**Participant 3 – Male, 24, Newham – Part 1**

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So, um, do you wanna start by telling us what you’ve put first?  In the all four boxes? In box one, I’ve put the number ‘1’, in box 2 I’ve put \*gets interrupted\*  No, no, actually, it might good if we start by what you’ve put first and then we can start talking about what you’ve put first. So uh…  As in  Let me just look at my notes…  Yeah.  \*looks at the notes\* Uhm okay, I think I have that, but um, can we start by talking about what you’ve put first?  As in…  Yeah, yeah, yeah.  … elaborate?  Yeah.  So, in box 1 I’ve put the number ‘1’ because when I thought about loneliness, I thought about being by yourself and then being one person in this world and feeling that there’s no one else there. That’s why I’ve put the number 1.  Mmh okay. Can you tell me more about that?  Um… there’s times where… I felt lonely and when you feel lonely, you don’t feel like there’s anyone else, you just think that you’re the only person. I may fill the time by watching Netflix or occupying myself, but um… lonely, you don’t feel like there’s more than… in that moment you only feel what’s going through your head, you only think about… how you don’t have someone or you, you could be in a house with a lot of your family, but you still feel like you’re the only person in there, in your house; that’s why I’ve out the number 1.  And um, how does that make you feel?  I feel that, that’s just an actual part of life and um, at times you’re gonna feel lonely even though you’re in a house with a lot of people and you could easily walk into the next room and make one into maybe two people, or make that one into three people, um… but at the time that’s not what you essentially want if you’re feeling lonely.  Um, so you’re saying that sometimes people, you could be with many people and yet you still feel lonely?  Yeah, you could. I don’t feel lonely when I’m with people, but I feel, you know, as I’m a man, living in London, I have access to people through social media, through my mobile phone I could phone somebody, I could leave the house, but um when you feel lonely that’s not what you practically want, is not, the feeling of loneliness and feeling that you’re by yourself is like… you know you could easily be with other people, but you know that’s not gonna solve that feeling at that particular time if you’re feeling lonely there’s like a \_\_\_\_ that you have inside and um it’s quite difficult to understand what you want at that time, maybe you want something that you don’t have access to at the moment… yeah.  Mmh, so you’re saying that you want something in a particular instance, or at a particular time, but you can’t actually get it.  Yeah.  Can you tell me more about that?  So um, thinking about loneliness in my life um… I feel, in particular when I feel lonely, I-I don’t tend to usually feel lonely when I’m in a relationship, it’s when I’m single that’s when I feel the most lonely so if I’m single, then I might be \_\_\_ for a women, and that’s when despite if I’m in a house, I’m with my family, despite if I have friends, um that’s not gonna solve that issue.  So, being single makes you feel lonely?  Yeah, yeah.  How does that make you feel?  So, like me being single is not that I’m lonely all the time, but I have times, maybe in the evening where I feel lonely. I think at the end of the day, really you can’t do anything about it, because um relationships are a big commitment anyway, so even though I feel lonely, it doesn’t make me feel like I need to rush into a relationship, but it’s like the waves, the tide and the ocean like you see the waves coming and they go out, it’s just a natural process of life, that feeling is gonna come and even when you’re in a relationship, you can feel lonely, because I remember when I was in a relationship and um, I used to run a business, like some of my business decisions only I could make them, so you know you might be battling with yourself and your ideas, then you’re in this place where until you make the decision you’re gonna feel lonely a lot, until you see the, the outcome of your decision you might feel lonely, so it’s not only me thinking about it, it’s not only when I’m in a relationship, there’s particular circumstances where no matter what, even if I have a girlfriend, parent, brother, friends, I can still feel lonely.  So, you’re saying that basically in instances where you have to make a decision and until you don’t get the outcome you might experience loneliness.  Yeah, yeah, because it-it, the, there’s a bit of anxiety: ‘Oh, did I make the right decision?’, then you think ‘Oh, I wish I had someone to help me with that decision’. Um, sometimes with certain decisions you could get advice, but nobody can make that decision for you, you’re always gonna be the one that has the final say, and you’re gonna have to feel that weight on your shoulders, you know what I am saying so?  How does that make you feel?  