Individual Interview 1 – Naomi

(Full time: 57:30)

Int: Welcome, hello.

Naomi: Hello.

Int: How are you today?

Naomi: Great, how are you?

Int: Good, good. You’ve read and have signed the consent form.

Naomi: Yes, I have.

Int: You understand the consent form?

Naomi: Yes.

Int: You acknowledge that you have not been forced into this study; you have fully volunteered.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: Great! So, taken that you have read the consent form you know what we are going to be talking about today – simply, the relationship between belonging and safety. Do you have any questions before we get started?

Naomi: No.

Int: Great! So, how are you today?

Naomi: I’m good.

Int: Ya, we’ll start off with some niceties. Um, ya well let’s just go through a bit of background and who you are currently. So, how old are you, are you studying, are you working, and where about do you live?

Naomi: Um, I’m 23 years old. I’m busy doing my second degree -it’s in education, which I felt like, it an important thing for me to do this research participant thing because its very like women dominated field, so I feel like it helps with that. And then I live in Pretoria, and I’ve lived here my entire life.

Int: Awesome, and you’re studying also here in Pretoria or are you studying a bit further away?

Naomi: No. I’m studying here at the University of Pretoria.

Int: On that topic, um, how do you get to university?

Naomi: I drive myself but that is also a very like recent thing. In the past, it was just like relied on my parents mainly.

Int: Okay cool. Um, so firstly, the main crux of this research is about belonging. So, in the research of belonging it’s bit difficult to define because in part it’s an emotion and then it is also a theoretical basis of where we are politically. Um, so how would you describe having a ‘feeling’ of belonging?

Naomi: Like in general or specifically like as a woman?

Int: Um, doesn’t really matter right now. You can give the very specific but you can also give your general sense of what a ‘feeling of belonging’ would mean.

Naomi: So, for me a ‘feeling of belonging’ would be, a just somewhere where you can just be. You don’t have to do anything to like earn your place in a place, I suppose. Like to belong just means that you’re allowed to exist somewhere, without necessarily – not like, contributing in a way. You can’t just leach off society, but mainly belonging in a way you don’t feel like you owe anything to anyone to belong in a place safely.

Int: So, you don’t have to pay for your belonging in a way.

Naomi: Ya, not just pay even like serve in a way, I suppose.

Int: Okay, so like you don’t have to give of yourself in order to belong?

Naomi: Ya, ya.

Int: Okay, what you said, is that the general feeling of belonging or would that be a specific sense to a woman?

Naomi: I think that is actually more specific to a woman.

Int: Alright, how do you think it would be different to a man?

Naomi: Because I feel like as a woman there’s like almost a burden to belonging. Like there’s this entire idea that if you want to belong safely in this space there’s like certain things you have to do. Like if you want to belong in a night club, and someone buys you a drink you can’t just belong; there almost this like this, give and take; like that burden where you have to – you can’t just accept things from people without being like indebted to them, and then also in general like it’s such a fine line that you walk to belong somewhere safely without having to like get yourself into situations; or like just being put into situations, because I don’t think we get ourselves into these situations.

Int: To be a bit more specific, how are you saying it would be different being put into a situation rather putting yourself into the situation?

Naomi: I just feel like it starts from the girls who are almost conditioned to believe that we put ourselves into situations by dressing in a certain way or accepting drinks from guys or anything like that. But I feel like, obvious there are like situations where you can – but it’s also not, because like if I say, “Okay if you walk down a dark street, are you putting yourself in that situation?”  
Because ya, you probably are, but that’s just because we know better - but in a lot of countries, and like maybe as a man you can do something like that. So, I don’t know, like if there is a situation that you can necessarily put yourself into - like there’s risks that you can actively take but are they only risks because you are a women.

Int: To clarify, would this link to this notion of ‘asking for it’?

Naomi: Yes.

Int: So, a man doesn’t ask for it because he naturally just belongs and a women-

Naomi: They are allowed to just exist, whereas women you do ‘ask for it’ without even knowing you’re asking for it. But I feel like that’s also not necessarily true, because like, not to blame women, but like we’ve been told so many times that like ‘we do know we’re asking for it’, but that’s still not an excuse because we should be able to just like exist.

Int: Be?

Naomi: Ya.

Int: Exactly Um, so one of the things, and I think you actually did allude to this in a way, because if we look at a gendered perspective of belonging, for me personally, what came up – what was quite interesting is we link this feeling of belonging to this feeling of ‘at home’.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: And then women are normally seen as a ‘home-maker’; a man builds houses and a women makes a home. So, how would that relate to this kind of idea of ‘asking for it’ – is it because we’re in a subservient role within the home or is it linked to something else?

Naomi: No, I think it definitely has it’s like traditional links back to like what a women should be, and what the role of a women should be in society and it has mainly just been this entire idea that like, you have to belong somewhere where you have a purpose and you have to belong somewhere where you and serve others, mainly men. So, I definitely think it links to that entire idea.

Int: Okay. Um, just moving on to the next question – we might come back to this, quite a fruitful discussion. Um, do you feel a sense of belonging in or to South Africa?

Naomi: As a women or just as a person – women are people, but you know what I mean.

Int: \*Laughs. I get you. Um, ya we can go general and we can go back to the specific, like we did previously.

Naomi: So, in general I would say no. And it’s actually weird because I actually feel like I belong more here as a women than I do as a like ‘regular’ person; because like as a regular person there is obviously so many like political links to ‘who’ South African actually belongs to. Whereas a women you kinda like … it an entire like battle of minorities almost.

Int: Okay?

Naomi: Because which category is it better to be. Is it better to be a minority in South Africa, in terms of race or religion or language, or is it better to be a minority in terms of women? Because some minorities are smaller than other cause there’s more women than there are maybe like English people or something like that.

Int: Ya. So, the minority in that sense is a bigger grouping so you’d identify with South African women-

Naomi: Ya.

Int: Instead of white South African women.

Naomi: Cause like you can almost like fly under the radar more as a women because there’s so many like compared to maybe an English person in Pretoria.

Int: That is also true. Um, so with this feeling of belonging you said … oh we’ve already answered that question, never mind, my bad. Um, has this sense of belonging in or to South Africa changed over your life or has it not.

Naomi: I think I have almost become more aware of it, like as I have gotten older because I suppose when you’re a kid you’re almost very naïve and like ignorant in like the situation where you’re like, ‘But I live here. This is where I belong, this is where I am supposed to be.’  
And then, as you get older it becomes this entire thing where your parents are like, “But you can’t do this and you can’t do that. You need to be careful about this, you need to be careful about that. If you go there watch your drink.”  
And it almost becomes this whole thing of like, can’t I just exist? Like can’t I just *be* here. So, I think that definitely has changed over time, like as I have gotten older and like as, the world maybe became a bit rougher – but I don’t know if the world actually becomes rougher or if we just become more aware of the roughness.

Int: Uh, I just want to touch on something. So, you said your parents – as you get older your parents like kind of like warn you about the outside world. What are those kind of disruptions to your belonging?

Naomi: I’d say it’s mainly men, which sounds really awful and like really blanketed, but it is though. And it’s-it’s horrible, but it’s so true, like this entire thing um… I went to a party at a commune recently, and all my uncles and my mom as well, we like, “You know what happens at communes.”   
And I’m like, “No I don’t.” \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs.

