

Interview: Jan

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Transcriber: Myla Corvidae

Attendance:

Lucia Ruggerone – LR

Charlie Hackett – CH

Bart Grabski - BG

Jan

Emotions have been added into the transcript as i.e. [*sadness*] and interviewers have been placed in bold and italicised. Any sections that need to be checked for accuracy such as phrases in other languages or names of places I couldn't confirm the spelling of have been highlighted in red.

PLEASE NOTE: Some words are missing as the audio quality was very poor due to a bad connection. They are highlighted in red and written as ???.

CH: So did you do the film with a camera on a kite? On a drone?

J: It's on a drone yeah. I bought this drone recently. I would say it's one month old and yes basically I visited a few places, I think I visited about ten cities in the last month. Yeah I just decided to merge all the best places I've seen so far. All the trips you can see on the video I did in January so it's like pretty fresh I would say.

CH: Yeah that's amazing thank you. Lucia do you want to start?

LR: Yeah sure, I wanted Jan to introduce himself a little bit too. We all introduced ourselves so could you introduce yourself?

J: Yeah, as you probably know I come from Poland. I live in Wales for about nine years I think and at this moment I'm thirty seven years old. So yeah. I work in a printing company,

LR: Ok, well thanks. Yeah I can start with when I was watching your video earlier on in the morning I was struck by this element that video has.

CH: Lucia I think his video's gone. Yeah, he'll be back don't worry I'll let him back in.

J: Hi I'm back sorry, it's my internet. Yesterday I was having problems with Virgin. I feel bad about it.

LR: No worries. No I was just going to say I might start with my first impression watching your video earlier this morning. This element has struck me to start with and you stopped or posed on it for quite a big part of the video is the sea. So maybe we can start from there because why did you make this video for this study? I don't know if you made it for the study or you thought that it kind of represented some of your feelings about Covid and about Brexit which is what we are looking at. So if you could explain a little bit how it's connected.

J: Yeah all the videos were done in January so I can't remember what day I spoken to Bart about participating in this programme but.

LR: We can't hear you very well Jan.

J: Maybe I can call my phone, it's the internet. I'll see if I can improve the call. I'm connected to 5G now so can you hear me better now?

LR: No, not yet.

J: I don't know if I can do anything about it.

CH: That's great.

LR: That's ok now.

J: Oh that's better yeah? I think there was some connection issue.

LR: Loud and clear yes.

J: So Facebook was created for the project ??? ??? all the places you can see on the video were done in January. I can't remember what day I spoke to Bart about participating but I created this video just for you. So just a project to do and why eh... I just wanted to show you all the best parts of Wales because where I live in Cardiff, on one side I have an access to the sea, on the other side I think it's about fifteen miles I'm already in the mountains. So I live I would say in a hole between those things and there's plenty of castles in Wales. It's kind of my hobby to visit all of them. I can't even count how many castles I've already seen in Wales. So yeah I think that's the best part of Wales. All the cities are pretty ugly I would say. There's nothing interesting in the town so if you wana' see something really nice you need to go to some you know, you need to travel about a hundred miles to see something really cool. Mountains are close, that's the Brecon Beacons it's called although it's like I would say twenty-five minutes of drive but Pembroke Castle is about a hundred and ten miles away from Cardiff and that's sea which is the first part of the video is about forty minutes away from ??? the place where I live. Wales is really beautiful but only outside the cities because all the cities are pretty old and for me it's a boring country ??? the views. Most of the population live in about sixty miles radius. It's like Cardiff, Swansea and Newport, that's about sixty percent of the whole population of the country and everything else is like forest, mountains, you can go... I've never been to Snowdonia yet so that's my next target but I didn't make it because yeah... I don't know if Bart told you but at this moment I'm positively tested for Covid.

LR: Okay. Goodluck.

J: I feel fine yeah, vaccinated just need to stay home for a few more days.

LR: Oh well. That's good for the interview so you had some time for us.

J: ??? ?

LR: So does this element the sea or the scenery that you filmed. How does that connect with Brexit and does it connect with your feelings about Brexit and Covid or the lockdown?

