Interviewer So have you got any questions before we start.

M2 No, not really, I kind of get where you're coming from, I think you're just trying to weigh up the feelings and reception towards the technology.

Interviewer Yeah, exactly. Yeah.

M2 And in some respects, I'm actually grateful for a chance to say, well, hang on a sec.... I really don't like this stuff...

Interviewer Yeah. Well, that's that's great. Yes, because I've heard from people from right across the whole spectrum of feelings towards it. So just to start I'll recap the system. So it works by having a camera in the car and using GPS to detect speed limits on the road. And then the idea is that if you go over the speed limit, it would cut the fuel and then slow the car back down underneath the speed limit. And there would be an override feature. So you could press the accelerator down if you needed to go faster. So that's the general way that they work. So you can just start off by telling me a little bit about what your thoughts are about the system because it sounds like you've got some thoughts.

M2 Yeah. I mean, to be fair, I mean, I.... it's worse than dislike.... I actually feel a physical revulsion to it. It's.... I view them as an unnecessary interference....that actually complicates the ability of a driver. Even if it's adding just a split second distraction while you're trying to go, oh, I need to override now... that is a distraction that you would not....have...with the current system erm.... I think for me, one of the key concerns is.... it becomes literally about speed. And any motorist who's been driving as long as I have knows that speed is not in and of itself the most important thing.....safety is.... so you know, it's....knowing where and when to use the appropriate speed, having the ability.... subconsciously...and I mean, obviously, I don't care who says it... everybody goes over the speed limit occasionally... there are some times er.... some times er.... occasions where you have to do it. And I believe as a legal defense, it is still one of the few allowed...you know, if you say, no, I was in fear for my life or the life of another.... that there is leeway there already in law for it. And by focusing on an almost binary thing where a system measures as you're either speeding or you're not.... it takes out the complexity that... that humans.... we deal with it so automatically. And I think people assume that AIs and technology can do the same thing, and it's not. It's just not as good erm.... It's.... it's an interference where there doesn't need to be one. I think in the same way, it will cause complacency, the same way as seatbelts have to a degree. Motorcycle helmets did. Roll cages do. And I know that there are a lot of studies that show that accidents increase in frequency, because you become more complacent. A more modern example would be the reliance on GPS systems now. How many times have people said...Oh, we got lost because the GPS said.... so rather than looking for where they're going, they've just gone by.....oh, the machine must be right. And I don't believe that's accurate at all.

Interviewer So it sounds like you sort of feel that the responsibility on the driver is more important than allowing the car to take over from these...

M2 Yeah, I mean, that's what it is, isn't it...it is a skill. And I'm aware that there are people of varying skill levels, and I think if it was an optional feature for some people.... I'd be less against that, but I'd still be concerned because of the complacency issues. Again, I've seen it so many times when someone's using a hands-free phone in the car. All right, their hands free, but they're having a conversation rather than focusing on using their skill.... to its maximum potential.

Interviewer Yeah, so almost it takes away from your ability to drive.

M2 It does. I mean, when I'm driving, it is... it's... it feels like it's an amalgamation of me controlling the machine to do... to achieve my goals. That's what I believe tools are there for. What I don't want is my tool saying, Well, actually, I think I can do that better and putting a barrier between..... Because then if you.... abdicate your responsibility to another machine. I think that removes you from the reality of it. I mean, it's all very well saying, well, the machine was saying I was right, but if you've still ploughed into a child, you don't get to say, oh it was the machine. And obviously, I'm not saying that the machines are going to make you..... But there is that...if... the more you take away the focus from the task that a human is completing.... I think you start adding a lot more danger to it. I mean we do to a lesser degree, it's already criminal to.... to not be concentrating at the wheel erm.... and like I said, one of the things about driving is it's... when you're doing it right.... everything flows together. I mean, I presume you drive as well..... and you know, when you're driving well, because you have a feeling where.... you've driven well, you've made your corners right, you've not had to excessively brake or accelerate. And it feels.... a smoother, more natural, more....for lack of a better word, professional feeling.... and I really don't like.... we already erm.... abdicate a lot of our responsibility to technology, and I don't think it's doing us any good as a species.

Interviewer So how do you feel about the sort of general move towards more automated cars in general then....

