



Telling Our Stories, Finding Our Roots

Interview with Ana Lodge

Interviewer: Lizzie Mee

Interviewer 00:00:00

I'm pressing record. Okay, good morning, Ana. Thank you for joining us. So, I'm Lizzie, and we're doing an oral history as part of the TOSFOR project. And it's the 16th of the 9th 2020. And Anna is just going to introduce herself. And then I'll ask some questions. So Anna, do you want to tell us something about you.

Ana 00:00:22

Yeah, hi. Yeah. So my name is Ana. I've lived in Tiverton for a couple of years now. And yeah, I have quite, quite a.. I don't know how to put it. Quite a complicated background. You know, my heritage is - yeah, quite, quite interesting. So it's nice to be involved.

Interviewer 00:00:54

Thank you. So you have told me that you have an American, Italian and Brazilian heritage? I know you said it's complicated, and you might want to try and go through it. But could you try and tell us a bit more about that? And kind of, yeah, kind of --

Ana 00:01:10

Yeah, yeah. So, so my dad is American, and my mum is Brazilian Italian. So her, her mother was Brazilian, her father Italian. And when - I think sometime after the Second World War - my gran- my, my grandfather moved from Italy, from Naples, to Brazil, met my grandmother and settled down in Brazil. So my mum grew up in Brazil, but with with an Italian background. She always mentioned going to, going to an Italian-based church in, in Brazil. So that's, that explains the American Brazilian Italian heritage side of things. The the next question I always get asked when I kind of, you know, go into that is where was I born? I was born in Holland. [laughs] So yeah, people are always a bit, a bit thrown. I find I always get a lot of questions around, you know, you're - you don't have an English accent. I can't quite put your accent. Are you from this place or that place? And they, you know -- I actually, I think, because I've lived in England for a while now, since two thousand... six? Yeah. 2006.

Interviewer 00:02:35



Yeah, that's what you said before, yeah. My accent isn't, isn't obviously American. My dad has quite a light American accent anyway. And we moved around a lot. So it's, yeah, it always brings up interesting conversations. And I never, I still to this day, don't really know what to start with. [laughter]. Yeah, it's complicated. So where did your - I'm sorry if you really said this, because I was trying to keep track of what you were saying - But where did your parents live? Before you were born? How did their story develop?

Ana 00:03:16

So my mum and dad met from a mut-, by a mutual work friend in Brazil. So my mum was working in an office in Sao Paolo, in Brazil. Sergio, his name was, my godfather - I only remember meeting him once - introduced them. They wrote each other letters. And I think my dad flew to Brazil, met my mum, they got married and then moved to the States.

Interviewer 00:03:56

Okay, so when they got to -- so they were in Brazil, they moved to the States. Whereabouts in the States were they? You don't -- you're not sure?

Ana 00:04:04

That's a good question. [Interviewer laughs] I don't completely know. I think either California or Arizona? Or between the two.

Interviewer 00:04:15

Okay. And then how did they make their way to Holland? Why, why go to Holland. I'm not sure how -- This, this is where I get a bit fuzzy. There was always a lot of moving around. So my dad's work was in international business. So that's why, you know, before I was born, you know, when when he met my mum, he was working with the business in Brazil. He's always, you know, he's a businessman, but always with international companies. So I don't know if they, you know, where they moved, where they lived, if they, you know, lived in one country and then moved to another and moved back. I think there was some bouncing around. So I don't know at what point they landed in Holland. Okay, so do you -- How long did you stay in Holland after you were born? Is that somewhere you spent your childhood?

Ana 00:05:21

[Unintelligible] six months.

Interviewer 00:05:22

Six months? Okay, not long, then. [laughter]

Ana 00:05:25

No. And then we moved, I think we may have moved to England, and they - or America. [laughs] And, you know, and we moved -- We just kept moving around. So the main, the main countries are Holland,



England, and America. So we kind of kept moving around those countries. I think, until I went to middle school, which was... sixth, yes, sixth grade. We didn't live anywhere for longer than two years... So anywhere between six months and two years, we were moving between those three countries.

Interviewer 00:06:20

[So when --]

Ana 00:06:20

[So] different locations in England, a couple different locations -- I was born in Amsterdam, spent six months there. Though at one point when we moved back, and I don't remember how old I was, I was primary school age, we lived in Leiden. I was fluent in Dutch. I was translating for my parents. I remember doing that. And when we moved, I forgot all of it. [I don't --]

Interviewer 00:06:23

[So you -] Can you speak Dutch now? No, that's really strange. I wonder if you tried to learn that you might find you can? I don't know.

Ana 00:06:57

It might come back, it might come back. [Yeah.]

Interviewer 00:07:00

[Yeah] So, I mean it does sound like, it's very difficult to kind of remember those different parts of your early childhood. But since we're talking about them, it might be nice to ask if you've got any particular memories. It doesn't really matter which country but if you've got any particular memories of places that you were that you don't mind sharing, kind of, maybe how it felt to arrive in a new place, or what it felt like to be there.

