Participant number 23 – Male, 23, Hackney

Part 2:

Interviewer: Okay so can we start by talking about what you’ve put in the first box please.

Interviewee: So they estate where I- I grew up on. The reason being is that most of my good and bad times um took place there. It’s where I feel the most connected and most valued. Um… the estate that I grew up on… toh, many of my memories- funny enough, m- many of my memories actually were at a time they were happening were actually quite negative and quite crazy, but when I think back on it it’s actually really really funny. Like I- I wouldn’t trade my childhood with anybody in the world, not one person, I wouldn’t trade it for a young rich kid’s who had a really great upbringing or someone that went to Eaton or anything like that. I wouldn’t give a shit. If anything, I would hate to have the childhood of someone that was raised by Eatonian parents and stuff like that, with the restricted and sheltered background. They’re the ones that turned out really fucked and doing drugs and you know, just you know, come from really- and their- their families become really dysfunctional. Our family’s dysfunctional from the jump, so could- so we’re already at the bottom. The only- the only place we can go is up. Really and truly. So we start from the bottom, you can only go up, you know? They started from the top and then… it’s where… in it… so the estate I grew up on had a monumental effect on my upbringing because from a young age my- a lot of my life lessons, I learnt there. I went through a lot of things, uh… I’m not gonna go into it, ‘cause it’s quite personal. Um… but that there, that estate is where I feel the most um… uh valued, the most socially connected. Now… the place I feel most lonely-

Interviewer: Before we go on, can I just ask, when you say the estate, what do you mean estate?

Interviewee: Estate. It’s an estate. It’s a council state.

Interviewer: Council state.

Interviewee: Council state- council estates, man. [Interviewer: is it unintelligible 41:46] Council estate, big block, high rises with a little mini park in the middle and swings and a little river side right- right by the River Thames. You know, that’s where girls and guys used to hang out, get up to no good, you know, smoke weed, chill, play football, get police chases. Best childhood of my life and I loved it and I wish I- uh… you know sometimes you- it’s like you have this Peter Pan effect that you didn’t grow up, you know, that you just couldn’t- wouldn’t progress past fifteen or fourteen, you know. Life is so much more easy- that’ when uh money and all that bullshit- the world didn’t really matter, all that just mattered was your friends- so- you know, some- little bit of money to go to the shops to get some food and drinks and stuff like that. You know, good looking girl that likes you for who you are, you know. Getting chased by the police. Getting you know chased- getting chased by the crazy person on the estate. Just getting up to all round no good, to be honest. But you learn a lot of life lessons ‘cause you see what a struggle forward it is. You see what your parents are going through, see what other people’s parents are going through. It toughens you up. You are… it makes a man of you. That’s what a real- that’s what it’s like to be a real- to live in a real city you need- growing up on a council- inner city council estate, going to an inner-city school. Teaches you a lot of things. Teaches you a lot of things you would never learn in a school or in a work place, to be honest. That’s why- when you got- that’s why I see these are bullshit. Our curriculum vitae is bullhshit. Trying to tell you what the- there’s so much people that I know, yeah, that I grew up with, that can sell way better than- than a lot of these people that are- these stockbrokers. These stockbrokers are following courses how to sell. You don’t need to do a fucking course to s- learn how to sell a fucking pen. That’s a true- I know people that are- that have businesses. Illegal businesses, but at the age of twenty-one they were sitting on two, three hundred grand. That’s the truth. Who taught them how to sell. Did they go to Harvard business school? Or did they go to UCL or anything like that? No. All self-taught young entrepreneurs. And I- I- I- someone in my- a lot of them are actually doing really well for themselves now because they’ve applied the same skills. The way it is, what you learn in the streets and what you learn in poverty… you learn grit, you learn perseverance, you learn ambition, raw, raw animal ambition to succeed. ‘Cause you’re already at the bottom, you cannot fall any lower. The only way is the climbing up the mountain. There are many ways down the mountain, as you see in society, many ways to fall down the mountain. But there’s only one way to climb the mountain. There’s only one way to climb the mountain. So yeah. The estate that I grew up on, and the area that I grew up in, is the place I feel most socially connected because that there is like- it is like my mother, it is like my father, it’s like my grandparents, it’s like my girlfriend, it’s like my brother, it’s like my sister. I learnt, I bled on that estate, I cried on that estate, I’ve been happy on that estate. You know, that estate’s home to me. Housed me. You know, been there for me. I’ve sat on the swings there for hours, you know… yeah. That’s where I feel most socially connected.

