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THE ANDREW MARR SHOW

INTERVIEW:

DAVID CAMERON

PRIME MINISTER

OCTOBER 4th 2015

ANDREW MARR:

And, on the other hand, maybe if you're David Cameron, being in a room with a bunch of political assassins isn't your idea of a good time. It was only early this summer that, against almost all expectations and predictions, David Cameron won an overall Tory majority. By rights he ought to be enjoying a smooth and easy conference week. Well maybe he will, but looking at the papers it doesn't quite feel that way, does it Prime Minister? Can I ask about your big strategic choice ...

DAVID CAMERON:

Good morning.

ANDREW MARR:

... because we've just seen, I think we can both agree, Jeremy Corbyn leading the Labour Party rather off to the left and this gives you the option of either hugging the centre ground and saying that's where elections are won, I am not going to go off to the right, or – as many people in the newspapers and in your own party want you to do – moving off to the right, finally sort of smashing the unions, squeezing the welfare state, having an up down argument with Europe. Which is it going to be?

DAVID CAMERON:

We will be absolutely anchored in the common ground of British politics. We were given an instruction to deliver by the British people security at every stage in your life – securing good jobs, apprenticeships, cutting people’s taxes, making sure there was childcare there for people. We’re going to deliver on those things. So as others are losing their heads and lurching off, we will be absolutely in the common ground delivering for the working people of Britain.

ANDREW MARR:

And if you do deliver for the working people of Britain, do you think you can finally kill off the Labour Party as a serious national force?

DAVID CAMERON:

We’re not in control of what happens to the Labour Party. It seems they have, as I put it, run off to the hills. We’re in control of what we do. And there’ll be no complacency or back slapping here this week. Maybe a little bit of mild celebration of the election, but the main thing is going to be about delivering people ... delivering for people the things that we promised. And if you look at the things we’re announcing this week – you know for instance saying we want a seven day NHS because your children don’t get ill between 9 to 5 on a Monday to Friday, delivering (as the Chancellor was talking about over the weekend) leave for grandparents to help out with their grandchildren, paid leave from work – these are things that really help people who work hard, who want to do the right thing by their children and by our country. That’s what we’re going to be talking about.

ANDREW MARR:

Getting a seven day NHS, 24 hour a day NHS when money is so tight is very, very difficult. Junior hospital doctors are absolutely irate about the imposed changes to their working conditions, which will mean for most of them an effective pay cut.

DAVID CAMERON:

Well I don’t accept that. We want a contract that helps junior doctors. But, first of all, you know we made a very big choice as a government. In our manifesto we said that we are going to have to make difficult decisions elsewhere, but the NHS will not just

be protected; it's getting an extra £10 billion of money during this parliament over and above inflation and that enables us to meet some really clear goals. And I think a seven day NHS is a really exciting prospect because, as I say, you know parents and people in our country want to access the NHS on a seven day basis. Let me be clear, this doesn't mean that all staff in the NHS have to work every seven days. It just means ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) It just means rescheduling it.

DAVID CAMERON:

... the services are available. So I can announce today that we will be publishing a new GP contract to get rid of the box ticking and the form filling and to focus squarely ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) Because the old one had a lot of criticisms attached to it. They weren't happy with it.

DAVID CAMERON:

Well that's right, I don't think anyone was happy with it. So this new contract will really focus on making sure that people in our country can get access to a GP on a seven day a week basis, 8 in the morning till 8 in the evening. That's what we want to see. Already, because of the steps we've taken, around a third of people are accessing the NHS on that basis by next year, but we want it for everybody, and that new GP contract will help to deliver that. But you know a seven day NHS is not just about GPs. It's also about our hospitals because the fact is there are about 11,000 excess deaths because we don't work properly at the weekend and we ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) That is when people die, it's true.

DAVID CAMERON:

Yeah and we know ... we know we can fix it. Just down the road from here is the

Salford Royal Hospital. They work on a seven day basis. You can have cancer scans, you can have operations on a seven day basis. So we want to see that in every hospital.

