

# Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2017 – Alex Salmond Unleashed

Not many of the other performers at the Fringe have the career backdrop of having been the leader of a country of around 5 million people, but Alex Salmond has lightly thrown that well-worn cloak over his shoulder. Now he is going to have his own chat show...



He says he is ready for his run of sell-out performances at Assembly Rooms on George Street, and this morning he was poised to take on the press.

Mostly he was ready to give them a hard time it should be said, rather than just answering their questions.

In particular he wants all the Scottish media to take a long hard look at themselves in the cold light of day following the decision by the Crown Office last week that there will be no criminal proceedings at this time against former Edinburgh West MP, Michelle Thomson. The Crown Office said that this followed “an absence of sufficient credible and reliable evidence”.



Ms Thomson, who was only one of the five people reported to the procurator fiscal in relation to matters involving alleged mortgage fraud, has taken the statement to mean complete exoneration.

It appears that Mr Salmond believes the same, as he told the press that she will be coming to his show during the run, although he did not confirm that this would be as a guest. He did not confirm any of the guests who will appear on the George Street stage with him (except one little reveal which

we have for you below!).

He has some advice for Michelle Thomson who lost the SNP whip during the last parliamentary term when it became clear that the police were investigating allegations of fraud against her, her former solicitor and her partners in a property business.

Salmond said : "My advice to her is to come back into politics. I think there will be a lot of support for her. I think a lot of people will be regretful. I let fly at the press today because the prime responsibility as to what happened to Michelle will be in the Scottish press corps.

"I know they don't realise that, and they are trying to deflect that onto the SNP and the SNP leadership, but it's guilt, well one hopes it's guilt, because there are newspapers in this country who should be hanging their heads in shame. Just about all of them to be quite frank!

"They have destroyed the political career of a highly promising young female politician for no apparent reason, apart from just general badness and their lack of journalistic standards.

"They had her carted off, signed, sealed and convicted, and of course as we now know she was innocent of any wrongdoing whatsoever. I hope they go to bed at night and ask for the Lord's forgiveness because that is what they should do.

"And I'm afraid that is what they should do. That is what I feel about them.

"This attempt over the last few days by papers like The Mail and the rest trying to whip this up into a row between Michelle and Nicola Sturgeon, it's just pathetic actually.

"It's people who hopefully are guilty about their own role in

bringing down Michelle so they want to blame somebody else.

“I happen to think – and I did when I voted last year to have Michelle readmitted into the party that the SNP were faced with a very difficult situation and handled it badly, but the difficult situation was created by the Scottish press corps and by newspapers of Scotland who should be thoroughly ashamed of themselves.”

[The Edinburgh Reporter meets Alex Salmond](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

### ***EDINBURGH FESTIVAL FRINGE – ALEX SALMOND UNLEASHED***

The Edinburgh Reporter asked first why there was no saltire on the set which is made up of three groupings of two seats each : two armchairs, two low seats and two high seats.

Salmond said : “Not yet, we are sending out for the saltires.”

Asked if these would be brought in in a handbag he quickly parried that the handbag in question had always belonged to his wife, Moira, and was not his. (Salmond controversially brandished a saltire in the Royal Box at Wimbledon after Andy Murray won there).

He then went on to admit to The Edinburgh Reporter that the story was very relevant to one of the guests, so are we to expect Sir Andy Murray to be one of the guests? Or will Judy Murray appear instead?

The promise is that the guests will be friends from politics and from sport, so that could very well be an exclusive reveal...!

But it has to be said Salmond was not giving much away, but was clearly enjoying being back in the spotlight.

Asked whether the kind of friend he might invited along could

be determined by where they get to sit on the stage he quietly said : "No the issue basically is we will do a trial run to see if I can get myself onto one of these high stools, because it's a bit debatable just now! We'll see how it goes."

Asked who his comedy heroes are Salmond replied : "I suppose I have never really liked pure stand up comedy. And I am not doing pure stand up comedy here. Politicians who do stand up comedy fall down.

"I like folk like Rikki Fulton, Stanley Baxter and Chic Murray. When I told a Guardian journalist about Chic Murray the other day they said 'Who?'. Chic Murray would have loved that!"

Alex Salmond Unleashed at Assembly Rooms Edinburgh from 13-27 August 2017

Tickets are on sale now: 0131 623 3030

<https://www.assemblyfestival.com/whats-on/alex-salmond-unleashed/book-now>