Individual Interview 11 – Hedy

(Full time: 1:02:12)

Int: Hello, welcome.

Hedy: Hi.

Int: How are you?

Hedy: Fine, and you?

Int: Good, good. You’ve read and understood the informed consent form?

Hedy: Yes.

Int: Cool. You have a fair idea of what we are about to get into today?

Hedy: Yes.

Int: So, we’re basically going to be talking about the relationship between safety and belonging, with a focus on the emotional side of belonging. And then from there we’re going to have a look at the aspect of safety and how that interacts with belonging. And then we’re going to have a look at your life as a South African woman. We’re going to be jumping around a bit – basically, we’re just going to be chatting about these two concepts and how they relate to you as a South African woman.

Hedy: Okay.

Int: Cool. Do you have any questions, concerns, deep-seated worries before we get started?

Hedy: No.

Int: Okay, so, in terms of the notion of belonging we get a feeling of belonging and we get a political side of belonging. So this feeling of belonging is what I’m really interested in – this emotional side of belonging. So, how would you describe having a feeling of belonging?

Hedy: Like being comfortable in your environment, like you know, comfortable where you’re going like in public, and all of that kind of stuff.

Int: So, what creates this sense of comfort for you?

Hedy: I guess feeling safe, like not having to worry about my stuff, what areas I’m going in um… ya, just, you’re not constantly worrying.

Int: So, one of the things that they have linked very closely to this feeling of belonging is this notion of home, like the sense of home. Would you say that is accurate or not entirely so.

Hedy: I think it is accurate.

Int: Cool. So, do you feel like you belong at home?

Hedy: In South Africa?

Int: Well, in your ‘home-home’.

Hedy: In my home, I feel, ya.

Int: Well, then we can actually stretch that to South Africa. Do you feel as though you belong in or to South Africa?

Hedy: It really depends because I mean some days, ‘Yes, I am South African’, but then other days it just feel like I can’t wait to leave – like-

Int: Those days when you feel South African, when are those days?

Hedy: Ag, like… when I’m with my friends or like I’m in the bush , you know, properly experiencing South Africa. We just understand each other, like you know when – you know like when my cousins come or whatever, you tell them about your country, ‘This is how things work here: this, this this’, you know. It’s just… ya, like I guess like a braai with my friends, you know, I feel South African and ya.

Int: So, you said when your cousins came – so, I take it, your cousins are international?

Hedy: Ya.

Int: Where’d they come from?

Hedy: So, they’re German but they were living in Dubai at the time when they came.

Int: So, when they came to South Africa what are those – because you said those are the times you really felt South African.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: What was it about those times that made you feel more South African?

Hedy: It’s like you can introduce them to your culture.

Int: Okay.

Hedy: You know, introduce them to my friends and show them how we live – what we do and things like that. I can just… ya.

Int: When you say culture, what are those aspects of culture that you are showing off?

Hedy: Like a – I want to say a ‘good time’. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs.

Hedy: Like a braai, like you know. I always go back to a braai, but I feel like, you know, from my side that is quite South African for me. You know, so a good braai. My one cousin he mostly – they actually did live in South Africa as well, but you know, then they lived in Germany for a while as well whatever. But it’s just like… I don’t know like… introducing them to my friends, it’s just what we do. Bring them along with me, it’s what I do, and ya.

Int: And then you said there are other times when you don’t feel South African, when are those times?

Hedy: Usually when it’s political stuff like it’s just – there’s just so much going on there it doesn’t make me feel like I’m wanted in this country; like I have no right to be here or anything like that. And it’s sad because I know like with the history of South Africa and everything, I still feel like I have every right to be here, you know. So, just stuff like that just make me feel that I shouldn’t be here.

Int: Can you be more specific about those times that undermine your right to be here.

Hedy: I guess, like… okay like, the farm murders, you know that kind of stuff, although I’m like not living on a farm, I do have family on a farm. So, it’s also like… you know, that kind of stuff like – should I just leave for my safety; should I just leave or stay and be at risk of being like hurt or murdered, or whatever. Ya which just… it’s also just some parts where you feel like you just shouldn’t go into. I guess, a lot parts of South Africa are, ‘No, you shouldn’t go there it’s dangerous’, or like… you know, predominantly African people, for me like, I don’t want to be racist or anything but like if it’s just me, I wouldn’t feel safe. You know.

Int: Ya.

Hedy: I don’t know, I just feel like, I want to feel safe going everywhere. I get you get your bad parts in every country.

Int: Of course ya.

Hedy: But like…

Int: The majority should-

Hedy: Ya

Int: Be good parts not bad parts.

Hedy: Like you always have to think, “Okay you can’t go there alone.” You have to, you know, you know. I’d like to be able to go to places alone. Ya.

Int: So, like you have said, there are places in South Africa you just feel like you just cannot go.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: Are there places where you feel like you cannot go because you are a woman or is it more of a racial aspect – that you can’t go knowing that you might be the only white person in the area.

Hedy: Well… I feel like in some instances, it’s both. Um… ya, it’s a difficult question.

Int: So, like places – what are these places you feel like you can’t go – you shouldn’t go, alone specifically?

Hedy: Can’t go alone… well, I guess mostly at night.

Int: At night okay.

Hedy: Ya, at night I don’t go to places alone. Um… well, it’s not like I’m going to go into a township, you know. I don’t know, it’s difficult, I can’t really – I know I say places like this, but then I can’t think of any.

Int: Ya, but you’ve also been put on the spot.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: We can come back to it and check it out later. So, this feeling of belonging to South Africa, you said there are some days where you feel South African and some days you don’t feel South African. Has this been a constant throughout your life or has this belonging or not-belonging happened later on in life; so, has your belonging been constant or has it changed?

Hedy: I think, you know, when I was younger like I felt like ‘I’m South African’, but then, you know, the older you get the more aware you become of everything that’s happening in the country that’s when it starts – like I really started thinking about it, like um… you know, when I’m more aware and all of that like I want to leave, like I think growing up with like my parents were always like, “You need to go overseas one day.” – like they push that idea onto you. So, I was always like, ‘no, I’m moving’… so, I think it’s been up and down.

Int: Do you feel safe in South Africa?

Hedy: No.

Int: Not at all?

Hedy: Like at home I feel safe.

Int: Okay. Are there like pockets and places where you feel safe?

Hedy: Ya.

Int: So, this sense of not feeling safe has that also been a constant or has it also changed, like belonging – sorry, the door.

Hedy: Um, I think like, growing up, it was always like: South Africa, not safe. You know.

Int: Ya.

Hedy: You know, you just like grow up with that notion. So, I guess it’s just always been there. That’s something your parents always just put in you-

Int: Instil into you.

Hedy: “Be careful, this is South Africa.” I mean like, you see in the movies they just lock heir door at night, but here we have gates around our house, we’ve got alarm systems, we’ve got like, you know, security people driving around the whole time, so I guess, that also just puts you on edge.

Int: You said there were pockets where you feel safe, like home being one. What else or where else?

Hedy: So, like my friend’s houses I feel safe in, like or – I guess it also depends on the area. Like there are some, like suburbs I feel more safe in than others. Um, I feel like uni I feel safe in because it’s also like in a gated security, despite being on Prinshof campus, like once I leave for a minute it’s like, okay, but once I get on the main road I’m like, ‘okay, it’s fine’. Um, so like my home, my friends’ houses, ya those kind of things.

