Individual Interview 8 – Angela

(Full time: 1:15:21)

Int: How are you doing?

Angela: Good thanks and you?

Int: I’m great. So, just some ethics quickly. You’ve read the consent form, you’ve understood the consent form?

Angela: Yes, sorry.

Int: \*Laughs. It’s okay.

Angela: I’m nodding ‘yes’.

Int: So, just an overview of what we are talking about today. Mostly belonging, but more the emotional side of belonging, and then we’re looking at safety, and then we’re looking at being a South African woman. At the end we’re going to tie it all together and then ya, that’s about it. So, if you’ve got any questions, concerns, deep-seated worries, you can ask them now and we can get into them, otherwise we can get right into it.

Angela: We can get right into it.

Int: Perfect. So, we’re just going to do a bit of background information just to get into the rhythm. So, who are you, what are you doing, where are you living, have you moved around a lot, have you not moved around a lot, have you lived overseas for a bit, have you gone overseas for a bit, so ya.

Angela: Alright, I am – name and surname or just name?

Int: No, you can just give your name.

Angela: Okay. I’m \*Angela. I am currently a community service audiologist working in Germiston, living in Faire Glenn Pretoria. I have only lived in Pretoria my entire life, so all my influences and everything are related to my immediate environment, and ya. Anything else?

Int: Have you gone overseas?

Angela: No.

Int: No, not once, you’ve only ever travelled within South Africa?

Angela: I have only travelled within Africa.

Int: Within Africa. Where’d you go?

Angela: Swaziland, I have family there. Namibia, I have family there. Angola, we were visiting.

Int: How was Angola?

Angela: It was nice, but-

Int: Not great?

Angela: I was a child, so I can’t really remember much.

Int: And the best place? Namibia, Swaziland?

Angela: Obviously, I’m going to say Swaziland, I’m a but biased, it’s my home.

Int: Oh you from Swaziland?

Angela: Yeah, my mom is from Swaziland and I was born in South Africa, but my mom is Swazi so we always travel that side.

Int: Oh no way, you’re a ‘Swazi-girl’?

Angela: Yeah , I’m a ‘Swazi-girl’.

Int: That’s super cool. I’ve always wanted to go to Swaziland, it’s a lot of – isn’t it Eswatini or is that Lesotho?

Angela: Yeah, no, it is. Kingdom of Eswatini.

Int: Oh, it just changed now I think it changed-

Angela: It changed a couple of years ago. It’s the same king, but he said it’s time to stop calling it what the colonisers named it. So, that’s why it went back to it’s original name, of the ‘Kingdom of Eswatini’.

Int: I mean, I think they wanted to do that with the Congo. They were like, “Ya, we want to take back our country, we don’t want to be referred to by the colonialist name.”   
And everyone was like, “Okay cool, what are we going to call the Congo?”   
And everyone’s like, “Ah… we don’t know.”

Angela: Because apparently, I had a friend – I don’t know if you remember her, she was in Pro Arté as well, her name was Denane?

Int: Mmm, sounds familiar. The name.

Angela: Ya, but she was from the DRC and she said there are two hundred languages and two hundred tribes there so-

Int: It’s so diverse.

Angela: So, it is very hard to just pick one, two – like there is literally two hundred different types of tribes to choose from. I think it is twenty types of languages to choose from, sorry. So, I’m just like, ‘that’s a lot, it’s crazy’.

Int: And then you have to get all of those people to agree on one thing.

Angela: That’s not going to happen.

Int: I mean, we don’t even do it here in South Africa.

Angela: Nah, it’s not going to happen.

Int: I mean I loved it if they were like, ‘we don’t want to be called what the colonisers called South Africa’, because they’d be like, ‘okay great, what were we called before that?’, because technically it was the Khoi San.

Angela: No.

Int: And then there’s the Zulu Kingdom.

Angela: Remember all the tribes that are here now, were there before, so all eleven were there – actually twelve. All twelve were there, it’s just that when they came the first people they came across was the Khoi San, because-

Int: The coast.

Angela: Yes, but all the other tribes were also there. They were fighting each other.

Int: Ya, there was Shaka Zulu, I remember that one.

Angela: Ya, they were all fighting each other.

Int: Happier conversations. So, we’re going to get into it for a moment. We’re going to start with belonging. There are two sides to belonging, there is this emotional side to belonging, so this feeling of belonging, and then this political side of belonging, so I belong here because I was born here, or I’m a citizen – stuff like that. Basically, your rights to a belonging. So, I just want to ask you, how would you describe having a feeling of belonging, having a sense of belonging?

Angela: I’d describe belonging as being able to be part of a community. It doesn’t matter if the community doesn’t look the same like you, speaks the same like you, but where you guys have shared values, have shared beliefs. Or even just mutual respect. That’s like belonging. So, for example in South Africa, we are so many different races, so many different cultural groups, but we all have this thing that ties us together and that’s literally just the fact that we are all loving – okay, I would to believe in love being South African. But we have this shared sense of Ubuntu, we want to help each other, we want to welcome each other and embrace each other. So, that is belonging.

Int: I did research last year, basically on what is it to be South African. And we’ll get into that in a moment, but what really stood out for me was how everyone was like, ‘South Africans are very welcoming, friendly people’, like the one quote that I really loved, it was a Canadian person, they were saying, “Canadians are described as the friendliest nation in the world and that’s true, but South Africans are the most welcoming.”  
So, a Canadian will say, “Hey, how are you.” Or meet you for the first time like, ‘hey how are you’, a South African would be like, “Hey, how are you, would you like to come to my house for a braai?” or, “Lets go and do something together.”   
So, do you think South Africans have a really big sense of community?

Angela: Yeah, it is. I feel like it is deeply engrained in a lot of the cultures that we have. And also like, I saw a few years a go there was a study that they did, and they said ‘the country with the happiest people is South Africa’. And I thought that was surprising, because we always hear the negative sides of, ‘the country with the highest’, you know, GBV, rape stats, like crime against woman. And then it’s actually, we have so many good things about us – a people that are always willing to accommodate others. We’re always willing to laugh, though anything, the best thing about South Africans is that we can make a joke out of everything.

Int: I agree with you one thousand percent.

Angela: And that carries over no matter where we go, we’re always going to be the joke of the room, because we are the ones trying to make people happy around us despite the pain that we have been though as a people. So, I like that about us.

Int: I agree. I think that is so well said, that South Africans no matter how really bad it gets, we will always make a joke.

Angela: We make a joke about everything.

Int: We laugh about it in the end. Like it is terrible. And I think its maybe because we have such a terrible history, so we can either be really sad people, really angry people, or we could really just try to laugh and get through this together.

Angela: I think that’s our coping mechanism. Instead of actually speaking about everything and dealing with it, we just laugh it through, and everyone gets along and move along, and I like that because we can’t always be broken. I feel like even with healing it is important, and it is a process, but you can’t always stay in a constant state of healing, because you’re holding onto that pain. there has to come to a – like a time has to come where you let go, not in a sense of forgetting, but accept what has happen, and are willing to step forward. So that’s what we do through joking around.

Int: So, this notion of acceptance, like we have had a terrible history and people say that South Africans have a culture of violence. I mean, if we have a look at how South Africans strike, it is almost always, a very violent strike.

Angela: Yeah that’s true, but I also disagree with that because a lot of the times – I feel like because we have had so much demonstrations and stuff that has happened in our country, it does feel like we have a culture of like being and angry, but it is because of a lot of the times people had to fight for the things that they genuinely need, like if we look at the current socio-economic situation of our country, the youth unemployment rate is absolutely ridiculous.

Int: I think it is at fifty percent now.

Angela: And we have a lot of educated youth that are unemployed and this is going across different sectors. It is going into health care, he have doctors who are unemployed. It’s going into education, we have teachers who are sitting at home. So, there are people who worked hard for opportunities that didn’t come easy, now when they finally get there they don’t even have anything anymore to do. So, they are upset. And then we have other people who have been working more labour paying jobs their whole lives and they’re just being retrenched out of nowhere, no warning, they are not being upskilled – that’s a problem we’re having. People are being hired, they are not being trained in their jobs, they’re not being upskilled, so they are getting stuck there. Their careers don’t develop, and they are getting bare minimum. They are literally getting paid peanuts. And when they try to ask for better, then they are the problem.  
So, a lot of the times, I don’t think it’s the right thing to do, but it feel like this is the only way people will listen.

