Individual Interview 9 – Gabrielle

(Full time: 1:01:13)

Int: Hello, how are you?

Gabrielle: Good, and you?

Int: Good, good. Okay, just before we get started, you’ve read and understood the informed consent form.

Gabrielle: Yeh.

Int: Great. Basic overview of what we are going to do today. We’re going to have a look the concept of belonging and then we’re going to have a look at the concept of safety, specifically your sense of feeling safe within South Africa. And then we’re going to look at what it means to be a South African woman in South Africa given the country’s level of gender-based violence as well as how this may or may not effect your belonging.

Gabrielle: Cool.

Int: Any questions, worries, deep-seated concerns, you can ask them now?

Gabrielle: No.

Int: Great. So, before we get started, we’re just going to get into a little bit of background information. So, just get an idea of who you are. So, where do you live? Are you studying, are you working – did you study or did you go straight into work? Have you moved around a lot or have you just lived here in one place? And what’s your age?

Gabrielle: Okay. 23, studied – I’m still studying.

Int: Okay, what are you studying.

Gabrielle: …

Int: \*Laughs.

Gabrielle: My Masters in Neurophysiology, MSC, and then I did BSC before that. I’ve lived in Pretoria for most of my life. I was born in PE.

Int: Oh, that’s interesting. When did you move?

Gabrielle: When I was eight months old.

Int: So, you don’t remember the move.

Gabrielle: No, not at all.

Int: Okay, so you moved from PE when you were eight months old.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: So, don’t remember the move at all.

Gabrielle: No.

Int: Move to Pretoria?

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Moved around in Pretoria or just stayed in the same house the entire time?

Gabrielle: We rented a house first and then we lived in another house for a little bit, while we were building our current house.

Int: So, do you remember any of these moves or do you only remember this one house.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: So, has that always been home or has home been somewhere else – maybe with grandparents or?

Gabrielle: No, only at my house.

Int: Only at your house.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Ya, age – I think we did give age.

Gabrielle: 23.

Int: 23, awe! Um, so yeah we’re just going to get into the concept of belonging. So, from reading the informed consent form you might have gotten a broad idea of what belonging might mean. There are two different sides of belonging, we have the emotional side and then we have the political side of belonging. And I’m really looking the emotional side of belonging – so this feeling of belonging, the sense of belonging. So, how would you describe having a feeling of belonging?

Gabrielle: Mmm… I don’t know, feeling like… I know where I can go and I know where I feel safe and… ya.

Int: I want to expand on what you said in the first bit. ‘Knowing there’s a place you can go’, is that like a – I want to say a ‘safety zone’, because you also said it’s a place where you can be safe.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Is it more the fact that you know you can always ‘go home’?

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: I feel like that is a famous movie quote as well.

Gabrielle: I don’t know. \*Laughs.

Int: I’ll have to check that. So, it’s the assurance that you can always go back to this place.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Now is it necessarily the house or is it the people within the house?

Gabrielle: More the people within the house, yeah.

Int: But you have stayed in one house your entire life.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: So, I take it you’ve gone on holiday before?

Gabrielle: Yeah.

Int: Anywhere you’ve gone habitually, so all the time?

Gabrielle: (No).

Int: No?

Gabrielle: No to like a specific place, no.

Int: Okay, so you always jump around a bit.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: So, home is always your homebase?

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Alright. So, do you feel this sense of belonging in or to South Africa?

Gabrielle: Ya, I think I do.

Int: You feel like you belong in South Africa?

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: You feel like you’re a South African?

Gabrielle: I feel like I’m a South African – I hope I am a South African.

Int: I hope so too – you’re born here, you should be one.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: Have you ever lived overseas?

Gabrielle: Um, no I wouldn’t say I have.

Int: Travelled?

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Where have you gone?

Gabrielle: Do you want me to list all the places?

Int: Might as well, let’s go. \*Laughs.

Gabrielle: \*Laughs. Okay, so it’s Saudi Arabia, and then Abu Dhabi, Dubai… Muscat, Singapore, Thailand, Madagascar, Mauritius… Mozambique… that’s about it.

Int: So, a lot of Arab countries?

Gabrielle: Ya, I feel like an Arab. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs. Which is interesting to say because you say you also feel like a South African.

Gabrielle: Ya, that’s true.

Int: So, when you go to these Arab countries does this sense of being South African change or does it kind of maybe just get solidified or get more fragile while you’re there.

Gabrielle: I feel like it get’s solidified, because when I’m there I miss home, I miss South Africa.

Int: What is it that you miss?

Gabrielle: The people.

Int: South Africans?

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: What is that is a South Africa – what shines out as, ‘okay, that’s a South African’, or maybe this person is ‘Abu Dhiabian’ - I wouldn’t know what you would call people in that area.

Gabrielle: Personality and like how friendly people are in South Africa.

Int: Oh, that’s another that popped in my research last year – I did research on South Africans, and they said, “South Africans are just really friendly people.”

Gabrielle: Ya, they are.

Int: Like we’ll talk to anyone and everyone.

Gabrielle: Overseas people are just flipping rude.

Int: So, your time in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Saudi Arabia. They have massive rules about what women can and cannot do.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: And a lot of people have said that this is a very oppressive state towards women.

Gabrielle: Yeah.

Int: Would you say that is true being someone who has gone there quite often or is this more of a generalised perception of those places?

Gabrielle: Oh, no definitely. It is a very oppressed nation. And the women are treated horribly, like I hated being a woman while I was there.

Int: How is that – like what are the types of things?

Gabrielle: Like you have no freedom, so we couldn’t just go to the shops when we wanted to – someone had to drive you, because you’re not allowed to drive as a woman, up until recently. So, when I was there, you weren’t allowed to drive. Then in like shopping malls there are like different lines for women and men, which is very…

Int: Strange.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: To say the least.

Gabrielle: It just makes you feel very, like you’re being put in a box as a woman, ya.

Int: Did you – what was that feeling, you said you felt very strange, was it sadness, was it anger, was it confusion?

Gabrielle: It was confusion and ‘what it this?’, I’m not used to it, because in South Africa we have such freedom.

Int: Yeah. Well, that’s another one of the questions is, ‘do you feel free within South Africa’?

Gabrielle: Ya, I would say so. Yeah.

Int: I link this question because – I don’t know if you’re aware of the #AmINext? movement?

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: And that movement kind of came along with, ‘how can we say that South African women are free when they can’t even go to the Post Office?’.

Gabrielle: Okay, that’s true.

Int: We have that situation, but we also have a situation like these Arab countries where you can’t even drive a car because you’re a woman.

Gabrielle: Yeah.

Int: So, when we ask this question, ‘free’ in the sense of maybe going to Abu Dhabi, but being free in South Africa, are there limits to your freedom?

Gabrielle: Yes, definitely.

Int: And those limits are placed where and how?

Gabrielle: Like… I don’t feel free when it comes to safety, that’s for sure, because I don’t even feel safe to like walk out of my house. So, it limits me to where I can go, and ya.