ANDREW MARR:

Okay. Let me move onto another great controversy here, which is tax credits because you've used the phrase "working people" a lot. Frank Field's talked about "the strivers". This new proposal on tax credits is going to mean that just before Christmas 3 million of the poorest, hardworking families, the people who go out properly every morning and see their neighbours' blinds down and so forth and get buses and do cleaning jobs in hospitals and offices and so forth, they are going to have a huge cut in their income - £1500 or so ...

DAVID CAMERON:

(over) Well what we're going to see ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) ... and they're going to get that news just before Christmas.

DAVID CAMERON:

What we're doing is we're actually increasing the income of hardworking people because of course introducing the national living wage – and this is important, let me just finish this point, I'll answer the point on tax credits – you know that will mean effectively a £20 a week pay rise next year for the lowest paid people in our country. And the bigger picture here is ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) I'm sorry to butt in.

DAVID CAMERON:

Yeah.

ANDREW MARR:

The Institute for Fiscal Studies says it is arithmetically impossible for that to make up the cut in tax credits that you're proposing.

DAVID CAMERON:

Well actually that's not right. If you take a family where someone is on minimum wage, when you take into account all the things we're changing in tax, in the national living wage and tax credits, that family will be better off – not least because you've got the national living wage and we're also cutting tax, so you can earn £11,000 before you start paying any tax at all.

ANDREW MARR:

Okay, this is incredibly important ...

DAVID CAMERON:

Yes.

ANDREW MARR:

... because a lot of people watching will be in this situation. Are you saying that people will not just before Christmas be getting envelopes saying you're going to lose £1500 out of your tax credits?

DAVID CAMERON:

(over) No of course we are making some changes to tax credits and there's an important big picture here, which is you know we're moving from an economy where you had low pay, high tax and high welfare – we're moving away from that towards an economy where you have higher pay, lower tax and lower welfare. And you know if you look at the tax credit system, it wasn't working. When I became Prime Minister 9 out of 10 families were getting tax credits, including Members of Parliament. So you know it was helping families right up the income scale.

ANDREW MARR:

Okay.

DAVID CAMERON:

And you know one more figure because I think this does help. If you look at the last 12 years before I became Prime Minister, the tax credit system went from costing 6

billion to costing almost 30 billion but in-work poverty actually went up. It didn't work – taking ...

ANDREW MARR:

Alright.

DAVID CAMERON:

... you know having low pay, taking money off people and giving it back to them in tax credit. Much better to let people earn more, keep more of their hard earned money.

ANDREW MARR:

So why is it that somebody like David Willetts, who's been a kind of philosopher king in the Tory Party for a long time, says this is heading to be an absolute disaster, it's going to be like Gordon Brown and the 10p tax cut ... tax rate cut and so forth, it's something that is going to be a big problem? Boris Johnson's very worried about it. A lot of your own Conservative MPs are worried about the effect, particularly right at the bottom. Frank Field has given you a proposal to mitigate, to soften the damage right at the bottom. Are you prepared to look at that at least?

DAVID CAMERON:

Well I always look at everything, but we've had the vote in parliament on tax credits and I think people do respect this argument that the national living wage - a 50p increase next year, so a £20 a week pay rise, rising to £9 by the end of this parliament – that is a very significant change that really helps to make work pay rather than a tax credit system that recycles money back to people.

ANDREW MARR:

Yeah. I can see the big picture looking ahead and so forth, but for those families who get those letters it's going to be a very miserable Christmas. Do you accept that?

DAVID CAMERON:

Well obviously I accept that we are making changes to tax credits. We're protecting the lowest paid people with the child tax credit and what goes with it, but we're moving to an economy where you get paid more and where you pay less in tax rather

than paying more in tax and getting the money back in tax credits. And that is a better system. And also there's another ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) Do you have some sympathy for those people who are going to ...

DAVID CAMERON:

(over) Well of course. We've as a country had to make difficult decisions in order to get rid of what was the biggest budget deficit almost anywhere in the world. And of course if you don't tackle excessive welfare and make reductions there, you have to either put up people's taxes or cut the NHS or cut education, which I don't want to do. So that's why we went into the election saying ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) I can see the difficulties, but final question on this.

DAVID CAMERON:

Yeah.

ANDREW MARR:

At the time of the Autumn Statement, will you have another look at this issue?