Int: So, these places that you feel safe have we created things that make them safer than other places – so, you have said Prinshof campus, there is a gate around it that makes it a safe place, and then once you get out of Prinshof campus, you don’t feel safe. So, the creations of safety – like you said about our house – um, we can go into that first. So, how would you describe the physical structure of your house in terms of safety.

Hedy: So, we’ve got the gate. We’ve got the electric fence, I don’t know if it’s on.

Int: But it’s there.

Hedy: Ya, it’s there. Then, you know, you’ve got the dogs, you’ve got um… a big wooden front door – a lock. You’ve got burglar bars on your windows. Got the alarm system. Um, ya. but then obviously, like the security companies, you know, if your alarm goes off they will message you or come.

Int: So, those are what you have done to your house to keep it safe basically.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: Um, then we get more personal safety measures that we take. So, daily safety precautions, I don’t know if you take any?

Hedy: So, like being mugged last year.

Int: Oh shit.

Hedy: After that like, I got the taser and the pepper spray, because I mean I always felt safe in my car it was my space and then being mugged it took that away from me. I feel very vulnerable.

Int: Did you not feel safe in your car at all anymore?

Hedy: (No). Like whenever someone’s passing or walking I’m always on alert. So… so, it’s also just the second I’m in the car, I slam the door and I lock; that’s like one of the first things that I do.

Int: And you didn’t do this before you were mugged?

Hedy: I mean, I locked it but maybe not as quickly.

Int: Okay. And the vigilance?

Hedy: No, I wasn’t. Like you know, you would be aware – like there would be people there – but… not as…

Int: Intense?

Hedy: Ya. Ya, so that’s – ya, and then like you know like, bags are always crossed over, not just like over, not just on the side, nothing in my pockets ya.

Int: So, you say you experienced a mugging.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: Do you mind if we go into that for a bit?

Hedy: Mm.

Int: Okay. How did it happen, where did it happen?

Hedy: So, I’m also on Prinshof campus and I used to go through fountains and then just through there. So, everyone says like, you know, “Fountains, just be careful.” - whatever, it is a hotspot, but I have never had a bad experience. And then I had to go in early one morning so it was like half past six I was there and then there was like a hobo. And um, he was like begging and everything like that. I saw him and I was a bit weary of this guy because I was just like, I don’t know, just a feeling of being weary. And then – so, I always had my shift, my gear shift is a little gap underneath my radio, and I always had my phone there, and um. So, then he, on the passenger side he like slammed the window and grabbed it. I managed to grab hold on him so we had a bit of like a pull over the phone.

Int: Ya, ya.

Hedy: And eventually he got it, but like, I managed to get his glove off and then he ran – and his mug.

Int: And his mug.

Hedy: Which he used to break the window. And then he ran off, and I was just shocked and then like it also like – in South Africa if someone steals something, the people around you don’t do anything. The people like next to me were just staring at me. And then after that, because I went around the circle to go back home, but then I felt even more and more, because of my window-

Int: Has just been smashed in ya.

Hedy: Is open - ya. And there’s glass everywhere. Luckily, it wasn’t too far from my house so like, I got home, and everything, but then – so, ya that was just ya.

Int: So, you said, while this mugging was occurring the people next to you were in shock or?

Hedy: Ya, like they just.

Int: They saw it happen and did they do anything afterwards, so was that – I take it, you were at a red robot.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: And then the robot changed and then everyone just went.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: Like continued with their day.

Hedy: Ya, so that’s also like, in South Africa like if you see something bad happen, you’re like, “Well, like I’m not going to help.” Because you never know what’s going to happen to you. So, I feel like overseas maybe a lot of people would help out or whatever but here it’s like… you know, if you see something bad happening it’s like-

Int: Rather stay out of it.

Hedy: Ya, and it’s also like… if something, like with the mugging, like because then I go to the police station to report it but you do it just for the insurance claim. You don’t – because you know they’re not going to do anything about it, you know, you just go to put in the report, like you know nothing is going to happen. And it’s also like, I feel like if we had a robbery or … again only for the insurance claim. We’re more… we’re more dependent on our security companies than we do on our police. So, I guess that’s another thing of not feeling safe is like, if something were to happen to you, you know like the police aren’t going to do anything. You know, maybe now and then something comes of it, but like so.

Int: Well, let’s talk about the South African Police Force for a moment as well. So, how do you view the South African Police Force?

Hedy: Not effective.

Int: Not effective.

Hedy: I mean because then it’s also all the briberies you know. It’s like they are more concerned about getting a bribe than actually like, doing their job.

Int: Ya. So, when you had to deal with the police you said you just did it for the insurance.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: How was that experience dealing with the police – have you only had to do it once or has there been multiple instances?

Hedy: I had to do it twice – the other time, I did hit a car, by fountains actually. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs.

Hedy: We also went to the police station because the guy like wanted proof that we would pay him.

Int: Oh for the insurance yes.

Hedy: Ya, so he wanted like an affidavit. So, with the affidavit where I hit the car it was fine. We had to wait quite long. I think it was an hour or two that we waited to-

Int: Make an affidavit.

Hedy: Ya. But the guy, the policeman, he was actually really friendly with me – that wasn’t too bad. Um, then with the mugging… it was another police station, that one we didn’t have to wait too long, but it’s also that police station is in Town, so it’s also, you don’t feel safe going to that police station. So, ya, that was quick but it just felt like she wasn’t interested in what I was saying, like at all. You know, she’s just writing it down on a piece of paper. Just like a statistic. You know, like not going to do anything.

Int: So, there was no aspect of care.

Hedy: No.

Int: So, not a positive view of the South Africa Police Force.

Hedy: No, no.

Int: Don’t blame you. Um, fountain circle where you were mugged and then where you crashed into another car, have you gone there since the mugging or is it a place you tend to avoid?

Hedy: Ya, so I found a whole new route and everything, which does suck because then it’s longer and it’s more petrol so it’s like ya.

Int: But you won’t go through Fountains again?

Hedy: Not by myself. The next time I went there was with some friends, we had to go through there and then I went through there recently to get to work, but not all the way I went – It was just straight instead of the whole turn. Um, and it’s still a bit, you know, I was like I didn’t even put my hand break up, just to go, you know on alert and everything. So, I avoid it as much as I can so ya.

Int: And that was your first experience of crime or have you experienced crime previously, after that?

Hedy: Personally, I think that was my first experience.

Int: And you say it’s completely changed the environment, specifically in your car.

Hedy: Ya, ya.

Int: Um, before this would you say that Fountains was an area that was a dangerous area or would you say it was ‘ag, it’s a normal area’, and then after you experienced this you were like now it’s a dangerous area.

Hedy: Look, I knew it was a dangerous area, everyone’s always like, ‘muggings there is’ – which I also think is ridiculous because if the mugging are so bad there, the police must know it’s a hotspot, but.

Int: Nothing’s been done.

Hedy: Its still happening. So, I knew it was a bit of a dodgy area but I was like, ‘it’s always so busy, I’ve never seen anything’, and then ya. So, now I guess it is still a dangerous area but like I can say, I know it’s dangerous.

