INTERVIEW L03: ANNE POWER

Interviewer: Dr Fearghus Roulston
Interviewee: Anne Power
Interview date: 5th November 2019
Location: Brighton
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.

FR: Okay, so if you could just start off by saying your name and today's date.

AP: Okay, my name is Anne Quillen Power and today's date is the fifth of November 2019.

FR: That's great, thank you. So the question that we've been asking everyone to start off with, we sort of talked about this a little bit already, but just what were you interested in about the project? Why were you interested in taking part?

AP: I think it's a very worthwhile thing to record the oral history of any anyone really, of any culture, and I think that Northern Ireland has been a culture that's been particularly neglected, or it's been recognised for all the wrong reasons, so I felt it was really important for me to make sure that there is an oral history from the normal people who were growing up in Northern Ireland at time, as opposed to the political figures who were, had the voice, we were the lost generation.

FR: That's really interesting that the kind of different stories that get told or the different voices that get heard I guess. So we'll just start off with where are you from or where were you from?

AP: I was born in Belfast in Templemore Avenue, the hospital, which sadly is no longer there, fourth of the, fourth 1969, so just before the Troubles really began, so it was around the time of the civil rights marches, and really I lived there until I was four, and temporarily went to England for two years in 1973, and came back 1975, so that was quite a tumultuous time for the history of Northern Ireland and England as well, and we moved back, and I went to primary school in north Belfast, the Sisters of Mercy were the teachers, so it was Mercy Primary on the Crumlin Road, which was a great school, and then I stayed there until the eleven-plus, passed my eleven-plus, and went to St Dominic's Grammar School on Falls Road [laughs], so out of the frying pan into the fire, and I stayed there until my A-levels, which I, sat my A-levels, passed them, and then went to the University of Ulster where I studied my degree in human communication that was, I graduated 1993. I had taken a gap year which was kind of unheard of then and I travelled to the States, so that was, that was, that was an

eye-opener actually. I think that was pivotal for me to realise that not everybody had gone through the childhood that myself and my friends had, and that was a wake up call, cos I saw someone else's normal [laughs]–

FR: I see what you mean, yeah.

AP: You know, that was a bit, I had travelled to England, I should say, my summer holidays were spent in England with my family who were over here when I was little, but generally that was my big exit from Northern Ireland was my trip to the States.

FR: And it gave you a different perspective?

AP: Totally, totally, and I can remember arriving in Manhattan. So we arrived at JFK, got the coach down to Port Authority and the first thing was this, well, actually I was overwhelmed by the size of the buildings, that was the, and weirdly they felt familiar, I can't, it's a very weird feeling to drive in somewhere and look up and think oh it's the Empire State, well, why would that be familiar to me, but obviously TV was the big thing, media. We arrived at Port Authority and this rather large police officer came over and advised us to leave as quickly as possible [laughs] cos it was a bad area, and I think to myself hang on I grew up in Belfast, how can this be a bad area [laughs], it just didn't make sense to me, so we jumped on the bus and headed towards to New Jersey. So that's my first, and I loved it, I just loved from the minute I arrived in New York I just felt that was my spiritual home and still do [laughs].

FR: [laughs] That was really interesting. We'll come back to the kind of New York and then London–

AP: Okay, so that's on my tangents.

FR: But I just wanted to ask, so your, what did your parents do?

AP: My mother was a clerical officer and my father worked for the local bus company, and he, in fact, he worked there for thirty-odd years, prior to that he worked in building when he went to England, he worked the building sites, it was during the seventies, work was quite hard to come by. He had lived in England prior to that. When he was seventeen he moved to Birmingham, he loved it and he had sort of established himself there, but then he moved back home for various reasons, his parents were ill and subsequently died, he'd nursed them, and he met my mother and they settled in Northern Ireland, but he always really hankered to get back to England, which is, it's kind of weird, but that was, this was pre-Troubles, so it was a good place to be.

FR: And a big Irish community.

AP: Big Irish community, Irish clubs, you know, people, my dad would, has very often said that you went over, someone would have gone first and then sent word back that there was jobs available, and they would've come over and had, used to get digs, he'd refer to the digs [laughs] and the boarding houses and they would've, and the landlady, the quintessential

English landlady, which he refers to, and very much that was the way of it, you left, you know, it's Northern Ireland, Irish people emigrate, that's what we do, generally for work, and he really enjoyed his time there.

FR: And so you left '73.

AP: I left, my brother was born 1973 and when he was six weeks old we moved to Walsall just outside Birmingham, and it was referred to as the Black Country because it was industrial and it was a heart, there's huge industries there, huge opportunities, factories, it was a thriving community. There was an Irish community there that had been established many years ago, there was a very vibrant West Indian community, because a lot of people come and settle there, there was an Indian community, so it was very multicultural, and that was probably the first interaction I ever had with anyone who was from another culture, because Northern Ireland, we didn't have, probably cos of the Troubles, we didn't have a lot of people coming in from other cultures, we didn't have a black community, we didn't have an Asian community, that's all changed now thankfully, but in those days it was a predominantly white community and you were either Catholic or Protestant, so that was, that was what I, we were leaving to come into a refreshing, it was actually lovely [laughs].

FR: Yeah, do you have any kind of memory of it?

AP: My, when we moved into our house I can remember I was very little and going outside into the garden and there was a prevailing smell of this very lovely sweet smell I'd never smelt before, and it was curry, and it was our neighbours were cooking, they were from India, and I was mesmerised by the colour and the lady came out, she was wearing a beautiful sari and I was just spellbound [laughs] cos it was just like, wow, and she introduced herself and handed my mum some food, and I thought gosh, isn't that lovely, that was like a, food is the cultural thing, but I just remember, I'm actually laughing and crying at the same time, there was just this prevailing smell of curry [laughs], isn't that so weird, I haven't thought about that for a really long time, that's really amazing, so yeah, and they were our neighbours and they they lived with the grandparents, there was a lot of generations in that house because again it was a, we didn't know then, but that was a very Indian thing to do, you have several generations in one household, so there were grandparents and aunties and cousins and just a hub [laughs].

FR: That's lovely, that's a lovely memory.

AP: So that's a lovely memory actually, yeah, I'm still very fond of curry [laughs].

FR: [laughs] Well, it's good in Brighton, we've some–

AP: Oh yeah, we're very lucky, but that was my, yeah, that's very–

FR: So you have some kind of sense of being there?

AP: I have very strong sense of being, I started school in England.

FR: Okay.

AP: I, because of just the timings the English school timetable runs slightly differently to the Northern Irish one, I remember starting a little bit later than everyone else and that new kid feeling, new country–

FR: Accent.

AP: Accent, children of all different cultures in the class, it really was a cultural shock for me, but again they're very happy memories, I don't remember being unhappy there and I was there for a few years, yeah.

FR: And do you know why your parents decided to come back?

AP: My, well, the ultim-, I subsequently know now why they came back, there's several reasons. My mum was over there with two young children and really no support because my parents, my grandparents and extended family lived back in Northern Ireland, mum had been really unwell, **[00:10:00]** so my dad was working, so I think that was one reason. Another reason was there was I suppose some sectarianism, if I would say that. There had been incidents where, this coincided with the Birmingham bombings, and my dad who, he's not a political person at all, but he had, our house had been under surveillance, we had police coming to the door because neighbours, people who heard our accents, and when people are frightened, they assume that you're a terrorist, so there was a lot of that sort of bubbling under, a lot of suspicion and my dad just thought no, I'll go back home, it's probably safer for us to be back home, and that's when we decamped back to Northern Ireland.

FR: It's quite striking that the memories that you have as a child are these memories of neighbourliness, multiculturalism.

AP: Yes, lovely friends, but my parents, and I guess that's the juxtaposition with an adult and a child, my parents just really didn't feel, I just, I think they felt a bit unsafe and they felt it was better for us to be back home, in those circumstances.

FR: And how did you find that as a child?

AP: Well, I didn't know why, one minute I was going to school and having a lovely time and the next minute I was taken back to Northern Ireland and it's that feeling of being a stranger again, and being from England, so we kind of had it in reverse, you know, I was, they assumed I was English cos I had a very strong Brummie accent [laughs], and there are recordings of that somewhere [laughs], which is quite funny, so I had a very strong Brummie accent and clearly, you know, going back to Northern Ireland and not knowing why there was colour, you know, there was flags, and what flag do you support and it was very strange, and I was going to a Catholic school, so I was an English kid in a Catholic school, which is–

FR: In 1976 or something like that [laughs].

AP: Yeah, so that's that was very, so to me that was a bit, I think probably people were suspicious because of what was probably going on in their own lives at the time, some of them, probably their parents, maybe their fathers, had been interned, you, I don't know, but I'm guessing as an adult, I'm looking at that with adult eyes.

FR: No, it's harder to see it I suppose as a child.

AP: But as a child I was, you know, they were picking on me because I had a different accent, I don't know maybe that's what kids do, maybe they just look for the differences and, you know, focus on those, but that was really it, and then once I settled in it was fine and I have very good memories there as, well, as you can do when you're taught by nuns, very strict nuns it should be said.

FR: But you enjoyed school for the most part.

AP: I did enjoy school, I did, I didn't find school, yeah, I enjoyed going to school.

FR: And so what was the school on Falls Road then?

AP: It was on the Crumlin Road, it was Mercy primary and it was, I was taught by the Sisters of Mercy, brackets merciless [laughs], and they were very, yeah, I was there right up until I left in P7 and I transferred to the other school.

FR: And you said your parents wouldn't have been political.

AP: Absolutely not, we didn't discuss politics at home, we lived in a, I should say a mixed area, but we moved back to an area, I say mixed, it had Catholic and Protestant neighbours, which was very unusual then because generally people were segregated, but my family just didn't, you know, we had friends from all over, that was just my dad's way, we didn't discuss politics.

FR: Church going?

AP: Church, yes, very religious, my dad and mum went to church every high day, holy day [laughs], holiday, very much so, but they never related their religion with politics, so I didn't either, I didn't make a connection with religion and politics, were even in the same sphere, very naïve of me clearly, just good living people, good, you know, involved in charitable causes and so on and so forth.

