

Galop and Stonewall Housing Oral History Project

Interviewee: Natasha Cenac

Interviewer: Fiza Hassan

Place of Interview: Grand Hotel

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Key

PG: = Interviewee, Natasha Cenac

MH: = Interviewer, Fiza Hassan

[time e.g. 5:22] = inaudible word at this time

[5:22 IA] = inaudible section at this time

Word 5:22 = best guess at word

NC: I was born at St. Mary's, Paddington on 3/7/75.

FH: We at Grand [0:23 Hotel] for Galop and Stonewall Housing's Oral Project.

So Natasha, thank you for being with us. Could you tell me a bit about your background?

NC: Yeah, I was brought up in Kilburn, London. I had a normal childhood background, always knowing I was gay though <laughs>, which was a slight problem because my mum is Muslim. So I knew I was gay but there was nothing I could do about it for a while.

FH: So when did you realise you were gay.

NC: I always knew I was gay, from primary school!

FH: From primary school?

NC: Yeah! It was weird little things. I used to fancy a teacher back then, but I knew from, yeah, from when I was a child that I liked women.

FH: But how did you realise it? Was it a crush or ...

NC: It was a crush but every time ... there would always be a new crush on a new woman.

<Laughter>

So yeah, I realised I liked women more than ...

FH: So you were never confused, nobody explained it to you?

NC: No

FH: You were just naturally gay.

NC: I was naturally gay. But I did have to put a front on for a while, but I was naturally gay, yeah.

FH: How long?

NC: I came out when I was ... nineteen/twenty.

FH: So that's a long time.

NC: It's a long time ago. But the family obviously didn't know at that time still. So I was ... under cover.

FH: Do you have any siblings?

NC: Yes I do. I have ... two, three sisters and two brothers.

FH: And how were they about your sexuality?

NC: It was ... not very good. My brother had a big problem with me. And that's why I had to leave home basically, because my brother ... he just couldn't apprehend me being gay and he's Muslim and stuff, he just couldn't, he was not having it. And he was a bit ... he was violent towards me and stuff, so I had to ... had to leave. Had to go somewhere.

FH: Is he older than you?

NC: Yeah, yeah. He's like ... fifteen years older than me. Yeah, there's a big age gap between us!

FH: Are you the youngest?

NC: I am.

FH: So you're the baby then.

NC: I'm the baby. <Chuckles>

FH: So where did you grow up – in London?

NC: Yeah, Kilburn. In Kilburn I grew up.

FH: So how was the neighbourhood like? Anything out of ...

NC: No. It was a nice area.

FH: And what about your friends, your childhood friends? Did they know?

NC: No, no, no. They didn't know.

<Part 2 starts>

NC: No, my childhood friends didn't know. When I was at secondary school I had a ... there was one friend I did tell eventually, not in secondary school but a few years later, but she was really cool about it.

FH: So how did you get involved with Stonewall Housing?

NC: Basically I read in G3 magazine, 'cause I had all the problems with my brother and my mum at the time, 'cause I was living at home with my mum and when

she found out I was gay she ... she wanted me out. There was a lot of problems there. So I saw Stonewall in G3 magazine and I rang 'em up and had a meeting with them in South London somewhere.

FH: How old were you at the time?

NC: Hmm ... <pause> 26/27.

<Part 3 starts>

FH: So how was your father about it?

NC: My father was fine, but he lives in St. Lucia, so that became ... he was OK with it.

FH: So you had his support?

NC: Yeah, but he lives in the Caribbean so he can't really do much from the Caribbean when ... you know, he's that far.

FH: So your mum was a single parent?

NC: No, my mother and father split up. My mother did go to the Caribbean with my father, but she had to come back because there were problems in the marriage, so that's why my mother came back and we had to live together ... and then she found out I was gay, and it just ... just got all mad. <Sighs>

FH: So is your father Muslim?

NC: No, my father's Catholic.

FH: Oh! Good combination!

NC: I know!

<Laughter>

My father's Catholic. But he was fine. He has no problems.

