M: So when did you first move to Canada?

Sa: So two months ago, so the 19th of August.

M: Oh, sorry, I should actually say this first is going to be a bunch of basic questions. And then I'll go into the mapping. And I'll tell you when I'm on the right. Perfect. So what were the motivations behind your move?

Sa: It was basically just for something different. And I'd been living in all the main cities in Ireland for a few years. A lot of my other friends had migrated, you know, and just kind of felt like everyone was getting on to do something new and different. And I kind of felt like it was my turn. So yeah.

M: Okay. And what were the factors that you considered so for example, was it just Canada always in your mind? Are you thinking about different countries or?

Sa: Yeah, well, I actually was just looking up, I was just googling places to live, you know. That's basically you know, and I hoped that I was going to move to Europe because you know I'm moving on my own so I was like oh, it'd be easier to travel back home and my sister lives in Berlin so she was there in case im tired of being alone. So I looked up places in France mainly and like other places but just nothing kind of really stuck out and then I know it's something that like in the week that I was deciding – I think about three things happened and Montreal came into my head…I think airlink had a direct flight which they promoted online and then, like things just kept popping up it like… it was the only place was kind of like calling me so I was like, its a bit further away and its a bit more expensive to be set but it just kind of was the only one calling out and that’s why I chose it. And like as well because I knew when people have gone Canada before and like although you have to go through the visa process. I mean, once you're there it kind of seems straightforward enough, whereas I know that France is known for its bureaucracy, and like filling out forms and making shit hard for you. So I was kind of like know that kind of put me off as well as a few friends that that had been there on Erasmus, and they were like, I don't know. So yeah, and cheap rent. That was a big thing coming from Dublin because I got so annoyed overpaying for stuff that wasn't good. And now I pay less. I paid for 700 euro for room in Dublin and now I pay less for an entire apartment to myself with bills included so it's Yeah, it's a lot better here…you get a lot more for your money here.

M: And did you do that sort of comparison between different cities?

Sa: So Canada so basically so I ruled out Vancouver originally because just I was like look, it's a bit too far away to the side. And because I've been there for I mean, I thought it was gorgeous like, I mean, I like I like if somebody told me to move there, like I would agree, its happening. So because I when I went to visit my friends over there, I was like, this is gorgeous. I can see why people wanna live here, its lovely. But it kind of was also felt like that was their thing they did it so I kind of wanted my own thing and then it was kind of between Montreal and Toronto. But like I said. Toronto seemed nice but it just… it just seemed like a kind of random city to me…there was nothing really pulling me towards it whereas Montreal, the culture of it just it seems I really wanted to try it and I always was like, Look, If I get tired, if it gets too hard with the French in Montreal, I can always move to Toronto. It's not that far like, I flew in from Toronto and I've been connected on flights from there anyway. So yeah, it's the same distance. So I mean, I still have it at the back of my head, I could always go but I don't know. I think I really like it here so.

M: And home is

Sa: Ireland, in Galway. Not the city. It’s a town. Its like 40 minutes away from the city. So the West but it's more Midlands. It’s the home of Supermacs, which I don't know if you've heard of. It's just a fast food place in Ireland. And it's it's known for…it's a kind of a culty thing.. do you use the word culty? Yeah, it's culty thing. It’s like a big in Dublin for like different Kipper. Like they have like, you know, proper divides with salt and vinegar and stuff whereas supermarkets sell it but they don’t have that kind of stuff…I think they there was some talk of it and bringing one to Australia a few years ago because of so many Irish living in Australia. But I think that fell through but there are actually I actually don't know if there are if it's gone international. But here's so many in Ireland. There's four in our town. Yeah it’s a big thing. Anyway, that's your claim to fame.

M: Now tell me a little bit about your professional background. So what type of work do you have been doing and what type of work do you do currently?

Sa: Yes. So when I left college, I had absolutely zero idea what to do. So I was working in a cafe I think, just before I finished my degree, so I stayed there for another six months, I think and then I moved to cork and my goal was to get work with like newspapers get some sort of a journalism writing job. So when I moved there Initially, I just wanted to get any sort of job and right away. So I worked in a cafe for a while and I was like, okay, it's fine. I'll do this for a few months and then I'll get my proper job. And then I ended up loving working there. And people there were so nice, it was like a little family so and after a few months of working there, I was made assistant manager. And then I was like, Oh my god, I actually really like this. Maybe I'll open a cafe myself, you know what I mean? I was kind of toying with that idea. And I stayed there for two and a half years, I think. And at the time, I had gotten a freelance job with The Echo paper in Cork. So I was like, writing the odd article for them. And then I also got a recurring job with Roscommon paper closer to back home. And when I got a weekly article, go with him, so I kind of was doing that on the side. So I kind of felt like I was nurturing and whatever writing I wanted to get done. And then towards the end of it, I was moving out of Cork and I was like, Look, I want to get My big girl job now [laughs], so am I said I flew home for a while to try and figure it out. So year. Summer of 2016. Yeah, I moved home for the summer while I was looking for jobs. And then yeah, I got this one in Dublin so it was a sort of editor job for Sci-fi website. So it wasn't so much writing. It was like, just when I read the job spec, I was like, Oh, I can do this. It was literally just like, obviously, correcting grammar and doing mistakes. And I was like, Yeah, no, I'm perfect for this. I literally used to correct everyone's essay in college and like I used to do that for my brother and sister and like, I'm, you know, like, people who are like… known. Like, you got this wrong and like, You spelled this wrong, you know, so people are like, yeah, that's my job. So I did that for three years. And I loved it. It was so good. And I learned loads because I had not actually got any clue on this sci tech stuff. So I kind of thought it'd be a struggle. But then if I could look it up, like the lingo and whatever… And it was good because it was the kind of website that was trying to be accessible to the everyday person. So, it wasn't wired. It wasn't like reading each audience was kind of like, you know, so it was kind of actually good to have me there. Because, you know, they might say something and I'm like, Well, I don't really know what that is. So if I don't know what it is somebody else wont. So yeah, I was kind of trying to make the language more accessible. So that was kind of so you know, and then I didn't know I was between leaving that job and finding something else in Dublin, you know, something along the similar thing. But then I just, I felt like I needed something a bit, a bit more. So, I said, I'd moved here and the aim was to kind of stay in the same field, but I was kind of like, I don't care. So I kind of saw it as a career break. And I'm not here to, you know, it's kind of here for the experience rather than, you know, so I knew as well I'd be narrowing down my options. I don't speak French. So, I was kind of like, nope, I'll go and I figure it out. If its a job in my industry, Great. I just was kind of like Ill do whatever there's to gain experience…but luckily I got something similar now I guess write a bit more so it's been more I guess… so its copywriting so to describe toys for kids, and so like there’s a bit of editing and like doing newsletters and stuff like that. So yeah, it's I think it's perfect because it's similar enough to you know, that kind of an industry but also a bit more… like describing toys for kids..more accurately for the parents because theyre the ones who are going to be buying and but we're launching an app now for kids to play with so like even think of all the everything that goes on behind the scenes, like you know, you need to write the Appstore descriptions, you need to write game instructions, all this kind of stuff that needs to… it is for like three year olds, but also it's kind of like trying to align the language. So I mean, you want to make it fun and accessible, but then again you're not advertising to kids, you’re advertising to their parents. So, it’s kind of trying to pick the right language.