M2 I find that terrifying, to be honest. That's not to say there aren't bad drivers out there. You know, I've been smashed by a couple of them but.... I prefer trusting a human who also..... because a human driver instinctually has a value for life, whether it's their own or other living.... beings... that will affect.... or it should affect in my opinion the way you drive a lot more... than, oh, have I ticked the x box of being at this speed limit. And again, when... when you're moving fast, say you're using these intelligent speed controls on a motorway where you're moving at quite substantial speeds.... or worse if you're on the Autobahn....you know..,. having that split second where you have to put another step into, I need to do X now to adjust my course. I think is adding a step for the sake of it.

Interviewer Yeah, so that that sort of split second of the override might make all the difference, is what you're saying.

M2 well that's it ...honestly, and it doesn't take long for things to go wrong when you're throwing that much metal around at that speed. It only takes a split second. Erm...and until we can find a way of having computers be able to er...actually understand the concept of how important life is... they really should not be in charge of anything that does that. I mean, you know, even with the likes of planes.... they're obviously heavily... heavily computerised, but you still have a pilot there because.... it's better to have a human there. And again, in some ways, flying a plane is easier because there's less for you to hit, other than the ground you know.... it's.... on busy roads and they're just getting busier and busier.... I think you're adding too many variables in, unless there's some sort of technology out there that I'm not aware of. I don't believe there is a computer system powerful enough to have the same flexibility and understanding as a human.

Interviewer Yeah. And you were saying, speed isn't the only aspect of safety when you're looking at how....

M2 I mean, a prime example is drink driving..... It used to be if you were a drunk driver, there'd be plenty of police and you'd be prosecuted. Now we have a reliance on the speed cameras and the amount of times I've seen people driving at 20 miles an hour all over ??, past all the cameras, and nothing because they're not looking for that. They're not aware of what they're looking for. So again, I just think it's too narrow a focus. And again, taking the responsibility away from the driver or rider is.... I think that's a very dangerous line to go down. I like science fiction films and I like seeing these vehicles, but at the same time, I'm always thinking, yes, but if something goes wrong and neither of you are on the ball, it's too late then.

Interviewer Yeah, so the responsibility still stays with the driver....

M2 well, it has to. Not trying to big up our species or anything... but we're at the top for a reason. And if you know, if we're now trying to create in effect..... they're almost replacing the human element of it, and I think that that is a massive, massive weakness.

Interviewer So obviously you're generally very negative towards the system. Can you see any situations where it would be a useful thing to have if it was a sort of system where you could just turn it on for particular journeys or....

M2 if it was on a closed course, maybe. So there's no way that livestock could get onto the road. There's no way you could have people wandering in erm.... and all the traffic is regulated, maybe. But then I think we'd lose something a bit deeper than just the safety. I think we'd lose part of our selves to that experience. I mean, for me, driving is not just something I do because it's useful to do as a tool, but it is also a form of relaxation, freedom and being quite.... without wanting to sound like a peasant, a bit low class......it's an important step for me to be..... I can leave my region and go to other places. I think, you know, it's quite an important part of human nature. In fact, since the car was.... invented that... that was what it was, it was the spirit of freedom. We have an entire culture built around ..... automobiles and things.... and a computer doesn't appreciate that the same way.

Interviewer Yeah. So it sounds like you get quite a lot of enjoyment from driving....

M2 I do. But I'm aware it's a responsibility and I take it seriously. But that's part and parcel of it. I suppose.... it's like any er.... when you do any complicated task, you take pride in the task you're doing. Erm..... I could...like I say, in very limited ways, I can see how it's useful erm.... again, maybe if there was,... see, I'm hesitant to even to say, well, maybe inexperienced drivers. But again, if someone needs to react quickly, I would still trust a human.....over a computer...

Interviewer So it sounds like you wouldn't trust the override feature to be responsive enough.