J: Maybe it's not related to Brexit I would say but it's kind of related to the Covid situation. I have like, I think there's plenty of people get a bit depressed because of the whole Covid crisis in the world and buying a drone was kind of like escape for me because when I wanted to go out, whenever I was going everything was closed. It was limited, even despite the fact that I'm a vaccinated person you know you just can't get somewhere if it's just shut. That was kind of like escape for me and I think sort of a new hobby because previously probably you can see on the YouTube it's called sim racer. I'm a semi-professional sim racer, I'm doing online races in real simulators but at some point I just got bored out of it. I wanted to get out of my house because I was feeling pretty depressed sitting at home all the time and just being limited and locked by the government. Now basically it's a reason for me to go out and it's kind of mostly related to Covid situation. I wouldn't say it's kinda' related to Brexit because, in a way we can't see much difference about Brexit. Nothing has changed. The only thing I seen that has changed is that when I want to send a parcel to Europe I just need to fill more paperwork and that's all. So I don't feel like Brexit's affected me so much. I know there are people that they've lost their visas as because of relation to the land in Europe but I work in a company mostly supplying UK customers so we're not affected about it.

LR: Did that affect you emotionally at all like as a Polish citizen I suppose you might have dual citizenship I don't know but as a European citizen did that affect you at all?

J: Yeah. I still need to do the British passport yet so I am just a Polish citizen but it was kind of sad about the things that people were talking about the Brexit because I've heard about many people are blaming Eastern Europeans for that situation because I'm not going to say that it's not true that people will just come to UK to I would say abuse the benefit system. It was pretty easy to get some money for just nothing and yeah I heard a

lot of things about Polish people just coming to UK and taking jobs from British people which is not true I would say because in my company we had plenty of British people trying to get a job and they were just not good enough to work there. Obviously not happy about the money, maybe it's kind of like, because of European people coming to UK I would say people started to earn less money because there was always somebody from Europe who could do the same job for less money and I think this is what people like me for coming from Poland are being blamed for. So yeah it was just kind of mentally affected me but not like in positive terms. It did affect my life much. I don't care about it because I'm a person who knows it's value and I will just listening to that but I never cared about people saying things. They don't know me so they can't judge me.

LR: Course, yeah. You said you were slightly depressed during lockdown so you found some kind of hobby to get you out. So what do you remember of that time in terms of how you felt?

J: Basically before the lockdown started my girl she was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis and this is how it started it was about two months before the whole Covid situation started and it was.

LR: How old is she?

J: She's eh thirty one now.

LR: Okay your girlfriend you mean. I thought you meant your daughter.

J: No not my daughter now. It's my girlfriend yeah and we were both pretty scared about the situation in hospital because it was really hard to get to the doctors and when she was diagnosed everything went pretty fast, they put the diagnosis on her and they decided to choose a treatment for her which was scheduled for the February and you know when it started in December and January when they started locking the whole country that was our biggest concern that she won't get to the Doctor and she will have to wait a year or two to get her treatment but at the end of the day everything went fine. She was isolated in the hospital and because her treatment, that was something that just destroyed her immune system and the treatments started to revealing it so if she got Covid in that days she would be in real trouble. So yeah that was my biggest concern her health when it started because it was just like you know... when she got diagnosed, after that straight away we heard about Covid and yeah.

LR: Just a horrible time yeah.

CH: That must have been very stressful for you.

J: Yeah it was yeah but everything was fine because in Cardiff we have really good Doctors in they are one of the best MS specialists in the UK so she was in really good care. That was a good part of it if we can say something good here so.

LR: I suppose if she was in hospital you were not allowed to visit her?

J: No. I could only drop her. That was a daily unit she wasn't allowed to even stay there so the only thing I could do is drop her by the hospital and after that she was on her own and she was spending like ten to twelve hours with the injection and then she was back home. She wasn't allowed to use any public transport, any taxi's. So they said if you don't have a car just walk home, four and a half miles. Yeah, just to keep away from other people. So that was pretty scary but luckily we have a car so it wasn't done that.

LR: Yes I can imagine. So you were pretty much on your own during lockdown for some of it when she was in hospital all day you must have been on your own.

J: I'm a big boy so it wasn't that bad. [chuckling]

LR: No but I'm thinking about your feeling of being a bit down because ok you were worried and also you didn't have any company during the day which I don't know. I was talking about myself when it first hit I mean I was glad I had somebody to go on walks with and stuff because I think I would have been a bit more depressed if I would have been on my own that's all.

J: Yeah... I think there's plenty of people. Everyone is just isolated you know. Even at work when the pandemic started, most of I think, eighty five percent of our staff was sent home for that furlough and my girlfriend was one of them. That was because of the safety proposes and it was only me and four other people in the whole

like four hour drive one way. After a week because the drone was pretty old model I decided to buy a proper one. This one that I recorded the video, this quite expensive and yeah I thought if I not going to buy it I'm just going to stay home for another few months so that's why I decided to buy a drone because you can't fly a drone in your house. That's the reason you need to go out. Obviously I can fly in the house it's safe to fly indoors but I don't want to do it. I don't want to scare my cats.

