it's, Glasgow's kind of a, I mean, I've, I've come to know which bits are what and they're kind of counterintuitive in a sense that, like, a lot of the kind of the Protestant working class is out, you know, not very far from Celtic Park, and the area around kind of Rangers is kind of, has traditionally been kind of more Catholic, Southsidey kind of, where kind of the labourers went, I mean, I'm not sure what the hist-, the demographic kind of shifts were, but I know that, that that's kind of where it is now which just baffles me, over the years, but I, it's, it's interesting cos, I mean, in a lot of ways cos I'm not actively DJing anymore, I'm not really active in the music scene, I, I play open mics sometimes in the area, when that was possible and I've met a whole bunch of interesting people through the open mic circuit and, and nobody's particularly bothered by that, although the guy I play, who's my cajón player is a very serious Celtic fan and he's got a real problem with one of the older guys that shows up at the open mic who's got a Union Jack on the front of his guitar and is a profoundly unionist Protestant, old school guy, who sings drug songs from the sixties, I mean, the, the contradictions in that particular individual are enormous, like, he's singing about a culture that probably would have had no time for the kind of person he is, but he loves the songs.

JC: That's interesting.

JMP: It's very odd. So I think it's, my, my point there is more that I'm in a relatively privileged position as a, you know, senior lecturer in higher education, most of the people I hang out with don't have any particular interest, I mean, I don't, I'm not even particularly close to anybody who's religious anymore, yeah, apart from the person that you contacted, which is Reverend Roy Henderson, who's a very old friend of mine, one of the first people I met when I moved to Ayrshire, Beith, Ayrshire and I met him because my mother went to the same church that his mother went to and they had a discussion over tea afterwards and she said oh yeah, my son plays an instrument, oh yeah, my son's in a band, oh we should get them together cos my son doesn't have any friends, and Roy's been a friend ever since and we've, over the years, done music together as well, I think of him as Roy the bass player rather than Roy the minister.

JC: Oh fair enough.

JMP: Yeah, so I mean, apart from Roy and, whose job it is to be religious, I, I don't know anybody who's actively involved, and I know very few people involved in, who are big fans of football because I can't stand football, so I, I'm kind of, I'm at, I'm at an arm's length from most of that, although I am aware of it, there's something about being from Northern Ireland that makes you particularly kind of, it's, it's the religious equivalent of gaydar I think.

JC: Yeah, you, you kind of can't help but notice.

JMP: You kind of pick up on things and, like, I can't help myself from thinking oh that's a Protestant name, that's a Catholic name, it just, I think it, because I just do and I think that's my, like, fifteen, no, seventeen years of being in Northern Ireland have left a lifetime of that stuff inside me despite the fact I think of myself as a progressive, liberal, feminist, you know, it's, like, it's, and yet that stuff is still stuck in there, like, and no amount of hanging out with progressive, liberal people's managed to dislodge it.

JC: Do you go back to Northern Ireland a lot?

JMP: Not really, I haven't been back in, I haven't been back since my friend Mervyn's father's funeral, which was four years ago, and I, I used to talk about going, I used to go back a lot in the eighties when I still had more people there that I knew and I was regularly stopped by the security guys coming off the ferry in the eighties because at that point I had sort of, like, sticky-up hair, or hair, and sticky-up hair and a bit of a straggly beard and I'd be wearing kind of, like, army fatigues and cos I was into that kind of sort of post-punk kind of look at the time and, so they, I would get searched all the time and they'd look at my passport and they'd see I was born in Newry and they'd say are you going to Newry, which was, like, a hotbed of terrorist activity as a border town and then I'd go no, I'm not going to Newry, and they were, well, do you still have friends there and I said I've been living in Scotland since 1980 and I never lived in Newry, and they went yes, but do you have friends there [sighs], no.

JC: Yeah.

