Individual Interview 15 – Jodie

(Full time: 56:42)

Int: Hi, welcome.

Joni: Hello.

Int: How are you?

Joni: Good thanks and you? It’s been a busy day.

Int: Good. And it’s been hot, geez it’s been hot.

Joni: Hot, ya.

Int: I know we live in Africa but it’s getting a bit ridiculous now, ag I can’t.

Joni: \*Laughs. The previous day was the worst.

Int: So, I need to make double sure. You’ve read and understood the informed consent form.

Joni: Yes. I did.

Int: Great. So, just a general idea of what we’re going to get into today, is we’re going to talk about the concept of belonging and we’re going to look at the emotional side of belonging; so, what does it feel like to belong in a place, what does that place make you feel like. And then we’re going to look at safety, just your experiences of safety in South Africa, and then we’re going to group that together for what that means for a South African woman living in South Africa. That’s basically it.

Joni: Okay.

Int: If you’ve got any questions, concerns, or deep-seated worries you are more than welcome to ask them now.

Joni: Um, not anything at the – no, not anything at the moment.

Int: Okay, great. So, we’re just going to do a bit of background information fist so that I can get a general idea of who you are. How old are you, are you studying, are you working, did you study and now you’re working, ya did you move around a lot as a kid or did you stay in one place – all of that.

Joni: Okay so, um, trying to introduce myself – I’m \*Joni, and I’m turning twenty-nine next weekend. I have moved around a lot as a child. My dad had contract work in different places, so we moved around a lot inside South Africa – um, well my stepdad, sorry. I have a stepdad. And, um, ya I went to study just shortly after finishing high school, and I studied for teaching. I didn’t finish that, and just went on to working for a few years. Jumped from work to work, and then finally got myself a job doing graphic design on social media. I’ve been working in the company now for almost four years, going for my fourth year now. Um, so ya that’s just about what’s happening now. Now I’m just working full-time from home.

Int: Happy birthday for next week.

Joni: Thank you.

Int: Twenty-nine must be – like twenty-four is freaking me out, I’m not going to lie, like twenty-three has been fun.

Joni: \*Laughs. To be honest I’ve – ya, it’s the borderline of being thirty and still being in your twenties so you don’t know how to feel about it.

Int: Exactly.

Joni: Yah, it just feels like-

Int: Yah, twenty-four is like the borderline of mid-twenties. Like my first quarterlife crisis is on the horizon.

Joni: Ya, it’s crazy how quickly it just flies by.

Int: Ya, day by day it feels like nothing and then suddenly I’m turning twenty-four, like, ‘Ooo, scary’. But ya, so I want to talk about the moving a bit. So, you said you moved around often and constantly, and how long were you in places for – were you moving around every two years, every few months.

Joni: Um, probably a year and a half, maybe two years I would say so. Maybe just over two years, ya. It was about two years, ya. We used to – well, I used to stay overseas with my mom and my dad. My dad actually had engineering contract there. So, we used to move around in Australia, America, New Zealand, but before I was the age of four so I can’t really remember anything. And then when they got divorced, we moved back to South Africa, um, and then we lived in Ladysmith. So, my mom met my stepdad and then, ya, they got married. We moved from Ladysmith to Newcastle, and then from Newcastle to Pietermaritzburg when I was – in 2001. No, no, sorry – no, 2001. And then we moved in 2004, we moved to Nelspruit, and then from Nelspruit we went to Pretoria, where we also moved a couple of houses here. So, I have never actually been in a like stable place. Um, I’ve moved a lot. I’ve been in Pretoria since 2008, but I’ve moved a lot since then.

Int: So, you’re like jumping from house to house and everything.

Joni: Ya, not any place to be stable.

Int: Like very unstable, always moving around. Were those houses ever home? Did you ever feel like they were a home or always like, ‘Okay, I’m going to have to leave this in a certain amount of time’?

Joni: Um, so, ya we didn’t actually – we weren’t actually sure where we’d go next, but um some places were quite comfortable, like I remember my young years when I was in Pietermaritzburg. Those were my – that was actually like a home. If I had to refer to any place to actually being like a home, was the house we had in Pietermaritzburg. Um, I think it was close to… it was like a very wooded area, and it was very secluded from the city Pietermaritzburg. So, it was just a way out, but it was very foreign. We had a huge garden, there was a lot of space to play. Us, as kids, were safe to walk around in the neighbourhood. Um, ya, there were just very good memories there and, ya, since we moved from there it’s just never felt like home again. So, when we went to Nelspruit that’s when I started experiencing bullying from girls.

Int: Ya, girls are mean. So, guys are physical, but girls are mean.

