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THE ANDREW MARR SHOW

INTERVIEW:

ED MILIBAND, MP

LABOUR PARTY LEADER

SEPTEMBER 30th 2012

ANDREW MARR:

And Ed Miliband is with me now, not looking at all stressed. Of course rather too young to remember the 1970s ...

ED MILIBAND:

Correct.

ANDREW MARR:

... Labour Government. But that was a time when one of the great issues was union power and union influence on the Labour Government, and on cue we have Len McCluskey this morning warning you that unless you change your policy on pay restraint, you're going to be "consigned to the dustbin of history." Do you have a message for him?

ED MILIBAND:

Well I think the first thing I'd say is there's one very interesting contrast between now and the 1970s. Think about what happened to Labour after it lost the election, Andrew. It became a disunited party and it lost touch with the electorate. We haven't made that mistake this time and we're not going to. And on what Len McCluskey said

this morning, I mean my view on this is very clear. We've got the right policy to say we put pay in the pu... we put jobs in the public sector, ahead of pay rises. That's what we said we'd do this parliament. It's a difficult decision, but actually it's the way to keep jobs in the public sector. But there's a bigger message also, I think, about the Labour Party that I lead. I'm not for pushing people out of the Labour Party; I want more people in the Labour Party. And there's no future for this party as the party of one sectional interest of society. We must be the party of the private sector just as much as the party of the public sector. So ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) Okay, can you be ...

ED MILIBAND:

... I think I'm pretty clear on that.

ANDREW MARR:

Well I'd like to ask you to be clearer on it still because a lot of people say 70 per cent of your funding has come from the unions.

ED MILIBAND:

That's not true.

ANDREW MARR:

Well it's pretty substantial.

ED MILIBAND:

Well that's not true.

ANDREW MARR:

What is the current percentage?

ED MILIBAND:

At the moment it's about 40 per cent comes from trade union members. And let's be clear about this.

ANDREW MARR:

Yeah.

ED MILIBAND:

This is nurses and engineers and shop workers around the country. About 40 per cent from our members - members of our party - and about 20 per cent from other sources. Now I'd much prefer that. (*Marr tries to interject*) Let me just say this. I'd much prefer that than a party like the Conservative Party that takes the majority of its funding from the City of London and look what they're actually doing on the banks and other things.

ANDREW MARR:

Okay, nonetheless these are big funders and you know perfectly well that the suspicion is that Len McCluskey and people like Len McCluskey feel that they are pulling your strings. So if they ...

ED MILIBAND:

(*over*) Well it's not going ver... it's not going very well for him, is it?

ANDREW MARR:

(*over*) Well they can ...

ED MILIBAND:

(*over*) I mean, I mean look ...

ANDREW MARR:

(*over*) They can come in at the beginning of your party conference and tell you what to do.

ED MILIBAND:

(*over*) Look, you can't say ... Well you know, look, you can't say at one and the same time Len McCluskey's saying you're wrong on pay restraint and you and Ed Balls have got it wrong, and then say we're just giving into him and he's pulling our

strings. So I think you've got the answer in the question, Andrew.

ANDREW MARR:

Okay. But you've taken £6 million from his union. What is your personal feeling about somebody like that using the first day of the Labour Party conference to tell you what you must do?

ED MILIBAND:

Well I think he's wrong, he's wrong. And he's entitled to his view, but he's wrong. But let me just correct you on one thing you said, and it goes to this issue of the link between the trade union members and the Labour Party. Look, there'll be some people who say why doesn't Ed Miliband make a splash ...

ANDREW MARR:

Yeah.

ED MILIBAND:

... by breaking the link with trade union members? I'll tell you why I'm not going to do that. Because think about politics and what people think about politics, detached from the lives of most people. What does that give us? At its best, the link with trade union members - and I underline members - gives us a link with people up and down this country who go to work every day, who get up early, who put in all the hours that God sends, who know what life is like at the sharp end. And, look, I'm not going to break that link, but I am going to make the right decisions in the interests of the country and that's my position as Labour Leader.