CH: With things with Brexit as well have you applied for British Citizenship or have you applied for...

LR: Settlement.

CH: Settlement scheme yeah?

J: I already did that yeah. I've lived here previously like I said nine years so yeah I did it straight away. I didn't wait till the last moment but I'm thinking about getting a British passport.

CH: How did you feel about getting the settlement scheme in terms of having been European and being able to travel wherever you wanted to go and then suddenly having to apply for this. What did you feel about that?

J: I don't know. I think they did the right thing because you know there's plenty of people in this country that you know that they just came here to get something without giving anything to the country and I wasn't worried about it because when they announced people were living here they will have to apply for that I read the rules straight away and I knew I shouldn't be worried. I have a job, I am employee of this company since I came to Wales, that's my first job. I never worked anywhere else so I wasn't as concerned about it because I knew I am safe and my brother who is in I think Caerphilly which is quite close to Cardiff he's here for thirteen years. It didn't bother me too much to be honest.

LR: So if you had been voting you would have gone for Brexit yourself? Do you think it was a good decision?

J: I don't think it was a good decision and I think we can all see this by the prices in stores. I know it's related to Covid, you know the value of the money just suddenly dropped and that's why we have to pay nearly one pound fifty for petrol in Cardiff which is quite expensive compared to even June last year but I wouldn't vote for them because I know it caused serious problems in the country. We all know what happened with the lorry drivers a few months ago when there was just a shortage of the drivers and shelves in the shops they were just empty and there was kind of silly propositions from Boris Johnson that he will give three month visa to the European drivers to come to UK. I don't know what he was thinking of all that people will suddenly leave their families for three months just to earn a little bit extra money. I think there's plenty of people that voted yes and they realised it was a really bad decision. I know the reasons, I agree with some of them like you know like I said before people just abusing the benefits system, just trying to get money from Government for nothing. I think there was a way to sort it in a different way than just leaving the European Union.

CH: Why do you think it's important to get a British passport rather than just settlement?

J: There's a few reasons. One of them is travelling, I really want to visit Australia and it's much easier to do it with a British passport. The other thing is it's strictly related to Covid because I know how it looks in my country and to be honest I'm pretty embarrassed about Polish people you know saying all the conspiracy theories. I don't really know but in Poland there's nearly five hundred deaths and it's like for several weeks. We already above a hundred thousand deaths so that's really close to UK. Nearly doubles the Polish population. It's thirty million living in Poland and as far as I know sixty eight in UK and it makes me embarrassed so sometimes I can be honest with you I'm pretty embarrassed to speak in Polish in public because of that. Because I know... I was asked plenty of questions from British people about oh what's going on in the Country. Why are your country so stupid and they don't want to get vaccinated and they believe that somebody wants to implement the microchip in your arm and just control your life so like they don't do it if you look at all other social medias they know everything about this. It is kind of embarrassing for me because of my country the covid situation might get worse and it's going to take way more time to solve that problem so.

LR: I didn't know that they had so many no vaccine Poland. So is the movement, no vaxx movement very strong?

J: I think there's only I would say fifty five percent fully vaccinated so not much.

LR: Oh right ok.

J: I'm reading all the social medias from Poland and when they say that somebody died like say there's an article on Facebook. If you go to the comment section you just, you know it's just unbelievable what people are talking like they say ohh it's because of the vaccine he died of the vaccine. They don't want to tell the truth and all this and I'm just getting sick of that. That's why my Facebook is banned now because I don't like it. If I see an idiot I'm just going to call him an idiot and yeah Facebook doesn't like that.

LR: [laughing] Yes.

CH/J overtalking.

J: Sorry?

CH: Have you got a word that sums up that sort of feeling? Like rather than embarrassed is there a word in Polish that would sum that up?

J: You want a phrase in Polish?

CH: Yeah a word in Polish that might sum up that kind of feeling of embarrassment?

J: Ohh... I don't know how to say that. I can say that in English but yeah. Hmm. I can't find a Polish word for that to be honest.

CH: Ok ok.

LR: Well if it's if any ...

J: There's one yeah but it's probably going to be tricky for you to repeat that. It's (Polish Phrase). So you can try but it's kind of literally translated from embarrassment.

LR: Ok embarrass yeah.

J: Want me to repeat? [chuckles]

CH: Yeah Bart, do you want to ask any questions?

BG: Uhh no I'm fine.

J: Basically before that conversation I was curious to know what you would like to know about me and Wales and the situation over here about my feelings but now everything is clear for me. ??? how many people in Wales you still have ??? am I the only one?