M: So you degree was in Journalism?

Sa: No, it was Art. So it was it was it was weird course. It was an Arts course with a specialism in human rights. So that was what I was very interested in the start. And the first year you do four subjects, I'm in the second year you drop to three and all the time your specialism is it's meant to be the four and they encourage you to do a placement. And so, I went to London for three months. And then I went to Geneva three months. And the goal was to find some, like I was working in NGOs and just being an intern and yeah, trying to work in like kind of fields you might be interested in. And then I went for one in Geneva because they needed a French speaker and you had to keep up with your French because that was my other subject… and then my final two, they we're in English and French and with the specialism of human rights, but you don't get final grade with your specialisms and so it's a bit weird that it's on the degree title and then you don't really, its not like you're qualified for anything. So and the thing that I love the most in the course was English and I knew when I finished then I was like I probably should’ve taken a year out after my exams and I probably should have done a straight Journalism course…probably would have liked it more, but you don't know that when you’re 18 or whatever. Yeah, so after that, English was my, what I was best at so yeah.. I wanted to then pursue a journalism career…

M: Do you see yourself studying further later on?

Sa: No…no I don't like I said a loads of friends of mine are doing Masters and PhD’s all that. A friend of mine is doing her Masters in International relations and she loves it. Its great, but I don't know I just really enjoy the freedom of not having to go to school. I mean maybe of course Never Say Never, if I find something that I really wanted to do and I do, then kind of.. like also have a pin in that like if I want to find some difference. I just didn't know myself I just wanna get some experience rather than get a degree. I mean, I know people that have worked at night like whatever they've done like a degree. But like people still watch five years work experience. Yeah so Not right now. I cant see myself ever going back now. Yeah, maybe when I'm like 50, and I wanna try something random.

M: And in terms of your actual move here, how long did you plan and consider it?

Sa: So I think I had decided by Christmas 2018 that I was definitely going to come. I think, probably this time of year, I was kind of formulating ideas and playing with the idea of Montreal. And so I kind of decided at Christmas and then from January then I kind of started the whole visa process? So it took about January to April, I think just getting all the documents sorted, waiting, like it takes a few weeks each time and all that stuff. And then I got it in April. Yes. And then from April to August was just, like quit my old job and kind of plan the move, looking at flights, looking at jobs You know do everything I could do about it. Yeah. That was basically it. So this is pretty much about a year, like less than a year maybe.

M: And in terms of the migration options that were available to you, was it just going to be this one particular type of visa that you applied? Or did you also consider like, hey, maybe I could get PR directly or things like that. Were you considering on the visa options?

Sa: Not really, I think I was leaning towards this one, because I knew people who…don't know it's slightly different process to when they did.. but I knew most people had done this for Montreal. They all were like, it's grand. Its easy, like you apply, theres obviously like, you can get refused but I didn’t see any reason as to why that might be. I thought it was going to be straightforward enough. So no, I think there's only one that I was considering because I wanted to be open as well. It's an open work permit that I have. So I didn't want to like I didn't know if I could get directly like I mean, say like say the company I was working for in Dublin was international if I knew they had and office Montreal, it was perfect. That was great. I would have been wanting to sponsor me or whatever. But because I wanted it to be open I was like, that was it seemed like the best option. And I didn't. To be honest, I didn't look into too many other options for Europe. I think maybe because, I don't know, I think the Canadian website is done pretty well, like its pretty straight forward, I couldn't think straight forward because it's literally like, here's you, here's what you need, here's all your steps. Whereas I think with other places, it's kind of it's not like easily laid out for you. It's kind of like you need to go and find the information yourself. So I didn't really delve too much into it. This was the only one that I found pretty much everything on easily. And yeah it's interesting to me. My brothers in Australia too and he got into trouble because he wanted to apply for permanent residency at some point and then it just seemed pretty like convoluted and like… Whereas this… I mean, a friend of mine was applying as well at the same time, I don’t think theyre going to come in now but I think they just wanted to look at the option and they're like, Oh, can you understand this website. It is so confusing. I was like, literally, it’s the easiest one, not being like whatever, but I think it was like so well laid out, they kind of make it clear, and the time you need all these documents and you need all this. So it's kind of like..

M: Yeah, great. Okay. Tell me a little bit about your family and their role in your migration. Like did they play a role?