Ana 00:07:31

Yeah, I mean, I don't mind sharing, I think - I think it's quite important actually. Like as, as a child, I remember moving to Holland. And the memory is very fuzzy. I was really young, I was in primary school, but I have a distinct memory of confusion. Actually, in quite a few countries, I have a distinct memory of confusion in England, as well. Because there are different rules, and there's different - there are different names for things. So, I mean, I don't remember the Dutch words, I quickly picked them up and lost them again. But trying to figure out where do people sit? What are you doing? You're playing and not writing? Where am I supposed to sit? Who am I supposed to talk to? All, you know, things like that. And the same thing in England, I remember one school, the classroom was, you know, had cleared out. And I remember still being sat at the table waiting and told by the teacher, Oh you can go. And she - I don't know if she used the word break, maybe. I remember it being called recess, so maybe this was I was living in America before that. But there are different words for different things. And as a child coming to a completely new country, or even a country you've been before. It's - they spot things



that are confusing. And, you know, you quickly pick up but it's, it's it's like being a fish out of water, I suppose. [Yeah].

Interviewer 00:09:09

[Yeah], it must have felt like that quite often just thinking about how often you went around, you moved. And it's good. It's a really good point to say that there's different words. I always think that with America, so you go to America, and it's the same language, but it's not actually the same language, is it? Because it is the words are completely different. So yeah, so it must have been confusing. So when you you say you were in in sixth grade, you were in America? Is that where you? Did you -- did you settle anywhere? So you said that up to sixth grade and I don't know how old that is. How old's sixth grade?

Ana 00:09:42

[laughs] I, no, was so --

Interviewer 00:09:47

[It can be approximate --]

Ana 00:09:48

[In America, I was in America] in fourth and fifth grade in Colorado. Okay, so this is where I start to get a bit more memory but I suppose it's similar to year four and five.

Interviewer 00:09:57

Okay, so it's like eight, nine. Yeah, okay.

Ana 00:10:00

Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer 00:10:01

Eight, [nine or --]

Ana 00:10:02

[So in] Colorado in grades four and five, and then we moved to England. So grades six to nine are called Middle School.

Interviewer 00:10:13

Yeah. So [you're [unintelligible] middle school. Okay.]

Ana 00:10:15



[And I went to an...] an American-based school, private school in England. So it kind of followed the American year system. I spent three years there. So grades six to nine. So that, you know, at that point, that was the longest time I'd spent in a place.

Interviewer 00:10:39

So your American private school, was that a boarding school? Or were you still living with your parents at that point? I was living with my parents, yeah. Yeah. And do you think they sort of decided to do that because you've been in America already, and so they wanted to, kind of, keep you in the same system? [unintelligible]

Ana 00:10:55

I think, from memory, I think my, I think my dad was on a contract and had moved because of , you know, people he was working with, and I think they paid for it.

Interviewer 00:11:09

Yeah. Okay. So it was part of the deal, and then yeah, okay. So that's nice for you, isn't it?

Ana 00:11:13

I went to school with a lot of kids who were from, like, military backgrounds, and... embassy? You know, that kind of -

Interviewer 00:11:23

Yeah okay.

Ana 00:11:24

You know, kind of moving around because of, [Interviewer hums] you know, connected to business or whatever.

Interviewer 00:11:30

Okay.

Ana 00:11:30

But, yeah, I think it was part of the, the big deal-io. [laughter]

Interviewer 00:11:36

That's great. Thank you. Okay, I'm gonna maybe go back because you've moved around a lot. So one of the questions is, can you tell us about your story to get to England? So it's - because you've got such a complicated story of getting to England, what I suppose -- just wondering at what point - so in 2006, you moved back to England as an adult. So that must -- Is that really the first time you've sort of chosen to live here and been here and I - Do you feel like you're going to stay here? Is, when we when we think



about your journey to this country, does it really start with you living here in 2006, do you think? Because your childhood was so, you know,

Ana 00:12:16

Yeah.

Interviewer 00:12:16

you moved around so much? Or was it before then? Do you feel like England was your home before 2006?

Ana 00:12:23

No. So yeah, so that that's an interesting, yeah, it's an interesting way of thinking about it. I mean, so, so I got up to middle school. So these three years were in England. After middle school after the ninth grade, ooh no. Eighth - Oh, yeah, no, 6,7,8 that's Middle School. So ninth grade, we moved to Italy.

Interviewer 00:12:46

Okay.

Ana 00:12:47

And this is the longest time I've spent again, three years in England, and then four years for high school in Italy. So I, I was in Italy, you know, for those kind of almost, I suppose it's quite formative, you know, those those kind of years. And it was, I was, you know, deciding what to do, you know, last couple of years, I suppose it would be college in England, you know. Kind of decide do you study and go into, you know, the type of work? Or do you get to university? What are you going to do? And I was looking at different universities and wanted to come to England.

Interviewer 00:13:36

Do you remember why? I'm gonna go back to Italy in a minute as well and ask you about that. But remember why you thought maybe UK universities?