Interviewer: And when you were in that sort of positive moment, or even sometimes when y- in that low, sad moments, [interviewee: yeah] um… okay sounded like- so what you’re saying is you had a lot of great time with your friends, the police chasing you, you know hanging out with a lot of friends and being around family, and at the same time those environments also helped you to grow. [Interviewee: yeah] Is that what you’re- is that what you’re saying?

Interviewee: Yeah they help you to grow. Yeah, definitely. Hundred percent. Definitely. Definitely. Definitely help you to grow.

Interviewer: And how- and- and- and… and how- and… I guess um… and how does that make you feel now, looking back?

Interviewee: To be honest, I still go back from time to time, just to go reflect. But it… it… well it’s sad is what it is. It’s ha- at the time it feels like the longest years of your life. You know, your childhood. They feel like the longest years of your life. The-

Interviewer: Feels like what?

Interviewee: The longest years of your life. [Unintelligible 46:26] you get to a certain age, you realise that it was so short. It was so short. It’s crazy. Honest to god, it’s so crazy. [Interviewer: hmm] Yeah, so crazy. Mm…

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. Is there anything else you want to say about that? Okay. Can we start by talking about box two please?

Interviewee: Yeah. Uh, you know what, so place you feel most lonely, funny enough look- are places like clubs and bars or Shisha Land. The irony is that these places are places to feel socially connected and in fact it’s quite the opposite. You know, that’s so powerful for me. Um… before going out to clubs and bars, like uh… like I’d feel like I’m connecting with people, you get people’s numbers, you speak to people and stuff. But um… these days they’re actually quite lonely places to be at. Um… sorry I’m just gonna get some tissues…

Interruption

Interviewee: So yeah, so clubs, bars, Shisha Land is a- are lonely places because, once you start waking up to certain things and start seeing shit for what it is, you actually realise what the fuck am I doing here, you know? Um… like, they’re actually- everyone that’s there… are running away from their problems. So these places are not to feel socially connected. There are places of escapism. People are just running away from themselves or running away from their lives. And then they drink and then they do drugs and then ahh… it’s like, it just- I- it’s just- you know what it is, they’re almost like an asy- an- a um… asylum. Like a mental asylum. In- in a sense. ‘Cause you look around at the madness that happens and everyone’s dealings and their craziness that’s just coming out, and then they’re screaming and they’re shouting and they’re loud and they’re not themselves, you know. ‘Cause people like that- every single day when they’re sober at work or anything like that [unintelligible 49:36]. So… yeah. [Yawns] I could sleep. Um… yeah. So like I- I don’t- me personally I don’t go to these places no more, but when I started realising that- yeah… um… start feeling lonely in these types of places, I thought you know, oh… it’s crazy.

Interviewer: And how does that make you feel? You know, that these environments are there and people go there and… how do you feel about that?

Interviewee: Laugh about it actually now. It’s actually quite funny. ‘Cause they’re- they’re pictured to be these places of socialising. You can meet your girlfriend- your future girlfriend or your future wife or… can make new friends and maybe to a degree you possibly can… possibly. But if you overdo it… it’s like, you can overdo anything. If you overdo that environment, that scene, it’ll be bad for you, you know? So if we drink coffee… we get addicted. Smoke too much cigarettes, they say you get cancer. Um… [unintelligible 50:53].

Interviewer: You mentioned that these places are an escape.

Interviewee: Yeah escapism, isn’t it?

Interviewer: Tell me more.

Interviewee: That’s what escapism is, in it? It’s just- look, why d’you go to a club? Aw, I need to get out, I need to get out of the house. Need to get out, get out from what? What are you escaping? What are you running away from? What- how are you not content in your own household? You know? Go to these clubs for what reason. Oh, just to… you go to meet new people and do things and get out your fucking mind, to be honest. Drink, drink, drink to the point where you can sleep. Some people need to like drink alcohol so they can sleep. To silence their thoughts. It’s crazy, it’s the truth. People do drugs to silence their thoughts. But what you’re doing- is it’s just your- it’s like- I’ll give you an analogy. It’s like you have damp on your walls. Rather than dealing with the problem outright, paint over it. But after the coating comes off, the damp’s still there. The problem still remains. [Interviewer: mm] Mm.

