Individual Interview 4 – Ella

(Full time: 45:53)

Int: Alright, hello, welcome. How are you?

Ella: I’m good, how are you?

Int: Great. Okay, so I’m just going to give you a quick overview of what we’re going to get into today, and then we’re going to get into it. So, obviously you have read and understood the consent form?

Ella: Yeah, I did.

Int: Okay. In reading and understanding the consent form you know that we’re going to be talking about safety and belonging, specifically in relation to South Africa.

Ella: Mmm, yes.

Int: So, basically a broad overview: we’re going to be looking at the concept of belonging, specifically the emotional side of belonging, and then from there we’re going to have a look at your ‘South African belonging’ – being a South African women – and then we’re going to look at safety, and then lastly we’re just going to end off on what does that all mean together; so belonging, safety, and South Africa.

Ella: South Africa and safety don’t go together, but yeah. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs. Brilliant quote! I love how I’m going to start my paper off with ‘South Africa and safety don’t go together’.

Ella: The really don’t.

Int: No. Well, we’ll get into that in a moment, I just need to get some background information. So, just to get an idea of who you are.

Ella: Okay.

Int: Your name, your age, where are you working, are you studying, um ya.

Ella: Ah, my name is \*Ella, I go to school – well I go to Mancosa, I’m a student, don’t work anymore. I live – wait, should I tell you where I live or like?

Int: Ya, where you live; where you’ve been staying, have you been moving around a bit?

Ella: Ya, I live in Pretoria North. Yeah, we just moved, not so long ago, this year, but ya.

Int: Where’d you move from?

Ella: We moved [in] still the same area because you know how my parents got divorced and everything.

Int: Oh, I’m so sorry, that’s terrible. Not a fun thing to go through.

Ella: Ya, its really not. So, we had to move places and ya.

Int: Quickly, just so I can get it for the record, what are you studying?

Ella: I’m studying digital marketing.

Int: Oh okay. Alright, so that’s our background information. So, we’re going to start off on the concept of belonging. Um, its this notion – it’s got two sides to it basically, we have this emotional said and then we’ve got a political side to belonging.

Ella: Okay.

Int: So, when we look at the emotional side of belonging, I want to know, from you, what does it feel like to belong?

Ella: It feels like – I don’t know, when you say belonging, it just feels like home. It feels like safe, you know. Ya that’s what is to me – to feel safe and to feel at home wherever you are, ya.

Int: So, before we go into the broader of South Africa. Where are those places where you feel like you belong?

Ella: Um, home.

Int: It’s just home, yeah?

Ella: Yeah, just home. Literally, just home because everywhere else is just uncomfortable cause there’s people you don’t know, there’s strangers, and yeah, it’s just not comfortable. So, it’s just home with the people that you know. Ya, home.

Int: So, I’m just interested because you’ve now moved homes recently. Did you feel a shift in your belonging or was it kind of constant throughout?

Ella: No, it was constant throughout because my family still stayed the same, it was just the area. We just moved areas that’s all. Yeah, that’s all. But you have to like learn everything else, like ‘oh where’s the nearest shop’, and you know, stuff like that. That has been like throwing me off, but everything’s okay other than that, ya.

Int: Alright well, let’s have a look at the broader. So, do you feel as though you belong in and to South Africa?

Ella: Mmm, only cause I was born here, yes.

Int: So, the fact that you were born here is the reason why you feel like you belong here?

Ella: Mmm, there’s no other place that I know.

Int: There is no other place you know, so this is it?

Ella: Yeah, this is it for me ya.

Int: Is that the same thing that makes you South African, or are there things that make you South African?

Ella: I think there are certain things that make you South African, like there’s certain cultures, a certain things that you know being South African, and only being like South African, I guess, you could only know that, so. It’s a sense of culture as well, I’m guessing – I’m not really sure, I’ve never really thought about it that hard, but ya. Being born here as well. It’s just what, ya, makes you feel South African.

Int: Have you ever like left the country?

Ella: No, I haven’t.

Int: I think that could be quite interesting if you ever leave the country and come back, I think that might -

Ella: Yeah, then I’ll understand how it feels like.

Int: So, um, ooo, okay we just skipped those. Um, this sense of belonging, so your sense of being South African, from what you’ve said – it’s been quite constant throughout your life?

