Individual Interview 17 – Florynce

(Full time: 1:09:36)

Int: Hello, how are you?

Florynce: Hello, I’m good thank you. How are you?

Int: I’m good, it’s a bit hot but ag, it’s summer we’ll get through.

Florynce: It is, it is hot.

Int: Ya, so just quickly, you’ve read and understood the informed consent form?

Florynce: Yes, I have.

Int: Great. Ya, if you’ve got any questions, concerns, you’re more than welcome to ask them, I’m here to answer, but otherwise we can jump right into it.

Florynce: Let’s jump straight into it.

Int: Cool. So, I just want to give a general overview of what we’re going to get into today. We’ll be looking at the concept of belonging, but more the emotional side. So, what t’s like to have a sense of belonging; so not the groups you belong to, but what those groups make you feel, and all the places what they make you feel.

Florynce: Mm, sure.

Int: And then we’re going to talk about your experiences of safety in South Africa. And then lastly, we’re going to bring that all together, safety and South Africa and how that has maybe affected your sense of belonging, and ya so forth. But ya, that’s about it. And before we get started, we’re just going to have get a general background of who you are, so how old are you, are you studying, are you working, did you study and now you’re working, and where you’re from, have you always been in Pretoria or have you moved to Pretoria.

Florynce: Should I mention my name?

Int: You can, I will take it out of the transcript. I’ll put your pseudonym in.

Florynce: Oh, okay. Participant seventeen. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs.

Florynce: Um, I’m originally from Queens Town in the Eastern Cape, so not from Pretoria. I’ve been studying, never worked permanently.

Int: Temp jobs?

Florynce: Ya, I’ve been doing temp jobs since I was sixteen; ya, waitressing, assistant marking, just helping out here I could. \*Laughs. Just making money as best as I could, ya. And then I moved to Pretoria two years back.

Int: Okay, so you’re recent in Pretoria?

Florynce: Recent in Pretoria. Two years back I moved here, when I was doing… starting my Honours. I completed last year, and now I’m doing my Masters.

Int: Good times?

Florynce: \*Laughs. Not really, recently. In pharmacology, so I haven’t been here for a very long time, but I have been here. I have come to visit, my older sister is here. So, I have come to visit a few times.

Int: And in Queens Town?

Florynce: Yes, Queens Town. Born, bred, raised-

Int: Everything.

Florynce: Everything there. And then for my undergrad I went to KZN.

Int: Oh, the university of KZN.

Florynce: Yes, so I went to UKZN for my undergrad. Spent a bit of time there and then I came this side in 2021.

Int: Okay. So, the move from Queens Town. You grew up in the same house there or did you move around a bit there?

Florynce: We moved around a bit. So, we originally were in the Townships – like, ‘Township-Township’. And then we moved to the suburb of the Township, and then we moved to the Town-suburbia area, suburban area. So, ya.

Int: And those moves – how old were you when you had your first move?

Florynce: I was in grade eight when we first moved to the suburbia, and then I was in Matric when we moved to the Town. So, most of my childhood was in the township, ya.

Int: Okay. And do you ever associate that as ‘home’? Your ‘original home’?

Florynce: That is home. \*Laughs.

Int: When you think about ‘home’, you think about that.

Florynce: That is home, like I think about ‘home’ – obviously ‘home’ is where mom is. But when I think about the place that I grew up, that is the first memory that comes up; that is that township-based house where there’s long streets with gravel road with all these neighbours and all our friends – who some still are there. Um, ya some are still there so we often go visit. When we go back home, we go visit friends; and we still chill in those same spots that we were chilling in when we were kids, right. So, ya that’s my first memory of ‘home’. So, when I think about ‘home’, I think about that township-home. I don’t even count the second house – that was in passing because that was in my high school, ya, and there was transition in my life there. So, moving to now where we are at, that’s where mom is so that’s where ‘home’ is – most of the time we go to the two houses.

Int: So, wherever mom is that’s where ‘home’ is?

Florynce: That’s where my home is, ya.

Int: So, that’s interesting because when we talk about home it could be a place and it could be a people. so, you’d say it’s definitely a people.

Florynce: It’s definitely a people. Definitely a people, because you could find your home even in Australia.

Int: That’s also true.

Florynce: If there is someone that you associate with a safe place with. So, ya for me home is where mom is, and mom is in that house in the Eastern Cape. But obviously as you grow older you find ‘home’ even in people right. In friends and in family.

Int: Yes.

Florynce: And as I mentioned, my sister is here so – that’s why I was like okay from being by myself at UKZN, it was an easy move for me to come here because there is family here – there’s my sister here; similar to mom, because she’s my older sister so ‘Oh, okay, another version of my mother’. So \*Laughs. So, ya that’s why I made the move to come to Pretoria.

Int: You’d have something closer to ‘home’.

Florynce: Ya.

Int: And UKZN, did that ever feel like home, or was that also like a place in passing for you?

Florynce: That was a place where I was like, ‘This is an environment where I would make my home’.

Int: Oh. So, you really loved it.

Florynce: So, a place where I wanted my kids at, like the beach, the vibe, chilled. And I feel like it’s a mood that I resonate with as an individual – hence, I chose it, and would love to go back there. Or Cape Town, one of the two.

Int: Cape Town is too bougie for me – I can’t, I don’t like Cape Town people.

Florynce: But, mostly Durban because I know the place and I am acquainted, and I have friends now there. So, it’s also where I found a bit of myself, so I can say that the friends that I made there can be a sense of home, because of the person I was around them. You know.

Int: Ya, well, it was the first time you were on your own.

Florynce: Ya, it was. \*Laughs. It was! It was. So, I can say that was a bit of me there, so also where I’m at there’s home because I have to make my environment the best it can be. So, the people that I met there, the people, the friends that I formulated there, they’re close to my heart. We’re still friends to this day.

Int: Which is great. Have friends all over the place and you’ll always have a place to sleep.

Florynce: \*Laughs. That!

Int: You know. People think I’m a friendly person, nah, I’m cheap.

Florynce: \*Laughs. Ya, so ya.

Int: And we associate ‘home’ with a sense of belonging, so you felt like you belonged in that ‘township-place’, and in-

Florynce: Yes!

Int: But you said there was a house ‘in passing’, in the suburbs of the township.

Florynce: Mm.

Int: A ‘place in passing’ – did you ever feel like that was home or was it just a skipping stone?

Florynce: It didn’t feel like home because we were just getting into it, as I mentioned like we moved when I was in grade eight, so I was in a new place, technically, and in a new school.

Int: Which is a big shift.

Florynce: So, that was a huge shift, so I could only focus on the school aspect of my life at that time, of which… when Matric came, we had moved. So, it wasn’t like I got to know the people there in a more personal way, but I had a friend – one friend actually in my street. A friend or two here and there, but nothing deep, where I would be like ‘Oh my gosh, we’re not in contact’, ‘I could never live my life without you’. So, that house wasn’t like a deep, deep, it didn’t have a-

Int: An attachment?

Florynce: A deep attachment to it, it’s just a house that my mom was transitioning from.

Int: To get to the ‘suburbs-suburbs’.

Florynce: The ‘suburb-suburbs’. Ya.

Int: And ‘suburb-suburbs’, where your mom is now, you would say that it home?

Florynce: That is home.

Int: You didn’t live in there for long I take it, because you did your-

Florynce: No, Matric and then I had to leave.

Int: Oh, so you never really lived there.

Florynce: Ya, never really lived there.

Int: But that’s home because mom lives there.

Florynce: Mm.

Int: Do you go back to that house?

