Individual Interview 16 – Katherine

(Full time: 1:04:39)

Int: Hello, hi, how are you?

Katherine: I’m good, and you?

Int: Good, good. So, just some ethics quickly – you have read and understood the informed consent form?

Katherine: Ya.

Int: Great. So, just a general overview of what we’re going to get into today. We’re going to be looking at the concept of belonging, specifically the emotional side of belonging, so we’re not really looking at the groups that you belong to, but the emotions of those groups; how they make you feel and what do you feel in those groups, and stuff like that.

Katherine: Okay.

Int: And then we’re going to look at aspects of safety, specifically your experiences of safety or lack thereof. And then we’re going to bring it all together and look at how safety might have effected your sense of belonging, particularly as a South African woman.

Katherine: Okay.

Int: That’s about it. If you have any questions you are more than welcome to ask them now, if you’ve got any concerns you are more that welcome to voice them now too.

Katherine: No, I’m good.

Int: Okay, great. Ya, just before we get into anything just want to do a quickly little background just so that I get a general idea of who you are as a human being. How old are you, are you studying, are you working, um ya where do you lived, have you moved around a lot.

Katherine: Okay. So, I am \*Katherine, I was born in Dumule that’s a small town in the Limpopo province. And I’ve basically lived there my whole life until I finished high school. Then I moved to Pretoria for varsity, and I have been here ever since. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs.

Katherine: And I have just turned thirty years old.

Int: Oh, congrats.

Katherine: Ya and been studying ever since so. Um, I work as a tutor, like part-time on campus, but like my main thing is like studying. Ya.

Int: Ya. And what is it that you study?

Katherine: I’m studying Bio-technology. And my research is looking into the safety of leafy green vegetables.

Int: Are leafy green vegetables safe?

Katherine: \*Sighs. There are risks involved.

Int: Okay, okay.

Katherine: And depending on where they come from, and how you handle them, and how you store them, then the risk is minimised or increased. And when the risk is increased, then they are not safe.

Int: Alright, so I can’t go to my Portuguese grandmother and tell her, “Ay I don’t want to have Kale soup tonight because a PhD student told me that leafy greens aren’t a good idea.”

Katherine: \*Laughs. No, please have the kale soup. I think cooking minimises the risk.

Int: Ya, that women cooks all the kale in this world. If you ever want kale-

Katherine: It’s when you put it in smoothies and-

Int: I disagree with that fundamentally, putting greens in a smoothie.

Katherine: Exactly. And you eat it raw – there are people who eat spinach raw, baby spinach in a salad.

Int: I get that.

Katherine: But then you have to understand that risks are increased at that point.

Int: Ya, you have to incinerate the bacteria. But ya, you said that you grew up in Limpopo – small town, small village, small city, what were you?

Katherine: Small town. Um, it’s like a farming town.

Int: Oh, so like big spaces in between everyone.

Katherine: Not – there’s a township, and there’s those big spaces in between everyone, and then there’s the town side where you have the suburb like part of the town. Ya.

Int: So, like a farming city?

Katherine: Mm.

Int: And you loved growing up there, you didn’t like growing up there?

Katherine: I did because I – everything was close, like going to town, the township to town, takes literally five minutes by car, and you can walk. It’s not too far to walk. Schools were easily accessible – everything was easily accessible. There’s no traffic like in Pretoria.

Int: Ah, what a dream.

Katherine: \*Laughs. Right. So, you’re not sitting in traffic for minutes or hours, or whatever, depending also on the loadshedding – you know.

Int: Ya.

Katherine: And it was quite a – well, at first, when I was still young, it was quite a small community. Everyone knows everyone, and I mean that has it’s advantages but then.

Int: Ya, word spreads like wildfire.

Katherine: Exactly. But I think it was, it was a good setting growing up in, you know. And then, ya so it was warm, you know, it was like the community was together and then came these RDP houses, and then you now had an influx of people from other towns.

Int: So, a bunch of outsiders coming in.

Katherine: A bunch of outsiders coming from farms – like people who have lived on farms, are now like moving to the township. And also now, the coming in of foreigners – being in Limpopo it’s the first province they get into when they get into South Africa. So that has been – ya, there has been a rise of people from outside and also foreigners.

Int: Like a breaking of a community sense or was it like the community almost like extended?

Katherine: Ah, both.

Int: Okay both.

Katherine: See it’s extended but breaking, because now you used to say, “Oh this is so-and-so. I know them.” Now, you completely don’t know them, you know. And now there’s like – township has grown and… which is one thing our government was not prepared for, because now the community is growing but the infrastructure is not growing. And the infrastructure is now breaking down because of the pressure, you know.

Int: Ya, too many people too little, ya.

Katherine: Exactly, like I mean there is still like one clinic in the township. And I’m like ‘We can’t have one clinic’.

Int: Ya, ‘It was fine when we were small’.

Katherine: Ya, but there so much of us that we need more clinics, more schools, one more hospital wouldn’t hurt.

Int: More of everything.

Katherine: More – ya. A police station in the township because the police station is only in town.

Int: So, if anything happens in the township no one’s got – well, the police take forever to get there, I suppose.

Katherine: Ya.

Int: If they get there.

Katherine: Ya. You’d have to go there.

Int: That to me is a bit-

Katherine: Same as the emergency services, like the ambulance, you know.

Int: Ya, if you’re in a car accident you must get yourself there.

Katherine: Not a car accident because then the ambulance will rush to you, but if you’re sick in the middle of the night it takes longer to come, you know, because there’s now – they must get everywhere to everyone, you know. And you do not know if on that day if there are any incidents happening that you are number ten on the list.

Int: Oh, okay.

Katherine: That the ambulance must get to, you know. So, ya.

Int: But would you still say that’s home, or has Pretoria become your home?

Katherine: Ahh, funny enough it doesn’t feel like home anymore.

Int: Ah Limpopo?

Katherine: Ya.

Int: Doesn’t feel like home anymore.

Katherine: No, I have been in Pretoria for like twelve years now.

Int: Oh that’s a big time in Pretoria.

Katherine: Ya, and I spent most of the time here. I’d go home maybe once a year for a, maybe two, three weeks, and then I would go home at the end of the year for the Christmas holidays. So, it doesn’t feel like home – like my life is now in Pretoria. Like my close circle is now in Pretoria. I do not have any friends back home, you know, it’s just my family, which after a few days you’re kind of like, “Okay.”

Int: \*Laughs. Yeah, I still live with my parents, and I’ll go away for a week and be like, “Why did I come back.”

Katherine: \*Laughs. Yes, exactly. So, now after a few days it’s like you know what – and also living alone, you get used to it. You get used to being alone.

Int: Ya, your own freedoms.

Katherine: You get used to your own space, your own doing what you want at whatever time you want. So, being home is quite different. I wouldn’t say difficult, but it’s different, and it doesn’t feel like my home anymore. Like it’s home for where I was born and bred, but my home is my little flat.