Ella: Yea, it’s been quite constant, yes.

Int: Have you ever questioned it?

Ella: No.

Int: No one has ever questioned it?

Ella: No.

Int: Just always been South African and that’s good.

Ella: And that’s it, that’s all I know, ya, again. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs. Yeah, and then we’re going to move onto the aspect of being a women in South Africa. So, how would you describe your life as a woman living in South Africa?

Ella: I would describe it as dangerous.

Int: Dangerous.

Ella: Living in South Africa. Ya, because um, we’re not safe at all, so it’s quite – like you never know. One day you could go out and never come back and that’s how it feels living in South Africa. It’s just, it’s scary being a woman in South Africa, it’s been scary.

Int: Is that a constant thing.

Ella: I think it starts early – yeah, I think it got worse over time. Now that we see all of these stories about all of these women like getting raped, getting kidnapped, being killed, ya it’s an extreme sport to be a woman in South Africa. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs. I like that, ‘it’s an extreme sport’. With this, like understanding of being a woman in South Africa, it’s a dangerous living situation. Is this something you’ve always been aware of or is it something you became aware of?

Ella: I became aware of it over time. I think, um, because like I’m grown now and I’m 23 and, you know, I go out with my friends, you have to be like aware of your surroundings like all the time; you have to be like aware of these things and you have to know, and it does happen a lot to people around my age, you know, you get like spiked in the club or something. Ya, so you have to be very aware. But only now.

Int: Only now?

Ella: Only now, yeah recently.

Int: On that topic are there like any specific safety precautions that you take? So, lets say you’re going on a night out are there certain safety measures that you take?

Ella: My friends and I have a safe word. \*Laughs.

Int: No.

Ella: So, if there’s like a guy who is like irritating – lets say irritating one of my friends or something, we just use our safe word and pull each other away from like these weird men or whatever is going on. Um, you have to watch what you’re drinking, every time. You just have to be like really, really carful and very aware of your surroundings, and don’t allow just anybody to come talk to you or some sit at your table. And stuff like that, and have a safe word with your friends, yes. You have to.

Int: So, what are those alarm bells; so, you’re saying these ‘weird men’, what are things that will send off your alarm bells: “Oh, this dude, this is not an ‘okay guy’”?

Ella: Ya, I think its mostly like the topics that they talk about like – oh, I’m going to get like so deep into it, into sex and stuff. Like if a guy come to me and is very sexual and is very touchy, like I don’t know you so why are you doing that. That’s when it’s like: “Okay, this guy is very creepy. I don’t like this guy. You don’t even know my name, but why you touching me. What gives you the right, the courage to do that?”

Int: ‘The audacity!’

Ella: The audacity! Why, what for?

Int: Exactly.

Ella: Ya, like that, stuff like that. And my friend has been spiked before so we have to be like very, very, very, very carful now. Every time we go out, ya.

Int: Ya, a friend of mine was spiked the other night and I mean like it changes your entire perception of everything.

Ella: It really does! Ya, it really does, and it’s scary. It’s so scary. So, uh ah.

Int: Luckily, we have a nurse in the friend group, so she knew what to do. Ya, but its crazy – its a dangerous sport.

Ella: It really is. Cause I remember they were trying to pull my friend when we went outside, like there was some guy who was trying to pull her and I was like: “What the hell is going on?”  
And at the same time we were also a bit tipsy, you know, we just came from the club so we didn’t understand what’s happening. She literally had like bruise marks from that guy trying to pull her so much, ya.

Int: Gee, that’s terrible, I’m so sorry you had to go through that.

Ella: Yeah, it was quite a while ago. I think that also like raised my alarms, it was in 2019, I think. We were first year varsity.

Int: Sorry, I lost my place for a second. So, when you go out do you always go out with your girls or do you go out with a bunch of guys as well, just for some protection?

Ella: It depends really. Both. Let’s say both, yeah.

Int: So, what’s the size of the group normally?

Ella: Um, let’s say five people, three people – somewhere there. Three people, five people.

Int: What’s the minimum that you’ll go out with?

Ella: The minimum? Like two, I can go out with one of my friends and that would be it.

Int: You’d never go out alone?

Ella: I would never, no!

Int: What about Ubering?

Ella: Pardon?

Int: Ubering – would you ever Uber alone?