FR: Yeah, and so you, but by the end of primary school I suppose you would have started to, you don't feel English, but you don't–

AP: Yeah, I'm over my Englishness [laughs].

FR: [laughs] And the accent has probably gone back a little bit to–

AP: Yeah, yeah.

FR: And you went to secondary school.

AP: I went to a grammar school, I did the eleven-plus, which was a really big thing then in Northern Ireland, especially amongst the Catholic community, education was always seen, again, my grandparents, I'd lost my dad's parents died years before I was born, but on my mum's side, my grandfather, he was a very intelligent man, but just hadn't had the opportunities, and we realised that, at the time he would have said Catholics aren't allowed to go to Queen's University, they were segregated against, so he was always very much education is the way forward, and he always said that, education is the way forward, you know, we'd go in to see him and the first thing he would say was how are you getting on at school, that was kind of his thing, and I suppose many other Catholic families too, you know, if you look through the generations you see there's a lot of people who did very, very well by comparison with maybe their Protestant counterparts, because I think when people feel vulnerable and deprived you, education is your way forward.

FR: It's an escape I guess alright.

AP: Absolutely, it's, you know, well, he used to say education's power and knowledge, he said that all the time [laughs], we said what is he talking about, it doesn't make sense to me, but that was very much his thing, he was very, he was very driven that we should all do well.

FR: And it must have had an influence I suppose on you.

AP: Well, I think so, I mean, my kids'd say I'm the strictest parent ever, but I think because I realise the value of how much he valued it, and it's weird because I see other, when you see people coming into the country and you see that, especially, you know, Asian community coming in, the Polish community are very much like this as well, anyone that's been persecuted they see education as a big, big thing and I guess that's what was going on back in Northern Ireland.

FR: No, that makes sense, so you got an AS in the transfer test?

AP: I did, whatever it was then–

FR: I don't know, I don't know–

AP: I got it, I can't remember cos they keep changing it as they do.

FR: Yeah, it was ABC when I did it, but that's–

AP: Oh I think we had random letters, I think there was, I can't even remember, I remember was it like, an R, an S was not good, but it wasn't ABC, it was a very strange, I can't remember now–

FR: Arcane lettering system–

AP: It's like, forty-odd years ago [laughs], but suffice to know I got it and I went to St Dominic's Grammar School on the Falls Road.

FR: And your family were pleased I suppose.

AP: Absolutely, absolutely delighted, I mean, I think they would have been crushed had I not, but weirdly the second-, Catholic schools in Northern Ireland, either secondary or grammar, were always considered the best, they had such a high academic standard, so yeah.

FR: And so how did you find secondary school?

AP: It was, well, I was coming from, I lived in north Belfast and my school was in west Belfast so there was a lot of [laughs], a lot of girls. Obviously you're meeting people from all over, people from west Belfast, and everyone's life experiences are slightly different, now this was a very affluent, there's a lot of affluent kids going to this school, but there were also girls in school whose father had been imprisoned for political beliefs or just for whatever, cos it was a very random judiciary then, there was a lot of, there was no jury trials at that stage, so people could be convicted and held on remand for years at a time, which I now know, I didn't know that then, so I was mixing with people who had come from very different social backgrounds and political backgrounds and that was a bit of an eye-opener, but, to be honest, that was never really a thing in the school itself because it was run by nuns.

FR: [laughs] Nuns again.

AP: Yeah, the Dominicans, who I've since realised there was a hierarchy that runs within the order of nuns [laughs], and some are more equal than others and they were very driven, and it was an enclosed order, so actually some of these, around my school there must have been a twelve foot wall around the perimeter, and inside the actual school itself we were taught by nuns, but some of those nuns had gone into the enclosure, as in, inside the actual convent, and they didn't come outside, so some of them had been in there for ten, twenty, thirty years and had never come outside of the walls.

FR: Wow.

AP: And that was kind of, and we had a bell system in school, so once the bell rang we all had to disperse like, I don't know, like cockroaches into classes because we couldn't see the nuns and they couldn't see us.

FR: Really?

AP: The ones who were enclosed.

FR: The ones who were enclosed?

AP: Yeah.

FR: That's so interesting.

AP: So it was really, I'm saying this to you now and I'm talking about this as if it was the most natural thing in the world, but you see people going, then someone going really, but yeah, that was our normal, that was.

FR: Yeah, it was like you said about going to the States, when you're in it–

AP: You don't know any different and, but the Falls Road that time, I was there in the eighties and that was the time of the hunger strikers and that was a very political–

FR: So how did you get to school?

AP: I took two buses to school. One bus went through **[00:20:00]** a predominantly Catholic area, I was fine, when it went through the Protestant area I literally had to hide the below the windows because the buses were frequently stoned, cos there was also boys going to St Mary's school, grammar school, who'd come over from north Belfast to west Belfast and they, obviously they knew it was Catholic kids on the bus and they would've stoned the buses, but again, that was it was part of everyday life, you know, smash windows frequently.

FR: But quite frightening and wearying.

AP: It was horrifying, I would not let my children do that now, that would be, I don't think anyone would let their children ride on a bus that was so unsafe, but that was our norm, that was just–

FR: And were your parents worried?

AP: Well, it was kind of that weird thing, I think they thought well, you're on the bus and it's, you know, it doesn't happen everyday, it's probably every couple of days it could happen, but people I guess they were just going through the same thing going to work themselves, you know.

FR: I suppose there's no alternative, I mean, if, yeah.

AP: There was no alternative, that's what you did, everyone, and probably the Protestant kids had similar experiences going through Catholic areas, I know the boys on the, they changed some of the school uniforms so the boys would've had a black blazer and a white shirt, but they wouldn't have worn their ties because your tie was a giveaway, so you'd see a lot of kids randomly walking around with no school ties on, it's different for the girls because we were very much, our uniforms were very, you know, I was in a maroon–

FR: Quite kind of formal, yeah.

AP: Very, very, very much so with the Dominican badge, the girls in Fort William, the other Dominican college, they wore green, so the other girls' uniform was brown, so you knew looking at someone where what school they went to.

FR: It's interesting how having not lived in Northern Ireland, you talked about coming back from Birmingham and seeing flags and kerbstones and sort of not being able to read it, I suppose you would say, not being able to–

AP: Because the Union Jack in, to us in England was everyone's flag [laughs], you know, our Queen, da-da-da-da-da-da-da, and you go back to Northern Ireland and suddenly you can't like that flag anymore.

FR: It means something different.

AP: Yeah, it's totally different, your identity is caught up in that flag.

FR: And so how about, sort of getting towards the end of school, did you have a kind of a social?

AP: We did, but again, well, we did, we socialised, but very much our social movements were, I suppose they were curtailed by where you lived and what was happening at the time, people didn't like to travel across town at night, there could be an issue, there could be, the buses may not be running, because very often the buses were taken off if there'd been an incident that day, the buses were prone to being, you know, they got fire bombed and hijacked, which was an issue, also taxis may not have gone into certain areas, so I could've been in west Belfast, but a taxi wouldn't have wanted to drive across to north Belfast. We kind of didn't notice, we got on with our own lives and, you know, sort of didn't think that much of it, but I guess as a parent, my parents were petrified that something would happen, again, a lot of places wouldn't have stayed open, we didn't have this culture they have now where the kids leave the house at eleven and party till four in the morning, that wouldn't have happened, a lot of places closed down about midnight, so that, you know, we would've gone to each other's houses, but always very mindful that you had to get back across town–

FR: Always very conscious.

AP: Cos there could've been a road block or the roads could've been blocked off, if there had been an incident.

FR: And did you, you were saying you lived in north Belfast in a mixed area, as in Protestants and Catholics.

AP: Yes, yeah.

FR: Did you maintain mixed friendships as a–?

AP: Yes, I did, yeah, both, I, going to an all girls' school, I should say the convents were all-girl, both convent schools were all girls, and again, a lot of the boys who were taught by Christian brothers, that would've been all-boys' schools. There was very few either unisex schools or religiously integrated schools, thankfully that's changed and there's a lot of integrated schools now, but in those days yes, I would've had friends from where I lived who were Protestant. I think we didn't really talk about it, it's a really strange thing because our area, you know, it wasn't a, it was a nice probably lower middle-class area, we didn't discuss that in the same way as maybe people who lived in working-class areas, that would have been more polarised, so you probably wouldn't have got mixed areas there.

FR: So it was just kind of avoided to some extent.

AP: Yeah, absolutely, and we just knew they went to a different church, but envious that they didn't have to go every Sunday, they didn't have to do the holy days, you know, it was kind of oh you're so lucky [laughs], which is so awful, but that was probably the only resentment our lot would've had because, oh you didn't have to get up and go to nine o'clock mass, you know, so that was nice, that was a nice thing and I'm glad my parents encouraged that.

FR: Yeah.

AP: Absolutely.

FR: Yeah, there's definitely something political about just allowing that to happen, maybe.

AP: It was very much, my parents were very tolerant and I think I'm still pleased that my father and my mother, they would have had maybe twenty kids in the house because you were safe, we knew where you were, we knew what was happening and other parents would've done the same.

FR: It's a lot of house parties I suppose.

AP: Well, you–

FR: Well, parties, you know, I–

AP: Strict supervision, no alcohol.

FR: Yeah, and then the gap year, so is that between finishing–?

AP: When I finished my A-levels I decided to take a year out cos I really didn't know what I wanted. In my school it was very much classical, it was a classical education, so sociology and psychology weren't even entertained, they were like, you know, they were weird science, what even is that, that's what the sister said to me, what, are you mind, is that mind-reading, no, not really [laughs], so I decided after I did my A-levels, at the school I did biology, chemistry and Spanish, and then I didn't get on with chemistry, so I did history of art, which was okay, cos it was all done very last minute, so I took a year out cos I wanted to

go and study sociology and psychology, so in that interim time, I thought well, I want to go to the States as well, so at the end of the psychology and sociology I travelled to the States.

FR: You did psychology and sociology at the tech?