DAVID CAMERON:

No, we ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) No, okay.

DAVID CAMERON:

... we think the changes we put forward are right and they come with higher pay and lower taxes.

ANDREW MARR:

Right. Let me move on to what Len McCluskey was saying. I don't know if you saw

him a little earlier on. He's written you a letter saying if you're prepared to work with the unions to allow more electronic ... secure electronic balloting at the workplace, he in return, they will accept the 40 per cent and the 50 per cent thresholds in your trade union bill. To a lot of people that will seem like quite a good deal.

DAVID CAMERON:

Well I thought what was interesting about the interview is the trade unions accepting that these thresholds are right – that you shouldn't have damaging strikes that close schools or shut hospitals or stop underground systems working. You shouldn't have those things without a proper turnout of voters.

ANDREW MARR:

So what's the problem with modern electronic voting?

DAVID CAMERON:

Well I think the Speaker of the House of Commons did actually put together a commission to look at electronic voting and the conclusion of that commission was that it wasn't safe from fraud, so I think there are problems with that approach. And frankly if you're going ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) Are you prepared to talk to Len McCluskey about this?

DAVID CAMERON:

(over) Look I have the TUC ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) You've never met him.

DAVID CAMERON:

(over) ... the TUC do come into my office from time to time and I've had meetings with them, so always happy to talk to people about things.

ANDREW MARR:

(over) But here is Britain's most influential trade unionist and the two of you have never met. That's a bit odd, isn't it?

DAVID CAMERON:

(over) Well, as I say, I've met the TU... *(Marr over/inaudible)* Well I met ... The TUC have been into my office, so they can ... you know they can bring who they like frankly.

ANDREW MARR:

Okay.

DAVID CAMERON:

But the point I'd make is: is it really too much to ask someone who's going to go on strike, who's going to disrupt people's children's school to fill in a ballot paper to do that? So the ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) Certainly not, but what about the armband?

DAVID CAMERON:

(over) ... the thresholds are right and they've now conceded the thresholds.

ANDREW MARR:

What about making everybody wear an armband and making them give two weeks' notice to the government of everything they're going to say on Facebook and social media? That seems a little bit, if I may say so, vindictive.

DAVID CAMERON:

Well all these measures in the legislation can be discussed as they go through parliament. The heart of the legislation is thresholds, so that you can't have strikes that are based on a ballot sometimes years before the actual strike takes place based on very low turnouts. That's the heart of the bill. That's what's being proposed. A lot of the other stuff you read frankly is not actually in the bill.

ANDREW MARR

There's a lot in the newspapers this morning about Europe suggesting that if you don't get what you want in the negotiations, you would after all be prepared to lead this country out of the EU. Is that right?

DAVID CAMERON:

Well I've always said if I don't get what I want, then I rule nothing out, and I think ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) Including leading Britain out of the EU yourself?

DAVID CAMERON:

Well ruling nothing out means ruling nothing out. It's as simple as that. But I'm confident we will get what we need. And you know what I want is what the British people want, which is to recognise there are benefits of being in Europe. We're a trading nation. We also get ... you know we get Europe to do good things like put sanctions on Iran, like stand up to Russia over Ukraine. You know our strength in Europe helps to get things done. But there are things we need to change. You know we don't want ever closer union, we don't want to be part of an ever growing political union, so let's rule that out. You know we need Europe to be part of the answer to our competitiveness, not a threat to it, so let's sort that out. Let's sort out the welfare issues, you know. So these things, you know the things I'm aiming for, I believe I can achieve. I think they really matter. They actually take away the grievances rightly that we've got about Europe, sort those out and then we can recommend staying in a reformed Europe. But, as I say, if I don't get what I want ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) Best of both worlds, I can see that.

DAVID CAMERON:

Best of both worlds. I mean the border issue is a classic one. You know we have not taken down our border controls. Others in Europe have. I think we have the best of both worlds – being able to access that single market but we didn't give up our border controls. Nor should we.

ANDREW MARR:

And yet there is a pervasive sense, a very interesting leader in The Times this week, that we are drifting towards the exit door; that we're not hearing from you and other leading Conservatives really powerful, pro-EU speeches. Meanwhile the anti-EU lobby is organising, very, very effectively launching next week big figures like Nigel Lawson coming out ...