Naomi: ‘I don’t know what happens at communes.’ – and it’s just – there’s so many… parts of it that you have to be careful. And I do think it links to ‘All men’, but I know there’s this whole thing where it’s like ‘Not all men’, but like it’s enough.

Int: It’s enough men, exactly.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: And that’s also something I touch on in the research – with these disruptions of belonging, is it normally just the safety aspect or is there something else that disrupts your belonging? You previously alluded to like this political sense which has disrupted your belonging and I… take that to mean also racial conflicts of whose country is what country.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: Whose country belongs to whom – sorry.

Naomi: Yah.

Int: So, when we’re looking in terms of safety – is there a racial aspect to safety or not?

Naomi: I actually think yes, but I wouldn’t say that white women are safer. Actually, I do think that African women and black women are less safe because, maybe, it’s more like ingrained in specific cultures, this entire idea that is your duty, that is your job, like you must just put up with it; whereas I think a lot of the times white people it’s more liberal – where it’s almost like, “No, I’m not going to deal with this.”  
Whereas over there it’s maybe not like as culturally accepted to not be like, “No, go over there.”  
You know.

Int: Okay, then also to just touch back on with this commune situation. Um, when you did leave the house and your uncles and your mom were like, “No, do you know what happens in communes.”  
Um, what was you kind of rhetoric back – except for, ‘I don’t know what happens’, did you fight it back, like, ‘No, these are my friends. I know this is a safe place’,   
or even, ‘If it’s not a safe place I can be safe there somehow’?  
Or are all these areas, such as boys’ communes, are unsafe places for women in general?

Naomi: I think everywhere is an unsafe place for women. But like, just the way I handled that situation is the same way I handle all conflict where I just was, “Oh yeah, I know. My dad was in a commune.”  
Like it is so difficult – there’s almost this other thing when someone upsets you. Like especially like – so say now for example, like a man buying you a drink and then being really annoying and not leaving you alone or even just a man annoying you and not leaving you alone, you have to still be kind, you have to still be polite or else it could literally be your life on the line. So, it’s still this whole thing of, you still have to be ‘laughy’ and brush it off, and I feel like that’s exactly what I did with the commune thing where I was like, “I know you guys are saying that I could get murdered, but like – \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs.

Naomi: “My dad was in a commune.”

Int: I’ll be fine.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: So, do you think that’s a general response women have to these conflict situations, these situations that could impede on their safety, is to ‘Let’s just brush it off with the most amount of politeness that you possibly can’, so not to encourage more violence.

Naomi: Definitely, definitely. And I think that goes back to the entire thing of ‘Burden of Belonging’, where you have to still – like even in times when your belonging is being questioned by other people in the same space you are sharing with them, you almost still have to behave in a certain way like you have to just be like ‘ag, you know, I’m so kind and polite’. And you know, be subservient and it’s okay.

Int: Um, one of the main theorists – I find this quite interesting, one of the main theorists that I have used throughout my work is Gqola. And she has this fantastic part in the beginning of her novel[[1]](#footnote-1) is, “What if women do just decide that ‘I’ve had enough’. I want to fight back, like I’m not going to be polite anymore, I’m not going to just take it, it’s times for a revolt, lets do this ladies.”  
And then she can of retracks it and is like, “Well you can’t fight violence with violence, because that’s just more violence.  
But in a situation, what do you think would happen if a guy were to buy you a drink and he’s like, “Hey, I just bought you this drink.”  
And you just said ‘no’ flat out, like, “No, I don’t want it. I never asked you to buy me this drink.”  
If you were more confrontational do you think this would help the situation in the future just like to have these instances happen less or would it just make it a lot worse and cause a big scene.

Naomi: I think that it’s like a person-to-person based thing. Because if like, you pick on a guy that maybe, you know, has a habit of getting his way, I suppose, then you start stepping into insult territory. Where you are literally creating men that are absolute menaces to society. Because now it’s kind of like this entire aspect of rejection.

Int: Okay. Um, I do like what you said because an aspect of rejection is that it’s a big aspect as well with belonging. Don’t you feel that you’re being rejected from your belonging when these situations do arise, when you have to shoulder this ‘Burden of Belonging’, and be polite and be this ‘kind, airy-fairy, girly-girl’ if I can say it that way in order to belong.

Naomi: No definitely. And I think it’s really difficult, because at the same time if you don’t know any better, like if you almost always have been rejected from the place you are supposed to belong then like does it not get to a point where it doesn’t really matter; where you’re like, “Oh, but this is just how it is, like it’s always been this way.”  
Like I remember being a child, and it’s also this entire thing where it was always very clear the boys did this and the girls did this. Like we were always just treated in different ways. So, I suppose we don’t really know any different. Like it’s always been this thing like… you’re like so crucial to the space you belong in. It’s the service, the cooking, the cleaning, the planning, the everything, but it is also so temporary because even though you are like the foundation of it, you don’t control it.

Int: Ya, that’s very much true. It’s one of the big ideas that we have in sociology that we are passing down these things but we don’t really control them. I just want to go back, because you did speak about this really early on and you said, ‘Ya’, you feel like you belong to this bigger category of women, is this separation?  
Because in South Africa we did have a separation between races and that effects belonging, so we do have a history of racialised belonging. This ’gendered belonging’, does it start that young; that this is boys and this is girls?

Naomi: A hundred percent, cause like just with my teaching background I had to go do a teaching prac and it was the craziest thing in the entire world, because she was like, “Okay, on this carpet the girls can play with dolls and on this carpet the boys can play with the cars.”  
And I was just like, “This is so stupid, this is the dumbest thing ever.”  
But even my lecture, a very intelligent women. She has a doctorate and everything. And she was saying, “Ya, like there’s the boys toys and the girls toys.”  
And I was just like, “Is this normal? Like are we really separating children, like they don’t even understand this concept. They just have friends.”  
They are like, “Oh, this is my friend Mark, and this is my friend Amanda.”  
They don’t really have this entire idea of like ‘This person is different to me’, but I feel like you start to realise it with those little things and it’s this entire bigger separation that starts happening. I remember when I was in primary school there were like these ‘top fields’ and they were like, “Only the boys are allowed to play on the field, because that’s where they play like cricket and stuff.”  
And I was like, “This is ridiculous.” \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs. This is just a piece of grass, come on.

Naomi: Ya, like, “Please.”

Int: Alright well, just moving on to the next questions. Um, how would you describe your life as a woman living in south Africa?

Naomi: It’s so difficult because I feel like just as a white woman in South Africa, I don’t necessarily experience South Africa. Like it is so different in the suburbs of Pretoria that it is like in the townships and in the CBDs and stuff like that, but I don’t know. I feel like it’s another one of those things where you fly under the radar because like… you just belong as part of something and you belong as part of anything else and it doesn’t really matter at the end of the day.

Int: So, describing your life as a South African women would be describing your belonging to the category of South African and women.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: Um, you said you ‘don’t really know’, is this because we don’t really think about it, it’s just something that is just there and this is just normal for us so we don’t even question it?

Naomi: No, exactly. I think that is all that it is. You can’t really fully belong somewhere if you aren’t really fully embraced by the place in which you are supposed to belong. I think that goes both ways for white people in South Africa, English people in Pretoria, and for women in like a male dominated society almost. And it is quite difficult because there are all these things that conflict with what South Africa ‘is’ […]. So, I think that’s why I don’t know what am I suppose to do, like do I belong with this group, or this group, or this one. So, I feel like it is just easier to maybe go for the biggest category which is, I don’t know, ‘women’? ‘white people’? I don’t know.