Joni: Ya. So, those are probably my most hardest years because I was just finishing grade four, we went to Nelspruit and then being there for grade six and seven I was bullied. And it was very tough to like make new friends and just trying to fit in. Um, then I still had my high school career with my high school stage at a new school here, at Garsfontein.

Int: Oh, I know where that is.

Joni: So, ya. So, again just coming from – I think it’s primary school. Ya, primary school, going directly to a new place, new people, starting high school – that was also tough. So, ya, even the same with Pretoria, it’s never really felt like a place I can be quite comfortable, especially with people, but I’ve learnt to manage. Ya meeting good people.

Int: I’m glad.

Joni: But it was hard.

Int: Like I said, girls are mean, but like Pretorian and Joburg – geez, I.

Joni: Ya, it’s-

Int: Those Poppies I – Afrikaans girls, they scare the living daylights out of me, especially the ones that play netball. Ah, no. Scare me.

Joni: Ya, so I started getting really shy in Nelspruit after the bullying, and when I started high school here I was still very shy so that was very, very, tough to make new friends, especially not know who like – like who Pretoria people are so ya. Then the cliques and everything stared so you could see where you were allowed – where you could fit in and where you can’t.

Int: And even now, you say that you refer to this Nelspruit – I think it was Nelspruit. That was home?

Joni: No, no, Pietermaritzburg was home.

Int: Pietermaritzburg.

Joni: Ya, that was around 2002 to 2004.

Int: Ya, pretty young as well.

Joni: Ya, I was pretty young. But it was pretty good memories, like those are probably the best memories I’ve had. Made great friends there. The area – our house was awesome, it was a big house. And ya, we just – ag, ya, just being a kid. Everything just changes so quickly after that so, and you’re in another place and it’s just different.

Int: So, jumping around and all of that, now that you’ve been in one place for a while – you said you’ve been at this job for four years. Has that been the same for your houses, or have you also been moving around a lot?

Joni: Ah, no. I have been moving around since then. So, my last house now I moved in last year February, so this is my first year being here. Um, because I was kind of like, um… the last time I had to move, I moved in by myself so I’m in a financially stable place where I can actually afford being in my own space and just trying to see where I feel comfortable. Ya so I… this – I moved into this place because it’s larger. The previous place that I moved in by myself was a garden flat.

Int: Oh ya.

Joni: So, it was quite small and, um, just needed some space to kind of just, ya.

Int: Run around a bit, be a kid for a bit.

Joni: Ya. So, all place I think comes with its challenges because here doesn’t really accommodate my dog so well, um, and in the meantime I have adopted another dog.

Int: Okay.

Joni: We live in a second story, but it’s connected to the main house – if that makes sense. I live in the second story so I have to take them out and like… um, keep track of them as much as possible, as I did with my old house. So dogs are an important thing in my life.

Int: Ya, my cat’s walking around here too.

Joni: Ya, I can see. \*Laughs. It’s fine. My dog is underneath my feet – he’s a big dog.

Int: Nahh, I like a dog too it’s just that they make too much noise for me. I’m not a fan. But when you were moving around, how important were aspects of like, ‘This place needs to be in like a gated community or in a safe area’ or was it almost the dogs’ got a place to run, there needs to be place for them and stuff like that. So, what was the number one thing that you were looking for?

Joni: Um… well, ya just I got – I wanted a space where I could have a dog because I was going through a rough spot with a previous, um… um, ya with the previous guy that I’ve dated. Um, so I moved out on my own so, I just found a place where I could have a dog. And um, so he’s become my little companion, my little supporter. Um, since lockdown. I got him a week before lockdown, so he’s saved me a lot through that emotional phase of just being alone. Just ya, the isolation was very bad. Um, since then, he’s just become a very important part of my life. So, I’m looking for a place that is safe that accommodates my dog, and ya, just more space for creativity and – because I’m working from home, I don’t want to be stuck between the same four walls everyday. Ya, the place that I’m staying at now, is not the most safest area, that I didn’t know before moving here. But we haven’t had any troubles, but there has been stuff in the past and there’s usually a lot of stories around the neighbourhood, in Garsfontein, that makes it quite, you know, you need to just be aware of your surroundings; you have to get into your gate quick, lock the gate behind you. Just always be aware of what’s going on around you because there is a lot – it’s an extremely busy street. It’s just down from the street with the primary school that’s just – ya, there’s just a primary school up the street here. So, a very busy area. And I would like an area that is more just relaxed.

Int: Ya.

Joni: Just ya, where you can feel safe, and don’t have to keep looking around or ‘What’s this person doing here’, ya what’s – things can get a bit, ya. So, I would like a place that’s more calmer.