Ana 00:13:45

I think well, first of all, it was more affordable at the time. It cost a lot more to go to America. I - also there's, there's he was a, you know, so a bit about money and a bit about immigration, actually. So when I grew up - as a baby, I had dual citizenship. I had a Brazilian passport and an American passport. And then when we were in England, in middle school, I remember my mum going through, you know, a kind of massive legal journey of getting an Italian passport. And, you know, this is back before kind of computers were easy to work with, you know. So I remember lots of faxes, lots of post, a lot of phone calls, you know, kind of long distance phone calls when, you know, it was really difficult and quite expensive actually to make those phone calls. And yeah, so it's quite complex for her to do that. She got her Italian passport. And then she got me an Italian passport. So at this point, I mean, I, I



can't remember if I had an American passport. [Unintelligible whispers] I may have done, it may have expired. I can't quite remember.

Interviewer 00:15:11

I mean, the fact you were born in Holland, does that mean you have a? You haven't got any connection with Holland though?

Ana 00:15:17

Just says Holland on my birth certificate.

Interviewer 00:15:20

Yeah. Okay.

Ana 00:15:20

That's the only connection I've got. I've never had a Dutch passport. I don't know if I had Dutch citizenship at any point I -- Actually, this this is interesting. Technically, I have citizenship in three places: Brazil, Italy and America. [Computer dings] Because once you've had a passport, they can't legally take your citizenship from you. Even if it expires. They don't know, if you've got citizenship in another place, it would be it would be against your human rights to take that from you. Because you'd be, you know, without without citizen in any particular country for all they know. So I could, you know, I could potentially access my American citizenship, but I think I decided to go for right I've it's it's cheaper, it's more afford- not cheaper - it's more affordable to, to go to England for the university because I was the EU. Back in the day. [laughs] England was part of the EU. So you know, we had the same, same price. You know, it costs the same, you know, for me to access, you know, education here as, as somebody who's British. Whereas in America it'd be more expensive and it's further away.

Interviewer 00:16:46

Yeah. And you never considered staying in Italy? I think is it -- Is it just because of the Italian universities? Are they just nothing like the standard of the UK? Is it the reputation of kind of both American and and UK universities that kind of, I suppose, bring people over here and -

Ana 00:17:01

yeah, yeah, I think it really was. I was choosing between the two. I mean, I'd, I'd gotten to a point where I was more or less fluent in Italian as well. But I still had some learning to do. It still wasn't my native language. It wasn't my first language. So it could get better. I could potentially, you know, study in an Italian University. It - it is -- Yeah, it would have been the cheapest option--

Interviewer 00:17:29

[But it's not your first language?]



Ana 00:17:29

[But it still didn't] quite feel like home and I don't think, at this point, I had set on anywhere being home. So it was a logistical - It was a logistical decision because of my upbringing.

Interviewer 00:17:40

Yeah. Okay. Not a, [not a -]

Ana 00:17:42

Can I pause it [unintelligible] just to blow my nose?

Interviewer 00:17:44

Yeah, of course. Yeah, yeah.

Ana 00:17:45

And I'm going to mute it.

Interviewer 00:17:48

I'll, I'll pause it.

The recording stops and continues in Part Two below:

Interviewer 00:00:00

Okay, continuing our interview with Ana. Thank you. So you were talking about - you decided that you would maybe come to, or wanted to come to the UK, for university. Just going back to Italy for a moment, you said it was quite a formative period of time. Is there any - a kind of memory or a story that you remember from that time that kind of illustrates your time there? Any, kind of, how people received you? What was it like being there?

Ana 00:00:27

Yeah. Oh, it was amazing. I mean, I, you know, I kind of mentioned, when I was growing up it, you know, it was quite confusing going between schools, but at this point, I've been to so many and moved around so much, it became part of me. And I was this person who, I just talked to anybody. And when I saw somebody who's new, I'd be like, Who are you? [laughs] I want to welcome you, I want to, you know - if you're a little bit different, or a little bit unsure, I want to I want to be around, you know, and, and help out. I, yeah. So, so we, you know, moving around at that point, and being new somewhere was, you know, kind of exciting. It was, it was a really welcoming experience, because I think I got used



to, used to it and almost opened up to it. I mean, it was, you know, and I was more of an explorer then, as well.

So I -- Memory-wise? I mean, I remember going on on Italian buses and trams and just exploring a lot, actually, on my own quite a lot. And, you know, just yeah, just kind of navigating was really easy over there. You know, you just get, you know, get bus tickets, which were just, you know, kind of half a euro or whatever. You know, it's, yeah, just really, really nice. But, I mean, things didn't work very well. That's another reason to move somewhere where things actually worked. You know, buses here are more or less on time. I mean, I remember waiting around for a bus for a good hour to two hours sometimes, literally not knowing is it going to turn up or when? And just being, you know, being a kid, I didn't work. I was just wandering around exploring the area. That was all right. I was just chilling out and trying [Interviewer laughs] and watching people.

Interviewer 00:02:34

Sounds like a nice experience. You didn't have any, kind of, there was nothing negative about being new there. I sounds like you just kind of embraced it as well.

Ana 00:02:42

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, it was. It was really yeah, it was really amazing.