Int: I mean you’ve gone overseas as well.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Were any of these the places where you could kind of go out on your own, walk around as a woman just kind walking around at night.

Gabrielle: Yes. So, surprisingly even in Saudi you don’t feel free, you feel safe.

Int: I’ve heard that, because apparently the penalty for crime is like-

Gabrielle: They chop off your hands and stuff.

Int: Yeah, really insane. So, that extreme amount of policing instils a sense of ‘safety-freedom’, I suppose?

Gabrielle: Yes, ya.

Int: Yeah, let’s take a detour that way – we can ask the question, do you think that would work in South Africa is we just did a 180 and were like, ‘Ayt cool, you steal now you lose your hands’?

Gabrielle: No.

Int: No. Why wouldn’t it then work in South Africa if it works so well in – is it in Abu Dhabi or Saudi Arabia?

Gabrielle: Saudi, ya. I don’t think it would work here because if you think about all the crime we have here in South Africa and we don’t catch the criminals because our police system is so shit. Then how would they find these people to…

Int: Chop their hands off.

Gabrielle: Yes, essentially ya.

Int: What is your perception of the South African police force? I don’t know if you’ve ever had to interact with them – let’s start there, have you ever had to interact with the South African Police Force?

Gabrielle: Yes, they’re useless.

Int: General perception they’re just-

Gabrielle: They’re useless.

Int: Do you have any faith in the South African police system?

Gabrielle: No. None whatso ever.

Int: Completely useless, wouldn’t deal with them?

Gabrielle: No. And they’re corrupt so.

Int: That’s also the other thing that we get. Have you ever had pervious experiences of crime, specifically within South Africa?

Gabrielle: What do you mean, I have experienced crime?

Int: Yes.

Gabrielle: Yes, I have.

Int: Would you mind talking about those instances?

Gabrielle: No, I don’t mind talking about those instances. There’s been a few though.

Int: Geez, we can go chronologically, or we can cherry-pick whichever instances you would like to talk about.

Gabrielle: Well, I mean like you get the general pickpocketing like when you’re in a mall. I’ve had a phone stolen out of my handbag while I was shopping. And I was like – but I felt the guy. And I saw the guy standing there and I went to him and I was like, “You took my phone.”  
And he was like, “Oh no, I saw it on the floor.”  
I was like, “No, you took it out of my bag. It was in my handbag.”  
So, there was this guy – we started chasing this guy, and we were in Woolworths, and I mean even security is shit is what I’m saying in this story as well.

Int: So, wait you were chasing the criminal.

Gabrielle: I was chasing him.

Int: The security weren’t?

Gabrielle: No, I had to try call the security. The security were useless.

Int: Okay. So, you were just like going down the middle of the mall after a criminal because he took your phone.

Gabrielle: Ya. And the security guard just ignored us completely, and in the end I was screaming at the tellers like, “This guy just stole my phone! And something needs to be done about it, this is ridiculous.” – he can’t just keep on walking around the mall and potentially steal someone else’s phone. So, another black man who was standing in the que, cause it was around Christmas time – around this time last year, I think.

Int: Oh.

Gabrielle: Yeah, and um… he was standing in the que and he came up to this guy and he just like klapped him through the face, and just started beating him up. And I was just like, “… this works, but it’s not the right kind of …”

Int: Justice?

Gabrielle: Yes. And it’s also not a security guard, it’s not a policeman.

Int: And I think that is a general sense, that South Africans have had to take almost safety and policing into our own hands.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: I mean we fortify our houses.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: We have private security firms, and like you say, a lot of South Africans believe that the police are useless. So, you’re running after the criminal on your own because the security is not doing something.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: And then a fellow – I don’t know if he was South African?

Gabrielle: Yes, he was South African.

Int: A fellow South African had to step up and be like, ‘okay cool, let me take this’- even though we don’t agree with this kind of mob justice.

Gabrielle: No, not at all.

Int: It works. And that’s another thing that came up with the #AmINext? movement. Uynene’s rapist, murder, was, I think, arrested by police and then his house was burnt down, to the ground, by the people, I think, who lived in his village. They literally just took the whole thing into their hands, and they burnt it down. And I think a lot of people saw that as retribution.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: Because it happens quickly – that type of justice happens very quickly. And it often is very violent.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: And that’s another thing, a lot of people said that South Africa has a culture of violence. Is that a statement you would agree with?

Gabrielle: I think so, ya.

Int: We deal with things in a violent manner. Can you think of any examples?

Gabrielle: I mean when you said that, it’s not really an example, but the first thing that came into my mind was like how a lot of South Africans have guns and knives, and walking around – you can’t go into Town and stuff because everyone has like that kind of shit, and you don’t know if you’re going to get stabbed or whatever.

Int: So, I want to reel it back a bit to one of the questions. So, the main thing we are trying to look at here is Safety in South Africa. Do you feel safe in South Africa?

Gabrielle: No.

Int: Are there places in South Africa where you do feel safe?

Gabrielle: No.

Int: Not at all?

Gabrielle: No.

Int: Are there places where you would absolutely not go at all being a woman in South Africa or just being a South African?

Gabrielle: There are places I wouldn’t go alone, but not necessarily places I wouldn’t go.

Int: Okay, so places you wouldn’t go alone would be?

Gabrielle: Into Town, Marabastad, Joburg Town – like CBD. And those kind of things.

Int: I think anyone who goes into Joburg CBD alone or accompanied-

Gabrielle: They’re stupid. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs. I agree, Joburg CBD is another jungle on it’s own.

Gabrielle: Yeah.

Int: And when I say do you have any place in South Africa that you feel safe, does this exclude areas like university, and home, and even your car, or even your friends’ places, or being around your friends, or going to the club?

Gabrielle: No. I never feel safe.

Int: Not at all? Are there no safe zones for you in South Africa?

Gabrielle: There are places where I can get myself to feel safe, so I have to trick myself psychologically to feel safe, but not places I feel completely one hundred percent safe.

Int: So, when you say you have to trick yourself psychologically, what are those tricks that you have to preform on yourself?

Gabrielle: I have to either be like, ‘Oh boyfriend is here with me, I’m fine. My family’s here with me, I’m okay’.

Int: You have to talk yourself down.

Gabrielle: Yes. ‘There’s this security measure, there’s this security measure, I’m okay’, kind of thing.

Int: So, would you say safety it something you think about constantly?

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: It’s always on your mind. This is something you are always aware of.

Gabrielle: Yes, a hundred percent. \*Laughs.

Int: And then when you’re overseas or when you were overseas, in Saudi?

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: Saudi Arabia. You were saying that it was so safe there like you can walk around, yes it is very oppressive for women but it was so safe.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: Was that awareness of safety something you carried with you ot was it something that left you once you arrived in this country?

Gabrielle: I mean like I kept the habit of ‘you don’t just leave your handbag wherever, because that’s just stupid’, and I mean when I was in Saudi I could be home alone and I didn’t freak out or anything. So, I didn’t have to worry about being like… I didn’t have to worry about being paranoid there.