AP: I did it at the College of Business Studies, and one module at the tech [laughs], cos they were very criss-cross over, they were very nice, and that was, again, that was another revelation to me that not only, there were people from every school in Belfast who came to study there, so you were integrated, which was a bit of a revelation to me, you know, people are always very guarded and look for social cues to find out who you are, what side of the divide you're on and we're very good at doing that, we can suss people out very, very quickly in Northern Ireland from a name or a–

FR: Where did you go to school.

AP: Where did you go to school, where do you live, yeah, that's a big one, not so much linguistically, people used to say oh you can do it linguistically, you can't really, it's more to do with area than actual sounds.

FR: Yeah, although people do say that they can do it by voice and stuff like that.

AP: They used to say it's how you pronounce the letter H, whether it was aitch, which was nonsense because if you came from certain parts of the country [laughs] it was your vernacular to pronounce it in a particular way no matter what side of the divide you came from, so that was, that was, again, that was kind of a, I suppose a step into going outside the bubble, the bubble of what was.

FR: And so you'd be eighteen, nineteen at this stage?

AP: I was eighteen, nineteen, yeah, and that's when I decided I'd always wanted to go to the States, always, I just thought, yeah.

FR: Why do you think, where did that come from?

AP: Do you know I've thought about that Fearghus, and I thought to myself it's possibly because when you're in a situation where you can't go anywhere, you watch TV and America was the land of milk and honey for a lot of people, a lot of Irish people for whatever reason migrated to the States, had family in the States and everything was going to be lovely and sunshiney and, you know, great holiday pics that would come over, so I thought yeah, I really want to go there.

FR: And you'd never been?

AP: I'd never been there before, I'd been to England cos we'd come here for holidays–

FR: Oh yeah, you said you used to have holidays in England.

AP: Which was, you know, cos I had family over here, so that was, that was–

FR: How did you find those holidays?

AP: Do you know what, I think because it was Brighton probably anything goes here, a huge Irish community, again, you sort of stayed in with family, you would have mixed inside the Irish community, always kind of tethered to the church, so there was a lot of events there and I didn't have any, I'll be honest, I didn't have any anti-Irish feeling ever in Brighton, laterally when I went to London I did, particularly at the Beefeaters at the Tower of London, but never so much here, or maybe it was here and I was too young to be aware of it–

FR: Yeah, I guess as a child–

AP: But my great-grandmother come here from Ireland in nineteen, my great-great-grandmother, in 1912, she came over here–

FR: Wow, 1912.

AP: Yeah, her son was a, sad story, my kids call this an Irish story cos it always ends in tragedy, but Irish story, her son had been murdered in Belfast quite brutally and it was quite famous, infamous murder and she took the rest of her surviving family over to, first to Scotland and then they eventually came down to Brighton.

FR: I guess 1912 was the civil war.

AP: The Black and Tans, the whole, **[00:30:00]** it was a horrible, horrible, in amidst many horrible hist-, parts of history from Northern Ireland that was a particularly brutal and savage one and–

FR: I guess we'll come back to this, but it's interesting that connection with Brighton has been for a long time.

AP: Yeah, just it's always been there, it's always been, again, very at home here, but it's what led us here, there's always kind of a tragedy, Irish story, the kids go.

FR: The Irish story.

AP: Yeah.

FR: Okay, so to go back to the States, you had some family in the States and a kind of a sense of it as a exciting place or as somewhere–?

AP: Absolutely, somewhere I wanted to go, it was so big, there was so much happening there, in my eyes everything good came from America [laughs], I was kind of like, all good things come from America, so as soon as I could, as soon as my parents felt that they could let me go, again, ironically I grew up in Belfast, you're worried about me travelling to the States, which never really, a lot of my friends felt that, you know, are you serious, you could

get shot going to school, but they don't want us to travel to the States, that was a big thing for me and I worked very hard, I had two jobs and I worked to save the money to go there, applying for my passport was a big thing.

FR: What did you do?

AP: I worked, God, I did loads of different little jobs, I worked for the Body Shop, first Body Shop that opened in Ireland was in, sorry, in Northern Ireland, was in Belfast and I worked there, which was great, again, weird thing, connection with Littlehampton–

FR: Yeah, of course, yeah.

AP: [laughs] Yeah, because I said I remember this shop, there used to be one in Brighton, I used to go into it when I visited on my holidays, so that was a nice connection. Then there was the chocolate shop which was associated with that too, I worked for the Queen's Film Theatre, so I was always kind of driven to do as many jobs as I could to get money to go to, to go away.

FR: Yeah, and you saved the money.

AP: Saved the money, obviously parents helped too, you know, it was kind of save and we'll match what you've got, and I just remember booking my seats and just thinking yes, I can't wait, and we had to go via Shannon cos you did your immigration in Shannon as opposed to waiting, cos there was all these sort urban myths that people had travelled to New York and were turned back because they didn't have the right documentation, but if you went to Shannon, which you, you got on board, I think you went to Dublin and flew from Dublin to Shannon, which was about twenty minutes by plane, you did your immigration there and then you went off to JFK.

FR: And how did your parents, your parents were worried.

AP: Terrified, pre-mobile phones, pre-email, pre-everything and I had letters, at the time my cousin, who's since retired, he was a general in the air force, so he was, you had to have someone to sponsor you out, I don't know if you remember that, it's kind of like, a letter of, should you run out of funds they would be there to help you, and it was sort of good character, and I was very fortunate to have it cos it came on very large headed note paper [laughs] from the United States Air Force, so no one was going to kind of turn me back on that.

FR: Yeah, that's reassuring.

AP: I was like, fine, fine, so that was great, yeah, so it was a great feeling just to get through Shannon and then I was off to the States.

FR: And you were there for a year?

AP: No, I was there for four months and then I came back to start university. I wasn't going to come back to start university, that was the other thing, I just felt actually I really like it here and I had a couple of jobs and I was travelling through, and my parents said look, give it a go, I should have known, come back and just give it a try [laughs], if you don't like it–

FR: You can always go back if you don't like it–

AP: Yeah, if you don't like it, mmm, and I did, I loved it, I loved the course, but then I went back the following summer, so I just had to get back again, that was kind of, again, working, studying, and then we had lovely three months holiday from university and I headed back to the States.

FR: So you went back to the States.

AP: Absolutely.

FR: So what, you've told me already, but what did you study at university?

AP: It was human communication, which is bachelor of science, and it was, it was the precursor actually to the CAMS degree, University of Ulster, communication, advertising and marketing, they were very much at the forefront of that that degree. I had applied to Sussex, weirdly, to come and study over here, to do sociology at Sussex and then this course, I read this course that they were bringing about at the University of Ulster and it was linguistics, and psycho-linguistics and biology and all of this kind of science things that I love, sociology, social anthropology, I thought no, this is the one, so weirdly that was what pulled me back, otherwise I would have been over here, but the lure of the course pulled me back and I've never regretted it, it was a great course with great great tutors, very good tutors who were very committed, a lot of them were published and have since been published again, so I was very, very fortunate, only thing was it was in Jordanstown, which was like, so far away from Belfast.

FR: Yeah, I know it [laughs].

AP: Do you know it, well, they're bringing that campus back into Belfast.

FR: Yes, that's right, yeah.

AP: I was like, thirty years later [laughs].

FR: [laughs] So did you, how did, did you travel, did you stay there?

AP: I travelled, black taxi, we would get the bus into town and then it was just a row of black taxis, which are just totally for the university, they don't even ask where you're going, you get in, you know, you're going to the university and that was their designated job, cram everyone in. I think it was like, fifty pee a trip or something like, I can't remember, it was something ridiculous like that, it's a set fare, and the taxis would pull in, you'd jump out and they would pick you up again in the evening, it was just a constant sort of, you know, it was

just on a loop really, but that was, yeah, that was back then, I don't know if they still, I don't know if they still run, probably most people drive now as well–

FR: That's right, yeah, probably.

AP: Then not so many of the students would've been able to drive or could have afforded to drive, out along that coastal road, and that was a lovely drive too cos you're right beside the coast.

FR: It is a nice drive up into Jordanstown, yeah.

AP: Yeah.

FR: And did you, you stayed at your parents?

AP: I stayed at home, I was able to stay at home to do that.

FR: How did you find that, having been away?

AP: It's weird, I think anyone, it is weird when you've been away and you've lived away, conforming back to your parents' rules, yeah, and I do empathise with my children when they come back, I have to say, ah that was you once, but then you sort of get into the loop of it, you know, it's nice coming home, there's something nice about the familiar of coming home and somebody to do your laundry and someone to cook your meals for you, someone to be there really, so that was, yeah, that was fine, it all worked out really well.

FR: And what about just being back in Northern Ireland in general?

AP: That was really restrictive. I remember when I came back, I think, you know, you go to the States and it's twenty-four-seven and if you're prepared to work in the States everyone is taken on just who they are, it doesn't matter what you were before, everyone was there for the same, to have a good time, to travel, to experience the country, and you sort of have all these freedoms that just weren't available to us in Northern Ireland, you know, there's no way I would have ever gone out to a bar or a pub or a club at ten o'clock in the evening, or eleven o'clock, it just wouldn't have happened, but there everything's just kind of twenty-four-seven and, you know, what you want you can have and the variety of stuff, I mean, my God, I gained so much weight in the States I have to say, I must have put on about two stone in weight–

FR: Rich, rich food.