Ella: Yeah, I do that a lot. I have no other method of transportation so. I have to yes, I don’t have a choice.

Int: And in those spaces do you feel safe or are there still safety precautions that you take?

Ella: There’s still safety precautions. You have to make sure that they are going the right direction all the time! You have to like watch and have your GPS on, you know there’s no funny things like wrong turns or like different turns that they making because that’s so scary – ya. Cause we hear stories of people getting kidnapped in Ubers and Blots, so yeah you have to be very, very, very aware as well. It’s an unconscious thing even. Right now, you just do it. you’re so used to it.

Int: You’re so used to being like aware if your unsafeness?

Ella: Yeah. It’s like an everyday thing now. it’s weird to not feel like unsafe. Yeah.

Int: Do you think that South African men go through the same thing or is it normally just for South African women?

Ella: I think it’s mainly South African women. I do think some men are conscious of this as well. I mean, when people – let’s say there’s a group of us, when we get robbed, they usually go to the men first, I don’t know if you’ve noticed. They usually just go to the men. \*Laughs. They go to the men first. So, I’ve noticed because its happened like in a situation where I was like with my ex-boyfriend and like they went to him, they didn’t come to me, and I was holding our phones, and I was like: “Oh, you guys that’s very weird.”  
Ya, so I think they are very […] as well.

Int: Why do you think that is, why do you think they go to the men and not the women?

Ella: I really don’t know. That is something that I don’t understand. I really don’t understand that. oh, maybe because they have more valuables, like wallets and, you know, I could probably like give him my phone to like hold just so I can feel safe in a way. I really don’t know. I honestly, have no idea.

Int: I feel like we have already answered this question, but do you feel safe in South Africa?

Ella: No, no. That’s a one answer: No.

Int: What has made you feel this way?

Ella: Like I said, um, you know, all the kidnappings, all the GBV situations that we hear, all the rape – we’re the rape capital of the world! Do you know how much it takes to be a rape capital of the whole entire world; in a world of eight billion people, that’s crazy. So, no, I don’t feel safe at all in South Africa, no.

Int: No, not at all?

Ella: Not at all, no, that’s it.

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

Ella: Yeah, home. That’s the only place, yeah, the only place -or around my friends, yeah that’s the only place. Other than that if you’re outside, again, it’s an extreme sport, you have to be careful.

Int: With that in mind, do you feel as though you are free in South Africa?

Ella: (No). In what way? Cause I feel like in certain ways, yes, you know, and in certain ways no. like in terms of being a women, no I don’t feel like free, you know, have to be carful every time, but in other ways, the fact that I have freedom of speech and, you know, I can go to whatever school that I want, and all of that, in that sense I feel free; the fact that there are so many opportunities as a women, as a black women, yes, but being a women in general, no.

Int: So, this notion like ‘women in South Africa aren’t really free’, is because of our high rates of gender-based violence or are there other aspects at play?

Ella: I think it is solely because of that cause there’s things like sexual harassment in the workplace and at school that come into play. So, I think yeah I do think its that.

Int: When we’re talking about these places where we feel safe, you did say you were working previously?

Ella: Yes, I was.

Int: Did you feel safe at work?

Ella: I did feel safe at work, yes. They made us feel safe, although they like spoke – I mean like, I had certain employ – collages, lets say that – collages who were a bit like, oh, you know, they hit on you a little bit and whatnot. That felt uncomfortable a little bit. But then, being a women in South Africa, you learn to like play it off in a way, but yeah they did make us feel safe apart from that.

Int: We spoke about this a bit earlier, where say you’ll be out in a club and you’re friends have a safe word for guys being ‘creepy’.

Ella: We have a safe word, yes.

Int: Do you think guys have a safe word for when girls are being ‘creepy’?

Ella: I don’t even think, no. I don’t think they think about that. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs. Sorry?

Ella: Do they even think about that – is that like cross their minds, about girls being ‘creepy’?

Int: Cause do girls even push it that far?

Ella: Exactly. Do we even push it that far? I don’t think so. I really doubt it.

Int: I’ve met women who are very forward, but I’ve never met a women who will actively try to like spike a drink.

Ella: Exactly. That’s it. \*Laughs.

Int: That’s it.

Ella: Yeah. \*Laughs. We don’t go that far.