Sa: I hate them that’s why I left [laughs] No and so no, I'm really close to my family. That was actually a big point, I was like, aah this is going to be tough. The fact that I suppose my brother and sister living abroad – like it wasn't the biggest deal so I was like, oh, like my parents are used to it. I mean, I kind of felt bad leaving initially coz its like Im the kid that’s going now but my brother had just moved from Australia and now ..it was kind of weird timing because the day my flight left was the day he moved into Dublin so I was a bit disappointed with that because I was like, I would have liked to have been in Dublin for a while when you were there. But I kind of was also felt like a cross over, I was like right you can look after the parents now. I think it would have felt bad leaving if all 3 of their kids were not home. But hes home now. Hes living in Dublin. So, and then my sister Yeah, she comes home often. She lives in Berlin and its not that far. And I think she's planning on staying up there another few years. So so it's kind of like, Oh, yeah, like, I could do this. Now they had obviously gone over with boyfriends or girlfriends, so and I hadn't. But I was like, Look, I mean, I think I want to do something for myself, and I want to do whatever. So. I don't know. Like, I mean, it was. I don't know. Yeah. Well, my parents, I think, like, Yeah, like that’s tough coz I used to go home like every two years or so. So yeah, if anything, they were a possible deterrent to me leaving. But. It's fine, to be honest. And that was a big thing in terms of choosing Montreal. So I was like that, you know, when when people are like, oh, we're immigrating. We're going to Canada or Australia. So theyre like, they have their big Irish group and everything there and then you don't see them for years, and it's a big thing. And I was like, Look, I don't want that. I want to go somewhere that's not that far of a flight, that I am gonna come home often and I do want people to visit me often. So I don't want to do this big “Oh my God I’m never gonna see you again”. I wanna come home for Christmas and have to come home in March again coz a friend of mines getting married. I want them to come out this summer. So it's kind of like I never want it to more than like two or three months without seeing someone. So yeah, that's probably there's probably a big factor in where I chose. Yeah, yeah, they would have stopped me from going like to like super remote, something like Australia. And then just as well, so my brother has been there and when he came home I hadn't seen him for like, 2 years. And I was like, this is very long, like, you know, and because it was so far away, so expensive to go, it really was a deterrent. like, you'd be talking at least two grands for fights. And then like, with here, it depends on when you go… I think my Christmas flight home is going to be expensive but well in general its like $500 return. So I mean, which is quite good. I mean, obviously, you still cant go over board, because it's still an expensive life. But I mean, if you can get there to get directly in like six and a half hours or something, its not that bad. I mean there are places in Europe which are like the same. So its kind of like, so yeah, they’re are a big factor in what way right. And they probably the reason why I probably would have wanted to go to Europe, you know, It would have been easy to come home, but this worked out..

M: And your brothers moved back permanently to live with your parents?

Sa: Yeah, he's permanent there. No. So well, he might. He said the minute he came home, that he'll go again. I mean, he might choose somewhere else. And he was thinking go to somewhere in Europe again. But hes fine for now. And we'll see..

M: And we've talked about visas. So you talked about how long right now in terms of This research and it's about based on skilled migration and people who consider themselves skilled. What are your skills? Like? How do you see the skills in this? What are your skills? And I'm not just talking about professional skills. I'm also talking about other general life skills as well.

Sa: Well, professionally, it's definitely just anything to do with the writing sphere. Like, I definitely got good experience in my old job. So I think that becomes really like future jobs, like editing like any article. I even was kind of thinking like, maybe I'll get into the book publishing or something along the lines. Yeah, I'm good at basically taking a big pile of crap and trying to turn it into something concise and readable, and it's making it clear. So I think I'm good at that. And then writing. I done know, I started off again now and I mean, when I did articles and stuff before, they were all really like opinion pieces that like my own mind, whatever I thought, and I think now that I'm writing, although its fun, I don't think its like my strongest skill I think. Im good at it but it definitely can be better. I don't think I'm as good at imagination. I think I'm good at writing down what I know, and what I believe. And, and you know, there's that little push. I don't know if I'm definitely the person that will be writing books and all that kind of Yeah. But yeah, they’re my main like, jobs. I don't know what I have in life skills. I think I'm quite independent. Yeah, I mean, obviously, I'm here on my own. So, I'm kind of quite optimistic. I think so kind of, like, if I kind of was like, I knew what might hard to be on my own. And I was, like, comforting to know that it will be that like, the worst that will happen is that I can always go back home. I know, it's gonna it's fine. Like to me, I'm, like, you know, ive been on my own in the past as well. So I think this is a personality thing. So yeah. Yeah, I think, I think probably, it's not like, like if I wasn’t enjoying it, I think I'd be very proactive and Be like okay, well Oh my god, this is awful. I'm just gonna go home, you know what I mean? So like initially coming year, had a bit of, like I was worried about like health things and getting set up with health insurance and stuff like that so I didn't have a scare and I'm kind of like, Oh no, maybe I should just go home, but I'm like no things will get good, its fine. last week got a mouse in my apartment I was like, Well, I'm gonna leave the apartment, Im just gonna go rather than trying to deal with that thing. Yeah, so luckily my landlord is very good at he came around to me tand he sorted it out for me. But I think like I went to go stay in a hotel and I was like, literally like, I cant. I had a bad week last week. I think I was just like, because it was the first time I actually felt truly alone here. I was like okay, there's my stairs.. where I'm going to go when I was like There's no one like I can see…I don't know anyone I can stay with or anything. You know, so when I left the apartment, I need to go to the hotel so it's kind of lonely and a bit like oh now and then I'm kind of thinking of like ‘Oh What am I doing here?’ Maybe I shouldnt be here, you know, the spiral. So, you know, you have that then I was kind of like, No, no, we'll be fine in a few days, we'll get rid of it. You know, trying to, I think go to trying to be like, fine, you feel shit for a while and then get up and move on with it. So, I mean enough to say that if I hate… if I continue to, like, have bad swings here that I’ll leave, like, I'm not gonna worry about like, what people think you know, whatever. But for now I think yeah, this is what I want. I think Yeah, as well as that I think because it was in my house and then it was like, you know, when you come over on your own like, literally have like one base where you call home then you don't you don't have friends ,you don't have your family or whatever. So that's the one place where I could go and then I was like theres a mouse here. I was like, I can't stay here and I’m not comfortable here and then it was like if I’m not comfortable here then I'm not comfortable anywhere in this country so then it was kind of like probably a bit of an overreaction. It was just a mouse. It was fine. But you know it's little things like that they've kind of made me feel.. I hope that it was just one like when my landlord came out and checked, he checked everything like holes and like droppings anywhere. There was nothing. So he's like, I'm fairly sure it's just one mouse and it got caught in the trap and it was the worst night of my life because I had to hear it dying. But it's gone now and I think I haven't noticed that the last few nights. So fingers crossed. Fingers crossed.

M: Mapping:

M: let's just start with all the processes that you went through.