DAVID CAMERON:

Yeah.

ANDREW MARR:

... that somehow bit by bit, almost without meaning to, you're going to take us out of Europe.

DAVID CAMERON:

No I understand that frustration and it's partly because, look, I'm involved in a negotiation. I'm trying to get for Britain the things that we need, and obviously once I've got them then I will turn around and make the case for staying in a reformed Europe. But right now I'm fighting to get these things ...

ANDREW MARR:

Right.

DAVID CAMERON:

... and I can't guarantee I will get them.

ANDREW MARR:

Okay without going into the thicket of the negotiations, Lord Lawson said that if we could have a situation where national parliaments had a veto again, if we had a situation where EU law was not supreme over British law, he wouldn't necessarily be in the position he's in. Do you agree with him about those issues?

DAVID CAMERON:

Well I think I would amend those slightly and say look where parliaments in Europe

get together and want to block a proposal, yes that should be possible. That's one of the things that we are aiming for. I think that's important. I think in terms of borders, being able to keep the border controls that we have, being able to make sure that our welfare system, you have to work in it and pay into it before you get out of it, I think these are important. The issue of child benefit – that you shouldn't be able to you know come and work here, leave your children in another European country and get British levels of child benefit. These are the sorts of things I'm going to fix.

ANDREW MARR:

But you need some ... you need some big, substantial, substantive changes. Owen Paterson says that what you're looking for at the moment is pathetic and puny and weak.

DAVID CAMERON:

Well there are some people who want to leave the EU, and I suspect in Owen's case have probably always wanted to leave the EU, and there's nothing I'm going to bring back that will satisfy those people.

ANDREW MARR:

Yes.

DAVID CAMERON:

But you know what I'm fighting for is what I would say again the common ground of British politics. There's things we get out of Europe, no doubt about it. We're a trading nation. We don't just want access to Europe's markets. We need a say over the rules and that's what we get sitting round that table. And, as I say, we get Europe to do things that matter. Why do we think Europe is about to sign the biggest trade deal in world history with America? Britain put that on the table. That was my proposal - as is the proposal that we have trade deals with China, trade deals with India. We want Europe to sign up to trade with the fastest growing economies of the world. Now that's not happening ... that wouldn't be happening if Britain wasn't there, so you know we ought to ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) You don't sound to me like a man who wants to head for the exit door. Would you regard it as a failure of your premiership if by the time you stood down this country was out of the EU?

DAVID CAMERON:

No what will ... what will be important is getting the right deal. If I can get the right deal that will be a success and then it'll be up to the British people to decide whether they agree with my success.

ANDREW MARR:

(over) And if you can't get the right deal, we'll be out of the EU and therefore it would be a failure?

DAVID CAMERON:

Well no, look in the end it's going to be for the British public to decide. And frankly, as I say, if I can't get the things that Britain needs then I don't rule anything out in terms of the role that I would play because we do need these changes.

ANDREW MARR:

Graham Brady says that one of the things people want to hear at this conference is whether loyal members of your government - cabinet ministers, other ministers and back benchers as well - if they feel in their heart of hearts they want to leave the EU have the freedom to make that case? Or will you get rid of them? Will you sack them for doing that?

DAVID CAMERON:

The time to make that decision is when I've completed the negotiation. I mean everyone in the government ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) There are people this week who want to go onto platforms and make the case against the EU - some of them in your government. Do they just have to shut up?

DAVID CAMERON:

(over) Well if you're a member ... if you're a member of my government, then you have signed up to the process of renegotiation and referendum and you've signed up to the belief that we can achieve a successful renegotiation. Everyone has signed up to that. Now at the end ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) And therefore for the time being zip?

DAVID CAMERON:

(over) Now at the end ... Well no people can stand up and explain why this is the right policy for the country.

ANDREW MARR:

(over) But in public.

DAVID CAMERON:

I mean that's ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) I see, they're allowed to agree with you.

DAVID CAMERON:

Well that's ... It's called collective responsibility.