Int: Your space that you have created by yourself.

Katherine: Yeah, exactly.

Int: And how long did that take – that shift, like moving from Limpopo where your grew up in a tiny community, you come to Pretoria which the furthest thing from a tiny community. Actually, for a big town a lot of people know each other through other people, but ya. So, how long did that take for Pretoria, or your space to start feeling like, ‘This is my place, this is my home’?

Katherine: I think after my undergrad, and getting into Honours because now you know places, you can get around alone; you know, if someone asks you, “Where can I get this”, and you know where you can get it like, ‘Where can I get a cake, where can I get a caterer’, or ‘Where can I get platters’, you know. And another thing is that I have an aunt in Soshanguve, still in Pretoria but it’s in the North. So, I am also accustomed to going from the city, like ‘city-city’, to like the township of Gauteng, which is different from a township in Limpopo.

Int: How so actually?

Katherine: Ah, it’s quite, the life is different and stuff. There is a lot of people, no one knows each other. Like if, I mean you only know your neighbours and people around you, like it’s huge compared to our town; like I mean I think our town could fit into Soshanguve a hundred times.

Int: That’s tiny.

Katherine: Ya.

Int: Even with the influx of immigrants and.

Katherine: Ya, because it’s – ag, two blocks, because they have blocks like ‘Block A’, ‘Block B’. I think two or three blocks would be our town.

Int: That’s tiny.

Katherine: Ya.

Int: That’s cute though, that’s something I have never experienced, so ya.

Katherine: So, it’s huge. So, I have also now gotten used to that as well. Using the transport there – I mean sometimes you have to take two taxis, or a bus and a taxi. In our town you literally just take one taxi and get where you are going. So, ya I have also gotten used to that. I’m comfortable with it, I mean I can go from here to there with a taxi, or using transport. So, ya.

Int: So, once you become like familiar with a place is when it starts to feel like, maybe, home?

Katherine: Mm.

Int: And what are those feelings of home? Like what makes you feel like, ‘Okay, I’m at home now’?

Katherine: For me, it’s where I’m free to do, not anything, but free to be myself I think. I can put my feet up on the couch without worrying like, \*Gasp, “Someone else’s space.” You know. Like you don’t – you’re just free. Um, I make myself food – that’s home. Just waltz in and go to the fridge.

Int: Do whatever I want, ya.

Katherine: Do whatever I want, exactly. And I know with things are, like if you ask me for extra soap, I know where it is, you know. And it’s where people I’m familiar with, I know, like people I don’t feel like I have to hide myself – I mean there are certain aspects that we hide from our parents.

Int: Ya, we have to.

Katherine: But it’s, you are – like it’s the. Like there is some feeling of free that is different when you are home.

Int: Ya. I love – one of the participants said, “You can’t be who you are in your mother’s house because that’s your mother’s house and you have to be your mother’s daughter then.”

Katherine: Ya.

Int: And I agree with that fundamentally. I can’t do some things in my mother’s house; I can’t make two-minute noodles at three in the morning because she’s going to come up stairs and go, ‘Why aren’t you having an apple’.

Katherine: Exactly.

Int: Like, ‘Woman, it’s three in the morning, I’m going to have noodles’.

Katherine: And you can’t order-in or.

Int: No!

Katherine: Like Ubereats.

Int: Exactly, ‘It’s been three times this week’. And? I make my own money.

Katherine: Exactly. \*Laughs. ‘I can do this, I can afford it’, ya.

Int: ‘I’m treating myself for the third time in a row – be happy I can do this’.

Katherine: Right, ‘It could have been drugs’ – I always say that.

Int:\*Laughs.

Katherine: Because now when I go home now, like home-home in Limpopo, people are like, “You have gained so much weight.” Dude, it’s food, it could have been drugs.

Int: ‘I could have been really skinny thanks to cocaine’.

Katherine: Exactly, like ‘Do you know how stressful my life is, I could have been on drugs’.

Int: Ya, very true.

Katherine: I could have been an alcoholic very easily, but I choose to eat. Which is way better.

Int: Exactly.

Katherine: Ya, so that’s one of the reasons why Limpopo doesn’t feel like home anymore because I bump into people like, ‘Oh, you’ve changed so much’, ‘You’ve grown so much’, and I’m just like, ‘Ag’.

Int: ‘Ya, whatever, that’s what it means to grow up guys’.

Katherine: Exactly.

Int: Ya, do you enjoy going back? I know you said after a few days like you need to come home, but is there some excitement when you get to go see my parents again?

Katherine: Ya, ya. There is a bit of excitement.

Int: Is there any sense of ‘Okay I’m going back to where I was a kid’, or is there some apprehension attached to that you’re no longer this kid or is it just like, ‘I’m going back to where I was’?

Katherine: No, no, it’s just going back home. Ya, there’s no like feeling any type of way.

Int: And do you miss it sometimes?

Katherine: Ya!

Int: What’s the one thing that you really, really miss?

Katherine: The fact that I can like talk to my mother, like we can laugh. Like sometimes it gets lonely – I mean, as much as we like saying alone, and having our own space, sometimes it feels lonely and sometimes you feel like, ‘Ag if I was home this situation would have been much better’. Or I could have – my family could have helped me handle it a bit better, you know.

Int: Ya.

Katherine: So ya.

Int: I guess Pretoria is – do you feel a sense of community in Pretoria at all?

Katherine: Mm, especially around like, I live in a student area so. \*Laughs.

Int: Ya, that’s a big community in itself.

Katherine: Ya. So, there is a sense of community, there is a sense of community with the people you work with in the lab, fellow students as well, and – I mean if you’ve lived in Res also, there’s obviously.

Int: Did you live in Res?

Katherine: Ya.

Int: Which Res?

Katherine: Jasmane.

Int: Oh! I know that one – isn’t it the one with the elephant?

Katherine: Ya, the one with the elephant. I lived in Jasmane, then moved to a postgrad Res opposite the police station, Protea.

Int: Oh okay, cool.

Katherine: Ya. So, I was in Res from undergrad till the end of my Masters, or towards the end of my Masters. So that’s also on its own a very big community, you know. In as long as – in as much as the people are not, like some of them are not physically in Pretoria but we have this kind of community, like we know each other; and I mean, if I know someone that want’s to work on something that someone did research on that I know, I can call her and be like, ‘Listen, this person needs help’. So, in that sense that – that’s a community.

Int: Like an extended community.

Katherine: Ya.

Int: Is that sense of community different compared to the sense of community you have in Limpopo or had in Limpopo?

Katherine: Very different, because this one is a community of intellectuals and academics.

Int: \*Laughs. Academics.

Katherine: People who have degrees. No, people who have I think similar views on things.

Int: Ya.

Katherine: You know. Whereas if I go home and be like, “Listen, I’m doing research like risk and then like leafy greens.” They’re like, “What the hell.” You know.

Int: Ya.

Katherine: So, it’s people that understand me.