FH: So did he take any stance for you?

NC: Yeah, he could, as far as he could do, but the only thing he could do was literally on the phone, he couldn't come over here at the time so all he could do was try and talk to my mother and brother, but ... you know, my brother is not his child so he couldn't really ...

FH: So are you his only child from this marriage?

NC: Yeah.

FH: Oh right.

<Part 4 starts>

FH: Did you ever think about going to the Caribbean and living there with your father? Or did it never come to it?

NC: I thought about it, but then I thought it might be a bit harder living my life in the Caribbean and being gay. I think it might be easier in London being gay than in the Caribbean, 'cause ... sometimes they have backwards thinking there. Sometimes. <Laughs> Not all the time.

FH: Your father being the exception.

NC: Yeah, yeah.

FH: So being a Catholic and being supportive of your sexuality, it's a big thing.

NC: Yeah. Well he says he's supportive of me, so whether he's supportive of my sexuality or not ... but he says I'm his child and he'll support me all the way.

FH: So he loves you, but he just can't get on top of it?

NC: No, no, no, he doesn't really ... yeah.

<Part 5 starts>

FH: So you mentioned you saw a G3 about Stonewall Housing. What is G3?

NC: G3 is a gay magazine, gay women's magazine.

FH: So how did you come across that?

NC: You could get it from First Out or Candy Bar back then. It's a free magazine.

FH: So you were involved in the gay scene then.

NC: Oh yeah! Yeah. <Laughs>

FH: Tell me something about that experience then. Interesting stories.

NC: Interesting stories? Erm ... Don't know about interesting stories. I just ... I dunno.

FH: Oh come on! Everybody has a story!

NC: Not really! <Laughs>

FH: Nothing?

NC: Nothing, no. I just used to go out, enjoy myself and ... you know, I met people and stuff.

FH: Did you make many friends?

NC: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I made quite a few friends on the scene.

FH: So who initially helped you, because it's ...

NC: I went, initially when I first came out myself, I phoned up that helpline, what's it called, London ... Gay Switchboard? I phoned them up originally, and I said to them, 'Where do I go, because I'm gay and I don't know what to do about it.' <Laughs>

FH: How old were you then?

NC: Nineteen. They were really helpful and they were like, 'Are you sure yet?' and I was like, 'Yeah – I know I'm gay!' and they were quite surprised. And they said, 'Go to London Friend,' and that's where I went first, one Sunday, and I met a few friends through there.

FH: What's London Friends?

NC: It's ... it's a sort of meeting place where you can go and come out ... if you were just coming out you could go out there and they can help you, introduce you to different things, different people. Yeah, it was good.

FH: So you got your [2:04] there?

NC: Sorry?

FH: Did you get your gay mentor there?

NC: <Laughs> Yes, I did. I did, yeah. I met some good people there as well, so from that I got friends from there and then ... just started going out and doing all different other things.

<Part 6 starts>

FH: Would you like to mention anybody special from that group who really helped you?

NC: Lucia actually. Lucia was one of my good friends. We used to hang out a lot and she was there for me throughout that first little bit, so yeah. <Laughs>

<Part 7 starts>

FH: What about your first girlfriend?

NC: First girlfriend?

FH: Yeah ...

NC: What about her? <Laughs>

FH: How old were you – how did you meet?

NC: I met her at a festival – I don't know what festival it was. Her name was Angela. But we ... <chuckles> we kind of came out together, so we were both new on the scene and so we ... yeah, we got together. We was together for two years. It was lovely. <Laughs> it was lovely, yeah. It was ... kind of innocent and ... nice. <Laughs> The first relationship and stuff, so ... yeah.

<Part 8 starts>

Through friends of a friend that I met at London Friends, and then we all went to a festival together, and then we found out we kind of lived near the same area, we was talking, and we just started talking with each other and then we started going out.

FH: Was she from ethnic group or ...

NC: She's English.

FH: English?

NC: Yeah. White girl.

<Part 9 starts>

FH: So did you live with her, did you move in?