Int: ‘I know from like personal experience’.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: So, we’re going to move on a little bit. How would you describe your life as a South African woman living in South Africa?

Hedy: Well, I guess it is also like one of my biggest fears, especially living in South Africa is being sexually assaulted because I know it’s one of the rape capitals of the world, and like I mean it’s sad because you hear stories, like with my maid’s daughter, she was attacked. And it’s just like, you know like I know it’s maybe a different scenario because then they go to the boys parents and then they handle it, and they don’t go to the police.

Int: Ya, it’s a cultural matter.

Hedy: And it’s just really scary because I really feel unsafe like with that aspect, I guess with my friends you don’t really think about it because you know it’s happening as well so you’re like, ‘ag what are the chances’. But then. I don’t know, it’s always then, because South Africa has the highest number of HIV patients as well, that’s another thing, like so now you’ve been raped and you can’t even process that, you have to make sure you go on the like the antivirals – anti-retro virals, rapekit, this, and then also like, I shadowed in a hospital and half the time they don’t even believe you. Like we had a rape victim come in and then they didn’t believe her because she wasn’t bruised up enough.

Int: So, the doctor?

Hedy: Ya. And that’s another thing, like you know again, I feel like you are just a statistic – I think maybe with rape they are maybe, again maybe they are stricter because I’ve like read a few stories, like they’ll go the next day and they will be arrested or whatever, but it’s also like when I read the news it’s always like: rape, rape, rape, rape. I mean like with that whole mining thing – you know, the illegal miners, where those girls were shooting that music video and then those illegal miners, there was like seven of them and how many man, and they each got raped this many times. And the police captain is like, ”Oh well, the one girl only got raped once so”-

Int: ‘She must consider herself luckily’ – Beke Cele.

Hedy: Like, how is that – that just infuriates me. It infuriates me that our police captain is like, ‘Ag, it was only once’. A rape is a rape. You know, for me it’s like your body is like a safe space and then to have that invaded it’s just – ya. It’s just, you know.

Int: So, would you say that’s something you fear the most in South Africa or is there another fear that overtakes that?

Hedy: No, I think that is something I really fear. Like to be honest I was think that if I’m raped just kill me; might as well kill me, because I think the women that actually live through that and move on are some of the strongest people out there because you know, it’s not a scar or something physical, it’s something you have to live with.

Int: Ya. There’s a great quote and I always forget who it’s by, but it’s like: theft happens to the economic pocket or economic sphere, assault happens to the physical body, and then sexual assault or rape happens to the soul.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: Like it really attacks the very being of who a person is. And well, you say there are people who don’t believe rape victims.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: We have a category – or there seems to be a category of women who don’t believe other women who have been raped. So, what do you view these women as?

Hedy: I think that’s even worse, I mean with a man everyone knows-

Int: He’s not going to understand?

Hedy: Ya, but like a woman – if a woman is like, ‘no you’re lying’, like that’s just like something else because I feel like that also starts making you think ‘am I,’ you know, ‘am I overthinking this’, you know. It’s just, you know, you just expect women to be on your side especially in this whole movement.

Int: Ya.

Hedy: But I also just feel like you get women who are like – so, like with my cousin. When – so, it’s my mom’s mom. So, when her, when she was a baby her dad died and her mom remarried her stepdad, and they had a kid together. But growing up he would sexually abuse her all the time. Like if she wanted to do something she would have to go ask him for permission, and then it’s ‘what does he get out of it’ kind of situation. And then eventually when she was eighteen she told her mom, confronted him, and she came to live with us. And my mom took her in. And then my mom went like ballistic for her, like she literally fought tooth and nail for her, and then confronted her mom about it, and then her mom just wouldn’t listen. It’s your own kid, your own kid, and you won’t believe her.

Int: So, is this your cousin or your aunt?

Hedy: My aunt didn’t believe my cousin. And then eventually she was like to my mom, “Ag ya, but the Bible tells you to forgive.” I mean she knows.

Int: Ya, she knows.

Hedy: She knows, and that even makes me more mad because she knew. And then my mom got to a point at family events she would say like, “Don’t even bring him.” My mom even had to go to therapy to learn to get passed that. So you know, he’s like always there at family occasions and it’s just like-

Int: Is your cousin there as well?

Hedy: Ya.

Int: And there’s never been reconciliation between your cousin and your uncle – well, your step-uncle I suppose?

Hedy: So, she had to because she still wanted to see her mom. She still wanted her mom in her life.

Int: So, because there were family events-

Hedy: So, there was still-

Int: She had bridge the gap.

Hedy: He walked her down the isle.

Int: …What?

Hedy: Ya. Ya. You know that’s.

Int: Your mom’s relationship to her sister now has that been-

Hedy: I think-

Int: Slightly altered, have they managed to get pass this?

Hedy: I think it’s been altered, but my mom kind of put it aside. You know.

Int: Okay. For like the greater good of the family?

Hedy: Ya.

Int: Did he ever go to therapy or?

Hedy: I don’t know. I don’t think he even…

Int: Cares?

Hedy: Admitted to it or anything like that, ya.

Int: I find it really interesting that your mother had to like-

Hedy: Ya.

Int: Has to be the one to take on the forgiving – has to be the one to go to therapy. She’s not the one that needs to go to therapy, I mean your uncle, and I’m pretty sure your aunt, is the one that needs to go to therapy.

Hedy: Ya, ya.

Int: If you’re going to believe the abuser.

Hedy: Exactly, ya.

Int: And standby the abuser. Which might sounds bit mean, I hope it doesn’t.

Hedy: Oh no.

Int: But ya, that does seem like really how we’re approaching rape situations or crime in general, like it’s the victims responsibility, like ‘why were you in that area?’

Hedy: Ya, ‘why were you wearing that’.

Int: Ya, so ‘why were you in Fountain’s circle’?

Hedy: Because I had to get to uni.

Int: So, why didn’t you take a different route?

Hedy: Because petrol is expensive, and that’s the shortest route.

Int: Exactly. And did you get those types of questions when you told people about this mugging?

Hedy: No.

Int: Instead of empathy, were people like, ‘why were you in this area’, ‘why was your phone out’, ‘why weren’t you doing this’?

Hedy: Not really, I dint actually get many of those questions.

Int: Dd you get any of them?

Hedy: (No).

Int: So, you go to the police station, not a great experience?

Hedy: No, they were basically like ‘what car is it’, ‘how much is it worth’, ‘how much is the phone worth’.

Int: Nothing about, ’hey are you okay’.

Hedy: (No), nothing like that.

Int: Oof, that’s terrible. I’m sorry. During this time that your cousin was living with you – how old were you?

Hedy: I don’t – it was at my old house I think, I might have just bene born.

Int: Okay.

Hedy: Like a baby, so I don’t remember any of that. Ya.

Int: Okay. Your car was a safe place, until this break in. And you said it felt very violating.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: Have you ever had your house broken into?

Hedy: Not like a full on thing, not like a – so, we also live in front of a tower, so it’s easy access. So, we’ve had people like maybe steal things from like our patio and stuff like that. So, my dad’s tried to like -we’ve made those walls higher and stuff. Things were stolen from the washing line. Once what happened though – so, we’ve got a door, like a wooden door, by outside as well, someone came in there and stole my Ouma’s phone, but then my mom saw him and chased him out. So, I have never had an experience where it was like a full-on robbery.