Int: Why? Why won’t women go that far, but guys will?

Ella: I have no idea. Why I wouldn’t do it, is because of morals. Like I just have morals – why would you do something like that; why would you spike someone; why would you be a creep to somebody that doesn’t know you, they’re a total stranger, why would you do that? Why would you?

Int: So, we’re going to come back to this aspect of safety in a moment, we’re going to go through all the boring questions. Our houses in South Africa are built in a very specific way, they’re basically built like fortresses. So, I’m interested to know what is the structure of your house? What does it look like, what safety measures you have.

Ella: House, oh we have I don’t know what to call these, are they like security – in our, we just call them like ‘butlers’. I don’t know if they are like security gates – what’s the right word for burglar-

Int: Oh, Trellidor?

Ella: Yes, Trellidor, they’re like all over the windows and by the doors, both the doors, and the sliding door; they’re like everywhere.

Int: Do you have an alarm system?

Ella: No, we live in an estate so its like very guarded, so no, we don’t need that. Yeah. That’s the reason why my mom wanted us to live in an estate as well, because of the security in the first place. Yeah.

Int: So, when you guys were moving houses – I don’t know if you spoke to you parents about this – but was safety an aspect that you were looking. So, like some people would be like: “Oh, I want a pool, or I want a big garden.”   
Was safety on that list?

Ella: Safety was the number one thing.

Int: Oh, so it was the number one thing you were shopping for?

Ella: We’re just women in the house.

Int: Oh okay, I see.

Ella: Yeah, safety was the number one thing. There’s no man in the house so, yeah.

Int: I actually have another participant who lives alone with her mom. And with her safety thing and everything, she’s like: “Ya, its just us and a hockey stick, so if push coms to shove, someone’s fighting.”

Ella: \*Laughs. Yeah.

Int: Do you guys have a hockey stick?

Ella: No. \*Laughs. I don’t know what we would do actually. I don’t know. I don’t know what we would do if someone like broke-in. I have no idea.

Int: Do you think you would fight or just run?

Ella: Um, no. I think we would just do as instructed […] If they wanted anything, just give it to them. Its not worth like fighting for, its not worth getting hurt for, its not worth dying. So, yeah.

Int: That seems to be a common thing in South Africa, that its your phone or your life, there’s no in between.

Ella: There is no in between. Yeah, like the whole situation that happened like in Hatfield, where the guy got like shot at two AM. We’re not sure what it was for, but I think it was for a phone, and yeah. I think also, guys also really don’t feel safe in that aspect as well.

Int: I don’t think guys feel safe in terms of like their possessions. I don’t think women feel safe in terms of their body, like there’s something really scary about having a body like this and being particularly vulnerable to a crime like rape or sexual assault. So, I think that’s what makes the difference.

Ella: Yeah.

Int: So, that’s one thing that I think was quite interesting, is that women seem to fear rape a lot. That seems to be a big fear for us. But what does that say about the female experience if that’s one of the things that really connect all women?

Ella: I think so, it does – wait, please ask the question again.

Int: No worries. Women are very, very diverse, I mean we’re completely different beings; we’re not -

Ella: Yeah, the same.

Int: We don’t share a lot of things – yeah. But there seems t be a common thread throughout a lot of women’s lives and that’s this fear – rape seems.

Ella: Yeah.

Int: What does that say about the female experience?

Ella: Um… in terms of the fact that we share this common fear, right?

Int: Yeah.

Ella: I feel like it’s awful and unfair. It really is unfair.

Int: Unfair why?

Ella: It’s unfair because you don’t feel free! And there’s this constant thing in your head like you always have to be careful, be aware of what’s like being said, how advances are being made; I mean like, even dating is not easy at this point because it’s just very scary. It’s unfair.

Int: How could we make this fair?

Ella: Um, only the men know. We can’t do anything about it because we’re not the ones doing it. So, only the men know. Yeah.

Int: That’s also what I found so interesting is – I don’t know if this ever happened to you, but when I was a kid they took a bunch of the girls, I think I was in grade three, and the took all the girls out of the class and were like: “Okay cool, this is what you do if this is going to happen.”   
Like, “If someone is going to kidnap you, this is what you do.”  
And the boys were allowed to go outside and play. Surely, that’s where it’s going wrong?