Int: I agree with you. That’s one of the things, because we have such a history of demonstration – I mean, someone once made a joke that we’re the protest capital of the world. And it’s because we had a system of pure racist – ah, systemic racism, that it structured the country so much, that the only way that was going to change was through demonstration, because no one was listening. Why would a racist-

Angela: It took a very long time.

Int: Why would a racist government listen to the majority of black and coloured people saying that you are the problem, until it became violent, because that’s when you have to listen. And think that’s what has carried over now, they don’t listen to peaceful protest, but as soon as it burning trucks or burning buses or we’re burning something or burning people. I mean, the xenophobic attacks, that’s when the government listened.

Angela: And it’s frustrating that things have to go that far for things to actually change, because I feel like, especially as a country we are at a place where there are people who should be able to fight for certain things for us without us having to get onto the streets. Like for example, when it comes to small things, even like girls’ hair being at school – you know, the whole Girls High incident. It didn’t have to get to a point where little girls had to go onto the street and protest against the whole school for that to be actually addressed properly, but that’s still what’s happening. We’re only taken seriously when a lot of people are together and actually having to demonstrate. So until that – when things are actually dealt with before it gets to that point, people are going to continue finding that as the easiest way to actually get change to happen.

Int: I mean, I don’t know if you were at Tuks when Uynene’s story broke?

Angela: Yeah.

Int: I was at Tuks that day.

Angela: I was also.

Int: I was in a lecture, and I remember I just turned to my friend, and it was wild you could feel the entire atmosphere change. So, I don’t know what it was like for you if you wan to talk about that experience?

Angela: It was terrible, because I remember the first time that I saw the post on Instagram – I think a lot of us came across it on social media first. And it was some girl sharing, “Hi guys my friend is missing. If anyone has seen or heard from her, please contact us.” And stuff, and this post was coming from Cape town now, but everyone could see it on Instagram. And at first I was like, ‘I also feel bad about it, but shame I hope she’s okay’. But then I thought she went home or maybe she’s out with other friends and she forgot to tell them. Maybe her phone got stolen, I thought, and then she couldn’t contact anyone. And then a week went by, and this was everywhere, everyone was sharing it. And I was also like sharing it now thinking, “Oh my gosh I hope this girl is not.” And then it was on the news, and then like, it was everywhere, and no one could find this girl. And then – what was it, like a week or two later?

Int: It was like three or four days later, just short of a week, and then we were all at campus and it just-

Angela: And then it came out that her body was found. And the last place that she went was the Post Office. And I was like, “The Post Office? What?”  
I’m like – I was thinking that something happened to the Post Office or from the Post Office, like it was so scary that this girl was so young.

Int: Yes, she was our age, I think. Or a year younger.

Angela: She was a child. I’m sorry, below 21 I feel like you’re a child because you’re still need some level of supervision, even if you’re living on campus, there are people there making sure that you’re not killing yourself, making sure that you’re eating every day; there are people there making sure that you actually are like learning – we can’t even learn by ourselves, because we need supervision.

Int: You are still a child.

Angela: You are still considered a child, and now this child is missing in another province, no family is around, like I was just – I couldn’t imagine. Even speaking about it, I’m getting chills. Because I’m like, first of all imagine what the friends were feeling. You’re friend just went on a normal errand and she never came back. Her family have been trying to contact her for days on end and they can’t get a hold of her, and now people were putting it everywhere on social media. Like teenagers were getting the word out there. Where were the police? Where was the statements? You know. How did the securities not notice she didn’t come back? Isn’t there some sort of register at the Residents so they could notice, ‘oh no’. Where was the matron to say, “This girl didn’t come back.”

Int: She just went to the Post Office, why has it been the whole day? It’s not like she went out with friends and then, ‘oh probably, she’s sleeping out at a friend’s place’.

Angela: Ya. Even if you are living at a Res, you have to tell, like, “I’m going away.” You have to report it to someone. Why was it children getting the word out there that she was missing? It just felt like, I don’t know, it just felt like children had to be adults in that situation, and the same with her. She was a child, and even in the way she died, no child should ever have to go through anything like that. And when all the details of how it happened came out, I literally felt sick to my stomach.

Int: Really, same. I couldn’t believe it. When everything came out what really got me was the fact that her rapist and murder helped on the search party, because there were search parties.

Angela: But it’s always like that. But it even goes back to, why was he even working there?

Int: Someone that… I want to say wild or has that little respect for human life, how did you get a job interacting with people daily. Like how were you not picked up before hand?

Angela: It just shows how the vetting system is just like absolutely-

Int: What vetting system.

Angela: Because even if you are applying for a government post, it’s then ‘do you have a criminal record, yes or no? If so, for what?’. People can just say ‘no’, and if you’re going to take that and go with it.

Int: Yeah, at face value.

Angela: What then? Also, it just shows that the policing system… I don’t feel like systems are put in place to make sure that offenders are firstly being tracked, being monitored like to make sure – I think this is overseas more, but there are certain states in America where if someone is a paedophile there is literally a list.

Int: There is, the sex offenders register.

Angela: The sex offenders list. And anyone can access that at anytime.

Int: It’s public knowledge.

Angela: It’s public knowledge, so it feels like, okay, even know it’s not something they are looking at every single day, it feels like if there is a sex offender that moves in, the police can learn about their history they can – in South Africa they have twenty percent of police officers that have a criminal record. That alone just shows that we have officers that are criminals. So, obviously they don’t take crime seriously. So, it’s just like there aren’t systems put into place to make sure that we are safe. There aren’t systems that are put into place that make sure that crimes are taken seriously, that repeat offenders are not out here terrorising children and woman. It just seems like it’s, ‘ah okay, you’re out, moving on’.

Int: I do agree with that. I think there is this sense of ‘let’s just move on, let’s just move on’. It’s hasn’t been dealt with.

Angela: Ya.

Int: So, there is a lot to unpack here and I want to start off with, have you ever interacted with the South African Police Force? So, have you ever been a victim of crime and you had to interact with the South African Police Force?

Angela: I have, but I don’t think it was a serious crime. I had an accident so, something very light. Um… it was okay, I just – it was okay. I just felt like the officer wasn’t really listening to me, because you know when you’re explaining ‘this is what happened’, and he was just like – there were three cars involved, I was the car in the middle, and I was telling him there was a car behind me that bumped me. And he was like, “Well, the never came in so you could’ve made that car up.”  
And I’m like, “Why would I make a car up? If you bump me-

Int: ‘How did I dent my car from the back, do you think I ran into myself?’.

Angela: Yeah, he’s like, “No, I hear you, but if there is no third car coming in to report it then how do I know there really was a third car.”  
And I’m like, “Okay, did the first lady say?”  
“Ya, she did say, but it’s not in her affidavit.”  
And I’m like, “Well, I don’t care what is in her affidavit, because the car bumped me from the back and that’s what made me bump her so?”  
It’s small things like that which make it feel like – imagine now if I had been through a very serious thing, how would that have been dealt with? But at the same time, I do feel like I am being hard because I have been with another officer – a laptop was stolen from work, so I had to go report that. And the officer was very sweet, he was very helpful. He did things a bit slow, but he helped and that was the-

Int: At least he was thorough, and he helped.

Angela: That was a lot different than the first experience. So, I also do think it’s the person that being put there. But it makes me wonder how the training is to become an officer. Because if I think about it, lawyers go to law school for like four years, and then they have to go through a whole bar-exam to qualify, and even before that some go through the process of doing exams to qualify and others do their articles to qualify. Like there are a lot of processes that go into place before someone is a qualified practitioner in law.

Int: Yeah. Even being a doctor or being a teacher.

Angela: Exactly. And we don’t even – I’m an audiologist, and there are so many fields in Audiology right, but I’m not an expert in every field, like that’s not how it is. And that’s like five years, it’s four years undergrad and then it’s one year community service where you help – throughout all of these there are practices where you go to different clinics, different hospitals, different setting. Like you are everywhere and you still don’t feel one hundred percent proficient in some things; like someone could be an expert in balance, because that’s their field of expertise, but then someone will be an expert when it comes to hearing aids when it comes to those things, or someone will be an expert when it comes to utilities management, but can you see, everyone has their own field where they specialise in. Now imagine if the police also had that. Even if we’re just saying five years of training, no one is ever a hundred percent proficient in whatever they do. You could be very great at doing it, you can have great experience doing it, and you can – even some doctors, it doesn’t mean if you have been learning for seven years, some people are just not like empaths, they don’t know how to empathise with their patients and that’s something that can’t be taught, but it can be something that can be learnt to be improved on; where I am not the most empathetic person, but I am willing to be more patient centred, so I’ll ask more questions, and I’ll try to understand you a bit better but actually letting you be an equal partner in this session. Now imagine if police officers were treating people like that.