ANDREW MARR:

Because you were elected as Labour Leader thanks to the votes of the trade unions, and a lot of people said this is a system ...

ED MILIBAND:

(over) Of trade union members, yeah.

ANDREW MARR:

Trade union members. But a lot of people said this is a system that has to be changed, has to be reformed, can't sustain. Is your position no, it's fine as it is, and we're going to carry on just as things are?

ED MILIBAND:

No because we agreed a set of changes at the last conference, Andrew, if you remember, and for the first time - something that Tony Blair never did, something that John Smith never did - Gordon Brown never did we've got registered supporters, people who aren't members of the Labour Party, people who aren't trade union members necessarily, who are coming in, who are going to have a vote in future leadership and deputy leadership elections. And I'm glad to say we've got almost ten thousand of those signed up. We'll have more in the coming years. And that shows the kind of Labour Party I'm determined to lead - a Labour Party that reaches out to people and is a party of the whole country.

ANDREW MARR:

The biggest question when it comes to policy at the moment is what you'd really do about the deficit. Would a Labour Government spend more than the current coalition or not?

ED MILIBAND:

Well let me tell you what we'd do now, right, what we'd do now because I think ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) Well I'm talking about the next election and it's a pretty straightforward question.

ED MILIBAND:

Right and we'll set out our plans at the next election for what we're going to do in the next parliament, and that's what you'd expect us to do. We don't know what the government's going to be spending or doing in the next three months, frankly, because borrowing's going up under this government. I think it's important to remember that. But let me tell you what we'd say right now, and it goes back to really

why we're in the position we're in as a country. Remember we're in a double dip recession, the longest since the war. Now we're not ... Let me just finish the point. We're not in that double dip recession because David Cameron wants us to be in it. It's because he had a strategy, actually a political strategy, to say the real problem is we're just spending too much as a country. If we cut as far and as fast as we can, then everything will be alright.

ANDREW MARR:

Aren't we spending too much as a country?

ED MILIBAND:

Well let me say. We're spending too much on unemployment, we certainly are, because what's happened under this government is a bo... Let me just be clear about this.

ANDREW MARR:

(over) So we're spending too much?

ED MILIBAND:

... is that borrowing is rising. Now why is borrowing rising? Not to invest in schools and hospitals and transport. Borrowing is rising to keep people idle. I mean this is amazing, Andrew. This government has delivered a double dip recession, more people out of work for longer than at any time for seventeen years, and the number one priority they set themselves: borrowing going up. That's why Ed Balls and I have said you need a different approach. Yes there would be cuts if we were in government, but actually if you make the pace of those cuts slower, if you take less money out of the economy now, it will be better for our economy, better for growth, better for people up and down the country, and better for getting the deficit down sustainably. And, look, two and a half years ago ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) So you would, you would be ...

ED MILIBAND:

Let me just finish the point. Two and a half years ago, the jury was out. I think the jury can now return its verdict because its hasn't worked what this government has done.

ANDREW MARR:

Well the deficit is coming down at the moment. Not as fast as they wanted it to ...

ED MILIBAND:

(over) No, Andrew, it's going up. It's going up. The deficit ... The borrowing in the first five months of this year is 20 per cent higher than it was last year. And just think about that, just think about that. After everything we've heard, after all the pain ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) So if that is the case ...

ED MILIBAND:

... all the tax rises, all of what we've heard ...

ANDREW MARR:

Yuh.

ED MILIBAND:

... I think people will be shocked about that. They'll think, they'll think how can that possibly be? Well the reason is because the economic strategy is ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) And your answer is ... And your answer is to spend more money still?

ED MILIBAND:

No, our answer ... Look our answer is this. Our answer is ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) Well it is, you just said that. I mean ...