Interviewer 00:02:47

Okay, thank you very much. Okay, so you found your way to a UK University then? Where did you go to university?

Ana 00:02:55

The University of Gloucestershire, so it's based in Cheltenham.

Interviewer 00:02:59

Okay, um, do you remember your experience -- ? Or do you remember your memories of Cheltenham when you first arrived? What were your first impressions of the town is kind of - Yeah it is a town, isn't it? Large town?

Ana 00:03:10

Yes. Yeah. Yeah, it's a large town. I mean, it was completely different. Really clean. Really clean. Really... Yeah, just just really, really different to to Italy. Like I said, things things seemed to work. The shops were completely different. They were big and open. You know. Yeah, shops were very very different. Yeah, it was all it was all very different.

Interviewer 00:03:44

Okay, but not in a not in a bad way, just in a different way?



Ana 00:03:47

Yeah.

Interviewer 00:03:48

Okay.

Ana 00:03:48

Yeah in a different way.

Interviewer 00:03:50

So, the next question, I'm going to sort of speed on a little bit to when you arrived in Tiverton and have your impressions of here. But we might, well, I think we'll probably go back and revisit various aspects of your of your past and your heritage, so your your parents' heritage and their background as well. But, so how would you describe -- if you could tell me when you arrived in Tiverton, and also your first impressions of the town as well?

Ana 00:04:16

Okay. I mean, we -- So, when, when I was in university, I met my, my, you know, future husband, and we moved, you know, around Gloucestershire area. We decided after having children to move to Devon. Before we actually arrived to Tiverton, we'd lived for a short period of time in Barnstaple. And it was, you know, kind of, again, deciding, where are we going to live? Are we going to live in Barnstaple? Are we going to live - you know, we we kind of had a look at different areas locally, my husband, knowing the bit about the local area but not a lot because he he just lived in grew up in Barnstaple. So hadn't been very often to different places with a view of what is this place actually like? Do I want to live here?

So Tiverton was one of the places we looked at. Sandwiched quite nicely between Exeter and Barnstaple. Barnstaple for family, Exeter for -- Well, it's big and there's lots going on. And we kind of thought what what is it like? The first time we came and had a look around, couldn't find where to park it was just it was pissing it down. [Interviewer laughs] It was raining so much. We had two small children in the back of the car. One of them quite, you know, our youngest quite small at that point still and probably screaming because she did she didn't [Interviewer laughs] like the car. So you got a little like just need to park somewhere, just need to get a vague idea of what it's like. The first thing we did - so now knowing Tiverton, we had parked at M&S and walked into town that way, around where the post office is? And we found a small place to eat like a cooked breakfast. I can't remember what - if it was - yeah, if we were - small detail, but possibly a vegetarian breakfast. Yes I think it was a vegetarian breakfast at that point. Possibly. And just it -- just sat there going, Oh my gosh, we need to we need to move, we need to find somewhere to live. I mean, how are we going to figure out what this place is like? It's pissing it down [Interviewer laughs] the kids are grouchy, we need to get food in them. I don't know the place. Where are we going?



So like the first impression, it was literally just this place to sit and have some shelter and to have a cooked breakfast and -- Okay, yeah, I mean, yeah. [Interviewer begins to ask a question] This little cafe, has breakfast, fireplace. They're really nice. They've made like a -- they didn't do kids food. They just did some stuff. So they really nice, this is great. Okay, let's look at some places around here.

Interviewer 00:07:19

So it's the cafe that being nice and kind of just welcoming you, okay, that that made you feel like okay, we can look for some houses and then you started [unintelligible]

Ana 00:07:26

[You know what it] reminded me of? It reminded me of where we used to live in -- Before we moved to Devon, we were living in Dursley, in Gloucestershire. It's not far from Bristol.

Interviewer 00:07:38

Yeah, yeah, I know -

Ana 00:07:39

[Unintelligible] district. And it reminded me -- Well, and it reminded my husband as well of anywhere, you could, you know, kind of go in Dursley, just, yeah. Just -

Interviewer 00:07:53

Okay.

Ana 00:07:54

- welcoming.

Interviewer 00:07:55

Yeah, that's good. Thank you. So we're gonna move on, and we better had move on. So I've got sort of priority of interview bit [laughs] so I should really move on to that. Just going back to your parents and their heritage. So there's a few things here. So there's sort of a heritage, there's language, and there's faith. So there's all those things, and we've touched on those a little bit already. But would you say that - you talked at the beginning about your mum's Italian heritage and how that was still quite important, perhaps more so than the Brazilian, am I --? But how would you say -- Yeah, what, what kind of heritage do you remember them talking about? Or is there anything that you've - any traditions, any kind of cultural festivals or food or anything that you think really kind of, like, you remember? And then your your mum and your dad told you or taught you?

Ana 00:08:50

Oh, gosh, so from my mother's side, she -- Actually I remember more being imparted from her Brazilian upbringing. So I think she talked a lot about going to church in in Brazil and it was Italian, walking with



her Italian father. But what she imparted, you know, heritage-wise as I was growing up was more from her Brazilian side. So I remember her telling me about the samba and the festivals, listening to, you know, to some Brazilian music. And you know, her teaching me how to dance the samba.

