Individual Interview 7 – Roxane

(Full time: 58:20)

Int: Hello, hi, welcome.

Roxane: Hello.

Int: How are you?

Roxane: I’m fine, how are you?

Int: Good, good. So, just quickly, you’ve read the consent form and you’ve understood the consent form.

Roxane: Mm.

Int: Great. So, just a quick overview of what we are going to do today. We’re going to be looking at the notion of belonging, specifically the emotional side of belonging, and then we’re going to look at safety, and what it means to be a South African woman in South Africa, with how South Africa is.

Roxane: Yes.

Int: We’re just going to start off very quickly with belonging. So, how would you describe having a feeling of belonging?

Roxane: Having a feeling of belonging. So, for the longest time I didn’t feel like I belonged, because I have been in predominantly white spaces growing up. So, I never felt like I belonged until I got to varsity and I realised, ‘Oh my goodness, I actually do belong in a space’, and ya. \*Laughs.

Int: What was that moment when you were in university and you were like, ‘I found this place where I belong’, what was that feeling?

Roxane: It was actually like a culture shock.

Int: Yeah.

Roxane: Firstly, it was a culture shock because I have been in predominantly English white headed spaces and I didn’t realise that I didn’t have to be in those spaces.

Int: Oh.

Roxane:\*Laughs. Got to university and I was like, ‘Woah! This is pretty cool’, because now I actually started to realise who I am outside of what people are telling me to be.

Int: That’s actually very interesting. So, was it like an identity affirming situation?

Roxane: I didn’t even realise I was in an identity crisis before that, because I think we were told to diminish our blackness for a long time that when I got to reaffirm my blackness, I was like ‘Oh my gosh this is the greatest thing, because I can actually finally find who I am outside of what I am being told’.

Int: ‘Told’, yes. So, when we’re in these white spaces – ‘we’re’.

Roxane: \*Laughs.

Int: Was it the people or was it just the general idea of what you should be?

Roxane: The general idea of who I should be, and some people. I mean, I was in a school where they told us if we listen to a certain type of music, “This is not Tembisa High school. You shouldn’t paly certain games, you should go back to Soweto.”  
Like they were very-

Int: Ya!

Roxane: \*Laughs.

Int: That’s not nice, at all.

Roxane: No, it’s not. And I mean we didn’t realise that it was lowkey racist, until afterwards and we were like, ‘Wait’.

Int: ‘This is sketchy’.

Roxane: But only after three years of varsity when we really looked back at it. And we were like, ‘Umm’. We weren’t allowed to speak our own languages, our mother tongues, we were only allowed to speak English.

Int: You grew up in a household, I take it, with a black mother and a black father?

Roxane: Yes.

Int: Siblings?

Roxane: Black siblings.

Int: So, a strong black family at home.

Roxane: Yes.

Int: And then we go to school – were you a day student or a boarding student?

Roxane: No, I wasn’t in the boarding school, I was a day student.

Int: Day student – ya?

Roxane: But my parents were also very, how do I put this. They also didn’t realise that they were putting us in these spaces and they were also stripping us a bit of our blackness, but then there were times when they were just \*Snaps fingers, affirm that we have to be black or that we have to speak this language. And then, it got to a point where there was a barrier because we couldn’t speak our own language, our home languages, at a point because we were predominantly at school, speaking English, now we come home, we watch English shows, we do all of this, and then. So, we eventually became, we assimilated into whiteness.

Int: Geez. This is very interesting, it’s the first conversation I’ve had like this.

Roxane: \*Laughs.

Int: So, when we have this situation where you’re going to school in the morning, you’re going to a place where they’re telling you, you shouldn’t be black.

Roxane: Yes.

Int: Despite the fact that you obviously are.

Roxane: Obviously! \*Laughs.

Int: It’s quite clear. And then, so you don’t belong in this space, and then you go home and – did you feel like you belonged at home?

Roxane: Yes!

Int: It was quite clear?

Roxane: It was quite clear, but I also still felt like I belonged at school.

Int: Yeah.

Roxane: Because I was assimilating. At all times I was assimilating, I also do the thing of ‘code switching’ or being able to adapt very, very easily, and I didn’t realise I was doing it. I didn’t realise I was forcing myself to do it.

Int: When you realise, ‘Oh I don’t have to be in these white spaces’, was it a kind of freeing sense or was it just like pure joy just like a weight lifted off or?

Roxane: There was no weight lifted off, it was just like, I can be myself and I don’t actually have to be in these spaces, and I haven’t – I haven’t actively been in white spaces, unless I choose to be there.

Int: Choose to be there, yes. We might come back to this because it is a very interesting conversation to have.

Roxane: \*Laughs.

Int: Maybe it’s for the Doctorate. \*Laughs.

Roxane: Think about it.

Int: Yeah. So, do you feel a sense of belonging to South Africa?

Roxane: Yes.

Int: So, you are South African through and through.

Roxane: Through and through. I’ve lived overseas and I know for a fact that I am South African. I don’t want to live anywhere else.

Int: Where’d you live overseas?

Roxane: South Korea.

Int: Oh geez, how was that?

Roxane: Greatest, but also most crazy experience of my life.

Int: What happened? How long were you there?

Roxane: I was there for seven months, I was supposed to be there for a year, but because of COVID, I had to come back.

Int: Oh that sucks, I’m sorry.

Roxane: No, it’s okay. I chose to back – come back, because my job was saying “No work, no pay.”   
And I was at a school, I was teaching English, and so I was like, ‘I’d rather be unemployed in my mother’s house’.

Int: \*Laughs.

Roxane: \*Laughs.

Int: I agree, I agree.

Roxane: But like language barrier, its already, and I’m also black. But they already – when they see white people, it’s also like, ‘\*Gasp’.

Int: ‘What’s this?’

Roxane: And not it’s like a black person, ‘\*Gasp’, who constantly wants to change her hair, who constantly wants to – \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs.

Roxane: Who’s also well-spoken, and now they’re like-

Int: Very confused.

Roxane: Very confused. But like, I’d go back any day.

Int: Any day. What was it feeling – like did you realise you were more South African when you were overseas?

Roxane: Yes.

Int: What was that moment like, ‘I’m South African, I’m not one of these people’, like?

Roxane: We had a Heritage Day braai with a South African group. There were like two hundred of us. We met up and we had a braai and listened to South African music, and I was like ‘This is home’. \*Laughs.

Int: ‘This is home’.

Roxane: ‘This is home’, and I think that for me – I was like, ‘Yep, I’m South African’. I’ve always known that I’m not necessarily one to like build a family like overseas. I want to build my family in South Africa, because yes no matter – there are many, many bad things about South Africa, but like still, I think I might be the safest here – umm it’s a very up and down thing, but like I am South African through and through.

Int: Wouldn’t want to be anywhere else, this is it.

Roxane: No.

Int: That’s actually one of the questions, do you see a foreseeable future for yourself in South Africa?

Roxane: Yes and no. I want to go overseas for like maybe a few years, but I still see myself coming back home because the weather is the best, the food is the best, the people are the best. \*Laughs. We are the most diverse country, we are, and being in a place where things are not as diverse you feel it.

Int: Ya.

Roxane: You feel it and you’re like, ‘Aaa, no’.

Int: This is not it.

Roxane: No, it’s not.

Int: So, I’ve been asking the participants this because one of my participants actually brought this up. Women are expected to have children.

Roxane: Yes.

Int: So, firstly would you like to have kids?

Roxane: \*Shakes her head.

Int: Not at all? Teaching resolved you from the want for a child.

Roxane: I’ve never wanted.

Int: Geez, um.

Roxane: \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs. Sorry.

Roxane: I know I’m a very like.

Int: ‘Nope, do not want children, full stop’.