Int: Um, have you ever gone overseas?

Naomi: Yes.

Int: And so describing your time overseas – where were you overseas?

Naomi: I went to – most recently I went to Turkey which was very interesting as a woman. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs. It’s ‘great’.

Naomi: But it also changes because when we were in Istanbul, which like you think about these – it’s not the capital city, but like these big cities are like, ‘Oh ya’, you know. No, Istanbul was literally the place that was the most strictest with like cover your shoulders, cover your legs, no sandals, cover your hair, everything. Whereas when we went to the smaller little seaside towns, where you think, ‘Oh no, that’s going to be-’

Int: Ya.

Naomi: It was insane, like people just walk around in their bikinis, down the street and everything.

Int: Locals or tourists?

Naomi: Both.

Int: Oh okay.

Naomi: And that was just very strange for me, but also in like Istanbul you don’t see women. Like you go into the shops and its men. Hardly see women, I think they are just…

Int: And you felt out of place I take it?

Naomi: Ya definitively.

Int: Not just because you are a tourist but because you are a woman.

Naomi: Ya no, definitively. And it’s almost this entire thing of the ‘Western women’ where they are like, ‘Ooo, look at them’ You know. And I remember there was this restaurant where we always walked past on our way up to the main square and this guy would always […] the host of the restaurant would always just like yell at us and it was so weird because like you still – you’re in a different country, you know you don’t belong there, but you still have to be so polite. Like you have to be overly kind in a place you aren’t even indebted to.

Int: So, shouldering this ‘Burden of Belonging’ not even in a place you belong.

Naomi: Exactly.

Int: Almost to just assimilate, like pretend to belong.

Naomi: Exactly.

Int: That’s actually very interesting way to look at it.

Naomi: It’s just so obvious you don’t belong. You still have to be so concerned with your safety just because you are a woman, and I’m sure there are other reasons, but I feel like it is mainly because you are a woman.

Int: So, you go to Istanbul and you have this experience of like, ‘Okay, I don’t belong here but I’m going to should this burden of belonging’ – I’m stealing that by the way, it’s a fantastic way to describe it. Um, and then you come back to South Africa, was it like another culture shock like, ‘Oh, damn I’m actually a little more free here than I am overseas’, despite the disparities in safety.

Naomi: You definitely are more free here. It was actually insane. And then it’s so crazy cause you come back and all the, um, customs agents and everything – it’s usually African dudes and they are so nice to you. Like, they’re literally so nice to you and it’s so nice to come back here and everyone is so friendly.   
I’ve also been to Thailand in the past and mainly just South-East Asia. And we landed in Cambodia and my uncle was literally just like, “Do not smile at the boarder agents. Do not ask them how they are. They will yell at you.”  
And we literally just stood there and handed them our passports, because they literally get so angry with people.

Int: For smiling and saying hi.

Naomi: So, it’s this entire thing of you’re forced to be polite in so many situations and then in other ones they’re just like, “Don’t speak.”

Int: Like ‘don’t exist’.

Naomi: Please. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs. Um, ya going back because one of the questions is, ‘Do you feel as though you are free in South Africa?’

Naomi: No, but not because I am a woman. I think there are other facets to it. Do you know what I mean? I don’t feel like anyone is free in South Africa, like we live behind gates and fences and wall, and all these security measures and we can’t just walk down the street – well, we can…

Int: But you shouldn’t.

Naomi: But I’ve actually said this to my mom before, I think the world would be a better place without men. And I know that is such a bad thing to say. And she was like, “No, it wouldn’t.”  
And she was actually getting so upset, because it’s from that generation where like men were just like, you know, ‘go off to war’, and they would be these hero’s. And I say this to my mom, “Can you walk down the streets at night.”   
And she said, “No.”  
“If there were no men in the world could you walk down the streets at night.”  
And she said, “Ya, probably.”  
And that’s just the craziest thing to me, that we can literally just get rid of all men and I think, probably, 80 – no, 90 percent of like our safety issues would be like solved. It would be fine.

Int: So, one of the main things that we do link to almost the ‘gendered of crime’. We picture crime to be mainly male criminals.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: But there is one specific crime that men are basically the most feared of, and it’s something that a women can’t really commit to another women – or not on the scale that men have committed against women. So, women can still steal but the question is, can a woman still rape another woman or does that idea of a woman raping another woman not even enter the consciousness, because if we’re getting rid of all men and you’re saying that crime would disappear, I understand how maybe rape could disappear from that situation, but if we’re looking at violent crime, that could still happen. Women can be violent women.

Naomi: Ya, but I feel like mainly, and this is going to sound awful, and I’m really not justifying crime, like I’m really not. I think a lot of the time that women are violent it is against other men or against other women as a result of another man.

Int: Okay.

Naomi: And then also with this entire idea of rape, I know that, especially when it’s with molestation, it’s mainly women against young boys. So, if we get rid of all men, we also don’t have that, which doesn’t mean that women are still not horrible people for molesting young boys but ya.

Int: So, we’re going to go back a little bit because we kind of skipped over this. Um, and it’s kind of linked to this idea of ‘are you free in South Africa’, and you spoke about – well, you can’t really be free in South Africa if you can’t even walk down the road. So, the big question is ‘Do you feel safe here in South Africa?’

Naomi: No.

Int: Is there any place in South Africa where you do feel safe?

Naomi: No. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs. No.

Naomi: No, I wouldn’t say so. Like you have – especially here in Pretoria recently, like in Groenkloof and Waterkloof and all that. You have all these areas now that have closed up, and like I’ve been there a few times and I’ve been walking around, and I’m still like ‘someone could literally walk in here and murder me any second’. But I don’t think that is a general thing, that’s a me-thing.

Int: Okay.

Naomi: You know what I mean.

Int: It’s just a personal thing.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: So, if you’re saying that you don’t feel safe anywhere in South Africa, there aren’t safe zone where you can be without necessarily worrying about other things happening around you.

Naomi: I think there are spaces where you can be where you are almost distracted from worrying. Like when you go out and having a good time, like you’re distracted from the things you are worrying about, but I do still think you have moments where you are aware of the elements of danger; like if someone comes up to you and is like putting their hand by your drink, you’re going to be like, ‘This person is going to Roofee, and murder me.’   
So, I do think there are still like, there’s ample opportunities to worry and fee unsafe so ya.

Int: Have you ever had one of those situations where you’re like, ‘Okay cool, this person is actually Roofeeing my drink’ or ‘Okay, I’m actually going to get mugged right now’ or ‘This person is going to take my things’?

Naomi: No. And it’s weird because like I’ve had my phone stolen once and I literally still get so upset about it, and it’s actually just a weird situation because it links to this whole thing of being a woman. I was at the strip, there at Jolly’s, and there were so many people I was trying to get past and this guy like put his hands like on my like bum. And I was like, “Okay like this” –   
And it sounds so stupid when someone’s like, “Oh has anything like bad happened to you?”  
You’re like, ‘Oh not that bad’, but like it is that bad, like just because you can get violently raped and murdered doesn’t mean that people like forcing themselves on you isn’t bad, because it is. And like he was putting his hand – and he stole my phone, I was so upset. But it’s almost this entire thing of, I wasn’t really upset about him putting his hands one me, because like that happens when you go to these crowed places all the time. It shouldn’t, but it does.