Interviewer 00:09:31

Can you still dance the samba?

Ana 00:09:33

Sorry?

Interviewer 00:09:33

Can you still dance the samba?

Ana 00:09:35

I - you know what, I can shake my butt. [laughter] I, you know, it's not something I do very frequently anymore. But [laughter] I mean, with my work we did a, an African dance session and the way the way that the lady was, you know, you know, moving it kind of, you know, reminded me a little bit more of those roots and like, Oh I remember moving a bit like this, it, you know, it reminded me a bit of that. Yeah, I mean, so food-wise, I mean, we didn't visit Brazil very frequently, but I remember going and having feijoada, which is like a pork based meal with, you know, I think it's served with rice and with this like grain type stuff, I think it's called feijao. And it's - Yeah, and having these kind of these sweets and guarana, guarana, a Brazilian kind of sweet drink. Yeah, so there - yeah, there are certain things I really remember tasting, every now and then I'll you know, kind of go into like, you know, international food stores and be like, looking for this stuff that I used to eat and try to describe it. I don't remember the brands or the name of the drink, but just trying to, trying to look for for what I what I remember.

Interviewer 00:11:19

So are they- are they traditions and things that you - or that part of your heritage - is it quite hard to replicate? Do you try and do things at home? Is there? Is there anything you do at home that you still think is part of that past? Or that or your or your is influenced by your parents?

Ana 00:11:35

Probably food wise, not so much. I, you know, we've gone vegan as a family, about 18 months to two years ago. So, you know, there's, you know, like I said, it's a lot of the food was meat based from what I remember. So not so much.

Interviewer 00:12:07

No. Is your veganism? Is that something that? Is that an environmental decision? Or what? What led you to become a vegan? Because I think that's quite interesting, isn't it, of like, your cultural heritage and then also our environmental concerns? If it, if it is that reason?



Ana 00:12:21

Yeah.

Interviewer 00:12:22

They don't always go hand in hand, do they? They sort of, but yeah. Could you talk about that?

Ana 00:12:26

Yeah, it's, it's an interesting thing, because I think a lot of people, kind of, you know, have these meals that are really based deeply in culture. And they remember having, you know, having this meal with, you know, with pork or pig, and, you know, or it's beef, and it's cow -- Oh no, feijoada, I think it was, like cow mince, beef mince. Actually, yeah, quite similar to the stews I make now, I suppose. But just, you know, just lentil based as opposed to cow based. [laughs] The reasons that, the reasons for me are, like, you know, ethical, you know, ethical reasons, as well as environmental reasons and health as well. You know, it's very, yeah, very, very good for your health, being plant based. I used to have iron deficiency issues and, ta-da, no issues. So, yeah, I, you know, there's certain things that can be replicated, you know, it's just kind of going, Oh well, you know, that's how that was, you know, you used to make that, but, you know, you can use lentils instead. Or, you know, you can use tofu instead, you know, you don't have to use [an animal].

Interviewer 00:13:44

[So I] suppose you're saying there's kind of, maybe there is a bit of your kind of heritage or things that you would have done or remember from your childhood, but you're kind of reinterpreting or redoing them now in a kind of a new way. But they may be feeding in a little bit with with how you live, but in a kind of quite, you know, implicit way rather than being explicitly kind of exercising your culture it maybe it feeds in quietly. Is that, is that maybe -?

Ana 00:14:12

Yeah I think so, I think so. It's probably one of those things that I think has probably seeped in as opposed to being Oh, I'm doing this to keep hold of that heritage. It's just, you know, this is, this is who I've become, and it's, it's yeah.

Interviewer 00:14:31

Okay, thank you. So, are there any -- We're kind of going on to the themes of faith. So do you -- is religion, faith or spirituality important to you? Is that part of your heritage? Are you happy to talk about that a little bit?

Ana 00:14:51

I'm happy to talk about it. The answer is no. I mean, I'm, I'm an atheist. So I don't, I don't believe in in the gods, or or have a faith or religion. Heritage-wise I was raised with, with some form of religion, I was



baptised. Roman Catholic. I've got photos. I don't know if I really remember doing it. I've got photos of being baptised in Oxford in England. I don't know how old I was. [Interviewer laughs]. But I don't, I don't have a good chronology. [Interviewer speaks, unintelligible] Dad is a Protestant. So I think they had a conversation and had agreed to, you know, have me baptised. I mean, in conversations, you know, with my parents to this day I'm quite open about not believing. And I mean, my I think my mum still still feels that I'm a Roman Catholic, because I was baptised but, you know, I just I didn't believe in, in that.

Interviewer 00:16:09

Okay. On on sort of that. On that kind of theme. Do you -- Are there any festivals, is there anything you like to celebrate throughout the year? Do you do things like Christmas or any other celebrations? Yeah. Is there anything you celebrate?