Int: Would you say you are paranoid in South Africa?

Gabrielle: Very.

Int: Do you think that’s a general thing that South Africans share?

Gabrielle: Yeah – well, I think most South Africans, I think.

Int: Most South Africans.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: Yeah, we can move onto this one. So, has – how would you describe life as a woman, a South African woman, living in South Africa?

Gabrielle: I mean in general it’s pretty good. I don’t mind being a woman in South Africa, I just don’t like the fact that… it’s only women that don’t feel – well, I don’t know if I can say it’s only women that don’t feel safe, because I don’t know how men feel because they don’t speak their emotions.

Int: Yeah.

Gabrielle: Ya, but that’s a completely different topic. \*Laughs.

Int: Maybe for the Doctorate. We’ll deal with that at some other point, because I agree with you men don’t really speak their emotions, so we’re not really sure about that. But as a woman you say it’s fairly great being a woman.

Gabrielle: Ya, I don’t mind being a woman, other than physiologically I don’t mind.

Int: Not a fan of that?

Gabrielle: No.

Int: Was is that? Is it more like-

Gabrielle: No, all the shit we have to go through as women.

Int: Can you be a bit more specific?

Gabrielle: Like body changes and having a period.

Int: Yeah, I don’t think any woman get’s their period and goes, “Yeah!”

Gabrielle: \*Laughs. Yeah.

Int: Maybe those who were worried that might be pregnant.

Gabrielle: Yeah, that’s true.

Int: ‘Dodged a bullet’.

Gabrielle: Ya, that’s true. I mean other than that, I love being a woman. In South Africa, yes, ya.

Int: So, this is something I have asked a lot of the participants, because a lot of it – well, us, and I say ‘us’ because we are in the same type of ‘identity category’.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: You’re young, I take it you go out to the clubs.

Gabrielle: Yas.

Int: Yes. What’s it like being a woman in the clubs in South Africa?

Gabrielle: Nerve wrecking.

Int: Nerve wrecking – always watching, the same kind of paranoia.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Or same safety consciousness.

Gabrielle: Always on edge.

Int: Always on edge, always looking around.

Gabrielle: Making sure your glass is always covered, so you don’t get spiked.

Int: Is being spiked something you really worry about when you go out to the clubs.

Gabrielle: Well, I’ve been spiked three times. So, ya. \*Laughs.

Int: A pretty scary experience I take it – I’ve never been spiked myself so I wouldn’t know.

Gabrielle: Um, it wasn’t a fun experience I mean you don’t know what’s going on, so luckily I had people with me that could look after me, but if I didn’t I don’t know what would’ve happened.

Int: Well, that makes a lot of sense. And one of the questions – well, scenarios that I have posed to participants is: I have a cousin coming from overseas. She’s around our age and she want’s to go out to the clubs in South Africa, could you please give her a survival guide of like ‘do’s and do not’s’ to Pretorian clubs.

Gabrielle: Yeah, look goodness. Don’t wear short-shorts or a skirt, don’t wear a dress because they will flip your dress up; if you wear short-shorts they are going to try and grab your ass and they’ll think ‘you’re wanting it’. Don’t drink too much because men take that as a sign or anyone takes that as a sign. And also, when you are drinking make sure you’re covering your drink so you don’t get spiked. Don’t go out alone, cause that’s not safe, I mean…

Int: What’s the suggested amount of people you should go out with?

Gabrielle: More than three.

Int: So, a decent group – a group that would fit into an uber.

Gabrielle: Yes, ya.

Int: So, you’ve alluded to being touched in a club.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Is this something that happens often and you’ve experienced often, or know of happening often.

Gabrielle: Ya, I have experienced it and it’s not a fun experience. I mean some random person think that it’s okay that they can grab your ass or touch your bum. \*Laughs. You know.

Int: It’s very inappropriate.

Gabrielle: Ya, extremely.

Int: That feeling with someone just touching your body – what’s that feeling like?

Gabrielle: You feel very vulnerable in that space. Like you feel very – you’re sense of… like personal space and almost um… what’s the word? Like the ability to say ‘No’ has been taken away from you because they have just done it anyway.

Int: Consent?

Gabrielle: Yeah, ‘consent’, there you go.

Int: One of the things that I do relate this to is, we have a sense of belonging to like our country, our home, but belonging if we boil it down to what it is, it’s something being ours.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: And in a sense our bodies are ours. So, when somebody touches your body inappropriately, do they infringe on your sense of belonging?

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: So, when we stretch that up further to a country’s sense – when someone infringes on your ability to feel safe in a country, do they disrupt your sense of belonging?

Gabrielle: I think so.

Int: So, when your phone was stolen. Did you go, ‘damn this country’, or was it more, ‘damn this man for stealing my phone’?

Gabrielle: ‘Damn this country’, actually ya.

Int: I mean it makes a lot of sense, because you didn’t just talk about this one perpetrator you spoke more about how the security did nothing, how the tellers did nothing, how – did you go to the police after your phone was stolen or did you get the phone back?

Gabrielle: No, because I got the phone back.

Int: If the phone was completely stolen would you go to the police?

Gabrielle: Ya, I would have.

Int: Why, just to filling – for insurance?

Gabrielle: For insurance.

Int: Nothing in the hope of them getting the phone back?

Gabrielle: Oh no, they wouldn’t get the phone back. It’s South Africa.

Int: That’s ya the general sense of our police. Yeah, we’re going to move on. The sense of belonging to South Africa. You said, ‘ya’ you belong in South Africa. Is something you have always felt throughout your life or has it changed?

Gabrielle: I have always felt like a South African, but I must say when my dad moved overseas it was kind of like a, ‘okay, he’s living there, I’m living here, this is weird. I’m not sure where I belong’. You know. But now that he’s back it’s more of, ‘I’m South African, I know I belong here’, you know.

Int: One of the things that seems very popular with South Africans is this notion of leaving.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: So, do you see a foreseeable future for yourself in South Africa?

Gabrielle: Part of me does and part of me doesn’t.

Int: Can we get into that for a bit?

Gabrielle: Yeah, of course.

Int: So, the part of you that says, ‘yes, there is a future for me in this country’. What is that thing that is making you stay?

Gabrielle: Just how beautiful the country is. My family, my friends are here. It’s just, I grew up here. It wasn’t too bad, I mean I had some… horrible experiences, that we can get into later. Um, other than that like I’ve enjoyed life in South Africa, it’s just the reason I wouldn’t, it’s the economy is horrific. Our government is so corrupt it’s scary and it’s not safe.

Int: One of the things that I have been asking participants, because I think this might effect of sense of belonging specifically as women. Would you like to have children someday?

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Is this a country where you would like to raise children?

Gabrielle: I don’t know because – it depends… it depends on my partner, on how he’s feeling, but at the same time… I don’t, but I do see myself raising children here, ya.