Int: Do you think it ever happens to guys?

Naomi: No.

Int: No, not at all?

Naomi: I think men have a lot of respect for other men. And it’s almost that entire thing like if you go somewhere and say to a guy, “No, leave me alone.”  
They’ll be like, “Oh, why must we leave you alone?”  
But if you’re like, “No, I have a boyfriend.”   
They’ll be like, “Okay, sick.”

Int: “Cheers.”

Naomi: It’s like they respect this imaginary man that they don’t even know exists more than the woman that’s standing in front of them.

Int: True. Have you used the ‘imaginary man’ as a way to be safer in a place; pretending to have a boyfriend solely just for this respect for this ‘imaginary man’ to like to protect you.

Naomi: No, but I have used the ‘lesbian card’ before, because some men aren’t okay with lesbians.

Int: Oh okay. \*Laughs.

Naomi: \*Laughs. Ya.

Int: Okay, just going back a bit. So, when I asked you ‘do you think this happens to other men?’, um, lets flip it and say, do you think girls would inappropriately touch a man’s body just because they are in a crowed place and because they could?

Naomi: Yes, I do.

Int: Does it happen on the same scale as men?

Naomi: No, definitely no. But I do think that it definitely happens, like, that women don’t really know boundaries. But I’d also, I’d almost like defend women, you know and be like a little feminist, and be like, “No.”  
But the reason why some women may not understand boundaries is cause they haven’t had their boundaries understood by men.

Int: It’s very interesting.

Naomi: It gets very man-blamey

Int: Ya, ya. Unfortunately, it does. But when we say it gets ‘man-blamey’ and they are the main perpetrators of these situations-

Naomi: Ya!

Int: Are we really saying ‘we’re blaming men’, or are we using justified evidence to prove a point?

Naomi: Ya, it’s justified. That’s the entire thing, it’s not blame, it’s proof.

Int: Its not blame, its proof – I like that one. Um, so like to take it back to the ‘not all men’ situation. Could we not counter that argument and say, “Ya well, it’s not all men, but it’s more than enough proof that it is enough men.”

Naomi: Ya. And I’ve seen this entire thing where someone uses a bowl of Skittles or MnM’s as an example, and they are like, “If you have a bowl of a hundred MnM’s and ten of them are poisonous and you will die, are you going to eat any of the MnM’s?”  
And most people are like, “No, probably not.”  
And that’s the entire thing, like ‘Ya, I’m sure it’s not all men, but if you look at the amount of men that know that their friends are doing very shady things, but they still just standby and then aren’t you just as guilty’

Int: That is the big thing, uh, ‘to be complicit in the face of the oppressor’ – that is a very famous quote and I can’t remember who it is by. But ya, lets move on a little bit. Um, how would you describe the physical structure of your home?

Naomi: What do you mean?

Int: So, you arrive home. How do you get into your house?

Naomi: So, our house is actually really low security, which I think is why we haven’t really had a lot of break-ins because – that sounds really stupid, that doesn’t really make sense.

Int: \*Laughs.

Naomi: It’s like: “Oh, if you don’t have electric fences then you have nothing to steal.”

Int: Oh, ‘you’re poor’.

Naomi: So yeah, we just drive in and we park our cars ‘inside-outside’ – like we’re inside the property but we’re not inside a garage or something. The car’s aren’t like locked up. And then like on our gate we just have a padlock.

Int: Just a padlock?

Naomi: Ya. And then we … we don’t have like – we have like bergular bars over the doors, the windows and stuff are like chilling.

Int: Just chilling?

Naomi: Ya. \*Laughs.

Int: They’re all great, they’re fine.

Naomi: ‘Very safety conscious’.

Int: What about an alarm system?

Naomi: No.

Int: No?

Naomi: No.

Int: That’s actually very rare for South Africans.

Naomi: We don’t have pets either -we’re really just-

Int: ‘Living it’?

Naomi: Ya.

Int: Ah, so lets compare. You said that the house is very low security, so what would a ‘highs security’ house look like?

Naomi: I’d say ‘high security’ house, firstly, you’re in like an estate. You’re in like a security village.

Int: Okay, ya.

Naomi: And then like you have electric fences and dogs, an alarm system. You have one of those boards where it’s like, ‘this house is protected by ADT’. I’d say that’s a ‘high security house’. And then also like people who have guns in the house and stuff like weapons. We have a hockey stick.

Int: \*Laughs. Okay cool.

Naomi: So.

Int: There’s your weapon of choice.

Naomi: Ya, we’re fine.

Int: Ya, ‘we’re going to be great’. Um, are there any like daily safety precautions that you take?

Naomi: Ya. When I stop at a robot I like look around a lot. I’m like: “Someone is going to jump out of the bush and they’re going to rob me.”  
So like that’s the only real thing, but also then at home and stuff. I’m so… anxious about my laptop, like when I leave the house I like lock my cupboard where my laptop is, and I’m like: “I will not get robbed, this is not happening to me.”

Int: ‘Not my laptop’.

Naomi: And then sometimes at night I can’t sleep. I have to go make sure my windows are closed because I’m so scared someone is going to climb through the windows and murder me. So, it’s like little things like that we… it becomes so routine almost that you’re just like, ‘This is just what I have to do not to get murdered in my sleep, it’s fine’. \*Laughs.

Int: ‘This is basically it’.

Naomi: \*Laughs.

Int: What about on a night out? I take it that you do go out sometimes, you did say you went to Jolly’s and you got your phone stolen.

Naomi: That is true. Many years ago, but I do still go out. I think that because I got my phone stolen, I’m like very panicked about that, so like when I go – but I’ve always been like this as well, like when I go out I always like have my hand on my bag. If I can feel my phone, I’m fine, I’m not stressed. And then just like other things, like you need to know where you’re friends are, you need to know where you are going to mee if you are going to split up from each other, you need to know how you’re getting home, you need to make sure you have money on you; cause like if you use a card, someone could take your card and ya.

Int: And then you’re stranded.

Naomi: Exactly! It’s not good.

Int: Um, so what about this necessitated aspect of having an entourage of ‘guy friends’. Do you feel like you have to have like ‘guy friends’ with you when you go out, especially when you are walking in between the clubs?

Naomi: I don’t think it’s possible for women to necessarily be friends with guys without there being some ill-intent from either side. But I actually – like I don’t actually have like an entourage of guy friends, but like I think that I almost prefer that I don’t.

Int: Okay.

Naomi: Because I think guys cause a lot of – I know it’s that thing where ‘I’m friends with like guys because girls like cause-’. No, guys cause drama. They are the problem. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs. They are the problem. As we have discussed, they are the problems of society, you know its completely ‘guy blaming’- ‘guy proofing’? I’m sorry.

Naomi: \*Laughs.

Int: So, are there places in South Africa where you feel you simply cannot go because you are a woman?

Naomi: Yes. Like the CBD and stuff like that.

Int: Okay.

Naomi: No, but that’s the thing women do go to the CBD, I think that’s more a thing, ‘If you’re the only white woman in the CBD’, like it’s just not looking good for you in anyway.

Int: In anyway shape or form.

Naomi: But I also think it’s the same if it’s any white dude in the CBD, you’re also probably not, you know… you don’t blend in necessarily.

Int: No. So, that’s more in a racial aspect of safety.

Naomi: That’s more the racial aspect, but there are like – but just as a woman, I still wouldn’t go there.