Int: I mean that’s one of the things that I have picked up, and why I have chosen research – because I have done research kinda on something similar two years ago. And what kept on coming up was, um… hmm, you’re pausing for a second.

…

Joni: Hi.

Int: Sorry about that, my wifi literally went bye.

Joni: Don’t worry.

Int: Ya, so, we’re talking about safety and all of this. and there seems to be a thing with South Africans where we are so aware of our safety, like we’re always looking around. And like you say-

Joni: Ya.

Int: When you get home you have to get into the gate quickly and lock up the gate quickly, and all of this.

Joni: Ya.

Int: So, we have a lot of these safety measures that we take, like safety precautions that we take on a daily basis. So, other than getting into your gate really quickly, locking the gate behind you really quickly, what else do you do in your everyday life to make sure that you are safe?

Joni: Um… I don’t know, I work from home mostly so I always just check out of the window at people walking around. But I don’t have much of a paranoia that someone is going to do something. I’m always just cautious or constantly aware of something if it were to happen of what to do, but I’m not that like-

Int: Active.

Joni: Ya, not that active to go through measures making sure everything is fine.

Int: Ya.

Joni: I live on the second story so I can see if something is going to happen, so. Obviously, we just close our windows at night. Um, there’s electric fencing, and we have a community group – an active community group that always keeps us up to date if anything were to happen in the area.

Int: That helps.

Joni: Ya, that helps to know is something has happened, or is a car has been stolen or if some house has been broken in, so you can kind of see what houses they have been – ya. But this street has been fine since I’ve moved in so I haven’t really had any like worry to – because there is a lot of homeless people that go through. Ya the police station is also just down the street. So, there’s a lot of like – and a liquor store. \*Laughs. Just across from that, ya so there’s a corner there in the front and they drink and smoke, you just always – feel like if you don’t bring any attention to yourself, I think you don’t really have to be that concerned. Just be aware.

Int: Ya.

Joni: Like if something looks off.

Int: Like when you’re driving at night is there anything that you are aware of or anything that you do.

Joni: Ya, so a few years ago I experienced a smash and grab.

Int: Damn.

Joni: That was really, ya I was really, it was really terrifying. Where I shouted on the phone to the police that they have stolen my car, but it was the wrong words to use because I was so stressed, “They just hijacked me, they hijacked me, they hijacked me.” Then I realised, no it was a smash and grab. Ya, so he took my stuff, but now I just make sure that my doors are always locked, because I have a manual car, so everything I open up manually with my key. Ya, so to lock it – I have a pretty old car, I didn’t think that it draws that much attention but I always just make sure that all my doors are locked, that my bag is either wrapped around my hand break or underneath my seat. So it they try to – ya, so I just wrap it around my hand break and they can’t. And ya, then… I don’t even know if it’s legal but if it’s a very quiet night and I’ll be home late, because I used to do a lot of photography or events, and I still do it as a side line job for extra money, so I finish an event really late, I’ll probably drive over a red robot, if it is really quiet, just to be safe and not take the chance by stopping. Because that’s what happened when they smashed and grabbed me, it was late at night on the bridge, like just before we – the Garsfontein bridge, ya. The problem is when that happened they made sure that my car was the one that was pinned in so I couldn’t go anywhere; I’m behind the front car, there’s cars next to me, and then there’s – so you can’t even go anywhere.

Int: Ya, I was – also Garsfontein area, I don’t think it was there by the bridge… anyway I know I was coming from an event, I was in the Garsfontein area, stopped at a robot, a car stopped in front of me, a car stopped behind me, and some guy tried to get into my side door, like he tried to open my door.

Joni: Ya, that’s the other thing. If they see – they specifically target cars that are ah…

Int: Boxed in, ya.

Joni: Boxed in like that. And I don’t have the fanciest, flashiest car, but I don’t know what he – but ya. At that stage of my life, it was my university years, so I wasn’t aware of what’s going on and stuff. But I saw something funny going on in my back mirror, and before I could know it, he – ya, just smashed my window. So, before I could like do anything about it. Ya.

Int: I’m really sorry that happened, but like for future reference. The minister of police even encourages women drivers in South Africa that at night you yield at a robot, you don’t have to stop. So, you do have that on your side, that the minister of police – I don’t think he’s the current minster of police.

Joni: Even he’s like, you can skip a robot if you don’t feel the need that you need to stay there for your own safety.

Int: Ya, so if you’re driving alone, at night, you look left and right-

Joni: Ya, obviously I make sure it’s safe before I cross over. So, I’ll never put myself into that situation again, I’m a pretty responsible person when it comes to safety on the road.

Int: Ya. Do you mind if we talk about your smash and grab situation?