M2 It just adds that extra layer. At the moment when I'm driving, I'm working the throttle constantly because you're never just sitting in one place, you know, you always have to be aware of distances, so you're always constantly making these adjustments. I mean, the.... a prime example leaps to mind is if you.... if you go past a slower drive, you're overtaking in a legal manner... and they speed up.... you have to make that decision instantly, or you get stuck very quickly and then having to go, oh well, now I have to do more... another.... press of the accelerator to get me there rather than just the continued.... It adds a level of complexity. And again, I know we're only talking fractions of a second. But that is literally all it takes. And if your brain's having to go, oh hang on a sec, I've got to do this now. It's... maybe you're missing another cue that's... And it's another step that doesn't have to be there.

Interviewer Yeah. So it's sort of taking your attention away from...everything else....

M2 yeah, and again, I've realised.... I'm not expecting it to be sort of half an hour for you to work it out, you know... But it could be enough. And it's.... to me, I don't like complicating the system, when it doesn't need to be any more complicated.

Interviewer So it sounds like if you if you had a car and it had the system and you could turn it off, I'm guessing you would just turn it off and not use it.

M2 I would turn it off or remove it completely. I'm a pretty good mechanic, so I would... I would absolutely hate it. It is literally almost an organic revulsion erm....

Interviewer Yeah, yeah. So I think I know what I know what your answer will be to the next question. But if you were going to buy a car and it had this system in. ...

M2 Yeah, I wouldn't buy it.

Interviewer Would it make you not buy the car or would you just find out how to turn it off?

M2 It would more than likely just go, I'm not buying that... I've got a lot of younger friends.... who are now in the process of buying their first cars and that... And, you know, like when they've said to me, Oh, I can get this one for a few hundred pound, but I've got to have a black box.... like, don't do it. You're adding stuff in there that... even if it's not particularly.... I mean, even if we exclude the mechanical fallibility of the machine, you are then putting erm.... an extra step into the er... companies and the corporations and police agencies and that.... that it'll only take them a brief period to go oh we can... we can er.... either weaponise it... or profit from it more. I think it's.... I think it's a very slippery slope.

Interviewer Yeah, so that sort of mechanical fallibility, as in it's another thing that can go wrong with the car?

M2 And again, yeah, that's another concept, you know. And again, if you get used to a system, say with the GPS example for maps, you begin to rely on it. And again, you know, I know that if something's wrong with your machine, it's your responsibility. So if you're so used to your machine being about right on the speed limit every time and the police start fining you and they say, well your machine wasn't working. Most people aren't as good at mechanics as I am. I see that victimising a lot of people that have put trust in technology that didn't have to be there in the first place and will come out worse from it.... And again, the expense of it.... it will, it will add an expense on....

Interviewer So it almost sounds like it's a stepping stone to something else, is how you would see it....

M2 Yes.... even if that's not how it's designed, it is inevitably the way the corporations work. If they can find a way to monetise it, they will do.

Interviewer Yeah. So it sounds like you would sort of see it could be used for monitoring.

M2 Yeah. Again, that's a very big one. And not only that, but you're then recording other people, so even if they don't, if they've not consented to it and don't want it, if it's going through a camera, they're recording you erm..... And our data privacy in this country is.... is shockingly bad. You know, I would hate to think what unscrupulous people could do with that information. So.....again, there is nothing I think that this machine achieves that wouldn't be better achieved by the more initial training for the drivers or having more police actually on the streets because, you know, I'll give the police their due they tend.... If you're going a few miles over the limit past them, they don't tend to bother because they're aware that there is a bit of flexibility. And you know, if you're not being dangerous, it's not an issue...whereas if you now say, Well, we've created a machine that says it, it becomes a lot easier for the police to just go, Oh, we'll just check your machine. In some ways, I think it encourages too much of a pinpoint focus on speed....reduces your own independence and responsibility. And again, we're not talking about.... when you're driving these things, it is not necessarily a safe environment, and I think any time you're messing with that, you're going to have unforeseen consequences. And I can't see any of them being good and that is the problem. As I say, maybe in time that technology will be there and I will re-evaluate. But I don't think, you know at the moment.....At the moment, I find it.... and I mean I'm still driving carb?? based machines because I don't like fuel injection because it adds another layer of complexity to a system that I'm perfectly adept with and can function on my own. I mean, again, looking at the end user cost, if the responsibility is theirs, how often does this machine have to be serviced? It's an added cost, an added burden. And I don't think there is a benefit there that offsets that.