Int: Ya, no, I get you.

Katherine: Or they understand what I’m doing, like they don’t necessarily understand like the details, but they do understand what its like. And I mean another thing, it’s like when I’m home and someone is like, “What you doing?” And I’m like, “School.” They’re like, “Huh?”

Int: It takes a while, ya.

Katherine: Like they don’t get used to it. Like every holiday or every time you’re home, they’re like, “Still at school.” I’m like, “Ya.” “What are you doing now?” “I’m doing my PhD.” “Ah, aren’t you scared that you’re going to be overqualified?” Do you understand?

Int: Yaa. I was tuned that the other day.

Katherine: “When are you going to start working?”

Int: “In the sciences, I don’t think I’ll be overqualified.”

Katherine: “Don’t you want to start making money?” Like, I’m already making money.

Int: \*Laughs.

Katherine: \*Laughs. You know. But as in Pretoria if I say that, or in where I live now, people are like, “Oh interesting.” So, very different.

Int: Very different. And you’ve always been in the Hatfield area, or have you moved around a bit in Pretoria?

Katherine: No, no, always been in the Hatfield area.

Int: And you like it?

Katherine: Ya, I do.

Int: You feel safe?

Katherine: Um… well, most of the time.

Int: Most of the time.

Katherine: Most of the time, especially towards the end of last year where we had like shooting arounds.

Int: Ya.

Katherine: You know, and they were grabbing cell phones and laptops, it has been happening – like there is a time where it shoots up and then it goes quite again. I don’t know, maybe it’s just me who’s not in touch with everyone. But ya, so in that way – like for example, if you want to take a walk or if you want to jog, you have to think about, “Okay, if this happens what will I do?” You know. Um, “Okay, I’ll leave my cell phone.” You know. Ah, I choose my routes carefully, like I make sure that I’m walking close to the university or where’s there’s at least security.

Int: Ya.

Katherine: You know. Ya, because if anything happens someone can help – or I hope that they will help, you know.

Int: Ya.

Katherine: But after the shooting I was just like, ‘Okay even the security guards can’t help you there’.

Int: I mean, I think the shooting rocked a lot of students to their core.

Katherine: Mm.

Int: Look it happens, as South Africans we know that crime happens, we get it.

Katherine: But I think what it – for us, like we felt so protected because there’s always security around, you know. And then when it happened, we were awakened to what the whole of South Africa is going through, or what other people outside of Hatfield might be going through.

Int: It hit home.

Katherine: It hit home, exactly. So, ya.

Int: And in Limpopo, your ‘home-home’ if I can put it that way – you feel safe there or?

Katherine: Ya, I feel safe. Even though some people say there’s like, they can mug you and stuff but I have never seen it happen, it has never happened to me. I feel a bit safer when I’m there. It’s a small town, you know, they can’t do much.

Int: I think it helps when it’s a small town because then everyone kind of knows everyone so then if someone were to steal your phone-

Katherine: Mm, ya.

Int: Someone else might see the phone.

Katherine: Unless they are from out of town.

Int: Ya.

Katherine: You know, which also happens. So, ya, I think it feels safer, ya.

Int: So, if I ask you: where do you feel like you belong the most? Would it be here in Pretoria, or would it be there in Limpopo, or would it be like the same?

Katherine: Right now, I feel like here the most.

Int: Is the feeling of belonging similar to the feeling of community or like the feeling of home, or different and if so, how is it different?

Katherine: Ummm, please repeat the question.

Int: No worries. That feeling of belonging, ‘I belong here’, is that similar to your feeling of community or is it the feeling of home, or if it’s different, how so?

Katherine: Ohh, for me it’s similar to the feeling of being home, in a sense that I am bit comfortable here with the people here. Also, its similar with community, because I feel more comfortable – because I see the people every day, I talk to some of them, you know. So, ya.

Int: And you feel like you belong – like you said, you feel like you belong here more so?

Katherine: Mmm, I feel like I fit in more here and now I feel like I do not – like I do not have a place anymore at home. So, I fit in more here. Whereas if I go home, I feel like I don’t fit in.

Int: And having this place that is very important for you to have this sense of belonging?

Katherine: Mmm.

Int: It necessitates it?

Katherine: Mmm, ya, because I would be very lost if I didn’t fit in here and I didn’t fit in at home.

Int: Ya, that would be a problem.

Katherine: Ya. So, at least I know I’m there for like a few weeks, it’s fine, I’ll get home, indoors, go out to grab a few things at the mall, come back, that side.

Int: But here you’ve got a role to play?

Katherine: Ya. Here, I’m a tutor, I meet students in the street, I have friends, people that I know from church – I don’t go to church anymore, but I know people that I went to the same church with. You know, so ya.

Int: Ya, like I’ve said, Pretoria as much as a big city as it is, it’s a small town in many ways. Like I’ll go – like I saw a bunch of my tutor kids when I went out to the movies the other day and I was like, “Why are you here, like you should be studying.” Like, “You have an assignment due tomorrow, like why are you here.”

Katherine: That’s so weird, because you’re like – it happens to me when I’m at the shops, like Pick ‘n Pay, when I’m at Hillcrest Boulevard, and it’s like, “M’am.”

Int: “Do I know you?”

Katherine: “Not in front of people, dude.”

Int: \*Laughs. Off Tuks campus, you don’t know me.

Katherine: Exactly. Like we don’t know each other, we only know each other in class. But it also, it makes you feel like it’s – like I’ve contributed to society, a bit. \*Laughs.

Int: Ya no, I agree with you. There are people out there who have learnt from me.

Katherine: Ya, ya, especially if they tell – especially of they come up to you and say, “Listen, I passed the test or the exam. I did well because you helped me, bla, bla, bla.”

Int: That always makes you feel good.

Katherine: Ya.

Int: Ya, so do you feel safe in South Africa ?

Katherine: Joh, no.

Int: Not at all?

Katherine: Not at all.

Int: Are there specific places where you would feel safe?

Katherine: There are places which feel safe if I know the place.

Int: So, like you home here in Pretoria?

Katherine: Mm, ya. For example, we went to Mpumalanga for the weekend, and it was just me and my friends. Two women travelling together, it’s very far. It was – we went to Hazy View, and like we don’t know the place. So, we were like, ‘Okay at sunset we have to be at the place we’re staying at’, because you know.

Int: Ya.

Katherine: Because we don’t know what happens there.

Int: Ya, and there aren’t streetlights there I’m telling you.

Katherine: Right. And also it’s not safe in like someone can do something to you – it’s not safe now, with the potholes and everything. It’s – and the car accidents. So, something can happen to you and someone can do something to you. There’s those two aspects of safety that – or those two aspects put your safety in jeopardy; because at some point, we were driving so slowly because of potholes, you know.

Int: Not pothole, pot-craters. Those things are massive.

Katherine: Exactly. And I mean, people drive like they are mad.

Int: People that know those roads drive like crazy.

