appendices
appendices 1–8
appendix 1: Charlie I

The following transcript documents a conversation with Charlie that was also the first conversation recorded for this project. Charlie and I met early on a weekend in a movement studio at Victoria University. He was waiting outside it when I arrived. Inside, we assembled a few sticks of furniture by a window and set up the recording equipment. I sat on the floor near the equipment and Charlie sat on a chair. While recording, we often looked away from each other and out through the window to the vista beyond. When we stopped, Charlie disclosed that he’d not been to bed for forty-eight hours. The conversation, like all of those documented for the project, was recorded on minidiscs. The microphone used to record this exchange, and the first exchange with Kate, was barely adequate for the task.

Russell:

I.i.00:00
It's recording now

Charlie:
It's recording

Russell:
Is that all right

Charlie:
It's recording now

Russell:
Yep it's recording

Charlie:
All right so anything I say can be used as evidence

Russell:
Not really it can’t be used as anything

Charlie:
Can I um are you ah do you have the licence to ask factual que factual questions which are

I.i.00:30
in fact not not the truth or which are fictional

Russell:

The questions

Charlie:

Yeah

Russell:
Um I don't know what you mean go on

Charlie:
See the questions that one asks I guess you've said before what’s the point in asking a question when you already know the answer

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

There’s a word for it that it becomes a particular kind of

I.i.01:00
question

Russell:

Yeah a rhetorical question

Charlie:

Yeah yeah so that’s one type of question a rhetorical question

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

Mm yeah I guess yeah I would just be interested to see what sort of questions are answered after this

I.i.01:30
(he laughs)

Russell:

Fine that’s all right

Charlie:

(indicating the minidisc recorder) Is is that enough to

I.i.00:30
checking one two checking

Russell:
No there’s no need to worry too much about that um (I sniff, and check my watch) do you have a watch

**Charlie:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

What time do you make it

**Charlie:**

Um seventeen past

**Russell:**

Mm okay this hasn’t stopped (I sigh) so what I guess what I want to start with

**I.i.02:00**

if I can is that we talked the other day and you mentioned that you then you mentioned that you had you kind of hinted at the fact that you’d probably only been once although then you kind of shifted a bit later on and talked about maybe having gone twice

**I.i.02:30**

so what I’m curious about maybe a bit later on is picking up on that but I guess I want to start with is yes you’ve been to a sauna in Melbourne is that right

**Charlie:**

Yes

**Russell:**

Yeah okay and that that was an experience of well what happened

**Charlie:**

**I.i.03:00**

What happened

**Russell:**

Yeah what happened

**Charlie:**

Um the most the happening that stuck with me the most what do you mean what happened like

**Russell:**

Well le all right well

**Charlie:**

Like before I got there when I left

**Russell:**

Well yeah le maybe let let’s start with before you got there like how did you how did you end up there how was it that you ended up going there which is a different thing from maybe asking why

**I.i.03:30**

how for instance in my case I know the decision to actually go to one happened ten minutes before I did

**Charlie:**

Right

**Russell:**

I had no idea fifteen minutes earlier that that was where I would be absolutely none it was quite swift

**Charlie:**

Hmm yeah as you asked me that question I was looking out the window and I saw a flock of birds just darting off

**I.i.04:00**

and that was the movement like a darting decision like it was um it it wasn’t pre-planned

**Russell:**

Were you in the vicinity at the time when you made that decision or were you then did you have to go on a kind of a long distance to go to wherever you went

**Charlie:**

Um I was actually

**I.i.04:30**

I was actually just coming from home um and ah I think I made a decision to go and check it out

**Russell:**

Right

**Charlie:**

out of curiosity more than anything because ah um yeah just because of I’m interested in sort of the fact that it is a landmark as such and

**I.i.05:00**
my curiosity usually gets the better of me or something

Russell:
So which one did you go to

Charlie:
(in a sing song manner) Volcano

Russell:
Yeah

Charlie:
Yeah um have you been there

Russell:
Yes

Charlie:
Yeah

Russell:
That was the first place I went to

Charlie:
Yeah

Russell:
Um so when you said you were coming from home what time of the day are we talking about were you setting out on the day’s activities or was it

Charlie:
Um no I think I remember it being there at night

Russell:
And were you heading out somewhere in particular and then you changed directions greatly to check it out

Charlie:
I actually don’t remember

Russell:
Right
Just you know

Russell:
You saw
Charlie:
an advertisement I mean because they're usually full page
Russell:
Yeah
Charlie:
and you can't miss them
Russell:
Yeah [unintelligible]
Charlie:
Yeah Volcano usually has a
full page um
Russell:
Do do you remember much about the ads you saw at that time
Charlie:
Yeah I do actually
Russell:
Yeah what was what was
Charlie:
It was sort of like a muscle sort of muscle-bound guy lying down on a table with his hand on his head
Russell:
Right
Charlie:
looking out you know with the with bulges all over his body (we laugh a little) and I think it you know that it portrayed a fairly a very very
Russell:
sort of ah um the rugged er queen that looked sort of the stereotype of the gay community over and over in the Mardi Gras
Charlie:
You said he was lying on a table what do you make of that like the concept of lying on a table
Russell:
Well actually on a hori not on a table excuse me er on a horizontal line
Charlie:
Right but you
Russell:
You imagined it as a
Charlie:
At the bar or something the bar or um
Russell:
A bar but not a floor
Charlie:
Well possibly a floor or even um a bed
Russell:
Yeah
Charlie:
with a plank
Russell:
Yeah
Charlie:
Probably do you rec do you know the image
Russell:
No not really but I'm what I'm working off is is just the um the fact that your the first simple option you went to was table and
then when I thought about it the moment you offered it

I thought oh that’s interesting because like a table isn’t exactly a place you think of people lying on so (Charlie laughs a little) and it makes sense to me but I’m wondering but that’s unimportant what I’m wondering is what sense YOU make of that you know like you don’t need to kind of apologise for having offered that first up but I’m just wondering where what the assoc is it like a massage table or was it like a hospital table or was it like um

Charlie:

Um

Russell:

you know the kind of can you or yeah a kitchen table (this is a question) you know what kind of quality do you think you had in just lurking around when you just simply said table

Charlie:

Mm well quite possibly I would’ve thought a kitchen it was a sort of bench a workbench possibly a workbench which looks multifunctional

Russell:

It would seem to be wouldn’t it (I laugh a little) um

Charlie:

You know yeah sort of

Russell:

The having said that like you you still remember that that kind of aspect of the full page ad at that time because yeah they do change over time their ads

Charlie:

Um I’m wondering then if did you find that a particularly inviting image an attractive image or a one that you were indifferent to or one that you actually found a bit off-putting in some way regardless of what you thought about advertising and how it works like intellectually I’m thinking more about your your you know simple meanings at the level of impulse

Russell:

I think I just it was out of curiosity and the fact that it was centrally located which was sort of I think what made it easy because I remember planning that I had to get home before midnight (he laughs a little)

Russell:

Because of public transport

Charlie:

I said I yeah I sort of said I was going to go for an hour or something just um I wanted to socialise and I didn’t want to go to a nightclub I wanted to go somewhere quiet where I could actually reflect because I

Russell:

and I thought well I’m I’m sure if I sort of send off the right energies I can just go there and no one will bother me and sure enough you know I went home and there was no fuss with anyone except for one you know monster (I laugh a little) that’s right this hideous queen who was really quite gorgeous and but really really muscley and he was like following me around everywhere um and I just got the feeling um

Russell:

he was a real local and he just zoomed in on the fact that he’d never seen me there before (he laughs a little) and ah and so there was that real sort of ah predator sort of aspect and

Russell:

Fresh meat

Charlie:
Yeah and I remember having sort of I just thought no I don’t want to stay here very long at all like I don’t want people looking at me um if I’m feeling this way if I’m feeling this vulnerable it’s not enjoyable [untelligible]

Russell:

I.i.12:30
You said I want to pick you up again on something you said you thought he was a local do you just want to sort of unpack that a bit for me

Charlie:

Well I mean I mean the fact that anyone with a body like that I assume immediately that they’d have to spend half the day every day in the gym pretty much like from stories I’ve heard about prostitutes who have really amazing bodies you know that’s where they spend

I.i.13:00
their mornings is at the gym you know for three or four hours because it becomes part of their lifestyle

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

The gym and um I mean he did look a bit like a Sydney-sider funnily enough because I’d spent some time in Sydney

Russell:

That kind of Oxford Street buffed and

Charlie:

Very much so very much so

Russell:

fitting constructing one’s body to fit into a scene

Charlie:

Mm very angular very pretty really pretty

I.i.13:30
and really shaved like just sort of Vaseline glossy and sort of (he laughs a little) yeah

Russell:

But is that when you say you thought he was a local member do do you mean that that was well I can’t imagine that that would be for instance an idea of what was typical of people at Volcano in the way that it would be typical of people in Oxford Street so what

I.i.14:00
like are we talking about um

Charlie:

I don’t know if I said local [untelligible]

Russell:

Yeah you did I mean I was

Charlie:

A reg yeah

Charlie & Russell:

a regular

Charlie:

I think I said regular

Russell:

Yeah but it

Charlie:

which is quite different from local

Russell:

Well you actually well we can check (we laugh a little) but um I heard local

Charlie:

Right

Russell:

I.i.14:30
And and I expected regular but I heard local

Charlie:

Right so he’s a local

Russell:

So but maybe and because local of course is kind of one of those words I’m kind of curious about like for instance did you get the sense that he knew his way around the place in a way that you didn’t
Charlie:

Oh obviously yeah

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

I mean

Russell:

Now what was obvious about that how did how could you tell that he knew more about the place than you did

Charlie:

Oh I I probably um well my judgement of course um but I think just the way in which I think it was the way he strutted around the place um he didn’t have well it’s a bit of a contradiction on one hand he he didn’t on one hand he um seemed disorientated to me because he was always sort of going from one place to another

Russell:

Following you

Charlie:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

And I can only see that as disorientating for him um

Russell:

Because he had to kind of pick up on following

Charlie:

Yeah and there’s that game they play you know in other ways at different sorts of gay venues um and but on the other hand um

Russell:

he seemed like he sort of knew exactly what he was doing but he was also disorientated at the same time

Russell:

About how long did he spend following you do you was this like one continuous event or did is it something that happened intermittently over a period of time

Charlie:

There was quite strong eye contact like he sort of it was like (he laughs a little) you know eyes wide open kind of trying to sort of rub his brown eyes all over my body and um it was really forward you know I just wasn’t interested clearly and at that time I sort of I didn’t even have the curiosity to go a step further to talk to him

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

because I thought that my curiosity ceased when I actually got there and the fact that I’d sort of given in as Sartre puts it to my bad faith as I call it to go into Volcano in the first place I immediately closed all doors of communication with everyone because I thought well I’ve come this far and that’s enough I don’t want to get myself any deeper into this um at the time so I sort of it’s it’s quite an insight to actually realise this that and then yeah so when I was in there I sort of maintained I guess probably quite a sense of rigidity now that I look back at it um yeah I

Russell:

You talked about feeling vulnerable

Charlie:

Mm yeah I believe that I can or not that I can but subconsciously that yeah that we give out messages

Russell:

I.i.15:00

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I.i.15:30

Following you

Charlie:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

And I can only see that as disorientating for him um

Russell:

Because he had to kind of pick up on following

Charlie:

Yeah and there’s that game they play you know in other ways at different sorts of gay venues um and but on the other hand um

I.i.16:00

I.i.16:30

rub his brown eyes all over my body and um it was really forward you know I just wasn’t interested clearly and at that time I sort of I didn’t even have the curiosity to go a step further to talk to him

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

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Russell:

You talked about feeling vulnerable

Charlie:

Mm yeah I believe that I can or not that I can but subconsciously that yeah that we give out messages
And but you talked about this man strutting around did you get a sense that he was unshielded or invulnerable or

Charlie:

He um I don’t want to say I felt sorry for him l.i.18:00
um (I laugh a little) but he looked a lone [alone?] quite a lone man that was the thing I noticed um he didn’t seem to really be enjoying himself but I could see that that was sort of ah a place where he had sort of come to frequent

l.i.18:30
ah on a regular basis and so it seemed that um yeah that he because of the frequency um that's something I could tell that he had was that experience of being there although mind you this is all information which I've assumed ah yeah

Russell:

(I check my watch) My watch l.i.19:00
HAS stopped

Charlie:

Right

Russell:

I'm going to [unintelligible] thanks and I want to just check how this is coming up (I check the minidisc recorder) yep that sounds all right

Charlie:

So do you remember your first time (he hesitates) there

Russell:

Yeah I do but can I ask you a couple of more questions about yours (we laugh) is there something you want to ask of me that you think l.i.19:30
will open up something to do with your time at the moment

Charlie:

Um oh no I was just curious

Russell:

Oh look I'll gladly go into it but I've got I'm dying to ask you about something which
It's

**Russell:**
I mean I think I know what you're talking about

**Charlie:**
It's quite simple actually yeah

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Charlie:**
He would I would say okay

_l.i.20:30_

I'm going there in that spa and sure enough he was following

**Russell:**
Right

**Charlie:**
Yeah I could see that because sometimes you wind around

**Russell:**
Yes

**Charlie:**
It's not straight when you're walking straight you don't see behind you

**Russell:**
Right

**Charlie:**
When you're walking in circles you can eventually see out of your periphery

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Charlie:**
in a circular ah line and you know at Volcano you can move around quite circularly and that's sort of how they're designed anyway to be quite circular

_l.i.21:00_

paths and um so you know I guess once I seated myself inside of let's just say a spa I looked up and there there he was quite sort of like _he laughs a little_ unapologetic of being so close and it was you know very clear that he wanted to make eye contact and so you know I didn't completely ignore

_l.i.21:30_

the fella I didn't completely ignore his ah inclinations to obviously I don't know what it was I mean he's probably for all I know just sort of you know playing with himself and his own charm you know but I just

**Russell:**
That it was all in the hunt in some way

**Charlie:**
Yeah it was all in a game for him and so you know I gave him a little bit of I guess pleasure by reciprocating by looking and actually noticing

_l.i.22:00_

and that's where the stare thing was like and it was quite sort of affronting to have someone sort of like [unintelligible] at you with this [his?] body

**Russell:**
Like as you're describing it you keep leaning back in a really vigorous way you've done that about three times now did you do that

**Charlie:**
Possibly

**Russell:**
Possibly

**Charlie:**
Possibly inside

**Russell:**
Possibly inside

**Charlie:**
Just like on the inside

**Russell:**
But but possibly on the outside holding an upright position or you know
Yeah

**I.i.22:30**
holding an upright position tight in the buttocks probably sort of like er er get me out of here

**Russell:**
A bracing sort of

**Charlie:**
Quick get me out of here sort of thing ah I can’t handle this right now

**Russell:**
Do you think do you imagine I mean the night you went there did the place um seem sparsely populated or busy to you or you know did you was it possible to spend

**I.i.23:00**
extended periods somewhere without anyone seeming to be around or

**Charlie:**
To be quite honest I wasn’t that courageous I wasn’t even aware but someone told me just recently about the other um sort of things that they offer at Volcano *(I laugh a little)* I just thought in my naive first visit that it was just um the one room *(he laughs a little)*

**Russell:**
So what you you went in cos you go in at street level up the stairs to reception

**Charlie:**
Yeah

**I.i.23:30**
yeah

**Russell:**
Then through the door into the locker area

**Charlie:**
Yeah yeah

**Russell:**
where the showers are

**Charlie:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
And then there’s that level that that one level and then there’s also downstairs

**I.i.24:00**

**Charlie:**
The spa and

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Charlie:**
And yeah I went downstairs that’s where I spent the time

**Russell:**
Right so can we can we just start off you went downstairs well let’s start off you went upstairs to reception you went through the reception door and there were the lockers

**I.i.24:30**
what else do you remember of that level

**Charlie:**
I remember the showers near the lockers actually

**Russell:**
So do I

**Charlie:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
I remember I ope the door opened for me and the first thing was was this image of because they’re those wide plastic strips instead of that form sort of a shower curtain transparent plastic strips and there was a man in the showers a a man who was overweight er an overweight man with really long hair

**I.i.25:00**
this kind of odd image in the showers but there was something about the lighting being directly from above so his *(Charlie laughs a little)* he was just this kind of vague form behind the showers this top-lit vague form so his face was in shadow and I remember and just hearing the sound of the water and I remember that quite strong and thinking oh this place is interesting [unintelligible] for some reason
it was the combination of the water um and the fact that there was a person who I wasn't in any way attracted to but these lockers and gear just beyond them [unintelligible] it was really that for me was really striking do you remember anything else from that level did or did you go from there straight downstairs did you explore around on that level

Charlie:

I.i.25:30
I think I remember seeing a gym or a room that offered massage

Russell:

Yeah there is a fully equipped gym

Charlie:

Yeah I remember taking some notice of that um I remember taking some notice of that and I remember smokers

Russell:

Yes

Charlie:

in that area I remember the smokers and just the sort of narrowness

I.i.26:00
of the space to actually get changed in next to someone else on the opposite side of the locker (I laugh a little) and I remember going if I open my locker and they open their locker and we both try and get unchanged it's just you know we're bound to collide in this narrow space and um yeah I just found that really affronting as well I thought gosh you know

I.i.26:30
first I go up this narrow stairs and through this sort of bzzzzzz electronic gate (I laugh a little) and I thought god you know I just want to come in here and relax and be myself you know I don't want it was all these it was like you know barricade of things to get through just to sort of be there I just thought what's going on here it's quite intense

I.i.27:00
but at the same time it's really subtle you know the experience like I felt really quite had quite a lot of fear [unintelligible]

Russell:

Fear that you didn't have before you arrived fear that was produced by arriving

Charlie:

No my I was aware that I had fear going there but I just was so damned tempted just not let that fear take over and I said I've just got to go through

I.i.27:30
got to go in you know it was now or never and um so you know I put that fear behind me as one does when one believes in something enough um so I believed that you know that night I had to go there

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

Um and um sorry I think I've lost the track of

Russell:

The fear

Charlie:

Oh that's right oh so when I got there it was um just the atmosphere

I.i.28:00
it was sort of dungie dungeon and lurky and ah gloomy sort of darkish

Russell:

What contributes to that

Charlie:

I don't know just sort of odours and cluggy carpet and um just sort of um

Russell:

Sorry I don't know the word cluggy

Charlie:

Sticky

Russell:

Sticky yeah

Charlie:

Sort of carpets that haven't been cleaned

I.i.28:30
like not fresh carpet there's carpet that no one it's like an entrance that no one cares
about that’s what it was like you know the fact that it was on a main street um surprised me because to me when I opened the door um I wouldn’t say immediately but it became apparent that I was quite dislocated from where I’d gone into like one minute I was in

you know

Russell:

a main street

Charlie:

the commercial mecca of a main street and then within sort of you know a couple of blocks away I felt that I was in a back back back back street tunnel underground sort of um game (he laughs a little)

Russell:

It I mean I agree that for me there’s a strong sense that the space of the street rapidly alters in a way that

I.i.29:30

I don’t experience if I say go into Myers or a big department store something in a funny way maybe that’s because I’m used to it but there’s something about the unexpected change and even once I’d got used to that I still am aware of it as a really big change so you’re exploring around that upper level and then you went downstairs and

I.i.30:00

you remember the smokers where were the smokers in the gym in the lockers

Charlie:

No in that locker area

Russell:

In the lockers

Charlie:

There’s actually it’s sort of like rectangular in shape and from it you can see another corridor um but you sort of get this sense that you’re in a little mousetrap um

Russell:

(I laugh a little) Yeah

Charlie:

But it’s not as exciting as that you know it’s like you know um

Russell:

I.i.30:30

So what made you choose to go downstairs rather than along that other corridor you could see

Charlie:

Well I went there for the purpose of um getting my money’s worth and I wanted that’s right I actually went there um to just sort of fix my body up and to have a spa and a sauna and I thought well for ten dollars you know I could get more than just (we laugh) I could get more than just a spa

I.i.31:00

and a sauna hey you know and that was the impetus actually

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

Yeah um

Russell:

Um I’ve actually been for just a sauna and a spa

Charlie:

Yeah I thought why not you know but when I got there and I saw the size of it I just went oh this is hideous I was imagining the sauna no which is the one that’s got wood and eucalyptus (this is a question)

Russell:

The wooden one is the sauna

Charlie:

Yeah I was expecting a really large sauna instead I got there and it was like

I.i.31:30

you know barely fit you know people in there I don’t know how many it fits but it didn’t I was just imagining it to be a bit more spacious than what it was like I thought the facilities there were um yeah just not really compatible with what I imagined them to be

Russell:
What else do you remember

I.i.32:00
about there being downstairs you talked about circular paths and the spa and the sauna I remember my first visit for instance I actually didn’t find the steam room (I laugh a little) for two and a bit hours and it was only when someone kind of went into it that I realised oh that’s the steam room and suddenly found myself in there did you find the steam room easily enough

Charlie:
No no I.i.32:30
I ah
Russell:
Did you find it at all
Charlie:
I eventually did yeah and um but I remember very clearly I remember the design like I could draw it
Russell:
Oh yeah
Charlie:
I could draw the design and the layout of it because that’s something I remember
Russell:
Could you could you do that for me you don’t have to do it now but I’d be interested if you could draw that for me
Charlie:
I just remember walking in
Russell:
Yeah
Charlie:
And it’s interesting because actually you walk down the stairs and you’re faced with a wall
I.i.33:00
so it’s one of those staircases where you actually have to turn a hundred and eighty degrees
Russell:
Yeah well
Charlie:
in order to um be in another room
Russell:
Yeah
Charlie:
Um
Russell:
This is into the whole downstairs area
Charlie:
Yeah
Russell:
Not just into the steam room
Charlie:
No the downstairs area
Russell:
Yeah
Charlie:
In the corner there’s the spa and just a fake path I think
Russell:
Fake paths yeah
Charlie:
A fake path um and then on this side there are benches where people just sit
I.i.33:30
and chat
Russell:
Yeah yeah
Charlie:
And then there’s that circular thing with all those cubicles
Russell:
appendix I: Charlie I

The circular shaped

Charlie:

Horseshoe shape kind of

Russell:

pathway

Charlie:

Pathway

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

And inside of that that's the steam room and the sauna sort of comes out like a [unintelligible]

Russell:

Did you find the dark area

Charlie:

Yes yes

Russell:

Which dark area did you find (I laugh a little)

Charlie:

Oh I found a dark area (he laughs a little) where I I was groped

And I found it absolutely disconcerting I didn’t want to go in and I was just sort of standing on the edge because I was so curious and ah yeah I remember sort of someone coming up and saying something quite ugly just you know really sort of um cheap sort of

Russell:

Before you went in or

Charlie:

No as I was in there

Russell:

As you were in the dark

Charlie:

Yeah impulsive sort of comments about you know um genitals you know sort of

Russell:

I.i.34:30

Can can I ask when you um left the dark area did you leave by the pathway you’d gone in by

Charlie:

Um yeah I don’t I don’t think I actually ventured all the way through

Russell:

Right

Charlie:

I think I remember just putting my sort of body in

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

And then taking my body out

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

A bit like that I don’t think from memory I don’t think

I.i.35:00

I actually went through it I just decided that it was best to sort of leave it

Russell:

Did you find it completely dark or were you able to kind of discern things

Charlie:

I just found it I found it inaccessible to my imagination to actually walk through there

Russell:

Right

Charlie:
Absolutely like yeah I just I just found it really inaccessible and I couldn’t deal with walking through

Russell:

How long do you think you were in there

I.i.35:30

how many metres in do you think how many paces in do

Charlie:

I I made sure that I was in the light even if it was a dim light

Russell:

Right

Charlie:

Because the light sort of um you know it’s got the doorway and it’s sort of it travels it’s like a sound wave you know when you draw an image of a sound wave

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

and it’s like a cone so the light sort of you know it’s quite concentrated at the doorway

Russell:

I.i.36:00

Yeah

Charlie:

And then it sort of cones out and starts sort of fading and so people’s sort of faces become more and more blurred as they walk in and I remember consciously making the decision to stand where I could see whoever’s face was going to be standing next to me because I had to (he laughs a little) sort of prepare myself in case I thought once I’m in here you know I can’t exactly sort of ah

I.i.36:30

well things like defence how will I defend myself so my vulnerabilities went up and er I really thought I shouldn’t like a lot of shame came over in that particular space because I thought walking in here’s asking for it you know you you know it’s just it just is you know um and um at the time I just thought well um it’s something that I couldn’t go through because I tried to imagine what would be going on

I.i.37:00

in there for people and I thought no no how can that at the time um you know how can I I just thought no I don’t want to go in at all because I saw the people walking around and thought uh uh it could be that man that you talked about with the long grey hair overweight in there

Russell:

I didn’t say he had long grey hair just long hair (I laugh a little)

Charlie:

Oh I heard I pictured grey

Russell:

It’ll be great typing this out to verify (we laugh a little)

I.i.37:30

whether we said or didn’t say what’s

Charlie:

So um yeah so I just walked in do you know what I’m talking about when you can still see people’s faces in the light

Russell:

Yes I do yeah this I I don’t remember I actually can’t remember from that first visit whether or not I went through the dark area downstairs I I think I must have but I think I was also

I.i.38:00

intimidated in that way but I I have to tell you on a later visit I found a place in the dark area that really excited me and what it was there’s a girder a gir like a structural girder and it’s it protrudes near a corner of the way the dark area’s constructed as a dark area and so what it creates is a tiny little cubby hole between there’s the girder which is cold

I.i.38:30

because it’s metal on one s on my right the wall on my back and then the wall on my left and I can just snugly squeeze in there and stand in there and people who are kind of feeling their way around the wall tend to touch the girder and then move bypass the hole where I am either move straight across to the wall which adjoins my left shoulder and I remember one wonderful visit once where I stood there for almost an hour (Charlie laughs a little)
and it was the most wonderful thing. No one found me and I my eyes adjusted a great deal and I could discern clearly forms and movement of people in and out. I couldn’t recognise too many people but for one period there was a man who stood in front of me for almost ten minutes. Literally within. Um it was amazing.

He couldn’t feel my breath. You know I mean I had to really be careful breathing. I think I even averted my head to make sure my nostril breath didn’t give away that I was there.

When you said ‘I’m quite interested when you said it excited you what actually happened’

I watched.

Yeah but what was the sensation of the excitement?

Oh the excitement was oh this sense of um an unknown place. I was I was actually somewhere. No one else knew about and I suppose a sense of empowerment. I mean part of one of the things that I guess has been going though what you’ve talked about is um what I would describe as experiences of power of power at play in different ways and one of the things I find really interesting is the ways in which I can know myself.

As a person who is empowered or as disempowered and operate in relationship to that at those places um it was interesting Foucault called the bathhouses of North America laboratories of sex but he was completely obsessed with knowledge space and power like that they were central concerns of his.

I’m not at all surprised that he became then completely preoccupied not completely but he became preoccupied with bathhouses as places that he wanted to visit um because it seems to me that those things come into play a lot and I felt like I felt like I knew things that was were happening that I had this kind of slightly privileged place I had choices available to me that other people didn’t have.

Like could I touch that man who was just he would have I mean especially after several minutes of standing there him for him the image of being in the corner and he himself was watching people.

Charlie:

Did you recognise so you recognised that that’s what he was doing.

Russell:

He was doing as far as I could tell what I was doing I mean I imagined that’s what he was doing he was watching other people from a corner that people would bypass because the pathway in there kind of curved around that and but I was watching him watching and that I found particularly.

Charlie:

So when you found when you found that space I’m still interested um I’m not sort of particularly satisfied in a way (he laughs a little) oh no not that that’s just the this question of the sensation of having sort of found that environment.

Like you talked about excitement.

Russell:

Well

Charlie:

But you didn’t actually talk about was there a new place in your body that you felt I guess that’s what I’m interested in knowing.

Russell:

Well

Charlie:

Whether that that’s sort of what kind of felt too.

Russell:

I felt like most of my body was switched on.
Russell: Because there was a sense of possibilities opening so there was a sense of although I was snugly compactly you know framed by a structure at the same time I didn’t feel cramped I just felt framed

Charlie:

I.i.43:00
Yeah but you could still feel what I’m asking

Russell:
I felt like I could do almost anything at any minute

Charlie:

I.i.43:30
So do you remember whether your body was tense like on a scale of one to ten say ten is just like everything is gripped yeah all your muscles are gripped and number one is sort of like practically lethargic when you’re really tired and you haven’t slept would you say on a one to ten you were feeling something you can remember of a particular body state cos it’s just really

Russell:
A quality of readiness so it wasn’t a sense of everything being locked and tense

Charlie:

Right

Russell:

I.i.44:00
It was more a sense of um things weren’t slack my muscles weren’t slack but I was very upright and very alert my skin was

I.i.44:00
I remember a a quality of registering even with the fact that you know because I’m in a towel you know my my shoulders and back are exposed to these surfaces that are framing like a cold girder which of course as after a few minutes doesn’t feel as cold because my I start warming it the bit where I’m touching it you know um and then this textured wall like um

I.i.44:30
like a fabric over the wall I think they’re just like office partitions or something built out of I don’t know well that’s my memory it might even just be painted plywood (Charlie laughs a little) but my memory is of something like a texture

Russell:

That you never even know well unless you go down

Russell:
What [unintelligible] well I could feel it but I felt my memory of the moment is like of a cloth a fabric that um yeah a sense of alertness and

I.i.45:00
readiness that I had many possible projects and that was the thing that sense of choice rather than of routine and of being locked into something you mentioned the mousetrap before there was a Sydney sauna I saw an ad for it or it mightn’t it might not have been a sauna it might have been just a sex venue of some sort but it had an image of one of those mice in one of those revolving kind of drums in a cage

Charlie:

Right yeah

Russell:

and it said

I.i.45:30
this isn’t our place (I laugh a little) now it was something like that underneath you know or is this what you usually experience and it was just this image of a mouse on one of those kind of you know revolving drums not going anywhere

Charlie:

Strange

Russell:

Oh I looked at it and I thought mm I felt I knew what they were trying to um communicate and I also wondered well then
how have they got over that as well because you talked about the circular paths

I.i.46:00
I mean ultimately the building has one place to go in and you have to leave the same way you’ve come in so at that very level it has to be circular it’s not like you have a choice of entrances and exits

Charlie:

Mm that’s the interesting thing about these rooms

Russell:

Yeah or museums and art galleries tend to be similar not always but similar they tend to be you have to go in and come out the same way

Charlie:

I.i.46:30
(a silence, then) Ah yeah and I remember there also being a er someone on the piano I remember [unintelligible] going to the bar

Russell:

Right

Charlie:

really really self-consciously

Russell:

The downstairs bar

Charlie:

Um is there more than one bar

Russell:

Ah there are two (I laugh a little)

Charlie:

See this is where my this is where my curiosity I just didn’t

Russell:

But they tend to be one’s closed when the other’s open

Charlie:

Right this is near the gym

Russell:

Right okay there is a right there is now a downstairs area which has opened up relatively recently so it might have been since you were there

Charlie:

Because I was watching I was watching the piano player and watching the audience so I was actually kind of in a sense what’s classically known as backstage

I.i.47:30

Russell:

Right

Charlie:

But I wasn’t backstage

Russell:

You were offstage

Charlie:

I was offstage and I think it was a drag queen or transvestite or whatever um

Russell:

There’s someone there’s someone who sings there called Minnie Mouse

Charlie:

An entertainer I think that might be her

Russell:

Yeah and I don’t know

Charlie:

And I just remember thinking that that was off the wall (he laughs a little) completely off the wall

Russell:

Because all these men were sitting around in towels

Charlie:

Yeah and she sort of

I.i.48:00
it was a surprise element you know

Russell:

The first the first time ever I had I have any I tried to ask myself what was the first time I ever heard of the existence of such places as gay saunas and I recall when um The Divine Miss M was released Bette Midler’s first big album and it was either on the sleeve notes or in some accompanying publicity there was mention of how she used to sing

for men at the Cont she used to sing for gay men at the Continental Baths and I had this bizarre image of a woman in a tiled a huge tiled bathroom like at like in the film of the Marat Sade with all this plumbing everywhere singing with a pian a piano and men sitting around in towels the idea that a bathhouse at that stage was a place that wasn’t just to do with

wet areas um hadn’t even I I couldn’t imagine that but I’ve since been in correspondence ah via email with a bookseller in New York who sold me a book in New York State he lives not in New York City but he was part of that scene in the seventies although he told me he never went ah Barry Manilow was her accompanist it turns out so that was his career launch as well but he hasn’t made as much of a big deal about it (Charlie laughs)

and they used to have what they call black towel nights when when it was kind of very up-market and the men would be issued with black towels and as a sign of approval they would take their towels out towels off and throw them at her so this was this became a kind of a instead of bouquets they would take their towels off and throw them at her she’d be littered with all these wet black towels that these men

Charlie:

Right

Russell:

It was a really strange image but they also during that period I’ve since found out

used to invite um regular people from the street in so it became a place that ah heterosexual couples would go to as a late night kind of cabaret and they would arrive in a separate entrance and they’d be sitting around with the men in towels but they’d be all dressed up

Charlie:

Wow that’s I mean that can only happen in America well

Russell:

There have been real women singing at Volcano I don’t know I mean when I say real women women where women female’s what’s on their birth certificate you know for all I know Minnie Mouse is a real woman when you can we just talk about her for a moment well let’s assume it’s Minnie Mouse but basically you said you saw a

did you say you saw a woman singing or a drag queen or a transvestite I forgot what can you go back what was it that you saw

Charlie:

I think I saw someone who was um obviously not um didn’t look vulgar in the sense that some of the drag queens do like they’re a parody of a woman you know larger than life breasts

and you know larger than life extreme extreme face make-up and hair she was a bit more um

Russell:

Do you assume that this woman was in fact a man or

Charlie:

Um no I was totally I think I was I think I just let it rest and I just said I was convinced that it was a woman

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

Yeah and I just didn’t want to sort of dwell on that for very long because I just don’t find it interesting I didn’t really care
appendix 1: Charlie I

Can I want I want to kind of follow that up though with some other things like did you (I think a moment)

I.i.52:30 did you have an experience or what were your experiences of gender there like I mean

Charlie:

[unintelligible]

Russell:

Well I mean for instance you talked about this man who was following you around and you talked about seeing this woman singing so there's distinctions people are being described in terms of gender so

I.i.53:00 so I guess what I'm interested in and then you weren't so sure whether she was a woman or whether she was some unvulgar drag queen or a transsexual or or whatever but for instance did you have an increased or decreased awareness of your gender while you

I.i.53:30 were there or did you feel your gender was being challenged in some way or shifted

Charlie:

That's interesting (a silence) I think so long as I remained anonymous that didn't bother me yeah I think it's in the relationship with other people

I.i.54:00 where and on that particular night I talked to a person who's actually a friend of Jimmy's

Russell:

Right

Charlie:

From you know uni he went to he went to he studied at uni with Jimmy

Russell:

Right

Charlie:

And that was really quite significant meeting him in there because um I'd sort of known his history in a way about his sort of coming out which I don't think is that coy to extract

I.i.54:30

but I did speak to him and he was there with two other people and and he's really jolly um like absolutely jolly you know one of these people that for some reason everything he says or has to say it's always in this sort of effervescent laughter whatever or not I actually feel that he's responding to me is another story like

I.i.55:00 sometimes that's where the sort of funny bit com sense of parody comes in it's like and then I felt like I was at a cricket match or something when I was talking with him it was yeah I sort of um felt ah quite ah I didn't feel like I'd fit in or belonged talking to him

I.i.55:30 in that place like I felt quite ashamed I felt ashamed of meeting him at the time I thought why couldn't I have bumped into him elsewhere when I had clothes on I didn't you know I didn't particularly find wearing a towel you know ah exciting or at that on that particular occasion you know I think people we all go through

I.i.56:00 phases when you know at some points we're really sort of feeling great on the inside and and we don't really care that much but other times we sort of feel different at different times well at least I know I am um and yeah so I guess the ah

Russell:

Where were you when you were talking with him

Charlie:

On those benchy things

Russell:

Why am I not surprised to hear that (I laugh a little)

I.i.56:30 it's just it's like that's exactly I realised when I just before I asked you that question that I'd been imagining you sitting on those benches talking with him and then I suddenly realised hang on why am I imagining this you know I'm why am I imagining that as the place where because they're like park benches the way they're made aren't they

Charlie:

Yeah yeah

Russell:
Well one of them is

Charlie:

Because there’s this sort of space in between them and this pillar I think because I remember sort of [unintelligible] I remember having to sort of contort my body a bit to actually see his friend next to him

Russell:

Oh yeah

Charlie:

So they were all along that wall a lot of benches as you were saying park benches

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

And I remember um that eye contact to me seemed really necessary in that in that venue like the fact that I’d made contact with someone that I felt familiar with it became really important to um address the situation of eye contact even more so and that could partly be due to the fact of um security that I’d sort of suddenly I felt human or you know I was made to feel that I knew someone in there suddenly it it felt better being there I remember that I remember feeling relieved actually relieved to sort of find someone or to have met someone in there that I could have a conversation with and who could give me a sense of my history or

Russell:

Did you feel like your history had gone

Charlie:

Well ah yeah I mean this is actually quite a long this is this is actually my life story that ever since I left home at twenty and decided to go in search of this sexuality I felt like I’ve erased ah a lot of things and quite unconsciously I think a friend of mine

I.i.58:30

who’s a writer or an acquaintance really um he once I’m going off the point a bit

Russell:

No that’s all right

Charlie:

But he once made the comment that so many young gay men at a very young age just you know fly the banners around and say I’m gay I’m gay I’m gay but don’t actually realise the psychological implications of what they’re setting in motion and ah that point’s really stuck with me I’m still ah still find it really fascinating sentence or a fascinating idea insight maybe [unintelligible] more appropriate word that yeah it was like you know I went overseas and to run in order to run away from something which was my family and the construction of my identity as a ah straight European male um so I ran away in the sense of deconstructing my identity and in order to do that I had to you know to a certain degree ignore the past I thought anyway it was appropriate for me um somehow I mean that obviously has a lot of deeper implications which you know I’m sure we’ll unravel as time goes on um as I begin to make more sense of my actions of the last sort of eight years you know I mean it’s always constant you know like

I.i.60:00

Russell:

Do you feel resistant to being identified like when you sa when you for instance quoted this person who was the writer you said ah he he referred to young gay males so is that um

I.i.60:30

a name an identity that you feel that you can take on or is that one that you’re happy to take on for convenience’s sake but it’s it’s not it’s not you really

Charlie:

Um young well thank you well I mean it’s certainly ah I think convenience has a big factor in involved in it like I just you know choose I just think that it’s it’s fine you know I’ve never really caught been caught up in a scene of any sort ah well possibly scene but

I.i.61:00
not the gay scene not in any place not in any city I’ve lived ever um so it’s sort of a thing that’s

I step into and I step out of um yeah so being identified yeah I think I sort of quite yeah I quite accept that I quite accept that

Russell:

Did you feel that at Volcano when you talked about an erasing of your history did you feel on the other hand there was also a writing in of your identity

for instance the man who followed you around

Charlie:

No I just freaked out and I said I don’t belong in here with these people (we laugh)
I was quite I was just um I wasn’t yielding at all at all to that environment I don’t think um and then when I did see someone good looking or young or sort of someone who looked normal

and I mean that in what I think I mean by that is something that’s quite subtle um which I’ve realised not in not in saunas but in other gay venues um just just the infrequency of a happy smiling face in one of these places but a happy smiling face which doesn’t signify tension or nervousness or covering up of um something there but a genuine sort of (he laughs a little)

you know I’m happy to be here this is where I want to be tonight

Russell:

Ah yeah

Charlie:

And that’s I think what that’s I think what really um I observed um I thought come on guys you know if this is meant to be sort of a gathering you know this sort of private gathering let’s all enjoy ourselves then and then I thought um you know my expectation was that it was going to be more social but when I got there I just felt that

um that I was wrong that

Russell:

I’ve I’ve seen some or witnessed some really social things there I remember I remember um

Charlie:

Well it depends how whether you call talking as social (he laughs a little)

Russell:

Or what kind of social yeah well if you’re talking about just something that seems light and and communicative in a very simple and direct way and not a complicated way I remember one

Saturday afternoon I was there and I was sitting in the sauna which as you’ve said is not well it’s a place that can seat um a limited number of people and so I was sitting up on a high bench in the sauna and there were a series of four men there all of whom I would assume would have been over sixty and they were chatting away about um their memories

of other kinds of gyms and saunas they’d possibly been places where there’d been clandestine sexual activity or cruising or something but in but in what they called the old days I guess but they told this fantastically funny story about one place that had a steam room where jockeys used to go to kind of you know sweat it out and about this famous jockey or famous at that place anyway I don’t know whether he ever rode a winner

he used to be in the steam room eating cream buns because he was so desperately hungry and still needed to lose weight and this bizarre and they were just laughing about this because one or two of them had heard about it and the other one hadn’t and this happy it was like this was their Saturday afternoon pension club

Charlie:

Yeah

Russell:

Like this is where they came and I didn’t get the sense that they all really knew each other you know um they all just seemed really happy to be just sitting around

chatting and I was really happy to be perched up kind of a bit above them and they they knew I was there
Charlie:
They were entertaining

Russell:
Yeah and but they just ignored me they weren’t doing it for my benefit as far as I could tell but they they were just completely happy and I kind of basked in that

Charlie:
That’s interesting do you think that had how much do you I mean I’ve only been there

Russell:
at night to what extent do you think the relationships that occur in there during the day and relationships that you hear let’s say or see or witness to what extent do you think they are affected by whether it’s a Saturday afternoon or indeed you know a Tuesday night

Russell:
Oh my my experience is it becomes a radically different place from

Charlie:
So it does

Russell:
Depending on time to time yeah I’ve I’ve found it to be quite radically different

Charlie:
That’s quite interesting that that

Russell:
For instance a lot of people who are older or frailer it just doesn’t make sense for them to be there at five o’clock in the morning or or at you know two a.m. on a Saturday or something whereas a Saturday afternoon it’s it’s this completely easy and effortless place I also get

Russell:
the sense that there are people who may have stories they tell other people about where they’re going who turn up there like at times I mean lunch hour is an interesting time to be there like on a weekday it’s clearly people who’ve who go back to the office (Charlie stifles a laugh) in the after the rest of the afternoon or they’re sales people out in the car or something like that like people who when they’re getting dressed I see

Russell:
them getting into kind of work clothes that and I think they’re going back to the office and everyone else thinks they’ve just been having a sandwich somewhere (I laugh a little) and they’ve possibly been in a sandwich instead you know like it’s this extraordinary sense

Charlie:
(laughing a little) That’s quite interesting

Russell:
Sense of the I don’t know the whole thing about people’s lives always being bigger than they appear

Russell:
but um one thing I I never look for but I I keep hearing other people mentioning it in different contexts it never means anything to me is wedding rings I’ve read about people noticing wedding rings or people I know I know a woman who’s doing research on massage and she noticed that whenever there are images of a man massaging a man but just therapeutic massage she’s really alert to the fact that they always have wedding rings on and she’s

Russell:
shown me picture after picture it’s a bizarre thing and I couldn’t believe it and she said it’s to reassure people and the images are often constructed so that that sometimes so that that weddings will be included they’ve gone out of their way to organise it

Charlie:
Right

Russell:
Bizarre but there’s stuff like that I’m just wondering did you notice things like jewellery like you know the convention’s that people wear a towel but did you notice people wearing other things there’s a literature about

Russell:
for instance you can’t tell where a person’s from or what their class is you know everyone becomes equal but is that YOUR experience
Charlie:

No um I mean quite possibly because I um I think hair

Russell:

Yeah go on

Charlie:

for me is quite telling

Russell:

I.i.69:30
(attending to the minidisc) Sorry I’m just going to check this volume level just a sec yeah what about the hair

Charlie:

Oh I just think that’s all you’ve got to go on you know is their skin their hair their walk their build you know their posture um and it’s a place it’s a place where you can where I felt if I wanted to I could spend time

I.i.70:00
actually looking at bodies observing bodies without or with with the sort of agreement made on my behalf that it was okay in this situation as long as I felt that I was being genuine in how I was observing that person so as not to um so as not to sort of give them a look of something that I wouldn’t like to be