Int: ‘Do’, because?

Gabrielle: Because I grew up here.

Int: And you had a pretty good childhood?

Gabrielle: Yeah.

Int: You said, you liked growing up here.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: And you ‘don’t’ because?

Gabrielle: I don’t have a lot of faith in the South African systems like the health system, the government, like anything, ya.

Int: There seems to be this sense that the country is about to collapse.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Do you feel that as well?

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Economically, politically, safety wise, all of it?

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: We’re heading towards this massive collapse?

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: With that in mind is there a sense that you might have to leave?

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Is that something you live with or is that just something you think about some times?

Gabrielle: It’s just something in the back of my head.

Int: So, its constant but not as constant as this safety awareness?

Gabrielle: Yes, ya.

Int: So, when I asked you ‘do you feel safe in South Africa’, you said, “No, not at all. There’s no place in South Africa where you feel safe.”

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: Has this been the same throughout your life or has it changed in different periods?

Gabrielle: No.

Int: Has this become something you realised?

Gabrielle: It’s something that happened after an event last year.

Int: Would you like to talk about it?

Gabrielle: We can. \*Laughs.

Int: What happened?

Gabrielle: So, last year we had an armed robbery. At my house. So, that’s why I don’t feel safe in my house because people were able to break into my house and kind of take away my sense of, my spot. And now that I know that people have gotten into my safe spot and they have been able to steal things and terrorize me with a gun. \*Laughs.

Int: Which is terrifying.

Gabrielle: Ya. And my family. I don’t feel safe at home anymore.

Int: Would you say they took away the sense of home from your house?

Gabrielle: Yes, definitely.

Int: So, your house before and after are two different places?

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Previously when we were talking about the clubs, you said, “Being touched inappropriately, they take away this consent.” And you did say something else – which I can’t remember right now. I will link it in the report. Is that similar to what you experienced during the house robbery?

Gabrielle: Ya, because they took away my sense of safety.

Int: Your consent – for a random stranger to just enter your house.

Gabrielle: Yes, enter private property.

Int: The stages after that, because I suppose that is something that you have to contact the police about?

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: You can’t just deal with it on your own?

Gabrielle: Yes. So, after that situation happened – I mean they took our, they took everything. The only thing they didn’t – luckily we still had a home phone. Which not many homes have anymore. And we don’t anymore, which makes my feeling safe at home even worse, because that was the only way we could reach people after this happened. So, um, my mom phoned my brother, I phoned Darren, my boyfriend, ya… and he came from his flat within two minutes, which is really fast because he lives seven minutes away.

Int: Geez!

Gabrielle: Ya. \*Laughs.

Int: The man flew!

Gabrielle: Ya, and my brother came from Rustenburg within half an hour.

Int: Rustenburg is like an hour away.

Gabrielle: Well, like an hour and a half. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs.

Gabrielle: So, he sped. And then of course we put the alarm off so the security came.

Int: Pressed the panic I take it.

Gabrielle: Yes, pressed the panic button. Yeah, once we had figured out that they – once we had seen that they were actually gone. Um, but a single security person came – one. So, if we called him during the robbery nothing would have like happened. He would have been able to do bugger-all.

Int: He would have joined you and your family.

Gabrielle: Yes, exactly.

Int: Being pointed at with a gun.

Gabrielle: Yes, exactly. Um, then he of course radioed it in to the security network, I’m assuming, and ya. Then, I don’t know if you know this, the CPF? The Community Protection Force.

Int: Oh ya, in Monument Park.

Gabrielle: Yes. So, then they came as well so there was a whole bunch of security cars and then cops also came.

Int: So, the police were almost the last people you called?

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Which I mean I understand-

Gabrielle: Well, no. We didn’t actually call them, someone else called them for us.

Int: Oh. Maybe the security company or the CPF?

Gabrielle: I’m assuming one of them ya.

Int: I find it very interesting that the first people that you immediately call are family and a boyfriend.

Gabrielle: Yeah, well other than ringing the panic.

Int: Why is that? Other than ringing the panic button, in the meantime phoning family and boyfriend. Um, do you have any idea why that was?

Gabrielle: \*Sighs. I think… in a panic state I didn’t know what else to do other than go to what I thought was safe in that moment, which in my head is my boyfriend.

Int: He’s a safe zone?

Gabrielle: Yes. And I think my mom just went, ‘I need to tell’, my brother, to let him know like, ‘This just happened’.

Int: To his entire family.

Gabrielle: Yes, ya. To just let him know that we are all okay, but this just happened. So, I mean if I had the opportunity over again, I would still call \*boyfriend.

Int: In that order – would you get those people in that order there again?

Gabrielle: Yeah.

Int: The following night – I don’t know if you stayed there the following night or did you maybe go to a hotel or a family’s house or somewhere?

Gabrielle: We stayed at home.

Int: Okay how was that first night?

Gabrielle: \*Laughs.

Int: Any sleep, I mean?

Gabrielle: No, none.

Int: No, I didn’t expect.

Gabrielle: Yeah, so I take a sleeping tablet every night because ADHD plus Concerta, plus insomnia. It just ya, it’s a mess. So, I take a sleeping tablet every night, that night I had to take two – or like one and a half. But it – I think I took two different ones, actually.

Int: Had a little bit of a party.

Gabrielle: No, not at all. \*Laughs.

Int: So, lay awake even with these meds in your body.

Gabrielle: Yes, and at the same time… boyfriend came and stayed at our house for a solid two weeks. Slept in my room with me, I moved my brother’s old mattress into my room and he slept on the floor.

Int: And slept better knowing that he was there?

Gabrielle: I mean relatively, but at the same time, ‘What would he do if something were to happen’. So, it helped that he was there because I felt more safe with him there, but at the same time I know if something were to happen it’s going to happen anyway, you know.

Int: This knowing, ‘If something is going to happen, it’s going to happen anyway’, did you have that knowing before something happened?

Gabrielle: No.

Int: Did you almost have this false sense of security?

Gabrielle: Yes, completely.

Int: And then this terrible event happens, and you’re completely stripped of this sense?

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: This wanting to maybe stay in South Africa was that more of an option before this event happened?

Gabrielle: Yes, definitely.

Int: After it happened was that one of the few things that crossed your mind , ‘Maybe we should just leave’?

Gabrielle: Oh definitely! I mean we wanted to move house because-

Int: Which I mean is very understandable.

Gabrielle: Yes, and I mean that’s been my whole family’s safe space for like…

Int: Like you said you grew up there.

Gabrielle: Ya, so like 21 years I guess, because I was at the other house for two years, I guess, because I don’t remember. But ya.

Int: The only home you have ever known.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: And now that home gets taken away. Now, would you say your house is a house and no longer a home?

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Have you guys been able to recover a little bit of that ‘home’, a little bit of what you used to have – I don’t know how long it’s been between now and then.