Joni: Ya sure.

Int: So, you say that you phone the cops and you accidently use the wrong word and everything, but you’re yelling and screaming like, ‘Help me’. What was that response from the cops, what was your experience like with the cops in that situation?

Joni: Um, so, ya it wasn’t really good. Because I tried calling the Garsfontein Police Station, like it’s not far from there, but they refused to help me because they said it’s not really in their jurisdiction, that part – just cross the bridge - but I wasn’t on that side of the bridge, I was just before the bridge. So they refused to come out, so I have to call the Brooklyn station, that is on the other side of, um… So, it took a while for them to come out, my mom was there before them. And I was kind of sitting alone with a taxi driver, that was the only person that was willing to help me. After he saw what happened – but he was actually a really nice – like a blessing. It was a bit of, because I was in such panic I took off after he smashed because the robot turned green and people were starting to hoot, but then in the middle of that road I just like stopped trying to figure out what just happened. Um, and then people started to hoot me out of the way, then there was a taxi driver who just pulled up next to me, and he could see like how frantic I was. He did see what happened, and he said, “Just come to this garage here.” And he drove with me all the way just to make sure I would be safe. Ya, it was just a few meters on. And ya, he offered his phone, for me to – because I didn’t have mine anymore – to call my mom and the police and that was still when I was frantic. I first called the police, and then I called my mom. My mom was there before the police came, and she was in Moraletta Park which is on the other side.

Int: Ya, she flew.

Joni: So, it took a while – she was there before the police, so um it was a bit concerning. And when it happened ya they didn’t want to do much. They took my statement. I had a few theories of where the guy could have ran off to so they could just check it out, but they weren’t really willing to do anything about it. Um so ya, I just gave them my view of what happened, my statement, I went to the police station as well. But ya, nothing has come from it, so. So I had to get a new phone and all of that – ya, that drama.

Int: Yeah, dealing with South African police. Um, so you said the taxi driver – who I think a lot of people would suspect are the absolute villains of South Africa, and I agree in some part. I do have a soft spot for taxi drivers because I stalled once at Brooklyn circle, just got my licence, like everyone is hooting like at me to like move out of the way and I just couldn’t; and this taxi dude was just like, “You can do it, you can do it. Come on, calm down, it’s fine they’ll hoot at me, it’s you can do it.”

Joni: Ya, so I do believe that you get really good guys, because afterwards while we were waiting for them he was just talking to me, and he was telling me about his baby and his work, and like it’s tough but he’s doing this for his family. He’s trying to make money. So, I didn’t feel the need to be – didn’t feel danger being there. Um, but ya I have mixed feeling about taxi drivers. But I know you do get ones that are just doing their job. They’re just tyring to make money. And can see it by the way that taxi drivers’ cars usually end up looking like – who the ones are that don’t care, and the ones that are just trying to do their job.

Int: Exactly. Sorry?

Joni: I think it can be stressful like, for even just the guys working that they also have that bad reputation and name of what taxi drivers in general give them. So, ya that’s sad.

Int: So, your experience with the South African Police Force, I take it wasn’t a good experience.

Joni: \*Laughs.

Int: Not at all.

Joni: No.

Int: Was there any element of care? Did the police officer be like, ‘Hey are you okay’ Or were they just like, ‘Okay, what happened – tell me what happened’, get it done and then leave?

Joni: No, I don’t think – I can’t really remember how the interaction was. I think it was very quick because I can’t really recall like conversations, I just honestly remember the taxi driver being really nice. Telling me about his family, and then the police came… I just remember we mentioned a few places that they might be because

…

Running down the bridge and jumping into the nearest car and driving off is just – so very high. So, I was, I think I was very angry because I couldn’t do anything about it, or like… like this guy must be here somewhere. They must do something about it. He can’t just take my stuff, ya. Then I just started racing about what could have happened, what I could have done. Um, ya. So, all of that just raced. It was a quick interaction, there wasn’t really much that they were willing or can do. And I was already like… um, I think a little angry at that stage that I had to wait for them so long and just couldn’t get Garsfontein , that I think was just them being restricted to certain area even though it’s just around the corner, just checking up on the person, you know. For their safety. There could have been something that happened, but because I was going on so frantically, that I was being hijacked, because I used the wrong term – but ya, not that. I don’t think there was much of that… I think it’s just a normal thing for them. That every day, and ya. It’s just another girl who got, is victim.

Int: Ya, it’s what happens in South Africa. Like it nothing-

Joni: Ya, the chances that they are going to get that guy is absolutely – ya.

Int: Ya.