I.i.70:30
looked at from and

Russell:

Because you’ve already talked about you’re very aware of being looked at

Charlie:

Yeah

Russell:

So but you’re also watching

Charlie:

Mm yeah I enjoyed watching movement in that place

Russell:

Oh yeah

Charlie:

I love watching movement and I you know I love watching the speed that people are travelling in you know and I’ll follow the same from my seat obviously I’ll follow the same person or people and notice

I.i.71:00
time you know I enjoy because of the time and suddenly one person’s walking in a rhythm and then you know suddenly they’re going the other direction and suddenly they’re walking twice as fast (he laughs) and you know their face has changed expression (he laughs again) and then you see them walking past again and it will be a different speed that they’re walking at ah you know possibly the sort of direction will change

I.i.71:30
and the and the and the way that they’re getting through people or around people um I find really interesting how people steer their bodies when they have you know a certain amount of room to do it in um I’m really fascinated with that kind of movement um but um yeah so I enjoy watching that enjoy watching that sense of sort of bubbles on top of a champagne glass

I.i.72:00
sort of effect (I laugh a little) you know (he makes bubble noises with his mouth and lips) can we stop there and have a a breathe

Russell:

Yeah we can it’s it’s going to stop in a second anyway

Charlie:

Right [unintelligible] impression

Russell:

Yeah do you want a break and do some more after that

Charlie:

[unintelligible] yeah

Russell:

How do you feel about that

Charlie:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

I.i.72:30
It'll stop itself in a second

Charlie:

So that was that was me observing people um in on that particular night I do remember that there wasn’t anyone on that particular night that I thought anyone anything that was moving I didn’t I didn’t follow anything that was moving on that night let’s say with my body I certainly followed moving bodies with

my eyes ah and my sense of ah that sense of feeling atmosphere is it touch or just that sense of feeling different temperature and becoming aware of that but on the night I went I wasn’t doing a lot of following so I felt quite good actually that there was no distraction in there for me that evening

I was sort of I was free to sort of get on with ah because I go in there and I don’t know if this happened with you but um well the night I went there it’s obviously an hour an hour or so journey and you know a journey in the mind but I was going to ask you have you ever been there where day has turned into night and you’ve actually walked in and it was sort of you know four or five in the afternoon

and you walked out when the city was suddenly closed and wondering just how you observed that whole like the new that’s sort of like that’s the sort of walking in there when the cartoons are on television (I laugh a little) staying in there when the news comes on television and people are having their dinner and then staying in there when people are getting ready to go out and then still being there when people are out like I find this something that I’d like to sort of explore this sense of

Russell:

Mm it’d be nice

Charlie:

This sense of um

Russell:

Well I'll I'll ask you about something I'll I'll answer something about that but I’ll also ask you something about that in a second because I'll stop this now

Charlie: All right

Russell:

because it’s kind of

(I switch off the minidisc recorder)

(a fresh disc is inserted and, after a short break in which we step outside for a breath of fresh air, the conversation continues)

Okay yep that sounds okay

Charlie:

Recording now

Russell:

Yep we’re on it doesn’t take very much effort for it to work

Charlie:

Oh gosh

Russell:

Um so the whole thing about day into night (Charlie laughs a little) I can’t I mean I think I have my experiences of that are actually more associated with cinema of um going into a movie when it’s daylight and coming out at the end of the movie especially if it’s been a big experience and it’s become night-time and feeling um er in the the type of period in which I associate that is a period in the eighties I think or maybe even the late seventies when I used to go to the movies in the city that was the place where I used to see movies and so that was a kind of a strong experience for me but um I don’t have that experience from um a sauna that I can think of where I’ve gone in at day and come out at night I do I have had the experience of going into a sauna at night and coming out at day

Charlie:

Right

Russell:

and not ah and being um

All right
appendix I: Charlie I

even though I knew the time feeling yet... a kind of a strange um a strange sense of that but part of all that is a function of the architecture the way the outside world gets sealed off um you know you talked about the experience of time you know rhythm and of time you didn’t mention rhythm but you said

Charlie:

I.02:00
I did mention rhythm

Russell:

Did you oh the... but time definitely though is a function of that [unintelligible] but um I’ve become curious about the way I experience duration in there um for instance one of the first things about any venue I visit is I locate the clocks I’m really curious about where the clocks are how many there are and are they synchronised (I laugh a little)

I.02:30
you know so that’s one thing and so I know where all the clocks are in Volcano and recently one of them got shifted and that’s part of the reason I bring this up and it had a huge impact on me the fact that one clock was shifted it was still in the same area but it shifted from one wall to an adjoining wall and I found that the way in which the ways in which I’ve taught myself to move through that have changed subtly

I.03:00
because I know I recognise now that I’ve incorporated it a glimpse at the clock as a some sort of stabilising thing but with that is an experience of duration that I find that my experience of the passing of time becomes completely ah unpredictable like so that it can suddenly telescope and I feel like I’ve just spent fifteen minutes doing something

I.03:30
and an hour has passed and so on and

Charlie:

Yeah

Russell:

Or the reverse

Charlie:

Yeah

Russell:

That I’ve felt like I’ve just spent ten minutes doing something and it’s only two minutes and I’m startled at that so that’s that part of it the other thing is that um possibly the only book I know where as as a work a work of literature I guess um devoted to um

I.04:00
bathhouses is a book by a guy called Michael Rumaker that he’s called A Day And A Night At The Baths

Charlie:

Right

Russell:

And it’s an account of his first visit to the Everard Baths in New York City in nineteen seventy-nine and it’s about arriving at daylight with the Empire State Building nearby and leaving at night and so it’s exactly

I.04:30
the experience that you talk about the other thing is um arriving in one kind of weather

Charlie:

Right

Russell:

and leaving and the weather has probably altered because the environment is so um not evenly within itself like for instance there are parts of Volcano I’m aware of where the temperature is actually quite cold and other parts where it’s obviously warmer and air conditioning a large building is a difficulty but it

I.05:00
nevertheless remains constant so the cold part remains cold and the warm part remains warm and so on and so whatever the temperature is outside becomes this strange negligible thing I don’t think it’s alone as an environment like that like cinemas strike me as being very similar they seal off the rest of the world

Charlie:

Yeah I get that seory [sic] that that sense even

I.05:30
going in Daimaru and crossing over to Myer and the big glass that big glass bridge

Russell:

Yeah
Charlie:

There’s a sense when I’m there that I just want to get out *(he laughs a little)* yeah get out of that and um

Russell:

Did you um [unintelligible] did you find any of the um cinema areas at Volcano?

Charlie:

Cinema now

Russell:

Yeah did you

I.ii.06:00
see any *(Charlie gasps)* of the kind of film areas where they show films

Charlie:

*(animated)* Oh yes yes now now I’ve just been reminded of that one film area and again it’s this narrow in narrow and then it follows itself but you go the other way it’s like a turnstile at Luna Park when you’re waiting for the roller coaster you go in

Russell:

Yes

Charlie:

You do a little sort of you do a right angle

Russell:

Yes

Charlie:

And you do another right angle you go back exactly the same way and parallel

I.ii.06:30
but just in the opposite direction

Russell:

Right so this is the one where they were showing porn films

Charlie:

Yeah yeah exactly

Russell:

You had of course you when you were there they had the pianist and the singer because sometimes they show movies in that area in fact usually they show movies in that area

Charlie:

What time does Volcano open on a Saturday *(he laughs a little)*

Russell:

Um I think it opens on a Friday and closes on the Monday morning but the um the thing about that is I’ve often um

I.ii.07:00
I’ve often gone […] well insofar as I’ve ever gone often but but I’ve gone and there’s someone I know who might say he he will usually ask me as he’ll usually ask me only two or three questions one is did you have a good time which I never quite understand what that means but I take it in good faith and just simply say yes or no

I.ii.07:30
but the other one is did you see anyone we know *(I laugh)* which is kind of an interesting one because that’s produced some interesting little stories and I think there’s a kind of map building up for him ah often it might not be people we know but people we know of for instance as much as anything but then the other one is that often he often I feel that um a very

I.ii.08:00
nice thing to offer him is when I can say I saw all of um what was an example recently oh um all of the the Marlon Brando Mutiny On The Bounty *(I laugh)* and realising what a really bad film it was but just you know I was quite happy to spend you know two hours or however long that interminable film goes watching

Charlie:

Oh so they show they do show

Russell:

I.ii.08:30
Yeah I didn’t see that there I saw that somewhere else but yeah I’ve watched I’ve watched films I’ve I’ve often been and found that the prospect of sitting down in one of the lounges and watching an entire film was more interesting than getting up and moving through the building and I also have a recollection of once I haven’t asked you about this but um of once being there and a Julie Andrews movie was being
screened and somebody decided that they would

I.ii.09:00
pipe the soundtrack through the building so the entire building was full of this dialogue ah er and and songs from the Julie Andrews movie

Charlie:
That’s fantastic

Russell:
You know and all those cubicles downstairs where you know men were kind of locked in with other men and dark areas everything the whole building was permeated with this soundtrack of a Julie Andrews movie and and I find it mentionable I’m curious for instance

I.ii.09:30
you say that’s fantastic like what what immediately springs to mind for you about that and do you have any recollection of sound

Charlie:
(a silence, then) I mean I like form and then I like breaking up form in amongst that and um you know Volcano is a formula in my eyes there is a formula to the

I.ii.10:00
way it’s successful I mean I don’t know the answers but I think it’s a hunch anyway um and when something like Julie Andrews you just mentioned comes on through this whole system I know that to my sort of tastes I would just be in hysteric whatever I was doing (I laugh a little) you know it just it would just make my night that something so sort of ah ingeniously funny

Russell:

I.ii.10:30
Yeah

Charlie:
happened quite by accident or if that that’s an accident possibly

Russell:

Oh I I have the sense it was an intention on the night I was there but still go on

Charlie:

So but I don’t I’m not clear about noise that night or music

Russell:

Because people don’t talk much and there’s the sound of water in different places like the sound of the spa is an obvious one but (Charlie laughs a little)

I.ii.11:00
do do you have recollections of other sounds

Charlie:

I had this feeling that noticed this this feeling that I was on a set for a movie it was like or maybe a set of some porn flick (he laughs a little) it was so tacky you know um

Russell:

Do you associate could could we talk about the sets of porn flicks um (Charlie laughs a little) I assume that you’ve seen some I mean you saw some there or you saw at least a glimpse because you went into the room

I.ii.11:30
where they were being

Charlie:

Mm

Russell:

So then when you talk about

Charlie:

I I when I was when I was fourteen

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

And my parents went overseas

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

I got one of those sort of picture you know picture magazines

Russell:
Yeah

Charlie:

And I sent away for three bisexuals (we laugh) I didn’t dare to question my homosexuality

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

at fourteen

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

It was I’ll go for the bisexuality in case someone finds it (we laugh)

Russell:

Yes

Charlie:

It would be a safer option

Russell:

I.i.12:00

That’s fair enough

Charlie:

And ah yeah that’s funnily enough yeah one time I mean I’ve experienced watching porn videos at a venue I went to once

Russell:

But the but when you talk about the sets being tacky because for instance I know of someone who’s very interested in in the sets of the porn videos and in fact he he doesn’t um he’s he’s started getting interested in at one

I.i.12:30

stage he was interested in actually trying to make them you know as like he works with sculpture I guess and he was interested in making them right but with emptied of people and there’s definitely a look

Charlie:

I remember blue these blue tiles and the fake green artificial plants

Russell:

at

Charlie:

And the lighting and the sort of orangey lighting

Russell:

Where were the blue tiles

Charlie:

I just saw it on the walls

Russell:

Oh yeah

Charlie:

Or maybe I’m thinking of another

I.i.13:00

you know association of a sauna um it I think what

Russell:

One thing you haven’t mentioned in your description of that downstairs area with the artificial plants the spa and the seats is the swimming pool (I laugh a little)

Charlie:

Oh I actually had a conversation with an a guy in the swimming pool

Russell:

A guy in the pool

Charlie:

Mm

Russell:

Were you in the pool

Charlie:

Mm
Right because it was ages before I ever went into the pool. I realised one night.