Int: That’s not where you would go at all, the CBD?

Naomi: No.

Int: Women who go to the CBD, are they brave or are they just have to do it in spite of the safety risks?

Naomi: I think with the, like it goes back to that entire traditional and cultural thing where there are so many times where you’re like: “Ya, someone could grope me on a taxi, but you know that’s just what they do in the culture so you know it doesn’t really matter.”  
So like from an outsider point of view maybe you could be like, ‘they’re taking a safety risk’, but for them it could be like: “Ya, but this happens whether I’m in the CBD or not so is it actually a safety risk?”

Int: This is just life in South Africa as a woman.

Naomi: So, it’s like almost less belonging for them. But ya, I think it’s difficult because like obviously there are things you have to do, but I think that if you look at the socio-economic factor of it all it is almost more risk for them because they have to do it, they don’t have like the privilege of me being like, ‘I’m not going to go there, I have no reason to go to the CBD’.

Int: Exactly. Also, you touched on the aspect of public transport. The fact that you don’t have to take public transport is that one of the reasons why you say you don’t really take safety precautions, because I mean having your own transport is kind of a way of a safety precaution.

Naomi: No, definitely. And I do think like it doe make it easier because I don’t have to be crammed on a bus, or a taxi, or a train with all these people around me the entire time. So, I definitely do think like it makes me safer, it puts me at less risk almost.

Int: Um, so going back to the safety precautions. Like we said earlier there’s this aspect of ‘you’re asking for it’ – if you’re walking down a narrow street at night, you’re ‘asking for it’.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: If you dress provocatively, that’s also been used as an excuse.

Naomi: It’s such a thin line though, cause like I was actually thinking about this. It’s this entire thing where like, the same way you like have this ‘Burden of Belonging’, there’s almost like there’s this imaginary audience where, cause you have to – you don’t have to, but there’s almost like this role that you have been designated by society and you’re almost like: “Let me play this role, let me dress this way.”  
And I know a lot of women do dress for themselves, but I feel like even when you dress for yourself you’re dressing for other people like you are – like maybe – okay, from my point of view, I’m hyper aware of how other people perceive me and I do think it’s almost this little performance that you put on for this little imaginary audience, but it is again that fine line: Do you look good enough for others or do you look too good to the point of dealing with barbarians.

Int: ‘Dealing with barbarians’. Um, so would you say that you restrict yourself in your clothing, perhaps in the way you speak, or you sit?

Naomi: No, definitely like there’s so many – it happen a lot when I was going out, like in my first-year going out to the strip and stuff, I was like: “Ooo, let me like wear a skirt.”  
And then you’re like: “No, because if I like walk past a bunch of people, people literally put their hands up your skirt.”  
So, you’re like: “Oh can’t wear that, so it’s”, you know, “long pants, let me wear this but I also have to have my phone somewhere, so no one steals my phone.”  
So it’s this entire issue. And there is a certain way I suppose you have to speak. You have to still almost be like ‘ladylike’ and polite, you know.

Int: Like, ‘please don’t grope me’.

Naomi: But you still have to be interesting!

Int: Oh! Ya, ya.

Naomi: Like it’s ridiculous.

Int: The whole ‘game’ basically.

Naomi: Exactly. It’s a performance.

Int: That’s also another thing we deal with quite extravagantly, extravagantly? I feel like that the wrong word.

Naomi: \*Laughs.

Int: But ya. When or where do you feel as though you are ‘at home’?  
It can also be at home.

Naomi: Ya, I would say it is at home. But I would also say that I do feel quite at home at university, because, um, the way that the Education faculty is set up, we’re all on our same – we have our own campus, called Groenkloof campus part of the university. So, I do almost feel more at home there because like there’s not a lot of men, do you know what I mean?

Int: Okay, ya.

Naomi: Ya, it’s mainly women.

Int: It’s the education campus, ya.

Naomi: Which is sexist in and of itself, but its fine. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs. So, when we’re talking of this thing of feeling ‘at home’, and you say: “Well home is where you feel at home, and as well as Groenkloof campus.”  
Except for the absence of men, what is it that makes these two places ‘home’ for you?

Naomi: I suppose it’s almost like when you’re allowed to almost not be under the eye of society, which sounds ominous and stuff.

Int: So, you don’t have to preform?

Naomi: Yeah, it sounds like the Handmaids Tale.

Int: \*Laugh. Ya.

Naomi: But I would also say that I still do preform at Groenkloof campus because I’m like – I’m older than all the people I still with. So I’m still like – they need to think that I’m ‘hip’ and ‘cool’. But like for ‘at home’, where I actually feel ‘at home-at home’ I’d say it’s this entire idea of like, I can not wash my hair for an entire week and I just be wearing the raggiest of clothes and I’m still like, ‘This is fine, I’m okay no one’s judging me, this is great’.

Int: So, I want to link this actually to your notion of belonging. So, you say that ‘belonging is just being’.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: Not feeling this necessary need to do anything or earn this, or what. Is this being, this kind of performance, this cost of preforming or well this ‘Burden of Belonging’, that you have to be this person. Does that not happen in the home or like you’ve said at Groenkloof campus a little bit differently – not so much as compared to the home?

Naomi: I think it depends like what your home set up is.

Int: Okay.

Naomi: Like, for me I’m an only child and I live with my mom because my parents are horribly divorced. So, with that it’s not really this entire idea that – I suppose if I had a brother and if my brother had friends over or if I had a sister and my sister had friends over it would almost be this thing where you still have a role to play, you still have this audience that is like watching you all the time. So, I do think it’s like very dependent on like the structure within like the place you belong to feel like home.

Int: So, I take it that you feel safe at home?

Naomi: Ya.

Int: And do you feel safe at Groenkloof campus?

Naomi: Yes, but it’s actually so weird. When my parents were still fetching me, you have to like walk out of campus to get fetched. And I’d be standing there and I’d literally have my phone like under my arm cause I’m like, ‘a taxi or something is going to drive past or all these people jogging up the road minding their own business are going to come past me and rob me’. So that was awful. And then like sometimes it would be so bad that when people would walk out – but then they like speak to you as well, like men. They just chat to you and I’m like, ‘this is very weird anyways’, and I’d like move further down so that the security guards could see me. And there’s this entire like, you don’t even think about it, ‘let me just stand somewhere so if someone like kidnaps me the security can see it’.

Int: Ya.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: So, this has been alluded to, also in my research, we talk about ‘there are simply places women can’t go’ – they can’t go to these places,

Naomi: Like a shebeen.

Int: Ya. You shouldn’t go there. You can go, but you really shouldn’t.

Naomi: You probably shouldn’t be doing that.

Int: Ya. And this is in part because of these things – these places are not built with women in mind. They are not structured with ‘oh okay cool, women might not feel safe here’, because primarily, going back to, women make home men make houses – so by extension men build society and women are trying to find their place in society.

Naomi: But is there anything built for women, cause I remember – I don’t know how true it is, you’re going to have to fact check me.

Int: I will.

Naomi: But I remember reading a few years ago where women are more likely to die in car accidents because the safety aspects of cars, like safety belts, airbags, and everything are built for male bodies,

Int: Ya.

Naomi: And obviously women are smaller, so they are more likely to die. So, even ‘female spaces’, I don’t know that’s going to sound so sexist, but like the ‘spa’ or something, something that’s more – which is also messed up because that’s also the entire idea, ‘you go to a spa to look good for the audience. I don’t think there are any spaces that are actually built for women.