Ella: Yeah. \*Laughs. That’s so wrong.

Int: Yeah.

Ella: I thought you were going to speak about like you know how we were taught about periods and how to use pads, that I understand, but I don’t understand that, what you just said right now.

Int: Ya, they were literally like: “You are more likely to be the victim.”  
So, it was like this ability to make sure this is going to be okay. Little bit of an issue with that.

Ella: Like, why not just teach everybody. Like men would know its like a genuine fear for women if they were also taught that. And that would help everything be better, in a way. I don’t know. What are the men doing, why are women doing so much?

Int: I don’t know. I really, really, really don’t know. And that’s probably the next question for the doctorate. I don’t know if you have sister or girl cousins.

Ella: I do have a sister, I have a niece, and I have girl cousins. Yeah, I have girl cousins as well, yes.

Int: Has there come a point where you’ve had to sit these girls down and be like: “Hey, listen, it’s a dangerous world out there and you have to do x, y, and z, just to be safe.”

Ella: I think our parents show that to us as we’re growing up. Like they are strict. They are strict, like they don’t allow you to go out at night at a certain age. I don’t know I wasn’t, I don’t think I was even allowed to go out. Well, I’ve always been a ‘good girl’, so I wouldn’t know. I didn’t go out. I wasn’t like rebellious or anything, um, but I think if I were to be like: “Yeah, we’re going out at night.”   
And whatnot, they would probably be more cautious of that, than if I were a guy. Yeah. So, they have brought that-

Int: Do you have brothers.

Ella: Yes, I found out I have an older brother. \*Laughs.

Int: Congratulations?

Ella: \*Laughs. Ayy. But yeah, I do have an older brother, I didn’t grow up with him though.

Int: Oh, okay. So, when we have little girls and we kinda have to tell them, ‘Hey listen, it’s a dangerous world out there’. What are the things that we tell them? So, you said you parents don’t let you go out, until you were a certain age, and you were a good kid, so you just kind of stayed at home, in your little protective bubble. What were the things? So, if I were to view it as: “Hey, my little cousin is going out in South Africa for the first time, please could you give her a little survival guide to the clubs in Pretoria.”  
What would you give to her?

Ella: Mmm… I would tell her to watch her drinks all the time. I would tell her to always be with her friends, always know where her friends are. Um, when she goes to the bathroom, she mustn’t go alone. Every time she moves, there need to be someone with her, that’s all.

Int: Work as a team?

Ella: Work as a team, that’s the only way to get through. Yeah.

Int: Together, never apart.

Ella: Mmm.

Int: So, um, ya we asked that one – are there places in South Africa where you feel like you just cannot go as a woman?

Ella: (No). I don’t think there is a place where I cannot go, I think I just have to be careful when I go to these places, yeah.

Int: What are those types of places?

Ella: Mmm, like we spoke about the clubs; can’t go by yourself, you need to know – it’s not like I don’t want to go, I do want to go, but, you know, I just have to be careful. Um, where else?   
Mmm, there’s not really any other place that I can think of that’s like, as dangerous as going out to the club. But ayy, we’re learnt that anywhere is dangerous in South Africa. So yeah.

Int: I mean, I think you’re referring to Uynene’s story, the #AmINext? movement.

Ella: Yeah.

Int: That showed a lot of South African women that-

Ella: It did mm.

Int: What – were you. I think you said you went to Tuks?

Ella: Yeah, I was in Tuks.

Int: Were you in Tuks when that – when the news broke?

Ella: Yes, I was. I was in Tuks.

Int: What was that like?

Ella: It was – oh, I remember there was a whole strike as well, like the whole protest thing. Um, it was – I think it just made being a student living in Hatfield even worse. It was just sad. It’s just really sad. That we have to go through this, like why?

Int: No, I think that was the general feeling amongst all the women there, was like […] the ‘am I next’, was just kind of this-

Ella: Yeah, like nobody’s safe.

Int: Yeah, no one’s safe. Do you feel like, ‘am I next?’

Ella: Um, I have this thing where I say: “If it’s my day, it’s my day.”  
So, I guess in a way ‘am I next?’, yes I do feel that way. Yeah, I don’t know, I always say that, like, ‘If it’s my day, it’s my day’, you know, but I’ll plan to be safe, that’s all I can do.