Sa: So, I'm just gonna say roughly, and I'm going to maybe do a timeline. Yeah. So December is when I started looking at so… like, the first thing I have is just the websites, yes, just going on to like, government, Canada website. So okay, research on that. And then there was a list of documents you needed. So that involves checks say when you go to a doctor, and that was like going to the guards [police] to get approval of stuff. And that's stuff, like CVs, references. Like just basic info look I don't think it was something that nothing was like I'm… probably getting the Garda cert was the hardest because when they send it and they were like two weeks to get this back to us and whatever so that was pretty… of fingerprints as well. Biometrics yeah and then that was everything that I kind of give to them and then just go with it. There was no other real intermediary or like I didn't have to do with any lawyers or any other people. I was basically just doing my own thing, just going through the website. That’s everything they needed before I came. I'm going to say August then. When I came I had to go through customs and then copies of it all the documents that I needed initially of money in my account, all right, okay and bank details and money so basically they either needed to have certification that you’re going to leave the country like a flight booked back home or your money to prove this you could stay there. They needed, I think it was 1500 dollars for this 1500 – 2000 Canadian dollars. Just make sure that you could pay for somewhere to stay for a while. And then for your flight back home so okay and they needed like full copies of all my IDs like everything like my passport and like all this I am who I am. I think that was everything then then they checked it over and then they gave me a SIN number. I thought that I had to go to like a place for it, like a separate office but they have a place right beside customs that if you want to pay something extra, like they'll process there. That’s what youre going to need to get your work permit. So they gave me the sin number and they gave me the work permit all there. And yes then when I was leaving the airport, I had everything ready that I needed to set up like for a job and the health cards is a big different, in that, you can only get it if you have an established employer, there was some other things in that I didn't have either. So I wasnt eligible for it. But I am eligible for health insurance at work after three months, so I have to sort that in January. I think that’s it. So the health insurance I have is a basic package it's like done, they do it for your visa. Its like a package for travel for like advice and stuff and then for basically health emergency so like if I die or if I have an accident. It doesn't cover like general medical and all that. You have to have a Canadian healthcare or you can pay private for it. So when I came here, I did have to go to a private health clinic. So I had to pay all those fees because I didn't have a health card and because I didn't have health insurance yet at work. So you have to pay all those fees yourself. It was my own like check-up. It was something that I want to get done even before I came over and I didn't have time. So, like doing over here it cost me more money. Yeah, you do have to go to a private clinic. Like that took a while actually trying to figure that. I tried like three numbers being like look Im not from here, like, where do I go? And then I was being directed to somewhere else. But the bottom line is it has to be private, you have to pay up. I think you can try and get like advisor has insurance, but like I think as long as I did, but it's not urgent. It's kind of like that's on you. That's the main thing.

M: And in terms of like spending money on all of these processes, do you have like a sort of a rough estimate in your mind of how much you spent on?

Sa: Oh Money! okay. So initially you have to pay I think its like $200 or 100 and 150 I think to actually apply to get a visa. And the visa itself and then you have to pay an extra I think it's 100 or something like that for biometrics and that's a new thing. I don't think my friends had to do it when they moved over. Yeah, it's definitely the last two years that they made it mandatory. For all the documents and stuff I don't I think had to pay anything. Oh I had to pay for a new passport. So basically, I wouldn't need it. Basically my passport went up to until April 2021 but as my visa was going to be up till August 2021, even though I'm probably not gonna stay here longer than a year, I had to prove to them that I wasn't going to let my passport run out before my visa. So I had to pay for that. So that was like 80. that was everything for the prep then after that was like Yeah, so the flight out was like 550.. that was a one way so it wasn't hugely cheap for a one way. Airbnb for two weeks while they, you know, like, new clothes, preparing for the winter. Like I packed lightly because I wanted to buy all of my clothes here. And then I came.. initially, like setting up and everything so I don’t think it cost anything to set up, but cost to set up a new phone, internet, and gym just like as an option. Yeah, and then like your rent, because I think you can't take your deposit as rent, they're not supposed to. Some landlords try and get to pay the last months rent… like in Ireland you would always be asked to pay 1 months rent as deposit plus the rent and advance whereas I don't want to do that here. I don’t think its illegal but basically you don't have to pay it but like a lot of landlords will want you to just as a security thing. So because my landlord, I got pretty good vibes from him and like I knew that it was a good person he’s like, Look like, its just to cover ourselves. So I did pay it. I had set it aside to do that because I just assumed I would have to. Like I had done the research, but I kind of knew as well and there was a possibility that I needed to pay a bit extra. So yeah, that was an extra cost.

M: And how did you find the place? Do you like an agent?

Sa: Well, No. Basically I did searches on Kijiji and Craigslist.And then, what else, nothing more than the usual expenses of getting set up somewhere new like getting your travel bags as well. and then yeah. all the new life stuff because the houses aren’t furnished here. So I need to get a bed, and a couch. It was grand because the guy that living here was moving to Alberta. So, he didn't want to bring any of his stuff with him. So, I got a lot of stuff from him and he gave it to me for cheap. So he gave me like his bed, his couch and stuff like that – it was $200 it was great and it was obviously in the apartment, otherwise I would have had to like go out and sort it all myself and that would have been a pain because I'm gonna have to buy like everything. Here I had to buy like cups and saucers and knives and cutlery, like everything so yeah..I mean it was a grand because I mean I think some of them don't even have fridges or they don't have an oven or a microwave or anything like that but they're extra expenses for coming here though.

M: So were you always going to be looking for a house for yourself like you did not want to share with anybody?

Sa: Um, yeah, like that was the aim. I knew was going to be my so there was like no other opportunity for me to live on my own. Because I couldnt afford to do that in Ireland and we don't even have studios either. Like you might find them if you did a search, like one or two vacant ones. But its not really there…everyone just shares big houses whereas here it was, it was almost the norm to find one bedroom apartments. So I was like and it was a lot cheaper. So even though it's dear by Montreal standards, for me like it's quite cheap so I think it was the only opportunity that I was going to have so I was like I gotta try it. So that's why I did it. I mean, I could have gotten a room for like $200 anywhere and save some money but I kind of wanted my space, and figure out everything so yeah, it could be a lot cheaper to share.

M: Is there a difference in income in terms of actual earning compared to Dublin?

Sa: Its slightly less here I think and so what I'm earning now is the same as what I earned in my old job, I thought was gonna be slightly more because they tax more here. So it's not a huge amount. It's about roughly the same. But I'm definitely on a higher wage here than is average. Do you know what I mean. For the job that it is…So I think the wages are known to be slightly less…Yeah, it's cheaper… the cost of living here as well. So while you might get paid more in Dublin, you're gonna pay more for living, So I think it kind of balances out.