Gabrielle: It’s been a year and… three months. So, I mean it’s been a long period of time, but it’s been a struggle for me the most. I don’t know why I’m the one in my whole family that’s struggling the most, but ya. They, I think, they feel more at home than I do, but I still struggle to – like when the incident happened I was sitting on the couch watching Tv.

Int: So, completely relaxed, chilling at home basically.

Gabrielle: Ya, and my dad and I heard this loud bang and then I turned around and I just see this man with a gun behind me and I was just like, ‘\*Sighs’.

Int: ‘This is happening’.

Gabrielle: Ya, and I was like – but at the same time, it’s like, ‘This is a dream?’, you know. So, I still don’t really like to just sit on the couch and watch Tv anymore because it doesn’t feel right, you know.

Int: Ya, ‘it could happen again’.

Gabrielle: Ya, exactly. So, ya no the house doesn’t really feel like a home to me.

Int: Could you pinpoint maybe the moment when you were able to sleep or are you still not able to sleep well?

Gabrielle: I mean I still have nightmares. I moved out of my room into my brother’s old room two months ago, and when I moved into his room I thought, “I want to get a Trellidor for the balcony.” And my parents told me, ‘No’, I’m stupid for wanting that. So, it took me a while to actually fall asleep in that room, as well, but… ya. Sleeping has gotten better, it did take months though, literally months.

Int: To get that point, ‘Okay I can sleep now, I’m okay’.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: Well, very tough conversation to have. Thank you so much for taking me down.

Gabrielle: Its okay.

Int: It really is a tough conversation to have. Um, so maybe let’s move onto a happier conversation, especially, because you have mentioned a Trellidor. So, there seems to be, I don’t want to say trend, but a ‘style’ of South African homes where they are very fortified.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: Can we go through the ways you have fortified your house?

Gabrielle: Well, I mean, since the robbery we have done it even more.

Int: Increased the fortification?

Gabrielle: Ya. I mean, so, if we start on the outside of the house, um, we have our boundary wall with an electric fence. Then um… after the robbery happened we put an alarm on our gate, so as soon as the gate opens, the alarm goes off. Then the gate motor didn’t have a cage over it – which was stupid, because that’s how they got in.

Int: Retrospect always knows better.

Gabrielle: Yep. Now it has a cage over it. Then the front door, just had a single lock, now when they replaced the lock – I got them to put a triple lock in – a bit excessive, but it helps.

Int: Whatever you have to do, ya.

Gabrielle: It helps me. Also on the one wall, because after this incident happened, a few months after, people just jumped over our wall, underneath the electric fence.

Int: Talk about kicking people when they’re down, geez.

Gabrielle: Ya, so they just jumped over the wall, under the electric fence and went straight to the guest room and started breaking in there. Luckily, they didn’t get anything – got scared by the alarm going off and ran away. But still it’s the fact that they were able to get in. So, after that happened, we put spikes on the wall where they got in. And then the next… panel of wall after that – ya, next section of wall after that, I don’t know what to call it. Um… ya, so that’s already quite a bit. And then we’ve got an alarm system, for outside we have a few beams, and then for inside we have an alarm system. Then upstairs also an alarm system, but not for when we are sleeping at night, also for just outside, like the balcony and the patio and all of that. And then we have a downstairs door, so it’s like a roller-shutter door on the stairs that like blocks off the top and the bottom of the house. Ya.

Int: So, security inside and outside?

Gabrielle: Ya. Oh, and the dogs, I don’t know if – I mean they bark.

Int: I mean they bark.

Gabrielle: I would never want them to be like, defend me, because like that’s not what my dogs are for.

Int: Ya, they’re pets.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: They’re not guard dogs.

Gabrielle: Ya, but when they bark it also helps alert, you know.

Int: I think that also helps alert other people around the area.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Also, when you’ve got – I mean I have three dogs, and I know my neighbour freaks out when all three dogs are going at it all at the same time, over and over, and over.

Gabrielle: Yes, imagine five.

Int: That’s a lot. What if someone just walks past your gate, it must be complete chaos?

Gabrielle: Luckily the dogs don’t go into the front garden.

Int: Oh, lovely. So, you said your dad moved to Saudi?

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Was his house there as fortified as your house here?

Gabrielle: Oh no, not at all. There wasn’t a boundary wall firstly, it was like in a compound so it was in like a baby estate kind of thing. And there weren’t like, I mean you could walk straight to the front door from the road.

Int: Which I mean is very weird for South Africans.

Gabrielle: Ya. I mean there were locks on the doors because I mean you still don’t want someone to walk into your house.

Int: Like a rational person wouldn’t want.

Gabrielle: Yes, ya, but there’s no electric fences, no alarm systems, ya.

Int: Which in itself is really weird.

Gabrielle: Yes. And then even the other houses outside of compounds, like the Arab houses, just have boundary walls. Just to separate them, some didn’t even have boundary walls.

Int: So, with the boundary walls, because you said it was to separate them, so they weren’t really for safety, they were just to block off the houses?

Gabrielle: Yes. And also because Arabs are really weird about like their privacy, they have really high boundary walls so you can’t see in, so it’s also not really a safety thing, it’s just to hide their personal lives.

Int: Very interesting. Alright, we’re just going to move onto the next question. Are there any daily safety precautions that you take in South Africa?

Gabrielle: Yes. I… while I’m like reversing I check that I’m not gonna be attacked by a human while I’m reversing my car or while I’m driving actually as well; I mean anytime you’re driving you’re cautious, looking left and right making sure no one’s going to mug you or hijack you. Then… when I’m out in the shops and I have my bag with me it’s always locked – zipped, not locked. Zipped closed and always if it’s an over the shoulder bag then under my arm, or if its an over the body – like a cross body bag – then its, I make sure it’s in front of me and I’m holding it. You know. I’m always aware of where my bag is, and always holding it so I can feel if someone is touching it.

Int: I mean you have had someone take your phone out of your bag.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: So, same type of awareness before and after or just increased afterwards?

Gabrielle: Probably just increased.

Int: Okay.

Gabrielle: Then I sleep with a panic button next to my bed, but we all do now. We have a panic button in like every room. \*Laughs. And… daily routine… I don’t know, just not leaving my phone anywhere like even at work I don’t leave my phone anywhere, like I always keep my phone with me. Ya.

Int: And university? You go to?

Gabrielle: Tuks.

Int: Tuks University. When you’re on campus do you feel safer there because it is enclosed by a kind of security barrier. Getting into Tuks, as a Tuks student myself, it used to be a lot more tough with the biometric scanning and everything, and now it’s just kind of your student card. I don’t know if they are going to bring back the biometrics, because they took it away for COVID, and now COVID is over basically. I don’t know, maybe they wont bring it back because now they will have to get the first and second years, plus the new intake.

Gabrielle: I think when you register with tuks you get your thumb print – you have to scan when you get your card.

Int: Yeah. Even during COVID.

Gabrielle: I think so.

Int: I mean it wouldn’t have been that difficult, I mean sanitiser.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: I have to go get my Masters card, I haven’t done that yet.