Int: So, with this, these structures that aren’t built for women, when we look at, lets take Groenkloof campus for an example. Are there dark alleyways without cameras?

Naomi: Yes.

Int: Do you go down those dark alleyways ever?

Naomi: I do, because I feel like it’s this entire idea – that’s sounds so ya, ‘I just walk down dark alleys’, places where people get murdered in horror movies. No, it’s this entire thing where you feel like you are safe because you are on a campus, and it’s a small campus as well, like it’s not busy, and it’s mainly women as well. And I’m like, ‘nothing’s going to happen’.   
But I suppose it depends. If I was there – um, cause I had English lectures recently and those only finish at 18:30, them I’m probably not going to do that.

Int: That’s it.

Naomi: Ya, there’s a time where you are allowed to exist safely on campus.

Int: That’s during the day, not a chance during the night?

Naomi: Ya.

Int: So, well the University of Pretoria have put into place the ‘Green route’. Is this something that is useful or it is something that needs to be revisited a little if you’re still feeling safe – unsafe on campus?

Naomi: I don’t even know if Groenkloof has a green route, I assume it does, but I remember recently I was going through the Instagram comments on the University of Pretoria’s thing because it was them basically, it was after a situation happen, that they were once again were once again: “We have ‘Green routes’. We’re fine.”  
And there were so many people in the comments sharing their own experiences where they were like: “I waited half an hour for someone to come and walk me.”   
Like at that point it’s ridiculous, and I feel like it gets to the point where it’s better to do something about it that is more proactive that is more preventative; that people don’t have to be come campus when it’s dark, maybe schedule semester tests earlier or maybe don’t have lecture until six in the evening.

Int: That’s also true.

Naomi: Like there are other things that could be done rather than having this thing, ‘lets have a security guard walk with you so you don’t get murdered in the street’.

Int: While we’re busy talking about this, what makes those places unsafe – is it the fact that it’s night time or is there something else?

Naomi: I think it’s literally just because it is so close to a CBD, especially like with main campus cause its, you know, it’s not the freshest area sometimes.

Int: Ya.

Naomi: Occasionally. But I also feel like if it was – it’s that whole like skittles thing again, even if it was like 90 percent safe, are you really going to take the risk.

Int: Ya, ‘are you going to take the risk’.

Naomi: Like when you’re ticket’s up, it’s up, and what if it’s on that day? It’s just not worth it.

Int: Just to be a little more specific. There this one thing that we talk about with these structures that aren’t built for women, one of the main things that do come up is ‘there’s too many dark alleyways’, and then these dark alleyways necessitate cameras or spotlights or someone to walk you through the dark, normally a man to walk you through.

Naomi: Like a child!

Int: Exactly. So, is it because there is someone lurking in those shadows or is it just the simple fact that this could happen?

Naomi: I think it’s the ‘could happen’.

Int: The fear that this might happen to me?

Naomi: Ya, cause like the odds are there’s no one, but there could be someone.

Int: So, the imagined fear of this happening?

Naomi: Ya, I feel like its just like this generalise anxiety that women exist with. Like there’s so many things you can’t do, so many things you have to be hyper aware of because you don’t want to be that one ‘could’ve situation’.

Int: Where does that fear come from?

Naomi: I think it’s generally about how women have to be raised., to a large extent. Where it’s like, ‘you have to behave in this way or this could happen’ or ‘you have to be like aware of your drink, or how you dress, you have to be aware of like you’re like surroundings’, like ‘don’t get too drunk that you don’t know what’s happening around you’. And like Uber’s and stuff like that as well. Like I have a friend who always Uber’s by herself and I’m just like, ‘I could never do that, I could literally never do that’. Like you’re in a car with a stranger. He could drive you anywhere and kill you, it’s just not good.

Int: So, with the umm… going back to this common example that you had used. You did say that you were an only child. Um, do you think if you had a brother do you think they would have the exact same conversation with your parents – with your mom and uncles – before they left? Or would it just be like: “Okay cool, have fun enjoy yourself”?

Naomi: I think it would have 100 percent been like: “Okay bye, have fun. Do you have enough money? Enjoy.”  
Ya, cause it’s almost this thing of … it’s again that entire preventative thing of where the focus is put on not the people who in general the ones committing the crime , but on the people who are the victims of the crimes – which isn’t the most fair thing in the entire world.

Int: You could argue that it’s not fair at all. Why are you blaming – why are we giving the victim the responsibility of their crime?

Naomi: The ‘burden of their crime’.

Int: The ‘burden of their crime’!

Naomi: \*Laughs.

Int: Instead of the perpetraitors of the crime.

Naomi: No, exactly.

Int: If we take this back to how we socialise children – how children are brought up. And we did speak about this, like ‘girls on this side, boy’s on this side – you belong to the category of women and you belong to the category of men’.

Naomi: Dolls, cars.

Int: Exactly. In that space where you’re saying, “Kids don’t really know the difference”. When does it become: “Okay you’re the preparators of the crime and you are the victims of the crime”?

Naomi: I don’t think men are ever told that they are the perpetrators of the crimes. Like I think that has only recently become a thing with the – I think it’s the ‘men are trash’?

Int: Yes, the ‘men are trash’ movement.

Naomi: That like movement on social media that men have suddenly been like: “agg”.  
And then I feel like the ‘incel’ movement popped up a lot directly after that. So, it’s almost this thing, ‘men are busy murdering women, men are trash’. And they’re like: “Oh look. We’re going to become trasher”

Int: Which would just be worse yah.

Int: So, I think that’s the entire thing. But I think that if we took social media out of the eqation, which we obviously can’t – but it we could, I don’t think men ever know.

Int: That they’re the perpetrators?

Naomi: Ya. I think they fully just they just live their lives. And in a lot of cases with this almost like ‘entitlement’, when they’re just like, ‘I’m not doing anything wrong. I’m allowed to do this, I bought you a drink.”

Int: Exactly. So, there is this notion, that there is this sense of entitlement to a women’s body. And we can take this back to, simply, just the way that gender has been conceptualised, even in academic fields, but also, more broadly that a women is a man’s responsibility – it’s his women.

Naomi: Or property.

Int: Property, exactly what it is. So, this kind of notion that a man ‘owns a women’, that a ‘women belongs to a man’; he is entitled to her and her sexuality.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: Does this allow further instances of ‘this is just how it is’?

Naomi: I think it enables it.

Int: It enables it?

Naomi: Ya, where it’s like: “Ya, but I’m allowed to do this because” – its that entire thing of marital rape was only made illegal in like the 80’s or something; it’s this thing like: “She’s my wife, I’m allowed to rape her.”  
No, not really.

Int: Not really.

Naomi: And I suppose like, obviously it’s not on the same scale, but there’s a smaller version of it where it’s like: “But I bought her a drink why she-

Int: ‘I’m entitled to this body now’.

Naomi: ‘Didn’t go home with me? I bought her a drink, I’m a nice guy’.

Int: Exactly.

Naomi: Ag, ‘nice guys’ anyways. \*Laughs.

Int: Inverted commas, ya.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: So, with this notion of entitlement, we discussed about it – talked about it earlier kind of, where if you’re in a club and it’s really crowed the chances are that some guy is going to touch you’re bum.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: Like that happens.

