

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

1

[00:00:00] **Luke Thompson:** [00:00:00] Hello listeners. This podcast is made possible thanks to kind donations from listeners and thank you very much if you have donated to the podcast. Luke's English podcast is also supported by the premium subscription, which you can sign up to for a small amount per month. Premium episodes include lessons from me to you about vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, as well as other bonus things, occasionally, like the recent 28-minute video of me performing standup comedy in London, which I published a few months ago, and you can access all of it and support the show by becoming a Premium LEPster. To get all the relevant information about that just go to teacherluke.co.uk/premiuminfo.



[00:00:49] **You're listening to Luke's English podcast. For more information, visit teacherluke.co.uk**

[00:00:59] Hello [00:01:00] everyone. I hope you're doing well today. Guess what?

[00:01:05] And this is where you say "What Luke?" because that's what happens when someone says, "Guess what?" You have to say, "What?" All right, should we try it again? Guess what? "What?" Here's a new episode of my podcast for learners of English, in which I give you regular doses of authentic listening practice to help you both maintain and boost your English in various ways.

[00:01:26] This is episode number 704 and as you can see from the title, it's a new edition of The Rick Thompson Report.

[00:01:36] Long-term LEPsters will know what to expect from this, but given that I haven't published a Rick Thompson Report for over six months now, it's quite likely that there are people listening who don't know what this kind of episode involves.

[00:01:49] That might be you. Hello, is that you? Maybe you've never heard a Rick Thompson Report and you're thinking, "Okay, what's all this, what's all this about then?" Well, let me try and explain it as [00:02:00] succinctly as possible, and this introduction should only be a few minutes long. Okay? I promise. Right. So here we go.

[00:02:07] The Rick Thompson Report is a series of episodes in which I talk to my dad, who is a former BBC journalist, about events in UK politics and current affairs, especially Brexit, although we also like to start each episode with a short weather report and end with a quick sports report too. It's like a sandwich with weather and sport being the bread and Brexit being the content of the sandwich.

[00:02:34] Okay. Admittedly, that's not a very appealing sandwich. "Do you want, do you want a, do you want a Brexit sandwich?" "No, thanks."

[00:02:41] Okay, so it's not like a sandwich then that's, that's just a metaphor that didn't work. All right. Now, although my dad is known for having a clear voice and a very clear way of putting things, this might still be a difficult episode to follow. This is because the situation is

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

2

hard to understand. [00:03:00] Brexit, that's Britain's exit from the European Union, is complicated. Brexit is complicated and don't believe anyone who tells you that it's simple. It definitely isn't simple. It's complex, especially the issues relating to the Northern Irish border.

[00:03:17] Remember the UK, that's the United Kingdom, in fact, it's the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. That's the full title. Oh, it's long. Anyway. Remember the UK is surrounded by water, right? But there is a land border between the UK and the European Union, and that land border is on the island of Ireland.

[00:03:41] Are those words pronounced the same? Island and Ireland. I think there's more syllables in the name of the country. So, island. You know, like a desert island, and Ireland. You hear it? Ireland. Slightly different actually, [00:04:00] but some people might pronounce them the same. Anyway, there is a land border between the UK and the EU on the island of Ireland because Northern Ireland is in the UK, but the Republic of Ireland certainly isn't, but it is in the EU.

[00:04:17] This is starting to sound like one of my standup routines.

[00:04:21] So you got that? Northern Ireland is in the UK, but the Republic of Ireland isn't but the Republic Island is in the EU, the UK isn't anymore because "hello!" Brexit. I told you it was complicated and that's just the simple version.

[00:04:35] So, it is complicated, so talking about it becomes quite complex too, with some very specific language and concepts, but I think this is the appeal of these episodes, listening to the way my dad describes these complex things in plain English.

[00:04:50] But if this conversation is difficult to follow, or if you just want to check some of the words and phrases that you hear, then, let me remind you that there is a full [00:05:00] transcript for this episode, which you can download completely free from my website. Just follow the link to the episode page in the show notes. You can just download the transcript with a click of a button. I'm not asking for your email address or anything like that.

[00:05:15] There's also a text version of this on YouTube, which should make it easy to read and listen at the same time. If that's what you'd like to do. If you're currently listening on YouTube, now might be a good time to like & subscribe if you haven't done that already. So off you go, there you go. Just click like, click subscribe. Don't forget to smash the like button. Thanks. Okay. So if you, if you still haven't done it, go on smash that like button and then slap the subscribe button and then dive into the comments section too, perhaps. Yeah. Smash. Slap. Dive. YouTube is so exciting, isn't it?

[00:05:56] All right. I'm not going to say much more in this introduction, except that I am [00:06:00] aware that my dad and I might repeat things that we have previously said as we cover some of the same ground as in previous episodes, but I think that's okay.

[00:06:10] Repetition is okay. In fact, repetition is the mother of learning, apparently. That's a phrase I've read. Repetition is the mother of learning. Have you heard that before?

[00:06:21] I think it's true. Although, if repetition is the mother of learning, I wonder who the father of learning is. My dad, maybe? That would be a surprise though, wouldn't it? If my dad

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

3

was the father of learning, because yes, it would be a surprise because it would mean that learning is maybe my brother James, or maybe I am learning, but I'm a teacher.

[00:06:46] So, so what am I, teaching or learning? It's probably both, isn't it actually? And what about my mum?

[00:06:53] Okay. All right. I've confused everyone. And we haven't even started talking about Brexit yet. Okay. I [00:07:00] think it's wise now to stop this introduction and just jump into the conversation with my dad. So let's do that.

[00:07:06] I'll chat to you again at the end of this episode, but now let's get started properly and here we go.

[00:07:16] **This is the Rick Thompson Report, with Rick Thompson.**

[00:07:22] **Rick Thompson:** [00:07:22] Hello, Luke, how are you?

[00:07:24] **Luke Thompson:** [00:07:24] I'm fine. Thanks very much. It's cold here.

[00:07:28] **Rick Thompson:** [00:07:28] It's cold here too. Very cold.

[00:07:31] **Luke Thompson:** [00:07:31] The weather report.

[00:07:32] **Rick Thompson:** [00:07:32] We have a, we have a 'Beast from the East' as the newspapers call it.

[00:07:36] **Luke Thompson:** [00:07:36] Another one.

[00:07:37] **Rick Thompson:** [00:07:37] Another one. Yes. We had one, three years ago, which is a big easterly wind, which brought some snow.

[00:07:42] And we now have got Beast of the East II: The Revenge of the Beast. And, it's strong easterly winds coming in from Scandinavia across the North Sea and smacking into Britain with snow in Scotland and the North and down the East coast. But here in the middle of the country [00:08:00] today it's quite a nice day, a few occasional little flakes of snow drifting down with patches of sunshine.

[00:08:05] It's actually quite a nice winter's day, but cold.

[00:08:08] **Luke Thompson:** [00:08:08] Very cold here too. I walked home from, from work. I liked it. I liked the quite cold weather. It doesn't bother me that much. As long as it's not pouring with rain, then I'm okay. Tomorrow it's due to be minus seven degrees [-7°]. It's going to feel like minus 10, apparently.

[00:08:26] And then Thursday will be minus five, but with sunshine, which is quite nice, actually, you know, for, for me anyway, I mean, you know, speaking for myself, I quite like a cold, fresh day.

[00:08:38] **Rick Thompson:** [00:08:38] Well, so do I, and we haven't, in the UK, we haven't had real winter for the last three years. I mean, since 'Beast I' and, you know, people talk

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

4

about how the weather is changing, which it is, you know, milder winters, climate change is happening, undoubtedly.