JMP: So, and I, I still, I still feel it when I go back, like, a mixture of nostalgia because it's got a particular look, as, as you kind of know yourself, like, the gentle rolling hills out in the countryside, Belfast's got a, I mean, Belfast is great, I mean, I love it as a city and, and it's, it's come on so far even since it started, since the peace agreement, it's, it's an amazing place, but also it's, like, you go round a corner and there's a poster of an evangelical preacher and you go oh right, things haven't changed that much and, yeah, and I can feel that kind of weight of kind of, how long is it that I'm here before I can leave, and I could, I mean, in as much as things have improved enormously there, and it's, and it's, as you know yourself it's a great place to be and I've still got a couple of friends in Belfast, it's, like, no, no, I couldn't live there, I mean, I quite like going there and walking around and going yeah, yeah, walking around the kind of the, the posh bits of Belfast, going up to Queen's and walking round the, the campus, I like the campus, it's very beautiful, going for a ritual pint in the Crown, I actually got to go in, I was there lunchtimeish about seven, eight years ago, can't remember why I was there, and, might just have been to visit Merv, might've been Merv's fortieth or something, and I went to the Ulster Hall to take some pictures of it and people were moving stuff in and out and the doors are wide open and they were setting up for an orchestral gig later that, concert, later that evening and I said to, there was some woman in the box office, and I said hey, is it okay to just go and have a look and she said yeah, and I went why not, this is cool, so I went into, like, the empty Ulster Hall and the first I'd been across the door since early 1980, it's astonishing, so and that, so I mean, I, I kind of like going back, but, and for all that things have changed and progressed there, there's such

a deep-seated lack of progression, especially once you get outside of Belfast and that, it's, like, no, it's, like, on, on that, that trip to my friend Merv's dad's funeral, we stopped off at an off-licence next door to the Chalet, which is still there, amazingly, the off-licence to, to pick up some beer to go back to his place, so that we could drink to the health of his, or to the memory of his, of his father, and so I went in with him and Merv has a chat with the guy and I couldn't quite work out what was going on, there was something coded in the conversation and we got back into the car and he goes that guy is a really big loyalist, I'm like, what, he goes oh yeah, he's, he's part of the family that owns Shamrock Park, which is the kind of the football ground and where they used to have, maybe they still have stock car racing as well, and I'm like, oh right, so, like, the, the big loyalists who have connections to the former paramilitaries are still, exert influence locally, and I'm thinking how can that be the case, and I go oh I'm in Northern Ireland, that's why, stuff doesn't change there, and doesn't change very fast particularly once you're outside of Belfast, so.

JC: But you still refer to it as home, you were saying.

JMP: I do, yeah, I mean, it's, it's, it's the place that formed the basis of my character and things like my sense of humour and my love of music, I mean, I, I do talk, I do talk about it as home or the old homeland or whatever, but never want to go back there.

JC: You don't think you could see yourself going back and living there, then, no?

JMP: Not a chance, not a chance. It's, I go back every few years to check on my grandparents' graves, outside Clonallan, now that I know where it is, with the aid of, I always for-, I always forget cos every three or four years I forget, it's all twisty side, side roads, country roads to get there and it's easy to get lost in those kind of little narrow roads up in sort of south Down, but, you know, with the aid of Google I don't get lost anymore, so I quite like going back and I get that kind of little kind of tingle when I go past the church that my parents got married at **[01:56:27]** and, you know, the places, places in Warrenpoint that I went to as a little kid, never want to go back there, I mean, other than to just have a walk around.

JC: And how closely have you followed, like, the news on Northern Ireland and politics there and, like, the peace process and stuff?

JMP: I don't have, I don't access Northern Irish news, I don't sort of, like, check out BBC Northern Ireland's site, say, so something has to happen there that's big enough to make national UK news for me to register it and unfortunately that happens from time to time, or the whole flag-flying over City Hall in Belfast, God, what the hell.

JC: I was actually at the Christmas market at City Hall the night that kicked off and that was, yeah, an experience.

JMP: Yeah, right, yeah, well, yeah, I mean, it's, like, it's, from a sociological and cultural studies perspective it's utterly fascinating, and, and political studies, it really is astonishing and it's, you can dig into the whole kind of, you know, flags as symbols business, but it's, like, it was, like, oh come off it, like, how can this still be such a big deal now, so that, that

annoyed the hell out of me, it's, like, just when you think things are starting to move, and of course, like, having an Assembly, it's been suspended forever and the whole cash for ash kind of, like, scandal, it's, like, that's so bloody Northern Irish, it's, like–

JC: Yeah, oh, oh it is, yeah.

JMP: It's, like, the way it all unfolded and the way that people weren't accepting responsibility and grrrr [makes a growling noise].

JC: So do you think it's because of those sorts of things that you kind of take, have taken a step back from it and you don't really follow the Northern Irish news and stuff?