LR: So far yeah. You're the first people we managed to interview in Wales. In the beginning we could recruit people in Scotland quite easily but it was not easy to branch out so now we're getting better. There's always a kind of a trial period in every research study but we're getting better and we're managing to reach more people in England and you're the first one in Wales but hopefully we'll find a few more because Wales is an interesting part because they voted for Brexit there so I suppose one thing I would like to ask you. I know you said you're not affected really in your everyday life by Brexit but did you feel any change in the culture surrounding you in the way in which people are relating to you? Since Wales is actually a pro-Brexit area of the UK.

J: I don't know if you can say that. It's a hard question because of the whole Covid situation because the Brexit happened during the Covid crisis and...

LR: Everybody's isolated yeah.

J: Yes so if I would be travelling more I'll be more affected about it but yeah because of that isolation your not seeing too many people ??? now everything's better, like coming back to normal in the Country but I can't see any change in the culture to be honest. People are just living their lives. That's the one part of Wales. People don't care too much what's going on in England. They don't like the Queen, the don't like the Prime Minister. They have their own kind of like Government which I would say is half independent from the English parliament but yeah they make their own decisions and ...

LR: Struggling to be I think like the Scottish government here. They are fiercely independent but there's so many things still where it feels like they are really controlled and...

J: Yeah but they've never tried to be independent. As well as government they always say something bad about England but on the other hand they would really like to get free from England. They can just do it, you can ask people about the feelings about it but they never tried it. At least Scotland tried and I was really happy to see that other countries did try to be independent from the royal family because in my opinion, I wasn't born in UK so I'm maybe not that related to all the royal but I think it's just... they should stop you know, some people in Wales say that we just work for this we pay our taxes so they can live like you know, rich people I would say just doing nothing. It's kind of representative only now. They think the Queen can make the decisions but I would say it's not true it's just you know... We rather demolish and have a democratic country.

LR: I can understand where your coming from definitely yes. I am also not a British citizen. I was born in Italy and I just don't understand all the monarchy bits.

J: Sometimes I feel like medieval times yeah, there's plenty of castles in the UK so maybe that's where they should live there.

LR: I don't know I mean...

J: Just you know, tradition. It's the only about the tradition but I think they spend too much money from the taxes. The royal family's way too big. That's why I'm pretty impressed with what Prince Harry did and he just decided to live his own life. That's one of the first person I think from the family that's decided to walk away. That was pretty impressive and yeah I fully support him for what he did. He just want to live like a normal life.

LR: That's right I agree. I was going to ask you after Brexit you said no that you don't feel any big changes around you but if somebody asked you now, where do you think your home is. What would your answer be? What is home for you?

J: It's always a hard question yeah because most of my family lives in Poland but at this moment I don't have any plans to go back to my country and I think I will never have so I think it's my home now here. I don't like the government in Poland it's completely not my part of story what they do in Poland. There's too much church in Poland so politics.

LR: Same here in Italy!

J: I'm not a religious person so yes for me seeing a library in the church is a really nice view so yeah. I think people should just live by their own feelings, not to be told by the church what they can do and what they should live. So I think, yeah, I think UK is my new home.

LR: Ok and did you feel different since the UK is your home, did that change at all after Brexit. Knowing that the UK had this kind of position towards Europe. Did that change your feelings about the UK as being your home?

J: You know at the beginning I think all people were kind of like frightened about what's going on but yeah. We all felt kind of separated from the Europe and I know people in Europe and they are different not UK citizens now. I know how, what they say about British people in Poland after they you know. There are some people in Poland that completely support Britain in the leaving the European Union and they're saying Poland should do the same but I completely disagree. I think that kind of isolation from the rest of Europe was kind of like the biggest feeling about the Brexit. I felt like, I know it was British decision to leave but yes, still **???? ?????** can do. Especially on the Island, we're separated by fear now, by the borders. But nothing got changed at the borders because it was never a **????** country so you still have to show your passport and now we can't use our ID's. We just need to use Passports and you still need to use passport at border control so I can't see much big changes now but like I said before it's probably related to the Covid because we're not travelling too much so we can't say too much about other countries. That's what I can say about Brexit you know the biggest problem in Brexit is I think Great Britain is a country that they can't create many goods and plenty of food was just taken from other countries simply because of the whole border situation. It's just becoming too expensive to live because of that you know transporting goods it's more expensive than it was before. It takes way more time so I think economics is the biggest problem with Brexit. I can't see much changing in peoples lives. I know

plenty of people left UK because of Brexit. I think they were just scared of then but then I think it's just bad decisions. Even with a stable job you can be safe.

CH: Do you know people who did leave?