[00:08:56] So it's a nice change to have a little bit of real winter.

[00:09:00] [00:09:00] **Luke Thompson:** [00:09:00] Absolutely. I could talk to you about the birds in the park and things, but I should just remind listeners that if they want to hear my dad's comments on birds in parks, then they could always pick up a copy of Parklife.

[00:09:16] **Rick Thompson:** [00:09:16] Another plug for my book, thank you.

[00:09:20] **Luke Thompson:** [00:09:20] Parklife: A Year in the [Wild]Life of an Urban Park by Rick Thompson. How's the book doing, Dad?

[00:09:25] **Rick Thompson:** [00:09:25] The book's doing remarkably well, and I had a letter this very day from somebody who lives in California, not related to us, who had written to say how much they'd enjoyed it. So that's amazing. And, I must tell you one thing before we get onto a more serious fare, is that yesterday I saw a murmuration of starlings.

[00:09:48] A murmuration is a good word, murmuration, a specific word about huge flocks of these birds called starlings gathering together before they go [00:10:00] into roost for the night into a reed bed, and the effect of the thousands of them is like swarms of locusts it's shapes in the sky, really amazing phenomenon, and I saw one last night, not far away from here over the river. Really good to see.

[00:10:17] **Luke Thompson:** [00:10:17] I remember seeing them on holiday, when we went on holiday to Cornwall as children, and I've seen them plenty of other times, because it's kind of a feature of life in England that at certain times you just notice, "Oh my goodness, what is that in the sky?"

[00:10:30] It's like a huge cloud, and it's actually tiny little birds, these, these dark birds called starlings, as you say, and they, yeah, thousands of them all flying in a big cloud, and it's a bit like the way, huge shoals of fish behave underwater, the way you get the sense that it's like just a big cloud of fish and there's no leader, but the whole thing sort of moves and shifts and undulates and it's, it's incredible. It's an incredible sight to see. So you saw one of those yesterday. That's amazing.

[00:11:00] [00:10:59] **Rick Thompson:** [00:10:59] Yes I did. I went specifically to see it because people have been saying that there was a murmuration, you know, just at dusk when the sun is going down and yeah, there it was, but too far away for me to film really. It was in the distance, but still very good to see.

[00:11:16] **Luke Thompson:** [00:11:16] You talk about numerations in your book, which is available from all good bookshops and some bad bookshops.

[00:11:23] **Rick Thompson:** [00:11:23] I'll give you a percentage, at this rate

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

5

[00:11:27] **Luke Thompson:** [00:11:27] "Parklife: A Year in the Wildlife of an Urban Park" by Rick Thompson, available now. Okay. So Dad. Right. Shall we do this? Shall we talk about the B word?

[00:11:38] Not birds. The other B word.

[00:11:39] **Rick Thompson:** [00:11:39] Yeah, we have to talk about the B word and the B word is not Boris. The B word is Brexit. I hope, I hope your listeners won't all immediately turn off and think "Oh no, not Brexit again", but there have, of course, been developments since we last talked about it on the podcast, which was last year, so you asked me to update and [00:12:00] I'll have a go at that.

[00:12:01] **Luke Thompson:** [00:12:01] Wait a minute. Let me just, let me just remember because I don't remember the last time we talked about it. When was it? Hold on a minute.

[00:12:07] **Rick Thompson:** [00:12:07] A long time ago.

[00:12:08] **Luke Thompson:** [00:12:08] I can find out quite quickly if I just search the archive of teacherluke.co.uk - I'm in promotion mode, aren't I?

[00:12:16] **Rick Thompson:** [00:12:16] You are.

[00:12:17] **Luke Thompson:** [00:12:17] But no, here it is. Actually, the last time we spoke was about your book, which is available.

[00:12:23] **Rick Thompson:** [00:12:23] Yes, I know. It wasn't about politics at all.

[00:12:26] **Luke Thompson:** [00:12:26] 9th of September, that was, but before that it was only July. We haven't spoken about Brexit or done a Rick Thompson report since the beginning of July of last year. So that's a good deal of time.

[00:12:39] **Rick Thompson:** [00:12:39] I think at that point in the summer, and we were still negotiating, or I should say the British government was negotiating with the EU about what would happen at the end of the transition year. Last year was a transition year where we were technically out of the EU, but they'd agreed that nothing would change while we sorted out what would happen next, which is [00:13:00] called the TCA. Trade and Cooperation Agreement. So we had to get an agreement on terms of trade in particular and I'm afraid it didn't go very well.

[00:13:12] I mean, I want to say here immediately that your regular listeners will know that I'm not in favor of Brexit at all. I'm a pro European and I think it was a disastrous decision in the referendum, which is now a long time ago, 2016 and I haven't changed my mind and so you're not going to get a totally impartial view.

[00:13:33] I'm just going to tell you what I think, and I am not in favor of Brexit and I am not a big fan of the government that is pushing it, Boris Johnson's government. So as long as people know that there may be other views out there, not the same as mine.

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

6

[00:13:48] **Luke Thompson:** [00:13:48] Other views are available, and in fact, they, they are, like, what's the word, widespread.

[00:13:54] If people want other views on Brexit, then they don't have to travel very far to get them.

[00:13:58] **Rick Thompson:** [00:13:58] No, you don't.

[00:13:59] **Luke Thompson:** [00:13:59] But, [00:14:00] I personally, Dad, think that you're well-informed and in your thinking, you don't just stop at a certain point. You continue to think and investigate and you read about, I think you read information from the right sources and I think you're a well-informed well-educated person, but anyway.

[00:14:19] **Rick Thompson:** [00:14:19] I'm well aware that Brexit divided the country right down the middle. I mean, the decision was a close one, but it was pretty close to 50/50. Scotland voted to remain in the EU, Northern Ireland voted to remain in the EU, London voted to remain in the new year.

[00:14:34] It really divided the country, and I think that's still pretty much the case. There's not a lot of evidence yet that people who thought Brexit was a good idea are changing their mind, though there is a little bit of evidence that some are starting to change their mind. So there are plenty of people who don't agree with me, and in particular, you could get those views in a lot of the newspapers, the popular newspapers, particularly in [00:15:00] this country are very right wing. I mean, I'm talking very right wing. They are nationalistic newspapers that wave the flag and they're against foreigners and they don't like the EU and they sing Rule Britannia and God Save The Queen, if you like.

[00:15:14] So there's plenty of views out there from the Daily Mail and The Sun and the Daily Telegraph and other outlets, which I think has influenced a lot of people, and is not necessarily accurate some of the time.

[00:15:30] **Luke Thompson:** [00:15:30] Not that there's anything wrong with being proud of your country.

[00:15:33] **Rick Thompson:** [00:15:33] The thing is that, I mean, we're going over old ground here, but the slogans were "We must take back control" and they talked about regaining our freedom.

[00:15:43] Now these are very useful phrases to persuade people. "Take back control", implies that we have lost control in the first place, and "Get back our freedom" suggests that we haven't got any, and the notion that Italy and [00:16:00] France and Spain and the other 27 nations are not free nations, not independent is absolutely farcical.

[00:16:08] I mean, the EU is an Alliance which people join willingly, which in my view has been a fantastic success after the Second World War and the single market has been brilliant for the EU. To walk away from it, basically waving the national flag and saying "Freedom! Freedom!" is complete nonsense. So there you are, that's my position.