Um \*silence\* makes me feel like an adult, makes me feel responsible, makes me feel mature, makes you feel powerful and um, when I make the right decision it makes me feel happy, good, when I make the wrong decision it’s a learning, sometimes when I make the wrong decision I feel sad about that, however um you have to pull back in prospective and not get um personally engulfed in certain decisions; uh even if the decision is personal, like you might be caught up at a point in your life where you have a decision to cut somebody out of your life and that is a very personal thing ‘cause you have a personal relationship with someone and you might have to decide that this person is not good for me anymore and um, that type of decision, you could feel lonely in that type of decision and um, human beings we feel quite connected with people and especially we have a sort of relationship with them for a year, two years, three years, you might feel very connected to them, but if you make, if your faced with a decision where you have to assess their relationship, and be like ‘is this good for me?’, ‘is it bad for me?’ and you might love the person, like the person, but if they’re toxic, you have to get to the point where you’d be like ‘ok’, if you’re wise anyway, you know some people they stay in toxic relationships, but that’s not um the type of person I am: if someone is toxic for me, I’ll give them a chance and I may give them a year, two years, three years max, if you’re toxic in my life for three years even though how much I love you, you have to come out my life, you get what I am saying, so that type of decision, um… you still gonna feel for that person and you’re gonna now um, or in my circumstance, someone like me I know I made the right decision because toxic energy in your life for too long is gonna affect your health, is gonna affect your progress, your growth, so um, that’s another type of decision where I may feel lonely, but um… that’s only me explaining where it has to happen and why it has happened and me explaining how it made me feel.  Mmh… is there anything else you want to say?  Um… my lucky number is 3.  \*laughs politely\*  So, number 1 so when I feel lonely, but um when I have like, let’s say a right hand man, someone to my left or right supporting me, that’s when I may feel the most strongest, but yeah that’s what I could add to the number 1.  So, you’re saying that if you have for example someone to your right and someone to your left it makes you feel less lonely?  Yeah, absolutely.  If you’re right on your own, it makes you feel lonely or alone…  If I’m, yeah it make, you, when I’m on my own I, there could be the opportunity I may feel lonely, but generally when I’m by myself its fine, you’re just living your life, but it’s when maybe the closing hours of the day where laying down, that’s when I may experience the feeling of loneliness. I don’t to feel lonely in the daylight, when I have things to do, when I’m active, um there’s this book called ‘Flow’ and um the experience of being in flow is when you’re doing something, your brain is occupied, you’re doing something you love and that’s when um it’s said that you can be the most happiest, when I’m out of flow that’s when the feeling of loneliness can creep up into my life.  So, you’re saying that in the evening when you have done all your stuff, in your home kinda relaxing, that’s when you kinda feel a bit lonely in a way.  Yeah, yeah, definitely if I am, the productivity of my mind shut off and I may not be going to sleep um \*silence\* fully content of what I have done during the day when I might be yearning like social \*gets interrupted\*  Hello.  Social… yeah when I might be yearning like some social interaction, you know what I am saying, usually it tend to be alone.  Thank you.  No worries.  Um, I think this is the interview between, it has to be private.  Okay.  Is it okay?  Yeah, that’s fine.  Thank you. Is there anything else you want to say?  Um… No, not on number one.  Okay, so we can move on to...  Number two.  Can you start by telling us, um…  So, number two I drew a circle, this circle represents an empty void, um I just had a new idea that looking at the circle, the circle reminds you of a black hole as well, ‘cause in loneliness you may feel like you're in a black hole, you’re by yourself, this can also represent a vacuum, um like the end of a hoover, you know the feeling that sucks you in and it may be hard to get out at the time because you feel alone. Um that's how I like to start with the circle.  So, this circle um sorts of represents a whole, so how does that, um so, can you tell me more about that?  So, this circle, when I thought about loneliness, I felt like this circle is in my chest, and it’s like this empty feeling in my chest and you're trying to fill it up, me, in particular, when I have this empty feeling, you know, you just, you’re there, you’re chilling and you try to fill up with many different kind of ways or distractions. Do you mind if I shut the door?  