NC: Yes. When my parents were in the Caribbean together she did move in to my flat with me, and we were together for two years.

FH: So you had a flat of your own?

NC: I did have a flat. It was a flat my mother and father bought for me before they left to go to the Caribbean, but obviously once my mother had come back due to the breakdown of the marriage she had to come and live back in her own ... at the end of the day it's her property. And it was fine, we were fine, you know, until she actually found out I was gay and then ... <laughs> She wasn't having it.

<Part 10 starts>

FH: So what exactly was her response to it? Did she emotionally blackmail you?

NC: She was a bit abusive and she just cut me off. Considering me and my mother was so close together ... for my mum to cut me off and actually have so much problems with me, it ...we didn't talk for ... a year-and-a-half or so.

FH: What kind of things would she say to you.

NC: She just called me ... she would just say, 'The child of a Muslim mother cannot be gay. It's impossible.' And I'd be like, 'But mum, I am!' But she couldn't comprehend it all and ... I mean some of the things, she would curse me out a lot. <Pause> So yeah.

FH: I'm sorry ...

NC: No, that's fine. I mean our relationship now is ... a lot better.

FH: But to actually think about it, I know it can be ...

NC: It can be difficult. <Chuckles>

FH: Coming from a Muslim background myself ...

NC: Yeah, it is a difficult time. She just ... she couldn't understand it at all, and so she was very negative about the whole thing. And I think my brother was spurring her on as well, which didn't help.

FH: What were her concerns, like was it you wouldn't have children, you'd be alone ...

NC: Do you know, she never really ... let those concerns out. Yeah, partly I'll never have grandchildren from you ... and I said, 'Well that can still happen.' But you know ... she just didn't ... she just doesn't understand it. She didn't understand it at all.

FH: So she doesn't understand the concept of homosexuality or just you being gay?

NC: I don't think she understand the concept of it. And then especially me being gay as well, that just doesn't ... just blew her mind I think.

FH: I say this because if my mother is saying something to me ... if I say something about homosexual people she will just flatly say, 'There's no such thing.' Was it the same thing? Was she totally in denial, or ...

NC: <Pause> Yeah. She was totally in denial, but with such a negative thing with it ... so negative with it as well, as much ... even though she was in denial, she was negative with it, and it just caused so much friction that I couldn't go near my mum. I couldn't go near her at all.

FH: You say she was abusive?

NC: Yeah, that's why I had to ... I couldn't live in the house, because she didn't want me there. Between her and my brother, at first when they found out, there was some abuse there, and ... you know ... I couldn't live there. I couldn't live there because my brother was threatening me as well, 'cause he was so ignorant and negative as well.

FH: But he's fifteen years older than you?

NC: Yeah, but he's ...

FH: Was he still living at that ...

NC: He was living around the area, but no he wasn't living at home, but just the fact that his little sister is ... gay, he just wasn't having it.

FH: So he would actually threaten you?

NC: Yeah, he hit me a few times as well, a good few times as well. So that's why I just couldn't stay there, I couldn't. I didn't know what to do and they kicked me out so I had to go. I didn't ... I couldn't really go to my other sisters and stuff because obviously my brother would know I was there. So ... I had to stay with friends or stay in my car or ... for the first few days. But ...

FH: **4:12 IA**

NC: No I didn't. I didn't because ... I couldn't really. <Chuckles> I couldn't.

<Part 11 starts>

FH: How old were you at this point?

NC: I was 26, but I was ... I wasn't in a good position ... in my head anyway. I wasn't working, everything was just going all wrong and then that, this on top

of it was just like wow and ... it just all went wrong so I had nowhere to live, no money, no nothing.

FH: And you didn't have a girlfriend at this point?

NC: No. At this point, no. <Sighs>

FH: So everything was just going ...

NC: Yeah ...well no, I was seeing someone. <Laughs> I was seeing someone, but that situation was not a very good situation, so ... yeah. That wasn't helping at all.

<Part 12 starts>

FH: So coming back to Stonewall Housing, you called them?