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

7

[00:16:30] Anyway, you wanted to know what's happened now that we've actually finished and 31st of December, we actually left with a trade agreement. So, I can give you a few ideas.

[00:16:44] **Luke Thompson:** [00:16:44] What kind of trade... I mean, is it a good trade agreement? Because we've had various different deals proposed as long-term listeners will know or people have been keeping up with the story.

[00:16:53] Theresa May had a deal which got rejected a number of times. Deals have been made with the EU and then not [00:17:00] successfully been agreed upon by parliament. So is this deal any better than the deals that Theresa May got?

[00:17:07] **Rick Thompson:** [00:17:07] That's a very good question. The ruling conservative party has always had a problem with Europe.

[00:17:13] It's always had an anti-European element within the party within the parliamentary party, quite a strong one. And it has been difficult for successive conservative prime ministers. To go back to John Major's time, and he was plagued by the faction within the Conservative Party that wanted to get out of the EU, and Theresa May basically lost her position as Premier through all this, trying to negotiate a deal which would appease these Eurosceptics proved to be impossible for her and she was replaced by Boris Johnson. And the impact now, we're speaking about a week into February and we've had a few weeks of being out of the EU [00:18:00] operating within this new TCA Trade and Cooperation Agreement, and you asked me, "Is it a good deal?" No, it isn't. I mean, this is a... this is turning out to be a pretty awful deal, and even though when it was announced on Christmas Eve, the negotiation was dragged out and dragged out and dragged out and people have different opinions about why it was the very last minute, my personal view is that this was planned by Boris Johnson and co. because they didn't want Parliament to scrutinize it too closely, and of course they didn't have time to. So parliament ratified this deal on the 30th of December, apparently there were thousands of pages of it, and most MPs admitted they hadn't read it. So Johnson said it was a fantastic deal, I quote, "This is fantastic news. We've taken back control. It is based on zero tariffs and zero quotas", which is true. [00:19:00] The deal said that there will not be taxes imposed on goods going to and from, and there won't be quotas, you know, quotas is obviously, you can only have so much grain or so much whatever.

[00:19:13] **Luke Thompson:** [00:19:13] Limits

[00:19:13] **Rick Thompson:** [00:19:13] But that's, as far as it goes.

[00:19:15] Yeah. It's limits. And, the fact is that people are now realising that there are lots and lots of problems. The agreement didn't cover certain things. It didn't cover the very important financial services, not just from the City of London but all over the country. We're talking trading in all sorts of financial services like insurance. It didn't cover data protection.

[00:19:41] It didn't cover a sanitary regime for food products, which is quite interesting.

[00:19:45] **Luke Thompson:** [00:19:45] What does that actually mean?

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

8

[00:19:47] **Rick Thompson:** [00:19:47] Basically all the countries in the EU agree to common standards and let's say common standards on food. And, if there is a dispute over the standards, it goes to the European court of justice and they [00:20:00] rule on it.

[00:20:01] The UK would not have any thought of being subject to the European court of justice on any matter, so they couldn't agree that they will abide by European rules on food standards. So it's not in the agreement and this is providing problems already.

[00:20:18] **Luke Thompson:** [00:20:18] Wait a minute. Sorry. We need to break this down a little bit, not just for my listeners, but also for me. So within the European single market, within the EU let's say, there are the agreed standards of cleanliness, let's say for food. So if you're buying tomatoes from Spain, you can be sure that those tomatoes have a certain level of hygiene applied to them, right, and this is the same across the whole EU, and so Britain is not complying? What, I don't see what, sorry. I don't understand.

[00:20:53] **Rick Thompson:** [00:20:53] We have lost the fact that if you're in the single market, you, by definition, you [00:21:00] will be abiding by the rules on everything, and we are now what's called a third country.

[00:21:06] The EU call us a third country. It's a strange expression, but basically, it's not a member of the EU and it's not an associate member of the EU and so we're being treated just like any outsider country and they have to prove all sorts of things about food stuffs. Every time they import something into the EU, you have to have loads and loads of paperwork and vets, veterinary surgeons, you know, animal doctors have to inspect and sign them on both sides.

[00:21:38] When they arrive in [the] EU, whichever country they arrive in, they will demand certain inspections and rules and everything else, and, it is proving to be a bit of a nightmare.

[00:21:51] **Luke Thompson:** [00:21:51] So basically, sorry, if we want to sell any stuff, any objects, any items into the EU, [00:22:00] then suddenly we have to comply with many, many, many more standards and checks, right? So there's a lot more paperwork. Now, that's not just annoying. It's also potentially a huge obstacle which can frustrate our trade significantly.

[00:22:18] **Rick Thompson:** [00:22:18] It is. It particularly impacts on meat and dairy products. They have to prove their country of origin, and they have to have been, inspected and proved to be fresh and meeting all the various standards, and it's slowing things down enormously. Let me give you an idea. There's a piece I read recently from a big company, a well known company called Samways. Samways is a fish merchant company. They have contracts with lots and lots of suppliers of fish in the Southwest of England, [00:23:00] where they land quite a lot of fish and shellfish.

[00:23:03] And for years, they have been loading them up on trucks and taking them off to Dover and selling them in mainland Europe where shellfish is very popular and so most of the shellfish like scallops that, you know, are caught in British waters are sold. Well, now the managing director of this company has said "For every consignment, we have to fill in 57

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

9

pieces of paper'. 57. They have to be stamped by veterinary surgeons. They have to be translated into French or Dutch, and they've had to hire lots of people in their office to be able to try and get this stuff done in time. But so far it hasn't been working and a number of consignments have been so delayed that they are useless and had to be thrown away at the other side because they have to be fresh, and [00:24:00] it's fairly ironic that the fishing industry is starting to complain so loudly about this because Johnson and co. promised the fishing industry in particular that they would take back control of their waters and stop all these nasty European boats taking our fish.

[00:24:17] **Luke Thompson:** [00:24:17] One argument that might be made, let's say, in the newspapers is that this is the EU being spiteful and taking revenge on the UK for it leaving the club.

[00:24:30] **Rick Thompson:** [00:24:30] Nobody is, nobody is saying that, I mean, even the Brexiteers know very well that if we're being treated like any other country, I mean, if this fish was coming in from Morocco they would have to comply with all these rules as well.

[00:24:45] We're in the same status now, and everybody knew we would be, but I'm sorry to say that the government ministers and the Prime Minister misled directly people about this. He said there would be no extra paperwork. We would get rid of all this [00:25:00] paperwork. It would be much simpler. We would take back control.

[00:25:03] And either he didn't know, or he did know, and he wasn't telling the truth. Now you can choose. So that's just one element. There are other things, I mean, 'country of origin' is a big problem, that you have to prove that a very high proportion of goods that you're selling into the EU is actually not coming from another country, like China for example, and they have to prove country of origin of all the bits in the machinery and in the fashion industry, where does the material come from? And all that kind of thing. It's very, very bureaucratic, and there's also some VAT Value Added Tax issues that certain products have VAT at certain levels

[00:25:49] and that has to be sorted out as well. The expert,s estimated just before this happened, that we would need an extra [00:26:00] 20,000 customs officers to be able to process all these things. So because of that problem, the British government and the EU agreed another transition period.

[00:26:13] Of three months where we the UK if you like are not imposing lots of controls. We are, if you like, waving the lorries through, because we haven't got most choice.

[00:26:27] **Luke Thompson:** [00:26:27] Sorry, we're waving the lorries through from the EU.

[00:26:29] **Rick Thompson:** [00:26:29] Yes, that's right.