AP: Just the volume of food I think, you know, everything was so much bigger, you know, a slice of pizza was the size of a whole pie, just the fries and it was great and we were along the coast, I lived along the Jersey coast, which is just brilliant on the boardwalk and just that sense of you didn't have to keep looking over your shoulder, you didn't have to worry that, you know, you know, oh is that a, is that a gunshot, no, it's okay, it's fireworks, cos we arrived on the fourth of July, the first time I went was on the fourth of July and the place

was awash with fireworks, and I think that probably contributed to my starry-eyed view of, wow, you know, it's all glitzy and sparkly, so things like that, it was just, and you get resentful, well, I got resentful, why can't we have that here, why can't we have what everyone else in the world takes for granted, so that, you know, and I guess–

FR: Yeah, it must have been strange to be back in Belfast–

AP: And not just me, other people who've been there, other friends of ours who sort of came back with this, well, it's just so unfair, you know, why have we not got these freedoms that other people in the world take for granted, and we're very educated, that's the other thing that amazed me about, you know, we come, a highly-educated nation, probably more degrees per head, per capita than any other country and yet, you know, we're going places, and I remember a girl who was at college asking me do we have electricity in Ireland, I'm thinking, oh my God, you're at college and you're asking me, and then she said to me, another person asked me how did you get here, did you walk, and I thought, from Ireland, they have no concept of where, you know, they've no concept of geography outside their own states, but why would they have to have because everything you want is in the States, you know, you never have to leave that continent if you don't want to, you could stay there, but that was just a very, it just sort of set up a dissonance in yourself, you know, you think well, why are we being deprived of all this [laughs], **[00:40:00]** so maybe my generation's the generation that kick-started the whole pea-, I like to think we kick-started that revolution, that we want peace in Northern Ireland, because we'd seen better.

FR: Because you'd seen something, something different.

AP: Yeah.

FR: So if my chronology is right, we're in the kind of mid-eighties.

AP: End of eighties, yeah, heading towards the nineties.

FR: Yeah, okay, and after the end of your degree you–

AP: At the end of my degree I worked in Northern Ireland, again, the job situation was dreadful, we're talking late eighties, early nineties, and I worked, because my degree was sort of social science based I was quite fortunate, I worked as a youth counsellor for a while, which was again an eye-opener into the whole, kind of the whole mentality of a lot of the kids who were growing up in very socio and economically deprived areas, dealing with kids who maybe had never met anyone from the opposite side of the community, who had all these ridiculous notions about what these other, you know, what they're like, what they look like and what they eat and just really silly things, so this was a cross-community project to bring these kids together, who, I mean, it could have gone catastrophically wrong, because obviously there's ideologies, teenage hormones [laughs], you know, sort of kicking in, but that was, I did that for a short time and then I went to work for Coca-Cola in the marketing department, which was great, again, that was a big American company coming over.

FR: Was it, was that based in–?

AP: That was based in Northern Ireland.

FR: Really?

AP: They have a huge Coca-Cola plant in Northern Ireland, Lambeg–

FR: I did not know that.

AP: The home of the Lambeg drum [laughs], so again, I was kind of out of the frying pan into the fire, and that was a good experience because they had all this marketing, international marketing, they had this guy who came over and it was an insight into the corporate mind.

FR: Sure, big American company.

AP: Big American company, so that was good, that was a temporary contract again, and then at the end of that contract I got married and I moved to England, I moved to London, because at the time my husband he had just qualified as a junior barrister and we were trying to find, whoever got the permanent job first, and he was taken on in tenancy in London and we went to London.

FR: But you were married in Northern Ireland?

AP: I was married in Northern Ireland, yeah. I met my husband in America, I should say [laughs].

FR: Oh really?

AP: Sorry, I jumped around, I just sort of took that as, for granted–

FR: We hadn't really got to that bit–

AP: Yeah, by the way, yeah, so I met him in America, weirdly, he lived six miles apart from me in Northern Ireland–

FR: [laughs] Strange how these things–

AP: He has four brothers, two of his, or one of his brothers had gone out, in inverted commas, with a friend of mine from school, so I knew his name, I thought why do I know that guy's name, yeah, he went out with my friend, but I can't, ugh, so it was all kind of a weird, you know–

FR: Serendipity–

AP: A weird thing, yeah, so we obviously got married in Northern Ireland, very traditional Northern Irish wedding, you know–

FR: Catholic–

AP: Catholic, yeah, yeah, yeah, oh there was no, I was married in Holy Cross church, beautiful, beautiful church, which my grandparents and great-grandparents had been married in before me, it was a lovely day, we had a lot of friends coming from England and that was probably the turning point, when we were inviting people over they were very trepidatious [whispers], oh we'll get blown up [laughs], and every single one of them just thought why didn't we come here sooner, this place is amazing, this is such a great, it made me sort of become aware, what kind PR, what kind of publicity's been sent out to the world [laughs].

FR: Yeah, the perception.

AP: Like, we're sort of living in caves in Northern Ireland, what is the, and they were totally just amazed by how beautiful Northern Ireland was, how lovely the people were, you know, and that was a nice thing, they got to see what we'd been telling them all along [laughs], forever apologising, you know, and then you go well, I'm not apologising for being from Northern Ireland, you just haven't seen the right side of it.

FR: Or you haven't seen any of it apart from–

AP: Exactly, from what you see–

FR: The TV news–

AP: And to be fair when I lived in England I used to watch the news and go ooh my God, that's terrible, I'd phone home, they'd go no, why, that was nothing, that was just like, a tiny little incident, but over here everything was just blown hugely out of proportion.

FR: And the way you see it framed makes a big difference.

AP: Absolutely, and the narrative that goes with it.

FR: Absolutely, so then your husband got a job as a barrister?

AP: Yes, he had trained over here, he had studied over here, so I guess he pretty much, I think he probably always knew he was going to be practising over in England and, you know, it wasn't a, you kind of go for the work and that's what a lot of people did, it was the brain drain, this was around the Celtic Tiger, back in the late eighties and nineties, where there was this huge leaching of young people and youth to Australia, to America, there just wasn't, we just didn't have the infrastructure to support the jobs that we needed.

FR: And were you happy enough then to go to London?

AP: Absolutely, it was never going to be for a long time, it was only a temporary thing, weirdly, I'm now living here longer than I ever lived [laughs] in Northern Ireland, so that's a

scary thing, that terrifies me, cos I was only, only here for a year [laughs], here for two years.

FR: So that's, so you thought it would be short term and then you–

AP: Yeah, absolutely–

FR: Yous would move back.

AP: We would moved back to Northern Ireland, we'd even had a house built back in Northern Ireland.

FR: Really?

AP: Yeah, we were coming back, we were definitely coming back to Northern Ireland, cos our family, it was always home, no matter where I've lived, Northern Ireland's always home, but life takes over and then we had our family here and they started school here, so it's always a bit more tricky getting, you have to, school holidays dictate when you can to go places, but yeah, I was always heading back home to Northern Ireland, cos that was home [laughs], you know.

FR: That's interesting, and I suppose maybe it doesn't feel that far until it does, or whatever.

AP: Well, this is it and, you know, you, kind of time just takes over, doesn't it, but more and more, particularly after the peace agreement, that was a really big thing for us, the whole Good Friday Agreement, that was a, I think that unsettled a lot of Northern Irish people living here, we had had a big comm-, well, when I say big, we had friends when we lived in London from Northern Ireland who for things like Easter or Christmas, where people couldn't afford to maybe go back home, we would all sort of get together [laughs]–

FR: And chip in.

AP: Yeah, it was just that lovely, oh you're not going home, okay, well, come round to me for whatever.

FR: Other Northern Irish people?

AP: Yeah, absolutely, absolutely, there's that sense of community because when you live in England, this is going to sound awful, a lot of English people in my experience didn't really care what your religious denomination was, you're just a Paddy [laughs], you know, that sort, back then, thankfully I think it's changed now, but back then there was a lot of anti-Irish feeling–

FR: So how did you find, sorry, so how did you find London, initially?

AP: I loved London, London is just, I think it's a melting pot, isn't it, you go to London to take from it what you need in terms of your skill set. I don't think anyone ever goes to London with the intentions of living there forever.

FR: No.

AP: I think it's a transient place and I think, you know, that time you're sort of getting your career off the ground it's all about CV, it's about CV and the résumé and having that London polish on your CV, but again, that was a tricky time to be in London because it was still at the height of the IRA bombing campaigns and so on, and again, it was kind of, you're relaxing but you're not, you know, you're relaxing, but you kind of always have at the back of your mind that you're still Northern Irish in England and people are very aware of that.

FR: And you were quite conscious of that?

AP: I was conscious of that. I can remember one time, this time I got a job at the United Nations working for the Year of the Family, which was our initiative, and I was in the office, it was just off Great Portland Street, and there was a massive, massive bang and I knew instantly what it was, and one of my co-workers came in and said oh it's probably one of your lot, and I said what, well, it's probably one of your lot that's blown it up, and I said one of my lot, and I thought we have been friends, work colleagues, but still, one of your lot has done that, I thought why would you even think that, you know, I've never had any, you know, we're completely anti-violent, completely anti-terrorism, why would you, but I just thought that's the mindset–

FR: Suddenly, it's your lot, yeah.

AP: It's your lot, and I said I really don't think it is, I said, because to be, I said not that there's any, you know, brownie points or gold stars in terrorism, but there's usually a warning given, this was just so, this was just a random bombing, and it wasn't, it was the Iranian, one of the embassies had been blown up, it wasn't anything to do with Northern Ireland at all, but still in people's minds that was the –

FR: That's the association.

AP: Suddenly your with the friend out for a drink on Friday night, but when something happened, your lot, you're just–

FR: Suddenly you're outside of it.

AP: Yeah, you're excluded again, so people always had that at the back of their mind.
[00:50:00]

FR: Do you want me to pause this so we can have a biscuit and then we'll come back to it?

AP: Yeah, fine [laughs], am I rambling again, sorry, just stop me [laughs].

FR: No, not at all. **[00:50:12]** [The two interview audio files were spliced together here].

FR: Got to press it twice before we start another, got to press it twice. That's alright [accepts beverage from Anne's daughter, Síofra]. Thank you so much, cheers.

AP: Cheers, yes, thank you. I've got a rumbly tummy Síofra, cos I'm thinking about food from home [laughs].

FR: [laughs] Thank you very much. So I was going to ask about London, but actually on that, food from home, what kind of thing?

AP: What do I miss from home?

FR: What did you miss?

AP: I miss the vegetables, there's no such thing as organic vegetables in Northern Ireland cos everything is grown in a field ten minutes down the road [laughs], and it's fresh and it's gorgeous. You go to the butchers and they can almost identify, you know, they know the farm and virtually the animal that whatever's come from, although I'm not a big meat eater, it's just the freshness, it's just, and the quality of the food and it's good, it's rustic food, I would say it's rustic and it's wholesome and it's comforting [laughs], so.