Florynce: We still go back to that house. That’s the main house, so to say, you know. Ya, so that’s the main house, so holidays, events take place there, but it’s like I don’t know who my neighbour is.

Int: Which is ya very normal in Pretoria.

Florynce: Ya, I don’t know who my neighbours is, you know. Ya!

Int: Do you know who your neighbour is here?

Florynce: My sister is acquainted with them, but I’m not. Because I’ve been so consumed with school!

Int: Ya. Yas, Tuks.

Florynce: I had to make that work.

Int: Ya.

Florynce: And then, slowly I think I’m getting into the habit of even having conversations with people around here, but I wouldn’t say that I have cemented myself here.

Int: So, there isn’t a community here yet for you?

Florynce: Not yet.

Int: So, when you grew up in the townships-

Florynce: I’m just riding on my sisters – I’m riding on my sister’s, I think, neighbours and friends.

Int: Give it time, hopefully you’ll fine your place. How long have you been in Pretoria for?

Florynce: Three years now. This is the third.

Int: So, ya-

Florynce: And ya, it was that transition between 2020 and 2021 – 2021 was shut down, and then it was only Final-years that were attending.

Int: Oh ya.

Florynce: I was doing that with them and doing Honours. So ya.

Int: A bit all over the place.

Florynce: I’m acquainted with those people though, I know them. I’ve spent quite a long time with them, so for the last what? Two years – ya, so I know them but it’s not like they are my friends; like I wouldn’t call them up and be like “Oh, I’m in trouble, help me out.”

Int: So, we also link community, belonging, these simple things that we put together – I can actually ask you. So, coming from this township-house, you have this house in passing that you never really spent time in, what are the different emotions that you associate with those places?

Florynce: Um… emotions, I’ve never thought about emotions.

Int: Or even what UKZN makes you feel when you think – when you think back about it, because you said that is a ‘home’ for you.

Florynce: Ya. Liberated, because I could express myself similarly to my township-home’; express myself in the way I wanted to express myself, right – wear what I wanted to wear. Um, because I know that there is safety around. Like in the township the guy at the corner like knew my mom and dad, so it would be like they wouldn’t try anything shabby. So, similarly to that feeling like just the freedom of expression and just being free, but never being free enough to walk around at night. That’s just dangerous.

Int: Ya.

Florynce: That’s just pushing the line.

Int: I wouldn’t even do it in the suburbs, I’m sorry.

Florynce: Latest, would be what – seven? Seven PM?

Int: Ya, in the summer the sun is still up.

Florynce: Ya, in the summer. In winter, five, you know.

Int: Ya, that’s when the sun goes down.

Florynce: That’s the cut off. So, ya. Even if like I felt comfortable in those places, and I felt like I could express myself and be free, I haven’t pushed the boundary of ‘Let me see if I walk around at ten how that would look like’.

Int: Ya, let’s be smart about things.

Florynce: Ya.

Int: But you’re also know those things; you’re like ‘I know that it’s not safe, in winter, I know that to be back by five. Summer, I can push it to seven because the sun is still up’.

Florynce: Ya.

Int: And that comes from things that we know. And you said that UKZN was liberating.

Florynce: It was. Even their – the environment because I was a ‘student environment’. I’ve never been to hostel.

Int: Ya, I’ve never lived in a hostel.

Florynce: So, it was my first time being by myself, establishing myself, establishing what I want what I don’t want. Excuse me.

Int: No worries.

Florynce: And just establishing the kind of person that I want to be, you know, just walking in that journey of ‘finding yourself’. \*Laughs.

Int: Self-discovery yeah. \*Laughs.

Florynce: Ya, um… so, ya I feel like that was freeing for myself as an individual – and I could make my own decisions and suffer the consequences. \*Laughs.

Int: Which is important for learning, ya.

Florynce: And *suffer* the consequences because there was no one who was going to be like, ‘Girl, I don’t think that’s a good idea’. My friends would say obviously, but we’re the same age, ‘I’m not going to listen to you, I’m going to do what I want’.

Int: Exactly, and you learn from yourself like that.

Florynce: And you learn.

Int: That’s the worst type of learning because you can’t blame anyone either.

Florynce: Ya. That is true, but I feel like it’s the best.

Int: Ya, because you get hurt the worst too.

Florynce: Exactly! And you never repeat it again.

Int: Exactly.

Florynce: So, ya.

Int: Which one of those moves were the jaggering, like ‘Okay cool, this is stressful’?

Florynce: Definitely to UKZN.

Int: That was the most stressful move.

Florynce: Ya, definitely. It was the isolated move. The other move, we were going together – the whole family were going.

Int: Moving as a unit, ya.

Florynce: Mm. Being left behind by yourself with strangers.

Int: In a strange place.

Florynce: In a strange place, yes. You don’t even know the language.

Int: Exactly, ya.

Florynce: Because in the Eastern Cape we only speak Xhosa and English.

Int: And Zulu up there.

Florynce: In KZN it’s only Zulu and the tribal differences between AmaXhosa and AmaZulu are…

Int: Very evident.

Florynce: Very evident. If you are the remnant or the tiny minute group of people infiltrating the big KZN.

Int: The ‘Kingdom’, ya.

Florynce: Ya, so there was that transition of tribalism, but they are welcoming people. They are so welcoming, very kind, and then you have one or two people when you’re having a really bad day that can hit you to the core.

Int: Ya, and they always rock up on your bad day.

Florynce: Ya, but it’s not a horrendous place but it was just a lonely place because it was the first move that I did by myself. Ya, and I had to make friends.

Int: Which is a whole different ball game when you’re an adult – making friends as a kid is easy.

Florynce: I feel like making friends as an adult is super easy as well.

Int: How? I struggle so much.

Florynce: I find it very easy because maybe I’m not – or maybe it’s because I’m not looking for *deep* friendships, like just people to do life with, and then working our way slowly into that deep friendship. But I find making friends super easy – super, super easy.

Int: I’m glad, that helps a lot when you’re moving to a place. When did you move to UKZN?

Florynce: 2013, 2014.

Int: Okay.

Florynce: 2014, my Matric was in 2013. 2014, ya I moved to UKZN.

Int: So, I’m just trying to remember because there was a student that died at UKZN. I think he was shot or something.

Florynce: Yeah, I was there.

Int: How was that, because I mean?

Florynce: It was horrendous. That was so scary, and it was done by his friend making the matter even dicer.

Int: How long were you at UKZN before that happen?

Florynce: I was there during that time. I was there. I was there. I was there. I was there during the transition – well, ‘Fees Must Fall’, I was there.

Int: Oof.

Florynce: Ya, I’ve been there!

Int: Ya, the ‘Fees Must Fall’ was bad.

Florynce: I’ve been there for a while. Ya, my undergrad took a lot longer than it should have, so I was there for six years – 2014 till 2018, I think. Five years.

Int: Ya, and like you say there’s this community there and then you have this tragic even that happens, like this shooting-

Florynce: And not just that. Um… like young girls being molested by other kids on campus. I was one of the Man-com in the Res’.

Int: Oh like the ‘house leaders/representatives’.

Florynce: Ya. So, I was there. There was a lot of cases like that. and then I was also part of the HIV and Aids, the ‘council-peer’, the ‘peer education’ thingie on campus.

Int: Oof, that must be gruelling as well. A lot of emotional draining work.

Florynce: Ya. That was horrendous. So, there was a lot of other cases as well. And violence – a lot of violence; a lot, a lot, a lot of violence. Where guys would be drunk at Res fighting each other, ya. Oh ya.

Int: So, did you feel safe at this university?

Florynce: Um, no. \*Laughs.