No problem.  Okay \*shuts the door\*. Yeah, we’re in to give you the good stuff.  Thank you.  So, yeah, um cool.  So…  You can ask another question then I can elaborate more.  Sure, so, you’re saying that, that sort of circle represents something in your chest when you feel kind of empty.  Yeah  Tell me more about that.  So, as I said, my feeling of loneliness tends to come in in the evening and I have never, I cannot recollect feeling lonely in the daytime, even in my example of when I said me making a business decision, I would have had to have made that decision in the day or that decision could be lingering for something that I need to do the next 2-3 days, while the feeling of loneliness about that decision won't kick in until it's late at night and my mind is clear and I get to the point where I can't really do any more activities in the day. So, um this circle is just like a visual representation of a feeling.  And how does that make you feel?  Um… I'm quite alright with the circle, um you know, circles also means infinite, the idea of an infinite feeling or an infinite kind of, see the world, the world's got like seasons, yeah, and each year the seasons continue going winter, summer, autumn, spring. So, the same way the seasons come around, loneliness could just be the season of winter, but I know that is part, winter’s going to pass and it will be the next season, you know what I'm saying? So, I don't feel bad about there being loneliness, I don't feel, it's just a part of the natural like kind of rotation of life. That's how the circle makes me feel.  And um, so, you’re saying that, basically that circle, the sense of emptiness more so comes in the evening.  Yes, it comes in… evening, late at night, early in the mornings, you know, so let's say, if I'm up past midnight, also those type of times, it might not, evening could be like 10 o'clock, then um, yeah restlessness comes in with lonel-, loneliness also makes me restless, I could be um staying up, trying to fill the void with Netflix, with maybe even pornography, masturbation, but at the end, even if I do all of those things um then I have that feeling of I wasted my time, because it didn't fill that void of the loneliness.  Cool, thank you. Is there anything else you want add about that?  Um… no, I think I’ve explored the Circle.  Thank you. Can you start by giving, talk about the… \*gets interrupted\*.  Number three?  Yes, please, thanks.  \*sneezes\* Number three is the word empty and, as the reoccurring theme of the things I’ve put down, is that um, this feeling of emptiness of, and trying to fill something up that you can't fill. When I think about emptiness, as a young man living in the city, I’ve discovered that um there's different type of party scenes and people take different type of drugs when they go partying and there's this drug called, I think that MDMA, or a certain type of pill that people take that, what, the, the side effect I’ve heard of this drug, you might be very happy when you take it, very talkative, very social, then um the side effect, when you wake up in the morning, is that, you get this feeling of emptiness that I'm talking about, that you can get naturally, so I get this feeling naturally, as so I believe many other humans do, and you just feel empty and you don't know what it is, you just, you have some ideas of what it could be, but even when you have the things that you think will stop you feeling empty, you could have those things and still feel empty. So, you know, sometimes I may yearn more money in my life, I may yearn certain type of clothes, I may yearn a woman, um at different times in my life I could attain these things, but it doesn't exempt me from ever feeling that feeling of emptiness again and you know when I think about the word empty, I think about conversations with some friends and um them talking about how they feel after they’ve come off of that particular drug I was talking about, they say they are so mad, weird, empty and that they're just feeling like they don't have anybody and they don't know why, they just have that feeling of emptiness and they can't fill it up, and that feeling of emptiness is um I think heavily linked to me feeling lonely, it's there when I get that feeling of emptiness.  So, you're saying that taking certain drugs can give you a certain, a small boost at the time…  Yeah.  … and then after that, when the parties are over, you know, you, people go to, people start feeling empty after that.  Yeah, definitely, definitely, definitely.  