NC: I dropped in. They have a drop-in session. That's what I did. I went in to the drop-in and I went and spoke to someone there. And she took the case on straight away. And that night they was trying to find me places to go. Obviously there was nowhere, so obviously I just either stayed at a friend's ... but then Mara from Stonewall Housing took it on, and she was so good. She was just ... you know, she was trying everywhere to try and get me a place, and eventually they found me the Jewish Women's Aid in Finchley, which ... that was just the start, that just changed everything for me. They took me on and ... they were great. They were great in there. It took me a few years to get out of there. I mean obviously I had problems in there as well 'cause I had a ... breakdown... after that ... and I was sectioned for three months, while I was living there and stuff, so ... I think everything had finally got on top of me, all got too much for me and I just ended up having a breakdown, or a psychotic episode as they call it. <Chuckles> So yeah. So after living there ... at the Jewish Women's ...

FH: Jewish Aid? This was a place to live?

NC: Yeah, it was a refuge, it was somewhere where I lived for two years.

<Part 13 starts>

FH: How did you find the facility?

NC: Their facilities were great. It was a beautiful house, I had a lovely room ... I couldn't complain at all. The facility was great. It was cleaned – someone came in and cleaned it every day. It was clean. I couldn't moan about anything. And they really did help you in there. Up to now I still get help from them if I need it. They're just wonderful. Yes.

FH: So they just provided you with accommodation?

NC: They provided me with accommodation, they got me onto Barnet Housing, they helped me get onto the list, obviously there was a lot of problems with it but obviously when I got ill Barnet had to take me on, 'cause <Laughs> I was living in the borough and ... I was under the psychiatric hospital here, so Barnet Council had to put me on their list and ... eventually I moved out from the Jewish Women's Aid about two years after that. They put me into a hostel

and then they moved me to another bedsit <laughs> which was a studio, and then finally I got this place in January, so this is my permanent flat now.

<Part 14 starts>

FH: So you got this one through the council then?

NC: Yeah

FH: But the council wouldn't help you – did you initially go to the council?

NC: I initially went to Brent Council through Stonewall, because that's where originally I was from. I was born and bred up in Brent. So I went back to Brent, but they wouldn't take me on. Even though I was there staying with a friend who was living in Brent, they wouldn't put me on the council list. Why? I don't know. I don't know. It was just a lot of palaver and considering I'd lived there all my life, it was just ridiculous they wouldn't take me on. So ... I had no other choice but to join Barnet.

FH: So even though you were going to them through Stonewall, they still wouldn't take you on?

NC: No.

<Part 15 starts>

FH: So did Stonewall make a lot of effort to get you on that council list?

NC: Yeah. They did as much as they could, you know, they did everything they could, but the council just was not having it. And at the end of the day it's up to the council who they have on their list, so ... As I was living in Finchley I thought OK, I'd have to try and go onto the Barnet housing list.

FH: So basically did they help you with whatever they could have done?

NC: Yeah. I mean Stonewall went out of their way, they really did. They did everything they could. Everything they could.

I mean even once I was in the Jewish Women's Aid, they really would always constantly ring up, check that I was OK and everything was going OK ... so yeah. Stonewall were great.

FH: You mentioned that Jewish Aid still helps you out if you need some help.

NC: Yeah

FH: What did you mean by that?

NC: Obviously 'cause I had, while I was living there I had my ... psychotic episode, so like I have a key worker there, sort of like I have a social worker as well, I have a key worker and she helps me out if anything ... I have any problems with anything. If I have problems here with the council or anything like that, she would contact them if there was any problems ... but I do the majority of that myself now.

FH: Tell me about what life is like for you living in London since you were involved with Stonewall Housing?

NC: Well now obviously I'm a lot happier 'cause I can be me now. I don't have to hide anything. I'm just me, I'm in my own house, and ... if it weren't for Stonewall Housing I don't know where I would be, to be quite honest, I really wouldn't have a clue. So I have to thank them, 'cause without Stonewall I wouldn't have this flat, <laughs> to be honest. Yeah, no see I forgot the question!