J: Yeah, a few. None of them were my friends but there were a few people living from my work. They decided to go back to the country but they did it during the Covid situation. There was a couple, they came through UK for few years. They said that they came for few years but after few months they decided to stay but when they heard about Brexit they decided to go back to their country and wanted you know to have a wedding but afraid after they left there was a big lockdown in the country and all the money they saved they just spent on living because they had no job over here. They couldn't get a job because everything was locked so I know they were not happy about this but they could have come back because they didn't think about settlement status or anything like that. I know they could get it but they decided to stay in their country. I know a few people, not only Polish. There were a few Lithuanian peoples that leaving my neighbourhood. **???? ???? ???** Decided to go back.

CH: I was going to ask another question as well. You know the music you chose for your film. Why did you choose that piece of music?

J: I don't know. I just like this tune, the interesting thing was it was made by two Bristol DJ's and they played, one of them is Nick Warren. Have you ever heard of Massive Attack.

CH: Yeah I have yeah.

J: Yeah. Nick Warren is one of the first DJ's of Massive Attack and he was one of the people who established Massive Attack and he's one of the guys from Way Up West that created this tune that you heard in the video. So it's quite interesting because normally they do different music. Jody Wisternoff he's the second guy and he plays progressive tracks and progressive house and Nick Warren sometimes even he approach the techno music so hearing that kind of tune is something kind of unusual for both of them. One of the guys from Wales was one of the Massive Attack DJ's.

CH: So what kind of mood were you after in the piece of music?

J: I usually listen to electronic music. Not the one you can probably hear in the clips...

CH: No but in the video that you showed us, what was the mood you were after in that video?

J: [sigh] I don't know. When I took that and I watched the video I was kind of like. I think I became a little bit sad hearing this music because it's not a happy tune. It's kind of sad music and you know I think it perfectly fits to the isolation you know. Shows especially the video. I didn't want to show many people on the video because I have plenty of recordings where you can see people but I just wanted to see that shows you I think my feelings like. I prefer to go to the mountains instead of going to see a bunch of people and going to the club so it's hard question to answer about the feelings because I know this track for many years.

LR: I did actually notice. It was one of the things I was going to ask you. It's quite unpopulated your video so it was deliberate. You didn't want to show too many people in the video. Yeah to convey this idea of being isolated very much.

J: Yeah like I said I created the video specially for that conversation so there was more people from the video from the beach but I just decided to just cut the video. I think you can always see a person with two dogs on the beach and that is it.

CH: Yeah.

LR: Yes I saw that. Also another thing I noticed is that you start out with filming the sea and the sea is kind of coming to the land but the land is not, it's cliffs and rocks, it's not like a welcoming beach where it's easy to have access to. It's almost like the sea crashing against the rocks. I was wondering whether that was a deliberate choice or is it just because you like that kind of scenery.

J: Oh, yeah yeah. It was my choice because I don't like to spend time on the beach so I prefer to go to the cliffs. There are pretty nice cliffs that are nice to Swansea and it's called three cliffs bay. So yeah I just prefer to go on the cliffs. I like climb on something like this, I like to go down to get closer but sometimes it's not safe to do it. I

just don't like sandy beach and I sometimes wonder people in the UK all they want to do during the summertime is to go to Spain and spend the time on the beach for seven days. It's for me just not a holiday. I prefer to do something than just lie on the beach. I did it once, it was in November. I went to Portugal. That was Portimao but the reason to go over there was to see (Polish Racer's name) one of the famous Polish drivers. I went there for the race, European Le Mans series and yeah I spent three days on the beach and yeah I was so bored. So yeah, never again.

CH: Another thing I notice in your film is when you... you obviously love castles and stuff like that but you kind of hone in on this map of Europe. I think it's a map of Europe that's in the middle of Carmthen Castle. Why did you do that or what were you trying to say?

LR: Is it not Wales on the map?

J: Yeah I think it's Wales.

CH: Oh sorry.

J: To be honest I didn't put too much attention on this map so I zoomed out when I showed the video to my dad yesterday. He did ask me what's over there so I just zoomed it and then I realised it's a map but when I recording the video I didn't even know what it is. It's just a coincident that there's a map over there but I took the credit.

LR: You know what I noticed in your video and maybe it's my interpretations or maybe you wanted to sort of give a message out but there's a lot of barriers. So the sea finds the cliff as a barrier and then you have this really nice image of a castle which is a fortress you know with big walls and it's quite inaccessible and then you have this shots with the bear hills with a bit of snow on them. I just notice that there's a lot of barriers so I was wondering if there was some meaning that you wanted to show?