FR: That all makes sense.

AP: Yeah, that's what I miss from home, the food.

FR: And I guess in–

AP: And O'Hara's bakery, which has closed down almost thirty years, but I still hanker after O'Hara's bread, as do many of my friends who remember O'Hara's bread.

FR: That's really interesting, was it soda bread?

AP: There was soda bread, there was, they used to do sort of a plain loaf, I think it was, in Scotland they call it a plain loaf, but their bread was just the best, fruit malt, their cakes, used to do, it was always this synthetic cream they used to put in these, they called them cookies, but they were sort of like, a muffin with cream inside them and that was a big treat [laughs], you know, I'm thinking you can't eat them it's full of chemicals, but it was such a comfort food, and Irish people love their food, just, Northern Irish people love their food, that's just the way it is, so I miss that.

FR: That's amazing that you remember the bakery after thirty years.

AP: I remember the bakery really well, and they used to have, it was baked down Tennant Street, it was baked down and it was a Protestant bakery, but they had bakeries all over in all different areas, so it just trans-, it transcribes the political divide cos the bread was so good and it would come off these, the lorry would come up and they'd put out these pallets

and you could see the steam rising off the bread, it was so fresh, yeah, I miss that, I'm going to start my tummy rumbling [laughs], so that was good stuff.

FR: So before we, before I stopped recording we were talking about London. I think you described a bombing incident that wasn't actually an IRA bomb.

AP: It was nothing to do with them, weirdly.

FR: But do you remember the IRA bombings? Were you living in London when–?

AP: I remember we had just moved down, well, there was so many bombings over the years, and this is a horrible thing to say, they kind of merge into one, and it's only sort of specific incidents that kind of stretch up, when they did the 7/11 bombings in July that was the, the 7/7 bombings, wasn't that it in, we'd just moved down from London to Brighton and it was that awful feeling, the buses that were involved and the tubes and trains, because several, we knew so many people who were there, so it was clearly you could, anyone could have been caught up in that, no matter what religion they were, whatever, that was awful because I had, my really good friend ran that bus route everyday, my husband was in London that day, that was a horrible feeling, that was just awful, but again, that wasn't the IRA, that was the terrorist, but it brought it all back, it brought back those feelings. The IRA bombings, when they went up, every one was a tragedy, and I think every, any good person would have held their head in shame and just oh, you know, we're trying so hard to make, you know, to change this and suddenly everyone is just condemned with the same, with the same act, everyone is condemned, it was awful, again, the Manchester bombings, the Omagh bombings, you know, it was just awful and certainly my friends and family, you know, we just felt such, so sad and embarrassed and it was just it was just not a good time to be, you know, it wasn't a good time and of course that leads to resentment and then you go through every time there's one of these incidents it churns everything up again, so you're, you're brought right back to being in that situation and those awful feelings.

FR: And you felt conscious of being Northern Irish?

AP: Very much, very much so, and you can understand people who maybe weren't fully appraised of the situation. To be honest, English people kind of, I remember one person saying to me oh yes, it's, the Protestants in Dublin are fighting the Catholics in the North, I just thought you're actually older than me, you were probably around when this started, I don't remember it, but it's just this lack of knowledge and maybe people thinking well, it's not on my doorstep, I don't want to know about it, maybe it's, you know, until it comes into my backyard we don't need to know about it, but it yeah, it was definitely a, it was a sad time for all, and I was very conscious of being Northern Irish and apologising on behalf of, you know, the good people on either side who didn't want this and trying to explain it's a minority of people that are keeping this going, everybody wants peace, you know, the majority of people want peace and they want peace without violence, you know.

FR: It's interesting, you were saying earlier about the, when all you see of Northern Ireland is the news it makes it seem like a much different situation.

AP: Yeah, you're detached aren't you, it could be anywhere in the world, it's on a TV screen and I've probably been guilty of this, watching awful genocides in Rwanda and, you know, shootings in Amer-, all these terrible things that happen, but when you've lived through it and you know it it's so much more poignant, when you see Northern Ireland you go, oh it's not like this, so you have to then think well, oh [laughs], you know, what is this generating to the world, of course people think this, they think we're barbarians and we're out hurling petrol bombs at everybody and that's not the case, that is so not the case.

FR: It must be frustrating.

AP: It's, it was really frustrating and just embarrassing cos you just think everyone's working so hard to generate this very good image and oh, this just sets it right back, once that would come on you'd just go ach, here we go again.

FR: And you said you had a circle of Northern Irish friends in London.

AP: Yes, we did, yeah.

FR: Are they people you knew from–

AP: Some people that I met when I went over there, friends of ours from back home who lived in London, and we would get together regularly and actually it's lovely because by that stage, obviously you make more friends when you go somewhere, so we had friends from who were, you know, maybe of Asian heritage, who we met and Ind-, you know, Indian heritage and West Indian heritage and German, so it was kind of a lovely melting pot, it's a really nice feeling to have just inclusivity, you know, we're all here, we're celebrating, it was maybe Christmas or Easter, St Paddy's Day was a big one, we had a lot of [laughs] adopted Irish on St Paddy's Day [laughs], you're not even, you know, no, we're here to celebrate, so that was nice, they were good memories, they were good.

FR: That's really interesting that the people you mentioned there would all have been slightly at one remove from Englishness.

AP: Yeah, absolutely, and isn't it funny how I think migrants from any generation or second generation, I think you have that common bond, that, you know, your family, you know, so many very good friends who've parents who've come from Goa, a lovely friend, doctors came from Goa, other friends who had come over with *Windrush* and we had all experienced that degree of, their parents, as had mine, had experienced that degree of racism and anti-ness that, you know, so obviously it's not, you know, we don't talk about that it would maybe come up in a conversation, oh yeah, well, my parents arrived, they had this, they had that and you think gosh that's incredible cos my parents had that too [laughs], you know, and I'd say yeah, my parents, so it's kind of weird that we gravitate, it's just a common history.

FR: Yeah, no, that makes sense.

AP: But by the same token it was lovely, I had Northern Irish Protestant friends sitting round the table, I had a very, very good Jewish friend who was sitting with a Muslim friend of ours and she said this would never have happened in my country, and I just thought gosh, isn't that incredible how we, we have just, you know, we are not there, we have progressed beyond all of that, which is a nice feeling.

FR: Definitely, and did you, would you have been going back and forth to Northern Ireland in this period?

AP: All the time, all the time, yeah.

FR: To see family and–?

AP: Yeah, see family, again, life goes on back home, hatches, matches, dispatches [laughs], great-auntie so-and-so's birthday, duh, duh, duh, even travel to Northern Ireland has changed.

FR: How did you do it then?

AP: Because before we used to go to Heathrow or yeah, Heathrow, and you would be put in hangar, it was like Area 51, Roswell, you know, you were so far removed from all the other passengers, you would have walked along, you **[01:00:12]** would have had the most stringent security ever. I can remember one time we were flying back from Kenya and we had a six or seven gap, hour gap in our flights and we woke up and there was a police officer with a gun pointed at my husband's head. Now, you're going to Northern Ireland, and we're like, oh my God, oh my God, what's happened, you know, so that was that was really traumatic I thought, that would never have happened to any other passenger travelling anywhere else in the world.

FR: And what had happened, it was just–?

AP: Nothing, it was just, we had just, we were sitting in the chair and we'd obviously dozed off, he had come up, seen where we were going, cos obviously only people in that area are going to Northern Ireland, and he woke up with a gun to his head.

FR: That's horrible.

AP: [laughs] You just think my God, we're just travellers, we're just travellers trying to get back home.

FR: And if you go back and forth quite a lot it's sort of a–

AP: Yeah, you sort of have that, then that builds up a resentment, but we were a couple, we were travelling as a couple, so that was quite, that was quite [pauses] frightening actually, yeah, that wasn't good.

FR: That must've been frustrating as well.

AP: And also the interrogations when you came through security. I remember being interrogated intensely at Heathrow.

FR: On the way out or on the way–?

AP: On the way into England.

FR: The way in.

AP: And it was, you know, what's your name, where do you live, what do you call your brother, have you got a brother, what's his name, and when people ask you these questions you think has something happened, cos my brother was a student at the time, and I thought oh my God, has something happened to him, so you're panicking thinking has something happened to my brother in Cork, you know, why are you asking me this, but it was really intense, it was so random as well, you know, they'd pick elderly folk and I thought this would never happen to anyone else coming into this country. Thankfully those days are pretty much gone, but that was a pretty, that was a harrowing time travelling to and from.

FR: That must have been very difficult.

AP: Travelling with young children, they would've taken your baby bag apart at the airport to make sure this is all, you know, obviously this is like, going back twenty-five years ago, if you carried formula through it would have been almost opened up and whatever, you know, it was just the most extreme, extreme security and unnecessary, I think it was all garnered to make people feel very uncomfortable and second-class citizens, but you couldn't argue, you couldn't say well, why're you doing this because then you'd be hauled off your flight, or worse, so yeah.

FR: It's when you're trying to make a life in England–

AP: Yeah, exactly and, you know, you're just going on about your daily business, but the travel thing, I remember just feeling really stressed travelling thinking here we go, back, you know, so however many ages, and this walk to this hangar at the edge of beyond, we were segregated.

FR: Ah it's tough.

AP: It is tough, but, you know, I'm remembering this now because obviously it's not like that anymore, but they were the in the days when you travelled to and from England from Belfast, you were treated like a third-class citizen, and that was pretty harsh, it really was.

FR: And that went on for a very long time I suppose?

AP: Oh I think it went right up to the, in fact, there is a lot of security going to Northern Ireland now, but that's fine, but I think the whole 9/11 thing, it's kind of [laughs], you know, it's kind of superseded that.

FR: Yeah, I know what you mean, yeah.

AP: But it was certainly that level of being victimised and segregated as a threat.