Int: When they came into your house or were in your garden or went though that back door, did you feel a similar sense of violation that you felt with your car or not?

Hedy: Ya, that I was more irritated.

Int: Okay.

Hedy: You know, I was like, you know, because my one friend was like, “Ya, you don’t know what goes on through your gardens at night. People are running up and down.”

Int: Ya.

Hedy: It just makes me irritated. That’s my home, that’s my house, like my space. You know. I know they once went into the neighbour’s garden or something, and I was just like – you know, and then they come and shout at us. Like what do you want us to do about it, you know.

Int: It’s not your responsibility, ya.

Hedy: So, it was just irritating. And then again, things like that you don’t tell the police.

Int: Because what are they going to do really.

Hedy: Ya, so it was just more irritating.

Int: So, ya, you’re young, you go to university, I take it you have gone out to the clubs, the strip specifically?

Hedy: Yes, yes I have.

Int: Do you feel safe going out to the strip?

Hedy: It’s weird because you know it’s a dodgy area, but you know everyone goes – you still go. I think, you know, with Latinos whatever you know, like you know they pay the cops off, like everyone knows that, and that it’s a dodgy area, I’m pretty sure it’s a money laundering place or drugs or whatever, because I mean when my cousins were here someone got stabbed and then died outside.

Int: Oh ya, ya.

Hedy: So, you always hear about people getting spiked and, I think I have heard of sexual assault cases as well. Like with my one friend, like, she went in a dress and this guy just went under her dress, you know. So like, I want to say luckily he just touched her arse, but that’s not like luckily, you know,

Int: Ya, ya, it still happened.

Hedy: Ya, um, so I guess if I’m with a big group of friends, that’s what makes me feel safe, but you know once you – like if you walk up and down there, I’m like okay, but then once going out, like getting passed there, because I know someone once almost got kidnapped – like a car stopped and tried to grab her and put her in the car but luckily like her friends managed to pull her back, you know.

Int: Sorry about that. Ya, please continue – your friend that was almost snatched.

Hedy: Luckily, her friends pulled her back, you know, but you hear about these stories and you still go back, you still go out. But I also think before COVID, you know another thing that made you feel safe were Ubers; you can’t drink and drive because there’s Ubers, but nowadays like you hear so many bad stories like with the Ubers but you’re still like – you know, I wouldn’t mind taking an Uber alone at night after going out with my friends. Now, it’s like no.

Int: Not a chance.

Hedy: Don’t Uber alone. You know, which is also like irritating because like you trusted them but now I don’t because also I found out they can hack the app or something, because my one friend they were going to leave the commune and go out; while they were waiting outside the commune for the Uber, a car came past with their lights off and everything and they were mugged at gunpoint, you know, stealing phone or this or that, so that safety system is also just.

Int: Completely broken .

Hedy: Ya. So, being safe at the Strip, I think you’re always on edge, always got your drink covered with your hand-

Int: Just to prevent the spiking?

Hedy: Ya, well I guess unless they put it in the ice or something. You know, you’ve got your bags, always making sure that everything is there, making sure you’re not drifting off from your friends. Ya, so I guess it’s, I don’t really feel safe, but I’ll go anyway.

Int: You’ll still go.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: You mentioned sexual harassment or sexual assault at the Strip. Have you ever experienced that?

Hedy: No.

Int: Luckily, not – thank goodness. Spiking is another thing that seems to be a big fear at the Strip or even going out in general.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: Something you fear as well, something you have experienced?

Hedy: I mean the fear of being spiked is always there, but I have never been spiked myself, no.

Int: Do you feel as though you are free in South Africa?

Hedy: No.

Int: What has made you feel this way?

Hedy: I feel like, you know, coming from a job perspective, like I think I do pretty well but then it’s always like, you know, you’re the top applicant but now there’s always that thing with the BEE, which, you know, I understand where it’s coming from and what the goals were, but I think it’s really drifted from what it’s purpose was. And it’s come to that point now where you – it could be different where it was me and a black person, same experience, you know, and things like that, and they got the job. I’m like, “Okay fine.” You know, it sucks, but okay. But its different when you’ve done so well and then there’s someone else barely getting it right and then they get the job over you. So, I think for me that’s a worry as well, trying to get a job in South Africa. That’s also like why, you know, I would rather go overseas and have like fair chance of getting a job. I’m not trying to like completely like, um… disregard the BEE because I think it did start off with a good intention, coming from apartheid and everything, but I think were it’s gone now, it’s.

Int: It’s drifted too far from its main goal.

Hedy: Ya, ya.

Int: So, you say you might, you know you’d get a better chance of getting a job overseas.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: You’d be an immigrant overseas, immigrants haven’t been viewed very favourably overseas. However, these tend to be immigrants from much more poorer places. So – well, you could say that South Africa is a poorer place – but you wouldn’t be a refugee in that sense. Are you – is there any part of you that fears being an immigrant, or do you think you would be able to assimilate quite well into these societies?

Hedy: I think I will be fine, because I did the exchange in Germany, so you can kind of get that experience. And then also, I was in Dubai this year and it’s very international.

Int: Ya.

Hedy: Like I know Dubai is known as an international city – but it was fairly easy. And then like, I’ve got Austrian citizenship as well and the passport, so I feel like that would help me better. But I, I guess I – like I understand the question, I guess I never really thought about it that way. I’ve just been more focused on getting out of here.

Int: Oh, okay.

Hedy: But I think, I don’t know, like I never thought of that.

Int: You said you went on this German exchange. Austrian, Germany, similar type of places, did you feel a sense of belonging while you were in Germany or did your South African belonging even increase or decrease while you were there?

Hedy: I do think my South African belonging increased, because like when I was in a classroom, the one class I was telling them all about South Africa, it was really cool that I could tell them about all these things, like what we do for Christmas, we go to the beach. You know, there it’s like-

Int: Oh it’s freezing cold.

Hedy: Ya, all white Christmas and they have all these big real trees, and we take little plastic ones to the beach, you know.

Int: A little plastic tree to the beach, is that what you guys do?

Hedy: Ya.

Int: That’s pretty cute, ya.

Hedy: And then like, you have the Kruger National Park which is like bigger than Switzerland kind of thing. So, it was cool to be able to tell them these kind of things, you know. And it did make me, my belonging to South Africa increase. But feeling like I belonged there, um… I don’t really know. I think the language barrier is a bit difficult. So, that’s a bit – I think most people overseas all speak English – most of them anyway, especially the newer generations, the younger generations; because towards the end of my trip, I stayed with family, because I also have quite a bit of family in those areas as well.

Int: And does that help?

Hedy: Ya, because that helps me to think that if something goes wrong, there is someone I can go to, you know. So, I’m just not stranded in a foreign country. I don’t know if I felt like I belonged there, I think – because I depended on my host family a lot, I think if was maybe on my own for a bit for a longer period to try and get that sense, ya.

Int: When or where do you feel as though you are ‘at home’?

Hedy: My house with my family, with my friends, ya like… ya.

Int: So, this notion of home you said with your family - at home-home. Have you ever moved from the house you are living in or have you always grown up there?

Hedy: When I was really young we moved, like when I was three.