Roxane: No.

Int: So, then what makes you want to come back to South Africa; you say you want to live overseas, but would you like to put down roots forever here?

Roxane: Yes, because this is home for me.

Int: This is home – you’d buy a house and build a home here?

Roxane: I’d get a house. I also know that if I go to England, I can’t buy a house.

Int: Yah.

Roxane: I can’t buy a house. I’m also a foreigner. Being a foreigner in another country is not easy. It’s not easy. You can’t be as free as you can be here. Now, I know I can get into my car and I can pull out my ID and now one’s going to stop me, no one’s going to arrest me for doing something stupid. But like ya, home is here.

Int: Home is here. And that’s one of the other things when we talk about belonging, its this sense of home.

Roxane: Mm.

Int: South Africa is your home.

Roxane: It is my home.

Int: What’s that feeling of home? So, you leave for seven months, you come back, you touch down in South Africa, what was that sense or what was that first thing you’re like ‘This is home’, ‘I made it, I’m home’? Was it the smell, was it the weather, was it the people?

Roxane: The smell and the weather. Korea is polluted air. Completely polluted air. You have to wear masks all the time because the air is polluted. I walked out the airport and was like \*Inhales.

Int: I can breathe.

Roxane: I can breathe. And also just the hearing familiar accents. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs.

Roxane: That’s the first thing I was, ‘Oh my gosh, I’m not listening to Korean’. And I’m able to understand what people are saying to me.

Int: That must be so scary actually. You go to a place, you don’t look like everyone, hardly anyone.

Roxane: Hardly anyone.

Int: And then you don’t understand half the people, you don’t understand the language.

Roxane: You can’t read.

Int: Oh, that must be terrifying.

Roxane: \*Laughs.

Int: What if you get lost?

Roxane: The nice thing about them is, they have very good like infrastructure; transport system is amazing. Transport system is amazing. Technology connected to the transport system is also pretty amazing. In the transport system everything is in English also. Everything that is in Korean is in English, the apps are – then the translation apps are top-tier. So, it was like the first few like, ah, it was weird but then the one time I realised this language barrier is a lot was when I landed up in hospital and-

Int: Oooo, shit sorry.

Roxane: It’s okay. I had emergency surgery and I landed up in hospital for a week. And now the nurses don’t speak English.

Int: Oh damn.

Roxane: Oh yeah. And they’re the ones taking care of you.

Int: Ya, how do you communicate ‘I’m in pain’, or ‘I need something’? Google translate?

Roxane: It wasn’t even – they call it ‘Coa-coa’. The entire time they were on their phones I was on my phone, we weren’t speaking to one another. Then it was the world cup final. The rugby final. I was in my bed, and I’m watching this rugby match, and I just started balling. I was just like…

Int: “We won!”

Roxane: “We won, I just want to go home.” \*Laughs.

Int: Aww.

Roxane: I could be celebrating but – and that’s when I was like, ‘Mm, this is a very different country’.

Int: You’ve said that you clearly belong in South Africa, this is your home. Have you always felt this or has it changed throughout your life?

Roxane: I think it must have changed throughout my life. I don’t remember a time when I didn’t feel like I belonged here, but I do remember a time, like fantasying when I was younger, ‘Oh I’m going go live in a America, Hollywood, being an actress’, because I did a lot of acting, so being an actress overseas and stuff. But, that was very – without knowledge about the world. That was without knowledge of the world and now that I’m older, I think that has changed.

Int: Was it this trip to South Korea that was like…

Roxane: I think it solidified it.

Int: Solidified the belonging.

Roxane: Yes, yes, yes.

Int: And then, one of the things is do you feel safe in South Africa?

Roxane: No.

Int: When you were in South Korea, did you feel safe there?

Roxane: Yes.

Int: Does that not effect your sense of belonging?

Roxane: I don’t know if it effects my sense of belonging, I think it does effect maybe the way I operate is very different, like in South Korea I could walk at night by myself with my phone out.

Int: Which is the weirdest thing for a South African to do, like.

Roxane: \*Laughs. I could go onto a train at midnight and go to any city.

Int: No issue, no problem.

Roxane: Phone out. And I knew no issue was going to happen. And here, you wouldn’t catch me dead. And never catch me doing anything of the sort. So, maybe it does effect my sense of belonging, because sometimes you do think, ‘Ag, maybe I’ll be safer somewhere else, maybe I would – it would be better for me somewhere else’, but then I think other things outweigh it for me.

Int: I also had another participant, and she currently lives in Denmark now. And she was talking about how difficult it was for her to firstly take those steps out at night.

Roxane: Yes.

Int: To walk at night.

Roxane: Yes.

Int: Did you experience something similar?

Roxane: Yes, I did, like I had – my school was across the road from me, so I would just walk to school. And sometimes it would be at night, and the grocery store were all – everything was very convenient. But like, I just had like a, ‘My phone must be in my pocket, my bag – I can’t have my backpack with me in a certain way. I can’t be walking in a certain way’, also because I’m like, ‘Oh my gosh, I’m black’, they are already all staring at me, so now I’m like – I was very, very, very conscious of everything that I was doing. And then over time you realise this is actually very safe. Then you become comfortable, you do become comfortable.

Int: We were speaking about this, there is almost this sense of you’re always being constantly aware of your safety in South Africa.

Roxane: Yes.

Int: Then you go overseas, you carry this awareness with you.

Roxane: Mm.

Int: Did it entirely go away at some point while you were there or was it always with you the entire time.

Roxane: It was always with me.

Int: Even throughout the whole entire seven months, even the day you left you were like ‘Okay, I’m still carrying this with me, I still have to watch my phone’?

Roxane: Yes. Even when I was travelling. When I was in Dubai – it’s also because, I travelled before, and my phone got stolen in Russia.

Int: The Russians though.

Roxane: Ya, ya. \*Laughs.

Int: Ya, ya. \*Laughs.

Roxane: But you see, I didn’t realise everywhere I’m going I’m stilling feeling, ‘I need to be conscious, I need to see, I need to make sure I’m safe’, because if something happens, I’m scared someone is going to blame me.

Int: Ya, but that seems to be our vein of thought – we blame the victim for their crime.

Roxane: Yes.

Int: “It’s your fault’.

Roxane: ‘It’s your fault’.

Int: ‘Why were you wearing that’.

Roxane: That, that, that, is the literally – and I’m such a. I do not believe in victim blaming like at all because that’s not who I am and I’m a very, very strong advocate for women, so it really does bother me, even though I know – but I know other people could blame me and people aren’t as strong of a – what’s it called,? They not voicing their voices like we do, but…

Int: It’s an issue.

Roxane: Ya.

Int: So, what are some of the daily safety precautions you take as a woman in South Africa?

Roxane: I lock my car every time I get out of my car. I have to double check it’s locked. I make sure I don’t drive with my phone near me. I have my handbag under my seat. I drive with my front – my passenger seat forward so that it can look like there is someone in front. \*Laughs.

Int: I haven’t heard of that one, that one is an interesting one ya.

Roxane: Ya.

Int: Makes a lot of sense though.

Roxane: Like from the back, if it’s leaning forward, no one can actually see that you’re driving alone. I try not to drive too late at night alone.

Int: That’s the other thing. Ya so.

Roxane: \*Sighs.

Int: I’ve been asking the participants tis, because it is mostly young South African women I have been interviewing. You go out to the club?

Roxane: Yes, yes.

Int: So, let’s say I’ve got a cousin coming from overseas, like she’s going out to the club for the first time ever, can you give her like a survival guide to Pretorian clubs, or whatever clubs you usually go out to or used to go out to.

Roxane: Do not accept drinks from strangers.

Int: Not at all.