Int: Not once?

Florynce: No.

Int: Just from the day that you arrive, ‘This is not a safe place’?

Florynce: Oh, there were moments of feeling safe. But like, generally, you have to look over your back and be like – but I knew that nothing would happen to me, I was scared for other people. Isn’t that crazy?

Int: I think so – I think when we’re in a position of responsibility and leadership the safety of others weighs heavily on you.

Florynce: Oh ya. I was more worried about things happening to other people than happening to me, but obviously my thing was ‘Let me not go out there and look for trouble’. Like I wouldn’t go out at night and stare at men.

Int: Ya, but you’re worried that other people will go out and look for trouble.

Florynce: I’m worried that other people in Res are going to harm each other because they drink here and they don’t have a place to go to. And I was very um… so, I’m a Christian. So I go to church, right, and I spent most or my – I spent some of my time there. So, it’s like, I understand that there’s trouble out there but I’m secretly hoping that it won’t happen to me or won’t happen to me because I have Jesus. \*Laughs.

Int: Jesus. \*Laughs.

Florynce: You know.

Int: Ya, ‘My Lord and Saviour’.

Florynce: Ya, so I wasn’t scared-scared, but I was sceptical of moment – of feeling unsafe. There were moments of feeling unsafe, where you’re like, like… even like – even on campus, you know. Even on campus. Not like someone is just going to walk up to you and snatch your stuff, but like… when there were strikes, I wouldn’t feel safe.

Int: Well, they turn very violent very quickly.

Florynce: Very quickly. When there were strike and at night – yes, you can walk around campus, but you shouldn’t be doing that alone. Like, in essence, as women we don’t live a life as chilled or as safe, as guys.

Int: I agree.

Florynce: So, I wouldn’t say that – my safety means that there is always someone with me.

Int: Walk in numbers, yes.

Florynce: Not that I would walk by myself and be like, ‘Oh my gosh, I am feeling so safe’.

Int: Exactly.

Florynce: Don’t have that luxury.

Int: So, like the safety precautions that you take – like, never walk alone especially at night.

Florynce: Never walk alone, especially at night. Always take someone or tell them where you’re going if you’re going on a date.

Int: Ya.

Florynce: \*Laughs. Tell them where you’re going, who you’re going with, and give that person that person’s number and pin your location when you get there. Ya, did do that – still do that. Like, we could never be like, ‘Oh I’m wearing’ – for me personally, I know I can’t wear something short because I’m going to get catcalled or stuff like that; I know I can’t wear something too revealing because I’m going to get catcalled and that’s uncomfortable. Um, so ya, I’m like ‘There are things that I can’t do because I’m trying to not make other people feel… some type of way that would lead them to making me feel uncomfortable about either the way I’m dressed or how I look’. No, in general. So, I do that. always with someone, unless obviously I’m coming to campus or if I’m headed home, then I can take a taxi by myself, but if it’s at night, I call someone to come fetch me from the taxi stop and then walk together. Ya.

Int: So, you’re young, you went out to the clubs, you were a student, so I take it.

Florynce: I did.

Int: Which student doesn’t. Were talking to like – um, we’re do that one later. So, going out to the club there are certain safety precautions that you take – you don’t wear a low-cut shirt, you make sure that your bum is covered, and that’s all linked to the fact that you probably will be touched inappropriately.

Florynce: You will be touched inappropriately whether you wear longs, or a suit.

Int: So, it’s just basically a given that it will happen.

Florynce: It will happen. But rather not give someone – imagine that, ‘a reason’. A reason of you just living your life.

Int: The best life you can. Living your ‘free’ life.

Florynce: Ya. So, rather not give people added reason – because my friend and I did this experiment. I was like – because we were being catcalled, I was wearing shorts so these guys catcalled me in a car, right. Like these are guys my age, possibly a little older. They were in a car, they were coming from Res and they catcalled me and my friend while we were waiting for he bus, the bus to town. And, so they catcalled us, and I’m like, “Is it because we’re wearing something short? So the next time we should try wearing jeans.” Now, the same thing happened. So, it’s not necessarily women that are the problem, but it is the men who are doing things to make us feel uncomfortable.

Int: Ya, I think – well, I mean spiking is another issue. Is that something you’re worried about?

Florynce: Very worried about that because that is… I’m not sure if you know about this, but Durban is notorious for drugs.

Int: I found that other from another participant the other day. She went out with a friend, she was young, they were like seventeen at a party – a friend’s party. And a friend of hers got spiked with heroin.

Florynce: Ya. Notorious for that.

Int: I did not know that heroin is a spiking thing.

Florynce: It’s a thing. Like what isn’t? Like I’m trying to think of a drug that isn’t.

Int: I thought it was just Ketamine or something like that.

Florynce: Nope. Nope, nope, nope.

Int: Any drug, all drugs, they will spike you with?

Florynce: Yah. And they will have sex with you, because ultimately that’s what guys want.

Int: I think that’s what a lot of – I was talking to the other participants, and every single one has said spiking. That is the number one thing that they’re worried about when they go out, and I think it’s linked to the fact that ‘What happens to you after you get spiked’. You completely don’t know what’s going on. Your body – you just. And then you wake up and it’s just like, ‘What the hell just happened’.

Florynce: Yep.

Int: So, that was a fear that you had going out?

Florynce: So, I was very worried about that as well. I was very worried about that. And as a result, my friends and I had this thing of ‘One person has to sit with the drinks while we go and stand and dance’, or if you need to go to the bathroom, have someone watch your drink. Like all your safety precautions, but you’re like ‘What life is this?’, because either way, if there is someone or there isn’t someone, if your drink is spiked or not, someone will touch you in those spaces.

Int: Ya, and it’s annoying because, I mean, you’re there just to have a good time with your friends and then all of a sudden you’re a piece of meat up for grabs for someone else.

Florynce: Ya. They will touch you. It’s disgusting. But ya. They do, they do. Even at the mall.

Int: Oh, don’t even get me started about the mall.

Florynce: Even at the mall, people will be touching you at the mall. People touching you, touching your arm, touching your hand. Even during COVID. Touching your neck. I’ve had people just brush up on my neck, like ‘What is happening!’. So, that is not sexy. So, you would in those moments feeling like, ‘Oh my gosh are you going to try something else, like what’s your limit?

Int: Exactly, if you can touch a stranger.

Florynce: Ya, if you can touch a stranger, what’s your limit? Are you going to now touch my bum? Are you going to move closer to me and touch my breasts, like ‘What is your limit?’. So, you’re not feeling entirely safe because you’re wondering… ‘Are they going to do more?’. And especially at night. You are *fearful* that, because there is a high chance that people are intoxicated or on drugs, that they will touch you not just inappropriately but actually will go ‘all the way’, you know. So, ya. So, it’s not entirely feeling safe, but just like hoping they don’t do it. It’s just not even.

Int: Which is ridiculous, we can’t live on hope. But I think we’re forced to now.

Florynce: \*Laughs. We are.

Int: So, you said that you never – well, you felt safe in certain parts at UKZN, um. Do you feel safe in South Africa?

Florynce: Um, not as I would like to.

Int: Not as much as you would like to.

Florynce: Mm.

Int: Have you always felt this way, or has that changed throughout your life?

Florynce: It’s changed throughout my life. When I realised that they could also harm kids. So, moving now back to my childhood. I would go visit someone who stays past Hillcrest, walking by myself when I was younger.

Int: Whoa, okay.