M: Yeah, yeah. So yeah. Cool. All right. Now let's talk about technology. Okay, so the role of technology in your migration.

Sa: So it was all to do with technology, and then moving here, it was finding the apartments online. And yeah, like “moving to Canada” Im just gonna write that website. Yeah, because that was such a great website it gave me all the resources. It was set up by an Irish man and he…. it's just so comprehensive it gives you everything like up when I signed up, they messaged me every two months. They were like, you said, you're moving on the 19th. By this stage you should have this sorted and you know. On the day that I moved, they’re like, congratulations you're on the move. And then they're like, here's a video of seven things you need to do when you get to Canada. So its like first do this and second do this. It was so great. So it's like such a good resource. So like, technology just like trying for like, coming here. And then when I came here and we should be right Montreal blog because it's like a, loads of Instagram accounts that follow it and just to like for tourism, see what was good here and. Oh Facebook groups. Like, you know yourself. And then, what else, searching for the job. Oh, LinkedIn. I got my job through LinkedIn. I've been searching on like Craigslist.. like in Ireland it’s a bit dodgy but here everyone posts jobs on Craigslist and there was like, like babysitting jobs, It was a secret shopper jobs, It was like, massage therapist, but like, yeah, you know, so it was a bit dodgy so I didn't find it that great so I went on linked in. So I got like, three or four calls from places after that. So I would recommend for job search. Like, I mean, I used Linkedin quite a bit in my last job and I was like Why don’t I use Linkedin more. Cant tell, it was like, Facebook in the way that Facebook used to be big and now Linkedin is for work, do you know what I mean? I mean I know it's all about the jobs and like whatever that's what it advertises, but it does actually work.

M: So these were actually job adverts on LinkedIn or you reached out to employers?

Sa: no no no I was applying. There was a couple people I did reach out to but I didn't hear from them and I kind of know that like cold emailing and calling doesn't always work unless they're actively looking for someone like you. No, I applied to all the jobs and like a lot of them are easy applies as well, you can just click and apply to a lot of them. It's better than sending in a cover letter. Yeah, LinkedIn is great for that. And then at the job I'm in now and all of the toys and stuff are sold and targeted towards Amazon. So a lot of the works involves SEO keyword research. So that's a huge part of technology that I use every day. Oh yeah, Whasapp is key. I don’t use skype because we just use whatsapp now. So that's how I message everyone every day called everyone all the time. That's the my main source of communication for and then, like other social media say like for like us the likes of Instagram and yeah, you know, you know, so I'm gonna be the main source of communication issues. I mean, obviously, I’ve got inyternet set up at the house and everyone needs internet anymore. I got a good data plan joints with the phone. So that was good, because when I did have an internet issue, like I didn’t have internet for 2 weeks in the house. I was using up all the data on the phone and obviously going out and around, so its very important for like Google maps and all.

M: Great. Okay. And how long did it take you to get your job offer you arrived?

Sa: Like three weeks so very lucky. Yeah. So basically, because I got the apartment so so… basically I came over on the 19th and I had the Airbnb for two weeks. So it's like I give myself the whole two weeks to just find the apartments. Obviously it might take longer or I'm not going to think about jobs, because my parents were like, “you don’t have a job yet, you sure you want to go over” and I was like no Im going to find the apartment first, that's key, and then look for a job. So because I found it so early, like I got here on the Monday and found the apartment by the Wednesday, like I got to spend all the rest of the time looking for the job. So cant remember the day and I actually got it but, I was assured that I had it so then I started on the 24th of September. It was an open work permit. So basically, I can work like the HR guys were like, okay, because you're from Ireland, I need to see your visa, I need to see your SIN number I need to see proof of my bank details but I think that was just to pay me. I don't think they need it. So once you get the permit and once its open, I mean, some of them. Obviously, if you came over with another company, and they were like it was a specified or if you're coming over to study, I don't think you can work anywhere. Like you don't mean you have to be a whole separate thing but because mine is very open, I can work for the whole 2 years. So I don't think I can stay here any longer than that. I mean, I think there is the possibility to apply for more time, but I think they brought in something new recently, that you might be able to extend your visa maybe in a year or two but in general unless you find like a specified job and they weren't willing to vouch for you and want you to stay longer..I was just two years ago I think it's fairly recent two years to do whatever you want and then after that leave..Yes, yes, it is. It was a pool. So like when you when you join first they were like applied to join some pool and then they're like welcome, youre in the pool. Now you have to apply to actually do something that's and then you do it and then they’re like, congratulations you did this. Now gives us this document… so was kind of like a little process like that, but it didn't really feel like full steps because I think the way they used to do it before, it was like a lottery and it took a lot of time and I remember my friend doing this, they were so stressed that … it would be like it could be sometime in March or April that we're just going to send you a message and then you can get on the internet and Its first come first serve. And it was like, I remember they were so stressed about it and then they got their thing whereas now I don't know whether the pools wider or its that they don’t have many? I don't think it's as likel at the time…so they're like between now and now… they'll let you know when the pools are open but I don't think it's like ….I think they gather all the first and then they select you from it. So it's not like the first person that gets in will get it. It's kinda like they do choose your from a list but I've never really felt that I was narrowed down or whatever. I think the likelihood of not getting chosen for it would you have to have something that would deter them like say like if your passport was invalid or if like updating the criminal records you cant come gere or like maybe if you've been here before and you're trying to apply again. So it didn’t really feel like it was…no maybe it was… maybe they chose me from list of people but like it didn't really feel like it was hugely selected because it was done so quickly. So It was like, within a day or two it was like here you’re approved for this, not move on to the next stage.. it was like this.

M: yes. And the Airbnb accommodation may have you sorted that out before you came?

Sa: Yeah, no, that was the only thing that I had sorted because everything else, like I cant find a job unless I would go in an interview, I can't find an apartment without going and seeing it, I cant set up a bank account until I go into the bank so Airbnb wass the only thing I can do from abroad where I like filter that down through super hosts and…I want to make sure that you know, the people Im staying with are good like that. So it's about like okay, maybe don't stay like, alone with a man, in a weird part of town you know, you know. So that was the only thing I had coming over. But it was really good to have someone coming over knowing that I had somewhere to be. At least it was like I'm going somewhere these people are expecting me to come here so it was kind of helpful.