Interviewer Does your car tell you if you're going over the speed limit or anything like that?

M2 No, I've got a speedo and that's it....

Interviewer What do you think of those kinds of systems that don't slow your car down, but if you went over the speed limit, they would either flash something or they would beep at you....

M2 That's fine....That is an awareness thing. But most people now have been driving on our roads for so long with that many speed cameras, you're aware of your speed and again, that still then takes.... the focus too narrow on speed is the issue. Erm.... I mean, there's a reason it's, what is it, 10 percent plus 2 leniency.... and if you're going that much further over the speed limit, you either know what you're doing, or what we need is a traffic officer to go, you don't know what you're doing. And again, I don't see the machines as being..... reliable enough to even... so you know, even if the machine's saying that.... you've then got a police officer to go out and how does the police officer...I mean, with laser speed guns at the moment, if you take them to court...You can say, oh was it calibrated, was it this, that and the other...., you've removed the human element, which has in turn made it more complicated, because.... It has to be more inherently complicated.....

Interviewer Do you think there are groups of drivers who would quite like driving with the system? Do you think it would suit some people....

M2 possibly older people, as sort of a.... an aide to them, but then again, I'd be looking at saying, well, isn't that getting closer to saying, if you can't drive the vehicle without these reminders, is that something we need to look at erm.... I know that, you know, my friends joked that I'm a bit of a Luddite. And to a degree, I am.... I don't believe in technology for its own sake. I believe in what it can do, but it has to... if it's replacing the human element, it has to do it better. And I don't think we're anywhere near that yet.

Interviewer So what do you think would happen in terms of the safety of the roads if they sort of rolled out this system so it was compulsory in all cars? What do you think that would do safety-wise?

M2 Well... I.... I don't know. I wouldn't want to bet on it.... if there were any improvements in road safety.... I suspect they would be offset.... by other factors. For instance, criminals by their very definition, don't care about the law and if you're now saying, Oh, well you've got to have these.... then why bother then taxing it or insuring it or stopping at the site of an accident.... so it doesn't help in those respects. And again, if er.... you can override it any way, you could intently.... with intent, perform the same accidents erm.... I honestly believe that a better focus would be on driver confidence and training. That, to me, is a better way.... and more of an understanding that in the real world there is no..... the speed limit is just the signposts.... you drive to the way that is safe on the roads, in the conditions that you're in... because that's what it should be about. We should inherently want to keep ourselves and others safe.... and I think anything outside of that.... again, I know at the moment they're doing the black box thing for younger drivers, so maybe if it was introduced as that and if you drive, you know, you drive safely for so many years.... possibly. But I would hate to put the burden on a younger generation when it's not me that would be suffering from it. So I kind of have to take a blanket position and say, Well, no, you've got to drive a car competently..... but the downside is, if you don't, you have to deal with the consequences.

Interviewer Yeah. So it sounds like you sort of see this as almost deskilling drivers.

M2 Yeah.... again, like I said, as car safety is increased through.... like I say, roll cages erm.... and seatbelt, basic things that we take for granted. There is a spike in accidents because the safer people feel, the more risks they tend to take. I believe that's part of human nature. So the more you wrap someone in cotton wool..... I think that's offset. I think all of the safety features that we would like to see..... like not having children hit crossing the roads could be better done.... by maybe putting more crossings in erm.... you know, making sure that the children aren't left unattended to cross the roads. Er.... these are human features that are much more reliable.....because at the end of the day, this speed restriction system, if you're not having the machine enforce it....but you're adding an extra step.... I'm not sure what gain there is.... I can see plenty of drawbacks, but very little... and I genuinely struggled with the survey trying to think of something good to say about it. I wasn't being facetious. It's like I'm trying to work it out in my head.... what are the benefits.... I'm not inhuman, I don't want to see people hurt on the roads. You know, I'm not callous. But even with this system, people will still step out in front of cars...it will still happen unfortunately....

Interviewer It sounds like you don't see the system as being effective in making driving safer. If anything, it would make it worse.

M2 Yeah, to a degree...again I can see maybe there'd be certain individuals that might benefit from it.

Interviewer Do you think there's any advantages around sort of avoiding getting speeding tickets and things like that?