FR: And I suppose in general travel there was quite low security then, it's hard for me to imagine if you went–

AP: Well, no, oh yeah, before that, I mean, can remember we, being in America and used to check your bags on kerbside, you know, and just sort of waltz onto the plane, and actually I remember being in New York thinking oh why are they not looking through all my stuff, why am I not being, clearly that's what they should have been doing as we know now, but I remember thinking my God, the security in Northern Ireland is so extreme, so, so extreme, you know, by comparison to this.

FR: And again, it's like, normalcy or whatever–

AP: Yeah, that was our normal.

FR: Just one more thing about London. I think you mentioned something earlier about the Beefeaters.

AP: Yes.

FR: [laughs] I wanted to hear what that was.

AP: We had travelled, as a child out-, we went to school, a school party to London and of course you do all the sites and it's very exciting, we were all very excited, girls of an age, we were probably about twelve or thirteen, maybe about eleven, twelve, and we travelled over to London for a competition and we're going round all the sites and we came to the Tower of London and everyone was getting their photographs taken and there was one of the Beefeaters came out and he was sent on various tours, oh where are you from, we're from America, we're from Canada, where are you from, and one of my friends said, one of the girls said oh we're from Belfast, you know, and he went well, I suppose somebody has to live there, and I remember at that point thinking it's a really odd thing, he's being rude, you know, you're a child and you're thinking why would you say that, that was such a, said with such venom, and that always stuck in my mind and I thought why would you say that to a child, cos that's clear, that we were children.

FR: Who have got no–

AP: We're there for a school trip.

FR: That's interesting, I suppose it's a–

AP: And that sort of stuck with me and I thought okay [laughs], is this what you people really think of kids from Belfast, when you're welcoming kids from all over the world who have

come from traumatic experiences, you know, from Russia and wherever, and I felt that, you know, the kids in Belfast, these are traumatised children, and that's what they were, a lot of them had seen things that no adult would ever have seen in their lifetime, and these kids have experienced it, and I thought gosh, there you go, that's really interesting.

FR: That's the way that it's seen.

AP: Yes, that's how it's perceived, your trauma's not as important as anyone else's.

FR: It just, yeah, kind of ties back in with you living in London as an adult. We talked a little bit about this when the tape was off, but, so coming towards the peace process then, in the sort of mid-nineties, what are your memories of that?

AP: Lots of optimism, even though we lived in England we watched the news, we had the Northern Ireland stations [laughs] then and we would always watch the Northern Ireland news just to see what was happening and it was a time of great optimism. I think Clinton had been to Ireland and to Belfast and I can remember thinking that's the first time my country's been all together under one flag, and it was the American flag, and just swarms of people, oh it just makes me very emotional, just with these flags, you know, for Clinton, people lining the way, it was kind of the Kennedy effect, you know, people were lining the motorway up to the cavalcade, up to the airport and stuff, it was a great, great feeling, so when George Mitchell came on board, Mo Mowlam, who I've spoken about, the lovely Mo, it was a lot of optimism, people were so happy and people were just feeling, you know, could this be the end is coming, you know, it was a great, great feeling and of course there was dips, peaks and troughs in that process, where it was all good one day, then people were throwing their toys out of the pram and leaving the next, and so that was me watching it as an outsider looking in, I can't imagine what it was like to be in there at the time, just, probably people on tenterhooks, just hoping for the best, and of course the background that was not everybody wanted it [laughs], and that was always burning along the back, but I think, I remember thinking if they can't get it now we will never have peace, if we can't do this now there will never be peace in Northern Ireland, and that was just my, just thinking, just let them get some sort of a deal.

FR: It must have been strange to be following it so intently from London.

AP: Yeah, from here, from a country, well, England, you know, yes, it was a vested interest of course, the English, we want, you know, the English wanted to get it because there'd been a lot of trauma and all the bombings and no one wanted that, nobody wanted that that scenario, but I just remember thinking, and of course at the time my baby was due that day, I was giving birth, I was literally giving birth [laughs] when the process was on and I was saying to the midwife, no, no, no, no, hang on a minute, I want to see what's happening, I want to see it's good, the Holy Thursday, this is a day, this thing has to come through on a Thursday, and of course it didn't, it went over to Good Friday, and I can remember just, you know, the elation of having this baby, but being so focused on [laughs, you know,] what is happening back home, this is so, and the midwife was looking at me, her name was Comfort, she was a West Indian, she was lovely, she went you're having a baby, why are you watching and I said you don't understand, this is so important, you know, for us, this is such

an important time, fingers crossed, you know, and many years later in fact, my husband met George Mitchell and had a very nice conversation and sort of said, you know, just expressed how much gratitude we felt towards him as Northern Irish people for what he had he had brokered in the agreement.

FR: That's just amazing that, was that your first child?

AP: The second [laughs], the second.

FR: Either way, it's amazing.

AP: It was just such a weird experience, and I just thought how weird is this that, you know, something so important to me on so many levels, it's like, coincided on the one day.

FR: Wow [laughs].

AP: It was just so, it was just a really amazing experience, and my mother was over at the time, **[01:10:12]** so she was very invested in it too, so there's this great, you know, what's happening, what's happening, what's happened, have they got it yet, have they got it yet, that was a good feeling, it was a really good feeling.

FR: It's a good time to feel optimistic I suppose.

AP: Well, you just kind of had that please let it happen, cos by that stage there was very much an opinion everyone was just fed up, people had had a nice time, there had been a ceasefire, so people got a taste of what it could be like and so, so important that that went ahead, irrespective of what was happening in Clinton's personal life, no one really cared about that, we were just, we need to get an agreement for Northern Ireland, and I think there was a lot of, yeah, of course this whole Brexit thing's coming up now and I think this is what's always at the back of your head, no one wants to go back to what was there before and of course it's very much tied in with the Brexit and the hard border and all that kind of thing, so yeah, that's, it was just such a crucial day, such a great feeling, great, great feeling.

FR: That's great.

AP: A rare day when you were proud to be Northern Irish, I have to say, it was one of those days, yes, you know.

FR: So with your children, did you take them back to–?

AP: All the time, they used to refer to Northern Ireland as home [laughs].

FR: Wow.

AP: Because we'd be back and forth and people would be over, and they love going back home, they love Northern Ireland, yeah.

FR: That's interesting.

AP: We had a very weird thing with my son, he was about three, and obviously we, we were visiting in north Belfast and there was a [laughs] cos you go up as, you know, in Bel-, any part of Northern Ireland, every hundred yards you change flags, you know, you change [laughs] one to the other, and we were out and my son said oh there's our flag, that's our flag, the Union Jack [laughs].

FR: [laughs] Okay.

AP: There's this little Catholic boy, it's our flag, and I come out like this [gasps] in the car, you know, he's going to get us shot, but, you know, I thought isn't that lovely, that he doesn't, to him it's just a flag.

FR: He doesn't really have a sense of the–

AP: No, he didn't, you know, to him it's just a flag that you see everywhere in our England house, you know, not house, in our England country, yeah, so that was that was kind of, a weird kind of ooh, you know.

FR: That's really interesting, it kind of, it reminds me of you saying that you as a child–

AP: Yeah, again, when I came back, so there you go, it's like, full circle, you know, well, it's just that really weird experience of him going ooh, yeah, but then, you know, it's church, he's going to church, but that's our flag, again, politics and religion.

FR: Hmm, so would you have still been going to church in London?

AP: Yes, I went to church, yeah, it's weird because again, you know, religion, yes, I'm a person of faith, I obviously don't agree with things that were carried in the name of my church because to me that doesn't represent me, that's not my church, the church that I believe in, so of course I've had issues with that, and it's very hard to argue when there's such strong evidence of wrongdoing that has happened and has, you know, and you see it presented to you, so I think you have to be mindful of that, but yes, I do go to church, my kids have made their communions, confirmations, but it's not a political thing, it's just a, it's a faith thing and, you know, that's just the way it is, there's no, if I don't go it's not the end of the world, as it would be when I grew up in Northern Ireland, and I do have that guilt if I don't go on a Sunday or two or three, there's that kind of, you know, that Catholic guilt, which I will take to the grave, I know that, all the therapy in the world will not [laughs] eradicate that, my Jewish friends tell me they have the same thing, so [laughs], we bond over our mutual guilt, so yeah, yeah, I do.

FR: Where was your church in London?

AP: It was in Highgate in London.

FR: A lot of other Northern Irish–?

AP: There was, the priest who was there–

FR: Or Irish I suppose.

AP: One of the priests was from Belfast, Father Christopher, in fact, I know for a fact he's just celebrated his one hundredth birthday, and he was a really big strong pillar of that community and he instigated the Irish centre and the creches and so on and so forth, but he had lived there probably, I'd say he'd been there from a very young priest, maybe when he was in his thirties, maybe even younger, he had lived in London–

FR: For a long time.

AP: For a long time, and he was a big part of the community, in fact, he still was still running the, they used to try and open up the parish centre well into his eighties, and I thought that's interesting because I'm from Belfast, you know, it's just, so of course you gravitate to what you know, it's, oh are you from Belfast, yeah, and we were debating what schools to go to, he was like, no, no, no, your son will be going to our school, our local school in, you know, so that was a nice kind of sense of community, so it was a nice thing, that was a good, it's a positive image for the church [laughs], you know, God knows we could do with as many as we can get.

FR: [laughs] But it can be quite hard to find that kind of community in London.

AP: Absolutely.

FR: I mean, it sounds like you and your husband also had a kind of a community of friendship.

AP: We did, and I think when you live away from home your friends become your chosen family, I think very much that's the, and what I've often tried to say that, you know, it's as much about faith, I used to say to the kids when they were little, look, you can go anywhere in the world, if you're feeling homesick go to a church and you'll be with people and it doesn't matter what denomination you are, you just have a common faith, whether it be Jewish or, you know, Buddhist, something, you are tied together with your, with your, faith and I sort of felt that was a nice thing to do, you know, it harks back to what you know, doesn't it, you're what you grow up with, cos I used to say that, you know, just go and just sit and just be be still and you will feel comfort and the whistles and the bells and the whatever.

FR: No matter where you are.

AP: No matter where you are, and I think even in America when I felt homesick, I remember going to the [distracted by a sound], the door.

FR: Oh is that your door?