Ana 00:16:25

Yeah, I mean, you know, I, we always did Christmas. I, you know -- I mean, we you know, culturally growing up, we went to, you know, to Masses. I remember going to a, you know, an evening Mass in Italy. I think in Italy and Brazil, they did a lot of Midnight Mass, you know, they go to Mass in the evening, you come home, do a big meal and open up all the presents and stuff. Christmas Eve, as opposed to, I don't know, Christmas Day, as it's done in England, and I think in America. We didn't do that very frequently, there was more of my mum, my mum would talk about it. So I, you know, celebrate Christmas. I mean, the kids get Easter eggs. You know, things like that, really, that have become more steeped in, you know, I suppose, recognising the change of the seasons and things like that.

Interviewer 00:17:27

Yeah. And they're very much part of a kind of British culture. I suppose if you're a child in school and you can't engage in or you don't do those things, then you would feel perhaps left out or you know, I suppose there are things that have become part of being British rather than being Christian in some ways, [aren't they]?

Ana 00:17:41

[Yes], that's it. And it's interesting. I mean, raising children with the background I've got and the kind of, I kind of get by in this country. I, you know, like, like you mentioned before, it's almost invisible, until I start talking and someone goes, Oh, your accent isn't British, then I kind of pass as a white person walking along, you know? And kind of just just, you know, just pass.

Interviewer 00:18:14

What do you say when people ask you that? You might have said it early on, but what do you, how do you answer that question? Because it is one of the questions is that is thinking about being different and whether you enjoy that whether you celebrate that almost, but also, what do you say when people ask you, where are you from? So what do you say?



Ana 00:18:30

What do I say? I, usually I laugh. [laughter] I usually laugh. I look at my watch and ask how much time they've got. [laughter] It depends on the person and the situation. Sometimes I literally go Right, I'm gonna do this quickly. Brazilian Italian American, born in Holland, moved every couple of years. Got it? Okay. Probably not, don't worry. Sometimes I'm like, I live in Tiverton. No, where are you from? Honestly. And I'm, like, I don't really know.

Interviewer 00:19:13

It's a strange question though, isn't it? Because where are we actually from? When do we form? Are we from a place we're born? In which case that's strange, isn't it?

Ana 00:19:21

Holland! No I'm not from Holland! I'm not Dutch. [laughter] I'm not Brazilian. I didn't grow up in Brazil and my Italian. I know some Italian. But I haven't lived there in a while. And if I try to converse in Italian in Italian, I would it would take some time to get up to speed. Am I American? I don't even know what a dime is. [laughter] Am I British? Do I sound British? No. Do I have a British passport? No. Do I have British children? Yes. Oh my gosh! [Interviewer laughs] Where am I from? You know what? I'm from Tiverton because this is where I live.

Interviewer 00:19:58

Yeah. So right now --

Ana 00:20:00

And I feel like this is home. My children are happy in school. Everyone's happy here. I've got friends here.

Interviewer 00:20:09

Yeah.

Ana 00:20:09

I [don't know.]

Interviewer 00:20:10

[Yeah I think] that's good. I think [that answers the question].

Ana 00:20:11

[It makes my brain] blow up, [honestly].

Interviewer 00:20:13



[Yeah, yeah, yeah]. No, that's great. That's a really good answer, though. Do you, so go, just going back to that idea of being different. And then we'll do a little bit about language. So do you feel that? Do you feel different? And? And is that a good thing? Do you enjoy it?

Ana 00:20:29

Yes, I feel different. [laughs] And yes, I enjoy it. I - I think. I don't think there could be any other way. You know, like I said, kind of growing up with the background and moving around. I don't know any other way of being. I've been different in lots of different places. And sometimes, sometimes, sometimes it is uncomfortable. Because, like I said, I kind of pass as, not, not always being put on the spot about my accent or where I'm from because my accent is mostly American. I know English fluently. So I've got I've got almost a level of, I suppose what what I'd say is white privilege - is getting by with that. The only time I feel vaguely uncomfortable is if somebody says, like, you know, so what do you do here? How long have you lived here? And I sometimes feel like I almost need to give some credentials as to why I'm here. Especially post-Brexit. Being here. You know, I'm here because of my Italian passport, I've got settled status. It's the it's -- before that I didn't really worry too much. Since Brexit, it's become just -- I recognise my difference more.

Interviewer 00:22:09

Do you think people ask you more, or is that just -- since Brexit? It's difficult to say, isn't it? How can you say if people ask you more Since Brexit?

Ana 00:22:18

No, people ask me the same, it's just that it's - whether it's me, or whether it's them - I suppose, in myself, I've I almost feel like, you know, I have to I have to give some credentials as to why I'm here.

Interviewer 00:22:40

And that's -- I mean, is that -- that sounds to me like a form of of prejudice. So so we, you know, there's certain people who walk around, who don't have to give a give a reason why they exist somewhere. Would you describe that as prejudice?

Ana 00:22:59

Sometimes.

Interviewer 00:23:02

But it's more -- Is it kind of an - it's not quite an institutional prejudice. It's a personal one, isn't it? But, but it's more subtle, I suppose.