Roxane: Not at all. Like, if a stranger is going to buy you a drink watch the bartender make it. Do not be in a space or don’t go with people you are not comfortable with. Go with your own money. Make sure battery is charged, make sure you have a full battery. Ya, those are my, ya. I will not advocate for ‘don’t wear short-shorts’- wear what you want to wear.

Int: Wear what you want to wear, like honestly.

Roxane: Honestly.

Int: Going out in clubs, have you had bad experiences at a club, or do you know of anyone whose had like their drinks being spiked or being touched inappropriately or something like that.

Roxane: Touched inappropriately all the time.

Int: All the time.

Roxane: Every – I don’t remember a time I was not touched inappropriately.

Int: That’s like really scary.

Roxane: It is. It’s even to a point where you get used to it, like because I don’t think men realise that touching, like passing by and touching you – I don’t want to be touched.

Int: No.

Roxane: But I’ve also gotten to a point now where I vocalise that. “Stop touching me! Don’t touch me.”  
And then men are like, “Oh my gosh, what are you doing?”  
But I know my friend – I had a friend who was spiked.

Int: Oof. That’s quite scary.

Roxane: But there was so many of us and she wasn’t drinking, she was sober. So, she had like a water or Red Bull, and she got spiked. And she was throwing up, and we were all just like-

Int: ‘What the heck is happening’.

Roxane: And she’s acting – and we were all like, ‘You’re acting drunk, but you’re sober’, and that’s when we realised she was spiked.

Int: And then all the girlfriends were like ‘Okay let’s just’-

Roxane: It was girls and guys.

Int: And everyone was like, ‘Let’s do this’.

Roxane: Everyone was like, ‘We’re going home’.

Int: Yeah, ‘Teamwork, let’s get out of there’.

Roxane: Yeah.

Int: So, I’ve been asking the participants this too it’s, ‘Girls get touched inappropriately at the club’, like you said all the time, it’s basically a guarantee, you expect it to happen now.

Roxane: Yes.

Int: Does it happen to guys?

Roxane: I think so.

Int: That girls will go by and touch a body inappropriately.

Roxane: Yes. And I think girls think that it is more okay.

Int: That’s the other thing. Yeah, guys don’t voice this.

Roxane: They don’t voice it, and they don’t realise that they are being violated.

Int: Yes.

Roxane: And women think it’s okay to just, ‘Ag let me just go and touch you, I can do what I want because it’s a man’. It does happen.

Int: It does.

Roxane: Maybe not as often, but it does happen.

Int: I’ve understood this to mean basically that someone is feeling entitled to someone else’s body.

Roxane: Yes.

Int: Where does this sense of entitlement come from?

Roxane: The patriarchy.

Int: Ah, yes the patriarchy.

Roxane: \*Laughs. The patriarchy! I know, I know, I know, it is such a common answer, but it is the patriarchy. Men always know that they can, ‘If want a woman, I can get her. I don’t have too much, I can take’. Or just, always wanting to take yeah.

Int: Ya, we’re just going to move a little bit forward.

Roxane: That’s fine.

Int: How would you describe your life as a South African woman living in South Africa?

Roxane: Scary, but sometimes it is freeing; sometimes being able to be myself, I know I am able to be myself and I try to find myself in spaces where I can-

Int: Be yourself.

Roxane: Be myself, yes.

Int: With this in mind and joining it with what we just spoke about, there’s this woman who started an ‘only girls club’. It’s a club just for girls to go into. Do you think that would do really well here in South Africa or is that something… it’s a bit of a fad thing?

Roxane: I don’t know what – I don’t know if it would do really well in South Africa, because we’re still also trying to process gender.

Int: Yeah.

Roxane: \*Laughs. So, South Africans are still trying to understand gender: trans people, non-binary people. And at what stage do you decide that someone is not ‘woman enough’ or ‘girl enough’ to allow into your club.

Int: Exactly, how do we draw that line.

Roxane: ‘How do we draw that line’. Because then we say, let’s say ‘gay men’, they are very, very, very flamboyant, but it is a ‘girls only club’, so they are not allowed in.

Int: And they are technically a ‘safe man’, if we can put it like that.

Roxane: Exactly, exactly. They are safer people for us. They definitely would not be allowed into an all-male club.

Int: Yah.

Roxane: And then, South African clubs thrive off of men.

Int: Oh yes, men buying drinks.

Roxane: Ya. So, I don’t think it would work in South Africa.

Int: On this topic of, ‘how do we - who do we say is a woman, who we don’t say is a woman’. I’m sure you are aware that there is this argument of ‘biological woman’ and then there is a social definition of a woman.

Roxane: Yes.

Int: But what I find interesting in these situations, is that we have women who are actively advocating against abortion rights or against sexual harassment laws and legislation. Are those women still in the category of women or are they traitors?

Roxane: \*Laughs. Traitors. \*Laughs. Sorry, who are you to tell me what I can do with my body. It doesn’t matter – my mother cannot tell me, my father cannot tell me. These are people who made me.

Int: Technically, yes.

Roxane: Technically. Who are you to say, ‘No, I can’t have an abortion’; what if I’m just not ready for a child?

Int: Very valid.

Roxane: What if I was raped and then suddenly, and then… yah.

Int: So, when we’re looking at the sense of feeling safe in South Africa, you say you don’t feel safe in South Africa at all.

Roxane: No.

Int: Are there places where you feel safe in South Africa?

Roxane: Yes, I do.

Int: Where are those places?

Roxane: My home, at school, also I like have found like clubs and stuff where I do feel safe, or events – I’m more like an advent person, where if it’s in an open space during the day I do feel very safe. I went to ‘Rocking the Daisies’.

Int: Oh, awesome!

Roxane: \*Laughs. But I went to the one here in Joburg.

Int: Oh, okay.

Roxane: Yah, meh.

Int: Next time.

Roxane: Yeah, next time. Um, I went to that one but like it was the safest space, like I didn’t – I walked in and at no point did I feel like anything was going to happen to me. And I don’t know why, there was nothing specific, nothing different about going to Daisies or like going to any other place, but I felt safer. I guess the people around were also very like… ‘free’.

Int: Ya, festival people.

Roxane: Very festival people. And I felt in that moment, ‘Okay, I’m safe’.

Int: Have you ever done Splashy festival in the Drakensburg?

Roxane: No.

Int: I highly suggest that you go. It’s five days of hardcore camping though.

Roxane: Ahh. \*Laughs.

Int: But it’s literally South Africa’s friendliest festival, it’s amazing.

Roxane: Okay. I’ll research it.

Int: Like you’ll have parents with kids, and then like literally teenagers just absolutely bugged on the one side and children like ‘Weeee’. It’s something else.

Roxane: Okay.

Int: It really is a special experience.

Roxane: Okay, I definitely need to experience that.

Int: So, these places where you feel safe, you said your home, at school, and then at this festival. You’re not really sure why rocking – well, Daisies-

Roxane: No.

Int: Was this very safe place. What makes your home a safe place?

Roxane: My home is a safe place because I am also able to be free. I can dress what I want, I can say what I want, I can do what I want. There is no one looking at me and judging me. It’s not a judgmental space and I feel that’s why I feel the safest.

Int: It’s your space?

Roxane: It’s my space. It’s my own special space, yah.

Int: And you’ve been in this home for how long?

Roxane: Eight months.

Int: Eight months, oh it’s still a new home.

Roxane: It’s still a new home.

Int: And you’ve imprinted yourself into this new space?

Roxane: Yes.

Int: How did you do that.

Roxane: I left my parents’ house feeling like I need to leave. I just needed to leave, and I think just trying to – and I moved with my sister, so we just try to make it a space where we are very comfortable. The things that we were doing in our parents’ house, sneaking out, it was very not necessary anymore, and then that’s when I think I realised that this is home.