[00:26:30] **Luke Thompson:** [00:26:30] So we're just letting EU products in without checking them.

[00:26:35] **Rick Thompson:** [00:26:35] That's what it comes down to. It's selective checking, some checked, some are not. And this is going to end at the end of March and the government has asked the EU to have this extended for another two years, and the reports

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

10

from Brussels are that the answer will be a polite no. So, we're not ready for all this. Business isn't ready for it. [00:27:00] The customs posts aren't ready for it. And so it is causing a lot of problems. There are no huge queues of lorries, which we did have before Christmas [where] everybody's racing to get their stuff through before Brexit. Also, there was Christmas also, there was the COVID issue, which, you know, made it more difficult because a lot of the hauliers are just avoiding it. A lot of the European places are just simply not sending their lorries here. For example, Poland, lots and lots of trucks from Poland used to come into this country and it's reported from there, that their drivers don't understand English. They can't possibly comply with all this paperwork, so they're just not coming. They're taking their goods elsewhere,

[00:27:46] **Luke Thompson:** [00:27:46] The companies and the drivers are saying, this is a nightmare. Just don't bother.

[00:27:50] **Rick Thompson:** [00:27:50] That's right.

[00:27:50] **Luke Thompson:** [00:27:50] Don't even go there.

[00:27:52] **Rick Thompson:** [00:27:52] So this has only been a few weeks and we don't know whether that'll remain, whether people will sort it out and then the traffic will [00:28:00] increase, but according to the National Hauliers, lorry drivers association, lorry companies association of UK last week, they said that two thirds of the lorry trips in January hadn't happened. It was down to only a third of its normal traffic.

[00:28:19] So we wait and see. The government has said that's not true. They've simply denied it. So believe who you like. You could believe the government, or you can believe the people who run the lorries, but the fact is that we have to wait and see whether this will lead to shortages of things or whether the prices will go up or whether it'll get back to something a bit more like it was.

[00:28:41] **Luke Thompson:** [00:28:41] So you haven't seen shortages of stuff yet, or...

[00:28:44] **Rick Thompson:** [00:28:44] In Northern Ireland, they have, and that is a completely different subject, Luke. Northern Ireland.

[00:28:51] **Luke Thompson:** [00:28:51] Shall we touch on Northern or not? I was going to say in terms of shortages of things, obviously I live in Paris and we have [00:29:00] Marks & Spencer's stores here. These are British stores, Marks & Spencer's, you know, classic English brand, and it's very popular. You can buy all your different English products in Marks & Spencer's, and they sell loads of things, including different types of beer and different types of bread and cheese and biscuits and teas and fresh products and all sorts of stuff, shelves full of stuff, very popular shops.

[00:29:24] But the local Marks and Spencer that I would go to and a lot of other French people would go, is closing down. In fact it's already closed. It closed at the weekend. Saturday was his last day because the shelves have been empty for weeks.

[00:29:38] **Rick Thompson:** [00:29:38] Yes, I heard.

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

11

[00:29:38] **Luke Thompson:** [00:29:38] Since the new year.

[00:29:39] **Rick Thompson:** [00:29:39] They couldn't get enough supplies.

[00:29:41] Yeah. Can't get the supplies it's just closed. They just closed one and they're reducing the number of stores in Paris. I mean, you know, I guess this is not that massive an issue from this end, but it is material evidence.

[00:29:55] Yes, it is. The shops here apart from Northern Ireland, and we will talk about that in [00:30:00] a minute, have been okay, but also the impact is likely to be seasonal. The main problem will be with fresh fruit and vegetables in the spring and the summer. We get a large amount of fruit and veg from mainland Europe, Spain being one of the biggest sources.

[00:30:23] It's Spanish everything. Spanish tomatoes, Spanish plums, Spanish oranges, Spanish, everything. And when that season comes in it'll be interesting to see whether we get some shortages then. It's much more likely to have two impacts. One is that a lot of British companies are discovering that the only way they can keep trading with mainland Europe is to set up another arm of their company, a subsidiary or maybe even their headquarters within the EU and the favorite country to do that, is it in the Netherlands but also France and one or two other [00:31:00] places, which means that the jobs will be exported. They'll have to set up and recruit people there and it'll mean job losses in the UK.

[00:31:09] It hasn't happened yet, but a lot of companies that are doing it so they can get around the problem of not being in the EU.

[00:31:17] And the second impact is likely to be on prices, and again, that'll take some time to materialise. I might be wrong, but a lot of people are saying that all this is increasing their costs quite significantly and they can't absorb them, and so they will have to be raising prices in order to keep going. Obviously inflation at the moment is low and if all the prices went up by 5%, it wouldn't be the end of the world but it's not very helpful in this time of COVID when a lot of people are losing their jobs because of that and it's not exactly an advantage of Brexit.

[00:31:59] I [00:32:00] mean, to summarize, I can't see a single advantage of us leaving the EU, not one. It's all damage limitation and firefighting and trying to make sure it's not too bad. Yep.

[00:32:13] **Luke Thompson:** [00:32:13] We get this wonderful thing called sovereignty, Dad, which we kind of already had in the first place.

[00:32:19] You know, people say that when you have a court which is at a higher level than your country's supreme court you do not have sovereignty, but I mean we've said before that we are members of the EU we're part of the project, so it's not like they are imposing things on us.

[00:32:36] **Rick Thompson:** [00:32:36] There is no doubt that joining the European Union meant you surrendered some sovereignty. There's no doubt that you had to agree that we would be subject in disputes to an international court, but it was an international court. It wasn't a foreign court. There were senior judges from all the member states, were members

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

12

of the panel of the [00:33:00] European Court of Justice. We had two senior judges there all the time. It's an agreed joint court of arbitration. If you're going to have a lot of different countries and there's a dispute, you have to have an independent arbiter to decide who's right and who's wrong.

[00:33:15] And the idea that that somehow means that we're not an independent country, seems to me to be completely wrong. So that's my view.

[00:33:25] **Luke Thompson:** [00:33:25] Well Dad, now that we've dealt with that difficult topic, let's talk about the easy subject of Northern Ireland.

[00:33:32] **Rick Thompson:** [00:33:32] Yes, indeed. This is the big one at the moment here. It's very tense. I have to remind your listeners, I mean they will know that Northern Ireland had violent difficulties particularly in the 1970s. It was called the troubles. We're talking about a nationalist population in Northern Ireland who wanted to be reunited with the Republic of Ireland, mainly Catholic population and the mainly Protestant [00:34:00] loyalists who want to remain within the UK. These two communities are very entrenched, and it led to a sort of civil war going on in Northern Ireland where three and a half thousand people got killed before it ran its course and Tony Blair was instrumental in making the so-called Good Friday Agreement because it was signed on a Good Friday, which had a whole number of elements to it, to diffuse the tensions, and that has held good. The fact that Britain and Ireland were both in the EU at the time was very helpful, and one of the things, of course, in the Good Friday agreement is that it would be an open border between Northern Ireland and The Republic of Ireland. So that's a little bit of a recap and people who live in Northern Ireland have the right to an Irish passport.

[00:34:49] So people who live in Northern Ireland can, if they choose, be EU citizens, and so the status of Northern Ireland is in between-y. It's sort of in the EU and it's sort of in the [00:35:00] UK.

[00:35:01] Limbo land.

[00:35:02] And this thing about, well, where's the border then? You know, with a single market border, if it's not going to be on the Island of Ireland, where is it?