Int: So, do you remember the move or not really?

Hedy: I remember a few things – I don’t remember the move, I remember a few, I have a few memories of the house, but like, um… I don’t remember the move. All my memories are from where I am now. Ya, so-

Int: Ya – sorry. That old home, your house, did you ever refer to that as your home or is this, where you moved to, your home?

Hedy: No, where we moved to is my home, because that’s where I grew up and that’s also – it’s sad because my parents want to move as well, because it’s a big house and financially we just can’t keep up with it. And it’s really sad because this is my home, you know, it’s go memories and, you know, it’s where I grew up.

Int: And then you said, also with your friends you feel like you’re at home.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: The relationship between place and belonging and friends or people and belonging, which one do you think for you is stronger, people or place?

Hedy: I think people, because I know like saying ‘my home is my home’, but at the end of the day like… do you like stay in that home and have like no friends or do you have your friends, you know, and then in a different place. So, I think people.

Int: So, you said earlier, one of those times where you really feel South African is when you’re out camping with your friends in the bush and you get to experience the country.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: That’s quite interesting because now we’re talking about an experience of a place but with the accompanying of friends. So, if you were to go camping in where in the world would you still feel a sense of home and belonging?

Hedy: No.

Int: If you went camping on your own in the country would you still feel an experience of belonging or home?

Hedy: I think I would still feel a sense of belonging and home, but I wouldn’t feel safe camping on my own.

Int: Ya, okay.

Hedy: Ya. But I also think it’s the African bush, you know, I love that. I love the nature because I feel like South Africa – South African and South Africa, have so many resources that we can actually use but aren’t being used. And I just – it’s just such a big part of growing up, you know, you go to a farm, you go on, you know, game drives, there’s just something about it that I really like, so I think that experience with my friends was ya.

Int: So, the nature aspect is a big, big one for you?

Hedy: Ya. It’s South African nature, you know. Um, so, I think I’d still feel belonging doing it like on my own, but not safe.

Int: When you went overseas, either time, you go there what was those moments where you were like, ‘these are South Africans and these aren’t South Africans’. Did you have that moment, was there not that moment, and if so, what was it, when was it?

Hedy: So, in Dubai everything just works.

Int: \*Laughs.

Hedy: It works and it’s just city, it’s so industrial like that kind of stuff not like the nature we have here, but everything just works, you know, and, you know, the different mannerisms; like if you go to the shops so many of them are just so wealthy and rich and they don’t – I feel like they don’t appreciate the small things, like we do here.

Int: What are those small things that we appreciate here specially, if you can think of any?

Hedy: Like… like not waiting food you know, because you always like think, ‘there are so many people on the street here, you don’t want to just go throw it away, you can give it away’. I think it is also difficult, like electricity, like I know-

Int: \*Laughs. Loadshedding.

Hedy: Like, I know I don’t experience loadshedding in my area.

Int: Must be nice.

Hedy: Ya. \*Laughs. But like, you know, you appreciate the times when you have power, you know.

Int: Oh ya.

Hedy: Like it’s always, always working, you know, like… I don’t know. You won’t want for anything while you are there, you know, because that’s just they – they just always cater for the international people. Germany, um… it’s just – okay, first of all the cold, we just-

Int: Completely different.

Hedy: We just don’t get that. Their public transport, you know, just works. Here I don’t feel safe going in a taxi.

Int: No, literally.

Hedy: Or a train, or even go on a bus, ya. Um, so ya, you know, it’s that being able to walk to school by yourself.

Int: Did you ever walk in South Africa by yourself?

Hedy: No.

Int: Not even day, night?

Hedy: Look, day if I had to like a short distance, but no.

Int: Not at night, never?

Hedy: No. Ya, so there it’s just, ya… and I guess the food is different and everything, but ya.

Int: So, coming back to South Africa, what was that first moment where you’re like, ‘I’m back, this is South Africa’, or ‘these are South Africans’?

Hedy: Okay. Coming from Dubai, the escalators didn’t work, that’s how I knew it was South Africa.

Int: As you get off the plane?

Hedy: Ya, there was loadshedding or I don’t know if there’s loadshedding at the airport but nothing was working, the belts weren’t working, the bathrooms weren’t working – like, ‘now I know I’m home because’-

Int: Stuff just doesn’t work.

Hedy: It doesn’t work. And I was so upset I was like, ‘I wish I could go back’, because nothing is working. Oh ya, and a lot of people – I think it is actually true, what you don’t appreciate while you are here is that South Africans can be very friendly. Going overseas in Dubai a lot of them were rude, even though they are all from all over the place, you know, like they are very rude. So, but like here if you like ask someone for help, they are very polite and they will help you. There, no.

Int: You’re kind of on your own.

Hedy: Ya. So, I guess that’s the first thing you notice being in the airport, or like while we were waiting for our luggage I saw a girl, she had similar shoes to what I had, and I struck up a conversation with her. I was not going to do that in Dubai, because they also just intimidate me a lot because they are all so fancy with the Gucci or the this or the that, you know, so. Um, but ya, coming back from Dubai, coming back from Germany my mom – okay, my mom was there for both times. You know, seeing my mom and everything, going home and seeing my dogs, and the food, the sun.

Int: \*Laughs. The sun.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: So, do you plan on staying in South Africa for the foreseeable future?

Hedy: So, I need to finish my Masters and that’s going to take another two years, and then I want to do my PhD in Germany. So, I think I thought about staying for a third year, just to work and save up some money. Whenever I think about my future, I don’t see it here, like it’s just not here. Which is sad because there is a lot of this country that I do love, but if I were to have kids I wouldn’t not raise them here.

Int: Is that one of the main push factors for you, the fact that if you were to have kids you wouldn’t not want to raise kids here?

Hedy: Ya, but I’ve also been thinking about whether I want kids. If I do, ya. I just feel like, we also have one of the highest tax brackets in the world. You pay so much money when you do well for yourself. Where does that money go, to someone’s pocket. It would be different if I think it was like Finland or Sweden where they also pay like a lot of tax, but then it’s free health care, their roads are fixed, they don’t have power cuts on a daily basis, you know, they don’t have to worry about that stuff, whereas here that money is supposed to go back into the country and it doesn’t, it goes into someone’s pocket and everyone knows. What’s done about it, nothing. So, it’s just like, I rather like have my money returned to me in a way of like the roads, healthcare, or whatever.

Int: See it working within the country.

Hedy: Ya, exactly.

Int: So, we’re going to move on to this for a second. Student, studying at Tuks as well, were you on campus, or around campus, or maybe on a different university campus, during the #AmINext? movement?

Hedy: Was that that one with from Cape-

Int: With Uynene – yes.

Hedy: Yes, I was on main campus, yes.

Int: That was a quite interesting movement, because I mean a lot of South African universities kind of came together for this one specific movement. And then being a student, I mean I was on campus, I think everyone just – maybe a lot of people were on campus when they got the news that they found Uynene’s body and she was raped, mutilated, burnt, I think as well.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: And I know, I speak for myself, is that when I was in that lecture hall, I was with a group of friends of mine, and we got this news and we all kind of – you could feel that it hit the entire room, you could see that everyone kind of knew what was happening. Um, were you on campus for that or were you just at home, like where were you when that news first broke?