Int: If they had empathy training, I think a lot would be different. I think learning about how to deal with different victims of crime, not just people-

Angela: Yeah, it feels like a job.

Int: And that’s my thing, it is a job to an extent, but your job is to look after people. And I don’t think that police officers understand that their job technically involves the care industry. They are involved in the care industry.

Angela: Ya, because they are public servants. You are serving the public, so there has to be a level of understanding, a level of compassion, especially because it’s not like you go to the police station for fun things.

Int: No.

Angela: If you’re going to the police station it’s because something got really messed up and you need help, because you even hear stories – I heard a story from a friend of mine, where she was like. She was with a group of friends, at one of the friend’s places and they basically had like a robbery. And right before it was happening, someone was trying to break-in, they called the police. Like, “Hey, we’re at this place and someone is trying to break-in, please come.”  
And thankfully it was a large group. I think there was like three girls and three guys as well.

Int: So, six people.

Angela: Six people, so it was a big group. But still, if someone is coming with a gun it doesn’t matter how many people you are – you don’t feel safe enough to do anything.

Int: No, it’s a gun.

Angela: They were calling the police, the police were like, “Okay, alright.”  
They came like two hours later, because they wanted to make sure it is safe enough for them to come. And it’s like, if it’s not safe enough for you, how do you think it’s safe enough for me in this situation.

Int: And you’re the people with guns.

Angela: You’re the one trained to use guns.

Int: Exactly.

Angela: You’re the one trained to protect people. And it’s like – I don’t know, I don’t know. It just feels like there are a lot of things that need to be improved on. And I think it would help if we had, firstly more police stations, because then there would be more access to police officers. More police officers who are hired and trained. And also, I feel like there should be yearly reviews on performance.

Int: And upskill? You spoke about this earlier.

Angela: Yeah.

Int: Like that seems to be a problem in South Africa, that we’re not upskilling.

Angela: People get a job, and you stay there. And sometimes I’ve seen why, because I’m working in a government setting now, a lot of people feel like ‘what’s the point of studying, it’s not like I’m going to get anything from it’. Literally, they say, “Oh congrats.” And maybe you get like an extra thousand rand, but that’s not going to help that much. And because you spend a lot of money, for example with your studies at university, it is so expensive. You have to pay for that yourself, and now a lot of people that are working also have families to take care of. Even before having your own kids and your own household, a lot of families from black communities have something called ‘Black Tax’, where you have other people who you have to kind of like – you have to hand down clothes, it doesn’t matter if you only have two shoes one of them has to go to someone else because they literally have nothing. They have to walk every day barefoot. And you can’t have your family out there like that. There’s others where because of different circumstances, maybe their parents have died, but they still have to go through school. And now as a working person, you’re the person who can help them through that. Or there elderly people now who are helping to raise other peoples’ children, who have passed on, who have decided to abandon their children, you have to contribute. As a family, you can’t let your family struggle so, it’s like there are so many responsibilities that you have to face now, and the last thing on your mind is, ‘mm, maybe I should just use this money to just focus on developing myself and my career’, because a lot of people don’t have access to opportunities like that where you are told it is possible to do better, or it’s possible to want more for yourself. All lot of people are told, “Just work or just study, get a job, and then you’re fine for life. You’re set for life.” And that’s the mentality that they carry into these different careers, where someone will become maybe a nurse and they feel like that’s the best that they can do – ‘I can’t be a nurse that is specialising in maybe surgeries’, or, ‘I can’t be a nurse that is specialising in helping in the maternity ward, where there are certain things that are done overseas that I can bring this side’. People are just told as long as you get a job and keep it, that’s the best thing you can do, because there are so many people who are unemployed you don’t want to end up like that.

Int: Or you’ll lose your job.

Angela: Or they are told, ‘they won’t be able to afford you once you are educated’, because a lot of people have that misconception of, ‘why get an Honours, why get a Masters, why get a PhD, because they’re not going to pay you more; the person won’t want to hire you because you’re more educated than them’. And if you think about it, I’d rather have an educated person, more than me in my field, work for me, because they are going to do better, and they will guide me. Like the mentality is the other way around, because people feel very threatened, and that’s because a lot of them, they didn’t have the opportunity to study further; or if they did, they were told, “This is a place to hold onto, don’t let anyone into this position.” So, they are very hard towards people coming in, or they don’t want them to get training, they don’t want them to get upskilled, because they are afraid they are going to lose their job to them.   
There’s a lot of fear in the systems that we have. That’s why they are not developing and not growing in the way that they are supposed to.

Int: We’re going to comeback to this in a second, because I did pick up on something you said – but we do have to move through everything firstly. So, hopefully we’ll have time to talk about it later. So, one of the questions that I asked all the participants is, do you feel a sense of belonging to South Africa. Do you feel that South Africa is your country or is your home?

Angela: I do. I…

Int: Do you feel a sense of belonging to South Africa, like this is your community?

Angela: I feel like South Africa is my home. I feel like this is where one day I would like to raise my kids, but I’m hoping I find a very nice, safe, space to do so. I feel like South Africa is a country with great potential, and I believe in the South Africa it could be. That’s why I don’t want to give up on it, but I also would not mind going elsewhere. I feel like being in other places doesn’t take the South African out of you. It’s just getting to experience and explore culture and different people, and also help them see a bit of South Africa elsewhere. But I feel like South Africa is my home. I belong here.

Int: When you said that is possible a country where you would like to raise your kids in. Do you see a future for yourself in South Africa?

Angela: I do.

Int: And with that – this is something I found very interesting. You said that you want kids, possibly one day in he future. Does that decision to have kids or not to have kids, does that influence your decision to stay in South Africa or not?

Angela: It does, because… I want to stay in South Africa, but it’s a matter of where would the safest place be to raise these kids one day. And also it’s a lot of thing, because of everything that’s going on, it feels like the more you have some sort of financial backing the more you can kind of guarantee a level of safety. Like it sounds silly, but like if I am able to live in a gated community, I’m a lot safer than if I’m living in an area where anyone can just come in at any time; or if I am able to live in an area with an electric fence, it’s a lot safer. So, I want to be able to provide those things for my kids, so I need a level of financial security.

Int: So, that’s one thing, in South Africa we buy our sense of safety.

Angela: Yeah.

Int: So, if we look at the way South African houses are built, they are very much built like fortresses. We’ve got high walls, and electric fences, we’ve got gated communities. So, on that topic, could you describe what your house looks like.

Angela: So, my house is a stand-alone house in a community, but we have a wall – a bit of a high wall, because I’m just saying this because it’s nice, you can walk around with your shorts, you can walk around with your swimming costume and no one will see you from the outside. So, you feel that level of ‘this is my safe place’. You’re not worried that anyone is spying on you, or anything weird like that, so. And um, that’s the only – and around the area there’s the ADT that also drives around so.

Int: Do you guys have an alarm system in the house?

Angela: We don’t actually. I was thinking about, we actually don’t, but we have, it’s not really an alarm system, but it helped once. We have sensor lights as well, so if anyone-

Int: Spotlights.

Angela: Yeah, spotlights. So, if anyone is walking past, we’re able to like…

Int: Know what’s going on outside.

Angela: Know what’s going on outside. It helped once because a few years ago, I think I was still in high school at the time, someone tried breaking in. So, we have two garage doors that go up, so one of them – because they are alongside each other – one of them, someone tried to use something to like pull the garage door open, but they couldn’t because of the material. So, they were trying to break it up, and they struggled, but thankfully the lights went on. I think they panic and they just ran away. But I’m just thinking that it’s small things like that – it’s like, imagine if we didn’t have that, what would have happened, you know.

Int: So, like you said, your home is your safe place-

Angela: Oh sorry, we also have butlers everywhere. On the windows on the doors-

Int: Oh, the burglar bars.

Angela: Yeah, we have them everywhere. We have two – in my room we have two. So, on the window the white one, and then there is a green one above that, so if someone tried to break-in they are going to have tow go through two butlers just to get in. and it will make a lot of noise, so that’s like the security.