Int: There are spaces in South Africa where you obviously don’t feel safe. We have this very small collection of spaces where you feel safe. Um, what are those spaces where you feel just not safe? Or you just can’t go as a woman or shouldn’t go?

Roxane: The mall.

Int: All malls?

Roxane: I hate malls.

Int: Oh I hate Menlyn too, don’t worry.

Roxane: I don’t walk into Menlyn. I haven’t been into Menlyn in like six years.

Int: Oo, you haven’t seen the new Menlyn.

Roxane: No, I haven’t. I don’t go into malls. I went to Mall of Africa recently, like last week, because I needed an outfit. I literally park at a space where I know I’m just going to walk for like, and then get out, cause like I’m going to that specific store and that’s it. I don’t like malls, I don’t like shopping centres. I was attacked at a shopping centre a few months ago.

Int: I’m so sorry.

Roxane: It’s okay. I was attacked at a shopping centre. Um, I don’t know. Clubs, I’m semi, cause you get there buzzing so it’s not like I’m – but like I don’t feel safe there, but I’m not like as vigilant as in the mall. Taxi ranks. I’m trying to think of other spaces. I don’t frequent. I don’t go to a lot of places, so it’s like mm yeah.

Int: One of the ones that has come up quite constantly is CBD.

Roxane: Yes!

Int: Don’t go to CBD at all?

Roxane: No.

Int: Pretoria CBD or Hillbrow, or neither CBD, just not a chance that you’re going to walk into there?

Roxane: No. I used to walk in there when I was in varsity, when I didn’t have a car.

Int: Had no choice, you had to.

Roxane: I had to. Or like I had to take a bus or then missed the bus I had to take a taxi, that was my first year varsity and that was it.

Int: That was it. Do you mind if we talk about the attack that happened at the shopping centre?

Roxane: No.

Int: So, how did this happen, what happened?

Roxane: So, I walked out of my car and I was walking – so, Jean Avenue in Centurion. I walked into Pick ‘n Pay Clothing, to go exchange something. So I walk in and then someone is following me, this man is following me. And I look at him and I go to do my shopping – he waits outside of Pick ‘n Pay. So, I see that he is waiting and I’m like, ‘okay’. I go into another store, I go back into Pick ‘n Pay, and he’s still waiting. So, now I’m walking back to my car, but like – I’m pacing. I get to my car and he’s like, “Can I have your number?”  
And I’m like, “No.”  
“Can I have your number.”  
“No.”  
He’s like, “Why don’t you want to give me your number?”  
And I’m like, “I just don’t want to.”  
“I just want to be your friend.”  
“I have enough friends.”  
And then he pushes me against my car. And like, I pushed him back.

Int: Gee, ya!

Roxane: And I don’t know what – so, I pushed him back and then the security guard saw him and came and stopped him. “Dude, just stop she doesn’t want to give you her number.”   
And then he took him away, but ya.

Int: Geez, um, if the security guard wasn’t there, do you think you would have fought a lot more, do you think you would’ve just turned around and just ran?

Roxane: I would have fought a lot more.

Int: Was your reaction to this situation ‘I’m going to fight’.

Roxane: That specific situation, I fought.

Int: Have you experienced crime prior to that?

Roxane: Yes.

Int: Ooof, do you mind if we get into that for a moment?

Roxane: Mmm, no. I’m sorry, no.

Int: No worries.

Roxane: It’s a trigger, so.

Int: I completely understand, um. Dealing with the South African Police Force?

Roxane: I didn’t go.

Int: You didn’t go at all. What is your view of the South African Police Force?

Roxane: In terms of… when it comes to sexual assault, it’s useless.

Int: In general as well?

Roxane: I also think they are pretty useless.

Int: \*Laughs. They’re pretty useless.

Roxane: \*Laughs. They are pretty useless. Like, unless it is like my – I don’t even know what crime would possibly allow them to like work for me. People have broken into my car with surveillance and nothing has happened, so.

Int: Completely useless. You put your faith into private security?

Roxane: Rather.

Int: Rather ADT’s and all of that.

Roxane: Rather.

Int: With that, um, we build our house in South Africa in a very specific way.

Roxane: Yes.

Int: They are quite fortified.

Roxane: Yes.

Int: I’m just interested, what’s your physical structure of your home; what’s the safety precautions that are applied to your home?

Roxane: So, I live in a complex, so it has – what do you call – electric fence around it. And then I live in like a flat, a townhouse. I have burglar bars everywhere.

Int: Alarm system as well?

Roxane: No, the alarm system is within the complex.

Int: Oh cool. Do you have like security?

Roxane: Yes, we have security. We have security cars inside also, yah.

Int: Patrolling?

Roxane: Patrolling constantly.

Int: Geez. When you were moving, you said prior to your recent move, and you’re looking for your home, like your ‘wish list’ for your home – ‘oh, I want a garden, I want two bedrooms’. How high did safety rank on that list?

Roxane: For this specific time, this was my parents’ house. So, they have always had this house ready for us. So, I wasn’t like I necessarily had a choice in where I wanted to stay, like that’s not where I want to live. That’s not where I want to settle. But like in terms of next time, safety is a big thing. I do need to live within a complex or within an estate. I will not live in a standalone house.

Int: Yah, I don’t blame you. It’s a general feeling as well.

Roxane: Yah.

Int: Um, we did speak about that one, um… sorry, I just have to find my space. So, in South Africa we have this general notion – well, I don’t know if you were at Tuks at the time with the ‘#AmINext?’ movement that erupted?

Roxane: Yes, I wasn’t at Tuks, but I was still like -

Int: Aware of what was happening?

Roxane: I think I was in varsity. I was in UJ.

Int: Oh you were in UJ. What was the response at UJ, because I was at Tuks?

Roxane: What year was it?

Int: I think it was 2019 – end of 2019.

Roxane: Oh, I was in Korea.

Int: Oh okay.

Roxane: I had graduated 2018. I was in Korea and I had, I felt a sense of sisterhood with South African women, because many of us have been through very similar situations or situations where because it was – it started with that girl who was-

Int: Uynene.

Roxane: Uynene got killed at the Post Office. And my mom and I were speaking on the phone and she was like, “If you went to the Post Office, you would never tell me.”

Int: No.

Roxane: “You would never tell me, because it is just a Post Office.” That was the thing for me – it was something so small.

Int: Insignificant.

Roxane: Insignificant, but she still got killed. And, ‘Am I next?’.

Int: Yeah, that was a big question on South African womens’ mind.

Roxane: Like it was, could I go to the shops now? If I go to Spar, I don’t tell my sister, “By the way I’m stopping at Spar.”

Int: Why would you?

Roxane: Why would I.

Int: In other places in the world, would you say, “By the way I’m going to Spar and then I’m going to the Post Office.”

Roxane: No! Sometimes, you’re even driving and, “Oh let me go quickly and buy something.” And then I could still get killed then. \*Laughs.

Int: That’s what’s so scary about it.

Roxane: It’s so scary – like I even have an example. Last week, I went to Checkers and I’m in the line and I have my stuff with me, and some man is behind me. And he is like on top of me. So, I think that he is with the people in front of me, because they have a big trolley and it’s four of them, and I’m like, “Okay.”

Int: “Do you need to get through.”

Roxane: I even asked him, “Are you with them?”  
And he was like, “No.”  
So, I’m moving and he moves with me. So, like every time the line moves, he’s next to me. Eventually I stop, he also stops, and then I’m like, “You can go in front of me, it’s okay because clearly you are in a rush.”  
He doesn’t go in front of me. I literally – then I was like, ‘Okay cool,’ pay, I ran to my car, locked my car and I just drove. And yeah, I drove and I just drove, I even -

Int: Bolted home.