Int: I’ll do all that I can. Yeah.

Ella: Yeah, I’ll do what I can; I’ll do what I can to survive.

Int: What’s your biggest fear living in South Africa?

Ella: Exactly this, the whole GBV, the whole being kidnapped, the whole rape situation. That’s like my biggest fear living in South Africa. Just not safe as a woman.

Int: Mmm, just not safe at all.

Ella: Not even in your own home.

Int: Not even in your own family.

Ella: Huh?

Int: Sorry, did you just say-

Ella: Yeah, cause – yeah, not even in your family cause, like most rape situations have happened in like peoples like family, like it’s been an uncle, or it’s been a brother or something. I’ve heard stories like that, and I’m just like: “Yoh, damn. Not even in your family. Not even the people who are supposed to protect you, that’s crazy.”  
So, nowhere is really safe.

Int: And I find this really interesting, and this is one of the reasons why I took this research question. So, when we ask, ‘What does it mean to feel like you belong; this feeling of belonging’, you said that it feels like home. It feels like being home.

Ella: Yeah.

Int: But feeling ‘at home’, means feeling safe. So, if we can’t feel safe-

Ella: In our homes – pardon?

Int: If we can’t feel safe, can we not belong?

Ella: I mean like, how do you feel like you belong if you don’t feel safe? \*Laughs.

Int: That’s the question, yeah.

Ella: Yeah. There’s no way. You can’t feel like you belong if you can’t feel safe. Yeah, there’s no other way to put it. There’s not even like – I can’t even get deeper into that because that’s just is what it is; like how do you feel safe?

Int: This is what I found so interesting, is we are South African women, I would proudly say that I’m South African, that’s who I am. And I do belong to the notion of being a South African, that’s what I am, I’m South African. But we’re under constant threat here.

Ella: Yeah.

Int: That’s the fact of the matter, my life is under constant threat.

Ella: Oh sorry.

Int: Oh, no, no worries.

Ella: I’m getting my charger.

Int: Oh, actually should we restart the meeting quickly because I see it’s going to end soon, and we can jump into this question.

Ella: Oh, alright.

Int: Okay cool. I’ll see you know. I’ll send through the link in a moment.

Ella: Okay, bye.

Int: And we’re back!

Ella: And we’re back. \*Laughs.

Int: So, we’re just going to talk about this quickly. Like I said before we left, do you feel like you’re South African?

Ella: Do I feel like I’m South African? Yeah, I do, I do.

Int: Do you belong to this country?

Ella: Yes, I belong to this country, yeah in a way. But now that we’re gone through all of these questions and when you put belonging in a word like South Africa, cause South Africa is not safe, it just doesn’t sound right altogether. Like going back to that.

Int: So, another way of looking at this is: “Okay cool, if you don’t feel safe let’s remove it from the equation of belonging.”  
Another way to look at belonging is to have a place where your voice is heard.

Ella: Yeah.

Int: Do you feel heard as a South African woman?

Ella: Mmm… I think, I think yes and no. Like I’ve said, like you have freedom of speech and all of that, you can go to work, and you literally can be a boss, you know, and um. But in a way no, because when we speak and we say we have these problems as South African women in, like South Africa, living in South Africa, when we speak about rape and gender-based violence it’s like: “What are you guys doing? You hearing us when we’re crying out? What are you guys doing? What’s your way of like resolving this whole situation?”  
Like… Like are there deeper punishments for people who do these things like shouldn’t you guys be doing more? That’s how I don’t feel heard. Because why aren’t you guys doing more? Why are we still having these problems? Why are the punishments just a slap on the hand? Like yeah. People can go to jail for like five years for rape. Five years is that enough? Really?

Int: Yeah, so the big thing is that they wanted, I think now Cyril’s come out and said it’s a mandatory twenty, so they’re trying to increase the conviction rate – not the conviction rate, the prison sentence. But the issue is that we’re not convicting these rapists, because a lot of women don’t come forward.

Ella: Yeah.

Int: Why do you think that is? Why do you think South Africa has such a problem with the reporting of gender-based violence?

Ella: Because what are they going to do?

Int: The cops?

Ella: Yeah, I mean-

Int: Sorry, I just. \*Removes cat from counter.

Ella: Aww. Someone just got raped in a police station. Hi, kitty! Aww, so cute.