<Laughter>

FH: That's alright. I just asked you if you could tell me a bit about your life since you were involved ...

NC: Yeah, it's just gone up and up and up. Everything's got a lot better. I had my down bits, but now everything's just going so much better. I'm so happy. It's great. I'm great! <Laughs>

<Part 16 starts>

FH: So you mentioned that you lived in your car and with friends, so basically if you were living in the car you were basically on the streets.

NC: I was on the streets, yeah. I was on the streets.

FH: So did you have any experience with the police – would they bother you or ...

NC: Luckily enough, no. I've never had any problems with the police. I don't know how I slept in my car without them bothering me, but <laughs> it was the odd occasional nights, but I've never had any problems with them, so ...

<Part 17 starts>

FH: What about when you were hanging out in these gay places? The police ...

NC: I've never had any negative sort of feedback from the police. No, never.

<Part 18 starts>

FH: Did any of your friends ever share anything with you ... or did you recommend Stonewall Housing to any of your friends who needed help?

NC: I haven't ... I haven't had the need to recommend it, but I mean there's people who've said they've had problems and I have mentioned that if you have any problems go to Stonewall Housing, 'cause they're just great. <Chuckles> So yeah, I do advertise them! ... No! <Laughs> I do ... but no, no one's really had any problems, 'cause ... now I think it's a lot easier for some people.

FH: Lucky people!

NC: Yes.

<Part 19 starts>

FH: So what kind of people did you come across when you were placed in different accommodation facilities?

NC: The people living in the houses, in the refuge there were some real disturbed, *real* disturbed women living there, who'd been beaten black and blue ... throughout their life, you know? But then I've also met some ... those people have become some of my close friends; well, at least one of them has come really, really close friends 'cause ... you know, just seeing what she went through and ... how long she lived through domestic violence was just ...crazy to me. It was just crazy, 'cause I couldn't stand a day of it, much less my friend living there for like seven years ... in that situation. So ... but yeah ... the people were lovely, the people were lovely where I was. When I moved from the Jewish Women's Aid I moved into a hostel and that hostel unfortunately was ex-offenders, drug problems and stuff, so I just fought my way to try and get out of there because that's not my sort of thing. I've never been ... involved in that at all. Like right in my face, do you know what I mean? Because there was like fights, all sorts of things going on in the place, and I've never lived like that anywhere, so that was a bit hectic for me, but ... I got out of there eventually.

<Part 20>

FH: So that hostel wasn't a queer place, or ... wasn't it specifically for gay people?

NC: No, no, it wasn't specifically for gay people, no. It was just for anybody basically.

FH: So you had a hard time there?

NC: Yeah, obviously I mean they knew I was gay and some of them would obviously be on my case sort of thing, but obviously I'd take no notice of them, I'd just curse them out. But then I got to know the security guards and obviously if there was any problems they would just deal with them, sort of thing. But you know, with those people living there I just thought, 'You know what? You lot are ignorant, so I'm not going to take any notice of you.' So ... I mean yeah, it was a bit stressful, but ... I had a roof over my head at the end of the day.

FH: Did you mention this to Stonewall?

NC: No. At that time ... I think ... I'd sort of cut contact with Stonewall because I'd moved on quite a bit and it had been ... a good few years ago, a year or so of being on the books and things, so ...

FH: So who placed you in that hostel then?

NC: It was Barnet Council.

FH: Oh, it was the council?

NC: It was the council, yeah.

<Part 21 starts>

FH: So you mentioned your friend was a victim of domestic violence – was this domestic violence from her husband, from the family ...

NC: It was from her partner, her boyfriend. Yeah, she'd lived with him for a good few years.

FH: So that was the reason of your bonding?

NC: Yeah ... I mean yeah, I went through it. Obviously not as much as her. I realise that! <Laughs> But yeah, we bonded and we kind of just grew closer in the house and we've just come best of friends.

FH: How was her experience of Stonewall – did she ever mention it?

NC: She didn't actually go through Stonewall. It was ... yeah.