ED MILIBAND:

Let me explain. Our answer is not (as this government is doing) is borrowing to keep people idle. Let's get people back to work. For example, one thing they could do right here right now - tax the bonuses of the bankers, put young people back to work. It's a simple change that they could make. And instead we see long-term unemployment, including ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) How much money would you raise from taxing the bonuses of bankers?

ED MILIBAND:

It's about £2 billion that we've said we'd raise.

ANDREW MARR:

From bonuses alone?

ED MILIBAND:

Yeah.

ANDREW MARR:

And you would use that to put people back to work? That would be enough?

ED MILIBAND:

Yes, and some of it we'd use for housing and some of it we'd use to put young people back to work. I think most people would think that was a good use of public money.

ANDREW MARR:

What about the position of the better off - let's not call them the rich - the better off generally speaking? How attracted are you, for instance, to a mansion tax - a tax on some form of accumulated wealth?

ED MILIBAND:

I think it's definitely an idea worth considering, and Ed Balls has rightly said that if

the government wants to put forward a mansion tax, we'll work with them on it so there can be cross-party support for that idea. But let me just say one thing. Here's one thing I would do if I was in government tomorrow. One change I would make in relation to the better off, first change in a Labour budget, we wouldn't be cutting the top rate of income tax from 50p to 45p. And I don't think people have quite understood what this means.

ANDREW MARR:

So that would go back again with Labour?

ED MILIBAND:

(over) Yes if there was an election tomorrow ...

ANDREW MARR:

It would go back up to 50p.

ED MILIBAND:

... if there was an election tomorrow ... We'll set out our plans for you know two and a half years time in our manifesto, but if there was an election tomorrow that's what we'd do. And let me tell you why. Because this government is cutting taxes for millionaires by £40,000 a year. Next April, David Cameron will be writing a cheque to each and every millionaire in Britain for £40,000. At the same ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) I don't think it's quite like that, but ...

ED MILIBAND:

Well why is it not quite like that?

ANDREW MARR:

I don't think he sits down and writes cheques to millionaires. *(laughs)*

ED MILIBAND:

Well it is a tax cut of £40,000 to every millionaire in Britain at the same time as you have people in Manchester going to food banks, at the same time as people going to

the petrol station can't afford to fill up their tank, Andrew, that is wrong!

ANDREW MARR:

Okay, okay ...

ED MILIBAND:

And, look, that is a massive difference in priorities between a prime minister that I aspire to be who will stand up for the people in this country who need the help of government, who can't just get by on their own ...

ANDREW MARR:

Okay ...

ED MILIBAND:

... and a government that says let's just cut taxes for the richest in society.

ANDREW MARR:

Harriet Harman says, your Deputy, that there are no circumstances in which you would follow the current government's spending plans. Now we know that they're going to be laid out for the next few years, as they have to be ...

ED MILIBAND:

(over) She was talking about now actually. She was talking about now, that we're not following their spending plans now, but anyway comforting words. We'll come to your question anyway.

ANDREW MARR:

(over) But she says because it's a failed policy ...

ED MILIBAND:

(over) Well I think it is.

ANDREW MARR:

... and, therefore, we would not be following that. Whereas Ed Balls is saying it's going to be a very, very tough spending plan. My question is would you follow the spending plans, the overall limits of the coalition government in the first couple of years of government or would you not?

ED MILIBAND:

But, look, this is why people are fed up with politics - because you're asking me a political game question. Let me explain why.

ANDREW MARR:

I think I'm asking a very straightforward question.

ED MILIBAND:

No, let me explain, let me explain.

ANDREW MARR:

People don't understand whether ...

ED MILIBAND:

Let me explain.

ANDREW MARR:

... you're going to be an old-fashioned tax and spend party or not.

ED MILIBAND:

Let me explain, let me explain. We don't know what their spending plans are going to be. How would you expect me to say I'm going to sign up to their spending plans without knowing what they be. That's why it's a political game. You see, look, let's be frank about this.