Int: And that’s makes you feel safe? Having those things.

Angela: Yeah.

Int: So, as you said your home is a safe place, and then you unfortunately have a situation where someone tried to enter this safe place without being welcomed. What was that like?

Angela: It was scary because I was the first person to notice. It was in the morning, like six in the morning, I walked out, I had to get something from my mom’s car. And then I’m like, “The garage door is like halfway up.”  
And I’m like, “It wasn’t even up, it was like broken. It was rolled up, like someone was struggling.” And that was a bit scary, because ‘are they still here? did they get in? did they run away?’, we didn’t know. But thankfully nothing happened, so there’s that, ‘okay we’re safe’. But it felt like, ‘what if someone tries this again’, you know, ‘what if they went further’, because it’s only my parents and I, so it’s not like we have a lot of people where it’s a bit safer, or – I’m the only one, I’m not even like a ‘male son’, so it’s like ‘how would I protect my parents in a situation like that?’, because I don’t think my parents have the physical strength to protect me in a situation like that. So, it’s very scary, but I’m just thankful nothing happened.

Int: Yeah, thankfully. And it’s scary that we have to say that we’re thankful nothing happened because nothing should happen. Whether someone breaks-in or not, that happens all over the world, but the violence it happens with in South Africa when someone breaks into your house and then you’ve got a gun in your face, it’s really scary. And the chances that you’d be severely hurt, or raped, or murdered, it is quite high in South Africa. So, unfortunately we have to sit here and say ‘thankfully nothing happened to us’. Um, but is that something you think about, that ‘I’m not safe in this place’?

Angela: It’s not something that I consciously think about, but I do – every night I have to make sure that all the doors are locked, that all the windows are closed. And it’s like, I wonder if there are other places in the world where people don’t have to worry about things like that. Like it’s a small thing, but in Swaziland, my cousins always joke when I visit, “This is not South Africa, it’s safe here.” Because it’s small things, like when we’re in a car, we always sit – like every robot I lock the door, like again and again, because I need to make sure it’s locked. If you’re leaving you have to make sure the doors are close, and you check all the door in case there is signal jamming or something.

Int: Yes.

Angela: In Swaziland, that’s not the case. Like I went out with my cousins and literally at the end of the night, this is at what – five, six in the morning. I’m like, “How are we going to get home? No one is sober.”  
They’re like, “Don’t worry, we just spoke to the owner and he’s like ‘Oh, you can take him, he can drive’.”  
And this guy, there was two of them, they drove us home. They dropped one of us at my cousins hotel and the other one dropped us at home. They give you the keys and then they wait for the next driver to come pick them up. And all of this was just for fifty Rand, and we were far. They didn’t kill us, they didn’t mug us, they didn’t rob us, they didn’t hurt us, and they even gave the keys back – I was like, “Why was that?”  
And she’s like, “It’s safe here. It’s not South Africa.” She was joking, but that’s the truth. Even small things, like you can’t leave your bag in the car, it’s not safe to do that. When we’re in Swaziland there are bags in the car and sometimes they even leave the car unlocked, and they don’t even think about it.

Int: It’s so weird.

Angela: And I’m like, “But you have to lock the car, it’s not safe.”  
And they’re like, “No, this is not South Africa. Those things don’t happen here.”   
They’re like, “Ya, there is a bit of crime, but people are not like South Africans.”   
And it hurts to hear that, but it’s true. Other countries are not like South Africa. Some are worse, we have to agree, but there are other countries where it is really safe to live there.

Int: There are lot’s of other countries in the world where it is really safe.

Angela: Even in Africa, there’s Botswana, there’s Swaziland – also, two examples of countries where it’s safe to actually live in and not be paranoid. Like they always call me paranoid, and I’m like, “This is not paranoid, this is South Africa, this is being cautious.”  
They’re like, “Well, here that’s called being paranoid.”  
They’re like, “You can’t keep like” – even if someone keeps walking past a car and the doors are unlocked and the windows down, I’ll keep looking, they’re like, “\*Angela, relax.”  
Like they are always saying, “This is not South Africa, like people are not crazy, people don’t do violent things like that, like.”

Int: So, on this topic of – this is actually one of my questions. Um, you’ve talked a bit about the few daily safety precautions you take, like signal jamming, always check your car door, never leave your handbag where they can see it. Are there any other safety precautions that you take?

Angela: Like it depends on the situation. If I’m taking an Uber I’ll share my trip with someone so they can track me in case something goes wrong. Small things like you don’t just carry your bag anyhow, you need to make sure, like small things, like either you put your hand through, so it’s like this, so no one can easily grab it, or you put it around your waist. You make sure your bag is always closed if you’re walking around with it. If you’re sitting down make sure your bag is somewhere where no one change just walk around and grab it. When I’m in public and I’m walking up and down, I don’t want to be on my phone, I don’t like answering a call, because anyone can come and grab the phone at any time, and I cannot run to save myself.

Int: Same.

Angela: If it’s let’s say late out at night, I try to be home like early so. Something small like going out until six, I’ve never done that in South Africa. The latest I’ve gone out is like, I’ve come back home at half past eleven because like, I’m scared after that anything could happen, because -I don’t know. I feel like maybe it’s – because guys can do that, but as girls, especially if you’re not in a very large group, it’s very dangerous. Anyone can spike drinks, anyone can try to take advantage of you even if you’re going somewhere like the bathroom, you can’t walk alone if you’re going out. You guys as a group have to go together. Like ya, we say it’s for bonding but really it’s for safety because anything can happen on the way to the bathroom, in the bathroom. So, small things. It depends on the environment. If I’m at work I make sure my phone is in my pocket, deep in my pocket, so it doesn’t – because sometimes, a patient can also steal things. A laptop was stolen at work, at the clinic. So, it just shows that no place is – it’s not safe really. You just have to try and put measures in place so that you try to, ya.

Int: So, also another one of my questions. The conversation is flowing very well, thank you. Are there places in South Africa where you feel that you just can’t go because you are a woman?

Angela: …Um…I’m trying to think about this. Are there certain places I avoid? Not, really specific places, but for example, lets say I’m on the street alone and I see a group of guys, I’m not going to continue walking down that street. I’m going to turn around and walk another block, because I’m alone and I’m a woman, and I don’t know if those are men who are okay up there or if they are looking for another victim or if they are tyring to take advantage, so it’s small things like that. Or let’s say some place is really busy, I’d rather go with someone, even in a large crowd, you’re not always the safest because then no one can really notice if something is happening, because we do have that thing where someone – a crime is happening and no one want’s to do anything because they are afraid that something is going to happen to them. So, rather walk in numbers. Unless it’s like a place like Brooklyn where it’s more quite. So, I-

Int: It’s not Menlyn.

Angela: It’s not like Menlyn. Yeah, I avoid Menlyn because it is so big and my wallet was once stolen there. So, it’s like just certain places like malls you should be comfortable, but I avoid there generally because I just fell like anything could happen at any time. Unless it is a small centre, because then it is more quite, it’s usually safer, and there are security guards, there are cameras. So, even if something were to happen I feel like there are certain measures put into place-

Int: To make you feel safer.

Angela: Where you are a bit safer. Like the other day, my cousins from Swaziland are this side – I told you because of the family reason we have. But um, the older ones left the little ones in Menlyn at the ‘Fun company’ for an hour because they had to fetch my aunt from the hospital. And then when they were telling me this like, “Ya, we left them at the – at Menlyn, at ‘Fun company’ for like an hour, and when we came back they were having the time of their lives. You can see they have never been left alone.”  
Of course not! And for them it’s like, “But they are fourteen.”  
I’m like, “It’s not safe.”  
They’re like, “But why? They’re at the ‘Fun company’.”  
I’m like, “Guys, this is not Swaziland. You can’t leave them alone.”

Int: Someone could like take the kids.

