**Joseph Jeffers**

**Extract 1**

And then I remember the first time I actually went in to um a sort of a gay pub venue whatever I was kind of very young at the time compared to most people there. But I think what hit me was one I felt very comfortable, but I think really early on Uh, I don't know whether it was to do with maybe an unconscious form of politics or not. I don't know. But one of the things that hit me really early on was the fact that compared to quote unquote, my normal life, I felt there was a higher degree of racism there. And I say that because I just felt for a lot of the kind of early kind of experiences I had with people. I think I was more convinced And I'm convinced now as an older person, that a lot of those experiences, I don't think it was because of me. I think it was because of my color. I think people they objectified you because you were black or mixed race or whatever. And I think later on I became I began to almost resent that. And I remember having a conversation, um, in a gay club in Birmingham called the Nightingale and I remember saying to this guy that I felt really uncomfortable and he just couldn't, dismissively said, you know, but some people, you know are into leather, some people were into denim. I just happened to be into kind of black people. Um, And I think he, it just made me feel very, very, very uncomfortable.

**Extract 2**

And I was making kind of, um, choices. So wherever the, the in clubs was in those days, um, I would actually have gone to most of them. Um, at some point in the Vauxhall Tavern the usual, um, used to go to clubs on a Sunday, um. And then, you know, uh, an interestingly always woke up for work the following day. So yeah, it was good. And you, and then you actually realized, I think maybe that's what I suppose, what London, I suppose did was it actually showed me that there was there was a whole range of people. Cause I think like most people of my age growing up I think I'm, which is kind of different to now is that the people who, uh, portrayed on things like television, as people who were gay were very stereotypical people.

There was people like John Inman, there was kind of Dick Emery there was Danny La Rue. It was one very typical type of person. And I guess in some ways in your head, you actually thought. Is that what I need to be to be a gay person. Then when you moved when I moved to London you found such a broad range of real people because back in the suburbs a lot of people, I did meet at the time, funny enough were either in the creative industries like hairdressers or in catering or whatever.

And then you moved to London and you started meeting doctors, lawyers, or whatever. I'm not saying those people didn't exist. In the suburbs, but I guess probably they would have been more conscious of the fact that if they were out how it could affect their work.

Extract 3

And I think one of the things I don't know whether it's about being black or gay or whatever. I think one of the things that's been very important to me is that I've always accepted responsibility for my life. I've never whether it has been a partner or anybody I've never, ever been that person who's actually said, Oh, poor me. Look what's happened to me. I think whatever happened. I am one of these people that turn negatives into positives and I'm not the type of person that dwells. I don't think, oh, coulda woulda shoulda. I just kind of think that's happened. And now it's time to move on to do something else. And I guess that's the way I see relationships when I come out of a relationship, I don't kind of dissect it and think, Oh, you know, what did I do wrong? What did he do wrong or whatever. I just think to myself, that was a chapter in my life. And whether it was good or bad or whatever it's part of who I am. That's never going to go away. All I can choose to do is to continue that behavior into another relationship or I guess learn from it. And I think by and large, I think I I've learned from it. And I think a lot of that learning has come from growing up in Birmingham as. Uh, gay black person that basic they were only a few that I was aware of that made you feel very kind of strong, independent type of person. Because I guess when you think about it now, I guess when people did know or when people was aware it wasn't like now where there was always the kind of in the Equality Act 2010, where people, whatever, you know, people, you know, were very, you know, very vocal about how they saw gay people, how they tolerated or didn't tolerate gay people. You know? I mean, People being beaten up at taxi ranks in Leicester, in Birmingham was quite normal.

**Extract 4**

I think whilst London, I guess, is a Mecca for lots of people, you know, even people from abroad, they come to London. I do think that beneath the surface of you know buzzing,vibrant young London you do I am beginning to see a lot more older, um, lesbian and gay people who are very isolated. Um, and in some ways I would imagine London is probably the worst place because in a way everything that they would like to be part of is here but it excludes. So, as I said earlier I'm not really on the scene whatever the scene is now. But what I know of it is about young people it's about money it's about body image is about lots of things.And it's quite interesting in all these years. Given that older people, whatever old, I mean, I think the European Union now describe you older person to someone over 55.But given the monetary value that people are of my age group, spending power, that you actually have what I find is very, um, interesting is that there isn't really such stuff to cater for that age group.

It kind of, it's kind of, it's really kind of.Um, sad. So I kind of think that's something I think I would like to see, um, different there's lots of isolation. Um, and also, I mean, I remember talking to somebody the other day, about a year ago. It was not the other day, about a year ago. And she's now living in a care home and in a care home, you know, people know that she is a lesbian, but she's ostracized by um, her, her, um, fellow guests within, within the, um, the home. And I think that's the kind of thing that goes through your mind. And recently, um, I went to the Caribbean and one of the things that really hit me there is ,it could be just my perception. It may not be the case, but it's one of the places where I wouldn't couldn't see myself being out because of the level of hostility that exists. And it made me wonder what life must be like for people who are not in places like London or Paris or New York. Who are living on a very tiny Island where everybody knows everybody and you know, where the whole issue of isolation because of your sexuality, you know, isn't even considered.

So I'm glad I moved to London. Um, but I also kind of think. I would sort of say that it wouldn't have mattered where I actually moved to. I think I'd like to believe that I would have actually found a level of happiness, a level of peace, a level of being a reflective person. But I think all that journey that I actually took it that got me to where I am now. And. I do sometimes look around and actually think, I wonder what would have happened if I had actually stayed in Leicester or Birmingham. And I think that the thought is just too horrible to think about.