ANDREW MARR:

Alright. Let's turn to another issue which is on your plate and very, very dangerous at the moment. Now that the Russians have got their jets and their anti-aircraft missiles and their fighters and their troops into Syria, isn't the old policy of let's go back to the Commons and have a vote and possibly start to do bombing runs inside Syria against Isil now redundant or too dangerous to pursue?

DAVID CAMERON:

No I don't think it is because our policy should be just squarely rooted in the national interest of the United Kingdom. In a way that's what this conference is about. It's

about economic security for our families, national security for our country. Our national security will be assisted, greatly assisted by degrading and ultimately destroying Isil both in Iraq and Syria. Today we're helping others ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) But the Russians have closed the air space. They have said you cannot fly here, we control this air space.

DAVID CAMERON:

No that's not the case. What's happened ... I mean tragically what's happened is that most of the Russian air strikes, as far as we've been able to see so far, have been in parts of Syria not controlled by Isil but controlled by other opponents to the regime.

ANDREW MARR:

Yes I can see that.

DAVID CAMERON:

So what is happening is that ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) They're backing Assad in effect?

DAVID CAMERON:

They are backing the butcher Assad, which is a terrible mistake for them and for the world. It's going to make the region more unstable, it will lead to further radicalisation and increase terrorism. And I would you know say to them change direction, join us in attacking Isil, but recognise that if we want to have a secure region we need an alternative leader to Assad. He can't unite the Syrian people. He's been the cause as actually *(Marr over/inaudible)* the Deputy Editor of the New Statesman was saying rightly on your programme. Assad has driven far more people from their homes with the barrel bombs and the brutality than even the brutal death cult of Isil.

ANDREW MARR:

But Putin is determined to keep him there and if you fly RAF jets across Syria there must be a chance that we will, by accident if you like, come into conflict with the Russians?

DAVID CAMERON:

Obviously we're not going to do that until we have a vote in the House of Commons. But meanwhile we are supporting the Americans and others who are attacking Isil in Syria. We have ourselves used drones in Syria where there's a national interest at stake and would do so again because you know be in no doubt Isil, this appalling death cult, there are people who are plotting murder and mayhem on the streets of Britain and we've got to have the capabilities to deal with them - which is why you know we've announced today we're going to be increasing the fleet of drones that we have.

ANDREW MARR:

And we've seen these hideous scenes of beheadings and so forth. But let me ask you about another scene of beheading: Saudi Arabia who carry out more beheadings than Isil do themselves. There's a guy called Mohammed al-Nimr. He was 18 when he was arrested. He is about to be crucified and beheaded by the Saudi government. What's your message to them about that?

DAVID CAMERON:

Don't do it. We raised this case with the Saudis, as we raise all human rights cases with them, and we don't agree with the way that they go about these things, you know. And we've never stood back just because they are partners when it comes to national security, they've given us vital intelligence information that has stopped bombing attacks in Britain, but you know we never stint in telling them that we don't agree with them on this human rights issue.

ANDREW MARR:

Is it right that we are bidding for a prison contract with this regime?

DAVID CAMERON:

Well it's right that we do work with Saudi Arabia, but we wouldn't ever be any part

of the punishment that they carry out that you just sort of mentioned.

ANDREW MARR:

But the Justice department is bidding for a contract in Saudi Arabia to modernise prisons there. This seems ... you know this is a regime which is doing appalling things to people day after day, week after week.

DAVID CAMERON:

(over) As I say ... as I say there's a different matter between, for instance, you know helping supply the police or military, but we would never be part of the sort of punishments that they hand out because we do not ... You know Britain does not support the death penalty.

ANDREW MARR:

(over) But do you want to help their "justice" system? That's what we're supporting.

DAVID CAMERON:

(over) But we do not help ... we do not support the death penalty in any state anywhere in the world and when people are on Death Row we always make the point to those governments concerned and of course that will continue to be the case.

ANDREW MARR:

Alright. Now when you told my colleague James Landale in your very nice kitchen that you weren't going to serve for a full third term, did you know at that point, was it obvious to you that you were going to unleash the kind of demons of the party – people looking for who's going to be the next leader, endless distraction? We were talking about it during the paper review.