[00:35:13] And this is where Theresa May became unstuck. She came up with a deal called the backstop, but her parliamentary colleagues wouldn't accept it. We're back in this situation right now that there are indeed checks on goods going between England or mainland UK and Northern Ireland and the loyalist majority in the assembly in Northern Ireland is extremely unhappy about this.

[00:35:41] And they are trying to rewrite the Northern Ireland Protocol, which is part of the withdrawal agreement of the EU. But of course, the problem is that it's an unsolvable situation. It always has been an unsolvable situation, that if you're not going to have a border in Ireland, that you've got to have a border [00:36:00] between Northern Ireland and the UK, otherwise the single market has a huge hole punched in it.

[00:36:06] And there are no checks between the UK and the EU via Ireland.

[00:36:12] **Luke Thompson:** [00:36:12] So currently, where is the border?

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

13

[00:36:16] **Rick Thompson:** [00:36:16] Well currently, it's in The Irish Sea, in between Northern Ireland and England and Scotland. So there are checks going on with goods going to and fro. They were very bureaucratic.

[00:36:31] They delayed things. Nobody understood the rules and that's why there was a period of time with shortages in the shops in Belfast.

[00:36:41] **Luke Thompson:** [00:36:41] Okay. So I'm going to ask a question, which is what's wrong with having the border in The Irish Sea?

[00:36:50] **Rick Thompson:** [00:36:50] Well, the majority of loyalists in Northern Ireland see that as being chopping the United Kingdom up.

[00:36:59] They [00:37:00] are determined to be part of the United Kingdom. That's why they're called loyalists, loyal to the crown. And they would see it as a giant step towards a reunited Ireland, which they're very much against.

[00:37:13] We are seeing graffiti. Graffiti, you know, words written on walls, is a tradition in Northern Ireland.

[00:37:20] It always has its political messages written large on walls, and graffiti is appearing at the ports in Northern Ireland basically saying "No border in The Irish Sea", and the fear is that the loyalist paramilitary organizations, the ones that rose up to fight against the IRA might be behind it and they even sent all their workers home for their own safety last week because they were worried that this might be the start of something leading to a bit of violence. There has been no violence, but the police force in Northern Ireland have said the situation is, the word is [00:38:00] "febrile", which means tense atmosphere.

[00:38:04] It's a very difficult situation, you see. It remains in the single market for goods. The UK has left the single market of the EU with the exception of Northern Ireland. So it is actually still in the single market for goods. That's why I said it's in this in-between-y land,

[00:38:21] and it means that, you know, if the border is open, there's free movement of goods and people between the Republic of Ireland in the EU, and Northern Ireland in the UK, and nobody knows how to solve this issue. And I don't know what they'll come up with, but I think they'll have to continue with checking goods between Northern Ireland and mainland Britain.

[00:38:46] It's a dangerous situation actually.

[00:38:49] **Luke Thompson:** [00:38:49] Yeah. It's a very sensitive situation there. You don't, you know, we, we need to try and protect peace.

[00:38:54] **Rick Thompson:** [00:38:54] So one of Boris Johnson's close allies, Michael Gove, [00:39:00] who is in the cabinet and is supposed to be in charge of the EU relationship at the moment is in talks.

[00:39:09] I mean, he's going to be in a serious series of talks starting the day after tomorrow with the EU to try to change this Northern Ireland Protocol in the agreement in some way.

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

14

[00:39:22] The situation has not been helped by the European Commission, making a bad mistake last week. They, as you may know were slow in getting hold of COVID vaccines.

[00:39:35] The member States of the EU, were happy for the European commission to lead the purchasing and distribution of the vaccines on behalf of everybody using their purchasing power and because it had to be coordinated in some way. But they were slow. They were slow to order lots of vaccines.

[00:39:54] They were slow to have them approved by the European regulator [00:40:00] and Britain was very fast. It's the one thing that the government got right, which was, they ordered large numbers of vaccines from the Oxford and AstraZeneca outfit because they assumed that it would be, it would work and they were told by the chemists that they were confident it would work. So they ordered them, bang, before they were fully tested and before they'd been authorised, and that proved to be a good, good move, and that's why we had access to lots of vaccine early on. The National Health Service has done a great job in organizing mass vaccination everywhere, and we're obviously at the moment, well ahead of all the other European countries in getting people vaccinated.

[00:40:46] The mistake the European Commission made was when they were under huge pressure from the member states saying "What's happened? Where are our vaccines? You're you're too slow." They mistakenly suggested that they would [00:41:00] override the Northern Ireland Protocol and prevent any vaccines from the EU going into Britain via Ireland. They were saying, you know, suggesting the vaccines made in the EU, and a lot of them are, they wanted to keep them in the EU and they were suggesting that they would make sure that they couldn't go into the UK via Ireland, and this was a big mistake. There is article 16 in this protocol, which says that in an emergency it could be overridden and you can have some kind of a border effect, and of course, within hours, the Irish government, the British government had not been consulted. They screamed blue murder and they, they immediately said, "Oh, sorry.

[00:41:47] No, no, it was a mistake. We didn't mean it."

[00:41:49] **Luke Thompson:** [00:41:49] Wait, so Northern Ireland, which is still partially in the EU in some respects.

[00:41:54] **Rick Thompson:** [00:41:54] Only part of the fact that it's in the single market for goods.

[00:41:57] **Luke Thompson:** [00:41:57] It's in the single market. The EU suggested, "Wait a [00:42:00] minute, we shouldn't give any vaccines to Northern Ireland, any of our European vaccines to Northern Ireland, because..."

[00:42:07] **Rick Thompson:** [00:42:07] Well, to the UK . There we have an open border, so they were saying, you know, we must hold onto what vaccines we've got within the EU. We're not going to be exporting them to anybody else for the moment, that includes the UK, which means we'll have to stop them going across the border from Ireland.

[00:42:21] That overrides the protocol that says there's no border on the island.

[00:42:26] **Luke Thompson:** [00:42:26] Oh I see. I see. So the problem is that...

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

15

[00:42:30] This is getting all so complicated...

[00:42:32] It is Dad, but I have to ask these questions just to clear it up in my own head. So yeah, I see the problem that the EU basically kind of said, "Don't let the vaccines cross the border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, even though, technically, there is no proper border there, it's a soft border and so this was a huge issue.

[00:42:52] **Rick Thompson:** [00:42:53] It was a political gaffe as they say. A gaffe being a mistake, to even suggest that they were going to [00:43:00] override this famous Northern Ireland Protocol and put some kind of barrier at this non border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

[00:43:10] Anyway, that's sort of gone away, but it does mean that you know, the British government could go into the negotiation saying, "How dare you suggest such a thing?!" you know, and all that.

[00:43:21] **Luke Thompson:** [00:43:21] It made the European Union look pretty bad.

[00:43:23] **Rick Thompson:** [00:43:23] Well, it did make them look bad. It was a big mistake to do that.

[00:43:27] **Luke Thompson:** [00:43:27] Okay. All right. Gosh.

[00:43:28] **Rick Thompson:** [00:43:28] So Brexit is still, you know, to be sorted out. I mean, we thought it was going to be all over but it's far from over and there are lots and lots of elements that are not sorted out, not covered, problematic, and the negotiations and the tweaking of the agreement and agreements on the side will go on for some time, I'm sorry to say. And we have to wait and see. It'll take a few months before we can see whether there are any benefits, but I haven't [00:44:00] found any yet.

[00:44:02] **Luke Thompson:** [00:44:02] Okay, so the saga continues.

[00:44:04] **Rick Thompson:** [00:44:04] Yes it does.