Angela: They were like so shocked. They were like, “But why?”   
They’re like, “They’re old enough, they can take care of themselves.”  
I’m like, “I hear you and logically that makes sense, but they could have been kidnapped, they could have been given drugs, they could’ve been” – anything could have happened. Like, “Guys, don’t do that again.”  
And they’re like, “We only realised that was a problem when one of the mom’s asked where are the kids, and we’re like, ‘oh no’” – they were like, “Oh no, they’re just eating.”  
They thought they meant they were eating at the house. These girls were eating at Menlyn by themselves having the time of their lives, like. And I’m like, “Girl, don’t do that again. Even with your own kids one day.”- because one of my cousins are married now with two kids, and I’m like, “You can’t leave your kids – you can do that in Swaziland, but don’t do it in South Africa. Those kids, one of them might go missing.”  
I don’t want to think the worst-case scenario, but you have to think about that. Like you can’t just leave your kids anywhere. Even at the clinic, we shout at parents if a parent leaves a child there. It’s like, yeah we’re here but we’re not looking after your child. This is not a day care, no ones focusing on your child – someone can walk in and walk out with that child. What’s going to happen? And you can’t even hold us liable, because we’re here seeing other patients. So, like guys, don’t just leave your kids anywhere. Small things like that.

Int: Ya, like you said, it’s not a day care.

Angela: Yeah, you can’t just leave your kids anywhere. You can’t even leave adults anywhere.

Int: That’s also true.

Angela: Because there’s this guy – I don’t know if you’ve seen it on social media. He’s gone missing.

Int: No, I haven’t seen it.

Angela: By, by, here by waterfall. He was like driving home or something and then he was hijacked, but then they took him with and it’s been like two, three weeks now and they still haven’t – his wife has been posting it everywhere. They still haven’t found him.

Int: That’s the thing, you hear about these things so often. Is it shocking anymore, is it surprising anymore?

Angela: I think it’s always shocking because like I can’t believe this is still happening. And then there’s always a sense of ‘Why isn’t anything being done to stop it?’. Even when we speak about cameras, there’s only a few camera’s being put around. There is a level of it where it’s \*gasps. And then there’s also a part of me that feels like, this is always happening. Like you always hear stories like this so you kind of become desensitised. And then you start thinking, “If that were me or that were” – it shouldn’t have to get to that point for us to realise that it’s a problem, you know.

Int: So, do you feel safe in South Africa?

Angela: I think I feel safe because I grew up here, so it feels like I – it’s like sometimes we tell ourselves you don’t put yourself in danger, so it feel like we take responsibility for our safety. It’s like I feel safe because I feel like I put measures in place to make myself, but there are also other times where I don’t feel safe, because it’s like we don’t know. Small things, like a guy could be hitting on you, and you ignoring him could be – if this guy is crazy, he could kill you, he could rape you. He could, you know. So it feels like…

Int: Yeah.

Angela: Yeah. I feel as safe as a South African can feel.

Int: Oh, I like that. ‘I feel as safe as a South African can feel’. I’m going to use that in my paper, I’m going to steal that. My new tagline.

Angela: Oh gosh.

Int: But this sense of being responsible for your own safety. Have you always had this sense or is this something you grew up and realised?

Angela: It’s something I had for – I think from childhood. My parents would travel a lot, so I would always like have an auntie by the house to help out and stuff. And there’d be times when I’d be walking home or taking the bus home by myself, and I had to. I can’t even be mad at my parents, they had to work, they didn’t have the opportunity to fetch me from school and stuff because they were always busy and stuff. But I had to make sure from school that I would get home by myself. I had my own keys from grade two. So, when I got home, I’d lock the door, make sure all the windows were closed, and only when they came back then I would open the windows and you know. I had to take care of myself a bit. I had to be a certain level of independent at a young age, but I remember there was a time I was in primary. I was leaving school like normal, but it’s literally so, like when I speak about this story it doesn’t even feel real. But, I think I was in grade three at the time, and I was walking on the street and I felt like there was a car following me; and it was driving slow. So, then I turned on the street, it was turning too but it was driving very slow. So, what I decided to do was, I ran to the lady in front of me, she had a child, and I held her hand and I was like, “Please act like my mom there’s a car following me.”  
So, she turned around and then the car sped off. And it’s small things like that. A child shouldn’t have to think like that for their own safety, but it’s like, as a South African you have to be – I think, more as a woman, because guys don’t have that. They feel like this is the safest place in the world. As a young lady or as a girl, you have to have that thing of, ‘You have to always be cautious, you have to always be aware of your environment’. Even small things like taking a taxi. If there was a taxi and I were to get in and it was just like the driver and one guy, I would not get into that taxi, I’ll wait for another taxi where there’s at least a woman or more people; because it feels like what if the guy behind me – like it sounds crazy – but what if the guy behind me decides to strangle me, because they are in on it together. Like you always have to be cautious with small things like that. So, yeah.

Int: You just said something interesting now. Ah, you’ll get into a taxi only if there is another woman in there.

Angela: Yeah.

Int: Is the presence of another woman almost a sense of safety or a sense of community or something like that? What is that?

Angela: Yeah, it feels like because she is a lady or a woman she’d understand. She’d also want to feel safe. And also a lot of the times in that situation when I took a taxi, I was young, now I’m a lot older so I don’t take them anymore because I’m driving. But at the time it felt like, let’s say there was a older lady there or there’s another lady, they’d almost be like an older sister or an older mother or a aunt, so they have that, that, um… intrinsic intuition to kind of like look after me, even if they don’t know me because I think that’s how South African woman are. Where if you’re crying an older lady will come and ask, “What’s going on Nana?”  
So, they will always treat you like a daughter. So, seeing another lady feels like, ‘okay she will protect me, she’ll take care of me’. Or if something were to happen, we’d both be there to fight together, so it’s like you have that thing. Even now if it’s someone older it feels like… if I were to see another girl crying I would want to do something, because she is a girl too, you know, so it’s like we have that thing of-

Int: This understanding.

Angela: Yeah, we want to help each other.

Int: So, one of the things I find really interesting is – like you said earlier, South Africa has one of the highest rates of gender-based violence in the world. And it’s terrifying to think about, because we have countries like Honduras, where woman are literally – their legs are cut off so that they don’t leave their husbands. That literally happens, and yet we still have a gender-based violence rate that is almost similar to them. It’s mind blowing. So, one of the things that I think all South African woman experience is a unique violence that is targeted towards them, because they are women. If a common thread of South African women is this violence, do you think that’s why we have this sense of trust or is it not this common thread of violence is there something else that we all share as women?

Angela: I think it’s something we share as women that is just put into us.

Int: Okay.

Angela: Like, it’s just something that we have in – because anywhere else in the world women have this connection. I don’t know if you’ve seen those videos on Instagram where a girl will be like, “What am I saying?” And she’s just giving different facial expressions, but we all understand as women.

Int: You know what’s going on, yeah.

Angela: We have it everywhere. But, I also feel like… a lot of us have somehow experienced or know someone who have experienced some level of aggression, violence, or…

Int: Specifically coming from men.

Angela: Specifically coming from men, where we either have a mom who has been in a relationship where this guy has been abusing her, or we have an aunt who had an abusive boyfriend, or we have a friend who had a guy – even something like someone stealing from you, that’s an act of aggression. You know, so it’s like you’re always feeling like you have to protect yourself. So, as women knowing that you have to protect yourself, you also want to protect each other.

Int: Yeah, I think that rings really true, that we know we have to protect ourselves because we carry the responsibility of our own safety, so it makes sense that we want someone else to feel that sense of safety.

Angela: Yeah.

Int: So, we’re going to move on a little bit, ah and we kind of have touched on this a little bit. But, how would you describe your life as a South African woman living in South Africa?

Angela: I have a lot of positives.

Int: Say positives, you are more than welcome.

Angela: Yeah, I have to say that I have a lot of positives because I feel like we live in a very progressive country. Not as progressive as it should be, but we live in a country where women can do any job, where women can be respected by men, even if they don’t want to, we have women in management, we have women in different places, so you get to see women doing amazing things and you can be inspired by that and be like, “You know what, it’s possible for me.” And there’s countries where women can’t even learn, you know. So, it feels like we are being put in a place where women are human beings, but the problem is there is also a lot of uncertainty because it’s like as much as there’s a lot of progression, there’s still a lot of uncertainty whether women are valued. So, it’s like, ‘yes, we’re human being but are we valued as important as men?’; is our safety seen as important men? Like if something were to happen – like, I’m just, in general – like, if something were to happen to let’s say a… a man, like a white man, where he gets robbed, I feel like he gets immediately believed – like immediately, like, “Oh shame this happened to him.” But if a woman says, “This man was groping me.”  
It’s like, “Are you sure?”  
It’s like you’re always questioned, so you always wonder if people takes you as seriously as they should. Where It’s like, “Okay, how come it’s like I’m worthy being ‘respected’ as a human being if I’m your partner or if I’m your child, but if I’m just a random person then you have to question my experiences, you have to question my beliefs, my – you have to question my knowledge of certain things.”  
It’s like, why is there so much uncertainty around women’s experiences. Even from other women; that’s the sad part where you’re like, “This happened to me.”  
And they’re like, “Are you sure? Maybe you guys were dating or maybe you were flirting with him.”