M2 Yeah, the speeding ticket thing... but to be fair....you know, again, I ride in a real world sense, so the limits are there....but I'm also aware of dangerous areas, which is where these cameras tend to be. And I'm more than happy to slow down, if I see a slow in the road, that's enough to go, oh hang on.... they've told me there's something coming up, I'll be more aware. And you know, I prefer to spend my focus looking at potential threats or potential victims around me, than go, oh well, I better just slow down this half a mile there.... I'd even be prepared to go to court and argue, Look, you know, if they caught me speeding, but I'd swerved to avoid a child.... I would say, look there was a reason I did that. I had to get out of the way before the child could get hurt. That, to me, is something that I would stand on on a principle basis...

Interviewer Yeah, yeah, it's the personal responsibility around driving.

M2 It is. And if you're going to put people in the position of saying you are the owner of this vehicle, you are responsible for it, then they should be responsible for it..... maybe with disabled drivers that need a bit of help, maybe it could be useful for that but I don't know enough about the system and its integration.

Interviewer Is there anything in the future that you think sort of with systems evolving or anything or technology getting better...is there anything that would make you more likely to use this or incentives that would make you more likely to use it in the future?

M2 I am very anti.... like I said... to be fair, to get me to accept a system like this, you're talking about, well, I want to pay no road tax.... free fuel.... it would have to be.... If you're taking all my input away from me, my..... then, you might as well just say, Well, here you go.....it's free travel..... because it's not just about getting from A to B. It never has been for me. It gives......it allows an individual freedom to travel, which is a right that I take very seriously. The same with all the basic sort of human rights that's.... I think it's integral, and I fear there is a danger where we rely too much on technology too quickly and then that detracts from our humanity. And I think this is just another one. And again, like I say, it's not that I don't want to save lives. I've lost plenty of friends in road accidents. I've been hurt myself quite seriously when I was hit by another car going the wrong way. But again, I struggle to think.... it doesn't tend to be speed that's the problem. It's usually people doing the wrong thing. I was hit by a car travelling the wrong way in my lane who hit me head on. That wasn't a speed thing, that was...he just should not have been there. And again, when children step out into the road...horrible as it is.....why was that child in the road there? I know accidents happen, they wander away from parents..... but I look at it as.... we have to deal with the reality of life and the reality of life is... we are better at assessing risks than a computer is.

Interviewer ....and it's only looking at one specific aspect of driving......

M2 it is...and, like I say, speeding is not... not the big deal for me erm..... And again, yeah, OK, people might say, Well, I might not get speeding tickets like, well, hang on a sec.... you're saying you want a machine, then, so that you can't get.... just don't speed in areas that you're unaware of.... which surely is the point.... they put the cameras up in areas where they don't want you to speed. If you can't look out for a giant Day-Glo box or a police car at the side of the road, you probably shouldn't be behind the wheel in the first place (laughs)....

Interviewer Yeah. So again, that's not paying the attention to the road.....

M2 yeah.....and then you get to complain and say, Well, I got a fine....well, were you going too fast by a camera? Yeah,...pffft...sorry.... like whose fault was that then? Again, I understand that.... speeding tickets are controversial erm.... you know, I'm not a big believer in them myself. I'd rather see a policeman pull someone over and say, oy...what are you playing at? But...to some degree, if you drive.....like somebody that has the experience and the competence..... I have zero points on my license... I've never had a point on my license... because I just... I am aware that I drive... to my.... within my abilities and how I'm feeling...... if I'm not feeling well, that can change whether I go, oh... I'll find other ways to get round. And I think that is.... it should be more focused on.... on the training side of individual drivers....

Interviewer Yes, so it's all about being a competent driver yourself.

M2 Yeah....and again, if we've said that, we're going to put this override feature in....and you've then added that complexity step.... people are still going to go faster. Alright, they might face risks, but again, you know, that's....

Interviewer And you can turn it off if you want to, so anybody who doesn't want to use it can just turn it off...

M2 Yeah....and I guarantee when it's released, it'll be five minutes before someone comes out with a little clip on bit.... that will make it display a normal.... within the speed limit, no matter what you're doing.....

Interviewer So you could imagine a system where it was in a car and it was forced to be on and you couldn't turn it off. But what from what you're saying, people would even get around that....