[00:44:07] **Luke Thompson:** [00:44:07] Are we going to be able to keep talking about this Dad? Because I don't want you to just, I don't want to keep putting you on the spot and having to explain the unexplainable.

[00:44:15] **Rick Thompson:** [00:44:15] I hope that some of your LEPsters out there who actually live in the EU will find it quite interesting. I mean, there are quite a few countries within the EU that have political parties that are hostile to Brussels and all that kind of thing and they do make nationalist noises and rather suggest they might be better off without it.

[00:44:39] I think they, they should think again. The benefits of the single market are fantastic. Free movement, wonderful. The students are unhappy here because for years and years in your gap year, students, you'd, you'd get on a plane or a boat and you'd go and work in a bar in Paris, or you'd travel around Europe or [00:45:00] you'd get a course and you'd go and study in Europe.

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

16

[00:45:02] The Erasmus scheme actually gave financial support to students studying in different European countries, but we're not in the Erasmus scheme anymore and the British government said, Oh, well, we'll have our own. Scheme to subsidise people, but they're really looking at non-EU countries, and the academic world says it's a shadow of the Erasmus scheme.

[00:45:27] There are all sorts of things that are taken for granted by countries in the EU, which once you lose them you start to realise that actually it was quite handy, quite useful and strangely British young people were the biggest users of the Erasmus scheme.

[00:45:43] They were really enthusiastic about it and the same way that British science was very much involved in European science projects, collaborative projects that is being stifled because they can't just say to a German scientist come over and work with us for three months because [00:46:00] you know, we... They have to go through a whole incredible rigmarole for him to get a visa as a preferred worker.

[00:46:06] And another one. How about this one? The entertainment and fashion industry. It's a big industry for Britain. Obviously we're fortunate in that British pop music is popular everywhere and you know, a lot of the big artists and bands are known everywhere and they tour. They would normally go on a European tour.

[00:46:25] Well they can't, essentially. They're stuck. They have to get permission from each individual country they go to and they have no right to go and work in wherever in Germany or Spain. It's the same with the fashion industry. You know, if you're Stella McCartney and you want to go and take a team of people and put on a show in Milan, before you used to just get on a plane. Now it's much, much more difficult and the entertainment industry, the actors, [00:47:00] musicians, you know, all famous names, they're all signing letters to Boris Johnson saying, "Why haven't you agreed that we can continue to go and perform and tour in Europe", and apparently they're just not getting any reply.

[00:47:17] **Luke Thompson:** [00:47:17] Wow.

[00:47:18] **Rick Thompson:** [00:47:18] Lots and lots of things that we've yet to see if they can be sorted out. But I hope your listeners won't mind me being so hostile to what this is meaning and I'm trying to be factual about it and we'll wait and see how it pans out after the first few weeks.

[00:47:36] **Luke Thompson:** [00:47:36] We do appreciate Dad, we really do appreciate it. I mean, I obviously personally appreciate the fact that you take the time and the effort to talk to us. It's difficult to talk about this complicated subject. It's difficult to keep it all factual, and this is one of the problems. I mean, you know, naturally people go for the easy information, the easy answers and so on, [00:48:00] and they're not always the right answers.

[00:48:01] **Rick Thompson:** [00:48:01] [A] lot of things are much more complicated than they seem and trying to simplify the impacts of Brexit is ... It's very difficult to simplify and a lot of it is at the detail.

[00:48:11] The other thing I should say is that the focus, the media focus, and I think individual people's focus at the moment is on the pandemic.

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

17

[00:48:21] This crucial historic moment when we actually have left the EU has been eclipsed in the news by all the news about the pandemic, which you can understand. It affects so many people personally and directly, and everyone's waiting to see whether they can all get vaccinated and return some kind of normal life, and everyone's get[ting] absolutely sick of this long, you know, restrictions or lockdown, and of course that's what they're most interested in and the slightly difficult subject of Brexit isn't getting hugely prominent [00:49:00] news coverage. So that's another thing that we'll wait and see that, that I think once people start realizing the impact on them. You know, it's not affecting them now because they can't go anywhere.

[00:49:14] But if they suddenly start realising it is going to affect them directly in one way or another, then I think that that might change a few opinions. So at the moment, it all seems a little bit theoretical unless you're in Northern Ireland where it's felt much more keenly.

[00:49:32] **Luke Thompson:** [00:49:32] Oh, well, how do, how does one make a transition to the sport from this, Dad?

[00:49:38] **Rick Thompson:** [00:49:38] Oh, not too difficult.

[00:49:40] **Luke Thompson:** [00:49:40] You're a newsman. How do they do it on the BBC news?

[00:49:43] **Rick Thompson:** [00:49:43] "And now, sport."

[00:49:45] **Luke Thompson:** [00:49:45] But if you've just, if you're a newsreader on the BBC news, right, and you've just done a report on something deeply serious, how do you then transition to the sport?

[00:49:56] **Rick Thompson:** [00:49:56] Well, that's what they do. "And now the sport" [00:50:00]

[00:50:00] **Luke Thompson:** [00:50:00] It's just as simple as that. What else can you do?

[00:50:03] **Rick Thompson:** [00:50:03] Serious face to less serious face, on the television.

[00:50:06] **Luke Thompson:** [00:50:06] "And now sport with Alan Partridge".

[00:50:08] **Rick Thompson:** [00:50:08] That's right. And yes, I mean, cricket again, ah, England have started a tour of India and they're playing to empty stadiums and they're, you know, in their bubble to try to make sure that they don't get affected by COVID and India are a very, very good cricketing side, and we've just had the first five day international against India and England played brilliantly and India did not play well and England beat them quite easily. So people who like cricket are thinking, "Wow! England's just beaten India. That's not bad." And it's also on terrestrial free-to-air television here.

[00:50:48] So people have been watching it on Channel 4, which makes a very nice change because normally international cricket is paid for on sky or somewhere.

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

18

[00:51:00] [00:51:00] **Luke Thompson:** [00:51:00] Okay. And who's the big star of the England team who just... [Dad: Joe Root] ...got a century?

[00:51:05] Joe Root

[00:51:05] The captain.

[00:51:06] **Rick Thompson:** [00:51:06] Joe Root. He's the captain. Brilliant batsman. He scored a hundred in his hundredth test match. Thank you.

[00:51:12] **Luke Thompson:** [00:51:12] He's played a hundred test matches and he scored a hundred runs.

[00:51:15] **Rick Thompson:** [00:51:15] He scored a century in the hundredth. He scored two centuries, a double century, in his hundredth match.

[00:51:21] **Luke Thompson:** [00:51:21] That is significant ladies and gents. Those of you who have got no idea about cricket. Scoring a hundred runs is quite a big deal.

[00:51:27] **Rick Thompson:** [00:51:27] It is, and scoring 200 is twice as good, and he is the captain and he's only 30 years old and he is regarded as, you know, one of the best batsmen in the world. And Joe Root is a Yorkshireman. So the county of my birth. Yes, it's all good.

[00:51:46] **Luke Thompson:** [00:51:46] 'Ee bah gum'

[00:51:48] **Rick Thompson:** [00:51:48] Oh he's going into a Yorkshire accent now.

[00:51:51] **Luke Thompson:** [00:51:51] I can't. That's a total, total cliché. Do people in Yorkshire actually say 'ee bah gum'?

[00:51:55] **Rick Thompson:** [00:51:55] Well, my grandfather, my grandfather Thompson, [00:52:00] who was called Frank, Frank Barley Thompson. He was very Yorkshire, North Yorkshire and he used to go "eee" "oh ee aye" and all that stuff. Yeah, quite a lot. And he had these expressions, like if he was surprised by something he'd say, "Ooh, I'll go to the foot of our stairs."