Roxane: Bolted home, I was like, “You know what this is actually very scary.”

Int: You get home and you’re like, ‘Just have to take a breath and sit down’.

Roxane: As soon as I got into like my complex, I’m like \*Breathes out. Literally.

Int: So, you get into your complex and you’re like ‘I’m safe, I’m home’, ‘I’m okay right now’.

Roxane: Yeah.

Int: Are there people that are like that for you, that if you’re having a really bad day or if you’re just not having a great time, you see these people and you’re like, ‘okay, \*Breathes out’, “I’m okay, I’m alright.”

Roxane: Yes.

Int: Is it a lot more with people or is it more with spaces? People?

Roxane: Yes.

Int: What is your biggest fear living in South Africa?

Roxane: Getting raped.

Int: I think that is a fear that all women have.

Roxane: Ya, I think being attacked and like, because men do have a sense of entitlement that actually baffles me.

Int: The audacity.

Roxane: The like – it actually scares me and like black men in particular.

Int: Yeah, that seems to be the imagined criminal or the imagined rapist.

Roxane: Yes, yes. The imagined but also the most like…

Int: The stats prove it.

Roxane: The stats prove it, and obviously yes, there are more of them in the country but still it’s like they’re – and it doesn’t matter who or what they came from, lower class, upper class, all of them are the same.

Int: The entitled. I mean we had a president who was convicted – not convicted of rape but accused.

Roxane: Yeah.

Int: Heavily accused with a decent amount of evidence.

Roxane: And I’m like, I’m very like a big feminist. And obviously when I’m at work I try to contain that. \*Laughs.

Int: Yeah, you have to. As a teacher you have to.

Roxane: As a teacher I have to but like in my own capacity I’m very heavily feminist. I do not – I have cut off many men. I had a best friend I cut him off very quickly. I don’t care . I was like, “I would rather believe a woman lying than a man who is actually a rapist.”

Int: Exactly. We have – I love when people are like, “But men get raped to.”  
Yes, okay but that’s one percent.

Roxane: Or, “No there are false accusations.” – Okay, cool, but there are also real accusations.

Int: If we look at this in terms of percentage, truth outweighs the falsehood.

Roxane: Literally! All the time. And people don’t actually hear that.

Int: Yes.

Roxane: And I have cut off a lot of people, even women, who feel that way, and I’m just like, “I’m sorry, our, our-

Int: ‘This can’t continue’.

Roxane: Our views don’t align and for me that’s just not a friendship that I can continue.

Int: Do you that’s how we should treat people that view it this way so it can eventually, hopefully, stop?

Roxane: Yes. \*Laughs.

Int: Yes. \*Laughs. Just cut and dry, ‘We’re done with it’.

Roxane: Yes. Like an example, someone who we trusted as, um – so, my sister is non-binary.

Int: Oh awesome.

Roxane: Yes. \*Laughs.

Int: No, lovely, this is just such an interesting, what’s it, a different type of sister to have – or person to have, sibling to have.

Roxane: No, we still say sister. Like we had a conversation and I was like, “Are you still my sister?”   
And they were like, “Yeah.”  
And I was like, “Okay, cool.”  
So, my sister is non-binary, goes by Larry, and we had a friend. Who decided to violate my sister sexually. Yes. And like he was really close to us, like came to our house every day when we were -

Int: He was a friend.

Roxane: He was a friend. We were living at our parents’ house and he would come to our parents’ house, have dinner with us almost daily. He decided, ‘Oh let me just violate her’ – them, sorry. I still make the mistake.

Int: You’re learning.

Roxane: I am, it’s been about a year.

Int: Oh that’s still very, very, very new.

Roxane: It is! \*Laughs. It’s still very new, so. And then they were like, my sister told me and I was like, ‘Cool whatever’, cut him off completely. But then we told our one other friend who met him through us, and she said, “Oh my gosh, I’m going to stop talking to him.”  
One day we had a feeling that she didn’t stop speaking to him and we went through her phone. And she was still speaking to him, she was still sending him sexy pictures. So, we were kind of just like confronted her and she was like, “I don’t believe in cancel culture.”

Int: Cancel culture and consequences are two different things!

Roxane: Thank you! \*Claps hands. We were like, “But this is not cancel culture.”

Int: This is cut off culture but-

Roxane: He actually violated someone you know, someone you consider your friend, no. We haven’t spoken to her since.

Int: I don’t blame you.

Roxane: \*Laughs.

Int: People do not understand the concept of loyalty and it baffles me.

Roxane: And I think outside of loyalty for me it was, ‘So you’re okay with being friend with someone who did that?’

Int: Traitor.

Roxane: Traitor! And I was just sitting there, I was like – I remember being like, my sister put it on loud speaker, and I just went…

Int: ‘What’s happening?’

Roxane: No, I actually need to read this message. \*Laughs.

Int: Ohhh. Evidence! Get the receipts, let’s see them.

Roxane: Oh my gosh, I just need to remember when it was. Cancel, cancel, that’s what to search, just cancel. Ah here. She said, um, “I could go on and on and explain the context of the situation but as a friend I’m sorry that you feel that I didn’t have your side. That is what I am sorry for. If you think it came from a place of being a snake then you genuinely don’t know me, because I don’t move like that. I don’t believe in the good in people, I believe in second chances. I don’t believe in cancel culture and I can’t change based on friends. And I can’t be expected to be someone else to show that I have your back. This never came from a place of hurt or to spite you. If you want to classify me as a snake to feel better, I can’t change that.”

Int: I mean.

Roxane: \*Laughs.

Int: You’re just better off without some people.

Roxane: Literally. I read that message and I was like – because I was at work and my sister was like, ‘forward’, and I went, “Alright.”

Int: ‘Put this away for now, I’m at work’.

Roxane: No, no, I left class. I walked, and I called and went, “Say this.” \*Laughs.

Int: ‘Let’s fight!’

Roxane: ‘Lets fight’!

Int: Exactly. This is the other thing, is we have violators all the time, all over the place, and then some are convicted and are sent to prison. We have an incredibly high rate of reoffending as well. So, prison clearly isn’t working. They have increased the prison sentences for rape, I think it is now a mandatory twenty, we have increased them. There is a lot more put into like victim rehabilitation and everything, the problem is it’s still happening. So, prison sentences aren’t working. Do you have any idea or suggestion of how we could change this or how we should be dealing with these offenders?

Roxane: I actually have no idea. I’ve thought about it, because outside of just abuse – gender-based violence. I still can’t trust anyone who has been to jail, because like they’ve been rehabilitated, I don’t think they are.

Int: We don’t have proof that you are.

Roxane: We don’t have proof. I don’t know if you’re doing it to your wife now, I don’t know like, I don’t know actually what could help.

Int: You’re a teacher.

Roxane: Yes.

Int: And you teach in an all-boys school.

Roxane: Yes.

Int: The majority of these offenders are boys, well men.

Roxane: Mm.

Int: As a teacher in this capacity do you feel a responsibility to help change this view of almost masculine entitlement to the feminine body?

Roxane: I do. I feel like the South African schooling system needs to put it somewhere. Like I am a very strong advocate for teaching ‘no means no’. And I have started to teach that very young because if you start with things like a pencil, eventually they will start to understand that ‘no means no’. And I think that’s where it needs to start.

Int: At school this is where it needs to start, because at home this is not happening.

Roxane: No, it’s not. It’s definitely not happening at home, so at school is where it needs to be, because if you ask – like you know how we ask our little siblings, “Can I get a kiss?”  
And they’re like, “No.”  
We all as adults need to remember that they are saying, “No.”

Int: And that’s fine.