Florynce: During the day, when I was younger, you know. But as timed changed – I think when I was moving like. Like with was in grade four, five, and then from grade six to seven it started changing, because now I started fearing for myself, because the boobs were developing and people were looking at me in a certain way. So, it started then – I know it started then because that was when I started spending a lot of time at home, because I was like, ‘I don’t want to give people the wrong impression’, if I’m walking down the street – doing the same things that I would like to be doing or the same things that I have been doing all my life; like going up a, you know not necessarily like a ‘monkey-bar’ but something like a ‘monkey-bar’ – there used to be like a play area.

Int: Like a pull up bar.

Florynce: Wearing a skirt and going up there as a kid was nothing hectic, but when my boobs started growing it was like, ‘Oh no’.

Int: ‘I need to start watching this’.

Florynce: I need to start paying more attention to what I do – and I started wearing pants more than I did skirts because I didn’t want to give the wrong impression. Just imagine a kid not thinking like a kid, but like an adult because-

Int: You have to.

Florynce: Other people are thinking like adults.

Int: Wrongly.

Florynce: Ya.

Int: So, I think this happens to all kids, but when we’re growing up there are certain things that our parents tell us about our safety. Is that something your parents did as well, did you have a ‘safety talk’?

Florynce: Mm.

Int: Did they sit you down like, ‘Listen’.

Florynce: No.

Int: No? Just kind of let you figure it out on your own?

Florynce: Ya, I think I had it at school.

Int: Okay.

Florynce: Ya. It wasn’t, ‘Let’s sit down. Let’s have a conversation about this, this is what…’

Int: Is going through-

Florynce: ‘What you’re going to be experiencing’. Just do what other kids are going – stay away from.

Int: Do you have a brother? I know you said that you have a sister.

Florynce: I have older brothers, but we never lived together.

Int: Oh okay.

Florynce: So, family dynamics.

Int: No worries.

Florynce: Ya, but I feel around my brothers I feel very safe. I feel very safe around my brothers. I could be chilling and not wearing a bra and not thinking about ‘Oh my gosh, they might do anything to me’.

Int: No, ‘It’s your brother’.

Florynce: And if at night, if I’m with them, it’s standard, it’s chilled. I have ‘bouncers’.

Int: \*Laughs. You were also a student during the ‘#AmINext?’ movement. I take it you were here on Tuks.

Florynce: I was here.

Int: And how were those feelings, because I know I was in a lecture hall when we found out about Uynene, and her body was found and everything. I’ll never forget how the atmosphere changed.

Florynce: I cried right there.

Int: I cried – I will say this-

Florynce: I cried.

Int: In a lecture hall, with a friend and we both just sat there and had a good cry together, because I was scary. There was so much hope that we would find her and we did, but not in the manner in which we had hoped.

Florynce: Ag, that shaked my mom. That shaked my mom.

Int: Didn’t her family also come from the Eastern Cape?

Florynce: Eastern Cape, East London. Mm, they did. They did. Oof, that was… that was sad. That was sad. And I remember watching the news – after Uynene, there was Karabo who was chopped into pieces by her boyfriend. My mom was devastated. I literally cried because I was like, like if it could happen to them, obviously – not obviously, but.

Int: Yah.

Florynce: There is a high chance that it could happen, because those are ‘normal’ people.

Int: Everyday girls.

Florynce: And those are normal men!

Int: Which is scary.

Florynce: Air quote.

Int: Exactly.

Florynce: ‘Normal’ men. And to do that that to a woman…

Int: To a person even.

Florynce: It’s just scary.

Int: And that’s what I think so poignant, that hashtag ‘Am I Next?’ because that was a lot of women were asking themselves – a lot of South African women.

Florynce: But you know what the sad part is? As much as that was a national story, there was many stories from like where I grew up, like from the township, where – and my mom was literally telling me another story this morning of young girls being molested. There was a friend of mine in the street, in our street as children, who had a cousin who was staying, I think, like a street away. And behind there, that street, there is ah… there’s just a grass area right. There was a grass area. And my friend’s cousin was raped there. Like there were many stories of – even like our friends. My friend’s older sister’s friend was murdered while they were coming back from a club or something, a tavern, you know, in the township. Like we heard these stories.

Int: You just grew up with it.

Florynce: We grew up with it. Unfortunately, but we grew up with them. My mom was telling me a story this morning about a young girl, who was crying about a tummy ache. And then, when they went to the clinic, they found out that like she was raped, right. So, like Uynene’s story was tragic, but it wasn’t the first one.

Int: And was not the last, which I think-

Florynce: It was not the last.

Int: I think what’s maybe shocked a lot of people was that the story comes out, and it was a lot of her friends on social media like, “Hey guys, we need help finding our friend. She went out-”, like ‘Okay cool’. And it got on all the university pages, like somehow it spread to the universities. And then we find out that she just went to a Post Office – she wasn’t out drinking, doing a normal activity and that’s when she was attacked. I think that’s what shocked a lot of people, that it could be anyone and it could be anywhere. So, with this hashtag ‘Am I next?’ and the activism that followed – were you part of the protests that happened here? I think there was a – it was intended to be a silent protest.

Florynce: I was in KZN.

Int: Oh, you were in KZN during that time.

Florynce: But I did. I did. We marched. We did march.

Int: And what was that march like, was it emotional?

Florynce: It was so sombre. It was so sad.

Int: Was there any sense of empowerment in that?

Florynce: No. For me personally – not for me personally because it’s that vibe of, ‘Okay we’re walking around but what’s that going to do?’. Like is it going to stop guys from, one, beating girls, and then taking what they want from girls when they want to do whatever they want to do with them. And just like the whole thing of just generally not feeling safe.

Int: Mm. Was it more a sense of frustration, or just like exhaustion or just of like ‘Why are we here – it’s probably not going to change anything’?

Florynce: Frustration and exhaustion are actually good – and a bit of anger, that I can’t be. I’m very angry about that. And as a result, if you’re walking in the street and someone catcalls me, like – before Jesus delivered me, I used to cuss them out. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs. I don’t blame you.

Florynce: And then they would be charging towards me – then it was like, ‘Okay now I’m really feeling unsafe because, ‘Are you trying to harm me?’’, you know. So, just that, and the fact that there are still so many stories after that.

Int: Ya. Nothing stopped.

Florynce: Like nothing stopped, but it just – it just made a more conscious group of guys be more conscious but the rest of the people that want to do what they want to do, they do that.

Int: Exactly. So what came up with this was the ‘#NotAllMen’. And obviously, obviously, it’s not all men. I mean you’ve got brothers and you say you’ve always felt safe around your brothers, but your brothers’ friends. Do you feel safe around your brothers’ friends?

Florynce: No.

Int: That’s what I think might be the issue.

Florynce: No, no, no, no! Because they’re not seeing me as a sister, they’re seeing me as a young fresh girl. Air quotes right there, you know. So, I remember my brother – my brother is… fourteen years older than me. And his friend was making moves on me, I was in grade eleven. So, when I was in grade eleven I was seventeen and someone who was fourteen years older than me was making moves on me.

Int: That’s almost thirty. I’m very bad at math.

Florynce: Me too. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs.

Florynce: But ya. Like they don’t see us as…

Int: People.

Florynce: Kids.

Int: Or kids.

Florynce: Kids, we’re younger than them.

Int: I like what you said, with this ‘#AmINext?’ movement just made an already group of conscious men more conscious, um, and it had been put out there that if we want this to stop we need conscious men who need to take the role, ‘You need to make your friends-’

Florynce: In check!

Int: ‘In check’. You need to make them accountable for the things that they do. ‘There is no such thing as a rape joke’.

Florynce: Oo, and they think it’s a joke! They really think it’s joke.