M: And organizing like your kind of move, like your travel from the airport to home did

you do Uber or like things like that?

Sa: So I knew the directions from the metro. I knew that the place of staying was near a Metro. I was like that’s hand. But I did factor in the fact that I had a massive bag and two other bags with me, and I was just a tourist hanging. And so I had a few homeless people, like, like a few rough looking people come up and kind of chat with me, so then I was like, I'm just gonna take an uber for the rest of the trip. So I would recommend that, like you get to the airport and its straight into town, but I was like, yeah, ubers are much cheaper here so you just get an uber where you're going. Yeah they were great [uber and Airbnb] because it was so much cheaper like 250, for two weeks, two weeks, which is very good. I mean, like, I stayed at a really bad hotel that night when I saw the mouse. And that was like $60 $70 and if you do pay for two weeks of that, that's a lot more expensive but also it was horrible. So I'm like, it was like a one star hotel where it's like, at least at Airbnb, you have insider knowledge, people tell you stuff. Like they told me like, they set up my internet for me, they were really helpful. definitely would recommend that. Can I write this down like a travel section? And so I'm just going to come in here and then it was so Airbnb first. I Had a girl that lived here before. So she was… she went to college with me. She did same courses with me and then then moved here for two years. I remember seeing her pictures in Montreal so she sent me a document of that she sent to the guy who was taking over her job, but it was all like, what you need to know about living in Montreal. So she told me to look at the plateau which was great because I actually messaged her when I came here the first week. I only had 2 house viewings and I didn’t go to the first one because she told me not to because she was like, look, like you can go see it. She was like look its not the best street. Even the place that you live in is nice, your walk home isn’t going to be great. She was like a if youre living on your own, I just wouldnt recommend it. So I ended up just cancelling that and then I was like look I found somewhere else. So, I didn't go to that one. And then I got the viewing for the place that Im living now. And she was like, that is an amazing spot if you can get that in any way, take it. So, it was a huge help having her to be honest, to be honest. I mean, I could have ended up in first place and it could have been fine. But like, having someone who knows is so great. Like I'm from Ireland. I've been to Dublin. Like I know. I know things about living in Ireland. If you don't live in the city itself, if you don't know this exact area, if you don't do this street. I mean, you could take this is a great area, but this particular street isnt nice, you know, it's it's beneficial. Yeah. So having her like her insider knowledge was very valuable. I mean you could maybe find it online but then you would find like posts that were made in 2008. You know like, I don’t know if I could trust this stranger. But I knew this girl. I was like I knew, like, you know, to make sure we have similar ideas and stuff. So I was like, if she was advising it, you know, I, gonna trust her like, so it's Yeah, it was very helpful. I mean, like, you could, I suppose you need to know the area and its hard to like “ask where is good to live” coz everyone has their own opinion. So yeah, that was good. And what else?

M: Okay. Yeah. All right. We were just gonna move. I mean, you actually kind of spoke about this person. Anyway, so I was going to move to social connections. Yeah. So you already told me about this particular person. But yeah, otherwise as well, friends, family, greater community, professional networks that helped you in your journey?

Sa: So okay, I'm gonna put her down. Yeah. So she was probably the first that I had any kind of, in Montreal. initially I think I messaged her like a year ago I was like thinking move here I'm thinking of moving said lot of places. Would you recommend anything? And she was like yeah move here. So Im gonna say friend from college and then I don't knowlike, now that Ive come here, I mean haven't had a huge… yeah like it was mainly just I talked to like other people that have lived in Canada so like other people… so yeah friend of mine from work she lived in Vancouver so and they were like this little group you have like this like people living outside of Ireland. So yeah, And I can write the Facebook group here and then that website as well. The move to Canada one, they have forums and stuff if you wanna post any questions or whatever. And here I’ll write down bumble and meetups but haven't fully used them yet but I'm just gonna write in the future because when it starts to snow, and I get more alone… yeah

M: In terms of technology, sorry, now that you're here, do you provide advice to anybody? Do you actually go on forums and say, or this is what you can do or…?

Sa: I haven’t done that yet because I think when even like the odd questions you pop up in the likes of forum thing I'm like, I haven't done that yet. So, I can't advice but I probabl;y should. I mean, I did a Google review the other day and I never use google reviews and I remember talking to my brother about it and he's big for TripAdvisor. He uses it for everything like here. He came see me in Dublin for like a lunch. And he was like, Oh, I think this place is number one on TripAdvisor. I was like, all right. Like I live here, I know theres a few places that are good. But he was like, but this is on Tripadvisor so hes very like, he's very trusting of it. And then was like, all right, well do you post on it and he was like no and then I was like you should. And then I realized that I should because I use a lot of like I would use the internet live like best place to go for this.. like best bagels in Montreal. I use it a lot. So I probably should. I put like one google review the other day for a restaurants because I went with my friends and it was so cheap, and so nice. And staff are amazing. Like, you know, like I'd be really compelled to do it if I had a really good experience. if I had a bad one.I know I probably should left a bad one for that hotel that night. I was just worried that like the guys would know that it was me. Coz Id just left that day but it was aweful. But then I went on to booking.com and like all the reviews were pretty bad anyway, so so I was like I didn't stay here because it was it was good reviews. I stayed here because it was the cheapest and closest space in my house. Okay. But anyway, um, No, I haven't given any advice, but I If I saw someone like obviously asking questions or like if they were like, Oh, I don't know about this. I mean, somebody told me theyre coming to montreal from Ireland, I would definitely sit down with them for three hours. And I think I'm still learning. Its all new for me. And I'm kind of like, I don't know, like why you asking me it's like, when people come up from the street? And they're like, asking for directions are and so I'm like, I'm trying to even come up with the words to respond to them in French, let alone tell you. Where I don't know where I am. I don't know why people approach me because I clearly look lost. I'm looking at Google Maps and someone's like, do you know where this is?

M: And this French, I mean, just the language, sort of play a part in how you navigate

the city or do you feel that's that's got anything to do with your experience of living here?