Roxane: And I know we get offended, but we actually need to start putting that into society that ‘no means no’.

Int: And that’s okay.

Roxane: And not only in the rape circumstance, it’s every single circumstance. “Oh why don’t you want to give me your sweet?” – because I don’t want to.

Int: Exactly, and you shouldn’t feel bad about not wanting to.

Roxane: Exactly, and also I don’t have to give you a reason.

Int: There we go.

Roxane: I don’t have to give you a reason.

Int: You are not entitled to a reason.

Roxane: You’re not. And that’s what I’ve been trying to – it’s a mindset that I’ve been trying to change in my life and to get other people to change.

Int: It is a mindset thing.

Roxane: Yes, yes.

Int: Beke Cele mos said, “Rape is a social issue so it can’t be fixed by the police.” But Beke Cele is some other issue. Rape is a social issue and it does come down to the fact that there is a perception of the female body, that it belongs to others. I’m going to get a bit theoretical, but if we look at how women is defined it is defined as the ‘other of man’. So, everything that a man is, a woman has to be the opposite. If men are strong, women are weak, if men are rational, women are emotional. And this seems to go like this. but when we’re looking at this term of, rational and irrational, emotional, I link this to… I’m going to go back for a moment. So, belonging we can define as having a home and feeling safe, but it’s clearly not a situation in South Africa where safety is a factor here.

Roxane: Yes, yes.

Int: But you still belong.

Roxane: Yes.

Int: So, we almost have to take safety out of the equation.

Roxane: When we talk about South Africa, yes.

Int: Exactly. So, the other way of looking at it, is you feel like you belong in places where you have a voice. Do you feel like you have a voice in South Africa?

Roxane: Yes.

Int: Is that voice heard?

Roxane: I don’t know.

Int: Does it fall on deaf ears or is it not seen as a ‘rational’ voice?

Roxane: It is not seen as a rational voice. I get into a lot of debate with my family and they will tell me that I’m being irrational and sometimes it’s just like, I’m a passionate person. I’m not irrational, I’m not being – just because I’m screaming out what I am saying doesn’t mean I’m not saying the truth.

Int: Yeah, just because I’m crying doesn’t mean-

Roxane: Yes, just because I’m crying doesn’t mean it’s not true.

Int: Exactly. I had someone say the other day, “Why do we view tears as a weakness?”

Roxane: Why.

Int: It’s so true, why do we view tears as a weakness. If more boys cried I think a lot of things would be solved.

Roxane: Yah.

Int: A lot less fights would happen.

Roxane: A lot less wars. \*Laughs.

Int: Less wars! I love that quote, um, “If countries were run by women we wouldn’t have wars, just countries not talking to each other.” \*Laughs.

Roxane: \*Laughs. Because we’re petty. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs. Ya, basically. It would be like the cold war, it would be great.

Roxane: Literally, because like nothing that destructive.

Int: Yes. That was the other thing, um, guys are very physical. Guys will fight, girls will just ignore and not talk to each other or get very catty and that’s another situation. Um, this quickness to violence with guys, do you see it in as young as you teach?

Roxane: Yes.

Int: And how do you solve that? How do you step into it, do you kind of just let them sort it out or?

Roxane: No we don’t. One thing we actually emphasize is that violence is not the answer, you cannot push someone. And they will tell you – or I will ask, “Why did you push someone?”  
“Because he punched me.”

Int: And?

Roxane: You can’t fire with fire.

Int: Yeah, it’s going to make more fire.

Roxane: It’s going to make more fire. You guys are both going to be angry with each other, you’re both going to have broken arms, and then what happens after – are you happy?

Int: You’ll have matching casts, maybe you’ll find some friendship.

Roxane: I think we try to emphasize that or I try to emphasize that with them – that you can’t fight fire with fire, you can’t fight violence with violence, like all of you actually need to take a deep breath. I think that is the one thing: stop being impulsive. Stop being impulsive, and men are very impulsive.

Int: Where do you think that comes from?

Roxane: I think it’s like a generational thing, I don’t know. I think like them watching their dads not actually tap into their emotions makes them realise, ‘I’m a man ahh, strong, masculinity’, that type of thing.

Int: Do you have a brother or a cousin?

Roxane: I do.

Int: Did you see if your brother was raised different than how you and your sibling were raised?

Roxane: Yes, my brother is much older than me.

Int: Oh okay.

Roxane: So, I don’t know if I can compare that. My older brother is twelve years older than me.

Int: Oh that’s really much older, yeah.

Roxane: Yeah, it’s a pretty big gap, because by the time he left the house, I was still in primary school. So, I didn’t really see that, but with my little brother I see it. My parents are divorced, so I’m talking about different families.

Int: Multiple families yeah.

Roxane: Multiple families yeah. My little brother has been treated a lot differently, raised differently, because he is the only guy.

Int: He’s the young, little baby.

Roxane: He’s the youngest and he’s the only boy out of six girls.

Int: Woah, big family!

Roxane: Yeah, I have a really big family. I have a huge family. So, he is the only guy out of six girls. He is taught like completely – ya, he can do what he wants. He can do what he wants, he can have what he wants. And I’m trying to break it out of him, and a big part of me is tying to get him to this school.

Int: Hopefully, they will sort him out.

Roxane: No, because he is in grade three.

Int: Oh, he’s a little kiddo.

Roxane: He’s a little kid. It’s things that can be broken.

Int: He’s still young enough to mould.

Roxane: He’s still young enough for us to mould him, and my parents are not seeing that so I’m just – but yeah.

Int: You said previously, that you had to sneak out of your own house, did you brother had to do that, your older brother?

Roxane: I don’t know.

Int: Don’t know.

Roxane: I don’t know, but I don’t think he would have had to.

Int: Your parents would have been like, ‘you can go out, you’ll be fine’.

Roxane: Yes, yes, yes. I don’t know why that is, like even as teaching people how to drive and all of this, we are taught later in life, we are taught – I don’t know why.

Int: These are Doctorate questions. I’ll ask them later.

Roxane: Yes, you need to.

Int: I’ll send you the answers if I find them.

Roxane: \*Laughs. Please!

Int: One of the things that I found so interesting was how our parents instil a lot of our safety precautions.

Roxane: Yes.

Int: So, before I go out my mom is like, “Okay, phone charged-

Roxane: Yes.

Int: “Do you have money.”

Roxane: Yes.

Int: “Do you have airtime, do you have data.”

Roxane: Yes.

Int: All of these things, um. Parents did the same to you?

Roxane: Mm.

Int: Any special things your parents did to you before leaving the house.

Roxane: ‘If anything happens call me’.

Int: Yeah.

Roxane: Or like, ‘don’t drink and drive, rather stop or uber home. I’d rather shout at you alive’.

Int: Very valid – ‘I’d rather shout at you living than you dead’.

Roxane: Yes.

Int: You can’t speak ill of the dead.

Roxane: Yes! \*Laughs. But yeah, I’d rather shout at you while you are alive.

Int: And does this not instil a sense of ‘a lack of safety’?

Roxane: Yeah , probably.

Int: So, like we were speaking earlier, you said you don’t feel safe at all in South Africa.

Roxane: Not at all.

Int: Is that a feeling you’ve had throughout your life or is that something you grew up and realised?

Roxane: I’m not actually sure. I think I probably grew up and realised it. Or my parents have constantly had that thing of also – yeah, I think so. No, I actually think that my parents instilled in me, you know like when I first got my period, my parents: “Stay away from boys.”  
“What do you mean?”

Int: It was the first thing that you were told?

Roxane: My dad told me to stay away from boys, “You’re a woman now, stay away from boys.”  
I’m eleven?

Int: ‘I’m eleven’, yeah.

Roxane: I’m not a woman, I’m a – a baby.