Int: I tell my guy friends now that, “I don’t want to go out tonight.” And they’re like, “Why?” “Ag, every time I go – every time I go to Latino’s someone is going to touch me. Every single time and I cannot take it anymore.” “Ag no, it’s not that serious.” That’s not the point.

Florynce: Yes!

Int: “Listen here, regardless of how serious you think it is, it’s still happening.”

Florynce: But it is. But it is.

Int: And that’s what’s so frustrating.

Florynce: Ya.

Int: Ya. \*Laughs. We could go down this hole forever I suppose.

Florynce: It’s so annoying, it’s annoying. And you know what is just nailing on that. Because you know, I feel like in group settings and things, um, there’s always this awful one that is going to be like more.

Int: Aggressive.

Florynce: More aggressive than others. So, my brothers are not like aggressive-aggressive people, but obviously, if you’re not aggressive-aggressive there’s one that’s more aggressive than you are. And, ya, it’s that one that’s the problem. Obviously if one person does it, everyone else will feel like it’s fine. And then there’s this thing of, I remember this one person who is the – who I think is like the ‘star’ of the group. He was like, “Ah, this one is mine.”

Int: Mine?

Florynce: Mine.

Int: Like my property.

Florynce: “Mine? Stranger? Mine, person I don’t know?”

Int: Wait, this is a stranger?

Florynce: This is my brother’s friend, but “I don’t know you.”

Int: “No, I don’t know you like that. Like nah.”

Florynce: You know, “Why am I titled ‘yours’?” You know. So ya.

Int: So like he called ‘dibs’ almost?

Florynce: Ya… ya, ya, actually.

Int: To a human being – like you can do that on a car seat, fine. Or like a chocolate bar, but this is a human being.

Florynce: I’ve had that plenty of times. Not just with my brothers’ friends, even with my – like a guy friend of mine. We’d be at a house party and I’d be chilling with him and his friends, and then maybe someone who likes me would be like, “Dibs. That one.”

Int: Geez.

Florynce: Countless times.

Int: And how does that make you feel as a person?

Florynce: That – initially I used to be really mad, but now I realised that they are the one with the problem. Which makes me even… like I’m livid. But initially I would attach it to who I am. So, I would be like, ‘Oh, I’m someone’s property’ – but like secretly thinking it but not actually acting out like that. But I – ‘Oh wow, I’m someone’s property’. Not in a delighted way of being chosen, because I didn’t want to be chosen to begin with.

Int: Ya, but you’re not a property, that’s the thing. You’re a human being.

Florynce: Ya, so that did knock me a few times, because now then I started associating like – like if people ‘like’ me they are going to choose me.

Int: With like affection?

Florynce: Mm. Like now, if a boyfriend – there has to be a number of girls, and then I have to be chosen, because of that.

Int: Does that no affect your relationships with other women? You start seeing them, maybe, as competition?

Florynce: Luckily, luckily – because of my mom, it wasn’t like that. Because of my mom. My mom is on that ‘Your sisters are your best friends’.

Int: ‘Guys will come and go, but listen-’

Florynce: ‘Your sisters are your best friends’. And my older sister is super chilled, like we learnt at a young age to stand and fight for each other. So, I understand the value of sisterhood. I just don’t get it when someone else does it to me when I’m showing like…

Int: ‘I’m trying to be your friend’.

Florynce: Right?

Int: Yeah. The ‘pick me’ girls of this world.

Florynce: Ya, ya, ya.

Int: Sweeties, I just think you need a hug from a girl – just calm down it’s going to be alright.

Florynce: But I will say that it effected my friendships in the sense that – not putting myself out there as much as a kid, you know, because I had a group of friends that were very tiny, very skinny, and I’m not like that.

Int: Ya, ‘Don’t fit the mould’.

Florynce: Yeah. So, a lot of guys – I went to an all-girls school, and then opposite our street was an all-guys school. Right, an all-boys school. So, in the group of friends that I was in, like the fact that I wasn’t your typical, your ‘chosen’ type of girl, that effected my relationships in the sense that I made sure that they didn’t get into my inner, inner, inner space, because, I mean, you might be chosen by someone that I like. So, it effected it in that regard but never to a negative extent that I would now fight my friends, but it did cause me to go back into my shell, you know.

Int: Ya, ‘keep to yourself’. Ya, I mean I completely understand, my sister is – I grew up with a sister who could be a model, like really is absolutely stunning.

Florynce: \*Laughs. I have sisters like that as well.

Int: Like it’s tough. Like you go out, and we have friends that we share. And for a long time for me it was like, ‘I don’t want to introduce you to my guy friends, specifically one my of guy friends that I like, because I’m beyond terrified that they are going to choose you over me’.

Florynce: \*Laughs. Ya.

Int: And then I have to deal with that, like ‘Why wasn’t I good enough?’. But we have another category of women where it’s other women who don’t believe women when they say, “I was touched inappropriately.” Or, “I believe all women should have equal rights.” And they’re saying, “Nah, you should be at home, you should be feeding your husband, you should be dishing up first for him.” “You should be his wife not necessarily his partner.”

Florynce: A wife!

Int: So, we have that category of women who are kind of continuously putting on this idea of what patriarchal men think women should be, ‘the cleaner’, ‘the child bearer’, not necessarily the partner that is going to help you. How do you view those women?

Florynce: Have you noticed that those women are women who don’t want to go out there and get the things that the guys are getting for them.

Int: Ya. They’re not the ones going for a job – they’re not trying to be…

Florynce: Themselves.

Int: More – themselves either, they’re trying to be what their husbands want them to be. And even boyfriends or whatever.

Florynce: Ya.

Int: Crushes, or something like that. So, we have this category of women, how do you view them?

Florynce: My sister and I always have this conversation. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs.

Florynce: We are troubled by those women! We are troubled by those women because they are the one basically dragging us back.

Int: Ya, holding us back. I’m sure we get a lot of them in the church.

Florynce: Ya, especially the older women.

Int: Ah, I like them tannies. I’ve got a bunch of tattoos just for them.

Florynce: \*Laughs. Especially the older women. \*Sighs. Ya. They were giving us a lot of trouble, in the sense that they’re not even allowing… like this new age of women to be heard, like to have their view.

Int: To have their voice.

Florynce: Mm, to have their voice. And they are actually masking a lot of abusive relationships. Um… ya. My sister and I usually say that, “It’s fine” – it’s their path, but it starts becoming an issue when they are pressing what they are assuming is the epitome of being a woman onto other people. Like don’t do that.

Int: Exactly, but like what you’re saying, “I’ve got my vision of what I want to be as a women, and that’s for me, is to be a human being.”

Florynce: How about that!

Int: Yep. And then, “That’s my view, that’s how I want to live. If you want to serve and clean and do all of that, fine, you can do that. But I’m not pressing my views onto you.” And that’s when I have an issue with it. Like what you say, also, that these women are hiding a lot of abuse.

Florynce: Ya.

Int: And that’s what’s s scary for me. They’ve associated abuse with love, and that’s very wrong. So, where do you think that comes from? Where does that first spark of – I mean, I don’t think you associate it like that.

Florynce: No.

Int: So, you didn’t grow up like that or something. Or, I don’t know, were in a healthy relationship, and these women somehow do. This process happens.

Florynce: Even for me, I wouldn’t say that I grew up in a healthy household. \*Laughs. You know. Single mom, you know.

Int: That’s rough.

Florynce: There’s one parent missing, already. So, it’s not the healthiest of place, in the sense that there are things missing that we could and should be getting from a father figure, but we don’t. and that’s not to say that my dad was not in the picture, it’s just that we weren’t staying with him. Yeah, my parents divorced when I was in grade… two.