Katherine: Maybe because – okay I have a fear, not the fear of driving or being in a car, but I was in a car accident before. So, I’m quite, um.

Int: Cautious.

Katherine: All of my senses are like-

Int: Heightened.

Katherine: Heightened you know. So, ya, now – especially in a place I don’t know, like around Hatfield I’m like, ‘Okay, it’s fine’. But when it’s a place that I don’t know, it’s like, ‘Okay I don’t know how the people drive here. Are they careful, are they-” You know.

Int: Ya.

Katherine: There’s potholes, and then there are other people; like people there drive like crazy. They take risks. It’s a truck, it’s a *truck*, you can’t overtake a truck with another truck coming.

Int: Exactly.

Katherine: No, no, they just drive on the side.

Int: Off roading?

Katherine: No, no, on the yellow line. But then also, some of the roads are a bit thing or, you know, narrow, you could fall off at any point. So, now I’m just like, ‘I give up’.

Int: I mean like, I get stressed out when I have to drive through Town here.

Katherine: Mm.

Int: Like I don’t mind driving through Town, I did it throughout my high school career, it’s fine I can do it. But you have to know how to drive there because people drive there drive how they want to.

Katherine: Especially, taxi drivers.

Int: Taxi drivers, I mean my cousin once said this and it’s probably the only smart thing he’s ever said. He said, “Taxi drivers, because they drive for a living, they are probably the best drivers that we have because they know their car; they know their space.” So, if you just let them be, the chances are they’re not going to crash into you. But they are just very loud, geez.

Katherine: Mm, exactly. And they are very like violent.

Int: I mean the taxi gangs are something else. Ya, I take it you were in Pretoria when the whole Uber and taxi wars were happening.

Katherine: Mm.

Int: And that was scary, I felt bad for Uber.

Katherine: And also like, the thing is now at some point you can’t request and Uber because taxi drivers will fight with you, and I’m just like, ‘If I want to get into a taxi I will get into a taxi’.

Int: Exactly.

Katherine: You won’t see the Uber people going after people.

Int: Ya, no exactly. Like at the Gautrain station in Hatfield.

Katherine: Ya.

Int: Uber drivers will not pick you up there.

Katherine: You have to walk up to the Plaza.

Int: ‘Do I look like someone who’s going to take a taxi bru? And are you going to drive me straight to my house?’, because I don’t think that’s how taxis work.

Katherine: And also, ‘I don’t feel safe enough, because with you’, the meter taxis, there’s no tracing involved. Like if I get into an Uber I know like – like I can share the trip information. You know. There’s some sort of traceability involved. And then with them it’s just, ah.

Int: I don’t like the meter taxis. They’re like triple the price, they always try rip you off and they’ll be like, “Nah fifty bucks.” And then they’ll drop you off and it will be like three hundred Rand, like what?

Katherine: Exactly. And then now you start arguing with you and they leave you on the side of the road.

Int: Exactly, and you never know if it’s going to turn violent.

Katherine: Ya.

Int: It’s always that thing. So, this feeling of safe in South Africa that’s a general thing – you just don’t feel safe.

Katherine: Mm.

Int: Has that been the same throughout your life, or has it changed.

Katherine: I think it’s changed. Like as a kid, I felt very safe anywhere. Like I said, my aunt lives in Soshanguve and when we went to Town, we would feel safe. Like there was no need to hide your phone, your boobs.

Int: Ya.

Katherine: You know. But now you can’t walk with your phone in your hand or in your bag.

Int: No, exactly. I don’t even like walking with my bag.

Katherine: I think for me it changed when I was mugged in Town, in the CBD.

Int: Oh damn, like this Town.

Katherine: Ya, like I was in – was it first-year, ya. So, my mom had sent me money. So I was like, ‘I’ll go pass’- I was living in Pretoria North by then. I lived in Pretoria North for a few months before I moved into Res. So, now on my way there I was like, ‘Okay let me draw some cash for the bus’, you know. Fine, I go to the ATM. I think they followed me to the ATM, and when I came out of the ATM I was standing at the robot they come back and took all the money – well the wallet. My wallet.

Int: I’m sorry that happened. It was for first-year, so I take it was your first year in South Africa – ag, ‘South Africa’, in Pretoria, and then you’re like, ‘Oh it’s safe’.

Katherine: Ya. My whole wallet, like my ID was in there.

Int: Oh, that’s such a drag.

Katherine: Ya. So, fortunately I still had my phone so I could call and get help, you know. But that was like – I think that’s when things started changing.

Int: And then you started becoming more aware or just feeling unsafe in general.

Katherine: Ya, like feeling unsafe and just being more aware, like ‘Okay now you have to hold onto your bag’.

Int: Ya, you have to be aware all the time, like hold it like it’s your baby.

Katherine: Ya, you know. And I mean for some people, like people who have had worst experiences, they’ll be like they’ll will just cut, like under your bag and everything just falls into a plastic bag and they just take it. So, you think you still have your bag.

Int: And then gone.

Katherine: There’s nothing.

Int: I mean, that’s mad. So, like you have this mugging experience – I’m very sorry about that, it’s terrible especially because it’s your first, I don’t know, few months in Pretoria. After that I happens, I take it your went to the police station or did you just go home?

Katherine: I went to the police station.

Int: And what was that experience like?

Katherine: \*Laughs. They made me feel like I mugged someone, not like I was mugged. So, they’re like – you get there like, “I’ve just been mugged.” They’re like, “Where?” Like, nonchalant, like no urgency. That’s when you know, you’re not getting your things back.

Int: Exactly. Like you’re done. Is that the only time you’ve had to interact with the South African Police Force, or have you had to interact with them more often?

Katherine: I’ve dealt with them – there was another incident, I think in 2022. So, someone tried to break into the flat that I live in, right. So – okay, let me explain the first incident. So, now I’m there and they’re like, “What happened.” And I’m like, ‘Okay’, they take my statement: “Did you see the people?” “No, I didn’t see them.” “Fine, well make a statement.” That’s a statement that I have to take to Home Affairs to get my new ID, to the bank to get my new card, new everything. But, funny enough – well, fortunately for me, um… someone called me the next day, they had found my wallet.

Int: Oh, okay.

Katherine: And then my aunt was like, “Okay, let’s wait and see, like I’ll go fetch it. Don’t go alone.” And then she went with a colleague of hers, a man. I mean it has to be a man for you to feel safe, you know.

Int: Ya.

Katherine: So, they went there and picked it up. So, the people who stole it did was just take out the money and left it at a club. So, they bought alcohol. And then just left it on the table. And I had a Money Market slip – you know, Money Market at Shoprite?

Int: No, I’m not too sure.

Katherine: So, I can send you money using your phone number.

Int: Oh. Yes, ya, ya.

Katherine: So, I just tell them, “I’m sending money to this person.” And then you just go collect it. So, my phone number was there on the slip because my mom sent to me.

Int: Oh okay.