DAVID CAMERON:

No what I said was a very simple answer to a simple question. A lot of people ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) Always the worse ones.

DAVID CAMERON:

(over) ... have been wondering would you serve a full second term ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) Always the dangerous ones.

DAVID CAMERON:

(over) ... and I said yes I will serve a full second term. But then asked the question about a third term, I said I think 10 years as Prime Minister is quite a lot. I'm absolutely passionate about the job, I leap out of bed every morning with a great honour to do this job ...

ANDREW MARR:

Yeah.

DAVID CAMERON:

... but I think 10 years is enough. Now the effect it has on the Conservative Party, frankly I would say look it's good, we've got a team, we've got a team with stars in it. And of course people will look at some of those stars and think well you know ... you know he or she, would they be able to do this job? Good! Frankly it's great! You know people are asking you know well look at this person, look at that person. I want to run a team and that's great.

ANDREW MARR:

And you want to see a proper contest, not a coronation?

DAVID CAMERON:

Well it's not up to me. We have ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) I remember last time, we had David Davis and you having a real contest.

DAVID CAMERON:

Well it was, absolutely. As I said to Jeremy Corbyn, sometimes the outsider wins, you

know.

ANDREW MARR:

Yes, we know that.

DAVID CAMERON:

But look, we have very clear rules.

ANDREW MARR:

Yes.

DAVID CAMERON:

Those rules will be followed. It's never a coronation because it's not my decision. It is the decision of the MPs and the party members.

ANDREW MARR:

(over) Of course the outside ... the outside are winning ...

DAVID CAMERON:

And look, I think frankly you know I have a very clear mandate from the British people. That's what this week is going to be about – delivering modern, compassionate, Conservative government; delivering the security that people want at every stage of their lives; delivering our manifesto. And we've cracked on with a hell of a pace since May delivering that manifesto and that's what we're going to do for the next five years.

ANDREW MARR:

Okay.

DAVID CAMERON:

And you know then in time someone else will take over.

ANDREW MARR:

You mentioned Jeremy Corbyn just now. He said, with admirable clarity and honesty, that there were no circumstances in which he would press the nuclear button. Would

you say the same or would you say yes there are circumstances ...

DAVID CAMERON:

(over) No ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) ... however tragic, in which I would deploy the nuclear ...?

DAVID CAMERON:

No his answer ... The problem with his answer is that if you want to have ... if you believe, like me, that Britain should keep the ultimate insurance policy of an independent nuclear deterrent, you have to accept there are circumstances in which its use would be justified. And if you give any other answer other than that you are frankly undermining our national security, undermining our deterrent and making Britain in a dangerous world – we've just been discussing Putin in Russia ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) So you would press the button in short?

DAVID CAMERON:

I've given the answer, which is if you believe in the nuclear deterrent – as I do – you have to accept there are circumstances that justify its use.

ANDREW MARR:

Alright, let's move onto another big subject that's been floating around the conference. I am not going to go through all the unproven allegations in a particular book, but I am going to ask you generally speaking - you've seen the stuff all over the press, everyone's talking about it – is there anything more you want to say about those allegations? Is there anything you want to fess up to or particularly stamp on?

DAVID CAMERON:

(over) No. Frankly no. Look you know I think everyone can see why this book was written. In fact you know the author wrote an article himself explaining you know why he was doing this. So I think everyone can see through it, so frankly I'm not

going to dignify it with individual responses. I think people, frankly they've had a look and they've made their mind up.

ANDREW MARR:

Well let's stick to the why as it were – why – because he was once a kind of friend of yours, wasn't he? I mean ...

DAVID CAMERON:

Well he was a supporter of the Conservative Party and he was Deputy Chairman of the party, but obviously he's not happy with what happened and he's let fly.

ANDREW MARR:

(over) He gave 8 million ... I think he gave £8 million to the party. And he thought ... He says he had a conversation with you in which you promised him a senior job in government. The implication is in the Foreign Office. Did that take place?

DAVID CAMERON:

Andrew, you just asked me was I going to dignify all of this book with ... I'm not ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) It's not about the book. It's about why the book ...

DAVID CAMERON:

(over) Well that is about the book, that is about the book.