Can you tell me more about, you know, you associated it with parties as well…  Yeah, yeah, as a young man, I'm very outgoing guy; grew up very um… shy, um at certain points of my age, when I was young, I was overweight, then I had like a slow climb on the social ladder and, as you get more popular, you get invited to events and you maybe get invited to parties, um I remember getting invited to my first party as an individual, so, you know when you're really young, you get invited to parties as like a group, like ‘Okay everyone in the class, come to my birthday party’, but yeah, as a teenager, I got invited to a party from a girl, I went to an all-boys school, I got invited to a party from, a girl’s party from like a secondary school, so this is a friend that I made independently and that invited me to a party. So, yeah, first party as a teenager then. For the outgoing people that live in the city like me, some of them may turn, like to go out and enjoy their weekends and just have a bit of laugh and celebrate the fact that they’re living, so, yeah, going out, having a party, I find it very enjoyable, socializing, maybe partaking in some social drinks and um having a good time meeting people. So yeah, that's how I feel about that situation, yeah.  So, you’re saying that going to parties can make you feel less lonely?  Yes, yes, definitely.  But if, if, for example, there's drugs involved, the next day, for example…  Yeah  You or any people might be feeling empty and lonely afterwards.  Yeah, definitely that happens with a lot of people that I've found out through and live in, in the city and um… yeah, yeah, definitely like, in a good night out, when you may not partake in any drugs and only alcohol, you know, I've gone out, um it was like London Fashion Week recently and I went out, had a great time with friends, ended up sleeping at a friend's house. So, even the whole, all day like there was not, not even that time at the night where loneliness could have creeped in, as I’ve discussed with the other… things that I’ve put down. Um, so I was literally with people throughout, then the next day, even travelled back home with a friend, then, by the time I got home, it was Monday, back to the working week, then I was occupied again, and I got in flow as I discussed and um being in flow makes me happy. So yeah, times like that, it's quite a perfect day, without ever feeling lonely in any part of the day. So, I have days like that where loneliness couldn’t even peek its head into my life on these days where, you know, naturally, as a human being, if you have goals and you're trying to accomplish things and maybe potentially make a financial gain, or tryna… achieve an outcome, or some sort of status, or tryna complete a mission, that may involve you putting in hours by yourself, making sure things get done and in that scenario, that's when maybe loneliness can creep in… or a feeling of emptiness as I've put down empty.  And um you mentioned that these times when you're working and you have to spend some time to develop yourself and so on, these are the times when you feel, you might feel lonely.  After intense session of work or development, um if I do not like master the day \*emphasised\*, there's a, in life it’s like, I’ve found, th-, I can happen to the day or the day can happen to me. If I do not carefully plan out my day and I just go on like 12 hours trying to accomplish something, then the wind down isn't correct, or let's say if I go too hard on paperwork, or computer work and maybe not exercise in that day, I'll have enough energy in myself in the evening, so instead of me feeling tired all-ready to sleep, this is when the brain is very active, and when the brain is very active and um… it’s alone, when you leave a brain by itself to operate and to run at, let’s say, a hundred miles an hour, this is when, this feeling can come of loneliness, and the brain can now start to think about things and start to bring its own type of ideas and feelings up within myself, so, um on a very holistic round-day of good exercise, good work, good communication with people, I could lay in bed feeling very accomplished and tired enough to fall asleep, but in a day where I might go too hard on um my work, as I tend to do sometimes, that is when, I could just do a whole day of work, um have energy, then I'm thinking about more work, I'm thinking about my life, I’m thinking about where I'm at, I may think about the terms of life and death, why am I here? Then, yeah, when these questions start to get lost in my mind, this is when I may start to feel lonely.  So, these questions are essentially like maybe existential questions.  Yes, yes, yes. I started existential questions at the age four and um my first memory of having an existential question, my, my brain was so small, I couldn't comprehend it and I just burst into tears, at a very young age, and I thought ‘why am I here?’ Then I was thinking ‘what happens after here’ and I started thinking ‘okay, if I die, if I die’, I couldn't accept that there's nothing, when you're that young, you haven't done anything, so you feel like the point of you being here to then go, was very overwhelming for me at that age, but now I'm older and I've done quite a bit and I've had impacted other people's lives and me have an impact on other people's lives give me a feeling of… wholeness, accomplished, um… I feel like, I've achieved something and it makes me more accepting of the fact that I could leave and there be nothing after I leave. So, yeah. That’s how I feel about that situation there.  