Hedy: I don’t remember, because also like back then I wasn’t very like, well aware of like, all of this stuff, but I don’t remember when I first found out, but I remember what happened on campus. I think it was – so, they had all their protests and stuff and I remember also Lente Dag was coming up. So, Lente Dag is like one of South Africa’s largest day festivals for the students and stuff. And you know, the university gives you that day off as well, because it’s like a Wednesday. And I remember before that, like my one friend in Res and she said that all the Res girls were all saying, “Why are you going, you shouldn’t be going. It’s so selfish of you to be going, when – so it’s so selfish to be going like when”, you know, “this has just been happened.” And all of that. And I’m just like, ‘that’s not fair’. Like, I understand that this happened, and I’m not trying to like disregard it – it was just like, this is what we live with every day, you know. And then also, what I remember then they started to come into our lectures, and started to like tell our lecturers to stop teaching; and I was like, “Now you’re stealing from us.” Okay, I understand we all need to be aware of bad this situation is, but I think what it became to get like the attention, you know everyone’s attention, they like… it wasn’t right because then a lot of, you know we pay for these lectures, we pay, and a lot of people struggle to pay for those lectures. And then you come in and interrupt and tell us, ‘no, we’re not allowed to get out education’. So, I was like, ‘I understand we need to make the whole country aware, it needs to brought up, it needs to be addressed, because it is such a major issue in South Africa, but I think the way they went about it, wasn’t the right way’. You know, because then what they did was – the university was like, “No, they’re taking that spring day away from us because so many days had to be cancelled because of all the disruptions.”  
So, I remember more that – like I said, I wasn’t really aware of-

Int: What’s going on.

Hedy: Like I am now, like invested in the country, like what’s happening. So, it was just like, you know, it was bad, and then I think a lot of stuff came – started to coming up after that, like I think it was kids were kidnapped… from their school.

Int: Oh, ya, there were two boys who were kidnapped for ransom.

Hedy: And like children – and things like that. So, it was just like… it just – what’s sad about it is that this stuff happens every day, but when you start hearing about it, you realise actually how much is going on. So, I think it was good that it made South Africans more aware of what’s going on in their own country, but I think, at the uni perspective, how the students went about it-

Int: Was incorrect.

Hedy: It could have been different.

Int: How do you think they should have gone about it?

Hedy: I don’t know, like… I guess that’s also like ‘how do you get their attention’, that’s also true.

Int: That also seems to be a main thing in South African protests. So, I take it you weren’t part of the protests, the #AmInext protests?

Hedy: No.

Int: I went for a little bit and what I found interesting was that, it was suppose to be a silent protests like there were a lot of women who had put duct tape over their mouths and it was supposed to be a silent protest and then it became really rowdy, specifically the Hatfield one, we’ll talk about the Cape Town one in a moment, and that was mainly done by men. It was men screaming and shouting and actually taking mics away from women and yelling and screaming that they need justice, which was quite entertaining.

Hedy: But then you take away the voice away from the women, the women who are actually-

Int: Protesting.

Hedy: Going through this, you know.

Int: Yes. And I mean in Cape Town protestors were shot with rubber bullets and water cannons. And what was meant to be originally a safe protest, a silent protest, about safety turned into a really violent one.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: And there’s quite a great image, I’ll try to find them for the focus groups, of a woman, ya a teenaged woman, who was basically yelling and screaming at cops, I mean she was just going at the cops. And she was shot with rubber bullets and she was just yelling and screaming at the cops. That seems to be a quite a common theme within a lot of South Africans, is that we have a culture of violence; we deal with things in a violent manner. Is that something that you understand – not understand. Is that something you have experienced or is that something you think could be a reason for something else; like what do you think about our culture of violence?

Hedy: So, it’s also like with our strikes and stuff, I also think it like delays your – when you want to get to work or uni or whatever. And I also guess its just like you know, it always becomes violent. So like when I was in grade eleven there was that while hair movement at Girls High.

Int: Oh, were you at Girls High?

Hedy: So, I was at Girls High.

Int: Okay, cool.

Hedy: And what bothered me was, a lot about what the press and the public were hearing wasn’t true, like they didn’t actually know what happened and then it was also like while we were in class the EFF was protesting outside our gates and the whole school had to go into lockdown, you know, and that, you know, you’re supposed to feel safe at school and then they take that away from you; like we are all young girls like we have nothing to do with this.

Int: You said you guys went into a lockdown?

Hedy: Ya.

Int: What was that like – what do you have to do in a lockdown?

Hedy: So, we – at first we had to sit under our desks. And then it was like you were locked in that classroom until they said you could move out and whatever.

Int: How long were you in lockdown for?

Hedy: I think it was for like four hours. And then after that I think we took like two weeks where no one was coming to school as well.

Int: So, during this lockdown – we’re going to talk about this experience because it’s something I have never experienced myself. Were you guys scared?

Hedy: Ya.

Int: And the teachers?

Hedy: Ya.

Int: So everyone were literally cowering under their desks scared?

Hedy: Ya.

Int: What did you guys do in that space and time? What did you do to maybe take your minds off it or were you all just really quite sitting under your chairs.

Hedy: Ya, we were quite but after a while they kind of just made us to homework.

Int: So, you guys were sitting under a table?

Hedy: No, then we had to like sit back up, but I don’t think we were allowed to leave the classroom. They still locked us in and everything. Um, so they were just trying to keep us busy I think, and distracted and whatnot.

Int: Okay. Could you see actively that the teachers were scared or who do you think were more scared in this situation, the teachers or the students or everyone?

Hedy: I think the teachers were scared because they were like, ‘hey, I’ve got thirty kids to look after now’, you know, it’s a big responsibility. I think the kids were scared because, you know, we don’t know what’s happening; you know, ‘what is happening’. And it’s like, ‘this is our school, these are our friends’, you know, like.

Int: Did you feel safe at school prior to this?

Hedy: Ya.

Int: And after it?

Hedy: Afterwards, I felt like you could feel there was a divide happening.

Int: There was tension?

Hedy: Ya, and that sucked, you know. And then there was like – Girls High had a really good name. A lot of good, um like morals they put on the girls or whatever, and then like after that you could whatever you wanted with your hair – you could wear it lose – and you’re wearing uniform as well. So, I was just like… it kind of just made it look disordered, you know, and I feel like also I think a lot of us were just mad, ya.

Int: Just angry that this was happening.

Hedy: Ya, ya. And then it was kind of just brushed under the rug. Ya.

Int: Ya, well it’s terrible that this happened to your school – I think schools are things we might take pride in.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: And then you have this blemish on its reputation.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: The aftermath of that. So, we go to a school, I refer to myself as a Tuks alum – I went to Tuks, I’m a Tuks alum. And I will get along with other people simply because we went to Tuks; we share similar things, we know where some building are, we know – I mean, they took away OG’s.

Hedy: Oh ya. \*Laughs.

Int: Like the bar, and only Tuks students will know that. So, coming from this school and this kind of pride in your school or even this belonging you share with girls that also attended this school – was that taken away from you because-

Hedy: Ya.

Int: Of this.

Hedy: Ya, I feel like the pride and things like that was diminished like – because that was the year I went to Germany, and I was actually quite worried that when I was telling them about my school that they would go an google it and see, ‘oh what about all of this’.