Int: Sorry say again.

Ella: Yeah, someone just got raped in a police station, by cops. Haven’t you heard that story?

Int: No.

Ella: It was all over Twitter, and it’s just like, what are the police going to do? Because even when we go and report – have you heard of people buying, like buying police cases? Because people can buy a police case if they have enough money. What is the police going to do?

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

Ella: No.

Int: Not at all?

Ella: No.

Int: Have you had to interact with them? So, I don’t know if you’ve experienced crime first-hand?

Ella: (No), luckily not. But I’m saying not yet, because I live in South Africa. That’s a ‘not yet’.

Int: And it’s annoying that you have to say ‘luckily’.

Ella: Mmm, luckily. I haven’t had to like work with the police, and yeah. It’s also the fact that they don’t want to go to dangerous areas where people need help. Like, why don’t you want to go to Hillbrow? Like that’s your job to protect the country. But then I also understand because of like the employment rates, you know, you kind of – people are cops because there’s no other jobs. So, they’re not really there to protect and serve, they’re just there to live and survive. I think it all goes back – everything is just a ripple effect of something else in South Africa, yeah.

Int: On this notion of the ripple effect. South Africa has – we’re know as the ‘rape capital of the world’, we have incredibly high rape rates and gender-based violence […]. It’s insane.

Ella: Imagine.

Int: Ya. And it’s been said that we have this ‘culture of violence’. Are South Africans violent people?

Ella: Mmm. Cause you know what, answering these questions I think of myself and then - \*Laughs. No, I’m not violent, you know, I’ve met people who are not violent. So, not entirely but there are violent people. There are violent people, yes.

Int: But we have a very violent history.

Ella: We really do, um. From apartheid to yeah. \*Laughs. We do.

Int: So, we’ve got such a violent history and some would say that’s kind of our culture as South Africans. I mean we had colonialisation and from colonialisation we had multiple wars, civil wars, and then we had apartheid, which had multiple civil wars as well. In this brief period of democracy and we have just seen ridiculously rates of crime.

Ella: Very high. Our own government. \*Sighs. Our own government, the people who were supposed to watch out for us – wow. I really don’t know why it is. I could be lying to you if I said I know why. I’m also trying to figure it out.

Int: Join the club.

Ella: Like why?

Int: Yeah, like mara why?

Ella: I’m really trying to figure out why. There’s no reason.

Int: So, with all of this in mind, do you plan on staying in South Africa for the foreseeable future?

Ella: You know what, I can’t see myself any place else. Again, I’ve never been out of the country. Like we’re spoken about going to – okay, I’ve spoken to my boyfriend about this; spoken about going to go live in a different like country, like lets say Canada or something, because it just feels safer to be there than here, literally, just spoke about it today. Um… but, I can’t see myself anywhere else, it would be so hard. Yeah.

Int: So, because this is another thing that I brought up with another participant. The idea of having kids, I that something that effects your wanting to stay in South Africa or not?

Ella: Um… no. I don’t think it is. It doesn’t effect it at all, but I know that my kids won’t be safe or won’t feel safe in South Africa. Bringing them into South Africa is like kind of nightmare really. Having kids in South Africa; having daughters, oh my God. Yeah.

Int: Another thing – this is one of the last few things I want to touch on before we end off today. So, I’m sorry my dogs.

Ella: No, it’s okay.

Int: So, in South Africa we, we kind of try to make ourselves safe. We have safety precautions – like you say, you go out with a lot of friends, you’ve got Trellidors, burglar bars. We’ve got a manufactured sense of safety – we create a sense of safety.

Ella: We create it, yes.

Int: Is that sense of safety real or is it just a façade?

Ella: I think it’s a façade. I really think it’s a façade, cause like, like we’ve said, you don’t feel safe in South Africa as a whole, like in its entirety, like anywhere you go anything could happen. People get robbed by their gates before they get home. You know, like, I think it’s just a sense of safety I don’t think it provides safety. I think anything could happen – if its your day, it’s your day. There’s a reason why I say that, there’s a reason why I say that because anything could happen, and this sense of safety is a façade, yes.

Int: Alright, well, that’s basically all the questions I have particularly on safety and belonging. I just wanted to have a look, because we do have some time, I want to have a look at this notion of being a woman. So, what does it mean to be a women for you?