Um…  \*sneezes\*  Do you, do you wanna add anything else?  I'm very happy with…  Sure.  … everything I said about it.  Mmh.  Yeah, now you want me to move on to…  Sure.  Yeah, so, this next word on the sheet of paper is longing, the feeling of longing, yearning, wanting more, um… then being at an age where I'm mature enough to understand, I could want, get, then still yearn more, still have a longing, still feel like having more, this is like a common theme that now I'm older and I've done my own reading and um analysing of humans, I've now come to like understand that, as a human being, I'll always want more, I will always yearn, I will always have a longing for more and um, I'm perfectly fine with that feeling and I'm happy with the feeling. Um, one thing I've realized about human beings and stories and a lot of the films out there that, the underlining story, the underlining story of the stories humans like to tell is the hero story, the, the, the story of an underdog, somebody that may have been underneath, coming into power, then achieving something, that's a common theme I've seen and I've quite enjoyed, as I said, me coming from being very young, shy, um overweight when I was younger, climbing the social ladder, then enjoying the position I’ve got myself in this thingy called life. Um, I love the climb, the climb is a very beautiful thing and, being a baby, growing up to be 4 years old, learning um how to speak, learning how to interact with humans, learning how to walk, that’s gaining things on this journey of life. I enjoy longing because it pushes me to learn, to grow and that feeling of growth and learning is for me like the essence of life is a core, kind of backbone situation, process, operation in life to be able to grow and learn makes, coming back to that question of existence, growing and learning makes me existing worth it. So, if I couldn't grow and learn, then I'll probably just end my life, you get what I'm saying? So, it's like, me being able to grow and learn and to have a good run at it, like even a 24-year run at it, it's very satisfying to me, if I had a 30-year run at it, very satisfying, anything over 30 is a major blessing from what I've seen in life and from my kind of um ethnicity and demographic, that's a big blessing, for me to, those who have paint me growing up in the city, 21 was a big milestone for me and all my friends, you know, me and practically one of my best friends, we used to like dream reaching 21, because of a lot of people were like losing their lives, before they got to even experience some of the things I've experienced and I've had like surreal moments, um someone coming from my ethnicity, background, um social group, you know, I took myself on a holiday to Mexico like when I landed and I saw the city and the country and like my mind was blown, I was in awe in the cab going to the hotel, like those things make me feel complete and happy like to be able to experience these things in life and if it was to end now I wouldn't be um that disappointed, um there might be a couple other things that I could have put in place if it was to end now, um but in general, I'm very happy with what I've done in life, and I think, in general, that's what keeps me feeling happy, complete and keeps me away from a feeling like loneliness or sadness. I think loneliness and sadness and depression, these are all feelings that are in the same group and I tend to stay away from them, because they don't make me feel good, they don't make me feel um complete, they make me feel, as I said, empty and um…, even though like, going back to the circle, a circle is complete in shape, is round, but then is what's in the circle, at the inside the circle is empty. So, even when I say, I don't feel complete, it's not that, circle is complete but inside the circle is empty, so, my state of being a complete circle, when the circle is fulfilled, is when I'm learning, is when I'm growing, is when I'm living, is when I'm in a good positive space, is when I'm doing the things, um taken advantage of the things that a human being in the Western World can do, even if I was stripped off of the things in the western world and I had to live very minimal: I've been to the central parts of the world where life is more humble and more simpler, I would enjoy doing that as well. So, um longing, I think, out all of the things I’ve put down, gives me the most hope, because in that dark space of loneliness, I feel loneliness is dark to me because you're, you're thinking false things, like when I'm lonely, I'm not one person, as I put the ‘number one’ down, I'm in a planet and u-, now I think of it that's probably what? 7 billion people in the planet, if my figure’s correct. It's very selfish for me to even think that I’m by myself and situations like the Sudan, um the, the violence happening in Sudan right now is um something that I explored in the morning. Um… generally speaking, I don't think on a day-to-day basis, because I'm trying to accomplish so much and I'm trying to elevate my family and one of the conclusions you see that with that question of existence, one of my personal conclusions of the question of ‘why am I here?’ I thought I'm here to elevate, I thought I’m here to make sure that the next generation, if I have kids, offspring, that I make their life better, you know, I feel like life's a marathon, you know, we're handing over the battle of life to the next generation, if I hand over the battle to my kids, I wanna put them in a better position that my dad put me in, some may argue that the position my dad, going back to the Western World versus Central parts of the world and the Eastern world and the Western World is very good, like clouded with media, social media, there’s um the Western World is up in such a way that you can be lonely; um somebody in the central part of the world or the eastern part of the world have a simpler life, so at times where, in the evening where I may be feeling lonely, if I lived in the central part of the world, I feel, I may not experience that certain type of loneliness, ‘cause life is more simpler, maybe on a day-to-day basis I won't be aiming so high, I might just be thinking about living a very humble, content day of just trying to put food on the table, enjoying the fruits of my labour and going to sleep very happy and very accomplished of what I've done. So, when I think about existence and me trying to create a better life for the next generation, if I have um the blessing and opportunity of having children, um I want to not only accomplish that, but for me having the longing to do those things, so I could be in that place of loneliness, longing is one of the things that can get me out of there, me wanting more is what's gonna make me step out of the feeling that I'm by myself and then at \*emphasises\* all of these other things I’ve put down there’s no action, there's no, that's just me in that state, longing is the thing, is the motion, longing, me being lonely, me longing is the emotion that can cause me to act, to get out of that state of mind and get out of loneliness. So, this word longing makes me the most happy, out of everything I’ve put down.  Mmh, thank you. Um, so you mean lack of longing or longing that, um, that you associate with the experience of loneliness.  I wouldn't, um I wouldn't break down the word to say lack of longing because I feel, me I'm a very driven human being and um goal-centred human being, so I never lack longing, I'm always wanting more, I'm always going for the goal, I want to accomplish something, I'll go for the next one, so, I never let longing, so um in pursuit of the goal, there's stuff that, as I said the waves, the seasons of the pursuit, the pursuit is a year-long thing and the seasons, there’s four seasons in the year, so there's always going to be a winner, there's always gonna be opportunity for negative emotions to come into the pursuit, so I don't think the lack, I don't think, the longing is there, I could feel lonely, maybe instead of lack, I would say um… ignoring my longing or forgetting my longing and yeah, if I ignore it and I focus on the feeling of loneliness and emptiness, and existence, that's when I could stay in the state of loneliness, when I ignore my longing for more or maybe when I'm impatient. At the period before sle-, rest, when I'm impatient the period before rest, I'm feeling lonely, then after I get my rest and I wake up, I'm feeling ready for the day, it’s very rare for me to go sleep, wake up lonely, I can't recollect waking up feeling lonely, I always wake up thinking ‘let me attack the day, there’s something I have to do today, time started again like the clock started again’, that’s how I feel about that.  Thank you, thank you, so when you, when you feel like, you know, you don't have, when you not, when you don't have the motivations or goals or that longing, that sense of longing for more, that's when, you know, you experience or you might be leaning to feeling lonely and things like that.  Could you repeat that one more time before I confirm that?  Sure. Um, so you're saying that when, when there is little motivation for more or when you don't feel like, you know, you have the longings to go for more, the desire for more, that's when the experience of loneliness sort of kicks in, you know?  Yeah, that would be a way of saying it, that would be a way of saying it, in my mind, it is more when, ‘cause I have 24 hours a day and that has to come, is when I've done as much as I could humanly, possibly be doing that day, that is when the feeling of loneliness can come in, is like because the longing, at the beginning of the day, I have longing and I know I can do action towards fulfilling that longing, but is when my time of acting runs out and I know it's now time to rest because resting is like, I could safely say, that's like some form of reverse of action non-action, times of non-action is when loneliness come is.  Thank you. Is there anything else you want to say?  No, um I'm very happy with how I expressed myself.  Sure, thank you. I’m gonna end the interview. |