AP: Sorry.

FR: Absolutely, no, no, I, I heard it as well.

AP: Did you hear it? [leaves the room to answer the door to a caller]

FR: We can wrap this up if this is [pauses], it's a nightmare, we've got a really small letterbox and if you're not there to sign it just seems post just disappears, it's a nightmare.

AP: Yeah, they don't, they, especially I think it's just the way of the world, isn't it, things go missing, they say we delivered it and I go well, where is it–

FR: Where is it gone [laughs]. So I think the last thing is just to ask about moving from London to Brighton and then some final thoughts about Northern Ireland and about emigration, so we'll not take too much of your time.

AP: No, that's fine I don't mind, I'm all yours today, I hope I've been of some use [laughs].

FR: It's been really interesting, really, really interesting. So yeah, you and your husband were both living in London.

AP: Yes.

FR: Two children at that stage or–?

AP: We had two there, yes, we had two in London and then after, we'd been there probably about years, and we moved down to Brighton, we made the decision to move because where we lived in London, in Highgate, it would take me sometimes forty minutes to drive in the morning time what would take me five minutes in the evening, to do the school run, and London is a great place and I loved it, but I think when children come along you have to reassess your priorities and of course we always had the connection with Brighton, so more and more as I came to Brighton it was harder to go back to London [laughs], I used to sort of look behind me as I'm going up the A23, oh I don't want to leave, and we just felt that maybe it was time for a change. Lew was still working in London, he works all over the place, so we sold in London and came down here.

FR: What date would that have been?

AP: That was October 2000.

FR: October 2000, okay, so it's been, yeah, eighteen, nineteen years.

AP: And weirdly at the same time we had had a property built in Northern Ireland and we were debating whether or not, before we made the initial move to Brighton we debated whether or not to move home, and because I'm, I'm sure you find this, each time I go back now I just keep thinking it's a better and better place to be, and I get kind of a little bit resentful that, you know, I had to leave, and now everybody's getting all the good stuff back

home, you know, you go back and you go oh where are the security barriers, where's this, where's that, that's a good thing, but I'm missing out on it, FOMO, total FOMO, but we then decided we'd spend a summer at home and we just thought it was so quiet, it was so different from London cos London is just such a crazy place, to go back to a little one-street town [laughs], it was just too much, we spent the summer there and I thought, no, I'm kind of missing, I need a little bit more, I'm not ready to retire yet to the country, and we moved down to Brighton.

FR: That's really interesting.

AP: But we kept the house there for summertime.

FR: Oh there's still a kind of a like, a–

AP Well, we had it, not anymore, but we used to keep it to go back to with the children.

FR: Was that in Belfast or–?

AP: It was in Dundrum.

FR: Dundrum, okay, yeah.

AP: On the coast, **[01:20:12]** which is beautiful, there was, I mean, it is an area of outstanding natural beauty, as the big sign says as you drive in [laughs], lots of artists go there, the most pure light you'll ever get, lovely people and that sense of community you just can't buy that anywhere in the world, you know, you kind of go home and they know how long you're staying for before you do [laughs].

FR: It's interesting that that was a, and that's after the peace process as well.

AP: That was after the peace process, because I didn't, it was weird, I'd never really been as homesick as I was probably the first couple of times I went back after the peace process, and it was just such a lovely place, and huge, I don't know if you remember the security barriers, they were everywhere, and it was ugly concrete bollards, security bollards, and the peace wall had sort of been made more pretty and all those kind of divides had come away, and I just thought, even the murals had changed [laughs], you know, we went to a wedding and it's part of the, you know, one of the treats of the wedding was to go round, they hired a bus to take all the guests round the murals in Belfast, and I was kind of looking and going oh my days, this used to be something else, but they were just, they'd now become a historical artefact, that was really bizarre I have to say, you know, that was a very bizarre feeling to go round thinking these are now tourist attractions, you know, kind of a big part of our youth and they meant something.

FR: And they were kind of alive.

AP: Yeah, they were political statements and that delineated where you were in the country or in Belfast, if you saw that mural you knew you were in, and you shouldn't have been

there, that was the, you shouldn't be here, that's dangerous, but it was just now, that to me was a real sign that tourism had taken over, terrorism had kind of gone by the wayside and this was the new Northern Ireland, so that was a very [laughs], I actually corrected the guide, you're not right in that, just saying, I just want to be factually correct, that was [laughs].

FR: That's interesting, so that was the moment when maybe you thought about going back, but then decided to–

AP: But then, work, the children, they were getting older and we looked at, you know, they had established friendships here, and still it was still early days to be fair with the peace movement, you thought well, gosh, do we go back home and it all goes back to the way it was, we never discussed the Northern Ireland situation with our children, I think we sort of consciously unconsciously made a choice, we never discussed it and even my son weirdly, take the boy out of Belfast, he studied politics at school and he would say things and then sort of as they got older and we talked about it, but I just thought I don't want that to taint their lives, that was our history, that shouldn't be part of their history, you know.

FR: It makes sense.

AP: We talk about the house of tolerance where, you know, everyone comes in, we've all denominations here and everyone, you know, in fact, it was Diwali a couple of weeks ago and one of his friends brought us round a Diwali feast, which was lovely, you know, I just thought that's really nice, you know, sort of, so we were really, I think we're really pleased that that's not been an issue, and his my son's best friend is a boy that he probably would never have met if we lived in Belfast, and he lived in Belfast, because we were totally different sides of the divide.

FR: But also Northern Irish?

AP: His mum's Northern Irish, and they met at school and they have been best friends from when they were in P7, all the way through Manchester, university, and I said do you know that probably would never have happened if we were back home.

FR: That's amazing.

AP: So who knows, but that to me I just think that's, it's kind of very symbolic of, you know, and obviously his mum and us we've grown up with our own histories in Northern Ireland, but it's so nice that it's kind of, I reckon if we're, I said to her well, we're all here for the same reason, we don't want to be part of what was going on back then and, yeah, so that's really nice, and I often think that's a good, you know, that's, that's political process, that's the peace process right there, and they're sitting round the table, you know.

FR: That friendship, yeah, I mean, that's amazing actually, that's a really–

AP: So it's a, you know, and the boys, my kids support England, they support Ireland in the rugby, England in the rugby, kind of bit greedy, they can go either way.

FR: They can choose.

AP: Yeah, it's, so that's weird, that's, it's kind of weird–

FR: No, that's a great way to think about it. So would you ever think about going back?

AP: We have thought about going back, cos obviously our, my, our parents are, my father-in-law has sadly passed, last year, that would be the draw, family's always the draw that brings you home, and I think we've made a lot of sacrifices and we look back and we think well, our kids grew up without their grandparents round the corner, which is something I grew up with, I always had my grandparents and my husband had his grandparents, but you have to kind of make those choices, something has to give, and we've been lucky that my parents were able to come over, as they retired they had more free time, they could come over and spend time with the grandchildren, but I, I, you know, it's funny, I'd like to go back, but I wonder if I'm too if I've been away too long now to, the climate's awful [laughs], that's the big thing that puts me off cos you know that shoulder-crunching cold that you get about December to May [laughs], that's the one thing that puts me off, everything else I love about home, except the climate.

FR: And you get used to the south coast I guess.

AP: I know, I've become a southern softy as someone said [laughs], but that's a, that's the, and I think my husband would be the same, we, we, I mean, it's home, it's always going to be home, I could live anywhere in the world, but Northern Ireland's the only place that's ever going to be home, everywhere else you're just, you know, you're just biding your time.

FR: Which, isn't that strange that you can live in Brighton for eighteen years, but–

AP: Yeah, I, actually I'm even considering actually moving to the States, I would consider, I'd like to spend some of my retirement in the States, in a warm climate [laughs].

FR: [laughs] That makes sense.

AP: But yeah, we just need to warm Northern Ireland up and I'll go home [laughs], if we can just move it along a bit, but no, it's a great place, I do miss it, I have fond memories of, sad memories too obviously, which it would take reams and reams of tape for everyone's life story who's grown up in Northern Ireland, it's that, the highs were really high and the lows were dreadful, but it's, no, I've never left and said oh I, you know, my character owes a lot to having grown up in Northern Ireland, and the nuns [laughs], yeah, definitely I would, and my kids like going back as well, which is good.

FR: They go back to see grandparents–

AP: Yeah, they do they go back, they've cousins back there, grandparents, one of them even considered studying at Queen's and they decided to go to Manchester, so, yeah, it's just,

we're very much a Northern Irish house I think, we can say we've brought Northern Ireland to the south coast [laughs].

FR: [laughs] That's interesting, that kind of, the bits that you remember fondly of Northern Ireland, but not the bits that are the sad memories or whatever you've kind of–

AP: Yeah, and I think in every life, everybody's lifetime has sad memories, but I think some of the situations that happen there, you know, there's like, things with my kids, funny, it would hit me at really weird times, the kids'd be going to school and I thought gosh, I remember going to school at that age and the army, being stopped by really big, scary men with guns and them rifling through your school bag to see if you were carrying, you know, you know, I've nothing in, this is ridiculous, why would I be carrying a gun to school, that makes no sense to me, you know, why would I have a bomb in my bag, that makes no sense to me, but it, it's comes across as bullying if you pick, you know, little girls going to school and you tip their school bags out, why would you be doing that if not to intimidate, so a lot of the negative press that the police and army got, I've family members who were in the army as well, many years ago, pre all of this and, you know, you have to, they have to take responsibility too for their, for how they conducted themselves in their everyday interactions with people.

FR: And for the kind of difficulties they created for people just trying to live.

AP: Yeah, because, you know, you would look at that, and my mum tells a story of a lady who had a very premature baby and she was pushing the baby in a pushchair and the army came up and mum said weirdly sometimes women were kind of you would think they'd be more compassionate, the female soldiers, and they were demanding that she lift this tiny baby out of the pram so they could search it for bombs, you know, it's just crazy stuff like that, my mum said whether the situation makes craziness in people and, you know, the people standing around said what are you doing, it's a tiny premature baby, and they were pointing guns at these ladies who were, so **[01:30:12]** it's weird things like that would come up and you'd go no, that could never happen, you know, it's like you're relating a story of something crazy.