Ella: What it means to be a woman for me… also, something I haven’t really thought about. I just am.

Int: It’s who you are?

Ella: Yeah, its who I am, it’s nothing else I know being a woman. I don’t even know what to say – I just am. I feel like I just am. Yeah, there’s nothing really-

Int: So, when I asked you, ‘What’s it like being a woman in South Africa?’ you said its dangerous; it’s like an extreme sport. Do you think it’s the same for women, let’s say living in Canada?

Ella: No. They can walk out at night, by themselves, to go get something stupid, like ice-cream – then ya. I think they feel safer, cause we get shocked a lot, like when you see a woman walking in the dark in another country; and you’re like: “Oh wow! You can actually do that? You can do that!”  
\*Laughs. Like, ‘you can do that, yeah’.

Int: Free!

Ella: Yeah, mm.

Int: Alright, well, yeah that’s basically – ooo, actually mmm.

Ella: Mmm, what? \*Laughs.

Int: So, I don’t know if you know what’s going on in Iran?

Ella: Not quite sure, not quite informed like that, yeah. What’s happening?

Int: So, it’s the ah, mandatory wearing of the hijab – the hajib?

Ella: The hijab, yeah.

Int: A lot of women are saying: “No, I don’t want to wear this.”  
And they’re actually being arrested and jailed, and all of these things are happening.

Ella: Mmm, was that the whole situation with why they didn’t want Ms. South Africa to go there?

Int: Ya.

Ella: Oh okay.

Int: Ya, it’s a lot of stuff like that. So, these women have basically gone: “You know what, enough is enough. We’re going to fight back now.”  
And there’s a situation in South Africa where women are, for a lack of a better analogy, hunted in South Africa. And one of the theorists that I use quite a lot, she talks about ‘what if’ – what if all the women just decide, that’s it, I’ve had enough. I’m going to start fighting back now.”  
And then we have violence meeting violence.

Ella: Ooof.

Int: And she kind of ends off with: “We can’t do this because violence and violence gives more violence.”

Ella: Mmm.

Int: So, it’s not really going to work.

Ella: Yeah.

Int: Do you think there’d ever come a point where women would be like: “You know what, screw it. I’ve had enough, I’m now going to fight.”

Ella: It’s getting to that point. It is. I’m also thinking about getting a gun licence so I can carry a gun, so that I can feel safe – the safety façade thing, you know.

Int: Yeah.

Ella: I think it’s getting to that point because enough is enough. Enough is really enough.

Int: Do you know of women who have specifically gotten a gun licence because they feel this unsafe?

Ella: (No), but I saw a video of some women who almost got hijacked and she had a gun and she shot – she shot the gun who was like coming towards her car. She was closing her gate – again! You can get robbed at your own gate. She was closing her get and obviously she’s alone, so she had to get out of her car, close the gate, and they were like literally coming and she had to pull out her gun, because what else can you do.

Int: Exactly.

Ella: No, I don’t know of anyone who has a gun – like a gun license. I don’t know of anyone. But I think that is something to look into. Yeah.

Int: Maybe a little less than a gun license – I know a lot of my friends carry around pepper-spray; one of my friends carries around a pair of knuckle-dusters and I think it’s a little bit funny, because no one expects her to whip out a pair of knuckle-dusters out of this cute little pink bag, like: “Okay?”

Ella: Yeah.

Int: Is that something that you and your friends carry – pepper-spray or knuckle-dusters or a knife?

Ella: I actually don’t carry anything, which is a bad thing. But my friend use to carry like pepper-spray when we were living in Hatfield, my friend used to carry pepper-spray and whatnot. Luckily, we never got to use any of that, but I really should look into carrying something. Yeah, no I don’t.

Int: Maybe that before a gun.

Ella: Yeah, before we go for a gun just go for pepper-spray or a taser – a taser doesn’t really work though, but pepper-spray, yeah.

Int: Okay, well, that’s basically all that I have for you today. If you have any questions, quarries, concerns, or anything you want to add, please do so now.

Ella: No, everything’s okay – this was perfect. \*Laughs.

Int: Awesome. And then ya, thank you so much for your time, for your answers. Really, really, really great interview, thank you so much.

Ella: Alright. You’re welcome.