Interviewer: And how do you feel about that?

Interviewee: How I feel about that? Well… dunno really. It’s… it is what it is, isn’t it? It is what it is until it ain’t, then it ain’t. That’s how I look at it. People are mad, in it. People are mad. People do different things man. People are mad. People just wanna be happy but they’re just trying to different- they’re trying to do different things to be happy. Deep down inside they know [unintelligible 52:26] there’s this little voice that they don’t wanna listen to, this voice of reason. But then they- then they forget. They sat there… world restarts again, it’s like they’ve got amnesia and they go back and do the same thing all over again like Groundhog Day. Mm. And the other irony- the other ironic part is, the people that do this are actually- there are people in our society that are actually seen as very smart, like academic and uh… influential and seen as role models and yet they fall into the same trap. You know. When you know something is wrong for you, and you choose to do it, what does that make you? Does that make you a hypocrite, does that make you ignorant, what does that make you? What do you say?

Interviewer: Are you asking me?

Interviewee: Yeah, I’m asking you.

Interviewer: I guess it makes you… yeah, a hypocrite. Someone who… you know something isn’t good for you, yet you do it. [Interviewee: mhm] Hypocrite. Stupid.

Interviewee: I have another question. You have- for instance now, you… are feeling lonely, you feel upset, you feel angry… yet you are trying- for example you are trying to escape. So you use- so you use- you use drugs or alcohol, or any of these type of things now, but yet you know it is bad for you. Yet you do it constantly- over- again and again and again, see if you can get a different result. What does that make you?

Interviewer: Makes you… weak. [Interviewee: does that-] Makes you sleep. Yeah sleep.

Interviewee: Mm. Not insane?

Interviewer: I don’t know. But let’s keep it back to you. Then we’ll talk about it after the interview if you like. Um… okay. So, what you’re saying is uh, people continue doing the same thing over and over, [interviewee: yeah] um… and- and- and- and… and they seem to want different results, so they seem to seek happiness.

Interviewee: Mm. That’s what I’m saying.

Interviewer: Mm. How do- how do you feel about that?

Interviewee: Don’t really care. That’s the truth. Don’t really care if- for other people’s mistakes like that. That’s…

Interviewer: When you say you used to go clubbing, [interviewee: yeah] and-

Interviewee: Yeah. That was then, in it really. I don’t really- like really have an opinion now, to be honest, with all due respect. I don’t have an opinion on it now. That’s- that was then, you know. When I think of it now… bit of silly of me, you know. But then again, everyone get- can get caught up in that trap. [Interviewer: mm] I don’t really care about it, I don’t really care about clubs or bars or a lot of these types of places any more. I mean of course, like I could- not to say that I wouldn’t hang out in one. That’s not- that’s not what I’m saying. I would happily hang out in one. Um but what I choose to do in there is different. You know. I won’t spend as long uh… as I used to before. [Interviewer: hmm] Or anything like that. Um.

Interviewer: When you went clubbing and so on, in bars and clubs, [interviewee: mm] um… it… it seems like you felt lonely when you were there.

Interviewee: Sometimes. Now all the time. I’ll be real with you. Not all the time. Like, I did- have gone out with some good people, you know. Close friends and what not. I’ve had some great nights in clubs, I can’t lie. [Unintelligible 56:11] lie to you. But there are times when you just sit there and think oh yeah, you feel a little bit lonely, little bit empty. [Unintelligible 56:19]. Mm.

Interviewer: When you said empty, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee: I don’t really know really bro. Don’t really know. Just… just get that little feeling of oh I’m just lonesome little bit. Feel a bit empty [unintelligible 56:37] what am I doing here, I wanna do something else. So that’s when you know you got… when you’re, you know like, shouldn’t really be here right now. There’s no need- you went out for the sake of going out. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Is there anything else you wanted to say?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Thank you so much.

Interviewee: You’re welcome.

Interviewer: Let me just pause the recording.