ANDREW MARR:

(over) Okay, well let's try it in another form, okay?

ED MILIBAND:

Yeah.

ANDREW MARR:

Nick Clegg says that whoever comes into power in 2015 is going to have to carry on austerity, is going to have to carry on squeezing spending. Is he right?

ED MILIBAND:

(over) I think there'll be difficult ... I think there'll be difficult decisions that we'll have to make as a government, yes.

ANDREW MARR:

So you accept that?

ED MILIBAND:

Yes, I think that's absolutely right. And look ...

ANDREW MARR:

So you're going to come in as a Labour Government without extra money to spend?

ED MILIBAND:

Yeah and here's what's very important, Andrew. You see what I'm announcing this morning on banking and the change I'm talking about on banking, it goes to what I've been talking about over the last two years. The next Labour Government is going to have to be different from the last and previous Labour governments. We're not going to have lots of money to spend and I'm very clear about that. There'll be tough settlements right across our public services, but it doesn't mean there isn't a difference. There will be a massive difference. You'll have a prime minister who will stand up to the banks, to the vested interests in our society, and say we're going to change our economy, we're going to change the way our economy works, we're going to do what we haven't done for decades, we're going to have the big long-term reforms that will make a difference.

ANDREW MARR:

Okay, well I ...

ED MILIBAND:

And that is the difference. And there is a change in approach, you're right. There is a change in approach because there isn't going to be the money to spend. And I'm very clear about that and, as I've been saying you know consistently since I became Leader.

ANDREW MARR:

On the other hand, there are areas where you do want to spend money. You want to spend money on long-term care, to improve that. You have supported the idea of the living wage, which is higher than the minimum wage. And nobody likes the word 'predistribution', we understand that, but you want ...

ED MILIBAND:

(over) I love it.

ANDREW MARR:

You love it? No, you don't. Well if you do, that's worrying potentially. But you want ...

ED MILIBAND:

(over) Let me explain what that means.

ANDREW MARR:

(over) No, no, no, I think ...

ED MILIBAND:

(over) Let me explain what that means. No, that is about how do you make the economy work for all working people and not just a few people at the top without necessar...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) You want companies to pay people more?

ED MILIBAND:

... without necessarily spending public money.

ANDREW MARR:

Sure.

ED MILIBAND:

Look, what you're going to see from the Labour Party this week, Andrew. We've already talked about ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) Sorry, I just need to stop on predistribution. I will come back to that.

ED MILIBAND:

Okay, let me just explain, let me just explain. Look, what you've seen from the Labour Party this week - talking about how we can change the way the energy companies work; how we can change the pension system, so people get a fairer deal; how we can change the banks. You'll hear more announcements from Ed tomorrow and me again on Tuesday. That is all about how in tough fiscal times when there isn't money around, Labour can make a difference. And to go to your question directly ...

ANDREW MARR:

Well ...

ED MILIBAND:

Let me go to your question directly. Look ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) I haven't asked it yet. *(laughs)*

ED MILIBAND:

... we're not going to spend money that we don't have. Of course we're not. Look, one of the things about Ed is that he is going to be iron in saying you cannot make commitments - both he and I are absolutely clear about this - you cannot make

commitments unless we have an absolutely clear idea where the money is coming from. And that is ... look that is absolutely our watchword.

ANDREW MARR:

So when it comes to the actual issue of so-called predistribution - getting companies to pay people more so they don't have to be helped with tax credits, which is the essence of it - that presumably means public sector workers as well?

ED MILIBAND:

Well let me explain what ...

ANDREW MARR:

Well if it doesn't, it means nothing.

ED MILIBAND:

Well no because I obviously just explained what it means. It means that you change the way our economy works, so without having to necessarily spend public money you can actually make our economy work better for most people. And take my banking announcement ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) No, no, I will come to that ...

ED MILIBAND:

Yuh.