[00:52:22] **Luke Thompson:** [00:52:22] What?

[00:52:23] **Rick Thompson:** [00:52:23] I know! I'll go to the bottom of our staircase. I mean, it's meaningless, but it's a, it's a Yorkshire expression, like....

[00:52:30] **Luke Thompson:** [00:52:30] Let me say it again. Ooh, I'll go to the foot of our stairs.

[00:52:33] **Rick Thompson:** [00:52:33] That's it!

[00:52:34] **Luke Thompson:** [00:52:34] Meaning, I'll go to the bottom of our staircase, but...

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

19

[00:52:37] **Rick Thompson:** [00:52:37] It just means, well, I'm surprised. Why? Nobody knows. Yorkshire is full of little interesting expressions like that.

[00:52:46] As for the football, the football...

[00:52:49] **Luke Thompson:** [00:52:49] it's all about Lancashire at the moment, isn't it?

[00:52:50] **Rick Thompson:** [00:52:50] Manchester City - looking very good now. Liverpool have blown it because they lost a fantastic central defender, Virgil van [00:53:00] Dyke with a serious injury. And since then they haven't been playing well, and Man United are playing well, but it's wide open.

[00:53:06] It's going to be interesting. Man City are the favorites to win the league but watch out for Leicester City. Watch out for Man United. Oh, yes.

[00:53:15] **Luke Thompson:** [00:53:15] Who do you... I was going to say, who do you fancy? But I mean, you said it's wide open, so who would you like to do well?

[00:53:21] **Rick Thompson:** [00:53:21] Obviously I've always liked Liverpool and I'd like them to suddenly go on a winning run, but it's very unlikely that they can catch Manchester City, who are 10 points ahead with a game in hand. So they are now hot favorites. But...

[00:53:33] **Luke Thompson:** [00:53:33] City.

[00:53:34] **Rick Thompson:** [00:53:34] But there's still a lot of games to go. Manchester City are favourites, but there's a long way to go, and if someone was going to catch them and win the league, I want it to be little Leicester City.

[00:53:44] **Luke Thompson:** [00:53:44] Yeah.

[00:53:45] **Rick Thompson:** [00:53:45] Yeah.

[00:53:46] **Luke Thompson:** [00:53:46] Absolutely. Okay.

[00:53:47] **Rick Thompson:** [00:53:47] So that's a bit of football news for you. We've had the weather, we've had cricket, football and we've had Brexit. Hmm.

[00:53:55] I think that's pretty much it Dad, but have you listened to any episodes of my podcasts lately? And not that, [00:54:00] not that you are expected to do so.

[00:54:01] Well I took some trouble to listen to your, your prizewinner. I'm sorry, I can't remember her name young woman from Syria who your listeners voted for in your kind of competition.

[00:54:14] Her name was Walaa Mouma.

[00:54:15] Well, I thought she was terrific. Really impressive young woman. Of course she speaks English amazingly well, and she's only been here to study for a short time. Amazing that she could learn English so well, but she's so kind of bright and nice and interesting. What an interesting background she's got, and so sensible, and I think she was a very good

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

20

choice for your listeners to say, you know, she's your podcaster of the moment, your, your guests at the moment. So I heard that one. I heard you chatting to your cousin Oli and doing your musical selections. I enjoyed that one. Some very good selections.

[00:54:56] **Luke Thompson:** [00:54:56] Yeah.

[00:54:56] **Rick Thompson:** [00:54:56] I liked Booker T. Booker T & The MGs.

[00:55:00] [00:54:59] **Luke Thompson:** [00:54:59] Thanks. Thanks for introducing me to so much good music over the years. Booker T & The MGs is completely thanks to you. I remember you came home with that CD. UpTight.

[00:55:09] **Rick Thompson:** [00:55:09] Time is Tight.

[00:55:11] **Luke Thompson:** [00:55:11] No Time Is Tight is the track. It's the track on the album, but the album is called... it's actually the soundtrack to a film called UpTight.

[00:55:19] But Time Is Tight is one of the best songs on the album, definitely.

[00:55:24] I think that's why you bought the album because you loved that song so much. But it also had so many other classics on it and you know...

[00:55:31] **Rick Thompson:** [00:55:31] Well, I like instrumentals as well. I mean, you obviously like a few instrumentals and I was very interested that you chose a Madness instrumental because I know how much you love the band Madness and all those great hits they had and how they were so joyful, and you know, they were so much fun and really, really good music and great lyrics, very original. But you chose The Return of the Los Palmas [00:56:00] 7, which is an instrumental. And I think, I think it's absolutely wonderful. Of course, if anyone's not seen the video, they should go to YouTube and watch the video that goes with that because it's a classic video.

[00:56:15] **Luke Thompson:** [00:56:15] I don't know how they managed to clear the clips of Star Wars.

[00:56:18] **Rick Thompson:** [00:56:18] I doubt whether they did.

[00:56:19] **Luke Thompson:** [00:56:19] They just got away with it.

[00:56:21] **Rick Thompson:** [00:56:21] They just hoped nobody would notice all these amazing film clips smashed together very quickly.

[00:56:27] **Luke Thompson:** [00:56:27] Yeah. Yeah. The thing I love in that video is, is when the saxophone solo starts, because they're all sitting around at a dinner table in tuxedos looking very smartly dressed.

[00:56:38] They're having like wine and a nice dinner. And when the saxophone solo starts, if you hear on the record, someone goes "Waiter".

[00:56:44] **Rick Thompson:** [00:56:44] Yes, I know. It's Suggs. You can see him doing it on the video. "Waiter".

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

21

[00:56:50] **Luke Thompson:** [00:56:50] And the waiter arrives, but he leaps onto the table. So, off-camera, he just, he just leaps and, and arrives BAM in the middle of the table.

[00:56:59] **Rick Thompson:** [00:56:59] I thought he drops [00:57:00] down from above!

[00:57:01] I think they've got him hanging above and he just drops onto the table from above, and the nice thing is that this video, they start off as they were as a load of London lads in a cafe just having, you know, egg and chips and everything, and there they are all just in the caff [cafe] and then it takes off and it's a bottle of ketchup or sauce on the table that turns into a rocket. You know, they mix into the shot of the rocket taking off, and then it goes into this incredible mixture of images from the period, and then they have made it, then they're successful. They have made the big time and there they are in their tuxedos, around the big dinner table, sipping wine and everything else.

[00:57:47] And then at the end, it all comes back to them in the caff [cafe] and walking out into the rain.

[00:57:53] **Luke Thompson:** [00:57:53] Yeah, really nice. I just love the way the saxophonist lands on the table to do [00:58:00] his saxophone solo and they all carry on as if he's not there.

[00:58:04] **Rick Thompson:** [00:58:04] Brilliant. It's a terrific video.

[00:58:07] **Luke Thompson:** [00:58:07] Absolutely brilliant, yes. Dad. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much for taking your time to talk to us about this complicated subject.

[00:58:14] **Rick Thompson:** [00:58:14] It's my pleasure.

[00:58:14] And I'm very aware that it's you know, a little bit complicated, but I hope people will keep their eye on what's happening with Brexit, see whether in the end it turned out to be a good idea, or whether it didn't and I can't see how it could possibly be a good idea, but we'll wait and see.

[00:58:32] **Luke Thompson:** [00:58:32] Yeah. Okay. All right then.