Katherine: So, she would normally send me money through that to avoid bank charges. So, I had one of the slips in my wallet, and then they found it and they called the number. I answered, my aunt went to fetch it. And fortunately, I was saved from having to deal with Home Affairs. And after that I didn’t even go back to the Police Station, I was juts like, ‘You know what, it’s whatever. I’m done. They’re not going to do anything anyways’.

Int: Ya, exactly.

Katherine: And so the second incident. So, someone tried to break-in – well, they actually managed to open the door with a wire, the security door. And they couldn’t – they unlocked the door, the security door and the door.

Int: Like the Trellidor?

Katherine: Ya, the Trellidor. But then because you can lock it from inside – I don’t know what you call those things, like you know, like a shooter-something.

Int: Oh, yes. The latch.

Katherine: Ya, the latch. So, you can lock it from inside, so he couldn’t open it. And then he was fighting with the door and that’s when I woke up from the noise.

Int: Oh shit, so you were inside the whole time?

Katherine: Ya.

Int: That’s terrifying.

Katherine: So now, I wake up and then he realises, ‘Okay’ – because I think he thought there was no one-

Int: Home, yes.

Katherine: Home. So, he ran away. So now, I’m calling the police – but I saw him, I saw what he was wearing. Calling the police, I mean it’s the police right here.

Int: Ya, Brooklyn Police Station.

Katherine: Ya, Brooklyn Police Station. They come, they ask what happened, I tell them, they go to the streets. I think they drove around for a bit. Security guards actually found the person hiding in the basement parking. So, we call them back. They take him with. Like, ‘Okay, what’s happening now?’ – they just gave me their numbers. Apparently, the police station has a WhatsApp number. Then the next day in the morning, I call there like, “Listen, there was this person who was arrested at this time” – but, the thing is I didn’t even take their names or surnames, right – “at this place.” “There is no such thing, we have no record of such thing.”

Int: No record?

Katherine: Nothing.

Int: And what’s that feeling like?

Katherine: It made me feel more unsafe, because the person saw me, I saw him, what if we had another encounter and he’s like, “Ya, you” – you know, do you understand.

Int: Ya, “You got me arrested.”

Katherine: Ya.

Int: Oh, I’m sorry like you’re at home – do you mind if we talk about this for a moment, I understand if you don’t want to.

Katherine: Mm.

Int: So, you’re asleep, and then you just hear someone banging on your door. What was it – did you yell, did you scream, did you get a weapon out?

Katherine: \*Laughs. The thing is I have a really slow response to, you know.

Int: Okay.

Katherine: So, I didn’t scream, I didn’t yell, I just like, “What are you doing?”

Int: \*Laughs. Wait you’re like face-to-face.

Katherine: Ya. And then he ran away.

Int: \*Laughs.

Katherine: So, that’s like, I have a really slow response. It was only after that, like five minutes afterwards, when I have called the police and that, that I realised what was actually happening.

Int: Yeah, ‘Someone tried to break into my house’.

Katherine: Yeah. So, ya.

Int: I’m sorry to laugh, but-

Katherine: No, I also laughed.

Int: Like, ‘No bru, what are you thinking’.

Katherine: No, I also laughed at myself because – what are you doing? But when I think more about it, I just like – I wonder what would have happened if he had managed to get in. You know… especially with the stories you see on the news or see in the newspapers with people being killed in their homes or raped, whatever; and it just freaks me out. And the thing is now, if I hear a Trellidor move or the door moving I get like scared. I wake up from the slightest sound, you know, and I wake up now because I’m scared like that time I woke up, I was not scared, ‘I’m hearing sounds, let me check it out’. Now, you’re like, \*Gasps, ‘It could be someone’. You know. And I had to think about, ‘Okay if this happens again, what will I-’. And one thought that came into my head was like, ‘Okay there is a big ass like knife in the kitchen’. Like it’s just there, like ‘It’s just in the kitchen so what if the person is at my bedroom door, so what about-’, you know. You start to think about, ‘Okay I need to do this, I would do that to protect myself’. But also, what if that doesn’t work and what if the person has a gun?

Int: That’s also true. Have you ever thought about getting a gun?

Katherine: I have.

Int: You have a gun or you have thought about it?

Katherine: No, no, I have thought about it. Like I have thought about pepper spray, I have thought about… self defence classes, I’ve thought about – like the thing with that is if you’re scared, ‘Okay I’ll do this’, but then the fear dies down and then you’re just like; after three months you’re like, ‘Oh, I’ve been meaning to get a pepper spray’, you know. Anyway, but I have through about getting a gun. And, I mean… that’s, ya, now if you have a slow response like I do.

Int: Freeze.

Katherine: The freeze, the speak softly and nicely.

Int: What’s that going to do.

Katherine: You know. But ya, I have thought about it.

Int: Have you increased your security after that happened?

Katherine: Ahh, no. I think the latch on the door, is sometimes it makes me feel better, that ‘Okay’.

Int: That little latch makes you feel so much better.

Katherine: Ya, that little latch. Ya, because if it – like you can’t go in, like you have to do something to move it and by that time I’m alert and I can start thinking about something. You know. And I obviously have, I still have the police station number, but hey you can’t rely on the police. I mean, “Where’s the guy, where’s the guys?” “There’s no evidence of a break-in.” He broke the door, he used like a wire – there was a wire this size on the floor, and another piece of it was in the door, like in the door. Like they had to change the lock.

Int: Oh.

Katherine: You know. And I’m just like… “Okay take fingerprints then.”

Int: “Do something.”

Katherine: “Do something.” Because he opened the window – like the window was opened, but it’s like this small, so he saw that ‘Okay, I’m not getting anywhere with the window’.

Int: So, he must have been trying for a while.

Katherine: Exactly.

Int: And then after this, I mean you have this terrible – I suppose you wake up, middle of the night, middle of the morning.

Katherine: Ya, first few weeks after that, hectic.

Int: Couldn’t sleep – were you there at all, did you have to have people in the house with you?

Katherine: Um, I was – well, the next day my boyfriend came over. And then… I think that week it was also like, you know, in-and-out, in-and-out, in-and-out. And then after that just like, ‘Okay, like’.

Int: You have to get on with it.

Katherine: You have to get on with it, go on with your life.

Int: And did that disrupt your sense of home, because I take it that that flat was the first home that you owned.

Katherine: Exactly.

Int: And this happened. Did that disrupt your sense of home, did you think that maybe ‘This home is not home anymore’ for a while?

Katherine: Not really, I just felt unsafe.

Int: Unsafe.

Katherine: Ya.

Int: And how long did that take to get over – you said a few weeks?

Katherine: No, no, like the first few weeks you wake up – like at any sound you hear, you wake up. And then after that, it gets better. So, I would say a few months, like three or four months.

Int: And then you started to feel like back to normal almost?

Katherine: Ya. Also, I was scared that this person would come like – like what if I? And I was asking myself, ‘What if I see this person in the street? What do I do?’. Do I scream? Do I confront him?