Naomi: And then it’s like this thing, ‘oh no, it’s not that bad’. Like I remember I had a boyfriend, and he asked me – it’s was one of them, that sounds awful – but he asked me: “Ya, but has anything happened to you?”  
And I was like: “Ag, not that bad.”   
And I’m like: “It is that bad.”  
Like you shouldn’t just be okay with men groping you.

Int: But if we like flip with around, do you think women have a sense of entitlement to a man’s body?

Naomi: No.

Int: No?

Naomi: I think there are, ag.

Int: There are some.

Naomi: There are obviously inatcnes where it is, but I feel like if you look like ‘percentage wise’ – but also, all statistics are made up, but anyway. \*Laugh.

Int: Let’s not get there. \*Laugh.

Naomi: Um, I do think it is more ingrained in men as a general concept, this entitlement. Whereas women, I’d say it’s more of a case-to-case basis.

Int: Okay, that’s actually very true, and like we say statistics aren’t really something that is we look at the broad situation-

Naomi: Have you seen that thing where it’s like: “44 percent of all statistics are made up.”   
Or like: “54 percent of statistics are made up.”

Int: Exactly, but we can’t lie when we look at literally case loads – when we’re looking at court cases, the chances where the women is the rapist, it’s there, there is a chance-

Naomi: Ya.

Int: But it is not as likely as the chance of a man being the rapist.

Naomi: No.

Int: So, linking this back to the entitlement to a body. Um, is a woman ever entitled to her own body?

Naomi: That’s such a difficult question… I feel like there’s the entire idea that a woman should be entitled to their own body, but if you look back at the entire like – what I said about the ‘imagined audience’. Even when you’re only like, ‘I’m owning my body’, are you actually? Or are you just, doing exactly what society’s been telling you not to do but also to do, in order to be like: “Oh ya, screw men!”  
But then you’re doing exactly what men want you to do.

Int: Exactly.

Naomi: It’s that entire thing, I think it’s like called ‘pussy power’ or something. Ya, anyways, and it’s women like dressing overly …

Int: Sexualised?

Naomi: ‘Slutty’ – inverted commas. And it’s like this isn’t a big eff you to men, they are loving this. Do you know what I mean?

Int: Ya. I wanted to bring this up, because I love this movement, I thought it was quite entertaining, it was the ‘free titty movement’.

Naomi: Yes!

Int: Like: “Free the titty”.

Naomi: Like this is not excluding men. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs. No, ‘guys stop it’. I found that movement quite interesting because if we are saying that everyone’s entitled to their own body – my body belongs to me, it’s my body; yes, I do preform with it, I do enact performances for the other person.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: But if we bring it back to, let’s say abortion laws.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: These laws have quite distinctively-

Naomi: Against women, like very anti-women.

Int: If we look at the overturning of Roe v. Wade – um, you know of ‘Roe v. Wade’?

Naomi: Yes.

Int: Alright, so on that topic of the overturning of Roe v. Wade, it’s basically arguing that women don’t have their bodies as soon as it becomes-

Naomi: An incubator for an unborn.

Int: Basically.

Naomi: For a bunch of cells. \*Laughs.

Int: Exactly, a woman is a woman until they become a womb, basically.

Naomi: Ya, but also women are wombs even before they have wombs – do you know what I mean?

Int: No, please explain.

Naomi: So, this entire idea we have girls play with dolls – why do we have them play with dolls? Cause it’s this entire care role. We make women play with, ‘oh here’s a make-believe kitchen set’- why?   
Like it is so ridiculous. Like they aren’t even of reproductive age but its ‘we are training you for 13 years down the line, when you are able to conceive children’. It’s ridiculous.

Int: I agree. Um, as a nursery schoolteacher do you think you’d try to change the or would that be disrupting this category of ‘you belong to women’.

Naomi: I think it such a difficult thing because there is only so much you can do. Because I’ve always struggled with this as a nursery schoolteacher, like when I did my pracs, my mentor teachers would say to me: “You can everything you want at school, you can discipline them this way, this way, this way, and this way, if the parents don’t do it at home, what you’re doing doesn’t mean that much.”  
And I think that goes back to that entire thing, you can be like: “Girls, you can play with cars, you can do whatever you want to do”, but if at home the dad’s like: “Go get me a drink.”   
You know? It’s not – you know.

Int: It’s not going to come home, basically.

Naomi: So, I do think it starts at home and it’s this entire thing. And it’s the craziest thing to me, this is so controversial, like you have to have a licence to own a gun, you have to licence to drive a car, you have to have a degree to do this, you have to have police clearance to do this – like for my degree you need to have police clearance – but then, they just let anyone have children.

Int: That’s true.

Naomi: They let anyone have children and raise them, and I’m like: “This is probably not the best system in any way or place.”

Int: Ya, I mean if you look at people who want to adopt, they have to jump through so many hoops, but some people can just ‘make a child’.

Naomi: But that goes back to the entire abortion thing. Where they were like trying to force 12-year-olds to have children, but if a 12-year-old was like: “Can I adopt a baby?”  
They would be like: “Absolutely not.”

Int: “This is not happening.”

Naomi: “Under no circumstances.”

Int: So, with these abortion laws, what I found really interesting is that it’s a furthered masculine entitlement to the feminine body; so: “No you can’t abort this baby because I believe it’s morally incorrect.”  
And this baby also technically belongs to the ‘impregnator’, whether that be a rapist or an actual father

Naomi: Ya, but then I think it also becomes so much worse when you look at the amount of women senators who were also like ‘end abortion’. And it’s like: “You’re going against the people you are supposed to belong to, like you are a traitor.”  
It’s that entire thing that – and it’s also all these senators as well who have young daughters. And I remember I was a lot on social media where a lot of people were like: “If your daughter, if your 11-year-old daughter got raped and pregnant you’re really saying that she must not carry this child?”

Int: Ya, carry to term.

Naomi: But it’s almost this entire thing where like I think men fail to see women as people and it’s that whole thing where it’s like: “Just remember before you do something to a woman, she could be your mother, she could be someone’s daughter, she could be someone’s sister.”   
And it’s this entire thing, she could also just be someone. She doesn’t have to have a relation to a man in order to-

Int: Be a person.

Naomi: Be of value to you.

Int: Oh, ‘be of value’, that’s very true. Um, so while we’re talking about this – I kind of lost my space so… while we have these situations happening overseas, with the overturning of Roe v. Wade and the subsequent abortion laws – in South Africa it’s a bit different, we base abortion on choice and not necessarily on morality.

Naomi: Which is actually quite weird actually.

Int: Is it? We have a really new democracy.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: Well, constitution. Well, that’s kind of why we can always have – well, rely on the fact that we will always have abortion laws because it’s based on the notion of ‘its my choice, ít’s ‘my body’ […]’. But would this – and we were also speaking about this earlier with you going overseas and saying you felt more free in South Africa than you did over there. Do you see yourself remaining in South Africa for he foreseeable future?

Naomi: It’s so difficult, because like I love Pretoria, specifically, like obviously I love South Africa, but it’s also this entire thing, I haven’t lived anywhere else. So, I think I love it here, you know, but if I look at the countries I’ve been to, they have all been countries where they just really hate women. So, I don’t think I’d go to any of those, but I’ve thought about it like, New Zealand or … maybe not England that’s not the cutest, but like somewhere there. But it’s also that entire thing I want a country where there isn’t that language barrier because that is another layer of ‘not-belonging’; if there is that entire issue of language. But I have considered it.