Int: Yeah, you’re a child.

Roxane: I’m a child, and what do you mean I need to stay away from boys – I go to school with boys. \*Laughs.

Int: What am I supposed – ‘Father, I am bleeding’.

Roxane: ‘I’m just bleeding from my vagina’, exactly. \*Laughs.

Int: ‘I’m still me’.

Roxane: But, yeah. \*Laughs.

Int: Shame, but I do feel bad for men and periods, they are so uncomfortable like that – I love it.

Roxane: Yeah, relax its just blood.

Int: Exactly, calm down. My sister had severe period pains like a month ago, we were in Cape Town with my dad. And my dad did not know what to do – this poor man. We were in a hotel and we were supposed to book out, and he goes to the front office and he was like, “Can we please stay for a bit longer?”  
The front desk woman was like, “Oh why sir?”  
And he was like, “My daughter, she’s um… she’s in pain.”

Roxane: \*Laughs.

Int: “…With the, period.”

Roxane: \*Laughs.

Int: And I’m standing next to him and I’m like, “Bru?”

Roxane: “With the… period.” \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs. “With the period.” And you can see that he is so uncomfortable.

Roxane: Just relax.

Int: Be calm, it’s fine alright – it’s not my fault you can’t think of a woman as a functioning biological thing.

Roxane: There’s also that. I don’t know like – ya, men are weird.

Int: Men are weird, but sometimes men are sweet I must say.

Roxane: Yeah, sometimes.

Int: As much as this research tends to indicate that I don’t like men-

Roxane: Can’t live with them, can’t live without them.

Int: Exactly. Sometimes they really are cute, especially boys. That’s saying, ‘Boys will be boys’, I do agree with it in some sense.

Roxane: In some sense, yes.

Int: But when does that become, ‘Boys will be boys, boys will be sexual offenders’?

Roxane: When ‘boys’ become toxic.

Int: Yes – when does that become a toxic thing?

Roxane: I don’t know when it does, but that’s why I think I’m trying to stop saying ‘Boys will be boys’, because we use it under all circumstances and then we can’t differentiate – we can’t say, ‘Boys will be boys, but’.

Int: We don’t ever say, ‘girls will be girls’.

Roxane: No, no. We never do say, ‘Girls will be girls’.

Int: We never do say that yah.

Roxane: Woah.

Int: The other one I love to talk about is that there are so many words for a woman that sleeps around – and one that I like is ‘man-whore’, but that’s technically taken from a ‘woman word’, and then ‘fuckboy’ which is kind of a trophy almost.

Roxane: Yeah.

Int: A sign of prestige.

Roxane: Yeah. And then for us it’s, “You’re a whore, you’re a slut.”

Int: Exactly.

Roxane: And it’s like, “Dude, what is wrong with being sexually liberated?”- what is wrong with it?

Int: Please tell me, I’ve been waiting to know, because technically, men are sleeping with someone. And you can’t slut-shame a woman if you still want to sleep around.

Roxane: Exactly! We get slut shamed for the smallest of things, like kissing a person. Like, “Dude, you do it all the time.”

Int: Exactly.

Roxane: \*Sighs. Society.

Int: \*Laughs. Society. Um, so we’ve talked a lot about you becoming a teach and you being a teacher. What made you want to become I teacher?

Roxane: I didn’t know I wanted to be a teacher.

Int: Until what? You started teaching?

Roxane: Yes. \*Laughs.

Int: Like, “I’m happy, I’m glad I made a good choice.”

Roxane: Literally. I studied psychology.

Int: Oh geez, how was that?

Roxane: I hated it.

Int: I don’t blame you, I hated it too.

Roxane: \*Laughs. I absolutely hated it. I got my degree, but I hated it. I’ll never do it.

Int: No, I got told I can’t be a psychologist because I’m too harsh. Like, it’s not my fault you have a problem , just eat and go have a shower – you’ll be fine, okay.

Roxane: \*Laughs. ‘Jog’.

Int: ‘Jog’. \*Laughs. Jog, take a shower, have a nap, eat a burger.

Roxane: Take a nap! I promise you taking a nap changes everything.

Int: It changes everything!

Roxane: It does, it does, it does.

Int: Go watch The Great British Baking Show, you’ll feel fantastic afterwards.

Roxane: \*Laughs.

Int: So, just a few more questions. About your time in South Korea.

Roxane: Yes.

Int: Did you go out in South Korea, dd you go to the clubs?

Roxane: Yes.

Int: Were you ever hit on while you were there?

Roxane: Yes.

Int: Was it different than being hit on here in South Africa or very much the same?

Roxane: Very much the same.

Int: Very much the same, like entitled or?

Roxane: Very – actually, no I’m lying. It wasn’t entitled, it was a lot of African men, but not South African men. The one South African man that did hit on me, almost got physical. I was like, “They are the same literally everywhere in the world.”  
It was actually disgusting. But it was like African men from like Ghana, Kenya – they were very respectful. They are very respectful of women, they do understand that a woman needs to be taken care of and a woman must not be hurt, but yeah it was very different but ya.

Int: And the Korean men?

Roxane: Not my type.

Int: \*Laughs.

Roxane: I didn’t even – no.

Int: No?

Roxane: No.

Int: Them come near you or they were very respectful and styed their distance?

Roxane: I think they were also very respectful to stay their distance.

Int: Okay.

Roxane: Yeah, they were. The ones that weren’t, they could see, ‘Oh no, I’m not interested’, and they move.

Int: Taking a bit about going out in South Korea, like you said in South Africa – the number one thing when I asked you about a safety guide or a survival guide, ‘Do not get drinks from other people – if you’re getting a drink watch it being poured’. Did you feel the same in South Korea?

Roxane: Everywhere.

Int: Everywhere? All over the world?

Roxane: I don’t care where I am going, that’s still my number one rule.

Int: So, being a South African woman, we live in a country with extremely high rates of gender-based violence and rape. I mean it is quite shocking, it really is. What does this say about South African women’s’ uniting experience if it is violence.

Roxane: That we are – does it say that we are violent?

Int: No, no, no, that we experience violence. That it is something that we are very likely to experience. Is this something we should warn little girls about or is this something we need to change the perception of?

Roxane: I don’t want to say ‘warn little girls’, but I have a little sister who is thirteen and at her camp this year with boys, a coed-camp, one of the boys was groping them.

Int: At thirteen.

Roxane: At thirteen. And it’s like, I haven’t gotten the opportunity to talk to her about it.

Int: But what do you say then?

Roxane: No, I mean like before that happened. After that I obviously had to have the conversation, that, “Listen girl this is wrong.” But before that, I never thought to have that conversation, I’m only thinking at sixteen.

Int: Yes!

Roxane: \*Laughs.

Int: When you start being naughty yourself.

Roxane: Exactly. But I’m not thinking that before she goes on camp that I need to tell her, “Watch out for boys”- no! So, I think maybe we do need to start warning them.

Int: There’s a theorist I love to use, and I’m going to butcher her name, it’s ‘Gqola’, it’s with the ‘q’ click. Fantastic, I thoroughly suggest that everyone read her books. She wrote ‘Rape: A South African Nightmare’, really is a great book. And she’s talks about this situation that South African women live in a violent country, and there is one way we could solve this, we could fight violence with violence, but you’ve said very clearly that’s not going to work.

Roxane: It’s not going to work.

Int: And there have been situations where calls of ‘#AmINext?’ were met with – one of the Jacaranda guys or the ‘#Menaretrash’, his kind of response was “Women you need to start listening.” So, we’re talking, we’re speaking up, we’re trying not to violence-

Roxane: But then-

Int: We’re not being heard. Do you think there might come a point, like in Iran now where the women have said, “Enough is enough, we’re fighting, we’re protesting.” And a lot have been locked up and a lot are facing terrible, terrible, terrible punishment. What do you think is going to become the boiling point for South African women or what do you think will become the reaction?