ANDREW MARR:

... but this is about persuading companies to pay their workers more, yes?

ED MILIBAND:

Well ...

ANDREW MARR:

Predistribution is about that?

ED MILIBAND:

Well no, I've actually said it's about something else. I mean you can have your own definition if you like. What I've explained it to you as being about is how you change your economy so it works for most people, but not necessarily by spending public money.

ANDREW MARR:

(over) I don't understand any of that. How does that work?

ED MILIBAND:

Well I'll explain it, I'll explain it. If you have banks that work for small businesses and get them the loans, that's better for the economy and better for them. If you have a skill system that trains people up properly, so that they're more productive and they can be paid more, that's better for them and that's better than ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) So it's nothing to do with pay?

ED MILIBAND:

Well of course it's about higher pay over time. Of course it is, yes.

ANDREW MARR:

Including in the public sector?

ED MILIBAND:

Well it could be in the public sector, but obviously it's going to have to be on the basis ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) Which is going to cost more?

ED MILIBAND:

Well ...

ANDREW MARR:

So the question is what people are listening... are waiting for is a clearer sense of where you are prepared to squeeze spending, so that you can spend on the things that you think are more important, and they haven't really heard that from you yet.

ED MILIBAND:

Well and we're going to lay that out at the time of the election. And, look, you know you wouldn't expect a government... a party aspiring to government ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) Just some sense that you know you have the steel to take tough decisions about spending.

ED MILIBAND:

Well let's go back to public sector pay. It wasn't popular in parts of the Labour Party; that we said that if we were in power now, in this parliament, that we would say that in this parliament we would put jobs in the public sector ahead of pay - the one per cent pay rise across the board. Now we said that we'd help the lower paid more than the higher paid; we'd do it differently from this government.

ANDREW MARR:

Okay.

ED MILIBAND:

But I don't think you can say about either Ed or myself, we're not willing to take on tough decisions on that or when it comes to banking and all the other issues.

ANDREW MARR:

Well let's talk about banking, let's talk about banking now. What you're saying is that if the banks don't separate themselves into ordinary retail banks and what have been called casino banks or investment banks, you will force them to do it. You will bring in a law which slices them down the middle?

ED MILIBAND:

Yes, I am saying that. Let me explain why. What I want is a country where a small business or an individual going into their high street bank knows that that bank is working for them, not gambling with their money on the international market, and that doesn't happen at the moment. And what really worries me is that we're seeing and we've seen over the last year actually a watering down of some of the reforms that the government was talking about to try and make that happen. I'm very clear - and this is a very clear message that I have for the banks - either they sort it out themselves, so that once and for all the high street bank is not an arm of the casino operation or the next Labour Government will by law split those banks up, so that once again we return to the best traditions of British banking, which is banks that serve the customer, banks that serve customers rather than customers feeling and the country feeling they're serving their banks.

ANDREW MARR:

Barack Obama has pulled back from doing something that radical. Are you concerned that the result of that might be large numbers of banks simply leaving the UK and relocating abroad?

ED MILIBAND:

Well I don't believe that will happen, but I think what the British people want is a prime minister who will do the right thing for the country. Who will do the right thing for the country ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) So if that's the price, it's a price worth paying?

ED MILIBAND:

(over) Well I don't believe it will be the price because I think those banks have a commitment to Britain. And I actually ... You know what the people want and what investors want, they want safety in their banking system, they want clarity about what is happening in the banks and the way banks are going to work in the future, and we don't have that at the moment. And, look, let me just say this. You know a year ago the government had the Independent Commission on Banking, the Vickers Report.

Since then two things have happened. The Vickers Report has been watered down, so in important areas the report has been made less safe in terms of the impact it'll have on the banks and the culture change we need in our banks is going to be less likely to happen. And we've seen more of a case for that change to happen with scandals like the Libor scandal and others. So I'm very clear you know we can't carry on as we are.