Int: ‘What did you do’.

Angela: “Or maybe you were using him, that’s why you got it wrong.” “What did you do to upset him.” “What were you wearing?” – it’s always our fault if something happens to us. It’s like you always have to prove something. Where even if you hear something, a story of like – there was this girl at Southdowns Collage, it’s like a high school. And she reported that this guy tried raping her, and they were classmates. And people were like, “But he’s such a great guy. This guy is on the rugby team. He’s so friendly with everyone, are you sure?”   
People were like, “His career is going to be over before it started.”  
And I’m like, people were thinking about all those things but, “Did you guys not hear that she said this guy attempted to take advantage of her.”

Int: To rape her.

Angela: Imagine how she’s feeling – like having to live through that, having to have that memory of someone trying to, like you trying to use you as if your life is worth nothing more than their pleasure; and no one cares about that, but they always thinking, “Are you jealous, maybe he liked someone else more than you and you’re trying to” – it’s like you are always being questioned, that’s the only thing I don’t like.

Int: So, like one of the things that you said which was very interesting is that women are seen as human being in terms that you can go to school, you can get a job.

Angela: The rights are there.

Int: Yeah, the rights are there, but you’re not valued.

Angela: You’re not valued.

Int: And one of the things we look at when we’re looking at belonging is one of the ways, because the emotional sense of belonging is this feeling of being ‘at home’, or this feeling of being safe. But in South Africa we don’t feel safe and if we do it’s almost manufactured safety, we make our safety.

Angela: Yeah, we have to.

Int: Yeah, like you’ve said we take safety precautions, we’re conscious of certain things. We make ourselves safe. Um, the question then becomes, if it’s not a safe place, can we belong here? So, if we remove safety from the equation of belonging, one of the other things is a feeling of being valued and a feeling that you have a voice. You’ve said now that women are not valued in South Africa. Do you feel like you have a voice as a South African woman?

Angela: We do have a voice, a very powerful voice, but that doesn’t always mean that it’s listened to.

Int: So, do you feel like you are listened to?

Angela: Not always.

Int: Not always.

Angela: I can’t say never because we are listened to or else there wouldn’t have been a lot of progression. We are literally the backbone of this country. A lot of the things that are positives are from women, but it’s always like, you always have to – again, it goes back to that protesting. You have to bang, and bang, and bang on the same doors or different doors, and scream and shout and speak and be very vocal. You have to put in so much effort to just be heard, and sometimes they hear you, but they just don’t want to do anything about it. So it’s like even when they hear you, you still have to do other things for things to progress. You have to do other things for things to happen. So, it’s like, “Yeah, they hear our voices because we’re very loud,” we have to be very loud, “but it doesn’t mean things are being done.”  
We have to like literally get on the ground. We have to start ‘gyms for women ‘, for women to feel safe, to be comfortable, to work out and exercise and to live healthy lifestyles. It’s shouldn’t have to get to that point, but you know, the fact that women have to do things like this means – they have complained about certain things at gyms before and men haven’t listened or other women haven’t listened so they have to make a safe place by themselves. So, they listen to us but they don’t really take our-

Int: Don’t hear it or don’t take it seriously.

Angela: They hear us, but they just ignore us. They choose when they want to listen.

Int: So, when we have situations when it’s women not believing other women. Those women who don’t believe other women, do you view them as traitors or as maybe men in disguise or how would you describe those types of women?

Angela: Those type of women are a lot of the time – I take it back to their childhood. Because a lot of the time that’s what they were told by other women, it’s small things like… I remember my aunt was telling me when they were growing up, “When you dish up, you dish up for the men and the other boys first, and then you dish up for the girls.”

Int: Despite the fact that the women made the food.

Angela: They made the food, they were … sorry, it’s my little cousin.

Int: We can put it on pause for a moment if you need?

Angela: Can I quickly just call him back.

Int: Um, ya how do you view those women who don’t believe other women?

Angela: Yeah, a lot of them I feel it is based on their upbringing, because some women they are told by their mothers like, “A man is more important.” Or that the boy child is more valuable. So, they grew up feeling that these men are meant to be kind of put on this pedestal and praised, and you kind of like – whatever a man says is right. And they have that mentality of, like a man is the head of the house so whatever he says, whatever he does, that’s the best thing. So, for them to now hear a woman complaining about a man it’s almost – they can’t believe it; they’re like, “How can you complain about God’s gift to earth?”   
They literally see men like that. Where in modern terms we’d describe it as a ‘pick me girl’.

Int: Yes!

Angela: Where you hear them say certain things like ah… there was this one who said, “I want to be” – this is a Tweet, I was like, “This is embarrassing.”   
But she’s like, “I want to be a powerful woman. My man can be broke, and I’ll take care of him.”  
And I’m like, “That doesn’t sound like woman empowerment, it sounds like you’re saying things that you wish other men – that you think men want to hear, so that they will like you.”  
And it’s like, why is there so much value being put on a man finding you attractive or liking you? It’s like the opinion of men is more important to you than how other women look at them. It’s like, ‘it doesn’t matter if you like me or hate me, as long as I end up with a husband that loves me that’s all that matters’. But there is still so much put on by being in a relationship, by being in a marriage, because the goal is being with a man. That’s the best thing you can do in your life, there is nothing better than having a man in your life. Like it doesn’t matter how many degrees you have in your life, it doesn’t matter what jobs you have, what you have accomplished, as long as there’s a man in your life you finally made it.   
So, I really think it goes back to that’s what they were told to believe and they held onto that, because it is a core belief; like the same way I believe if I breathe in air comes in and when I breathe out airs going to – and that’s the breathing process. They believe the most important thing in their life is having a man in there. So, it’s like, obviously. Like you even see them. They end up being those moms’ where no woman is good enough for their son. And if you think about it, that’s absolute bull, because those are the men that end up abusing their wives physically, emotionally, mentally, financially; those are the men that end up cheating on their wives – where I don’t feel like a lot of people take cheating seriously, but the emotional damage that comes from loving a person, from being with a person, and then you find out this person has a whole family somewhere else that was kept secret for years. And we laugh about it as South Africans, but’s a serious, that’s a real problem that damages a lot of women. And women end up in broken marriages and relationships and they hold onto it because they feel like, ‘I can’t fail at loving a man, because that’s all I’m here to do’.   
So, it’s like a core belief of ‘I can’t do anything better than be there for a man because I’m the support system, I’m just here to make sure this man is successful. And he can’t be successful if I’m not putting food on his table’, you know, ‘so, the only value I bring is to add onto his life’. So, those women value men more than anything else and that’s because they were told, “All you’re there for is to be a lover, is to be a nurture.” Like, ‘there is nothing more you can bring to this world than to support a man’, and now you’re here testing that theory, like no; you don’t need a man. No, men can actually be terrible. And it’s shattering their little glass house that they have created of how life is supposed to be. Men get angry when a woman doesn’t want a child or they get angry if a woman says she has experienced harassment because they’re like, “No, you shouldn’t have even spoken about that because this man should be protected – how dare you put a man in a bad light, how dare you disrespect men.”  
Because it also goes back to, if God is a man then all men are somehow linked to God, and now, “Here you are breaking that system, here you are disrespecting the very reason we’re alive,” like, “How dare you do that.”

Int: ‘How dare you fight’.

Angela: ‘How dare you go against a man’. It’s like unfathomable.

Int: So, this is one thing that I have spoken a lot about with the participants – In South Africa women are, for the lack of a better analogy, hunted. Gender-based violence rates, rape rates, they are incredibly high. Do you think it’s going to come to a point where women do rush into the streets and start demanding change. I mean we saw it happening with the #AmINext? movement, and that was caused simply because Uynene’s story spread like wildfire and we all wanted to find this girl; and when we did find her, we found that her body was – well, she was raped, murdered, and then burnt. And it was completely disgusting. And then women raced into the streets and they tried to fight and, like you said, we were yelling and screaming but we’re not being listened to because the #AmINext? movement kind of linked in with the #MenAreTrash movement, and then the entire response from certain men in power was ‘Not all men’. They’re not even addressing the fact that we’re asking the question ‘Am I next’. Like, is that a general question or is that something you understand when we say ‘am I next’, or is that something you agree with or do you think that’s a bit far?