Int: Ya.

Hedy: Because it became like an international thing as well.

Int: I think Beyonce’s sister tweeted about it or something, and it just blew up.

Hedy: Ya, and it just made me so mad – you don’t know what actually happened.

Int: Yes.

Hedy: I understand, you know, the hair rules, but the hair rules were there for everyone. And you don’t understand this girl’s hair, okay. I don’t want to get into that because it’s a whole thing, but like-

Int: No worries.

Hedy: I didn’t want to embarrassed by my school because like I loved that school and I was proud of it and I think now, a lot of the girls, there isn’t that sense of pride anymore like talking to boys who go to Boy’s High because that’s like the brother school they were like, “No, no one likes those girls.” You know, this and that, and it’s like they didn’t even want to be associated with them and I’m just like, ‘come on, like’. Ya.

Int: Ya, like, ‘we did so much good and now one blemish’.

Hedy: Ya. So, it did take that away, which sucks. Ya.

Int: So, we spoke about these things that we do in South Africa to make us safe, and we’re also very vigilant about our safety. Is that something you have experienced – like always looking over your shoulder; and you said you are quite vigilant in your car especially after the mugging. Is that something you’ve always been, always looking over your shoulder, or is it a new thing after the mugging.

Hedy: Ya, I think it definitely increased after the mugging but like – t was always like, always be careful like, if I see someone walking like a man, I’ll walk to the other side, or like, you know, always be carful when I’m carrying things or like where I’m going, ya, I’m always just aware.

Int: Always just aware of your safety and your things?

Hedy: Ya.

Int: When you went to Germany, and/or Dubai, did this consciousness, this safety awareness, follow you or did you kind of lose it while you were there?

Hedy: So, in Dubai, it’s one of the safest places in the world. So, it was really weird for me because you could literally, leave your phone on the table and no one would take it, because you know, they’re strict about things – you take something, you’re out. So, at first it was very weird for me because I got there and my aunt, I stayed with my aunt and uncle, they don’t lock their door at night, they leave their garage door open, you know.

Int: That seems – ya.

Hedy: Ya, they just came back from Spain, and she was just like, “Oh, I left my balcony door open.”   
I was like, “Oh, okay?” That’s just how safe – it’s so safe you can walk anywhere, you know, when I was like in like an Uber or taxi I was still a bit on edge, you know, because coming from where I’m coming from it’s a bit difficult to just-

Int: Let it go, ya.

Hedy: Ya. And then walking in the mall I had my phone – eventually I just put my phone in my pocket, because they have the maps, put the phone in my pocket and it was fine. I wasn’t worried, like I could have my whole handbag open, I felt – after a while, you start catching up on it, like it’s still difficult because…

Int: You’re still think about it.

Hedy: Ya. So, that was nice, you know, just not having to worry about this stuff. In, um, Germany, I can’t really remember – I think I definitely could feel safer because I could walk around, you know, like walk to school, at night.

Int: So, you did walk about at school and at night in Germany?

Hedy: Ya, ya. And I could take the trams.

Int: And were you aware of it though, like were you looking over your shoulder like, did – like you said at a point in Dubai, you felt safe, like ‘I could put my phone in my pocket’.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: ‘It’s fine’. Did that happen in Germany or not?

Hedy: I don’t really remember, because when – I was with my host sister all the time, so I just took her lead, you know, when she felt comfortable – okay.

Int: ‘I feel comfortable’, ya.

Hedy: You know, ya.

Int: This safety awareness or safety conscious – it follows you a bit, like you said either after a while or you kind of take someone else’s lead, so if you see they’re safe, ‘I’m safe’. And you said your aunt and uncle didn’t lock their doors at night. Was it something that when you went to bed, you’re like ‘okay’- did that stress you out at all, or were you just like, ‘okay, this is weird, but I’m fine, I’m safe, I trust them, I’ll go to bed’.

Hedy: I think, I don’t remember thinking about it, like, I was like, ‘okay cool’.

Int: ‘This is weird but’.

Hedy: Ya, because I mean, I did some research before going and I saw how safe it was, and it was also in a gated community.

Int: Which helps.

Hedy: Ya, so I was like, ‘it’s chilled’. I mean there they come to fill up your cars with petrol in the middle of the night – you just leave your car unlocked.

Int: And some rando will come and fill your car?

Hedy: Ya, and then you’ve got petrol. That’s how efficient they are, that’s how safe it is – you can trust some one at two in the morning while you are fast asleep in your own home, to come and fill up your car with petrol and it will be there in the morning, and they won’t have come into your house and everything.

Int: That is wild.

Hedy: Ya, so I mean so.

Int: Geez like, ya.

Hedy: So, I was like, ‘cool, how fun’, you know.

Int: So, like we have spoken a little about the South Africa’s culture of violence and I think maybe that’s what has maybe caused a lot of our issues, that we do have this culture and perhaps even a language of violence. Like if you want attention from the South African police – ag, the South African police – the South African government you need to be violent in strikes, silent strikes don’t work.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: This culture of violence seems to be very embedded in the South African way.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: How do you see away of us changing this?

Hedy: I think-

Int: Do you see a way of us changing this?

Hedy: Like I think, like I know we said earlier with the violence like, I feel like it gets us nowhere. Like… this how violence concept, how do people get hurt and this, and that, and it’s just, I just – you just don’t want to live here because if you get caught up in that, because I remember there was that whole taxi strike, it got close to our areas, which is a pretty safe area. And then like a women was in her car, and they started attacking her car, and then like, you know. Like you’re not part of this protest, so I feel like there needs to be some kind of like way to just sit and talk about it, but then at the same – and feel heard, because like, I think even in our like, I don’t know the exact words, but like the parliament meetings, they’re like screaming at each other. And I’m like, ‘how is that going to get us anywhere’, you know. We need a way to just sit and take and be heard – communicate. But then sat the same time, it’s difficult to do because of these big groups of people and it’s just-

Int: Everyone is just yelling and screaming at each other.

Hedy: Ya, and it’s not getting anywhere. There just needs to be a way just to communicate, but I think also it’s like, in our country all these strikes and nothing gets done about it. So, I feel like they need to know that if they communicate with each other, something is going to be done about it. They need to know something is going to come of it. Because I think that is a big thing as well, like they probably think the only way to get something done is to be violent, you know, lets threaten the,, you know.

Int: So, you’re talking about this sense of being heard, and that’s another things if we’re talking about the sense of belonging, one of the key things that enable one to feel a sense of belonging is a sense of safety, but if we are to remove a sense of safety from the equation, another one is this sense of being heard. Do you feel like you have a voice in South Africa and if so, is that voice heard?

Hedy: No, I don’t think I do. I think another big issue that is very difficult to tackle is the race issue – like it’s so big. Like it’s difficult to like have these conversations and not feel – well, for me at least – and not feel like… I’m going to be attacked or like they’re going to yell and scream at me, you know like… I feel like – because that’s also something that needs to be overcome, so that we can have these conversations in a safe space. Because, you know, like with black friends or whatever, you can have them one on one, you know, it’s calmer, but if you have a big group, I feel like, it’s intimidating, you know, so I feel like as a white woman I don’t have a voice. You know, like it’s just, you know, you just, they’re just ‘no, who do you think you are’. So, it’s just I feel like you can also not talk about it because like they’re like, ‘you don’t know what we went through’ – like, I understand, I understand, I understand, that I’ll never know what they went through, I get that and I understand that there is a lot of, like… it’s caused a lot of damage and everything and it’s not just something we can get over, but we need to talk about it properly. We can’t just – we know it’s there and we can’t just kind of avoid it and poke at it and then, it just needs to be overcome. I think that is a big issue as well, like I think for me that is a big thing that I have no say in. I don’t know, I just… I don’t think I have a voice in this country.