Int: Oh, that’s young.

Florynce: Two, they separated and then they got officially divorced when I was in grade five. So, three years later, but by that time we were with our mom. Ya, so… but now viewing what now a – looked like a healthy environment with my mom and how if felt there, it’s different from how I saw other parents interacting with their daughters or their sons and how they interacted with other kids, right. Um… sorry, what was the question?

Int: So, we have these women who associate abuse with love.

Florynce: Mm. Yes, yes.

Int: And we don’t, so how does that happen to them?

Florynce: Yes, yes, yes. I think it’s because… of how they grew up, you know.

Int: So, it’s definitely coming from the home?

Florynce: It’s definitely coming from the home. Because I don’t see it like that, because at my house it wasn’t, one, displayed. So, I had a clean blank slate of what a healthy relationship needs to look like. Whereas other girls associate love with how they saw their mom being treated by their dad.

Int: Exactly.

Florynce: Right, there’s that. Also, there’s, um, single mom who is trying to raise her kids as best as she can, so she is trying to get a father figure and that father figure becomes unhealthy for the kids. So, there’s also that. So – and there’s also, single mom trying to raise kids but doesn’t have a relationship with her kids, so her kids have to go find that outside. Ya, so there’s also that. Fortunately, my mom always spoke about boys, spoke about – \*Laughs – spoke about men. We have a relationship, you know, so we can come to her and be like, ‘Girl, I saw this nigga’, or ‘This guy’, you know, ‘Just doing A, B, and C, and what do you think about that?’. I remember this one time I had this boyfriend and he was always complaining about – and I was still only in my first year. And he was doing… he was doing a course somewhere, right. And… ya, he was doing a training course because he wanted to be a personal trainer. Ya, didn’t go to varsity so he wasn’t too far ahead, like three years older than me, right. So, he was always complaining about bills, bills, bills, bills, bills. And I was having a conversation with my mom over the holidays and my sister. And my sister was like, “Mom, what do you think about a situation where someone would be complaining about bills?” \*Laughs. And my mom was like, “Dump. Dump.” \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs.

Florynce: “He’s broke!” And you know what she said after that?

Int: What?

Florynce: “You are too young to be worrying about what another person is eating, drinking, being clothed.”

Int: Yeah, worry about yourself.

Florynce: “And you need to worry about yourself, and you need to get through school.” And I was like, ‘That is right, that is correct’.

Int: Your mom sounds like such a girl boss, like honestly.

Florynce: That is correct! And I know my friends who grew up in a two headed household who would – we call it in Zulu, ‘Bekezela’.

Int: Another participant told me about this, like you must get on.

Florynce: You must be ‘bekezelaing’- yah, ya! Like you have to ensure that this Titanic ship, even though it hit the iceberg, you have to hold it together. Like you have to just make sure – my mom doesn’t have that, so I don’t have that, so I’m like, “Okay, we’re not doing that.” But this friend of mine who has seen it be modelled – and I also understand that my mentality has effected a few relationships that I’ve had, you know, but not to the point where ‘I have to die for this’. But other girls feel like they should die for this because they have such strong opinions about how we should be dressed, like we should be, how we should be feeding our husbands, how we should be feeding our boyfriends – what? Why? Can he not get his own food? You know.

Int: ‘Did God not give him legs and make sure that they work too’.

Florynce: And to just touch on what you just said. This friend of mine when we were together last year, and she was like, “You know the way you have to serve your husband, you have to serve him to the point of washing his draws.” I was like, “No, wait, what? Why?”

Int: ‘Why?’, yes.

Florynce: And then she went on to say that he’s your first child. What?

Int: He’s not a child.

Florynce: “Why? Why is he a child?” And we got into a heated conversation about this because I was like, ‘This doesn’t make sense, it doesn’t – it just does not make sense’, because I feel like washing your underwear is a personal thing, that a person should be doing themselves. And we got into this heated argument, and I feel like those moments where even though she did not see her mom do it, because well, I don’t know. Or maybe she saw it being modelled or she heard one of ‘The married couples who are so well taught in the ways of how to treat a man’, that now that’s a thing that she adopted for herself even at our age. And that’s something she’s going to teach her kids. And the ball just keeps on going, ya.

Int: Yeah. What was her response when you were like-

Florynce: She was – I’m telling you we got into a heated conversation because now she was made that I wouldn’t do it, and I was like, “Hell no.”

Int: “No.”

Florynce: “Hell no.”

Int: I must actually, my mom – because my dad grew up, ag my father. Love my father, my father is great. He’s actually a feminist deep down, just don’t tell him that. But when they just got married, he grew up very affluent – always had maids and everything, and his mom was a stay-at-home mom, so she would do everything. So, he would get home from school, take off his school uniform and leave it on the floor; wake up in the morning and get out of his pyjamas, and leave them on the floor. So, my parents got married, moved in together, and my dad just kept on doing this expecting that my mom would pick it up, but my mom just kicked everything under the bed and two weeks go by and he has no more clothes left. So, he’s running around the house “Penny, where’s my clothes? Where’s my clothes?” And she’s like, “Under the bed, where you left them.”

Florynce: \*Laughs. Because what are we going to do?

Int: ‘Do I look like your slave?’.

Florynce: Exactly.

Int: ‘You can work’ – he doesn’t know how to work a washing machine, but I think that’s somewhat of a lie.

Florynce: He can learn.

Int: It’s very easy! ‘Put things in, washing, close, button’.

Florynce: Ya.

Int: Those things are made to make life easier. But ya, like you said – bekezela?

Florynce: Mm, bekezelaing.

Int: ‘Bekezelaing’. So, is that only for a wife?

Florynce: Ya! For sure it’s only for a wife! Or only for a girlfriend, it starts there.

Int: Girlfriend – it has to start there.

Florynce: It’s like, if we – if men can test just how deep they can go, then they’ll take you.

Int: So, then you’re still being chosen depending on how well you will serve him?

Florynce: Ya.

Int: And that’s like a cultural thing? Or is it a-

Florynce: I’m not sure if it’s a cultural thing.

Int: A social thing?

Florynce: I think it’s a social thing. It’s a social thing because it’s not only Xhosa, you see it there, but Zulu people also.

Int: I mean you can see it in Afrikaans cultures. I mean if you go to an Afrikaans braai, which I don’t like to go to, all the women will dish up for their husbands first, and then – like I get it, ‘You’ve been braaiing, it’s fine, I don’t mind helping you out’, but if you’re sitting down, God gave you two legs so that you can walk, you dish up for your husband first and then for yourself.

Florynce: And apparently, even in an African braai if you *dare* let your husband dish up for himself, that is an abomination.

Int: That’s insane. I’m sorry to put it that way, but that’s insane.

Florynce: ‘How dare you’.

Int: I mean I was at a braai – was at a church braai, and it was really, really fun because, I mean, at church you have an intermingling of races, especially the Methodist church. So, we had the Weasley Gild come over, and everyone was chilling and they were all chatting. All the guys just happened to be outside braaiing and all the girls inside just happened to be cooking. No one made the choice, it just happened like that. but if you wanted to go outside and join the guys, they we’re going to have an issue with it.

Florynce: And I am that girl.

Int: You would rather go outside with the guys and have a few drinks.

Florynce: I would rather do that. But you know a lot of people have mistaken that with being flirtatious.

Int: That’s my issue too because I’m more of a person who likes to hang out with guys, to me girls come with issues.

Florynce: \*Laughs.