Sa: It has made like, I kind of like it, that I kind of like that theres a different language, and I don't know why. I find it I like the challenge if I like, I don't know, like when I came here first it was a bit of a shock that it was so widespread. And that's funny because Montreal people will tell you yet that the plateau and all these others places there's so much English speaking there is so much English like 70% English and 30% French. I don't think that I think everyone speaks French so I think it's a bit of a shock when I get here first that, every when you hear in the background is speaking French and there was something nice about it though because it sounds like I'm here somewhere different, different culture, theres something new because like like I mean I can look at a sign and figure it out and like if you gave me a menu I can figure out most of things on it. It's like, it's nice to kind of feel like your brain has been trained to get into like work through stuff. Now I find it really hard to hold a conversation because even if I figure out exactly my word for oatmilk, I remember to request it, and then they ask me something in response and Im like… I don’t know. It is difficult, but when you learn a few words, and then you kind of make some effort to communicate someone it actually makes really good. So yeah, I actually like having it. And I would recommend those people like that they'd have had it in school. Say my friend that came she was at school with me. So she remembered few words and she was able to, like, do a few bits herself. I mean, if it was in German or in some other language like, I don't know if, like I was in China, I’d be fucked. I mean, it does help that I have some familiarity, but it's definitely a shock. Initially, when you realize oh, no, everyone does not speak in English. Just to hear it in the background, its even wierd, like speaking English. Even when I started my job was like, Oh, I can speak English. Okay, you know what I mean? And speaking with the flow as opposed to ummm.. could I … like trying to figure out stuff.

M: This may not apply to you but um any humanitarian or social support services that use like NGO or community service organizations or anything like that did that ever common?

Sa: No. Okay news anything like that? No The only like, humanitarian like NGO like I mean I tried to like set up a volunteering when I came here first but that was for myself to volunteer. I tried to then they were like we will get back to you and yeah, and then because it was before I got the job, so I was kind of like, how can I lose time but then I was like, I don't know if you can Yeah, so I don't know, maybe in time ago nice now that I'm so good and no, I didn't I didn't use it.

M: Immigration policy?

Sa: And so, the main thing I'll say is that I think we're beyond lucky in Ireland because our passports like qualifies us to go so many places and it's I think we don't realize how easy we have it. Like even someone who went to Canada and we'll talk about at work work, like they qualify to come to Canada but it would like so much harder for them to try and work abroad and like we really move so freely across Europe and like, like, everyone I know. It's like the worsening now I know with Brexit and how that's all changed. But like people in Ireland are always like Im moving to Australia or im mving to Berline, always moving somewhere and you're going to work and apply and you just have to set up your papers, whatever. Even to move to Canada bit extra to do but still fairly straightforward. So a girl from India who I worked with in Dublin. She had such a nightmare. She had to apply for a new visa every year. There was a rule where she… she left Ireland for like 1 day or 2 days in something in this calendar year and if she didn’t, theyd take away her visa. It was just awful. So I was kinda like, Yeah, I don't know they do realise that you work here. So I think it's made me more interested. So it's made me really I know, it's hard because generally, people get into policy or policies that affect them. So basically, you know, you'll always see people like fighting for cancer research because they're mum died of cance and they are angry and rightfully so and they want something. So it's different when…. I think it’s a big privilege when you got everything handed to you that you're kind of like, this doesn't affect me or is like, I don't know, it's hard because I'm kind of like I said it was the same it feels wrong for it to be easier for one person and harder for another. It feels wrong that people get put in cages in America and deported because they just want to live there. I mean, that's, I mean, that's like a whole other issue, that’s like, asylum and that's like people that actually need to live there. Not just someone like me who’s like “I would like to go to Canada”. I mean, it's so, the privilege we have is completely ridiculous. But yeah, it has made me more, if not involved in it, definitely more like aware of how, like when you hear about people like struggling with little kids, you're like, oh, like I can't believe that you have to worry about that when I don't you know, and it really makes you realize that privilege.

M: I think we're kind of almost towards the end of it. I suppose I just want to ask you about the biggest challenges or obstacles that came your way in moving. Is there is there anything that you want to say on that?

Sa: The mouse. Yeah I can draw a little mouse. I’ll put the mouse because the mouse really affected me, and the health thing and the whole thing I mean, not being able to… like which hospital am I able to go to, what does my insurance cover? Whereas in Ireland it was just like, Ill just go to the nearest clinic. Its an added anxiety maybe. And the it's mainly the social aspect of it, it's not so much that I miss, like, and I miss not having my friends as well. Or that I really miss people that I love all my god, I miss them so much. I really want to see them, I don't have that so much. But it's little things, like habits that you have, and maybe it's an Irish thing of like the drinking culture that we have – its true [laughs] But like even like going for drinks after work on a Friday, like something like that, that I really miss that like it's mainly the weekends when you're…even last weekend and I'm like, I don't have this and it's like, whatever, everyone was like going home and like, have friends coming in. And Im like, I'm just gonna like, chill in my apartment. Do you know what I mean? Bit’s like that makes me feel a bit disconnected. Well, I mean, my friends have literally messaged and talked to me non-stop every day is almost like another job to try and keep up with all the correspondence like trying to get back to everyone. But it's Yeah, they've been very supportive. Yeah, that's the main challenges I mean, being on your own like yeah, I think it's just a big thing as well in that even if you enjoy it any kind of whatever it's different when it's so like say when you’re off over a weekend, there's always something to do when you're home, you have to go home, or meet someone for a coffee, like you to do all your social to do’s. And then when you the morning free to yourself for half a day and youre like yeah I need to go do something for myself myself. That's really nice when it's a choice, but when it's we don't have choice in it, It's doesn't it takes away some of the good from it. So like I'm like, yeah, it's very much enjoying going somewhere on my own. I very much enjoy spending the day by myself, but when you know, I mean, it's nice to still have the option that I might meet up with a person later.

M: They don't really have a culture of like going Friday night drinks?