Angela: I feel like at the time, you have to remember, when Uynene’s story came out there were also two really big stories that were happening at the exact same time. There was that boxer who was killed by her boyfriend; and when you think about it she was a strong lady.

Int: She was a boxer, I think a world campion.

Angela: Out of everyone, that’s the one person you think can protect herself, that has a successful career doesn’t need a man. And if, lets say a man was treating her bad, she can walk away from that relationship and not look back; and here she was murdered by her abusive boyfriend. Its like, how did she even stay in an abusive relationship as a fighter? It’s like, I can’t protect myself, but she could’ve. It feels like, out of everyone that was my hope of-

Int: She could have been safe.

Angela: She could have been safe, and she wasn’t. The at the same time there was another girl with the grandfather who was killed at the farm. Um, it was also another coloured girl, but there was also – I think it was a robbery of some sort and they killed both her and the grandfather, but they raped her before killing her. So, it’s like at the same time those were the three stories that were circulating. So, obviously it wasn’t just Uynene. Yes, Uynene’s story was like heart breaking, it was sad, but it felt like there was so many stores coming out, and then there was that page that was started – um, that purple page on Instagram.

Int: Oh, I know exactly what you are talking about, but I can’t remember for the life of me now.

Angela: It was like ‘Women of SA’.

Int: Or ‘Women for SA’, something like that.

Angela: Mmm. And now they were sharing, literally ten, twenty stories a day of women getting rapped, of women getting murdered, of women getting mutilated. So, it was becoming a lot more real, where it’s like it’s not just these three women, every day you were seeing another face of a different age, a different race, a different community of women getting hurt, of women getting killed; women’s lives getting stripped away from them, their dignity. And the manner they were being killed was like… I can’t even kill a rat like that. And someone was able to do that to a human being. Like it became more real and it became frustrating because it was like, why isn’t this being stopped? Because it’s not like the first incident of rape or murder started with that year, it’s been years of people complaining about this; it’s been years of people saying women are not safe, it’s been years. Because it’s not only women, there were also other guys joining this, but it was like when guys join it – guys get defensive. And like you said, the original response was not “As men let’s #Let’sStandUp’, or ‘#Let’sBeBetter’, or ‘#ManUp’.” And ‘maning up’ being, ‘let’s take responsibility, being accountable, being able to like protect women and create societies’, and make sure women are valued. The immediate response was, “Not all men.”

Int: Yeah, “It’s not me.”

Angela: How embarrassing is that.

Int: \*Laughs.

Angela: No, really how embarrassing is that. People are telling you that they’re struggling, that we’re angry, we’re suffering, we’re tired.

Int: We need your help.

Angela: We need your help. And you’re saying, “But I didn’t do anything.” No one said you did anything.

Int: Exactly, we just want your help.

Angela: Like imagine if I was there complaining like, “Ah, drugs are killing the children in the streets.” And then there are people who will come through like, “But I’m a pharmacist.” What does that have to do with anything. It’s not dealing with the problem that we have.

Int: “I’m not the drug dealer.” – okay, fair but we have a problem, and we would like your help.

Angela: We still have a problem. Whether you are involved in it or not, we still have a problem, and we need your help in stopping it; and the more you are just more focused on protecting your sense of dignity or pride and acting as if you are some sort of better man than actually doing something to help protect women, you are also part of the problem because you’re complacent. You’re not doing anything. Like you’re more worried about your own little reputation than anything. But when we call men out you want to defend them, you want to protect them because they are your ‘boys’, because of ‘bro code’, are you stupid.

Int: What about your sisters? Protect your bros, great, but what about your sisters?

Angela: What about your friend. What about your best friend’s girlfriend that you know he is beating up. What about her, is she not a human being? When you know he’s beating her up, you know when – it doesn’t even have to get to a point where he is beating her up, you know how he speaks about her. I’ve had this conversation before with a male friend of: there’s a friend of yours that – there was a rapist that was releases, on Twitter, he was the one who sent it to me. “Did you see ‘so and so’ is on the rape list?”   
And I’m like, “Oh my gosh, isn’t that your friend?”  
And he’s like, “Yes.”  
And I’m like, “What are you going to do about it?”  
He’s like, “I’m cutting him off.”  
And I’m like, “But are you surprised?”  
And he’s like, “What do you mean.”  
“No, are you really surprised, because I’ve told you about this friend before. They didn’t rape me, they didn’t harass me, but I told you how he spoke to me. I told you how I felt around him. How he was always too much. And maybe it doesn’t make sense because you are a guy, but I told you he was possessive, and I wasn’t even with him. He’s your friend, but he was always trying to control me whenever I was around you guys. Like, ‘no, where you going, sit here’, or how he would speak about other girls around you. I told you that was problematic, that no healthy men – that no healthy person would speak about another human being that way. And you were like, ‘No, he has trauma from his childhood. No, his mother died.’ I don’t care. Not because I don’t care about his pain, but because there is no excuse to degrade other human beings like that. And I told you that was problematic years ago. Are you surprised? Are you really surprised years later that he’s on a rape list, because the signs were there, the signs were there from the beginning.  
Like, I would never allow any of my friends, even if it’s for a moment, to come and disrespect one of my other friends to be around us, to be comfortable enough to disrespect a whole gender and that’s not a red flag for you, especially as someone who has so many female friends. As someone who is a so-called feminist. Because out of all your friends, seventy percent are female, and you are comfortable enough to know that one of your friends doesn’t look at women the way they should be looking at women. One of your friends is somehow offended every time he hits on every single woman he comes across and none of them were interested. He sees that as a problem and he uses the ‘B’-word, and you are not seeing any red flags; this man has problems taking ‘no’, has problems respecting human beings, sees women as objects he can control. You don’t see those flags and you’re so shocked one day that he’s on a fricken rape list. Like you should have said something earlier on. You should have tried educating him a long time ago. You should have cut him off saying, ‘If you continue this behaviour around me I will not tolerate this, I will end this now. I’ll call you out and I will tell all my other male friends to stop having contact with you because we have female friend who we love and respect, and we cannot be around a guy like you.’ Why didn’t you do that? What did you think would happen? Did you think we would outgrow his toxic masculinity? Did you think that was going to happen? How can you be surprised?”

Int: How could you be so naïve.

Angela: “I can’t believe that you’re going to use trauma as a proper excuse for someone being a vile human being.”  
Like does it really have to take him being a rapist or a murderer for you to realise that he is a bad human being, and if he’s able to do that to women, what do you think he’s going to do to children one day?

Int: That’s a terrifying thought.

Angela: So, men know. That’s what frustrates me, men know the friends that are too much; men know the friends that speak down to women; men know the friends that are with multiple women and disrespects them and degrades them. Men know friends that use money to kind of like attract women because they see women as a objects that can be tossed away at any point. Men know these guys, and choose to ignore it because they feel like, ‘if I’m not like that, that means he can’t be like that’. But it’s not the case, the same way as I’m not a thief but I know someone that is hijacking and I’m not doing anything about it, I’m part of the crime because I’m enabling their behaviour; and as long as men are not being honest with one another, are not cutting them off when they notice some toxic behaviour – it’s like, you have a mom, you know what’s right and what’s wrong; if you wouldn’t want anyone to be treating your mom like that, then why are you comfortable with him treating other women and girls like that. So, if you know the difference between right and wrong, you can’t say you didn’t see the signs, you can’t say you didn’t know better, you can’t say you couldn’t do anything. You could’ve stood up, you could’ve spoken out, you could’ve cut him off, you could’ve reported him, you could’ve done so many other things, but you decided to ignore it and look the other way so you are part of that abuse. So, yes, all men, because as long as you’re not doing anything, you are part of that problem.

Int: Alright, brilliantly said.

Angela: It’s just so frustrating.

Int: Yeah, I completely understand. Just quickly, last question that I have for you today. What’s your biggest fear living in South Africa?

Angela: Getting raped, murdered, killed. \*Laughs.

Int: ‘Getting raped, murdered, killed’, yeah.

Angela: I’m afraid of getting robbed, I’m afraid of getting killed, rape; I’m afraid of somehow ending up in a relationship that is abusive.