J: Maybe I didn't notice that yeah but maybe when creating this video it was just in the back of my head. I never thought about it what you just said yeah but there must be something in it because I like to record places that are quite inaccessible for people because yeah because that mountain that you see at the end of the video I've never been there. Probably because of my girl and because of her mess, she's just, her mobility is kind of limited so maybe it's like compensation for me but I wasn't thinking about that but yeah I prefer to record cliffs because I just can't get there so the only way to see it from a different is just to record it using my drone. Probably if I was to get there I wouldn't get out so. I'm scared of water.

LR: I found some parts of the video really poetic like you know those shots that show the castle and it's really beautiful image and also then as a partial contrast is this image with all the boats which are all moored which also means people are stuck. I don't know, that's how I felt when I watched it. That image with the boats in the harbour and they're all lined up and they are not going out to sea, they are parked there so it gave me this feeling of being stuck.

J: Basically it was a marina but it was completely closed and I don't know what was the reason of the closure but I tried to get there and all the gates were closed, they were locked using some electronic lock so I couldn't get through. So I don't know, I took a picture. The reason of that was I just liked the colour of this pictures so maybe for different reasoning yeah but I tried to get around there but it was inaccessible so I just decided... I always keep my drone in my car with my batteries charged so I just went back to my car and just said I need to see it from the sky so yeah. Some people didn't enjoy that to be honest. They tried to kick me out of there. Yeah because some people don't like drones because of the privacy. I'm allowed to fly, I'm allowed to be certified so I can do that legally so I just always show the certification and yeah I just told them to get out.

LR: Ok that's so interesting thanks.

CH: The end of it is where everything blackens out afterwards.

J: Eh, yeah.

CH: I suppose there's a kind of metaphor there but you may not have realised it at the time. It sounds like from our speaking about it you were very much immersed in the subconscious maybe when you were doing it.

J: I don't know why I did it at the end. I just wanted to finish the video with something nice. That's why the very last picture you can see if you look closer there's me standing with my girl and the car so I just wanted to finish it.

LR: Yeah I saw the car in the last image yeah. I didn't notice you and your girl no. I'll have to rewatch it.

J: Middle spot in the picture but it's probably not good. You're not going to see it on the video probably because of the resolution then you just have us standing there and I made a picture of us and our cars. I always do when we go for a trip. I don't know why but I do. This is how I decided to finish the video like showing as now that was our Breacons where we recorded the mountains.

LR: Can I ask if you have any children?

J: Not yet no. I wish that some but in the last few years I was so busy that you know and my girls illness and her treatment doesn't allow her to have kids for at least a year because of her new immune system so this can be really affected so yes we have to wait.

LR: One year is a long time. It goes so fast.

J: Yeah I know especially during the pandemic. Sometimes if I talk about something and I want to remind something I just can't really say if that was 2019 or 2020 or 2021 because everything just went so fast.

LR: Yes absolutely and also it was a different feel of timing because every day was the same so for me it was a kind of time soup and I can't you know I remember some events but I cannot place them.

J: Exactly yeah. I have exactly the same problem. It's true yeah but the sad thing is that no body will ever give you back this time and yeah. My ??? still says I was born in 85' not in 87' so yeah. The time's flying but yeah we've lost quite a lot of time just doing nothing and I was like stuck in one place.

CH: Bart do you want to ask some questions?

BG: Urm, I've got two questions. Actually one going back to Brexit. I have a question regarding was your family convincing you to go back after Brexit happened?

J: No. Basically my closest family is my only dad at the moment. Everybody else is my uncles and my grandfathers from one side but they know how is the situation in Poland. They know it's really hard over there and mostly they say leaving the country and coming to UK was one of the best decisions I could do. I've never heard anything about coming back now so no.

BG: And looking at that from the other perspective so before Brexit have you been thinking about maybe asking your dad to move to the UK because it's like a last chance?

J: He was already in the UK for about two and a half years with my mum but like I said my mum passed away in 2017 and then he decided to go back to the country because he... It's hard to say why he went back. I think he just didn't want to be here and be some kind of you know luggage for us if I can call it like that. Yeah and he was pretty depressed and he just didn't listen. My mum died because of a pretty bad disease it's called MSA and it's way worse than cancer. There's nothing you can do about it, all you can do is help the person feel better and she did live here for nearly three years I would say and we tried to help my mum but yeah there was no chance to save her life and when she passed away he decided to go back to the country. He had a suicide attempt in Poland so yeah he was like you know really bad mental condition after my mum passing away but now he's ok. I asked him if he would like to come over here but he said no, he just want to spend the rest of his life in Poland. This is where my mum's grave is so yeah we just decided to make a funeral in Poland so I think he just want to stay with her.