[00:58:34] **Rick Thompson:** [00:58:34] All right.

[00:58:35] **Luke Thompson:** [00:58:35] Cheers.

[00:58:35] **Rick Thompson:** [00:58:35] Stay safe and I hope when you're listeners stay safe in these strange times.

[00:58:40] **Luke Thompson:** [00:58:40] Indeed. You too. Oh, you're vaccinated now by the way, aren't you?

[00:58:44] **Rick Thompson:** [00:58:44] I've had number one vaccination, yes. And the second one will be in April.

[00:58:49] Okay. All right. Well, good. Okay, well, speak to you soon.

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

22

[00:58:53] Okay. Bye-bye Lucas. Bye-bye.

[00:59:00] [00:58:59] **Luke Thompson:** [00:58:59] So that was my dad and the never ending saga of Brexit. So listeners. Hello. How are you all doing out there in podcast land? Are you okay? Are you more or less confused than you were before you listened to this conversation? I hope it's the latter and that you're less confused, generally, than you were an hour ago.

[00:59:25] But let us know in the comment section. I tell you what, though. There were some pretty nice words and phrases in that, weren't there? Yes, there were. My dad came out with some pretty solid English there. So if you're hungry for vocabulary and you'd like to investigate further, or you want to do some shadowing maybe, or you just want to see a transcript, let me remind you that there is a full transcript available to download free from the page for this episode on teacherluke.co.uk, no strings attached. [01:00:00] You don't have to give me anything to get it. You don't have to give me your email address or money or your soul or anything. No, it's just free for you to, to download, if you want. The transcript has time codes to help you locate specific words or phrases, if you want.

[01:00:16] There's also the text video version on YouTube as well, of course. Yeah. You're welcome everybody.

[01:00:23] Now if you want to support the podcast, you can send a donation through PayPal. I am working on other ways of letting you donate if you want to using other platforms like WeChat and so on.

[01:00:35] I am working on that, okay. You can also sign up to LEP Premium to access all the premium content, specifically created to help you develop your vocab, grammar and pronunciation.

[01:00:47] Premium subscriptions helped me to pay for the production of these free episodes and also to buy food, and perhaps even more importantly, buy proper tea [01:01:00] and even perhaps property as well, because it helps me pay the rent.

[01:01:04] Do you see what I did there? I made a joke.

[01:01:07] Payment options for the premium subscription are PayPal or a credit card. Now I know that that makes it hard for some of you to sign up. I'm afraid I'm limited by the options I have available to me at this stage. In any case, consider becoming a premium LEPster, if you are able to do it.

[01:01:27] So what else remains to be said here? Not that much, but I'll say a few other things. So episode 703 went down well, didn't it? That's the one with the Walaa from Syria. Like my dad said it was great to listen to her talk about her diligent and dedicated approach to learning English, putting all the rest of us language learners to shame of course!

[01:01:50] How did you feel as you listened to that? I mean, she's obviously very inspiring and it's very impressive, but I wouldn't be surprised if some of you listened to thinking, "Oh my God, do I have to do that? [01:02:00] How do I match that? I can't keep up with that!" You

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

23

know. Maybe that's how you felt, you know, you might've thought, "Oh God, how, how can I match her level of dedication and perseverance?"

[01:02:12] Well, I would say that we all just do what we can, you know, we can only do our best. We all find our own ways of working on our English. The main thing is that you keep enjoying it and that you find some time for it in your busy life.

[01:02:27] The vast majority of comments on that episode and there have been quite a lot from various places like Facebook, YouTube, the website, Twitter, the vast majority of those comments have been really encouraging.

[01:02:42] People seem to really enjoy listening to the episode and that's great. I'm glad that that episode struck a chord with lots of people. Having said that there were some comments from people suggesting it was somehow unfair that Walaa has a Facebook community, and that her [01:03:00] followers helped her to win the competition.

[01:03:03] I understand that, you know, fair enough I suppose, but who knows? Maybe she would have won anyway. Even if she didn't have the Facebook community, she might have won anyway. I'm sure lots of LEPsters who aren't in her Facebook group voted for her. So who knows? We don't know do we, or maybe I should have I thought about this in advance and maybe I should have added a rule in the competition saying something like this, like "people with Facebook groups aren't allowed" or "teachers aren't allowed", or even "you're not allowed to tell anyone that you're in the competition and ask them to support you" and so on. Maybe I should have imposed rules like that, but forgive me for not thinking of absolutely everything.

[01:03:48] And anyway, one of the main purposes of the competition was to find listeners who would be interesting guests, people who could share their own personal insights into learning English, and I think that's what we got [01:04:00] from Walaa. Also I'll be publishing conversations with some of the other competitors, specifically the ones who were in the top five-ish.

[01:04:10] So everything is fine. Okay. Other competitors will be heard. All right. Okay. I probably didn't need to say all of that, but I did. So there it is. In fact, I've already spoken to some of those runners up, from the competition, some of the other people who've got lots of votes, and I think they're all really interesting with more personal stories and insights about learning English and beyond.

[01:04:37] And I'm looking forward to sharing them with you. They will arrive soon and yes, I also have plenty of other episodes planned on different topics as usual with different guests, including some returning friends, some more analysis of British comedy and plenty of other things, okay?

[01:04:56] I try to keep the content of this podcast as varied as I [01:05:00] can, so you can hear different voices in different English accents, with different things being discussed to help expose you to a rich variety of spoken English on a regular basis, which ultimately should only strengthen your English long term.

[01:05:15] All right, that's the general plan.

704. The Rick Thompson Report: Brexit Update (February 2021)

24

[01:05:18] Alrighty then. That's it for this episode. Have a lovely day, morning, afternoon, evening, or night. Stay safe, keep calm, carry on, and I will speak to you soon. But for now, it's just time for me to say goodbye in a moment, but you know what? I'm not going to say goodbye yet, because... So the things I've just been saying there, listeners, I've just been reading out all about a page of notes. Well, I wrote a script of the ending of this episode, wrote it out as a script because sometimes I want to be really sure about what I'm saying. So, [01:06:00] you know, I write a script, but then I kind of think, you know, when I read out a script that's been pre-written, it doesn't sound totally normal and natural. I end up, sort of... You end up performing a script.

[01:06:13] It's pretty weird thing. There is a difference. It's, it's hard to put your finger on what the difference is, but there is a difference between reading from a script. Even if you, even if you able to write in a sort of natural way, there is a difference between reading from a script and just speaking in an unprepared way, in a spontaneous way.

[01:06:32] And I actually prefer the spontaneous side of things. So I thought I would just add this at the end, just to, you know, just to add a little bit of spontaneous speech at the end of the episode. So it's not like a scripted goodbye, because I don't want to sound like a robot. Thank you for listening to my radio program.

[01:06:53] Not radio. Thank you for listening to my internet-based download audio content.

[01:07:00] Goodbye. Bye-bye I don't want it to be like that. So. All right. Fine. Good, good, good, good, good good. Leave your comments in the comment section. It's nice to you know, see what you think and you can chat with other LEPsters and all that stuff.

[01:07:17] All right. This is it then this is the proper goodbye. Now, speak to you soon, everyone. Okay. All right. Cool. Bye then. Oh, I've got to do bye, bye, bye properly, haven't I? Okay. Okay. You can, you can do it with me if you'd like. Okay. Well thanks everyone for listening, but for now it's time to say, goodbye bye bye bye bye bye.

[01:07:35] Thanks for listening to Luke's English podcast. For more information, visit teacher lukes.co.uk.