Ana 00:23:09

It is definitely more subtle, because I remember a conversation with a colleague a long time - well, as long as when the referendum was going on - saying, you know, but you're, you're not the immigrants



that we're worried about. We're worried about economic immigrants. And I was just like, to this woman I worked with, and I really got on with, do you know where I'm from? Do you know why I'm here? Do you know why I'm working here? Do you know that I, I thought, you know, it, it wouldn't make sense for me to work in Italy, or America or Brazil. I actually picked here because of logistical reasons. I work here because I can make a living here and make more money here. So does that make me an economic immigrant? I think it does. Actually. I've never looked at myself that way. And she never did. And it was just silence and it was like actually I'm quite disappointed. And yeah, it's it's a prejudice.

Interviewer 00:24:20

Does it come from that idea that - I mean, I don't want to put words in your mouth - but about, so it does sound like she's worried about people taking job -- like people coming here and taking jobs so that - I mean, I suppose it's a more it's a more wordy way of saying that in a way - isn't it? - saying that they're worried about economic migrant immigration, but -

Ana 00:24:39

Yeah, yeah, I think so. And taking up space in the NHS. You know, and, and things like that. Yeah.

Interviewer 00:24:49

Okay. Thank you.

Ana 00:24:49

And, yeah, you know, yeah, my, you know, my jobs upon moving here. I, you know, before Brexit, I never thought about it. I - I did a lot of, you know, a lot of cleaning. I did a lot of jobs where I was working with other other migrants from the EU. I worked with a lot of people who were Polish, from Germany, you know, from South America. And I

Interviewer 00:25:20

[When were you doing those jobs?]

Ana 00:25:20

[I feel] I didn't feel, I didn't feel out of depth. I, you know, I felt welcome. I just, it was just jobs, just jobs to get by and get money. But it was, you know, it was, I went to university, but these were the jobs that I was able to take.

Interviewer 00:25:39

Was that after university those - you were doing some cleaning work? Yeah. Okay. And that's, that's kind of interesting, isn't it? Working with different people in that kind of in that kind of work? Just I will go back though, because we just need to talk about language a little bit, just in brief, because I don't want to use too much more of your time. But um, so what languages do you speak now? Or and what have you spoken in the past?



Ana 00:26:05

So in the past, let's start with past - in the past, I've been fluent in Dutch, English, Brazilian Portuguese, there's a distinction there - Brazilian Portuguese, not Portuguese Portuguese. And Italian. And now - I speak English. [laughs] I, I would say I probably am a beginner in Italian now, because I learned when I started to move there. I was fluent by the time I left, but I don't practice it. So I would be a beginner in Brazilian Portuguese as well, and I don't know any Dutch.

Interviewer 00:26:48

Okay, thank you. That's very helpful. So just kind of going back more to the present time and sort of where we got to, we were talking about your life in Tiverton. We've talked a bit about food so I won't really go through that again, but could you tell me anything about your leisure time, if you don't mind?

Ana 00:27:07

Yep.

Interviewer 00:27:07

What do you like to do.

Ana 00:27:08

Could we pause recording just a sec.

Interviewer 00:27:10

Yeah, of course.

The recording stops and continues in Part Three below:

Interviewer 00:00:01

So just resuming interview with Ana. And Ana, could you just tell us a little bit about your leisure time in Tiverton?

Ana 00:00:08

Okay, ooh. So, I mean, the things I enjoy doing: reading writing, going for walks. And previously, pre COVID, you know, visiting places like National Trust houses and, you know, the museum. Really, really interesting. And coffee. I love coffee so much. [Interviewer laughs and says something unintelligible] Actually, I think that that's a bit more based in heritage. Definitely the Italian coffee. I grew up like knocking back espressos. Just they do espressos like they do in Italy.



Interviewer 00:00:44

Yeah. So where's the best place to get coffee in Tiverton? [Ana laughs]

Ana 00:00:51

Liznojan.

Interviewer 00:00:52

Oh okay.

Ana 00:00:53

Yeah, yeah, they make really good coffee. Really good coffee. And yeah, they have, you know, it's all for me being vegan, all vegan.

Interviewer 00:01:02

Yeah. And it's a nice, it's just a nice environment. Isn't it? It's a nice bookshop and it's, yeah, it's good. Okay, so last few questions really. Could you just tell me a little bit about your work that you do now? Because it's quite, it's quite pertinent. But it's also important for your story.

Ana 00:01:20

Yeah. Okay. So the work I do now, I'm right now a fundraiser, PR and events officer for North Devon Sunrise. It's a community interest company based in Barnstaple. And we work to celebrate diversity, as it goes, and just just raise the profile of diversity. So people from all different cultures and backgrounds as well as people from different identities such as LGBTQ.

Interviewer 00:01:55

Okay, thank you. That's lovely. So do you work in Tiverton? And I suppose, at the moment, this question is quite different when I ask it now to when I was asking it back in March. So yeah, do you work from home? And how's that, how's that going? How is COVID with your organisation?