LR: Yes and I guess if he lived most of his life in Poland it might be really hard to change the country when you are older I think.

J: Yeah especially if it's about the language you know. He never learnt, like he was born in 1950 and he never learnt English in the past so for him it was tough to do something on his own yeah so.

LR: Although as an Italian I'm always very impressed about how well Polish people speak foreign languages. Not only English but when I was in Italy we had like an exchange with Krakow University and we had quite a

few Polish students coming through to Milan and spending time there and some of them spoke Italian like perfectly with the whole accent as well.

J: As Polish citizens we speak one of the most difficult languages in the world.

LR: Exactly so everything else is easy.

J: Yeah, if you look on the Polish grammar all this things. When I showed that to my English friends they're just terrified and they all can't speak even a sentence. On the other hand I know plenty of people who live in Cardiff and they're here for about five, seven years and they can't speak English at all because what I can see in Polish population living in the UK sometimes they just live in a close circle. So Polish friends they only go to the Polish barber, the Polish shop and they just don't even try to you know little bit give it British culture and try to find some friends. There's a ??? working with me and she's employed for about four years. She was employed with us, her cousin did work for my company and even till today when she want to say something in English she just type it on the Google Translate and she's showing this screen to other people. Not even trying, this is what makes me like you know wonder it why, how can you live in a foreign country without you know even basic language. I couldn't live like that, probably that was one of the reasons my dad decided to go back to Poland because it was like alone when I was at work, my brother was at work he you know, even going to the shop was probably a little bit traumatic for him. I am sometimes surprised that people can live here for so many years and when the courier brings the parcel they can't even talk to.

LR: Yeah I understand to a certain extend. I mean I agree with you that you always have to make the effort but I suppose when you are older it is more of an effort and also one thing that really is frustrating and is still frustrating for me now is that sometimes you can't really express exactly what you want if you're not talking your native language. I mean the more time goes and the better it gets but I think it's quite a long process before you can say oh I can convey in English exactly what I want like I would do in my own language. So for me sometimes it's still frustrating now.

J: It is true yeah because when you're living in a foreign country I think you just need to learn how to think in the other language. It's not just spoke. I don't know many people who just they know how to say something in Polish. Their English is not that bad but sometimes they just get stuck and they can't say a word but I see now after so many years I can learn how to think in another language. So when I want to say something I just say it.

LR: Yeah, it also depends on how much you talk your own language at home because if you keep on talking your own language then you know the process of starting to think in English gets slowed down I think.

J: Yeah but since I live here I speak Polish, that would be quite odd if I spoke English to my girlfriend. She's Polish as well.

LR: She's Polish ok.

J: Yeah but I was never scared to speak to English people when I came to UK my English was already on a pretty good level I would say so I go mostly British shops. If I need to go to Polish shop I just go there just because there's something I can't get in Asda or Lidl.

LR: Ingredients yes.

J: It's all about the confidence you know. If you're going to be scared you will never learn and you're never going to go out and my goal was to try and live with people here not just ??? by my side and you know simple worker who came to UK to make money. I just want to try to assimilate with British people. To be honest most of my friends are just foreigners. One guy is Iraqi and one guy is Brazilian. Plenty of British people but I'm not seeing many Polish people outside my work. Maybe that's the point.

LR: Yes. I'm not seeing many Italians, well yes I have a good Italian friend but apart from that no. I don't stick to Italian circles it's boring.

J: I could say the same because I don't, when I started here sometimes I'm just embarrassed about Polish people like you know the way they behave. It makes me embarrassed when you know, when they come from Poland. I think it was three years ago there was a big petition founded by Polish mothers. The petition was against schools and what they tried to do was make teachers in England speak Polish because they can't understand anything when they go to a meeting with the teachers because they can't speak English so they try

to force English schools to employ translators for them. It wasn't just unbelievable and this made me just so embarrassed because all the newspapers were just writing around this... It just can't be like that to a foreign country you just stick with the rules, you can't force them to speak your language. There's many people like this.

CH: Bart have you got more questions?

BG: I've got one more. So after Brexit how did you feel about your neighbours moving back to their countries that they were from. Like there was lack maybe of international diversity around you? How did that make you feel?

J: If the people were just like you know. You can explain a little bit more?

BG: Yeah so like after Brexit people who decided to go back home to their own countries because of Brexit because they didn't feel safe and they decided to go back. How did you feel about them leaving?