Int: Guys, I like guys they say it how it is – I just prefer sports over dancing and pageants and all of that.

Florynce: And then at church because I’m… I’m a social butterfly. They had mentioned that, “Don’t think that she is being too friendly with you.” I was like, “What does that?” Means that, ‘Oh no you can be very flirtatious’. “No, but I’m having conversation.”

Int: Ya, if they were a girl it would be the same type of conversation, it would just be you being friends.

Florynce: So, there’s also that. And there’s also a guy and a girl thing – I remember this one time I was chilling with this other guy friend of mine, and we were having a conversation, and we’re laughing. And then, um… this other girl sent him a voice note, and he was like, “Ah, no I’m chilling with… participant seventeen.” \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs.

Florynce: And then the girl was like, “Oh, the one that doesn’t have fingers.”

Int: What?

Florynce: I’m like, “Why would you say that?” And she was like, “Oh because when the” – the guy told me that, every time I’m away from you, you’re always sending me voice notes and I’m always with her.

Int: Oh.

Florynce: Ya, so I was like, “So, that’s how it goes.” So, it’s assumed that I’m being flirtatious and I’m like in my own capacity like, “Let’s just be chilled, dude.”

Int: ‘We’re just being friends’.

Florynce: Like, “I’m not even suggesting like anything.”

Int: Exactly.

Florynce: And I’ll be wearing an outfit like this and someone will be like, “She want’s me.” Or a girl will be like, “He wants her.” Or “She wants him.” And that wouldn’t be the vibe I wanted to give off. So, ya there’s also that now, also in terms of not feeling entitled to being entirely myself in conversation because I have to restrict parts of myself.

Int: Because you feel like you’re being watched or judged?

Florynce: Or judged mostly, because it would come across in certain way. Whereas if we were laughing it would be, “Oh, they touched, oh me.” – “She touched me!” You know. It be like that. So, it’s, ‘Okay so now I have to restrict parts of myself so they’re not suggestive to people’.

Int: I mean I don’t know if you played sports a lot at school?

Florynce: I did.

Int: Soccer, netball?

Florynce: Netball.

Int: Ah, the netball girls terrified the living daylights out of me.

Florynce: I’d be here and there, but not deep in rugby. I did that.

Int: Oh cool rugby, like I would love to play rugby with my cousins – I grew up with only guys cousins and we would play touch-rugby, on holiday. With church – we used to go on a camp called Dcamp. We used to go to the beach and everything, all the guys were playing rugby, I want to play touch-rugby, so ‘Cool, let’s go’.

Florynce: Why shouldn’t we.

Int: And I got into so much trouble because I was playing with a bikini top and shorts on with the guys.

Florynce: Oh ‘Shirtless!’.

Int: Yeah, I was shirtless – because I was being too suggestive. Like “What do you think the guys are going to think?” “They’re my friends, they should think that I want to play a game with them.”

Florynce: How about that.

Int: And that came from church leaders, and I was like, “You should have more faith in your congregation.”

Florynce: Have faith that what you’re teaching-

Int: Is working.

Florynce: That someone is going to catch on, and know that it’s good information.

Int: We literally just had an entire worship session that morning, like four hours in church with them talking about love and judgment; like ‘Okay, can I not love my friends like this?’.

Florynce: So, now that’s gotten me – that same emotion at church also – has gotten me that thing of ‘Okay’. Then I started telling myself that I shouldn’t make my brothers stumble, you know. There that scripture that says, ‘Don’t cause your brothers to stumble’.

Int: Exactly.

Florynce: And I was like, ‘I get it, but even if I was dressed they would still feel how they are feeling’. Like it’s not about me.

Int: No, it’s them. It’s on them. Ya, I just want to ask because we have actually gone on a complete tangent.

Florynce: Oh sorry!

Int: No, no it’s perfect. Because this is one of the questions that I have asked all the participants – so, how would you describe your life as a woman living in South Africa?

Florynce: Um, in terms of safety?

Int: No, in terms of anything really.

Florynce: Challenging.

Int: Is it because you are literally always being seen as this object for a man?

Florynce: Mm. And even if you are trying to be charismatic and get your way people would assume that it’s something else.

Int: There’s an agenda there.

Florynce: Mm. And you’re just like, “Maybe I just need a job.” Maybe I just need a job or – because I was looking for vac work last year, recently I went. And… so I was like, – they were like, “Oh are you going to be here throughout the whole December?” And I’m like, “Yeah, I’ll be here working?” Like you know, making a joke. “I’ll be *here*, working *here*.” And then this guy started giving me this like sultry look – “Oh, we’ll call you. Your details are on here.” So, ya it’s challenging that you always have to be firm, stern, you have to have your boundaries up.

Int: All the time.

Florynce: All the time because you don’t want to give the wrong impression. Like you don’t want to be suggestive in any way.

Int: And that’s something you think about all the time?

Florynce: All the time, especially for my personality.

Int: Mm.

Florynce: It’s good for people who can keep a straight face and …

Int: Go on.

Florynce: You know. Like I don’t have that, so I have to have other things to help me make sure that I’m headed in that direction. So, ya I’m finding it challenging. I’m finding it super challenging, super, super challenging. And one of the ways I’ve tried dealing with it was not be friendly.

Int: Which goes against exactly who you are as a person.

Florynce: Not be friendly at all. Like not even have friends.

Int: Specifically guy friends?

Florynce: Specifically, guy friends. Specifically guy friends, like let’s not even – ay!

Int: It’s not worth it, ya.

Florynce: It’s not even worth the trouble. So, ya. and like I really like chilling and being like – but like, it’s forbidden now! \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs. ‘It’s forbidden now’.

Florynce: It’s forbidden now. You know. So, I find it very challenging. And the whole notion of, of – I also understand obviously the implications of being too friendly.

Int: Of course. But that’s when you have your own agenda; that’s when – an that’s fine, look if you want to flirt with someone, go ahead do it, but if you are just being friendly for the sake of being friendly, then you’re being friends.

Florynce: I remember this one time we were in thingie with my sister. So, we were at Checkers and we hadn’t brought a trolley and we wanted to go to the till. So, I have the – I’m carrying this ice-cream, and I’m like to this guy who had a trolley, a bit trolley, and his stuff was one the tiny thingie there.

Int: Ya.

Florynce: So, “Can I just put my stuff here?”

Int: ‘I just don’t want to hold it, it’s cold’.

Florynce: Ya. And the looks I got. ‘You are literally opening a door to allow him to ask you out’. I’m like, ‘But I’m just putting stuff in the trolley?’. And I put stuff in the trolley and I looked away. ‘No way! How could you? How could you – that is suggestive, that is inviting him to have a conversation with you’. But this guy is keeping quiet and he’s on his phone, I’m just-

Int: He’s just living his life.

Florynce: Ya. And I’m literally just using this little bit of the trolley. And they’re like, ‘No’. So, I later had a conversation because I got a lot of stares – I was like to my sister, “What was happening there?” Like… She was like, “You clearly – you are being suggestive.”

Int: Is that kind of like when a guy offers to buy you a drink you have to say ‘No’, otherwise ‘You’re saying yes’?

Florynce: Ya. Ya! Ya, ya, ya. it is that – it’s equated to that, it’s not really the same thing but it is equated to that.

Int: But if a girl comes, “Hey I want to buy you a drink.” You’d say ‘Yes’ or ‘No’?

Florynce: Hm… I haven’t thought about that… Yeah, but now with…

Int: LGBTQ+A, all of them. \*Laughs.