Gabrielle: Oh, I’ve got mine.

Int: Any other safety precautions – oh, no wait, now we’re talking about Tuks. Sorry, my bad. Ya, so when you enter Tuks, it is a massive safety area.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: Do you feel safer in there because they have the safety barrier almost?

Gabrielle: No.

Int: Still watching your phone, still watching your bag – everything.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: Well, I suppose you have your laptop with you as well.

Gabrielle: Yeah, exactly.

Int: Which is like an added thing.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: So, similar type of awareness in and out of Tuks.

Gabrielle: Yes, exactly.

Int: And I mean, parking is an issue at Tuks.

Gabrielle: Oh parking is horrible, especially if you have to park on the side of the road outside of Tuks.

Int: I have never parked on the side of the road outside of Tuks.

Gabrielle: Really?

Int: No, never not even once.

Gabrielle: Don’t. You never know if your car is going to be there when you come out or not.

Int: I know so many people who have literally gone to varsity and then were like, ‘ya, my car got stolen yesterday’.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: And I mean, that’s terrible. There are people who wrote semester tests, they did not go well, and they’re like, ‘bru, my car was stolen’.

Gabrielle: \*Laughs. What a terrible day.

Int: Ya, oh my soul.

Gabrielle: So, I mean it’s like that, but walking around on campus I never felt safe, because… I always heard stories of things happening on campus. Like people being raped and … what’s it… mugged. I was going to say stabbed and then they steal things – people getting mugged.

Int: On campus, Tuks campus?

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: It’s not something that Tuks publicises often.

Gabrielle: Ya no, of course. So, when I heard that – “Cool, I’m going to take pepper spray with me.”

Int: Is that something you carry around everyday?

Gabrielle: Yeah.

Int: Do you think it’s normal for South African women to carry around pepper spray, or even just South African men – I don’t know of any men personally, out of my guy friends.

Gabrielle: I know a lot of guys that carry around knives or like those sticks in their cars.

Int: I know of that. I know one of my girl friends she carries a pair of knuckle dusters in her purse and I think it is super, super entertaining because it’s like the pretty little pink purse and then if you look like in the side pocket there’s like a proper pair of knuckle dusters. And she can do damage.

Gabrielle: Ya, no definitely – to your knuckles as well. \*Laughs.

Int: That one can punch. I’ve seen her punch like a punching bag before – I think she used to do boxing , but it was long ago.

Gabrielle: Hectic.

Int: It was always fun to see though.

Gabrielle: But I feel like most South African women have – well, I don’t know about the men, but pepper spray ya.

Int: Pepper spray is your kind of ‘go to’?

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: I don’t know if you were, being the same age, when I had my orientation at Tuks there was this kind of ‘safety briefing’, and the head of Tuks safety is a really cool dude, I really like this guy; and he was kind of just like, “Ladies, pepper spray this way not that way.” Like he had to show us how to spray pepper spray and everything. So, I don’t know if you attended that lecture, it was quite funny.

Gabrielle: No.

Int: It was very entertaining, I must say. He was like talking about how – how you should like lock your car. He was like, “When you lock your car, you don’t ‘joop-joop’, and leave. You go ‘joop-joop’, and pull.”

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Because of the remote jamming. So those are one of the things that I do constantly, I always, always check my car door.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: Not that I think anyone’s going to take my car – they may have a problem with one of the tyres.

Gabrielle: Oh ya. That’s true.

Int: Any other daily safety precautions?

Gabrielle: I forgot about checking the car thing.

Int: Oh the car jamming.

Gabrielle: Ya. I mean like, when you’re paying, making sure no one sees your pin. So that, so they don’t steal your credit card. And if like you go to an ATM, you have to look behind you because that’s-

Int: I don’t go to ATMs anymore.

Gabrielle: No, I haven’t gone in a while.

Int: I just don’t deal with cash anymore.

Gabrielle: Yeah, I don’t think a lot of people do.

Int: Which I mean, I think it can be a little bit – because we’ve got car guards and sometimes I want to give them like R5 or R2, but I can’t go to the bank and be like, “Hey can I get R200’s worth of R5’s because I need them for the parking guards.”

Gabrielle: Ya, they do that but.

Int: I take it you’re in the Monument Park area, same as me.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: So, we have a Spar down here.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: The one FNB bank, I was there to draw money – one of the few times that I had to draw cash. I go there and they’re like, “Oh the machine’s not working.”  
And I’m like, “What?”  
And the women behind me is like, “Don’t touch it, don’t do anything” – because the guys thing got swallowed mid-transaction. His card got swallowed and the thing just started freaking out. And she was like, “Don’t touch it, don’t do anything because that a signal that they’re trying to clone your card, like the ATM has been corrupted; someone’s come and done some funny things to it.”  
So, I learnt a lot in the que that day.

Gabrielle: You can’t even draw money safely.

Int: Oh no, that’s another thing as well. And I mean, Monument Park is a fairly safe area.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: I mean it’s Monument Park, it’s – I don’t want to say its upper-middle class, but.

Gabrielle: I guess it is.

Int: Upper-middle class.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: We were previously talking about these almost ‘no go’ zones in Pretoria, well South Africa.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: One of them I think is Hatfield – not Hatfield, Hillbrow, Joburg CBD.

Gabrielle: Yes, ya.

Int: I wouldn’t go to Hillbrow CBD. And then obviously the Capeflats, one of the places you just don’t go.

Gabrielle: Ya no, definitely.

Int: The police don’t even go to the Capeflats anymore, like that’s-

Gabrielle: Really.

Int: Ya, the military even went into the Capeflats and then left.

Gabrielle: \*Laughs. Funny.

Int: Ya, the gangs were like, “Come at me bru.” It was intense. In Pretoria you said CBD in Pretoria.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: Any other areas in Pretoria?

Gabrielle: I never used to be a fan of Tuks, like Hillcrest area.

Int: Hatfield.

Gabrielle: Ya, Hatfield – not Hillcrest. Hillcrest is okay. I never used to be a fan of Hatfield area because… it’s…

Int: It’s like CBD adjacent.

Gabrielle: Ya, exactly. And I mean, it’s next to Sunnyside which is also not good anymore when it used to be. And I mean, you also have to be careful when you’re riding around Hatfield, even though that’s where our varsity is, so.

Int: Ya, I mean the amount of people I have heard of their cars getting stolen – like fellow students. Someone I knew, literally went to write a semester test came out and his car was stolen. Talk about a bad day.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: Um, I’ve heard of students getting like pickpocketed and being – okay, this is a friend of mine and he’s a little bit dumb. He was in the middle of – no, he was leaving Town, so he was in like Sunnyside area. In his dad’s convertible, phone out, blasting music.

Gabrielle: With the convertible down?

Int: Ya, with the convertible down, blasting music, phone out, chilling at the robot like this. And a guy came up to him and was like, “Yo, give me your phone.”  
And he was like, looked at him, laughed and then said “No.”  
So, the guy whipped out a gun and was like, “Give me your phone.”  
And then ya.