Int: Um, so I actually just remembered what I wanted to ask. So, you’re saying some of these women, these senators, who voted against – well, for the overturning Roe v. Wade, and then also for new abortion laws, and you said they’re traitors to this category that they are supposed to belong to; they belong to the category of women and they are technically traitors.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: What makes them a ‘traitor’?

Naomi: Just this entire thing like you’re almost – it’s that ‘pick me’ mentality. Like these are new terms that you need to add to your thing.

Int: \*Laugh. Yes.

Naomi: But its this entire idea where they are almost – it’s the imaginary audience again, but now it’s very directly conservative men, where they’re like: “I also don’t agree with abortion.”  
Like: “Look at me.”

Int: “Look at me, I’m with the boys”.

Naomi: “I hate women.”   
It’s awful and it’s horrible and I would say they’re traitors, because its this entire thing where ‘why would you make laws that could impact you, that could impact like your daughters, like your kind almost’.

Int: Your gender.

Naomi: Which sounds awful basically.

Int: Um, so how do you belong to the category of women? Is it simply just your reproductive organs, or is there more to it?

Naomi: So, that’s a very difficult question. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs. Okay.

Naomi: Because of the entire idea of like… ya, this entire idea that you can identify whichever way you want and there was a thing recently – it’s called middle-ground – where it’s like a spectrum of ideas. So, ‘I agree, I disagree, I’m not sure, I strongly agree, I strongly’ – like those surveys you get from the university. It’s one of those. And there was this entire question: “Do biological women and transgender women share the same experiences?”  
And I a hundred percent say no. I would definitely and would whole heartedly say no. So, I think it’s do difficult because like, ya… there’s a whole new section of issues that like they face, but I don’t think it’s because they are women, I think it’s because they are transgender. Do you know what I mean?

Int: Yes.

Naomi: But it’s difficult, because I remember we used to do his in school where they were like: “Okay what classifies as women?”   
And people were like: “Oh, you can have like children.”  
Okay, so if you’re infertile then you’re not a women and no that’s not what I’m saying.   
There’s a whole lot of things, like there’s obviously the physical characteristics and there’s obviously DNA and stuff like that.

Int: The chromosomes, yes.

Naomi: There’s a whole lot of things like that, but I think it’s really… it’s difficult because there’s so many various opinions about it.

Int: When we were – you said this earlier, you’re saying that they don’t have the same experiences as you.

Naomi: Ya. But they have a whole host of new experiences that I don’t have.

Int: Ya, because they are transwomen they’ll have different life experiences and your being part of the more, if we can say ‘traditional’ category of women.

Naomi: \*Laughs. Ya.

Int: You’d have a whole other host of experiences. Is there any overlap in those experiences?

Naomi: Yes. It’s this entire – I would say there is cause there’s this entire violence against women, I would say there’s violence against transwomen in the same way that there is violence against ‘traditional women’. But it’s still that entire thing, is there violence against transwomen because they are trans or because they are women?  
So, I would say there’s an overlap with like violence and mistreatment… but other than that I wouldn’t really -

Int: Say that they are similar?

Naomi: Ya.

Int: So, if we’re saying that-

Naomi: Like pockets.

Int: Pockets, yes!

Naomi: Transwomen experience that.

Int: Exactly. The issue of clothing.

Naomi: And purses. Cause like I think pockets are only small so that peruses can be sold to women.

Int: Oh yes, I agree with you.

Naomi: It’s capitalism, I think that’s rhe issue.

Int: It’s male capitalism at its finest.

Naomi: \*Laughs.

Int: So, if we’re saying that this linking kind of experience could be violence.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: What does that say about the core linking aspect of all women – is it violence?

Naomi: Yes.

Int: Is that what really makes women belong to the category of women is because of he potential aspect of being a victim.

Naomi: I actually would say that because its this entire thing as well if you think about one of the most – this is going to sound so bad – one of the main, like most womanly things you can do is this entire thing of having children. Because even if you can’t have children, we’re like ignoring that completely cause I don’t think that’s what makes you women, but women are the only ones who can have children, and if you look at childbirth it’s this innately violent experience. Like there’s violence in all forms of it. So, I would say that’s probably a linking – a little string that goes through everything.

Int: And well, we spoke about this earlier, that boys and girls kind of get separated in the situation of ‘you’re the victims and you’re the perpetrators’.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: So, if we’re linking one of the core aspects of being a woman is almost this potential to be a victim, to experience violence. Men experience violence as well like we said earlier-

Naomi: But it’s from other men!

Int: It’s from other men, ya.

Naomi: That’s my entire issue with it. They’re the problem.

Int: They’re the problem, if we got rid of all of them there would be no violence. Well, maybe there would be no violence.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: I like that one quote, like if we got a bunch of countries that were ruled by women we wouldn’t have wars we would just have countries not talking to each other.

Naomi: The Cold War.

Int: The Cold War ya. Basically The Cold War.

Naomi: \*Laughs.

Int: Alright so, one of my last few questions that I have for you is: What is your biggest fear being in South Africa or being a South African?

Naomi: I wouldn’t say it’s being murdered. I feel like I’m more afraid of being raped than being murdered.

Int: You’re more afraid of being raped?

Naomi: Ya, because if you’re murdered its just like over – do you know what I mean?

Int: It’s just done, ye.

Naomi: Like you don’t have to deal with it after. If you’re raped, you have to deal with it after. It’s like you have to carry that with you for the rest of your life. And like you can only be murdered once.

Int: Ah well, you could be brought back.

Naomi: Ya but \*Laughs. Under most circumstances, you get murdered once but you could be raped in your 20’s and then in your 40’s again, you could be rapped in your 80’s; it’s like this never-ending thing where is at least – and this is awful – where at least if you’re murdered you can’t get hurt again.

Int: It’s over.

Naomi: Which is horrible.

Int: There another quote I actually like referring to its, ah: assault happens – no, its ah: theft happens to your economic need or economic pocket, assault happens to the physical body, and rape happens to the soul.

Naomi: Ya.

Int: Is that this fact, ‘okay cool, I’m going to have to shoulder the burden of this crime. It is now my responsibility that this happened – it was my body that it happened to.’?

Naomi: Ya, and that’s the entire thing, like it is your body; it’s the entire idea that it belongs to you, and it’s been violated in that way. But it’s also that entire thing of like the ‘audience of men’, like the – I suppose it is something you end up disclosing to like future partners that you may be with and that’s also very dependent if they are understanding which I do – I like to think most men are, but you could also have the few men that are like: “That’s disgusting.”

Int: Ya.

Naomi: And its this entire thing where like you could have one of the most horrible things ever happen to you and there could still be someone like: “You shouldn’t have been wearing that so.”

Int: Exactly. Um, so that’s basically all the questions I have for you today. It’s been a little bit of a tough conversation sometimes, I apologies for any of them. Do you have any questions, concerns, deep-seated worries or anything you wanted to add to this, before we end off for today?

Naomi: Nnn, I don’t think so. I think I’m fine.

Int: Okay, awesome.

Naomi: Perfect.

Int: You are also welcome to send emails with any insights you may have afterwards.

Naomi: Perfect.

Int: Otherwise, we’re all done.

Naomi: Thank you.

Int: Cool.

1. Rape: A South African Nightmare [↑](#footnote-ref-1)