<Part 22 starts>

FH: So if the Jewish Aid facility wasn't specifically for gay people as well ...

NC: No. No, no, no, it was just ... it was predominantly for Jewish women, but ... 'cause there was a space there and they took me on, and ... they were wonderful! <Laughs>

<Part 23 starts>

FH: So Natasha, tell me about the changes that you have witnessed, or you think have occurred, for the LGBT community, both general and in terms of housing and in terms of Stonewall Housing's work.

NC: To be honest I've actually been concentrating on me. I haven't really been looking at all these issues recently. Since I come out of hospital I've just literally been concentrating on me, getting myself healthy. Now I am just starting to go back out on the scene, and I am seeing the community is getting a lot bigger, a lot bigger, and they're coming out a lot younger, which is a great thing – a great thing. But as for the terms of housing and Stonewall, I haven't actually been keeping up on that, which is my bad, but I will be in the future ... very soon! <Chuckles>

FH: So you've totally lost the political ...

NC: Yeah. I kinda didn't even ... that wasn't even my thought. My thought was to get myself healthy, get myself back to reality I think. I had so much on my brain and ... you know, political stuff was the last thing on my brain, on my mind. But you know, things are getting back to normal for me, or have been back to normal, so I will be looking at that again very soon.

<Part 24 starts>

FH: So you've mentioned this episode a couple of times – what actually happened?

NC: To be honest, it happened so quick, I think everything started to stress me out and I just started to get a really, really bad headache and it was going on at the back of my head for like two weeks ... and at this point I'd just started

having some sort of contact with my mum ... and I told her about it and ... I went, I saw her and she noticed things about me, I wasn't going in the bath, I wasn't ... I started talking to myself a bit ... and obviously that is definitely me, 'cause I shower every day, twice a day <laughs> and ... you know, I obviously don't really go around talking to myself, but she just noticed certain things, and she said, 'I need to take you to the hospital.' I went to the hospital and they never let me out. <Laughs> No, I went to the hospital, St. Mary's in Paddington, and I saw the doctors and I explained what was going on, 'cause my body, my whole body, was just giving up ... I had back problems, everything was just going wrong ... and ... everything went a blank for like three months. I don't remember what happened. I went blank, but I woke up in Edgware Hospital three months later and I was like, 'What am I doing here?' And then I had my whole family round me, my mum, my dad <laughs> had flown over from St. Lucia, my brother, everyone was there and I was like, 'What happened?' And then I realised that I was in a psychiatric ward and that just freaked me out. I was like, 'What really happened there?' 'cause ... up to now there's certain things I don't remember. A lot of things I don't remember. But in a way I do think that little episode was good for me. <Laughs> 'cause it's moved me on from a lot, and it's helped my mum open her eyes to a lot, 'cause now me and my mother are closer than ever! And she accepts me now for what I am, she realises there's a lot more to life than worrying about these sort of things and ... now things are great and I still take medication but I've never gone back into the hospital, I've never had any other problems, so you know, I'm just keeping myself ... up there, basically, and keeping going, and being positive all the way! <Chuckles>

<Part 25 starts>

FH: So do you think that episode helped you reconcile with your family?

NC: Oh definitely. Definitely, it definitely did. I think they realised what had gone on, the past few months or so had taken such an impact on me, because I'd been so close to my family and my life revolved around my family, and then to be cut off from them ... was just ... unbelievable to me. You know, I didn't know how to cope with that. But ... I have to say, I mean my nephew, he was the one who kindly got a little contact between me and my mum sort of thing, and that's when ... once that contact happened, but then I got ill ... which I'm glad my mum was around, you know .. 'cause I think without my mum I don't know how ... I would still be in there.

FH: What about your brother? Did he give in?

NC: Yeah, yeah. He's ... I think he ... my brother has his own problems as well, so ... <laughs> I'll leave that subject on my brother.

<Part 26 starts>

FH: Did Stonewall or any other organisation help you at all with your episode? Did you seek any assistance?