ANDREW MARR:

Whatever the banks say, you know if the big boys from the bank come in and say "Listen, you do this and we're off" ...

ED MILIBAND:

Yeah, yeah.

ANDREW MARR:

... you say well go in that case; in that case go?

ED MILIBAND:

Yeah and that's the difference in politics today.

ANDREW MARR:

Okay.

ED MILIBAND:

Do you want somebody who will stand up to the power for vested interests in our society or don't you? And I think if that's the test at the election between myself and David Cameron, I think people will understand that. I can answer that question better than he can.

ANDREW MARR:

Are you going to repeal the government's changes to the NHS?

ED MILIBAND:

We are going to repeal their bill, yes.

ANDREW MARR:

Because yesterday you said that there was no point in another great change. It could cost billions of pounds top down. And then Andy Burnham, as you know, said we are going to repeal the bill.

ED MILIBAND:

No, let me explain what we're going to do. We will repeal their NHS bill. Why? Because it puts the wrong principles back at the heart of the NHS. It puts the principles of competition, markets and money as the central defining principles of the NHS. That's the wrong set of principles. I want a different set of principles. I want hospitals to be able to cooperate with each other, not to be sort of taken to court for colluding with each other, which is one of the things in this bill - they can be fined up to 10 per cent of their income. So ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) And your comments ... You suggested this could cost £3 billion and there'd be a major sort of reshaping of the ...

ED MILIBAND:

(over) No. No ... so that's the change that we will make. What I said yesterday, which I think is totally right and most people will understand that, is I'm not going to do what David Cameron did, which is he came along, he didn't tell us in his manifesto and he had a top down reorganisation which cost billions of pounds and is actually you know at the time that nurses are being sacked in the NHS.

ANDREW MARR:

Yes, okay.

ED MILIBAND:

So we're going to repeal the bill, we're going to make those changes, but we'll obviously have to look at some of the detail of some of the reform ... some of the changes that have been made because I don't want to just shuffle the deckchairs all over the place.

ANDREW MARR:

Okay. When you receive texts from Vince Cable, what are you talking about?

ED MILIBAND:

Oh, I've actually changed my mobile phone. I sort of ... you know I thought I needed to get away from him. *(Marr laughs)* Look, we've talked about a whole range of issues.

ANDREW MARR:

Such as? Go on.

ED MILIBAND:

Well, look, for example, I mean it's sort of private mostly, but you know some of these banking issues ages ago, we talked about them at the time of the Vickers Report. He was kind enough to give me a briefing on what the Vickers Report was going to say, and that's what ... you know oppositions and governments can cooperate. But look, this is way overdone, Andrew. Let me just be clear about this. I want a majority Labour Government. I'm working for a majority Labour Government. If there are areas where people can cooperate across the divide in politics, fine, but that's my position. And my position on the Lib-Dems is this.

ANDREW MARR:

Sure, but ...

ED MILIBAND:

Let me just say this on the Lib-Dems because it's important. The problem about the Lib-Dems, including Vince I'm afraid, is that they're an accomplice to this government, not a break on it. And when it comes to the economic plans that aren't working, the NHS plans that are wrong, what's happened on tuition fees, they're going in the wrong direction. So I'm very clear about that.

ANDREW MARR:

And yet it's up to the British electorate what happens in the next election.

ED MILIBAND:

Exactly.

ANDREW MARR:

As you know, you don't know how the cards are going to fall ...

ED MILIBAND:

Exactly.

ANDREW MARR:

... and you could very well be in a position of no party having an overall majority again. The Lib-Dems, despite everything you've said, are nonetheless a party you could do business with. Are they not?

ED MILIBAND:

I'm not going to get into it, honestly. I'll tell you why I'm not going to get into it - because I've got an old-fashioned view. Let's debate the issues ...

ANDREW MARR:

Because you can be trouble, that's why??