J: [sigh] It depends because some people were here because of you know like I said before the simple benefit system and like what they've learnt in last few years is just like you can work fifteen hours a week and everything else will just be done for them. The government will give them enough money to live better than people who are fully employed so I wasn't against this because for me the nationality doesn't matter. If you British or Polish or Lithuanian or Romanian you should be you know treated in the same way so when they left I felt like oh finally they going to stop abusing you know the system and I'm not going to work for them because my goal is to work for me, my children. When I pay taxes and I pay the insurance I would like to see the benefit of is on the street and everywhere else but for me it wasn't ok that most of people that came here I mean will to work just to you know getting profits from others work. Like I said it doesn't, it's not about the nationalities so if that was Polish, German or whatever. Yeah I know some people were scared about what's going to happen in the UK because... but there was plenty of fake news about this so they said you won't be able to travel easily and you know, they said if I am going to be a foreigner and lets say I'm going to loose my job after ten years I won't be able to get anything from the Government. So that's I think what made these people scared a lot. They decided **???? ???? ?** it was there choice so. None of my biggest friends left the country so it wasn't like a big concern for me.

BG: After getting your settlement status did you feel secure in the UK?

J: Yeah. I knew that paper just is as long as it's in my pocket I am already safe. I knew it's just you know when I got the paper I was scared for I think seven and a half years I don't know when it was 2020 or 2021. I can't remember because of the pandemic but yeah, getting this paper. I knew I was going to get it just because I had to fill the paperwork and it wasn't like they can give it to me or not. There were some terms and conditions that I was just you know ok with them. So I knew I'm going to get it anyway but yeah it just made me safe. I think at least.

CH: What does safe mean to you sorry?

J: I knew that nobody will come out to my house and tell me to go back to my country and I'm pretty serious about it because there were plenty of people saying that oh you if they will want to kick you out they will be able to do it but I knew it wasn't the case. Yeah but still, I know it's just a formality stuff but it made me feel safe. I knew I would be able to travel and go back for example without any problems on the border. I know there were plenty of people that decided to go for holiday to Poland but when they were on their way back they were stopped on the border because they forgot to make a settlement status. **???? ???? ?** In December I went to Belgium for a race **???? ?** and when I was on my way back I saw two people getting in the custody when I left for trying to get to the country without the proper paperwork. I wasn't thinking about it when I was filling the papers yeah but I saw that in December. I don't know if they were Polish but I think they were Bulgarians and I know they get some kind of fake ID's or something like that. It was just in front of me when I was waiting for the passport check at the ferry port.

LR: Yeah you mentioned that when you got the settlement status you were feeling safe because you had the paper. Unfortunately that's one of the things that the Europeans group, the three million are fighting for is that we don't have a paper. You know it's only this kind of code thing. I know that is attached to your passport but you know about this that they would like to have a piece of paper so that I can show them when I come in. I mean I've been travelling to Italy a lot of times and I've never been stopped, never had any

problems so I must conclude that the system kind of worked in my case but the fact of not having a physical paper that says I've got this settled status. I think that's a bit, it's making me a bit worrying. They don't want to give us a physical thing that says.

J: Well when I got this email confirming that I got the settlement status I printed it.

LR: It's not an official confirmation. It's written on the email. I mean they send you the email and you're thinking oh yes! Then you read it and it says oh by the way this is not a physical confirmation that you have settled status so I was thinking so what is it? Why don't you give us a piece of paper that we can take with us?

J: I think there was something in the email that you were able to log into your account and check the status.

LR: Yeah I know but that's a bit.

J: We live in the 21st century so everything is done digitally so I knew it was going to be the system. I know it works because when I was in Dundee and Carlisle for the passport check I didn't remember which document I use for the settlement status like when I show it with my ID they put it on the scanner and they told me that this document doesn't match so I had to open up my bag and find my passport in the bag so I know it works and they can see it.

LR: So when it works it's fine but I'm thinking you know if somebody changes the passport because it's expired and they forget to tell the Home Office then you're stuck outside the country and stuff like that which is...

J: No it's not the case. My brother's wife had that problem when we went to Poland. That was late November and she went to Poland just to pick her new passport because the old one expired. So she was still able to, sorry that was late October. She was still able to travel by using ID by the deadline I think was 10th of November and when she was coming back, when she was on the passport check they did ask if she changed the document. She said yes and they just ask her if she can show the old one and they confirmed her identity and it was ok so it works.

LR: It works, that's good.

CH: Bart have you got any more questions?

BG: No that's all the questions from me thanks.

LR: And me.

CH: And me. Actually I've got one more question, sorry Jan. Could you possibly take two photographs, stills of your videos for us that sum up your video for us? We want to use, we can't put your video into, we're going to do a book at some point. So if you could just take some stills of images that you like from your video and email them to Bart that would be amazing.

J: Yeah ok I'll do that.

CH/LR/J speak about Amazon voucher.

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