Int: And if you did, do you think that would influence your sense of belonging or even your wanting to stay or leave?

Hedy: I think… I think it would make things better. But then again, can I be heard and can I get change from it, you know.

Int: Ya.

Hedy: I think it would make things better, you know, like if we all could just talk.

Int: More to each other.

Hedy: Ya.

Int: More understanding it each other a bit more.

Hedy: Ya. I think it would.

Int: I don’t know if you are aware of what happening in Iran, with the…

Hedy: With the women.

Int: Ya, with the women protesting the Hijab and everything like that. And what we’re kind of talking about here as well, you’ve touched on it earlier when we were talking about the culture of violence – like, we can’t have violence because violence and violence equals more violence. And there’s this brilliant theorist that I use quite often in this book – ag, this book – in this research. And she talks about this, like, as women in South Africa we live in a country with the highest gender-based violence stats and some of the highest rape rates in the world. I mean, the rape capital of the world. So, we’re living in this place where women are actively being hunted and we can’t feel safe and all of this. And the one way we can solve this is to fight violence with violence – so, lets arm women, lets give them guns, lets given them knives, lets teach them how to fight back. But if we’re fighting violence with more violence, or even increasing prison sentences or even just doing this, we’re only ever going to get more violence. It’s like violence and violence – and this is kind of what’s happening also in Iran where these women are saying, “We’ve had enough, we want to be safe, we want to live an un-oppressed life, we want to be free within our own country, to do what we want like the men have.”  
And their protests weren’t listened. It turned violent because a protestor was killed or an activist was murdered and then we have this clash that is happening now. Do you think South African women are heading to that stage where they’ll get to that stage where enough South African women have said this is enough and potentially take up arms, or is there a different route South African women might take?

Hedy: Ag, it’s just… it’s difficult because I mean look at Iran, how many women have gone missing.

Int: Ya, missing with air quotes.

Hedy: ‘Missing’… I mean, like you said, it started off like a peaceful protest with women cutting off their hair or this or that, and then it becomes violent. So… I don’t know hey, like, I think a lot of women are like, like who have been raped, I think a lot of them maybe live in communities where it’s such a, as bad as this sounds, like a norm.

Int: Ya.

Hedy: Like every second person there has like – it’s something you go through. You know.

Int: Ya, ‘it’s just what happens’.

Hedy: So, I feel like, it’s also like, you need to be able to reach those people as well, and tell them, this is wrong you know. So, I feel like it could be violent – I don’t know if it will get there like… because it’s also like you’ve got so many demographically different women here.

Int: Yes.

Hedy: They all need to come together. Because I feel like we have so many like classes, but they are not together, they’re like separated.

Int: Ya, there’s no like unifying force.

Hedy: They’re like fighting their own battles, and I feel like that’s something that like… that should bring all women together, you know.

Int: Ya, I mean like we do have a point in our history where that did happen where we had the Woman’s Day March, I think it was 1940-something.

Hedy: Ya, ya.

Int: And that kind of unifying force was against the South African government. I mean it crossed boundaries of racism during apartheid. And now we have a situation, and I think you’re right, there isn’t a unifying force for South African women – we are all fighting our different battles and if there is perhaps a unifying force is it this fear of violence?

Hedy: Mmm.

Int: And if a fear of violence is what connects all South African women, what do you think that says about their South Africanness?

Hedy: Ya, I mean, it’s also like the sex workers.

Int: Yes.

Hedy: I feel like that’s a big… I don’t want to say, job.

Int: Career?

Hedy: Ya, like a lot of – lets, be real, there’s probably a lot of that happening.

Int: Yes.

Hedy: And then how many of them are then raped by police officers.

Int: That’s another thing that happens, yes.

Hedy: And then, also like when they are there, I also feel like they are raped by clients.

Int: Ya.

Hedy: But how are they going to go to the police – “I’m a prostitute, and I was raped.” They’ll laugh in their faces, like and then-

Int: They’ll get arrested. Ya.

Hedy: You see. So, I feel like there is a lot of that as well. And, you know, the police, they’re in on it so it’s just like who do you trust.

Int: Ya.

Hedy: Who do you go to and be like this needs to stop.

Int: That’s a very valid question: Who do you go to – who do South African women go to now to say this needs to stop?

Hedy: Who’s going to – I mean the police captain, “Ag it’s just one.”

Int: Ya.

Hedy: So, it’s like, there’s only so much we can do, and I feel like it would be more effective if we all decide, “You know what, we’re all going to stop working.” Every single woman, because I feel like women do a lot for this country.

Int: Oh ya.

Hedy: You know like… you know, because violence with men, ‘oh we’ll just overpower them’, we need to do something that will hit them, like realise-

Int: This is a serious problem.

Hedy: Ya, ya. I don’t know, I don’t think violence is the answer – it might get there, I don’t know.

Int: If it does, would you take part?

Hedy: \*Breathe. I think I would support it, but would I take part – because it would be pretty violent. Because that’s also, lets be real, if we have these protests a lot of them will probably be dragged around the corner, let’s be real. They’ll be like, “Oh you protesting this – let me show you what’s it all about.” I feel like that’s what probably is going to happen.

Int: I mean… that’s a really scary thought, but-

Hedy: Ya.

Int: Like we talk about it, like this stuff just happens to women in South Africa. Um, if the move was, ‘all women in South Africa are now buying guns’, would you take part in that type of protest – not protesting physically in the streets but more of like, ‘everyone does their part behind the closed doors’.

Hedy: Ya, yoh that’s a scary thing hey. I feel like guns actually – like everyone is ‘oh it’s just a gun’, but a gun…

Int: Ya, ya.

Hedy: I think, I think I would want to but I don’t know if I would – I think if it was something less violent, you know, because something like that, violence like that, you know, because it’s also like, ‘what if that gun lands up in the wrong hands or this or that’.

Int: Ya.

Hedy: I feel like if it was something else, then maybe.

Int: A pair of knuckle-dusters?

Hedy: \*Laughs. Ya, probably, ya.

Int: Alright. Well, that’s actually all the questions I have for you today. Thank you so much for your time and your honesty, and your stories. I know that some of this is a bit difficult to talk about, so thank you for giving your time and your answers. Please let me know if you have any questions, concerns, or deep-seated worries – you can ask them now, you can add anything you wanted to add.

Hedy: No. I think I’m good.

Int: But you also have my email address, so if you have any questions, concerns, deep-seated worries, or you see something, like articles, movies, anything – music, I’ll take as well. Please feel free to email it to me. Specifically, if you think it will help in this research, you’re more than welcome to send it to me.

Hedy: Will do.

Int: Awesome. Thank you so much for you time and ya, cool.

Hedy: Thank you so much.