Joni: So, it’s not like a – ya. I don’t know what it takes to be like a high concern case for them. Sometimes it’s difficult because they – it’s like, this is supposed to be the norm. I think that’s what really made me upset was like that a norm for this to happen every day, that’s why they are doing this. I mean my cousin got robbed three times in the Johannesburg – he was living in Johannesburg. So, um, while they were just sitting in traffic they guys – the criminals – will come, like pretend that they are holding a gun when they see someone’s window is open, like, “Give me your phone.” And they do it to a bunch of guys just by walking down traffic. Like it’s a – he got robbed three times like that.

Int: That’s insane.

Joni: We don’t know if he’s like pretending to hold a gun or if he actually has a gun so it’s like getting more easier for them to – um, they know that they will get away with it. So, it’s a sad thing.

Int: It is, that’s the thing.

Joni: Johannesburg is not a place I want to be though.

Int: No. Yeah Joburg, that’s the other thing that’s come up is that a lot of people will go to Pretoria CBD, like Sunnyside area, like they are fine with that. But they will not step foot in Hillbrow – like Joburg CBD, that is-

Joni: Ya.

Int: Not an option for a lot of people.

Joni: Ya, I don’t mind driving through Sunnyside or CBD, being a certain time of day.

Int: Ya.

Joni: It will be a little more stressful, but it won’t be as bad as going to Johannesburg, like they get robbed there during the day, during the night in his house. Yeah, my brother was once – so, they also tried robbing him by putting, because he worked in Johannesburg. He came home late one night, and his window was a little bit open because he was smoking – ya I think \*he probably told you this.

Int: \*He tells me nothing.

Joni: \*Laughs. Okay, it was pretty rough. So, he just suddenly felt someone trying to put their hand in there, into the window.

Int: Ya?

Joni: And um… then he tried closing the window, and he has that car that if the car senses that there’s something is blocking the window.

Int: Ya, it doesn’t go up.

Joni: No, it goes open – it open’s up.

Int: No.

Joni: So, then the guy could completely get into the car. He wanted to grab his phone and everything, and they were struggling. I can’t remember exactly what happened, but I think there was a second guy I think, who had a gun – but there was some person that ended up, like… fighting the guys off because they wanted money, and then he just drove off as fast as he could.

Int: Ya.

Joni: As soon as they were out of the car – so, ya I remember him telling me. Ya, I don’t know all of the details, I just remember the trying to put his hand in, and the window opening for him to get in, that’s pretty freaky.

Int: That’s insane.

Joni: You should ask him about that – it’s crazy.

Int: Um, just quickly I do want to start a new meeting because this one is going to kick us out in three minutes. And then we’re just going to have a little bit of a chat about your future in South Africa, and all of that, and being a woman, and then we’re done for today. Very short.

Joni: Okay.

Int: Awesome, cool. I’ll see you now.

Joni: Okay, bye.

Int: Bye.

… Alright, so welcome back. We’re going to move on – well, we’re going to kind of stick with what we’ve been talking about, the crime in South Africa, and all of that. So, do you feel safe being in South Africa?

Joni: Um… no, not always. Not really. I don’t know, you don’t feel – you don’t feel like you can be comfortable, because ya, it’s quite exhausting constantly being aware of what’s going on around you. So, I would say – and it’s only. I hear so many stories and, um, I try not to have them affect me so. I would rather… just… do what I do everyday just, like… rather than think what might happen and always be scared. I try to not have that overwhelm my life. But if I could be in a place where I was more comfortable and I could focus on living rather than being paranoid about things, um… ya, just be comfortable and actually going out and doing stuff and not always, um, ya, scared of something that might happen. There’s a lot of places that you want to go to but they have been basically taken over, so. Like all of the small little towns are also just being taken over and you can’t even visit some of these places anymore; places where my mom grew up. It’s just, there’s not a like quality being kept anymore. So, you don’t want to visit as many places, or see more places.

Int: So, these places have almost become dilapidated; they have become almost – no one’s taken care of them so they have broken down in a sense.

Joni: Ya, the quality of places. The areas, like lots of areas especially where my mom grew up and even just the last few years of staying in Pretoria you can just see the quality of areas and places just taking over. It’s not that - quality of Pretoria East is not really like great anymore because there’s just townships everywhere – well not townships, lekaasies? Sorry, I’m Afrikaans.

Int: No, it’s alright.

Joni: Places like, ag, Plastic View for example. It makes a place, the value of Moreleta Park drop down very low. So, people who bought a house there long before they just started popping up there can’t even get to sell their house now.

Int: Ya.

Joni: They don’t feel safe in their own house because no one wants to live in that area. Who’s going to buy the house for the value that they bought it for at that time. So, they either have to sell their property for very cheap to get out or face staying there. And ya, their safety is in jeopardy. Sorry, \*Laughs. Shame.