M2 Oh yeah..... it doesn't take long for people to circumvent the technological restrictions and safety..... erm.... I mean, a prime example was they wanted to put automatic brakes on motorcycles, you know, that would automatically come on if they detected trouble in the road. Well, that sounds great in theory until you realise that if someone is doing 70 miles an hour and it's brakes lock up on a corner, you're actually creating an accident, not preventing anything.....you know, because the driver is not expecting that behaviour. You know, again, maybe in the future, slowly by increments, technology will take over and people will find that more natural. But I do think that there are better, more practical ways of achieving the same goal.... without putting the burden on.... certainly as well, let's... let's face it, the burden always falls on the poorest first.... because the costs will go up, for the manufacturing, the installation... and then the insurance will, Well, we need to charge you a monitoring fee for it.... These, you know, they don't look at it for the individual. I always look at things from the point of view of an individual.... The same thing at the moment with, you know, they're putting the green levies on fuel, saying, oh we're trying to save the planet.... buy an electric car, if you want, well it's like, if you can't afford to drive an electric car, you're just going to pay more in petrol because you've got no choice. I don't think.... in reality, you know, on the ground, as it were, it works not for the populace as a whole. Like I said... maybe you could offer it as an optional incentive to people, maybe with an insurance reduction or something....but I think they'd also have to be very clear.... but no, I do think that... we're too quick to forget we are biological entities and we don't have that integration with technology. Maybe at one point where.... I know that people like Elon Musk are dealing with integration now, so a seamless integration to..... Maybe that would help the system because then if it's happening within your head, there's no distraction....maybe that would work....but again, this is science fiction at the moment, more than reality.... in reality, with what we have now, I don't think it's a good idea....

Interviewer You would have to have a lot more confidence that it worked and was responsive before you would even think about using something like that.

M2 maybe....maybe someone could give me a test ride in it and I could evaluate it.... but my my instinctual feeling is, Oh, I think this is a step too far, too fast, and I can see more problems coming from it than gains....

Interviewer Yeah, yeah. Well, that's that's great. You've given me some really good points there. Was there anything else that you wanted to say about the system or have we covered everything do you think?

M2 Yeah..... make it optional. The moment it is compulsory it is.... that's a whole can of worms, because again, that interferes....

Interviewer is that is that optional in the car or optional to turn on or off....

M2 Optional for people to have.....cos I guarantee you, when we get to a tipping point, let's say it's implemented tomorrow... within five years, they say, Oh, half the cars have got it.... now it's compulsory.... it will ha-....again, you'll notice that the impact will fall more on the low-... the poorer people...that are just trying to get about and live their lives and..... It's... it's too much like authoritarianism. I mean, it's like at the moment the government talking about phasing out petrol and I'm thinking, Jesus Christ, that's within my lifetime. I have no way of upgrading in the foreseeable future. And.... that's I mean, I'm at the moment.... I think I'm paying nearly £2 a litre for unleaded...... and I'm not buying the Ukraine thing as the excuse for it because it was going up before Ukraine....

Interviewer that was interesting what you just said about if you had it in the car, but you had the option of turning it off, that could still in the future lead to it being made compulsory, sort of by stealth....

M2 yeah....because you are in effect..... it would take no effort at all for a politician to say, Well, you consented because you've got it in your car..... so now we'll insist that it's on all the time and then they're tracking your movements and then it's....it's well, there's going to be zero tolerance.... and you're just putting more and more restrictions, more complications into a system that by and large..... considering how many cars are on the road at any one point.... by and large works.... Erm....Yes, obviously, I'd say.... if we could reduce deaths without adding the risks involved.... all for it. I just don't have faith..... that it would remain a helpful tool... it won't be long at all before that's.... used more aggressively. So I hope I didn't come across as too much of as a conspiracy theorist but....

Interviewer No, no. It's I mean, I've talked to some people who are very into the technology side, but you know, people who drive Teslas and they're practically on autopilot. And then I've spoken to people who don't like the system at all. So it's that it's that sort of breadth of different people's perspectives that we want to hear. So it's really helpful.

M2 Is there anything else you need to ask? Have I covered everything....

Interviewer No, no, that's everything. Thank you.