Roxane: I think we have become desensitised. We have become desensitised, because as soon as Uynene happened we went into and uproar. It was something I have never seen happen before.

Int: Same.

Roxane: It was an uproar. But then it died down very quickly. And in a few years’ time something like that will happen again, and there will be an uproar again. I don’t – I think we have become so desensitised that missing women is just ‘Okay cool’.

Int: ‘It happens’.

Roxane: ‘It happens’.

Int: “It’s just what happens to South African women’.

Roxane: A child get raped, ‘Oh okay, cool, it happens’.

Int: And that’s my thing is that we don’t sit and remember.

Roxane: We don’t remember everyone, like we – like I said, Uynene was the one that I’m just like. I was in Korea and I was having panic attacks. I was busy throwing up, having panic attacks at work, because I was so sad about this. but then, we’ve become so desensitised that it’s like, ‘Oh’. Until it happens to us.

Int: Exactly, until it reaches home.

Roxane: Until it reaches home, and I think it was that one because it was so close to our age.

Int: Yeah, and because it happened at [Post Office]

Roxane: A place where any of us could have been, but like we have become so desensitised that I don’t know if we’ll ever get to a point of-

Int: Fighting or-

Roxane: Mob justice.

Int: Ah, there is a great mob in India, where it’s like a group of women with broomsticks – I don’t know if you’ve heard of them?

Roxane: No.

Int: It in a village – they live in a village – I think it’s in north India, and they have basically eradicated gender-based violence, because what these women do is if they find out a husband has hit his wife or his daughters or something, they take a bunch of broomsticks and beat the living daylights out of the man. And they have eradicated gender-based violence this way.

Roxane: That is good. But another thing that I realised, especially in black culture, gender-based violence is deemed as normal. Like hitting your wife is deemed as…

Int: Disciplining her.

Roxane: Disciplining her. And I think that’s where, maybe in a few years because our generations are starting to understand that’s not how it’s done and we’re trying to change that culture, I think maybe by the time we are grandparents-

Int: We’ll be able to see it.

Roxane: Grand aunties. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs.

Roxane: Grand aunties, then it will happen, but I don’t see it happening anytime soon.

Int: And I just want to talk about your sibling for a little bit, because it just popped into my head.

Roxane: Yes.

Int: Your experiences as a woman, now that your sister has transitioned – I don’t know if ‘transitioned’ is the right word, but has ‘come out’.

Roxane: Yes, yes.

Int: Are there experiences, now being non-binary, very, very, different? Is it a lot worse than what she experiences as being a woman, or is it being able to hide almost not having this clearly feminine body?

Roxane: No, my sister is very feminine. Very, very feminine, and like female passing completely – wears make-up, but they just don’t identify as male or female, but they still like prefer like dresses and will wear crop tops and all of that, but they just don’t identify as a woman, but they still experience everything that women would experience.

Int: Which is interesting, because I would think that they would experience both, what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman or what it means to be neither as well.

Roxane: They – I think it is also because it is all so new.

Int: Yes.

Roxane: It is very new for them to actually explore because it’s, it’s ever changing, because they are also asexual.

Int: Oh geez, it’s a continuum like this, it’s amazing.

Roxane: I’ve always know that they were asexual and aromantic, and then they were like, “Oh no, I’m non-binary.”  
I said, “Okay, cool. What am I?”

Int: ‘Must we throw a party, what do you want’.

Roxane: ‘What do you want – do you want a cake?’ \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs.

Roxane: Like, ‘Alright lets go’.

Int: ‘Congratulations’.

Roxane: ‘Congratulations’. But like, it’s like a continuous like – they also want to experience certain thing, but they don’t like experiencing certain things, so it’s like an everchanging, constant growing, and I was like, “Sexuality is very fluid.”

Int: That’s the thing, for the longest time it’s taken people to realise that it’s on a continuum-

Roxane: No! It’s really not.

Int: Not really guys.

Roxane: Like I look at mine and I’m like, “Yeah, no? I don’t know what’s going on.”

Int: It’s fine we’ll figure it out. How old are you by the way?

Roxane: Twenty-five.

Int: Twenty-five! I mean like come on.

Roxane: Exactly.

Int: And then yah, one last question. What do you think is a defining factor of being a South African woman?

Roxane: A defining factor of being a South African woman… being able to live in such a diverse country.

Int: And you value that diversity?

Roxane: I do, I do.

Int: I mean like South Korea is a very homogenised community.

Roxane: Very homogenised. I value my diversity. I value being able to understand each other’s experiences, without having to speak the same language.

Int: That’s a really beautiful way to put it. I really like that. I’m going to steal that one by the way.

Roxane: \*Laughs. It’s okay. Like without being able to speak the same language we can all literally-

Int: Interact, yah.

Roxane: Understand one another, like we don’t even have to – like you can meet someone from KZN and still be like, “Oh my gosh, I love you, I understand you.”  
I even thought about this like when I was in South Korea, I had South African friends that I had not met here, I met there.

Int: Do the South Africans just kind of gravitate towards each other?

Roxane: Yes.

Int: You just hear the accent and you’re like, “Hello.”

Roxane: Literally, like I remember I was in a store, I was in H&M, and I’m shopping and I’m with my American friend and she goes, “Hi.”  
And I’m like, “Hello?”  
And she’s like, “How are you?” – and she’s black, so usually you’re like ‘where you from?’  
And she goes, “How are you?”  
And I’m like, “You’re South African aren’t you?”  
Literally, she went ‘how are you’, and I‘m like, ‘the accent!’. Or when you hear people speaking Afrikaans. In South Africa I’m like, ‘okay cool’, there I’m like, \*Slams hand down. Literally, there’s even a place called ‘Braai Republic’ there.

Int: Awesome.

Roxane: So, there is a whole braai restaurant, and you go there and you only here South Africans and that’s where you’re like, “Okay.”

Int: “Okay, this is home, the braai.”

Roxane: Yeah.

Int: That’s the one thing – obviously, the braai there has to be a little bit different.

Roxane: The meat sucks. \*Laughs.

Int: \*Laughs. You come home like, “I want steak and I’m only going to eat it from a South African cow.”

Roxane: Literally, literally .

Int: Don’t give me that Wagyu stuff please.

Roxane: No, Wagyu. I want it from a South African cow.

Int: No, stop with your messaging cow stuff, like please.

Roxane: Literally, yeah.

Int: Yeah, send that thing into a field. Um, taking about going into a field – because this is actually concept that a classmate came up with. Like I said, we manufacture a sense of safety here in South Africa. We fortify our homes, we take an immense amount of safety precautions, and rightfully so. This manufactured sense of safety, is it real or is it a façade?

Roxane: It’s a façade.

Int: It’s a façade, nothing can keep us safe here?

Roxane: We can be safe, but I feel like – I don’t think any precaution is enough.

Int: Alright. That is basically all that I have for you today.

Roxane: Alright.

Int: Thank you so, so, so, so much.

Roxane: You’re welcome.

Int: It was a fantastic interview conversation.

Roxane: It really was.

Int: Yeah, if you have any questions, worries, deep-seated concerns you can ask them now.

Roxane: Oh no, I’m good.

Int: Great. You have my email address.

Roxane: I do. Do you need . me to fill out that form and then.

Int: Yes, I’ll send it through to you. Um, if you see anything that you think may be of interest or think of anything afterwards you are more than welcome to send me an email.

Roxane: Articles and.

Int: Ya, please, send all of them through to me. And yeah, thank you so much.

Roxane: You’re welcome.