Int: I’ve been trying. So, you plan on remaining in South Africa for the future or would you like to leave?

Joni: Ah, I actually, my plan is – ya, I do want to leave. Might be in my… it might be ah, especially if I want to start like a future for a family and all of that stuff, it’s not really a place I want to… I’m fine by myself, like I can deal with this by myself, but I don’t want to have the… the stress of, um, ya having a family here.

Int: So, the stress of having children.

Joni: Ya, I want them to enjoy outdoors. Not gates, and gated communities and electric fencing, and all of the horrible news. I want them to experience a better quality of life, and ya, freedom.

Int: A sense of freedom, ya. So, I take it that you want to have kids, so the idea that you would have to bring up kids in these areas that are gated up, that there are electric fences all over the place, that you would have to kind of always be aware of what’s going on around you at all times – you don’t want to have for your kids.

Joni: No, I have heard too many stories. Kids being kidnapped. And its ag, it’s sad but my kids can’t also walk around like from school back home, like there’s always a constant thing that could maybe happen – later in life. But it’s like the kids can’t really – they have to be gated somewhere, be protected because they can’t take care of themselves. Um, ya.

Int: Ya, no I completely understand.

Joni: Ya, it’s took me a long time to get to where I am now. Um, I have not really decided to settle with anyone. I’ve had relationships, but at a stage I even thought, “No, kids aren’t even a thing for me.” Um, but I have recently met – ya, actually like a year ago, I met this really amazing man and I do see a future with him, and if that future involves having kids, I just don’t want to be under the like stress of taking care of them here.

Int: Ya.

Joni: That kind of having to teach them the – and you don’t even know how its going to be like in ten years. I’m not planning on getting kids now, I want to marry first, get settled with that, sort out our finances and where we will actually stay; I want to be more settled in a place. And to be honest, it never really feels like home. So, I don’t to really bring up kids where it doesn’t even feel like home to me.

Int: Ya, so, what is your biggest fear living in South Africa?

Joni: Um, well there is a few.

Int: Ya, any fear – it can be a snake, it can be a robber, it can be whatever you want it to be.

Joni: I think my biggest fear is actually not being able to get out.

Int: Of being trapped?

Joni: Yes. Of not being able to travel and get out, like experience new countries. And see what they have to offer. Um, just because of my… because I don’t really have a good educational background, so it’s that fear of not being able to get to a country where they will accept me. Or being able – being financially stable to make that move.

Int: And you fear that South Africa is that place that will keep holding you back, like it won’t give you the economic opportunity to leave; that it would deteriorate to such a state that no country would want you?

Joni: I think it’s more like, ya, not getting the financial. Ya, because everything is just so expensive and the way it is structured, we don’t make enough to really – the middle-class people don’t really make enough to be able to explore or go to new places. We live by month to month. So.

Int: Ya, no, one hundred percent.

Joni: So, its very difficult to try make – to see where the future will be going if you’re only living to next month and anything could happen.

Int: Exactly.

Joni: But, we’re just hoping for my boyfriend to get a degree now that that will open up some doors.

Int: Ya. Well, good luck and I’m glad that you have met someone that is really sweet – I think that is what we are all looking for. So, how would you describe your life as a South African woman living in South Africa?

Joni: It can be intimidating. Um, it can be… little bit – I don’t know what the word is, ah. Uncomfortable.

Int: Okay.

Joni: Ya, uncomfortable at times. You just have to be aware of how you dress, how your manner is, and your safety and… just being aware of everything around you. But overall it’s been fine.

Int: That’s great.

Joni: \*Laughs. Ya, it’s been good. I’m trying to no, ya… be too ah – because I try not to be too… I’m a person who doesn’t really like to stand out of the crowd often. but I want to but I also I don’t want to have the spotlight on me, I just want to be standing out on my own, going outside doing my thing. But, ya, because I want to be normal but I also just want to break out, but I don’t the – you know what I mean.

Int: Ya, it’s normal. You don’t want to have the spotlight on you, but you also don’t want to be part of the crowd the whole time.

Joni: Ya, I don’t want to be part of the crowd. Ya, but I would say it’s pretty good just sometimes it can be uncomfortable like, because women have to defend themselves against a majority that is a threat. And not just – anyone can be a threat, but it’s just that entire idea of not being able to take care of yourself if something might happen. That’s just very terrifying.

Int: Yeah, I think that is pretty normal fear to have as well.

Joni: I’m a pretty strong independent person, so I just always – I always just used to take care of myself. Um, so I try to keep out of any, um, fights or any arguments, I try not to get into trouble. It’s not needed. \*Laughs. But if something has to happen, I’ll probably try my best to – I’d defend myself or fight, if something happens.