JMP: No, it's, it's, yeah, I mean, I'm, I'm, not, my, my mother when she was alive, she was, she would watch that stuff all the time, she would, she would want to know what's going on back home and I'd be like, no, and cos most of the news that makes it out isn't the good kind, it's, it's the stuff about [pauses] women's rights, abortion, it's, like, like, a, a place that is so deeply stuck in the Victorian era in terms of its kind of approach to human rights, it really needs to kick itself up the arse, I mean, that's the stuff I couldn't handle, and obviously if I had any real convictions I'd be back there for fighting for it, but then they'd tell me to piss off because I don't live there anymore.

JC: Yeah, you're right.

JMP: Yeah, and I remember, like, a, a student early in my kind of teaching career at Queen Margaret, I went to one of the kind of the big Christmas events and one of the Northern Irish girls, Catholic as it turned out, accosted me at the bar, she was absolutely hammered and she asked me why I had betrayed my country by moving to Scotland and I'm, well, what are you talking, actually no, she must have been, no she was Protestant because she saw me as a Protestant guy, a high achiever Protestant guy moving to Scotland as being a betrayal of Northern Ireland, I should stay there, so I could be good for Northern Ireland instead of good for Scotland, that's what the sort, that's what the gist of her drunken rant was.

JC: Surely she should have stayed there for uni, then.

JMP: Well, does she, well, yes of course, I didn't want to get into that, it wasn't a case of rational argument, well, [indecipherable], she, she had plans to go back home and I'm sure she did.

JC: Oh right, yeah, fair enough.

JMP: Yeah, didn't apologise to me the next day when she was sober or anything, but no, no.

JC: Maybe didn't remember, I don't know.

JMP: Possibly not, and she probably didn't think she had anything to apologise for, so, so yeah, no I, I, it's, I find it, I get super conflicted when I think about it because there's stuff about it that's beautiful and there is a deep warmth and hospitality in lots of the people

and, and, you know, you can't get away from somebody's house unless you agree to have a cup of tea and probably some biscuits and probably then some sandwiches if you hang around long enough, so, and that kind of sense of hospitality is, is amazing, but underneath that, you don't have to scratch too deeply before you get to people talking, people who might be absolutely lovely to you, if they found out I was Catholic might be a little not so lovely to me.

JC: Yeah, no, I know exactly what you mean.

JMP: So there's, that, that's, it's, like, there's just so many great things about Northern Ireland and, like, there's really bright, smart witty people from there and yet there's, there's this kind of horrible underlying tension, and I, I know people who are actively campaigning in Belfast against that kind of crap and, like, pro kind of women's rights and they're involved in kind of cross-community kind of initiatives, but the fact that you have to have a cross-community initiative just pisses me off, so, you know, yeah.

JC: One of the final questions I'd like to ask is, and it's kind of a, not a trick question, but a bit of a, one you have to think about is what, how you'd define your national identity if someone asked you?

JMP: Not a trick question at all, I know what you're saying. It's, like, I would, I think my, my cultural identity is Northern Irish, and in terms of national identity, I think overall I talk about myself as being Irish to most people, that annoys Northern Irish Protestants, but I, I know that there is something quite culturally different about the Six Counties. I mean, it shares a lot of commonality with the South, there's a lot of kind of, I mean, especially in the, in those bits that are in the north west, like, sort of Donegal and so on, so, but there is something, you know, and it's in the food, wheaten bread, soda farls, Veda, my God I love Veda, you can't get it here, you can't get it anywhere in Scotland, it's, it's outrageous, so trying to find something malted that you can toast so it goes, you know, chewy when you put the butter on, you know, so little things like that, and I think there's something about the, the sharpness of the humour, which is quite distinctively Northern Irish as well, there's enormous creativity there as well, so I mean, I think, yeah, culturally Northern Irish and I, I can't say I'm not, but in terms of national identity I won't even say, I mean, my passport says I'm British, but I'm, but I'm strongly pro-Scottish independence, so I, I see myself as sort of culturally Northern Irish. Scotland's my adopted home, I wouldn't, I would never say I'm Scottish, I am legally British, but Britain, Britain has done so many things that I think are absurd, evil, stupid that I'm kind of embarrassed to even say I'm British when I'm travelling, so and I, so when I'm travelling I'll normally say Irish and if I'm pushed I'll say Northern Irish, and I, and have a, after Brexit I've got my Irish passport as well, so.

JC: Yeah, I don't blame you. An int-, interesting kind of one final question on that, and you don't have to answer it if you don't want, but you said you'd be pro-Scottish independence. Do you have any particular views on Irish unity?