Gabrielle: Oh.

Int: Ya, like I said not really a smart individual.

Gabrielle: No, it’s not smart having like the roof down and all of that – and having the phone out at a robot. I mean, you don’t do that.

Int: Ya, something you don’t do. Like I always chill with my phone down here when I’m trying to change the song. That’s the only reason why I would be on my phone.

Gabrielle: You keep everything where people can’t see it while you’re driving, like handbags in the boot.

Int: Ya, handbag in the boot – that’s another one. My cousin once took on someone – this was like years and years ago. She immigrated to Germany. And she had her handbag in the backseat and a s guy went and broke through the back widow, tried to grab her bag and she just pepper sprayed the living daylights out of him.

Gabrielle: Was she in Germany or was she?

Int: No, she was in South Africa. It was by Lynwood right by the highway onto Lynwood. Right there at that robot.

Gabrielle: Oh.

Int: So, this guy is like halfway into the car just crying and screeching, and she literally just put foot and drove.

Gabrielle: \*Laughs.

Int: This guy was like stuck in the car – it was a whole thing – she like drove over him, he was. He disappeared, but I’m sure he went to a hospital somewhere, he had to have.

Gabrielle: Goodness.

Int: She emptied like an entire thing of pepper spray into him face. It was intense. She had to pull over on the side of the road because the car just reeked of pepper spray. She like technically pepper sprayed herself.

Gabrielle: Ya! So, like how can she see then?

Int: I don’t even know, but I think you’re just so pumped up on adrenaline – well you’ll know.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: You’re so pumped up on adrenaline you don’t really think afterwards.

Gabrielle: Ya. Hectic.

Int: Ya, just ‘go, go, go’. Ya, we’ve gone through all of those… So, we have talked about how this sense of home for you have been disrupted.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Previously, before you had this armed robbery happen, what was that sense of home?

Gabrielle: It was just a place I could go to to get away from life, you know. Just disappear and put everything like in the back of my mind and just relax and-

Int: Breathe for a bit?

Gabrielle: Ya. Just escape.

Int: One of the participants related it to almost a sense of calm.

Gabrielle: Ya, exactly.

Int: Just feeling calm, very relaxed.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: Is that similar to a sense of belonging or would you say they are different?

Gabrielle: I think they are similar, but not the same.

Int: You’d say they differ somehow?

Gabrielle: Yes, ya.

Int: When we were talking about this sense of belonging, I asked you if it was a place or if it was a people. Um, do you still say it’s a people or does place play a role?

Gabrielle: I think it’s mainly people, but I do think place does play a role – like where you are located. And also if you have a safe space to go to. I think that definitely also plays a roll, but my main thing is people.

Int: So, you’re flying back from one of your trips overseas – you fly back and you land in South Africa. What are one of those things where you’re like, “Okay cool, I’m in South Africa, this is my country.”

Gabrielle: \*Laughs. The first thing, as soon as you land, you get off the plan and you go to fricking customs and you say hello to them and they’re like, “Hello.”

Int: \*Laughs. Like lack of service?

Gabrielle: Yes! And then they take so long and the ques are so long, and you’re like, “Cool I’m in South Africa.”

Int: ‘This is home – the inefficiency’.

Gabrielle: Ya, and even just like driving out of the airport, and then you see a taxi and they’re driving horribly, but it’s like-

Int: ‘I missed you, you little rascal’.

Gabrielle: Ya. \*Laughs.

Int: What are the things that you actually do miss when your overseas.

Gabrielle: My animals.

Int: Of course, whoever doesn’t is a psychopath.

Gabrielle: And my friends.

Int: Whoever doesn’t is a psychopath.

Gabrielle: And then, like I said before, the friendliness of South Africans. I mean it depends where you go, I mean… the Madagascar people were very friendly, Arabs are horrible people. \*Laughs. They’re just rude people. Um… there are like other nationalities in Saudi and Abu Dhabi, and all of that, who are better people but they have learnt to be rude, because of the Arabs. So, I miss the friendliness. And then just like the, like people being courteous and being able to like serve you – but serve you with like… not like a slave ya. being able to just help you, ya.

Int: A willingness to help?

Gabrielle: Yes, ya.

Int: And I agree with that, this sense of… there is this want to help, and this want to create a community in South Africa.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: I mean I got into a lift the other day and had a conversation with a complete stranger. And when she leaves the lift she goes, “Merry Christmas and have a happy New Year.”  
And I was like, ‘geez, this is lovely’.

Gabrielle: Yes, ya.

Int: Like I might be going overseas next year and I think that’s something I’m going to miss drastically – South Africans. What’s one thing you don’t miss?

Gabrielle: Paranoia. \*Laughs.

Int: I don’t blame you. On that topic, so we kind of spoke about this like false sense of safety or this false sense of security. We create a sense of safety in South Africa.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: We manufacture our safety almost. We fortify our homes, we carry around pepper spray, we are constantly aware of places. This manufactured safety – I think we have actually answered this – is any of that real or is ait all a façade?

Gabrielle: Which part, like the manufacturing of safety or like feeling?

Int: No the creation of our safety – that creation of safety, have we actually managed to create safety or the safety that we have created is not actually safety it’s just this belief in the safety?

Gabrielle: I don’t think it is – I think it’s just a belief that. It’s just helping people think that they are more safe even though… if there’s a will, there’s a way. If people want to get into your house, or people want to steal something, or if people want to do something to you or whatever.

Int: It’s going to happen.

Gabrielle: Yes, ya. It doesn’t matter how, if they want to, they will. So, it’s definitely just this idea of being safe and helping people feel safe in their own homes. I guess ya.

Int: So, living in South Africa, what’s your biggest fear?

Gabrielle: Someone breaking into my house again.

Int: So, a reoccurrence of what you know now is possible.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Before your armed robbery, what would you have said if your biggest fear, something similar or something else?

Gabrielle: I mean like being robbed ya. But like, I never thought it would be with a gun. So, I’m quite afraid of guns and what can happen. Like the different kind of scenarios that can unfold with a gun-

Int: Involved.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: There’s one quote in America it says, um, let me just remember it properly. ‘The one thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun’. Is that something you agree with.

Gabrielle: No.

Int: So, you wouldn’t even get a gun for yourself now, for protection?

Gabrielle: No.

Int: You don’t like guns, you don’t?

Gabrielle: Nope, don’t like guys. I think guns are a stupid invention. I don’t know why we need guys, because… the bad guys use guns and then the cops use guns to-

Int: Stop the bad guy.

Gabrielle: Yes, and it’s just like if there were no guns.

Int: We wouldn’t need guns.

Gabrielle: But then again, where there’s a will there’s a way. They will find something else. So, I will never have a gun – I might have, okay not a gun that shoots real bullets, I’ll have one maybe like a umm, the one with a gas chamber – what’s it?

Int: Oh, like a pellet gun. Like the look very real.