Int: Normal as well. So, I take it that you used to go to, I don’t know maybe the Square as a student.

Joni: Yes, I did.

Int: And how was the Square.

Joni: So, the time that I went there it was still fine, but over the year – it was in 2012. So, that’s when a lot of separation was happening in the Square. Where the nightlife was just taken over by – I don’t know how to say, one community. All the students from Tiks would either go to Aandklass or, what’s it, Drop Zone.

Int: Yeah, I’ve heard of Drop Zone.

Joni: Because there is lots of stuff that happens there, um, and I did scare my mom one night. I was missing from a party with my cousin, because we’re the same age we went out to party. We went to Drop Zone and - I can’t really remember the rest of the evening. Because, ya, we think we might have been drugged or.

Int: Oh geez.

Joni: Yes.

Int: I’m sorry.

Joni: Ya, when my mom was there to pick us up, my cousin couldn’t find me, so she started to just going through the Square trying to track me down, like you don’t want to mess with her once her daughter is missing – joh, she was very angry. So, they finally found – because my cousin said that they took me to the bathroom, but I never came out. So, he took me to the bathroom where we went. And ya, the doors were locked with a bunch of students trying to get into the bathroom. It has a hallway with a bathroom, so ya a whole bunch of people trying to get in, but it was locked. And then my mom just had a feeling that something was wrong and that she needs to get in. And it happened that a cleaner was there who locked the door, and she convinced my mom to – ag, my mom convinced her to open the door. And she got in and, um, ya I was passed out in one of the stalls.

Int: Geez.

Joni: Ya, passed out there. She didn’t want anyone else to come in because of me lying there, so she just – I don’t know, kept on cleaning, and waited for me to wake up so ya. but that was like a really scary situation.

Int: Ya, of course. I mean talking from the participants the number one thing that keeps on coming up is this fear of being spiked.

Joni: Ya, that is a big fear, like still to today I never take my eyes off of my drink. Always. If I like have cider bottles I won’t pour it into a glass, I’ll keep it in the bottle, I’ll have my finger over it; if I go dancing, I’ll go dancing with my drink in my hand and I’ll put my hand over it. So, I have never been in that situation again.

Int: Luckily.

Joni: Make sure that my drink is finished before I leave it, or I just leave it if I didn’t like look at it. Ya. Spiking is usually a big thing because it can happen so easily.

Int: Ya, and so quickly as well.

Joni: Very. Ya, I didn’t even know how it happened.

Int: Ya, so I just want to move on quickly before we run out of time, because I think we just might be fine.

Joni: Perfect.

Int: You want to move out of South Africa, is there anything that makes you want to stay here?

Joni: Um, yes. I think we have beautiful country. I love the mountains, the weather, and the summer. We actually just have so much greenery and there’s so much potential. It really breaks my heart that that potential is just like, like taken away.

Int: Ya.

Joni: Everything nice is being ruined. Like, there are so many hiking paths in South Africa, around Pretoria, that are very nice but some of them are so dangerous to go now, like.

Int: Ya.

Joni: The Groenkloof one, that is a really nice one, but you can’t walk that trail alone.

Int: I think Wolvespruit is one

Joni: Wolvespruit is – I still enjoy Wolvespruit. I still go there quite a lot with my dogs.

Int: Yah, I take my dogs.

Joni: I wouldn’t go there alone. But I’ve heard stuff that happens there. Everything just gets polluted or – even the nice areas, there’s just no quality anymore. It’s a very beautiful place, I love – I still love the landscapes and all of the – like Cape Town is one of my favourite places. The Western Cape, that areas, there are so many beautiful, jewels of places there that I would love to see. There are so many things that I still want to do here. And see. But ya. I think it’s just being stuck here in Pretoria, in the same spot, that it – you just kind of fixate on the one places instead of seeing what’s out there.

Int: Exactly.

Joni: Further in South Africa.

Int: I mean like Pretoria is a pretty city, we’ve got trees all over the place, but there is something special I think about the South African coastline. It really is stunning.

Joni: Ya, I agree.

Int: I mean Durban, the South Coast, it is absolutely stunning. And Cape Town is amazing.

Joni: Ya, and that’s another thing. We used to go to Durban a lot, especially to Ushaka and all of those places, but going there over December holidays.

Int: Ya, no it’s mad.

Joni: And going into the beaches, like you have to be careful where you walk because you might just step in needles that.

Int: Ya.

Joni: Or they have parties there and they just leave like butchered chickens that they sacrificed or something on the beach.

Int: Geez.