FR: And when you, it's the kind of normalcy, not normalcy–

AP: But that's your normal, you know, I had cousins who came over from America and they were mesmerised by, you know, soldiers driving around in armoured vehicles with their guns pointed, and they were like, you can't do that, you can't point your guns at people, this isn't a war zone, and I said well, it kind of is, it's a, how do you explain that, you know [laughs].

FR: It kind of is and it kind of isn't at the same time.

AP: This is our Disney, this is our kind of Disney attractions. I don't know, it's, yeah, it's kind of weird memories like that which you tell people and they think your crazy and you go well, that was our norm, that was kind of what it was like growing up in that situation. I'm sure you don't remember any of that cos you're much younger, but I'm glad you don't

remember, I hope you don't remember cos it means it's gone [laughs], you know, that's the thing.

FR: It's like with your children, I suppose you can, yeah, no, Ballymena was never as securitised as Belfast I guess.

AP: Cos I think it was far enough out on the outskirts to not have to merit that.

FR: Yeah, that's right. I remember stop points and searches and things like that.

AP: I can remember going to London when the first youngster was little, going to London and walking into the store and just opening my bag up, and they were kind of looking, what's she doing, what's she doing [laughs].

FR: [laughs] Waiting for someone to search you.

AP: Yeah, it was just like, such an automatic reaction when you went into a store.

FR: Hah, that's interesting.

AP: And one of my part-time jobs, you had to look for incendiary devices at the end of the evening.

FR: Just in the shop or around–?

AP: In the shop, in and around the goods, they hadn't put incendiary devices.

FR: I guess if you're in central Belfast, in the shopping bit it's quite–

AP: Can you imagine, what's your job description, you will be looking for explosive devices, you know, if my kids came in and said that's part of my job remit I'd be like, no, no, you're not, no.

FR: [laughs] Maybe not.

AP: But that wasn't just me, that was everybody who worked in retail, that's what you did.

FR: Yeah, and again–

AP: [laughs] It's just crazy, isn't it?

FR: Assumed it to be normal and took it to be just–

AP: Totally normal, why would you not be looking for those things, at the end of the day, you know, it's just–

FR: Aye, it's really interesting.

AP: Shoplifting wasn't our priority, it was like, making sure, you know, you didn't have, find bombs or suspicious devices.

FR: Yeah, it's scary.

AP: Yeah, but it's, you know, I mean, I'm not making light of it, but we were talking about that dark sense of humour that comes from adversity and dark circumstances, but that was just kind of, when I said to my kids they go what, what [laughs], it sounds like Beirut and I said I know, but that was our norm, you went in, you got searched, they searched your–

FR: Through the ring of steel into the city centre.

AP: Yeah, yeah, we went through all the security gates before you actually got in to the security gates, so when I see the ring of steel in London I, that's nothing compared to what we had in Northern Ireland, really it isn't when you look at the–

FR: The pi-, I mean, I've seen pictures of them.

AP: Yeah, I mean, there was proper cages and you went through a turnstile and there was especially created security officers who weren't affiliated to the police, they were a separate body, just civilians who would check, who would just check the bags coming through or, and I don't know whether that was a deterrent and I guess maybe it was. I've never heard them actually catching anyone or being aware of them actually intercepting devices in that method.

FR: I think a lot of the bombings ended up happening outside of the ring of steel then because it must have–

AP: Because who would have been going in, if you look at the pictures now, I look, I'm a member of a photographic society and they do very often show pictures of the sixties and seventies and eighties in Belfast, it's mums and kids going into the city centre, it's not, you know [laughs].

FR: They probably don't have anything in their bag.

AP: Yeah, they're just in to get their shopping and get the kids sorted, and they've Santas, one of them was a Santa Claus standing beside a, you know, like, an armed officer and a security gate you just think, but that was our norm, that was just–

FR: Well, thank you so much. I think I've been trying to ask everyone at the end if sort of thinking back on the experience of leaving and then settling are there any moments or anything that is particularly kind of, that seems particularly important in that kind of–?

AP: I think in the last, well, I've been here twenty-six years, since I left Northern Ireland, and in that time I've realised I have changed my attitude. Rather than becoming very defensive when people say things about Northern Ireland, rather than sort of have a go at them I try

to educate them more and say maybe you need to read a bit more into that, maybe you need to know the history behind that before you, you know, before you go any further with what you're about to say. That's been a big thing for me personally I just feel, because otherwise if you carry all this with you just, everyone has had issues in their childhood, you can't let that define who you are.

FR: Do you think you would have been more angry about it when you first moved?

AP: Yeah, I think when I first moved I think it was frustration, it was absolute frustration and one of the jobs I worked in we had to lobby parliament and I can remember getting to the Houses of Parliament and someone telling me sssh, don't say anything, if they hear your accent, and I thought gosh, you know, I was saying that before, it's like everyone is tarred with the same brush, you know, she was really concerned for me, she was going don't say anything [laughs].

FR: [laughs] Sympathetic.

AP: In case they don't let you in [laughs], some kind of, that's just weird, so then you realise well, actually if people have grown up not knowing what's gone on in Northern Ireland there's a lack of probably history taught in schools here about the Irish situation, then you kind of, I'd kind of, well, maybe I should forgive them for that lack of knowledge and then just try to enlighten them, it's too, while there may be issues, and it was funny we were watching *Victoria* that TV series and there was an episode that was based around the Irish Famine and I had, a couple of friends said to me, we had no idea like, we had no idea that that was a thing, that, you know, I said really, they said yeah, we didn't know it was England who, you know, were instrumental in that being an issue and taking the food and I said well, did you not cover it in school, and they went no, it was never, so I kind of thought okay, I mean, that was a big part of our growing up, that was why we have emigration, that was why, you know, a lot of the Irish left and had to go, had to go away, but it was kind of, okay [laughs], education.

FR: And it's interesting that you have switched from frustration to some extent to a slightly more–

AP: I think as you become older I think I've become a more tolerant person and sometimes you just have to think well, if people don't know any better it's not really their, like the lady who said to me the Catholics and Protestants fighting, nooo, bit more than that, so yeah, and I've good memories, in fact, just as an aside, a few weeks ago my husband was invited back, they're doing this thing, I'll show you the brochure for it, it's probably not relevant to our interview.

FR: No, go on–

AP: Well, they're inviting people who have been in Northern Ireland [indecipherable], to people who have gone, left the problems, but promoted it further afield, diaspora–

FR: Oh do you know I've seen–

AP: Have you seen that?

FR: I've seen the website, but I haven't seen the–

AP: And he was invited back, to come back to Northe-, because someone who, Lewis would promote a lot of Northern Irish contacts over here and–

FR: Oh that's interesting.

AP: Yeah, and he was awarded the ambassadorship and I thought oh maybe Fearghus would be interested in that because it is a Northern Ireland thing.

FR: Yeah, I must look that up, and did you go back as well?

AP: I didn't go back cos I had to stay here, one of the children's involved in something at school, so my other, Síofra, went, but that, I thought you might like it just as an aside to what you're doing.

FR: No, I'll look it up and it might–

AP: That's the certificate, but it's for people who've gone away and have promoted Northern Ireland from wherever they've been in the world.

FR: What a lovely thing.

AP: And that's the, oh [laughs].

FR: [laughs] Steady!

AP: Clearly, clearly I'm not jealous that I didn't get one [laughs].

FR: Aw that's an amazing thing.

AP: Yeah, so that was, they all got one and I think they've been running this for about three years.

FR: Yeah, I've seen something about it before, but–

AP: But Lew was in with a chap, in fact, I knew him, I went to the College of Business Studies with him, and he was given an award for promoting the Northern Ireland film industry in Canada, so it's kind of across the board businessmen and whatever.

FR: And was Lewis proud, was he, how did he feel?

AP: Oh he was really proud actually, he was saying, you know, because we've been away so long, but we've always very much, even, you know, when he was in chambers there'd be

people coming along for pupillages and he would always kind of be very much in favour of someone from Northern Ireland, he said they don't get the chances there, you know, it's that kind of thing, you don't get the chance and let's promote what we can, you know, do, you know, and be that ambass-, you know, be that person that speaks up for them, and also when we'd travel with the IBA, this is his body, it travels all over the world, the Northern Ireland Executive would have been there and they would have said [whispers] are you from Northern Ireland, **[01:40:12]** you know, even though he's English, so, kind of thing, are you Northern Ireland, [whispers] would you come along to our events, you know, so it's just lovely to go and wear two hats at these things.

FR: Yeah, and the connections are still there, right.

AP: Yeah, so there was one time when we were in Tokyo and they had a University of Ulster alumni [laughs], it's like, of all the places in the world, and I kind of went is this right, and she went yeah, yeah, yeah, the Japanese companies, Northern Ireland small business have gone out to bring business back to the province and clearly computers, technology is a big big thing, so they went to Fujitsu and these companies, so they had a symbiotic relationship where they would come and study business at the University of Ulster and then they would send students out to study in Japan, so they were part of the alumni, so I went over and said this is really strange, I'm actually part of this alumni too, and it was ooh yeah, then talked about Northern Ireland and how wonderful it was and they'd been to visit Northern Ireland, how lovely the people, all the things you just, the people are lovely, the food, they're so kind, and I just think that's a lovely thing to hear, you know, but they were in Tokyo, Northern Ireland, a little bit of Northern Ireland in Tokyo [laughs], it's just a very weird thing.

FR: All over the world I guess.

AP: So there's a lot of people from Northern Ireland doing a lot of good things out there [laughs], you know, putting us on the map.

FR: I must look that up. So just before we finish, is there anything we haven't talked about that you wanted to?

AP: Nothing I can think of, cos I was very much like, you lead, I've probably gone off on a thousand tangents, and there's probably a lot'll come back to me later and I'll go oh I should've mentioned that, but no I think, if there's anything, if there's anything you want to follow up please call me, it's not a problem.

FR: I'll send you an email, but no, I think that's been really great, so thank you so much.

INTERVIEW ENDS