Sa: I think it really depends. I think it's really the place where we are so I'm literally in a warehouse in the middle of an industrial park. There's no… I think the closest hotel is like a 20 minute walk and there's no cafes nearby there's no shops nearby there. If you forget your lunch there is this like truck that goes by and I think that like, that’s your only option unless you have a car and you can drive to wherever. There's nowhere nearby. And like even when I was coming into the interview, I decided that I was gonna hate this place because I hate the look of industrial parks. You know like, when youre near and airport, you know what that looks like, its like urghh. So I think that's the main issue. We had like a team lunch the first week, you know, because I'm not the only new person who have which makes it a lot easier. And then they were kind of talking about doing like an Oktoberfest thing, and then maybe a drinking thing. And then before the Christmas party, so it feels like they will do social things. But I think it's more difficult to where we are. And they were kind of like, what we're going to go, you know, and then people were like, well, maybe we should just stay here in the office or drink here, because, you know, everyone is pulling from different areas. And they’re like its little warehouse, and if we drink here, you know, someone is going to get injured. And so it's kind of like, where do we go then? Because we need to get a Metro and a bus. It's mainly the location, I think. I mean, everyone there has been really nice, but I suppose it's the same as anywhere when you start somewhere new you're kind of like, I'm gonna be really nice and polite, but I don't know what your personality is. Yeah, I don't know if it's okay to do this, and alcohol just helps with that [laughs].

M: And do you plan to maybe change your jobs in the future?

Sa: No, because a lot of jobs that I applied for, I didn't hear back from. And there was one that was like, super stressy. And they were like, can you do like 50 things to get up to the next stage. Before you will even be interviewed before you even have a chance to meet anyone. So, like I didn't want a high stress job. And this job is not stressful, I don't even think people are checking on me. It's like, amazing, like they're so positive and no one's kind of looking over their shoulder making sure you're doing the work. So I don't want a job that I'm going to be obsessed with or stay late at or, you know what I mean? So I think and because like, find a job and setting up and then get holidays or something like that because I need to take Christmas holidays, I need to take holidays in March, and then that would be six months. And then I'm like, well, what's the point of finding a new job I’m here for a year. I think I'm fairly sure I want to go and stay for the year, if that, if don't like it, I might go home sooner.

M: Oh, really? Okay. So you don't select? I mean, I was gonna that would be my next question. Yeah. Next steps in terms of staying here. You just want to stay here for a year?

Sa: I think so. Okay, you know, you never know what might happen. But yeah, like I could end up staying and making more friends find someone here, you never know. But fow now. No, I think I've always seen it as like a short term thing. I'm just here for I just want to be here for a while… I want to challenge myself to live on my own. I want to challenge myself to go somewhere completely new and completely different. Find a job like all these things, Like Im done with some of the hardest parts now. And now its just like adjusting. Like I don't know if this part is going to be the hardest because it's always different when your mind’s occupied it has so much to worry about. Like, oh I need to find my apartment, now I need to find a job, and my friends visiting but once they go and you know it starts to snow it's going to be a bit more like, okay, now you have to like, not only be okay living here, but try and enjoy it as well. I think quite keep it short term, like a year or maybe even less than a year, then I'll probably make the best out of this place. I think it's if I keep the short term, I'm really trying to value it and I'm like no, enjoy yourself. I mean, you're not going to have this next year you're going to be home and Dublin or go away and you want to be like I wish I was on my own again. So I'm kind of like trying to be you know, trying to enjoy it as much as I can.

M: And I was just wondering also your any aspect of romantic relationships. That sort of does that any is does that say the role anywhere? Is that a motivation at all?

Sa: So before I moved to here, so I was in a long term relationship for about six years, and that ended badly. So that was I think summer 2018. I think initially, your initial thing is like, I gotta move out, I gotta do something. I gotta cut my hair. I gotta go.. And then I was like, No actually gonna keep going and like, cuz I wanted to eave my job in summer 2018. And I was going to move to go away with him. And that was the whole plan. So then I was like, Okay, this big thing just happened. I don't want to change something else big in my life. You know, you've got your base, who youre with and your job. So I was like I'm going to say my job for maybe another year, and then I'll do and then I'll figure out something else. So I think that was partly why you wanted to Do something different, but I will say, That's why I came here because I don't like because many people have asked me like, did you move because of the’bad breakup? And Im like Well, no, I didn't mean to get away from anyone.. I didn't move to, like escape or whatever, because it was like, I always want to travel. I knew when I started, that he didn't. And I knew that would be kind of part of my life that I wouldn’t ger to do enough. I was kind of content. I don't think I felt that I was missing out on anything at the time for, I think it was all like, I mean, he knew that too, like many people do, My parents used to say it. They were like, oh, D, S are abroad. But you know, we always thought to be Sarah, you know, everything. And I was like, Yeah, okay, whatever. So it was always something that I knew that I wanted, and then eventually when the opportunity presented itself was like, so yeah, so I think that's why I gave myself a bit of extra time to kind of, coz obviously a breakup is hard, it's almost like I don't want to do this as kind of a reactionary thing. And then by Christmas and I was like all right yeah, I'm feeling good, Still though, I’d like to be single for a little while. Obviously when I have the long term or the short term idea in my head like that I'm not going to be living here for years and years. I mean it may be if I was in Ireland it might be different for I mean, I'm not definitely not actively seeking a relationship nor would I I mean, again never say never. I mean my parents were like you could me meeting someone in Montreal and stay there for 10 years. But I'm not really romantic like that. I still think I need a lot more time. I had a great year but being in a bad thing like that is hard. When you kind of get out, initially you’re upset but now I'm like, I'm actually really enjoying everyon, I really like, you know, I like the fact that I'm here. I've never been here. I've never gotten this opportunity. So, it's kind of like it's all for the greater good. Yes, it has made me be a bit more like no to that. So yeah, maybe in a year.

M: I just kind of want to get your thoughts on what you feel about it. Is there anything else that you'd like to add to it?

Sa: I think that's fairly comprehensive. And I'm really glad I came here. I think I made the right decision but then again, I think I'm that kind of person any way that I'm like, always be like, like, I never think that was the wrong decision. I'm not huge, like, everything will look like everything is predestined. And it's meant to be and I don't believe that, but I'm still kind of like it was the right decision at the time and if I choose to leave, that would be the right decision. And if I choose to stay for two years and then apply for another visa, that would be the right decision. So im kinda like, I'm really happy I came here, and Montreal particularly It's just like I love it here. Yeah, like I think yeah, it makes you realize what things are really valuable like, like missing friends and family is hard, but also it's kind of like oh, it's really nice to look forward seeing them and to really like value it like means I'm, I can't wait to go home for Christmas but I'm also not we counting my time here. It will be really nice to see them. But it'll be nice to be here too. So, yeah, I think it's good. I'm really glad I did it. I think if I had this I would have heard this. I think it makes you realise so much about yourself and other people when youre on your own. Like, it is harder but it is also such a great learning experience and you learn so much about yourself.