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**Participant 3 – Male, 24, Newham – Part 2**

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| Interviewer  Interviewee  Interviewer  Interviewee  Interviewer  Interviewee  Interviewer  Interviewee  Interviewer  Interviewee  Interviewer | Thank you. So, can we start by talking about what you’ve put first, please?  Box one?  Mmh.  So, box one I would like to express this in order as well. The first place I put is ‘Las Iguanas’. ‘Las Iguanas’ is a restaurant slash cocktail bar and um… I have many fond memories at this place; it was the favourite place for my ex-girlfriend to go to and on top of that this year, um, there's been times where I might have  been at ‘Las Iguanas’ what? Three times in one week like it might have been a friend's birthday we decided to go there, have a drink, I’ll be there with like six of my friends, you know, very socially connected with them, um group of uh… young guys and same like ethnicity, demographic and background as me, having a good time, celebrating life. As I said in the prior recording, you know, for us to reach 21 is a big deal for us, you know, so the fact to even hit in 24s, in my friend’s case hitting 25, that’s a fantastic master, I’m very happy. So, in that week I also… ended up going there with my cousin, or in the same proximity, over week… I went there my cousin and this is like a cousin that I made myself, this is not a blood relative, and in terms of me feeling connected and um, feeling social, feeling, not… feeling the opposite of lonely you know, um this particular person that I'm calling my cousin at the moment, me as a young man I kind of figured out how to feel socially connected with people, um my parents aren’t originally from the city, they're from Africa, so um them coming to Africa and not like a lot of my family came from Africa to London, United Kingdom, um I realized that it will be very helpful to have allies, to have a family per se, let's say, not, I didn't have the pleasure of having like blood family, but me growing up seeing people from the city, people from the city let’s say or from this country, the whole family's here, you have a stronger kind of social backing, opposed to somebody that parents came here, I had to learn the social cues, and fashion, and language, and my parents’ language wasn’t perfect, so I had to learn how to speak the language properly myself, independently, a lot of like bullying happened for, you know, maybe not pronouncing things correct, maybe not dressing accordingly, um so these are things that I had to learn along the way, and going back to the longing for more and having this climb, so my cousin is someone I met at secondary school, my first year of secondary school, this guy came from a city called Telford and he was a young man from the same country as me, and didn't have no friends in London, and I said, at that time I kind of climbed the social ladder in primary school, so I knew how it felt to be at the bottom, having no friends, having no status in a city or in a school or place and um I kind of fast-tracked his climbing the social ladder by having that conversation within to say ‘Oh you’re from the same country as me, let's be cousins’. So, as we grew older, we grew distant: um he got moved to Ireland and coming back to this theme of us, um… as young men not believing we're gonna reach the age of 21, his mum was very scared for  him for all the violence that was happening to see, so she sent him to Ireland to do, to finish off his education, so those years where he went away, um we still love each other the same, but we weren't physically in each other's lives, so he's made, he made a great effort on a bank holiday weekend to um organize an outing and we went to the cinema, and he invited another one of his friends from university and I invited my older brother and after we watched the film in the cinema, well we didn't, unfortunately the film was very popular, we didn't get to sit next to each other, I've got to sit next to my brother and he got to sit next to his friend and was in two totally different parts of the cinema, but I felt very socially connected to them because we organized to go there together, and um after we left the cinema, we all chose to  go back to this place called ‘Las Iguanas’, so this is why this place has given me so much feeling of social connectedness. Then um the final time I went there, in this, I had three times in my head mainly, outside of it being my ex-girlfriend’s favourite place, the three times that made me put this, ‘Las Iguanas’ down on the paper, the final time, one of my friends