ED MILIBAND:

Let's debate the issues. Let's debate the issues that matter to people. And, look, I do say this to you. Politics is an insider's game about what's going to happen in two and a half year's time after an election where we've still got to fight out the issues. I don't think that interests people and it certainly doesn't interest me.

ANDREW MARR:

The opinion polls that I mentioned at the beginning and your own personal rating, they're still pretty terrible. I mean very, very large numbers of people still saying I don't see this man as a future prime minister.

ED MILIBAND:

(over) I think it's quite a compliment actually that the Tories produced a poll yesterday about me. I think it shows I've got them worried.

ANDREW MARR:

(over) Well nonetheless ...

ED MILIBAND:

I think two and a half years from an election, I think that tells you something about where they are.

ANDREW MARR:

But however you regard all this stuff, it is part of the job of a modern leader to project him or herself in a way that people find appealing.

ED MILIBAND:

Sure.

ANDREW MARR:

And you've struggled to do that so far. What more do you do? How can you approach this because you know it's not trivial?

ED MILIBAND:

Well that's your characterisation. Here's what I think. I think ideas matter in politics and I'm not embarrassed about that, right?

ANDREW MARR:

So the wonky stuff is ... you know it's fine. Wonk, geek, no problem with that?

ED MILIBAND:

(over) Absolu... Look. No, let me be clear about this. You know I gave a speech last year at the Labour Party conference. It was controversial. I talked about the predator companies, predatory behaviour. I don't regret that speech because it spoke to ... and over the last year people said actually maybe he was right about that. And so look, you know I'm very clear about this. I'm my own person ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) So is the message ...

ED MILIBAND:

... and I'm going to do it my own way, and I think in the end people respect somebody who has seriousness of purpose, a clarity of ideas. And let me just make this contrast. Four years ago David Cameron was saying, "I want to hug a hoodie and I want to hug a husky." And now he wants to lock up the hoodies and he doesn't give a damn about the huskies. I think it is that sort of all over the place opportunism in politics that gives politics a bad name and actually I think that is one of the Prime Minister's biggest problems: people don't quite know where he stands. People are always going to know where I stand, Andrew, and that is the most important test of leadership. And, by the way, I think the real test and the real question about who's going to be the next prime minister is who can stand up to rebuild Britain and make our economy work for everybody and not just the people at the top.

ANDREW MARR:

And so we ...

ED MILIBAND:

And on that test, I think we can win this election.

ANDREW MARR:

We saw you and your family arriving in this city yesterday.

ED MILIBAND:

It's quite nice for me to have my family here. I mean it's great to have you here too ...

ANDREW MARR:

(over) I know, but this is, but this ...

ED MILIBAND:

.... But I mean it's nice to have my family here.

ANDREW MARR:

But this is not going to be the start of you know Ed the Relaunch, lots of soft focus pictures, lots of interviews on other kinds of sofas?

ED MILIBAND:

Look, I think as Leader of the Opposition people want to know - and as somebody wants to be Prime Minister - people want to know about you - about who you are and what makes you tick. And that's what I'm going to do. And you know I'm going to keep doing this my own way and that's what matters, I think.

ANDREW MARR:

Brother David back in before the election - yes or no?

ED MILIBAND:

I think that's ... Look, I say the same thing always on this. He made a decision not to join the shadow cabinet. That continues to be his view - that he wants to be in the frontline but not on the front bench of politics. He wants to do ...

ANDREW MARR:

Well you can't do that forever, can you?

ED MILIBAND:

He wants to do his own thing. Well, look, I think that he's doing a whole range of things on youth unemployment, on a whole range of issues, and I think he wants to carry on doing that and I hugely respect that.

ANDREW MARR:

And the door is open?

ED MILIBAND:

I think he's a huge asset to the Labour Party, but I'm not getting into all that.

ANDREW MARR:

Alright.

ED MILIBAND:

Thank you.

ANDREW MARR:

For now, thank you very much indeed.

INTERVIEW ENDS