Joni: They just pollute everything that was so nice at a stage. And it’s so sad to just watch that. I think that’s what upsets me most. Like being in these places, because we used to go there almost every year – I have family living in Durban. But the last – my family doesn’t even go to the beach anymore. They live in Durban, but they never go to the beach. Where my uncle has actually thought of moving to Gauteng, because ya, they haven’t been to the beach in years. Only when we’re there, they will take us. And it’s so sad, we always used to go there.

Int: Ya.

Joni: I remember being there in 2012 and it was still quite a lekker place to go. The last time I was there was not a good experience.

Int: I’m sorry. And I agree with you, here is this sense amongst South Africans that our country is heading towards a collapse, economically, landscape, politically. It seems like slowly but surely the country is deteriorating. I mean if we look at Eskom now – you just had loadshedding, I’m stuck in loadshedding. It’s a nightmare and a half.

Joni: Yes, definitely.

Int: And that’s something you feel as well?

Joni: Ya, I think that’s the other frustration is just like the loadshedding, the constant having to plan something. It just makes things uncomfortable, and we just have to sit with it like it’s, you know the norm.

Int: Ya.

Joni: It causes so much for people, because they sit in traffic for more, they have to plan their day – sorry.

Int: No worries.

Joni: Their day. So, it put my mom under overwhelming – she can stress up quite easily. Joh, she can really stress herself. Ya, she plans out her whole morning if there’s any loadshedding. She plans exactly when she needs to get up, she has her whole hair routine and all of that stuff.

Int: Ya, I mean my mom has to wash her hair every single morning, so if we have loadshedding in the morning-

Joni: Ya, same. She has to wake up like two hours before.

Int: Ya, or my dad has to put on a generator.

Joni: So, she doesn’t hit the traffic.

Int: Oh, that too. Geez. Ya, because the robots are all out, oh my soul. Is your mom coming from centurion side to – or well, Joburg to Pretoria or Pretoria to Joburg.

Joni: No, she just drives from Moreleta Park to Garsfontein, but that’s-

Int: Oh that whole intersection.

Joni: Ya, if you don’t go early enough.

Int: Ya, that intersection’s traffic, you will sit for hours and hours, just to get from the one side to the other.

Joni: So, that’s the one thing I’m very thankful for is just being able to work at home, because I can not stand being in traffic.

Int: Same, no.

Joni: Sitting in today’s traffic I would lose my shit.

Int: No, I would rather just walk. Like I would really rather just walk than sit – especially in the heat.

Joni: It’s just the time that you are wasting.

Int: Ya.

Joni: You could be doing something productive or something else. You only have so many hours in a day like you don’t want to be waiting that like just sitting in traffic like being irritated. So, it causes a lot of frustration just being in these situations constantly. I don’t mind being in situations, but like the constant, the everyday, that’s just causing so much stress and discomfortable for a lot of people. You can see people’s moods as well. Like you can just feel people are just irritated.

Int: Getting irritated – ya. I mean January is normally a rough month, but this January has been tough, geez. The loadshedding just like what the hell.

Joni: That’s just some of the reasons why I want to – ya, I don’t want to be in this environment where it is such a negative the whole time. Not being able to like experience more quality of life.

Int: Ya, and I think that’s normal.

Joni: Because I think we are all here for a reason, but I think you can only stand so much of your own situation before you do something about it to change it.

Int: Ya. Alright, well that’s actually all that I have for you today. If you’ve got any questions or concerns, you may ask them now. But if you have anything you would like to add, something you through was interesting, something that you think relates to this research, you are more than welcome to add it now.

Joni: Um… I’m sorry I can’t think of anything now.

Int: That’s fine.

Joni: My brain is a bit mush after today.

Int: No worries, you’ve got my email, you’ve got my phone number so if you think of anything please send it through to me, like I would be more than happy to include it.

Joni: Okay, so do you want me to send anything tonight or?

Int: If you think about something or you see something, or if something happens in the interim, like ‘Ay, this might be useful to Simone’s research’, you are more than welcome to send it through. But if there isn’t anything, there isn’t anything – you’ve helped me out so much with this interview so thank you so much, for sitting here and speaking especially after a long day. I mean it is in the evening and it is your free time, and these conversations aren’t easy to have all the time, so thank you for your honesty and willingness to give me your stories. It’s such a help, thank you.

Joni: Thank you as well, like for your time. I think it’s quite interesting what you’re doing.

Int: Oh thank you.

Joni: Ya, so I really hope it goes well. And if I think about anything, I’ll let you know.

Int: Awesome.

Joni: I hope you have a good evening.

Int: Ya, you too.

Joni: Thanks bye.

Int: Bye.