has moved to Spain and to go over there and work. She's born and raised in England, I met this person in college, friend of my ex-girlfriends, at the time my ex-girlfriend was my best friend and I heard about this lovely mixed-race girl um from Yorkshire and her accent’s very um… how could I say? Is very… a UK accent in London is very noticeable. I was in my ICT class and I heard this girl speak and I knew that this was the same girl my best friend always used to speak about and um I reached out to her and I was like ‘You know, you’re Christina, I know who you are’. She was very confused with my approach of introducing myself and I-I said to her, yeah, like ‘My name's Simo’, which isn't my real name is alter, alter, alter-ego, let's say, and then, you know, blackberry was very popular in those days and um blackberry messenger was, um, let's say as much of a strong force as WhatsApp is today, and this is another kind of application that is connected to social connectedness and we can feel connected and we could speak to people we may not have known, you know, prior to the other generations, before us you only speak to people you know, but um through social media, um at times I feel connected to people that I don't know online and she went online to blackberry messenger and put in her status ‘Who knows Simo?’ then my best friend popped up and said ‘Yo, that's the guy, that's my best friend’, then we became very good friends and um, I'm speaking about this because, in terms of social connectedness, I feel very connected to that girl, despite that she's moved out of the city, and she's in another country right now, and before she left, we went cinema and ended up at ‘Las Iguanas’ and she invited some more friends and there was this guy called Martin, that I've never met before, but all my lady friends kind of raving about him, this guy called Martin and my friend Kirsty's made from work and I've got to finally meet him that day, and I felt connected to Martin before I met him because I heard so much about him, so when I met him I actually hugged him and it was very like that kind of brotherly love going on throughout the night and I do hope to see him again. Yeah, so, social connectedness first I put ‘Las Iguanas’, then I put my childhood um estate B15 focus, I drew a picture of it, um all my best friends lived there.  No, I think um, I think one should be sufficient.  Yeah, that’s sufficient, yeah.  Thank you. What about the other box?  The other box…  Where do you feel most lonely?  Funnily enough, the first thing I put is not where it makes me feel most lonely, but these places are all in the same area, and um I've done a kind of cliché thing here, um I put a drill image of a lady on a pole, representing a strip club, this is like the Western world's kind of cliché in a movie, where you will see kinda men drowning their sorrows in a strip club. Um, I haven't had the pleasure of doing this year, I may do it one day when I feel alone, when I’m an older guy, I may experience it, but uh, plus it does came in my head, I've been to a strip club before for a mate’s 21st birthday, so, in essence, in my life, it may not represent loneliness ‘cause I haven't gone there for those purposes, but it's in the area where I have wandered around by myself, at a time, when I felt longing, I've gone to this area, called ‘Old Street’, trying to fulfil, that, that was one of the first times I come outside of my house tryna fulfill that hole I was talking about earlier, um just going out to the bars, tryna see if I could find some women, try um battle that  feeling of loneliness, it was um, a very nice social experiment, to see if I could go outside by myself and see if I could um make friends, even though I have friends, I could have easily found some other friends that have been in my life for ages, but it was like a coming-of-age kind of moment, where I went out by myself to see and I think that was very heavily influenced by movies and shows, so there was an immaturity in the maturity of seeing if I could um function by myself outside, on an unplanned evening, because there’s times where, as humans being, we have to travel by ourselves anyway, we could be going to work, but you usually travel with a purpose, when you come outside your house, or some people does. I'm not ever been the type to go outside without a purpose; I’ve gone on walks by myself as an introspection and me going on a walk, me going out of the purpose, um I did it for only going out on that walk, it was me understanding, as human beings putting yourself in nature in a city can help reverse the kind of negative um… emotions or attitude that may develop in a city, so I took myself to a flower garden and I walked around, I did it for learning, walking around in that flower garden, but I felt learning that night I went out to walk around in ‘Old Street’, going to bars, trying to make friends and chat with them. So, yeah.  Thank you. Okay, I’m gonna pause the interview. |