

L22-SG5: LAUREN KANE INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Interviewee: Lauren Kane
Interviewer: Dr Fearghus Roulston
Interview summarisers: Dr Hilary White and Prof Liam Harte
The interview was recorded as a single audio file with no section breaks

L22-SG5: Lauren Kane	Start time: 00:00:00	Finish time: 01:34:03	Duration: 01:34:03	Brief description of content:
00:00–09:59	Born in Swansea in 1991 to a father from Knockbracken near Belfast and a mother from Croydon who met at a Bible college in England. Her father became a pastor in the Elim Pentecostal church and was assigned to different churches in England, which meant she had a peripatetic childhood. The family lived in the Smethwick area of Birmingham from about 1996 until 2002, then moved to Croydon, where they put down roots. Lauren found it upsetting to leave behind her friends and large Victorian manse in Smethwick, but she didn't realise how 'rough' the area they lived in was until she moved to Croydon.			
10:00–19:59	Explains that her mother had various jobs before returning to university and becoming a religious education teacher in 2002. Says her family was very devout and that their Elim church attracted a large and diverse congregation, which was 'like having another family'. The area they lived in had West Indian and Asian communities, so she had a quite multicultural childhood. Admits that she has scant knowledge of the Troubles because her father, who comes from a Presbyterian family, never discussed them with her, even when her grandmother visited from NI. Her own impressions of NI were that it was both whiter and friendlier than England. Recalls a day they 'went to Londonderry', during which her father warned her to hide the Union Jack heart logo on her T-shirt 'because they'll use that heart as target practice', a comment that 'freaked' her out.			
20:00–29:59	Says her father never discussed NI politics with her, but she recalls hearing casual anti-Catholic remarks from other members of his family, which stopped when a cousin married a Catholic. Although her father considered himself British, she was aware of differences between NI and GB. Reveals that when she applied for an Irish passport after the 2016 Brexit referendum, there was some 'pushback' from her father. Says that she enjoyed school, but only realised retrospectively how impoverished some of her classmates were. Discusses being a chorister at Birmingham cathedral and says that travelling across the city from Smethwick to get there was like moving between 'two different lives'.			
30:00–39:59	Attended a small Church of England primary school, then a 'big secular high school' while still living in Birmingham. Reveals that the family's move to Croydon was due to her mother getting her 'dream job' at her former school. Recalls 'crying quite a lot' at the time, but says being closer to her mother's family was beneficial after her father was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis when Lauren was in her mid-teens. Describes how her father's working life changed following his diagnosis. Says the last time she went to NI was for her grandmother's funeral in 2012, and before that she wasn't visiting very often. Her NI aunts now visit them in England because her wheelchair-using father cannot travel to NI.			
40:00–49:59	Explains that her Croydon neighbourhood was more white and middle class than Smethwick. Reveals that she stopped attending church around the age of sixteen, saying she 'just didn't get on with anyone' at her parents' new church. At school, however, she was 'a big member of the Christian Union'. The family moved			

	<p>several times within the Croydon area, once because of her dad's mobility needs, with which the church supported them financially. Explains that their Croydon church is in an old warehouse, with 'six hundred people odd' attending its services, in contrast to the more intimate congregation she knew in Birmingham.</p>
50:00–59:59	<p>Says she didn't enjoy sixth form and had 'no sense of purpose' at the time. After a short-term tutoring job, she studied childhood studies at Bangor University, thinking she might want to be a primary school teacher, but changed her mind during her studies. Ended up as a teaching assistant at the school where she did her sixth form and 'loved it'. Reflects on her complex sense of national identity. As a Welsh-born woman with a NI father and an English mother, she defaults to saying she's British because 'it incorporates all three of them'. Reveals that she doesn't have a 'strong connection' with NI and thinks her mother felt like an outsider in her father's family, as 'the English wife who's taken away my boy'.</p>
01:00:00–01:09:59	<p>Joined the Christian Union briefly at Bangor, but didn't stay. Describes England as 'a much more secular country' than NI, 'even in terms of the language people use'. Being in Wales didn't resolve her identity crisis, but learning Welsh for a semester 'did really help'. After university she moved back in with her parents in Croydon and worked briefly as a teaching assistant before getting a job with the United Reform church, where she still works. Now lives now in central Croydon with her girlfriend. Thinks that her seeing police in NI carrying guns when she was younger has desensitised her to seeing armed police in England.</p>
01:10:00–01:19:59	<p>Even though her family didn't talk much about the Troubles, they 'were always aware that it was quite a tricky time to be living in' NI. Recalls being unnerved by airport security checks when she flew to NI to see her relations, and says she felt 'a bit on edge [...] walking around outside'. Discusses how her biggest link to NI is food, including crisps, soda bread and her grandmother offering a 'wee fry' no matter what time of day it was. Explains that she came out as bisexual to her mother when she was sixteen, but that it took longer to discuss it with her father and extended family. Thinks today's NI is not as homophobic as it used to be.</p>
01:20:00–01:29:59	<p>Discusses how tolerance of sexual difference in NI still lags behind England. Says she was 'vaguely' aware of the Troubles when growing up in England and got most of her information about them from TV programmes. Says watching <i>Derry Girls</i> makes her feel connected to NI, because she understands the jokes better than her English girlfriend. She also discusses episodes with her father over the phone and sees it as 'a good way of finding out more stories from his childhood'. Says NI has been on her 'radar' more often since the Brexit referendum and has noticed English people taking more of an interest also, but says she still feels 'completely unqualified' and doesn't 'really know what's going on'.</p>
01:30:00–01:34:03	<p>Thinks that younger people in GB are 'totally oblivious' to NI history because 'history in schools is terrible' and 'any problems the English have caused get completely glossed over'. With regard to her nationality, she rejects the notion that 'where your parents are from, that's what counts, that's what you are' because it doesn't chime with her complex heritage and family history of serial relocations. Adds that even though her father did not see himself as a migrant, moving from NI to England is 'like a whole different world really', despite the similarities between the two countries.</p>