Florynce: \*Laughs. You know, it would be it. I don’t think so. Because also with that, you’re saying ‘Yes’. So, ya, I find it very challenging. And I’m still literally, right now, I’m in that transition period of trying to put, um… like things around, um… ‘checkpoints’, so that I don’t go over the, the…

Int: The boundaries.

Florynce: The boundaries that the world has created, that I have no clue about but I’m slowly being aware of them.

Int: Have you travelled internationally or not?

Florynce: I haven’t.

Int: So, you have only travelled within South Africa?

Florynce: Mm.

Int: Given the way South Africa is, is this somewhere where you’d like to live your life or would you like to immigrate?

Florynce: Being the free spirit that I am, I wouldn’t mind moving. Like that wouldn’t be an issue for me. No.

Int: But it’s just like, you would go if the wind takes you but you’re not going to chase it?

Florynce: Ya. I actually did think of studying abroad – did think of that whole China thing.

Int: Oh teaching English in China.

Florynce: You know, did think of that. Um, ya I would, I would. And also, there’s this Canada thing where people are moving to Canada, I have thought about it.

Int: Ya, too cold.

Florynce: Thought about it a lot. I was like, ‘What do I have to lose?’

Int: Exactly.

Florynce: So, ya. But then I started thinking like an adult, having to establish myself and all of that.

Int: You also said that UKZN is a place that you would like to, like to have kids.

Florynce: Ya, ya.

Int: Raise a family and kids.

Florynce: I would.

Int: And is that because you felt safe there or was it because of the vibe – ‘This is what I want my kids to have for the rest of their lives’.

Florynce: ‘This is what I want my kids to have for the rest of their lives’.

Int: And you didn’t have that in the Eastern Cape?

Florynce: … Not that I didn’t…

Int: But it was just better?

Florynce: Ya – sorry.

Int: No worries, we’re almost done.

Florynce: Okay, let me switch this off and I’ll call them back. So, it’s not that I didn’t have it in the Eastern Cape, but um, if you – for me personally, this is what I’ve realised. If you grow up in a place for too long you get accustomed to how they think, how they do things, and that’s not the only way to do thing. And-

Int: The world’s a big place.

Florynce: You know. So, going to KZN I got exposed to that. I got exposed to options of doing other things and if I – because I have thought about it – if I am a Xhosa woman, right, and my kids are growing up in a Zulu environment, there dynamics there are going to shape how they think which is not a ‘strictly Xhosa way of doing things’, you know, or… ya, it’s just – it will be broadened because there are more people to influence how they think and how they formulate themselves.

Int: Alright, one last question because it popped into my head. Um, you grew up with your dad living in your house and then got – well, separated – when you were in grade two and then later divorced when you were in grade five, right. When your dad was living with you did your house feel safer or did it feel much the same after he left?

Florynce: … There was a shift when he left. It didn’t feel… I can’t remember.

Int: That’s alright, you were young – very young.

Florynce: I can’t remember… I actually can’t remember. But I know there was shift when he left because the house seemed bear.

Int: Ya, a big part of the house is gone.

Florynce: Ya. Males provide safety.

Int: Yes.

Florynce: On the broad spectrum of things, right. So, when he left there was something missing. I just couldn’t figure out what. But now that we’re talking about it – that covering, that male covering.

Int: Protection.

Florynce: Ya.

Int: But your mom filled in that role, after some time I take it or did it always feel like that?

Florynce: There will always be a void. It will always be a void.

Int: Missing your dad, ya.

Florynce: And it’s particularly his job, so only he can play that job, and no one else, ya. And my mom didn’t get remarried. Ya, so… it won’t – but it’s still avoid I’m not going to lie. It’s still a huge void.

Int: A part that you are missing.

Florynce: Ya.

Int: And your living here now with your sister, I mean, I’m sure you have safety mechanisms on your house.

Florynce: Mm.

Int: You’ve got burglar bars and Trellidors.

Florynce: Yep.

Int: And security galore.

Florynce: Yep.

Int: Like all South Africans. Do you still feel like there’s an element of safety or protection that is missing here?

Florynce: No because this is not home.

Int: It’s just a place you stay.

Florynce: You stay here, you just need to make it work and you’re on your own and you just need to make it work – it’s like when we’re back at home, we associate that void with this place because there is someone that’s supposed to be here, but here not so much.

Int: He was never here, he was never supposed to be here?

Florynce: He was never supposed to be with us at varsity, you know. Ya, so it’s not like that. It’s not entirely feeling safe but it is a sense of… just feeling safe in general, you know. Like there is nowhere where we are, so. If someone were to walk in, we would…

Int: Ya.

Florynce: It would be… I don’t know. Maybe let me not let me even say it. \*Laughs.

Int: Ya, let’s not go down that road.

Florynce: Ya.

Int: Ya, also – have you ever experienced crime in South Africa?

Florynce: Um… I have actually never.

Int: Oh, luckily. Have you ever had to interact with the South African Police Force?

Florynce: Yeah.

Int: And how was that experience?

Florynce: So rude. So rude.

Int: So rude.

Florynce: So rude! Oh so rude!

Int: No element of care, nothing?

Florynce: No. No, no, no. None whatsoever. Very dismissive.

Int: And that’s how you view them in general, just very dismissive?

Florynce: Yeah.

Int: Rude, dismissive?

Florynce: Even the traffic cops, very dismissive. *Very* dismissive. \*Laughs. Like you will sit there… because not like that I had an issue but even when you have to certify anything, they just sit there and stare at you like you’re the crazy one.

Int: Like, ‘Why are you here’.

Florynce: Ya. So, ya I have never had something tragic happen to me, I’m not going to lie. Um, but going there – even just seeing them interact with other people, ya very dismissive. I remember this one time my sister and I got into an accident, and very dismissive.

Int: No one asked if you were okay?

Florynce: None of that. Like, “What are y’all doing here?” And my sister was very young, like she was sixteen. So they came to the site with my parents, with my mom and my uncle and aunt. And they were just very mean. They were very mean to her, like, “Why would you take the car? Why?” – you know, like being very mean. To the point where my mom eventually was like, “No, she’s a child leave her.”

Int: ‘It’s my job to scold, your job to protect ‘.

Florynce: Ya. ‘How about you do your job’. How about you do your job!

Int: Yeah, that’s a general sentiment for South Africans

Florynce: So, I wouldn’t say that, ya, nothing tragic has ever happened to me. Like I have never even gotten mugged.

Int: Oof, knock on wood.

Florynce: Not even gotten mugged, so I can’t say – but feeling safe in general, it’s not that I don’t fear getting mugged. I fear that every day. It could happen to anyone.

Int: Well, actually, that’s all the questions that I have for your today. Thanks for the lovely chat, it wasn’t like an interview but more like conversation. Ya, if you have any questions or concerns you are more than welcome to ask them now. Um, but if you have also anything you would like to add, you can add it now.

Florynce: No. Are you asking in the sense of the system of being safe or the country being safe or?

Int: It’s just your feeling of safety – ‘Do you feel safe’.

Florynce: Oh.

Int: Because I think that impacts your feeling of ‘home’, your feeling of belonging. So, we’re just looking at the emotional sense. Look, statistics wise, I wouldn’t say that we are safe in South Africa, specifically in certain places, at certain times, being certain bodies, you’re not safe. So, I’m looking at that type of thing. But ya, like I said if you’ve got any other types of questions or anything you would like to add or you notice anything or you remember anything and you would like to add it to the record, you are more than welcome to send me a message or an email. But ya, thanks so much for your time, for the lovely chat like really, really was so much fun. Wonderful way to end my afternoon, but ya thank you so much and have a great day.

Florynce: It’s a pleasure, and you too Simone.