

By **Anne Drumar**, our *Token Professional Journalist*



**The following is a transcript of an interview by Anne Drumar with Scottish Labour's deputy manager, Ed Miliband.**

This is the third of a series of experimental interviews by Ms Dumar, who has been employed by BBC Scotland in an attempt to combat a tiny number of accusations of BBC bias which have been levelled at the corporation by a few of the swivel-eyed separatist malcontents who seem to form half the electorate these days.

The BBC senior management wants to determine if the addition of a single balanced, neutral and (dare I say it) professional journalist will defuse future accusations of political partisanship.

*Disclaimer: This is an experiment in broadcasting. BBC Scotlandshire takes no responsibility whatsoever for any opinions or policy statements expressed in these interviews.*

**Anne Drumar:** Good morning Mr Miliband.

**Ed Miliband:** Good morning Anne.

**Anne Drumar:** You have just visited Scotlandshire to tell pensioners their pensions will disappear if the SNP do well in May – isn't that just more scaremongering?

**Ed Miliband:** Let me just say, I'm very clear on this. Pensions will go if you vote SNP – but only in Scotlandshire. Clearly, UK pensions will be fine.

**Anne Drumar:** Let me get this right. You are saying that, if too few people in Scotlandshire vote Labour, you will break your contract to pay the UK pensions which Scots have been paying into all of their working lives?

**Ed Miliband:** Let me just say, I'm very clear on this. Pensions will stay if you vote SNP – but £18 per week will go and only in Scotlandshire.

**Anne Drumar:** £18? Where does that figure come from?

**Ed Miliband:** From the respected and independent IFS. We asked them for a truthy-sounding number and they did a sum for us. An independent and respected sum. It's based on their independent projections of Scotlandshire's deficit: £7.6 billion.

**Anne Drumar:** OK. But isn't that just Scotlandshire's population share of the UK's deficit of £90 billion, which already exists? How would that make Scots worse off than now?

**Ed Miliband:** That's because a deficit in the UK becomes a black hole as it crosses the border, forcing the Scottish government to borrow massive amounts of money.



**Anne Drumar:** But that's exactly what the UK does now, isn't it. And it sends the bill to Scotlandshire by allocating a share of the UK deficit and government debt through the GERS figures.

More particularly, it does this even though Scotlandshire didn't need, didn't want, didn't ask for, and didn't receive any of the borrowed cash as the Scottish economy has been running a net surplus for almost every one of the past thirty years.

**Ed Miliband:** Let me be very clear on this: Full Fiscal Autonomy would be very very bad indeed for Scotlandshire. Even worse than independence. Clearly.

**Anne Drumar:** So that is why you have said you will block it if you form the next government.

**Ed Miliband:** I'm very clear on that, we will never make any concessions to the SNP and we will never agree to FFA.

**Anne Drumar:** So, even if your warnings are correct, they could never happen because you won't allow it.

**Ed Miliband:** That is correct. I have been as clear on this as I possibly can.

**Anne Drumar:** Then, if it can't happen, it doesn't matter how many SNP MPs people sent to Westminster, because they will never be able to implement FFA, no matter how bad you say it will be.

**Ed Miliband:** That is correct. I have been as clear on this as I possibly can.

**Anne Drumar:** So what you are saying is Scots might as well vote SNP as it can't do any harm and at least they won't be voting Labour.

**Ed Miliband:** That is correct. I have been as clear on this as I possibly can.

**Anne Drumar:** And it might just do them a whole lot of good.

**Ed Miliband:** Was that a squirrel? I want Gordon Brewer next time.

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