Int: Ya, ‘Do I turn away and do nothing?’.

Katherine: ‘What if I see him in the basement parking?’, ‘What if he’s hiding in the basement parking all the time and he’s watching me?’.

Int: That’s terrifying.

Katherine: And then after a while everything like, ‘Okay’. And then you just get used to, you know, life.

Int: Ya, ‘Back to normal’. So, like how would you describe your life as a South African woman living in South Africa?

Katherine: With regards to safety or?

Int: Just in general.

Katherine: In general… Joh, I think it’s quite hard… Quite hard because, I mean you have to – first of all, okay being independent, working, you know, trying to make a life for yourself, a future, and then… thinking about ‘Okay am I going to work, must I still study those things’. And then obviously there are those things, um, the fact that when you get into a relationship you have to like think about it because people die at the hands of their partners as well. So, you think about those things in addition to the safety in the streets, in the shops, in the malls – I mean I’ve seen videos of people trying to abduct or kidnap people while they are jogging, you know. And I think that’s – when you decide to do something you really have to think about it and you always have to check if it’s safe, like ‘Okay we’re going to this place, is it safe?’.

Int: Ya. Are there some places you will just not go either as a woman or alone?

Katherine: I think… I think… I would almost go everywhere alone, or with my friends who are females, so I have not gotten to the point where I feel like there are some places that I have to go with…

Int: With a man.

Katherine: Ya, with a man.

Int: You’re a student, ya, I take it you went out to the clubs?

Katherine: Yeah.

Int: How was that experience?

Katherine: Most of the times it’s fine, it’s good, it’s okay.

Int: You’ve been studying for like twelve years now?

Katherine: Mm.

Int: You would have been around for the Square?

Katherine: Ya.

Int: And what was it like, because I’ve got The Strip, and ya.

Katherine: The Square was amazing. And I think um, because – at that time we were, ya, we were young and carefree, you know. We didn’t think of, ‘Okay am I safe, am I not safe’. You know, it wasn’t – we didn’t have a lot of, um, spikings, spiking of drinks, you know, everyone was just happy, and everyone was just-

Int: Kind.

Katherine: Ya, friendly with each other and kind. Until now, you hear of the things that happen and just joh. Or I think – ag, they might have had happened but they were not to a large extent, not as big as they are now. Maybe.

Int: Do you still go out?

Katherine: Not as much. \*Laughs.

Int: Those days are behind you. I’m getting there too.

Katherine: Also because it takes, like now it takes longer to recover after the night out. Like previously, like in undergrad – I remember this day, it was Friday, we went out Friday night, probably slept two, three hours; Saturday morning we were up doing nothing and then probably like go back again, you know.

Int: Ya, ya, the weekend long bender.

Katherine: Exactly. But then now, joh you go out once and then you have to sleep the whole weekend. Ya, so ya, it’s less frequent than I used to.

Int: I can’t do it anymore – like I was out once and saw kids that I tutor and I went, ‘I can’t, I can’t’.

Katherine: \*Laughs.

Int: I had a kid who was sixteen years old hit on me, that was an experience – tells me that age is just a number, like ‘No sweet pea it’s a crime’.

Katherine: I’ve had that.

Int: Getting hit on in South African clubs, what was that like?

Katherine: For me, it’s most of the time by older men. Which is really rude, because I mean the most rude one was in December and we went to a concert like here, at Time Square. And funny enough, these men were there with their wives, it was a group of three men and three women together. And they were sitting in front of us, but they kept on looking at me and my friend, like in a very funny way. And I’m like, ‘Dude you’re with your wife’.

Int: Yeah, ‘This is weird’.

Katherine: Very weird. So, ya it’s mm – it’s not…

Int: Ya, it’s creepy.

Katherine: Creepy, because I’m not a person who would meet someone at the clubs and get friendly with them.

Int: Ya, no.

Katherine: No.

Int: Ya, I need you entire credit statement, also a police check.

Katherine: Ya, and most of the time – well, not most of the time, but some of the times or… ya, some of the times I go out with my boyfriend and his friends, or with a group of our friends. So, it’s – you can’t do anything then because you can see that I’m with, you know, someone.

Int: Attached yes.

Katherine: So, ya. But when it happens, it is weird. And also because you hear stories of men who for example will buy you a drink and expect you to go home with them. As soon as someone looks in your direction you be like ‘No’.

Int: ‘No, thank you’.

Katherine: ‘No, thank you’.

Int: I’m worth more than a drink special, I’m sorry.

Katherine: Ya. Or you get a drink like sent to the table, like ‘No, like what’s in the drink’.

Int: Ya, so are you worried about spiking or is that only like recently?

Katherine: No, I think like from Honours upwards because that was when we had heard of frequent spiking. Ya, so now you’re worried about like, ‘What’s in the drink’. And I mean people tell their stories now, and I’m like ‘That sounds very scary’.

Int: I know someone who got spiked with heroin.

Katherine: Joh.

Int: Like that’s insane, like heroin is not like a silly, little, funny-funny drug, like that stuff is insane. But ya, are there any daily safety precautions that you take?

Katherine: Joh… let me think. I think um… well, one is to like have my laptop in a normal bag.

Int: And not a laptop bag – that’s smart.

Katherine: Not a laptop bag. And not have everything – like I have my other bag where I put my laptop in, and then a bag where I put my lunch in, so I have them separate. I have my phone in there, wallet in the other.

Int: Spread out your belongings?

Katherine: Spread out your belongings. When I go jogging, only have – well my watch, leave my cell phone at home, you know, and hope that I don’t get hit by a car, and need to call someone. Always look back, like ‘Who’s coming?’, you know, when walking and driving because I walk, I don’t drive. And ya, use the busiest route like there’s other people walking, you know, to work. It must be busy.

Int: Don’t go to quiet streets.

Katherine: Ya, because if it’s too quiet I feel like someone can do anything without anyone seeing something. And like I said, the route that I take to campus, there’s like a lot of – there’s like a block of flats, there’s a Res – not a Res. Ya, a block of flats. So, there’s a lot of security guys.

Int: In the vicinity, yes.

Katherine: In the vicinity. So, take that route. And ya, when the shooting happened it was the route to gym for me and I had to avoid it now.

Int: Did that disrupt your, I don’t know, sense of community, sense of ‘this is my place’?

Katherine: It disrupted I think my daily routine I would say, because now you have to change routes, you know. And make sure if it’s dark, rather Uber or Taxify. Ya, you can’t take chances anymore.

Int: No. So, we have spoken a lot about safety and women in South Africa and all of this. Do you plan on staying in South Africa for the foreseeable future?

Katherine: For the foreseeable future, yes. But I think for the future-future \*Laughs. Also, looking at job security – I think for the future-future, I think I would, given the opportunity, I would definitely take a chance and move overseas if I’m guaranteed a better job, you know, and a place where I can do the job I studied for. I don’t want to end up being in sales, waiting on tables – I mean like I’ve got nothing against it, it’s a job.