JMP: Oh God, yes, it should be, let's have Irish unity, the sooner better. I think, what's int-, what's interesting in terms of as an observer is just in the last two or three years, seeing even sort of, like, the DUP starting to realise that London really doesn't give a shit about

them, and it took them a while to sort of get their heads round that because they've, they've spent decades, you know, God, saying we're British, we're British, we're British, we're British, we're British, we're British, and, you know, it looks like, even people who vote DUP are starting to think, well, you know, maybe, maybe, and it's all cos of the Brexit thing I think, so I think, well, what I'm kind of hoping for is that, you know, I'm in my mid-fifties, so, that I will see both an independent Scotland and a unified Ireland before I'm dead and that, then I could go to my grave happily I think at that point.

JC: Yeah, well, I, I could see it happening for sure.

JMP: I, I think it's, if you'd asked me five years ago I would've thought, particularly just immediately after the, the Scottish referendum I'd have said no, we're screwed, that's never going to happen, now I think it's, it's well within the realms of possibility for both those things to happen now because I think kind of, I think mainstream Protestant opinion in Northern Ireland is probably shifting a little and that being part of Ireland will probably be better for the province than being part of the UK as the economy will undoubtedly continue to sort of slide and being isolated from Europe is a terrible thing for the Six Counties I think. I mean, there's huge, as you probably know, there's huge European investment in Northern Ireland.

JC: Oh yeah, yeah, for sure, I even noticed it on the trains the other day, they, you know, all the new trains on the NI railways are, like, built with EU money and stuff like that, so.

JMP: Yeah, yeah, so I, I absolutely, I mean, I think you need to have Dublin on board with that, I'm not sure they are there, they're there yet because if it goes wrong, even if there's, like, an all-Ireland, I think, wasn't it under the Agreement, like, both sides of the border have to vote for unification.

JC: Yeah.

JMP: So I think Dublin and the South would, they'll be aware that **[02:06:27]** there will be a very vocal and possibly dangerous and violent minority who don't want to do that and what, what Dublin doesn't want is a terrorist problem on its doorstep and that, that I think is the major stumbling block to, to Irish unification, and so there'll have to be, like, a peace process part two at some point that's going to make sure that that doesn't happen, which means the DUP have to be on board, which is a bit of a stretch at the minute.

JC: Yeah, for sure.

JMP: So bang, there's a long answer to a short question, as indeed all my answers have been, so, sorry about that.

JC: No, no, not at all, it's been really interesting. I was wondering is there anything else you wanted to add or anything we haven't covered that you think's important?

JMP: It's, your questions about defining yourself are, are kind of, are, are really important cos it's stuff I've thought about a lot over the years, particularly when I've been kind of

reading about music and the power of music in different communities and what it does in terms of both polarising and unifying, depending on where it's coming from. I was, there's a, a really grim London-owned cable channel, I'll check what it's called cos one of my closest mates has got the Sky package which has this, and they play just unending Irish, North and South, the cheesiest country music ever. It's one of the reasons that I grew up hating country music and have come to like it, you know, the, the same guy said you hate country music, have you ever heard Johnny Cash, and I went no, I have not, so he played me bits of Johnny Cash and I went aha, now I see why it's good, and then I, and I said you probably don't want to hear anything by Philomena Begley cos that might change your mind about country and western or any of the countless kind of bands that have that kind of super saccharine version of, of country and western, which is endemic there. What's my point, identity, I think, no, I, I think we've probably covered most stuff. I think my, my mother was always a little bit sad that, that we had to leave, I think she would always really profoundly enjoy it when she was back despite the situation, when she ever went back to visit friends or relations like the Roulstons, so, and I think she was also sad about, you know, the situation, she, she would, she would get very down about that, so yeah, I think it's, my, my feeling about there, it's just, it's so messed up, I feel a deep sadness when I think about it, about how things haven't got better fast enough, but also, you know, when you're standing on the end of the prom in, in Warrenpoint looking at the Mournes, it's like, oh my God, this is my place, so it's weird.

JC: Yeah, sort of ambivalent then.

JMP: Very ambivalent, yeah, yeah. I mean, it's not that I hate it, and it's not that I love it, it's kind of a bit of both, and, but, you know, I'm absolutely, as I said earlier on, no way could I imagine living there, ever.

JC: That's interesting, okay.

JMP: That, that's two hours of transcription, so again, hello transcriber, sorry about all that.

INTERVIEW ENDS