Gabrielle: Yes, exactly.

Int: Which is quite intimidating.

Gabrielle: Ya, so after the robbery I really thought of getting myself one of those, because I thought if I was in a situation and I was two steps ahead of them and I got this gun out and I started shooting the pellets at the, maybe they would run, you know. So, maybe I would get that kind of gun but not another. Not even hunting guns of anything.

Int: Just not a fan of guys at all?

Gabrielle: Not a fan of guns.

Int: I understand you, like my dad has a gun and he had to reapply-

Gabrielle: Gun licence.

Int: His gun licence and all of that. And he got back his gun, and I agree with the fact that is there is a gun in the house everyone should know how to handle a gun.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: Just to prevent accidents.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: You should know how to hold a gun, you should know where the safety is. Not necessarily how to shoot it, you just need to know how to handle a gun – god forbid you have to.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: And just holding it in my hand it was just something I didn’t like. A lot of people will say they will pick a gun and will feel strength and like power – I don’t know if you’ve held a gun before?

Gabrielle: I haven’t. Not a real gun.

Int: Not something you want to do at all?

Gabrielle: No. I mean, we actually have two guns in our house. I don’t know where they are, only my dad and my oldest brother know where they are. I don’t want to know where they are. And apparently the bullets and the gun are separate.

Int: I think that might be according to law or just general gun safety, you should keep these things separate.

Gabrielle: I think it’s general – ya, I don’t know what the gun law is in South Africa.

Int: Because like kids sometimes find their dad’s gun and – I mean, this has happened before. Kids have found their parents guns and think they are playing, I don’t know Call of Duty or something, and they shoot their bother and are like, “Why didn’t you respawn.”

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: That stuff has happened before.

Gabrielle: Ya. I’ve heard so many stories. I mean they have movies and books about it so.

Int: Yeah. Ya, actually… oh, that’s what I wanted to ask. So, being a woman in South Africa, there is this sense that there is a target on our backs.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: And you could relate this to our extremely high levels of gender based violence and you can relate this to our extraordinarily high rates of rape. And there’s an author of a fantastic novel, I do suggest that everyone read it; the title seems a lot more gruesome than what the book actually is, it’s called ‘Rape: A South African nightmare’.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Excellently written book, fantastically done. And the author kind of talks about this in the Introduction when she says, “What’s going to happen?”  
So, we can’t fight violence with violence because that just equals more violence. And we’ve kind of spoken about this with guns, we have guns because there are guns.

Gabrielle: Yeah.

Int: And it’s just causing such a problem. And she kind pf goes to this point and she says, “Okay, what will happen?” – are we going to get to a standstill like Iraq – Iran not Iraq. Where these women have gone, ‘enough is a enough’, like there is a point where will women will break and we have to push back. But that has been met with extreme amounts of oppression, but even in that amount of oppression there’s been a lot of fight back.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Do you think that will happen in South Africa, that there will come a point where South African women have basically said, “This is enough it’s time to fight back.” Or will we keep on going the way we have been going?

Gabrielle: Gosh… I mean… part of me thinks some women have wanted to, but I wonder if like – if it was me I would be too scared. I would be too scared to stand up and fight, like fight it. Maybe just because I’m such a paranoid person, um… I mean, you never know.

Int: You never know.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: So during the #AmINext? movement, I mena I think you were at Tuks during this time?

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: When the news broke about Uynene – were you on campus when you found out or?

Gabrielle: No.

Int: Where were you?

Gabrielle: I was at home.

Int: Were you on campus the following days when the activism kind of happened.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Because kind of all the universities in South Africa banded together and we had a memorial service – and that kind of spilled out into this kind of week, two week long thing of activism where a lot of women were saying, well, asking, ‘Am I next?’.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: Is that a fear you share – like I could be next. I think it’s a very rational thing to think about.

Gabrielle: Ya, I mean, it’s something in the back of my mind, but it’s not a constant thing. My bigger fear is safety – not worrying about-

Int: Gender-based violence.

Gabrielle: Yes, or being rapped, like.

Int: More the house robbery.

Gabrielle: Yes, ya. More like…

Int: Someone invading your space, taking your things.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: So, with this #AmINext? , the weeks of activism that followed, it was a lot of women who were coming out saying, “Listen, this is something we think about, like ‘am I next’. This is a legitimate question that we have asked ourselves and our girl friends. This is something we think about.” And then this was followed with protests. And a lot of these calls for, I would say ‘help’, were met with ‘well not all men’. And I do think this ‘#AmINext?’ was trending with ‘MenAreTrash’.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Do you want to get into that for a moment.

Gabrielle: Ya, I don’t agree with that hashtag that all men are trash because not all men are trash, but I do agree it made the #NotAllMen for the #AmINext? movement – but I don’t agree with it because men can also put an effort in to stop it. I mean you can talk to your friends about it, you can talk to colleagues, acquaintances, ya.

Int: That’s what I think and was my biggest issue with it, there was this plea like, ‘this is something we think about like, help’, and there were men who came out and were like, ‘ya this is a serious issue’.

Gabrielle: But they don’t do anything about it.

Int: And then #MenAreTrash came out and a lot of men were like, ‘not all men’.

Gabrielle: Ya.

Int: I think a lot of women were just like, ‘we know, we’re just saying we would like your help’.

Gabrielle: Yes, exactly.

Int: In this vein of thought, because we basically did just say it – I mean, it did just turn into more fighting.

Gabrielle: Yes.

Int: Are these hashtag movements doing as much good as much bad as they are causing?

Gabrielle: I don’t think so.

Int: They’re not useful at all?

Gabrielle: I don’t actually – I think they are useful for informing people about what is actually happening, but as for doing something I don’t think they are actually useful.

Int: So, to get the word out, great, but aside from actual change.

Gabrielle: No.

Int: So, what do you think will actually have to happen for there to be actual change in South Africa?

Gabrielle: I mean more influential people need to get involved. I mean the government, the police force, whoever, but it just can’t be the general South African population.

Int: Everyday people.

Gabrielle: Ya. And it can’t just be like a need to be-

Int: A massive-

Gabrielle: A greater movement. Ya.

Int: Alright, um, let me just double check that I’ve got everything that I wanted to speak about here…yep. That’s basically all that I have for you today. Thank you so much for giving me your stories and your time. I know we didn’t have the most fun conversation ever, but ya, thank you for your honestly and your candour.

Gabrielle: It’s a pleasure.

Int: You really, really, have helped me out so much in my research. If you have any questions, concerns, deep-seated worries you are more than welcome to ask them now, or anything you would like to add, you are more than welcome to put it now.

Gabrielle: I think I’m good.

Int: \*Laughs. All good. You also have my email address, so if you come across anything that you’re like, ‘oh this might be useful to Simone’s research’, you are more than welcome to send it through to me – that will be greatly appreciated.

Gabrielle: Prefect.

Int: But ya, like I said thank you so much for your time and ya, have a great day.

Gabrielle: Thank you.