Int: But you’ve studied twelve years.

Katherine: Exactly. You know. So, ya I think it would be a much better place to provide for my family like when I’m not in the county. Like if it’s a better job, better pay, I’m much better off in other counties. But also I would move because I would want my children, if I have any, to like grow up in a different environment, not like – I don’t want to be like watching over my shoulder now you have to watch over their shoulder, and you’re not even with them all the time, you know. So, my co-supervisor moved to the UK, she got a lecturing job in the UK and then she moved. And I would think that it didn’t even take a lot to make that decision.

Int: No, I don’t think so either.

Katherine: Ya, and then when we meet online and we ask her, “How is it going?” “It’s so safe.” Like, ‘When out there I would still hold my children like by the hand, drag them, you know make sure like’…

Int: Ya, ‘Don’t go alone’.

Katherine: Ya, like ‘Panic when they’re not like next to me. But here it’s different’.

Int: If they take off, they take off, they’ll come back – it’s safe.

Katherine: Ya. Like when they walk them to school, they walk in the front, they can walk in the back – they feel safer. So, I think if I had that opportunity, I would also take it. Especially because if anything happens and – you can’t even rely on the police or the justice system You understand?

Int: Ya.

Katherine: And also, I mean without that – if we had a functioning police force, functioning well, and a justice system that works. That punished people for doing wrong all the time, I would think that – well, the person who broke in he gave them, I don’t know, a hundred Rand, two hundred Rand, and they let him go. You understand. But if he was held accountable for…

Int: His actions, ya.

Katherine: I would feel much safer.

Int: Yes.

Katherine: And if you see stories on tv or read something and you see that the person is being held accountable for something wrong that they did, we would feel much more better or safer that ‘Okay, even if it happens, that person will wilt in jail’.

Int: Will suffer the consequences, yes.

Katherine: Ya. But now if something happens, pshht, you see the – ‘What if I see the person in the street, what do I do?’.

Int: Exactly.

Katherine: Like he saw my face and he knows me, now my life – I felt like my life was in danger, so.

Int: Ya, and rightfully so. That’s the thing about South Africa, like yes we have crime and there’s crime all over the world, but there is an extra layer of violence applied to our crime. We don’t just have house robberies – like you said, you don’t just have house robberies it can turn into a murder-rape.

Katherine: An extra layer of corruption on top of that because anyone can buy the police, anyone can buy the people in the justice system and the judges.

Int: Our previous president who was accused of rape, went to trial, and is still – I don’t think anything came of it. And the poor victim, I mean.

Katherine: I loathe that man, especially after reading – have you read the book, Redi Tlhabi?

Int: No. Is it good?

Katherine: Ooo, like her crazy story. Like joh.

Int: Please send me the name, I’ll definitely give it a read. You must read, ‘Rape a South African Nightmare’, by Pumela Dineo Gqola I think it is. It’s a fantastic novel. She talks a lot about this, and she’s – in the book she talks about this. There is a failing system, like the South African system fails women in particular, and what’s it going to come to because we can’t fight violence with violence, because that just leads to more violence, but where does that leave South African women; how do South African women get this to stop?

Katherine: In the book, it details how their relationship began, like the woman was the child of a friend. And how it progressed until that point, and what happened after that point and how people were just left to do anything to her and her family up to the point where they had to leave the country. And some of the people that were involved were women, the ANC Woman’s League.

Int: Yes.

Katherine: So, I loathe that man, I loathe the ANC with my everything. And at that time, I remember at that time I was in grade seven when the rape trial started. And I believed her then and I still believe her now, may her soul rest in peace – but I was still a kid.

Int: And you’re exposed to this.

Katherine: I was a kid. And that man went on to be our president, and I was like, ‘But we can’t – how?’.

Int: And that should have been the first sign, if we did not have that man as our president.

Katherine: And it’s been downhill from there.

Int: That man wrecked the internal workings of this country – I get it we didn’t have the most stable government, I agree, but that man and those eight years had done decades of damage.

Katherine: And what made me angry was that it happened to – that he did it to other people.

Int: Yes, it wasn’t just one.

Katherine: And this one woman who actually like was brave enough to tell her story in this book as well – it’s just like, what the hell?

Int: Exactly. Like you said, there was the ANC Woman’s League actively pushing against her. I mean the amount of verbal abuse.

Katherine: Exactly.

Int: The trail itself I mean a victim who had to permanently change her name, they could not go on with their lives because of this continuous abuse and – witch hunt, if you can put it that way.

Katherine: Ya.

Int: How do you view those women?

Katherine: … And you know what bothers me the most, they were black women and they are exposed to these things in our society, you know. And they know that it happens, right. Rape is not something that you make up in your mind, it happens. And they went on to victimise the poor woman. So, I don’t view them – as much as people view like, you know, ‘struggle’, ‘struggle world’, like I don’t care. I don’t think I will ever respect them as people, you know, if I were to – like if I were to ever bump into them I don’t think I would ever be like, \*Gasp, ‘Oh!’ – you know. ‘This is someone from the ANC Woman’s League, I’ve seen them on tv’. Right. And I mean, also – remember when we had, was it the last government elections and we had, um… there were… not Reddy, but some of the girls that protested at the announcement.

Int: Ya, ya – weren’t they wearing purple or something.

Katherine: Ya. And how they went after them also. They were like pushing them around, and I was just like ‘how are you?’.

Int: They remind me of Trump supporters.

Katherine: Exactly. ‘How are you protecting – you’re protecting a rapist’. So I don’t respect them as like people – and I know a lot of people, because they are politicians and they hold very high like, ‘I don’t care’.

Int: And? Just because you’re a politician doesn’t mean you’re a good person.

Katherine: And I mean, there’s a difference between right and wrong and if you’re going towards the wrong, I don’t place you in any high regard. Sorry. And that goes for like most people in the ANC, if not all of them.

Int: That’s the general sense now. I feel bad for Cyril, I like Cyril, I think he’s doing the best but.

Katherine: I like him, but I feel like he should have been more firm. Like he had a chance to change things.

Int: Ya, he should have put his foot down.

Katherine: I feel like he had a – ya. He had a chance to turn – to really turn things around. And he let it go, it’s – like from the tip of his fingers, like get there clean up, carry on. That should have been his strategy. But I guess his life would have also been in danger.

Int: Ya.

Katherine: And his family. And he also has some like – a bit of shady dealings.

Int: Oh ya.

Katherine: But I mean he hasn’t – I haven’t heard of anyone accusing him of rape. He looks like someone who respects women.

Int: He didn’t steal billions from our country.

Katherine: Exactly.

Int: He might have stolen some, but it wasn’t billions.

Katherine: Ya, and he’s done business with the government, like he is a businessman and he’s the president, but deliver. I feel like as long as you deliver, that’s it.