Ana 00:02:13

[laughs] So I'm working from home - as a, as a fundraiser, I can do a lot of work from home. Prior to COVID, I was working two days in the office and two days from home anyway. We're we're a Community Centre, it's, you know, it's -- you know, it's, it's important to be to be in a place for, for the community, and to know, you know, to be able to promote and fundraise and talk about what we do. It's, it's important to think about the community and, you know, to be there. So, I think it's interesting in that terms.

We can do a lot of work from - and we have been doing work - from home, remotely. So that's using things like Zoom, phone calls, emails and things like that. We've, we've carried on with English classes for people whose first language isn't English. Online, people have found that really good because they



can work around, you know, a lot of people still in work. It can work around their commitments, around children. You know, we've increased sessions so that's been really good. There's more demand, which is good, more people coming through to us. There have been - we do things like a group called Meet and Do. And people have been doing crafts and, you know, kind of socialising online. You know, and our, my lovely colleague runs these sessions. From I think she's from El Salvador. She's absolutely lovely.

And it's just, you know what, it's just lovely get I get the pictures because, you know, I do love posts on social media to show, you know, so everyone can see what we're what we're up to, and people can see, kind of, be proud of what they're doing. And you know, people are getting together, people from all around the world in Devon, you know, still getting together. It's nice.

Interviewer 00:04:14

Yeah, so that's a really lovely way of of yeah maintaining the communities. It's what we have to do isn't it, through Zoom but - So it's specifically North Devon Sunrise, isn't it? I was kind of wondering about that. Because when we started the project, it was interesting that there isn't a kind of Mid Devon kind of versions. Anyway, that's a conversation for another time, I think.

Ana 00:04:35

That is that is, and that that's something for us to look into really, you know, in terms of towns, I think. There's a little bit of Exeter there's a little bit in North Devon, but Mid Devon, there's there is a lot of culture, there's a lot of multicultural, you know backgrounds, from what I can see in --

Interviewer 00:04:57

And from a personal point of view, having done the project, or a professional point of view, I suppose. I found it, it's quite difficult to get people to come together, because there isn't another organisation that's already doing that. So when you're trying to do it as part of a project, you're kind of reaching out to people who aren't used to perhaps identifying as, as kind of different. So they're kind of, so it's quite a new -- It's almost like having to kind of, yeah, approach people but but be quite sensitive. And it's quite a new idea. And so because of that newness, it's been, I think it's been perhaps slower in getting people involved in the project sometimes because, yeah, because it's just not something they're used to seeing or happening. So certainly, for me, I'd quite like to see, I'm looking forward to the exhibition it being quite visible, that we're celebrating difference and all these different heritage people from different heritages. So yeah, it'd be it, I think there's definitely a if it can happen there's definitely a...

Ana 00:04:59

There's definitely a need.

Interviewer 00:05:23

A need. Yeah, I think there is definitely a need. Just cause I think that so if something like this came up again, with the museum, if there was a group that already was formed, then that could, you know, they



could almost, kind of, have part kind of managed it or been, you know, had much stronger voice in the exhibition, because they could have kind of taken it on themselves. And I could have facilitated, but it would have been very much theirs. So yeah, anyway, it's interesting. Okay, so just looking forward now. So there's just the last couple of questions. What do you think the big challenges that are facing Tiverton are? Are there any challenges that you think are facing the town? And what do you think would be nice to happen over the next 10 years? So it's kind of thinking about the future? Really, what would you like to see in Tiverton?

Ana 00:06:58

Ok. No more coronavirus? [laughs]

Interviewer 00:07:06

Yeah. And I think that's thing, ever since I've asked that question, since we've had COVID, I think it's really - yeah it's had such an impact on people, hasn't it? Okay, I'm gonna ask the last question then. So obviously, this oral history will be kept for the future for hundreds of years, however long the digital format remains relevant, for people to listen to in the future, and obviously, for researchers, but people who are just interested in who's lived in Tiverton and their lives. Do you have a message for that person who's perhaps listening in 10, 20? It might be a school child like, you know, 30 years time? What would you tell them?

Ana 00:07:46

I'd tell them to embrace difference, to embrace, you know, whatever makes them special. Whatever makes other people special, to be open, to not be scared, you know, to move forward with compassion and, and love and let that let that drive, you know, drive you. It's, you know, it's just, we're just human, all of us. We're just human trying to get by together. And, you know, if we didn't have any, anything that, you know, that made us stand out from each other, it would be just so boring. [laughter]

Interviewer 00:08:33

That's a great answer. Thank you very much. I might have to use that as a quote for the exhibition but we'll see what happens. [laughter] Yeah, I'm gonna, I'm going to stop recording. Actually, no, before I stop recording, is there anything that we've missed that you think is an important thing to talk about? In terms of the project? So in terms of heritage, faith, your -- Yeah, if we missed anything?

Ana 00:08:58

I don't think so. No you've asked a lot of questions. I mean, yeah. [Yeah].

Interviewer 00:09:06

[I think] yeah, I think we've pretty much covered everything, just having a look through my list. Yeah. So thank you very much. Okay. So I think we're good. Thank you, Ana. That was fantastic. So what we'll do is we'll -- I'll stop recording now.