NC: No. I didn't. Basically I think my mum took over what was going on with me. She took over, she ... I went back to the Jewish Women's house but she was my carer, my mum. I didn't even think about Stonewall, to be quite honest. I wasn't in the thinking frame of mind, so either the Jewish Women's Aid, my

key worker there, she kind of took over, controlled a lot of things as well as my mum. So ... I didn't really have control of anything.

<Part 27 starts>

FH: So now everything is fine, do you introduce your girlfriends to your mum?

NC: <Laughs> Yeah, I have! And she actually adored one of them! Sabrina, yeah, she adored Sabrina. Sabrina used to go down and my mum used to teach her how to cook and stuff. <Laughs> But yeah, yeah, my mum's accepting it now and she ... it's just so great <chuckles>. I think she knew without her acceptance I couldn't live my life properly, and I think she finally realised that ... that was my thing. Without my mother's acceptance I couldn't ... my life would have been ... up and down all the way, but now she's accepted it and I can ... I don't have to worry about anyone or anybody else, 'cause it's my mother!

FH: So you're [0:58] then?

NC: Yeah, as well as a daddy's girl ... I'm a spoilt little brat! <Laughs> That what I was! I was.

<Part 28 starts>

FH: So you just started going back to the gay scene?

NC: Yeah

FH: So how different do you think it is?

NC: Like I said earlier, I'm just seeing a lot more younger people coming out, which is great. It's such a great thing they're accepting their sexuality at a younger age and they're just living their life and I see people are more open to it nowadays, so much more open to it than ... what they were back when I was coming out, but ... which is quite a few years ago. But ... no, I just think it's wonderful. You can just see the difference on the scene. You really can, with just the youngsters coming out, it's just lovely.

FH: Don't you find anything negative about that?

NC: What?

FH: Anything? About the scene now. Because some of the people ... have problems with the pink pound, the gay people being turned into a niche market ...

NC: Yeah, I suppose ... but ... we can't really complain about that, being a niche market, because at one point we weren't accepted at all and now we're being accepted we can't ... I don't think we can really complain about that.

No, I don't know ... what do you mean about the pink pound? Come again?
<Laughs>

FH: The pink pound – like it's ... like we have places like Candy Bar, that's [1:48] [A]

NC: Yeah, but that's owned by straight people now.

FH: But it's still very few and very expensive, gay places, don't you think?

NC: Yeah, there are ... yeah, there are very few. There are very few. That is a thing. I have noticed there is less things. 'cause I go out more on the black scene, I would say the urban scene, yeah? And ... there's club nights but ... there's bars and stuff to go in, there's not that many places where you can go and just have a nice meal and chill out and have a drink and ... no, you don't really have that much. But ...

<Part 29 starts>

FH: So it is a lot more open, as you mentioned, the gay scene.

NC: Yeah

FH: So on a night out did you have any experience with the police, do you have any perceptions about the police and how they interact with the community, the LGBT community?

NC: Again, I've never had any problems with the police and I've never seen any interaction or anybody have any problems with the police, so ... you know, I've never seen that.

<Part 30 starts>

FH: Tell me about what the most prominent issues are for young people, in your opinion, currently in London? Do you have any young friends with any problems or have you come across anything?

NC: To be quite honest the young friends that I do have, they're living life wonderfully! <Laughs> They have their partners and they're just having a great time and enjoying themselves. There's no issues there! <Laughs> That's the ones I know. I mean they all seem to be fine, have jobs, have been settled, got their places ... you know, I've not ever seen any problems from that side.

<Part 31 starts>

FH: Do you have any hopes for the community, anything you want to see more in the community, or how it's evolving?

<Part 32 starts>

NC: [0:01] the world, just live our lives ... I mean not that we're not living our lives now, but ... live our lives with no prejudice, no negativity, we just leave us alone, let us live our lives and we do what we do and everybody else does what they do. It's not that we're different from anyone else, we just have our own sexuality, but ... no, ideal world everybody would just live happily ever after! <Laughs> With no problems.

FH: Thank you Natasha for giving us your time.

NC: No problem.

<End of recording>