ANDREW MARR:

(over) ... it's about why the book happened.

DAVID CAMERON:

Look ...

ANDREW MARR:

And this is serious because he is suggesting that he came to you trying to get a job in government because he'd paid the Conservative Party all this money and ...

DAVID CAMERON:

(over) Well I think you can tell ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) ... I'm just asking whether you had that conversation, whether you promised him a job?

DAVID CAMERON:

(over) ... well I think you can tell by the fact that he didn't get a job ...

ANDREW MARR:

He didn't get a job, yes.

DAVID CAMERON:

... that he didn't get a job.

ANDREW MARR:

Yeah. Would that have been a corrupt transaction had you given somebody a top job in government? I mean what would I be having the conversation with you about if you'd given him a job?

DAVID CAMERON:

(over) Well the thing ... the thing is ... maybe the one thing I will comment on because it's important. When I became Leader of the Conservative Party, the Conservative Party had debts of about £28 million, money we owed to other people – including to Michael Ashcroft. I repaid that. I raised money from elsewhere and repaid that debt because I didn't want to be in people's debt. And the Conservative Party today has virtually no debts at all. We have raised money, we've broadened our fundraising base, we've paid off all these loans ...

ANDREW MARR:

Okay.

DAVID CAMERON:

... and paid off all these debts because the party I run, I don't want to be in anybody's debt.

ANDREW MARR:

We endlessly talk about donors ending up in the House of Lords and whether that's right or not, but would it be a different thing for a donor to end up in government because he was a donor?

DAVID CAMERON:

Well no one should end up in government because they're a donor. Of course that would be completely wrong.

ANDREW MARR:

Would that be a corrupt kind of deal?

DAVID CAMERON:

Well it would be wrong, you know. I mean, look, you can't ... this is a ... I appoint people on merit, on their ability to do the job, not on anything else.

ANDREW MARR:

Okay. Okay one final question. I promise it's the last one on this subject. I'm not even going to mention Supertramp. But one final question is ...

DAVID CAMERON:

(over) I did listen to Supertramp.

ANDREW MARR:

You did. You are going to fess up to that?

DAVID CAMERON:

I own up. You know it was a long time ago ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) That is probably the biggest scandal of all.

DAVID CAMERON:

... and I was young and you know all the rest.

ANDREW MARR:

Yeah, yeah, okay. So let's ... so there is some truth somewhere. Let's go back to the non-dom issue because the other thing that Lord Ashcroft says is that you knew that he was a non-dom in 2009 before you said that you knew he was a non-dom and that the two of you had a conversation about hiding this before the election.

DAVID CAMERON:

Well if you go back to 2009 what you'll find is that actually I said in December 2009 that we should pass a law that anyone sitting in either the House of Commons or the House of Lords should be a full resident UK taxpayer. And that then happened: the Labour Party brought forward the legislation and we all voted for it and that put the issue beyond doubt.

ANDREW MARR:

And so when did you know that he was a non-dom?

DAVID CAMERON:

I answered all those questions at the time. You can go back over the record and look at the answers that I gave and all the rest of it. But the key thing is that we made sure you could not sit in the House of Lords or the House of Commons if you weren't a full UK resident taxpayer and quite right too.

ANDREW MARR:

The reason I'm pressing this is that he says you knew in 2009 and everybody else says you knew in 2010 and this is significant, this is not tittle-tattle.

DAVID CAMERON:

But I think we've been ... Again this is back to the reason why the book was written – as an act of, I don't know, revenge as he puts it. But you go back over my answers ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) So what he says about this is wrong? Let me be clear about this.

DAVID CAMERON:

Well you go back and see what I said at the time, which is ... I endlessly said that someone's tax affairs is a matter between them and the Revenue. And then I was clear that if you want to sit in the Commons or the Lords, put this issue beyond doubt and make sure you're a full resident UK taxpayer, which was then sorted out and quite right too.

ANDREW MARR:

Prime Minister, thank you very much indeed. I fear we have run out of time. No time for other interesting questions, but it's been very interesting talking to you.

DAVID CAMERON:

Good to be on the show.

INTERVIEW ENDS