Int: That does happen.

Angela: That’s like a bit fear, where it’s like… the same way men know better, women know better too. But I don’t know, something just happens. Like we even have friends where she’s with that guy that not good for her and she just holds on and doesn’t let go. I’m afraid of becoming that woman, where there’s a man who’s breaking me and I’m afraid of letting him go because of love.

Int: Do you think there should be a ‘women’s responsibility’, because girls talk, we chat a bit, and we say there should be a ‘guy’s responsibility’ for making their friends responsible for being that person to say ‘that is not okay, you know how to teat women, this is how we should be treating women’, if that’s men’s responsibility, should there not be a ‘women’s responsibility’ towards like ‘this is not a good relationship’?

Angela: It is.

Int: “You need to value yourself and you need to start taking this seriously.”

Angela: But that’s the thing, I feel like we do do that. I remember, there was this show on it’s on ‘Merg J love’. a cousin of mind made me watch it, and I was so horrified, it’s called ‘If they’re lying’. It’s basically a show about family and friends of victims coming up after this person has been killed, and a lot of them are women. Actually, ninety percent is women. Where they come up and they say the story of how this person ended up being killed and how this person ended up being murdered or burnt or whatever, and it was always by romantic partners. And at the end it’s like, when you hear these stories its like, ‘but you guys saw this happening all along, where the they’re like, ‘my sister would tell me she fell, but I saw-

Int: You saw the bruises ya.

Angela: Or, ‘I saw that she started isolating herself’ – that’s a sign of, ‘he was trying to make sure she was away from any sort of help’; where if something happens she can’t reach out to anyone because he has now isolated her and he can manipulate her the way he want’s to. We saw it happen. And they are all like, ‘how did it end up with her getting killed?’, you know, and it’s like-

Int: How did it get this far.

Angela: And the stories you hear of people saying, “I told her he’s not good for her, I told her.” And it’s like, until somebody is ready to listen, they are going to hold on. And that’s the thing, it’s always our responsibility – we are our sister’s keepers, you know. We have to look out for each other, but it also comes back to, ‘am I really ready to let go of this pain?’, because it’s like a poison; like people think like abusive or GBV relationships are ones where someone hurts you and you just run away, but most of the time it doesn’t start that way. It starts with this person being the sweetest person to you ever, making you feel like they are the person you can trust more than anything, making you feel like they are the only person who will do anything for you, make you feel as though you are the most special person in the world. And then one day it starts off as this person’s… idea of you is shattered, and you’re not perfect anymore. And now you’re trying to live up to that idea of being perfect, because you don’t know what happened. ‘How is he getting so angry with you all of a sudden, when it used to be so perfect?’.

Int: ‘What changed’.

Angela: ‘What am I doing that ruining this perfect person that he was? I have to do better’. And then they start thinking, “No one else understands. They were not there when he helped me,” maybe, “financially. When he was helping me emotionally; when I was going through everything and he was that one person by my side. They were not there helping me through it.” Because that’s what he does – he makes sure that no one else can help you so he can be the one to control the situation. ‘They’re not there when he’s making sure on a bad day you’re learning to smile again. He’s all of these amazing things and you fall in love with this version that seems too good to be true’. So, when something happens you feel like, ‘I ruined this person’, or, ‘I made a mistake that caused him to be like this’. So, you’re like, ‘I have to find a way to fix it and keep him happy’, because again, ‘I’m only as good as I can get this man be’.

Int: It always goes back to that, ya.

Angela: ‘If I can be his joy, he can continue to love me, and I’m only worthy of his love when I do everything right. So, I don’t care what people say, they don’t know him the way that I do’. Until, I’m ready to realise that that’s not the real him. That’s a façade that he put on till I got to a place where I was so reliant on him, that the more he beats me and the more he rapes me, I’m actually getting more obsessed because I feel like I can be a bit better. It’s like, ‘I can fix this’ – he wasn’t this person till I made him angry, so until I can stop making him angry we can go back to the roses, we can go back to those days, we can go back to the cuddles and the love, so if I can just be a better woman, then somehow he will be a good man to me again. And people don’t understand that because they were not there. They were not part of this relationship, so I need to hold on and fight for it.   
There’s a word for it in Zulu and in Swati, but in Zulu it’s called ‘Bekezela’ – it’s what they say a woman does in a marriage. It’s also like a speech that women get given when they are getting married off. A woman must ‘bekezela’. It’s basically like, ‘tough times will come’, so it’s like the traditional way of ‘through thick and thin’, but it’s a woman’s responsibility of, ‘tough times will come’. And a lot of it is rooted in ‘he will beat you, he will be a bad man, but you as a woman must take it because that’s your role in the house; you are the backbone of the family’.

Int: Sorry, that’s going to mess up the recording.

Angela: ‘You’re the backbone in the family, so you need to be strong. So, if he does anything bad, you need to take it, because marriage is not easy, love is not easy. You take whatever he throws at you, and you be strong, because if you break then the whole family brakes; so your kids don’t have a father, then your kid’s don’t have stability, then your kids will grow up and become criminal because you couldn’t take your marriage’; ‘your marriage is a mess because of you, so you must be strong, you must hold on, you must be a rock’. That’s basically it – you must ‘bekezela’, you must not give up, because if you give up then you’re a weak woman, you couldn’t see it through, you are the. If there’s a divorce the woman is always to blame, because ‘you didn’t hold your marriage together; you didn’t satisfy your man, you didn’t make sure that he didn’t go elsewhere, because you were not that woman for him. You couldn’t hold onto that, you couldn’t keep the system strong’. So, it’s like the same with that, if it’s in a relationship – you grow up with this thing of ‘you have to be the one to keep everything together; because my mom was strong, my sisters are strong, so why can’t I be strong’. So, even in like an abusive relationship it’s like, ‘I just have to hold on’, I just need to be patient. This is just a storm and it will pass, and then we will smile about it and we will speak about how we have been together for ten years – but nine of those ten years I’ve been crying, but it doesn’t matter because at least I made it through my storm’. So, it’s like the value of women is still being placed on how much they can do for a man, and untilt hat stops we don’t be comfortable enough to leave relationships; and it doesn’t matter what anyone else says as long as I feel like I’m only as good as this relationship, then it doesn’t matter if my sisters, my mom, everyone doesn’t see, because that gives me a great opportunity to steer my life where I want it to be .

Int: Shoo! Such a great conversation, and thank you for your honesty and everything with these questions. We are going to end off for today. And ya, like I said thank you so much for giving your time and for being so honest with these questions and really giving your point of view, I appreciate it.

Angela: Thank you for having me.

Int: Oh, really anytime, honestly. Um, so yeah, if you’ve got any questions, concerns, deep-seated worries or if there’s anything you find interesting, and think might be applicable in this research you are more than welcome to send me an email and more than welcome to send it to me. Otherwise, yeah, if you’ve got anything to add you are more than welcome to add it now.

Angela: I want to say that a lot of the things that are linked to being South African, but I think it’s also important to consider cultural influences because also, now that I am looking back at it, what I said about childhood, but a lot of the things are rooted in tradition or culture where either something like marriage in African culture you play Labola and back then it was saying thank you to the family for raising her and this is me showing that I can take care of her, that I value her, and that I and going to give everything that I have to make sure she is my wife, that is how much I value her. In modern society that same appreciation, that token of appreciation, is seen as buying a women - where he can be entitled to her, like ‘I can do whatever I want because I paid cows for you’. So, it’s like-

Int: There’s been a cultural shift.

Angela: There’s a cultural shift, and we fail to recognise that as much as things can be beautiful, they can be corrupted over time. And as long as we treat certain things as sacred and we forget that as much as things are evolving we also need to evolve in the way in which we pass down traditions, we also need to evolve in the way in which we speak to a woman when she get’s married or speak to girls when they are growing up, where we make them feel like they are as important as the boy child, they’ll always feel the way that men feel like the are so valuable and have so much to offer and women only feel as valuable as they are as long as a man loves them; we are always going to have problems of men always taking power. We also have to look at how culture influences how women value themselves, and how women value each other and how men see women.

Int: Thank you, and that’s a very good point and I’ll look into that definitely, because we are going to have a focus group so maybe we’ll bring it up in the focus group and chat about it. But yeah, I’m going to end the interview now, so thank you so much for all your help and participation and everything.

Angela: Thank you for having me.