Int: Shady is shady that’s fine as long as we get out stuff.

Katherine: If you’re the president and you have a business that’s builds roads, build the fucking road. And I have no problem – building a road that is a road when it rains.

Int: Exactly, don’t build a house – very simple things, like we’ll choose our own corruption here.

Katherine: Yes! You know. So, ya no, I have those government, ya – and I feel like Reddy was very brave to write this story. She’s a journalist in South Africa and…

Int: Ya, you’ve got to tolerate-

Katherine: I mean like she is, till this day, she is still being called names on Twitter. She posts something and people are like, ‘Ya, you excused Zuma’, and I’m like ‘What?’.

Int: But correctly accused. I mean, ‘An accusation with grounds is a lot better than what you’re doing with your blind loyalty’- I can’t stand blind loyalty.

Katherine: And I mean, it was in the media, it was everywhere.

Int: Mmm, there was proof.

Katherine: I mean, ‘I went to take a shower’.

Int: I will never.

Katherine: What more proof do you want?

Int: The worst for me, I mean I love South Africa, I love the country – you? Love the country, love South Africans?

Katherine: Yes, yes.

Int: There is this thing of blind loyalty, like, ‘Guys we could be so much better’.

Katherine: Exactly. It’s got into their heads as well because they’re like, ‘Oh we were out fighting for freedom, we deserve to steal, we deserve to loot as much as we want and still have a place; still hold a very high position’. Just because you were out in Anglo for a year.

Int: Shocking. Um, so one of the last questions: What is your biggest fear living in South Africa?

Katherine: Right now, my biggest fear is um… being killed for like no reason, like maybe, I don’t know, there’s a heist and I get hit by a stray bullet. \*Laughs.

Int: Rational fear though.

Katherine: Or walking in the street and someone decides, you know, they just want to have their way with me, you know.

Int: Mm, is that something you think about often or you try not to think about?

Katherine: I try not to think about it. I try not to read the news a lot, I try not to watch the news a lot, you know.

Int: And you find that helps quell this fear?

Katherine: Yes, ya. I mean also… ya, just the violence man, the violence is real. I also fear like being bumped by someone like in a car or just walking, you know, because like people drive like they’re mad and it’s also because you can buy a license wherever you want like.

Int: Did you hear what happened in Limpopo? So, the driving schools-

Katherine: Protested, yes.

Int: Protested because the bribes for a license went up. \*Laughs. Only in South Africa.

Katherine: You see. And for me, I have – and, I don’t know, I. I feel like I have a fear of dying before my time because I feel like I still have a lot to offer.

Int: You’re still young, very young.

Katherine: Ya. And I feel like, I still have a very long life to live, like have a family, have children, you know, work and empower other young women, you know, because I want to stay in academia. And I mean if that happened, it would be a loss, that’s, that’s my fear.

Int: A loss of potential?

Katherine: Yeah, death is natural that’s fine, yes, but please I don’t want to go out like this.

Int: Ya, so if cancer takes me, cancer takes me, but just not a stray bullet.

Katherine: Ya, don’t let it be a stray bullet, don’t let it be someone else that decides that, you know, that I’m not worthy of living. So ya.

Int: Ya, I think that’s all that I have for you today-

Katherine: And I also think that because – one more point.

Int: Yeah, go for it.

Katherine: Because of how my dad passed away. So, he was a taxi driver back in the day, and there were Taxi Wars and he was shot. Also, because of that I feel, and I – I feel like I would have had a very different life if he was still alive rather than having his life cut short. So, I feel like if that were to happen to me that would be very sad.

Int: Sad, ya. Um, do you mind if we actually talk about that for a minute?

Katherine: Mm.

Int: So, how old were you when this happened?

Katherine: I wasn’t even born yet.

Int: Oh! Shame, so your mom had you-

Katherine: My mom was still pregnant.

Int: Ya, so just you and your more – any brothers and sisters?

Katherine: It’s just me, I’m the first born. That time it was just me.

Int: Just you, ya, and your mom. Did you mom ever remarry?

Katherine: No.

Int: Oh, so your mom just you-

Katherine: Well, it took – she had someone and then had my little brother, but it was never, you know, a marriage.

Int: Ya, ya. And just growing – for how long was it just you and your mom?

Katherine: Eleven years.

Int: That’s a long time. And you bond must be like this \*Crosses fingers. It must be intense.

Katherine: Yes!

Int: But I also feel like a bond like that must also be tough to live with?

Katherine: Yes.

Int: And then your mom started a relationship. What was that like when this man comes into your life and you’re like, ‘Um, who’s this brukie’?

Katherine: I never liked him. I had my own reservations. But it’s also because I have a thing where, like if I meet someone for the first time I have this thing where I can tell – and I know this sounds very \*Laughs. You know, it sounds very weird. But I can tell whether a person is a good person or a bad person.

Int: I think it’s good intuition. You learn things.

Katherine: Ya. So, ya, I never liked him. We never talked a lot. It was just what it is, well. ‘He’s your person, I don’t have to get involved’, you know.

Int: Exactly.

Katherine: Ya, and… ya, but I never felt unsafe around him funnily enough. And, ya.

Int: Little bother, littler sister?

Katherine: Little brother.

Int: And does your little brother get away with murder or not?

Katherine: \*Sighs. I am the deputy parent, so not I have to make sure that he doesn’t- \*Laughs.

Int: Get away with murder, has to be a decent human being.

Katherine: Exactly, even if he’s left to do anything, it stops with me. Ya.

Int: So, you grow up as a girl, your mom have to have like safety talks with you like, ‘You stick with me all the time’.

Katherine: Mm.

Int: Did she have like similar talks with your brother or have you had those talks with your little brother?

Katherine: No. He goes anywhere, does whatever he wants. Except for like when it’s late at night and he knows that he has to be back – when it’s dark, you’re in the house, otherwise.

Int: ‘I’m coming to find you’.

Katherine: Exactly. You know. It’s like, ya.

Int: It’s a little bit different for a girl.

Katherine: It’s different.

Int: Well, that’s actually all that I have for you today. If you have anything you would like to add you are more than welcome to add it on now.

Katherine: I think that’s it from me.

Int: But you also have my number and my email addresses, so you are more than welcome – if you see something, you are more than welcome to send it to me, I’d be more than happy to include it. But, ya thank you so much for your stories, for your time; I know these aren’t easy conversations to have-

Katherine: But that are very important conversations to have.

Int: Even that being it, they are still difficult to have so thank you.

Katherine: I’m looking forward to your thesis.

Int: I’m looking forward to it being done as well.

Katherine: You know what you should do?

Int: What should I do?

Katherine: After you submit, or after examination and stuff, you should have like a conversation – like invite women from campus or something.

Int: That’s the goal actually, like turn it into a course or something.

Katherine: Ya.

Int: But ya, I’ll let you know.

Katherine: Invite me.

Int: I definitely will, but ya, thank you so much.