I actually feel like just simply being in the pool and then when I was in the pool I suddenly realised how nice it was just to simply be in it and I didn't give a fuck about the people kind of looking around.

**Charlie:**

I felt quite like the most safest in the pool and the most sort of less vulnerable in the pool.

**Russell:**

Right.

**Charlie:**

And that's where I actually headed first and that's probably where I spent the longest duration of time.

**Russell:**

I.ii.14:00

Right.

**Charlie:**

In the pool and on the bench.

**Russell:**

That's a very well lit area too compared with other parts of the building and you've talked about not liking the gloom so much.

**Charlie:**

I think it was just the head space I was in really at the time and the acceptance of the acceptance that this was something that was attached to my identity. I was really cautious um you know and I just thought should I wait until I'm you know forty (he laughs a little).

I.ii.14:30

I thought the longer I prolonged this experience the safer I'll be (I laugh a little) though of course that's just you know that's just my that's my Catholic sort of virginity virginal sort of judgement there which I'm glad to say is sort of broadened um I'm beginning there's a big thing of acceptance actually just as a human being and the association with

I.ii.15:00

with ah the fact that let's be clear most of the time you know it's something to do with sex or is it and you know one can question that and then look at something as simple as the Buddhist philosophy that you know actions have consequences and I can get quite tangled up some nights in trying to work that one out and I'm saying what what what are the consequences of me frequenting this

I.ii.15:30
	his many times whether it's a beat or ah a club or a pub or um there's still obviously some Catholic stuff that I'm burning with all of this obviously.

**Russell:**

It might not be just Catholic though.

**Charlie:**

No I don't think it's just is that but my conditioning.

**Russell:**

Yeah.

**Charlie:**

I'm burning my conditioning purging well using it actually to fuel the fire um and just how my parents

I.ii.16:00

saw sex and how I observed sex how I observed gestures and sexual or nonsexual gestures but I won't go into that of my family and how that comes into play nowadays but not so much anymore not so much any more because I feel like I'm getting a much better grip on on ah on who I am what I do and not doubting that's something I've sort of realised this year.

I.ii.16:30

is never never to doubt any of my actions ever I think that's the last thing you just I just don't want to doubt anything that I do or say like you said detriment detrimental I mean you can have other sort of implications but not doubt like doubt to me just seems like it can bring me down immediately and put me there for ages so I've sort of tried to work around doubt and sort of had enough of that.

I.ii.17:00

that doubt factor you know um.

**Russell:**

Can

**Charlie:**


I get this actually is about quality of one’s social life this is where I’m coming from now and not paranoia not paranoia about the frequency at bathhouses but purely

**I.ii.17:30**
I’ve got an enquiry about sort of healthy social structures um you know what percentage of hours per week does Subject A work and what percentage of hours does Subject A spend at the sauna those sorts of related those questions

Russell:
And is that work

Charlie:
And all sorts of well that’s this is the sort of

**I.ii.18:00**
this is where the it becomes an enquiry because it’s question after question yeah like to purely simply say it’s work or it isn’t work would be missing the point as Husserl wrote to simply say that something just is something you’ve already missed the point phenom you’ve already missed it as a phenomenon because you’re naming it immediately um

**I.ii.18:30**
and what’s the fun in that for a phenomenologist *(he laughs a little)*

Russell:
Well then what about well related to that thing you went to a place called a sauna or called Volcano you know it had a name before you arrived what did you imagine before you arrived what were the kind of imaginings you had

**I.ii.19:00**
because there was a name and there was a place and you’d seen an ad and you’d possibly heard stories from other people or I don’t know

Charlie:
I’ve I’d heard stories of people who’d gone to Sauna X in Sydney when I was living there

Russell:
Oh yeah yep

Charlie:
And they were always jolly chaps they were kind of sort of Aussie bred poofers who sort of *(I laugh a little)* have got quite a good sort of grip on their sexuality

Russell:
Yeah

Charlie:
Some of them

**I.ii.19:30**
some of them have got a drinking problem as well but they’re still quite chirpy and that particular kind of businessman

Russell:
So they they told you kind of stories or you’d overheard stories

Charlie:
Oh just bits and pieces here and there of going there and just listening to their attitude and the way they would what emotion like you can say something you can you know you can talk as we talk and you can talk with er it’s interesting because

**I.ii.20:00**
emotion affects talk affects action affects talk affects emotion like I’m interested in that as well and exploring that in space um and so just looking at those particular things keeping an eye out particularly for what you know gay men have had to say when I wasn’t socialising at gay venues you know if I happened to be working in a restaurant or a bar and I overheard a conversation between

**I.ii.20:30**
you know an obviously gay man um and someone else I’d sort of you know be even more interested because it was providing me with information er and at all what I really go on and what one can only go on I think in those sort of overhearing or witnessing a conversation witnessing ear witnessing a conversation is emotion and emotion and sort of

**I.ii.21:00**
action where their hands are going and um the volume of the voice even

Russell:
So all those things kind of as it were started building up a sense of a place they those subtle things you know like how they wave their hands when they’re talking were all you recognised all now that all of those
were contributing to a sense of what this place

\[\text{i.ii.21:30}\]
that you might be going to might be and even though you weren't going to \textit{Sauna X} in Sydney but were going to \textit{Volcano} in Melbourne there was a sense that somehow or other these might be connected generic places or similar in some way so what did you imagine what can you tell me about what that place was before you set foot inside it (a silence)

\[\text{i.ii.22:00}\]
for instance you've already talked about the sense of of arriving and although you didn't use this term and so please correct me if it's wrong of a quality of disappointment that um space was gloomy for instance or that that there was carpet that was cluggy you said or

\[\text{i.ii.22:30}\]
you know that these were somehow or other not what you were wanting it was cramped facilities

\text{Charlie:}

No I'm yeah I mean I'm sort of I guess I'm interested in in a space for gay men which is I don't want to use sophisticated but or even cultured you know but just a space that isn't black (I laugh) you know for gay men which isn't black

\text{Russell:}

Yes

\text{Charlie:}

And which

\[\text{i.ii.23:00}\]
isn't about youth and sexuality and and loudness and brashness and I'm not saying that everyone who I don't want to say let you know there wasn't a bar let's clone people that was one thing I was very aware of and that was age and the intergenerational aspect of saunas that actually calmed me a bit I thought great you know

\text{Russell:}

That there are older people

\text{Charlie:}

Well there was going to be this

\[\text{i.ii.23:30}\]
whole generation and they were going to be you know I knew of lots of young people who're really in love with old men old men you know seventy year old you know young people loved and I'd heard old men going oh you know I just got got off with a gorgeous twenty year old you know blah blah blah and I'd heard of you know (he laughs a little) kind of these these things

\text{Russell:}

You'd heard of them or you've heard them actually there

\text{Charlie:}

No I've heard them actually spoken

\text{Russell:}

Yeah yeah

\text{Charlie:}

And in some cases I thought god have these do these

\[\text{i.ii.24:00}\]
guys think about anything else that was that's one of my fears do these guys think about anything else but sex and I thought hold on a minute you know I could be going to a sauna heaps more times than than these guys but I could just walk out of it and not even mention the word and just find a million other things about it and that's sort of that's something that I'm coming to

\[\text{i.ii.24:30}\]
but yeah so I mean that was just that was the design of the place I mean design is a really important element for me I think it's yeah more and more where I like to go where I like to be I think the design of the place the design of it (he laughs a little) I'm a bit of a queen in that sense it's like

\text{Russell:}

Sorry it was a bit of a

\text{Charlie:}

I was I mean I'm just a bit of a queeny sort of thing you know it's not designed you know to
Charlie:oh yeah russell: i.ii.25:00 you know but just the whole design element of it was surprising actually um yeah it just looked run down and it also looked really dated and yeah i was i wasn't expecting it to be either run down or dated and then i tried to remember the only film i have seen about a sauna was the one which was taken from where bette midler used to play

russell: i.ii.25:30 the continental baths
charlie: yeah

russell: oh yeah
charlie: there's a movie made about that

russell: oh called um

charlie: really famous movie about a gay sauna

russell: yeah um ah it's a play that was made into a film and i haven't been able to track the film down

charlie: oh it's it's hysterical

russell: yeah

charlie: i've seen it a few times

russell: yeah and was it and was it like that or

charlie: no like in this movie everyone was larger than life well not everyone was animated but the camera followed the animated people

russell: yes

charlie: you know they were you know the people who were animated and larger than life get themselves into situations

russell: right

charlie: because of their nature

russell: right

charlie: you know and the quiet people who you know aren't so you know interested in meeting everybody but just going up to one person who they've been eyeing for two hours like this whole thing of as a species you know how do we you know some people i've heard just go

russell: (i laugh a little) yes

charlie: while others you know spend time eyeing people for hours you know some will go home not even having gone and spoken to the person so i mean you know that's really interesting as

russell: is this a film that you'd seen a few times before you went to volcano

charlie:
Russell:

So do you think it had a big impact *(Charlie laughs a little)* on your

Charlie:

I don’t know if it had a big impact but it certainly it certainly made me feel

Russell:

It was feeding

Charlie:

Feeding it was feeding my curiosity

Russell:

But was it also feeding into your expectations of what you could assume for instance

Charlie:

Yeah yeah it was feeding into that

Russell:

Right okay so it’s kind of interesting like for instance you talk about the dark room like that’s incompatible with the movie I mean I would assume for instance that this film has no sequence in the dark room

Charlie:

No no no

Russell:

There’s um

Charlie:

That’s right

Russell:

I found a website which I’ve been trying to relocate and I can’t and I didn’t write down the web address

at the time because I was I was shocked when I found it um but it was it was for like a promotional site for a sauna and I thought it was somewhere in North America but I’ve recently tried to relocate it and I can’t and there was so now I’ve got the onus is on me to really search it because I haven’t found one like it since it had points where you could click on to go into different rooms so that you could it would offer view

views of the facilities and it had lists and you could click on and then you’d get a view of that facility which were obviously taken from as far back in the corner with a wide angle lens as possible but on the list was Dark Room and I thought well

Charlie:

how are they going to show this

Russell:

How are they going to show it so I clicked it on and what was there was a close up with no sense of surrounding architecture at all a really brilliantly lit close up of one man fellating another

and that was the image for the dark room facilities like so that the whole thing about the space and the experience suddenly kind of got um aligned or they they slid into each other or something but that thing about what is representable so that the movie version of the sauna in a sense one part

of my thing is you know we talked about viewing and not viewing and yet you also talked about the cramped areas and one of the things that I’m aware of is that there are parts in the sauna where space opens up to permit that sense of perspective of view of distance of the mastery of terrain

Charlie:

Yeah

Russell:

But there are other spa parts where that just no longer becomes

possible where I’m in close proximity to *(Charlie coughs) [unintelligible]* and all sorts of things become imminent

Charlie:

Do they have internet facilities at Volcano

Russell:

Yes there is a cyber room with ah I think
Charlie:
Free

Russell:
nine no you I think you pay

Charlie:
On top of your entry fee

Russell:
Yes but there’s a number of things apparently

I.ii.30:00
you can pay for on top of your entry like stuff at the bar

Charlie:
Yeah it’s crazy

Russell:
Like well there are also yeah there are things but the cyber room is um I think it has ah nine stations I haven’t used them there um I’ve watched people using them there’s there’s a window-like area which isn’t glazed I thought it was until I suddenly realised one day

I.ii.30:30
and and in fact I maybe they had taken the glass out but I don’t think so I think I’d always assumed it was glazed and it wasn’t it was actually just an aperture and I so it’s possible to perve on people at the machines (Charlie laughs a little) who are in turn often I’ve noticed they’re either going through their um emails or

Charlie:
Or they’re perving

Russell:
they’re accessing um

I.ii.31:00
websites with pornography on it I saw one guy who must have been in his early twenties trying to find images of teenagers (I laugh a little) I just thought this is bizarre you know it was completely bizarre and of course they’re sitting there in towels doing it I haven’t been one of those people yet I’m interested in doing it at some stage (a silence)

I.ii.31:30

did you notice anyone walking around with clothes on I’ve seen that a couple of times it’s very disconcerting people who are fully clothed who aren’t staff who are cruising

Charlie:
Right how come you found it not sort of um okay that some people

I.ii.32:00
wanted to stay that way

Russell:
I think I think it’s more that I’ve found that it was okay and it’s not an option I’ve considered and I’ve found it curious because it seems that there’s a forcefulness of character involved that these are people who they’ll put a towel on when they’re ready thank you you know and meanwhile they’ll set off with clothes for a while and it’s strange

I.ii.32:30
in in an area where people are basically wearing towels only

Charlie:
Well I’ve actually been one of those people in another city I went to this sauna in another city for the first time in December and I didn’t take my clothes off and I was in there for nearly four hours five hours I think and not wanting to take my clothes off I was not interested so I just I actually sat at the bar and talked

I.ii.33:00
to the manager for about three hours and I watched a whole Italian movie a B grade Italian movie and that and no I didn’t talk to the manager for three hours I lie I played pool with someone who wanted to play pool I watched a B grade Italian movie which was fantastic it was about like dragons and people you know that slaying finding magic gold in caves and stuff

Russell:
So this was the second visit that

Charlie:

I.ii.33:30
To a sauna

Russell:
Yeah

Charlie:
appendix I: Charlie I

Mm and I kept my clothes on yeah someone kept bugging me the whole time (he affects a squeaky voice) when are you going to get your clothes off I just went and I didn’t answer him I just I just didn’t want to justify it but it was really interesting because I don’t know if you’ve ever been to this sauna in this other city um

Russell:

No I haven’t

Charlie:

but it’s quite it’s like a house yeah

Russell:

I’ve passed it in the street

Charlie:

You walk in

Russell:

It’s centrally located

Charlie:

[names the location, twice]

Russell:

I.i.34:00

[I repeat the name after him]

Charlie:

Next to a well known place I mean so you walk in and it’s very much a house you know you’ve got the first room on the left which is the TV room and billiard room first room on the right which is your huge TV like big ah one of those massive screens and all they do is they don’t they’re not licensed to show movies so they’re just showing commercial television which I just found weird very weird ah and there was also a bar in there

I.i.34:30

and like there looked sort of er op shoppey lounge like the furnishing in the saunas were dated and tasteless as well um and they were serving snacks which you had to pay for but you um but you they just asked for your key number and they charge you on the way out and then you sort of keep walking down the corridor and then you walk into the pool the wet area shall we say

I.i.35:00

and then upstairs is the darkened area and the cubicles which I didn’t go into at all someone just gave me an orientation and said there’re the toilets there’re the blah blah there’re the blah blah and I just didn’t bother to look in I was really just wanting um a safe haven from the people I’d been staying with (he laughs a little) and there was nowhere else I could think of going by bus and I thought oh I’ll go there I stayed there sort of from about um I.i.35:30
two till about seven

Russell:

in the afternoon

Charlie:

Yeah yeah it was really nice I really had a really good time I had a yeah talking to the owner the manager and he just had broken up with his boyfriend so it became quite there was not many people in there either

Russell:

And it was quite social then

Charlie:

Yeah very social with the man behind the bar yeah I felt really relaxed being in my clothes and I felt somewhat of a novelty to all these other men

I.i.36:00

that here’s this sort of you know guy in his clothes um but I wasn’t self-conscious and I didn’t feel threatened or bullied or even I didn’t even feel that myself that me myself was saying come on take your clothes off it was just no argument I just thought I’m going to keep them on and when I’m ready I’ll take them off (he laughs a little)

Russell:

Can I ask where you put your towel meanwhile cos did they hand you a towel

Charlie:

Yeah there’s lockers

Russell:

I.i.36:30

So you just put it in the locker yeah

Charlie:
Everything in the locker and went and sat down and I looked through a few pomo magazines and like I read old gay magazines like news articles really fascinating you know stories about um well just stories and sort of magazines from the early eighties late seventies and that was more interesting [unintelligible] I was on a mission to sort of come to terms with other things like I’m come to terms

with other things because it’s all so easy to just um when you’re me to sort of allow people to pull your heartstrings but really just be feeding their own sort of yucky insecurities or you know ninety percent of the time not very nice positive people but they’re just sort of tugging on my heartstrings you know (he affects a moaning voice)

oh [unintelligible: I love you?] and so I’ve just sort of come to realise that that sort of ah that that happens that I’m I’m part of that and I’ve been part of that for for quite some time and yeah so it didn’t happen as I was quite aware that I needed to make ah changes and I felt that going into the sauna was a yeah it felt really right being there in clothes

I think it was just the headspace I was in once again I mean I don’t know what it would be like in Melbourne you know with when the crowd increases by at least you know eight in this other city there was probably five people there five to ten people

Russell:

I um I’ve twice been at places when

there were huge crowds one was um at Splash on its closing weekend when there were so many people there that they not only ran out of lockers they ran out of towels and um I’ve somebody said it was like going to the world’s biggest toga party (I laugh a little) but it was it was so funny it was so funny because it was so chatty and buoyant it was just the place was so packed

that a lot of the silences um fell away but it was it really was like being at someone’s party and the other time was um I visited Volcano it recently had its twentieth anniversary I think and um that was quite different but er one of the things that happened that night was they ran out of lockers and started issuing people with garbage bags (I laugh a little) um as they arrived

for their things and that they worked out at one point there were over two hundred men in the building

Charlie:

Great for a fire eh

Russell:

The Everard Baths burnt down a couple of months after Michael Rumaker visited them um nine men were killed

Charlie:

Which baths

Russell:

The Everard Baths in New York City

Charlie:

Right

Russell:

The guy I said who wrote the book all the way through the book he keeps noticing

ashtrays fire escapes (I sigh) you know he just it’s sort of retrospectively he became aware of what a firetrap it was

Charlie:

That’s so interesting

Russell:

Will we leave it there

Charlie:

Yep

Russell:

Good

(I switch off the minidisc recorder)
appendix 2: Kate I

The transcript documents a conversation with Kate that took place at my flat on a weekday. We sat at a table under a large window with a view of plants on the balcony outside and of the sky beyond. Kate had not visited my home before. We drank several cups of tea and devoured a sensational cake as we conversed. The sound track of the minidisc is littered with the noise of all this. For much of the first ten minutes or so, we talked to each other through mouthfuls of food.

Russell:

I.00:00
We’re on okay now I’ll ask you what I’ve been holding back from last time so you went to Volcano was that where

Kate:

Volcano I went to yeah

Russell:

And did a a performance okay when

Kate:

When um (softly) I’m just trying to remember um

Russell:

Eighties or nineties

Kate:

It was the

I.00:30
it would be the late eighties early nineties it was just before I started working with some performers based in Melbourne so it was I think it was ninety-nine nineteen ninety-one

Russell:

All right

Kate:

And it was the um Women’s Business had decided to try out um yeah just setting up nights to have um

I.01:00
women only nights and so as part of that they asked various people if they wanted to do any performance or performances

Russell:

And how did what’s your understanding of Volcano as the venue how did that happen do you know like when you’ve heard the venue do you remember when you do you remember the occasion when you heard that that was going to be the venue

Kate:

I.01:30
Um yeah it was a whole period of like I think there was a few of us and we just (something happens with the teapot) ooh we always talked about the thing that um it’s something that gay men did not women and that would be you know sort of do do you know have saunas and there was and we were also talking about why it wasn’t set up for women you know why didn’t women or gay women have you know a sort of a sauna

Russell:

A place

Kate:

specifically for you know um casual sex

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

and um so

I.02:00
we sort of spoke to a few women it was always it’s always the thing of like don’t know it was always like is there like there was never the need but I don’t know about it being a need yeah yeah

Russell:

But it was a thing that was being talked about

Kate:

Yeah and I think that at that time it was hey let’s um you know I think Women’s Business got together and they sort of approached the owners and said you know
can we is there one you know sort of one night a month
	I.i.02:30
possibly setting up that um and I think they hoped for an ongoing um

Russell:

But it only happened the one night

Kate:

I think it only happened the one night so and that was because well women didn’t hardly anyone turned up really

Russell:

Oh really

Kate:

So there was one well when we did the performance there was quite a lot but that was because everyone was like in that you know the main pool area where there there’s all just um really really remember the wooden wall with the hole in it because Jodie and I that was part of the thing
	I.i.03:00
we we went in there virtually in an afternoon and went okay what can we do here so we hung up some ropes and um over that little pool and there were floating candles and lilies on the water (she laughs)

Russell:

So you went in in the afternoon before the evening

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

So

Kate:

before the event

Russell:

Right okay so before then did you have any reliable information to go on about what the place was like

Kate:

No not really nup

Russell:

I.i.03:30
Not really

Kate:

Nup

Russell:

Um you just knew there was this place Volcano

Kate:

Yep

Russell:

And you’d known of that beforehand

Kate:

I’d known of it beforehand yes yeah

Russell:

Yeah yeah okay had you ever been past the premises in the street do you remember

Kate:

Ah no it was only I mean I knew that it existed only just because of it being listed in um sort of Brother Sister and MSO

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

and and I knew that you know well I suppose I looking up the address but I never I never really went sort of like
t down that street that often

Russell:

So

Kate:

and actually it was it was Rear Entry that I um quite accidentally (she laughs) walked into one time

Russell:
Oh really

Kate:

Cos I was delivering yeah delivering leaflets or something and um so I went up the stairs and I thought (she whispers) wow there’s a strong smell of chlorine and it’s really hot in here (she laughs)

Russell:

At Rear Entry

Kate:

(still laughing) Yeah

Russell:

I might ask you about that later when was that

Kate:

Yeah oh that would have also been round that time sort of like early nineties yeah

Russell:

Right well let’s go back let’s go back to Volcano so you’d heard of it

Kate:

Yep heard of it

Russell:

And what did you imagine before you arrived there like you’d heard of this place you’d seen advertising for it and you’d probably heard people talk about it

Kate:

Um

Russell:

Yeah and light or dark or

Kate:

Quite dark

Russell:

Quite dark but extensive

Kate:

Yep I think
Russell:
And kind
Kate:
Oh sorry it was actually I mean I I had more images that might it might be similar to the um
the one that used to be in St Kilda maybe not as run down um
Russell:
Oh the St Kilda Sea Baths all right
Kate:
Sea Baths yeah I had more that but on a larger scale and I think a lot more ornate
Russell:
Yeah
Kate:
and things to be more tiled out and (she laughs) [unintelligible]
Russell:
Okay so then you actually all right okay so then you arrived at Volcano and what what can you describe to me now about what
you encountered like what you saw you went there in the afternoon so the place wasn’t open for business when you arrived
Kate:
No
Russell:
Is that correct
Kate:
Yep
Russell:
Okay
Kate:
It was quite well um it was quite well lit so daylight it looked a bit flat and bit sort of boring really (she laughs a little) I know I know that’s
Russell:
This is interior
Kate:
The interior I’m talking more in yeah the interior um
Russell:
Was there daylight in the interior
Kate:
Mm no no no it was um I think just like you know an ordinary light like fluorescent light
Russell:
Yeah
Kate:
Trying to make it just to be a bit quite bright um mm oh yeah um just aesthetically I thought oh what a pity (I laugh a little) wouldn’t it be great if it was you know (she laughs) like I envisaged and I thought well okay and then I had a little wander around and there was all you know lots of lots of showers I remember and I had my photo taken by that woman we both know because she was there on the night it was a really great one she was taking all these Polaroids
Russell:
Yeah
Kate:
There’s a great one where I’m actually in the water and um my face is really clear but because my body’s in the water it was strangely distorted a bit like a um oh Egon Schiele painting
Russell:
Oh yeah
Kate:
Body’s really sort of funny light
Russell:
Oh yes when you say under water where were you

Kate:
In this is in the main pool

Russell:
In the pool

Kate:
And this is just after the performance

Russell:
Right okay

Kate:
So I think I've still got the photo and but then I also had an had my photo taken in one of the showers so just daggling around with [unintelligible]

Russell:
Do you remember which shower

Kate:

I.i.07:30
It would have been you know where the main pool is

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
And then you go off I think it's there's an entrance there so sorry if the wall's there there's that main the main pool

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
And there's like a corridor that way was virtually just there's like a little sitting area there

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
Yep so and then the entrance there and just as it went off that way there's like a shower about there

Russell:
Um can you we'll get back to the pool but I.i.08:00
I just wonder if first of all you can tell me a bit about the description of actually getting to the pool from the street how how would you describe that from your memory and I'm aware that it's you know getting it's on about nine years

Kate:
Um

Russell:
Eight or nine years but what can you remember of you're on the

Kate:
My main

Russell:
One moment you're on the street and then at some later stage you're at the pool

Kate:
Just up the stairs it was a bit weird

Russell:
You go upstairs

Kate:
Mm

Russell:
Okay what's the can tell me more about that you go in from the street I.i.08:30 and what do you encounter as soon as you step in from the street

Kate:
Just a staircase

Russell:
Or how do you get in first of all what is there is it open

**Kate:**

Just a door

**Russell:**

A door

**Kate:**

Yeah just a door like an office building

**Russell:**

Yeah like an office building

**Kate:**

So walked inside and I think I was preoccupied with more the things like oh a bit like oh we've actually got to do something in this space

**Russell:**

Right

**Kate:**

So I had that running in my mind there was no like it didn't really concern me about oh I'm going into

i.i.09:00 into a sauna here um I was quite surprised that it was actually quite um it was just very low key so it was just like you know you know just walked in there and went upstairs and yeah

**Russell:**

Right so you go up the stairs

**Kate:**

I go up the stairs yep

**Russell:**

And the staircase is what what what

**Kate:**

It's just like um seventies

**Russell:**

Seventies

**Kate:**

Yeah seventies sort of concrete with a bit of carpet

**Russell:**

Yeah okay you get up the top of the stairs and

i.i.09:30 do you remember what's at the top of the stairs

**Kate:**

It's a little but there's sort of like the entrance for the little or a couple of doorways it's all a bit sort of partitioned off a little bit more like a bit sort of like going into a club

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Kate:**

And and there's like a little foyer area I remember set up to watch videos but on the arrival of the in the afternoon it was all quite

**Russell:**

empty

**Kate:**

Empty and sort of not you know quite you know

i.i.10:00 a bit quite sort of normaley um then I think yeah I just just straight away sort of switched in into um okay let's see what we can do in the space because we only have a short amount of time to get a piece you know to actually get our performance piece together

**Russell:**

I still need there's the foyer area where is the pool in relation to that I I need to persist with this

**Kate:**

Oh okay oh sorry sorry

i.i.10:30 yeah so then we go into the little foyer area and there's a section where you can either sit and watch videos couches then there's a little section that you go into where there's
lots of lockers so yeah just a section of lockers then that goes off into toilet like toilet toilet-sort-of-shower areas getting changed and then yeah that and then you go through another series of doors that come became a bit may [sic: maze?] I think just little corridors and then yeah I followed just one of the little corridors to the end and then that's

\[ \text{i.i.11:00} \]

where

**Kate & Russell:**

the pool was

**Kate:**

Yep is

**Russell:**

So the pool so we’re on the first floor once you’ve gone you’ve gone in at street level on ground floor you go up to the first floor and the pool is on the first floor

**Kate:**

Ah yeah yep yep

**Russell:**

And the pool area you’ve said there’s um a pool

\[ \text{i.i.11:30} \]
can you just describe it like is it an Olympic pool

**Kate:**

Oh no it’s shaped

**Russell:**

Is it like a Roman bath I mean what is it

**Kate:**

Yeah it’s more like a little pond

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Kate:**

It’s sort of shaped like a I was going to say like one of those paint palettes you know or those paint boards it’s almost like a kidney kidney-shaped pool

**Russell:**

Right but it’s deep enough so that for instance you could have your photo taken with just your face up

**Kate:**

Yep

**Russell:**

And the rest of your body do you remember was were you standing with just your face

\[ \text{i.i.12:00} \]

showing how deep do you recall it being

**Kate:**

I was actually lying in the water and there was one part of the pool that was quite safe to dive into I mean it was a shallow entry dive and at one point where it was actually almost you know would would reach my mouth so I’d say about um two three metres maybe not quite three metres

**Russell:**

And and what do you think of it in depth or

**Kate:**

In depth

**Russell:**

In depth okay and what about its overall dimensions like is it can you swim

\[ \text{i.i.12:30} \]
in it or

**Kate:**

Very oh not very you couldn’t do very many laps so you probably it’s probably about six metres so but enough to sort of you know just paddle around and float

**Russell:**

Now you said there’s this open area with the pool in it and you said talked about some seating near it

**Kate:**

Yeah
Can you describe for me now what you recall of that area in terms of you said there’s some seating what kind of seating is it like are they chairs or are they

**I.i.13:00**

Kate:

No it’s like there’s sort of a bench

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

arrangement so it goes into the wall it sort of curves in a bit

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

And there’s a little bit of an overhang from the ceiling

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

Yeah so it just sort of goes in about um oh probably it’d be about half a metre

Russell:

So it’s kind of like an alcove set into

Kate:

Yeah it’s a little alcove yeah and it’s slightly sort of curved

Russell:

Right okay

Kate:

Um then the opposite end so where you’ve got the pool

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

there’s actually um a jet spa as well so you could just step across

**I.i.13:30**

the pool into a little spa which maybe could have maybe three people but the when we were there the night I think we had you know about four people jammed in there and

Russell:

Only four *(we laugh)*

Kate:

Only four yeah yeah

Russell:

Um the the pool is it you’ve said stepped stepped from the pool into the jet spa

Kate:

Yep

Russell:

**I.i.14:00**

Like the floor area is the pool raised above the floor or is it sunk below floor area

Kate:

It’s sunk below floor area

Russell:

Right

Kate:

because I can remember there were we had like women sitting on the edge

Russell:

Oh yeah

Kate:

but also um while we did the performance actually they were on the edge because we walked around it as part of it

Russell:

With their feet kind of dangling in the water

Kate:

Yeah but they would actually move out of the way
Russell:
Oh yeah
Kate:
because we actually took over the whole space for the moment um and
I.i.14:30
then for actually for the first part of it um because we were up there’s a little hole in
the wall which you look down into the pool um we had there were women sitting in the
water like just around the edge so just all yeah like the first row of people were in the
water
Russell:
When you say there’s a hole in the wall looking down into the pool is this um can
you tell m well we’ll get no I’ll come back to it
Kate:
Sure
Russell:
Um anything else that that this area so we’ve got
I.i.15:00
um you enter into this open area from what you described is like a main corridor leading
Kate:
Yeah
Russell:
Yeah okay and then the pool is below um floor level sunken and there’s recessed
benches
Kate:
Yep
Russell:
And the kind of wall overhangs that
Kate:
Yep
Russell:
What’s the wall made of do you remember
Kate:
It’s wooden it’s almost like what you have in those um Sw I don’t know is it Swedish
saunas or whatever
Russell:
Yeah
Kate:
The wooden panels sort of quite sort of
I.i.15:30
seventies
Russell:
Just like varnished wood or something like that or
Kate:
No not varnished it’s um just almost a sort of a natural wood but it’s not completely
smooth so it would have maybe about um I’m trying to work out how big I don’t know
how many inches that is that’s probably about twenty twenty centimetres and
there’d be like a little gap in it so it was quite you know like
Russell:
Like planks
Kate:
Planks yeah
Russell:
or boards or something
Kate:
Yeah
Russell:
And vertically arranged or horizontal
Kate:
Vertically arranged yeah
Russell:
Vertically right okay and
I.i.16:00
now this hole in the wall can you tell me about more about this hole in the wall because I’m quite because it’s obviously

Kate:
It was quite integral

Russell:
That was the thing that was a focus for you

Kate:
Absolutely yeah it was

Russell:
So do you remember seeing what the hole was and then finding out about it

Kate:
Yeah we asked about it we went in because we looked at the pool area and went and just immediately looked up and went let you know and we asked could we just have a look to see um the space went

Russell:
So what is so where did when you say you looked up the hole in the wall isn’t at where is it

Kate:
Oh it’s quite high up it’s at least um if you’ve got the surface of the pool and the same thing happened there was a little um overhang also the pool sort of went inside I mean it sort of had another little overhang with probably you could sit on the edge of the pool and you had again the wall came down over you

Russell:
Right okay is that is that at head height or higher or

Kate:
A little bit higher so if if you were sitting you know sort of quite upright it probably would be about two metres

Russell:
Right

Kate:
I.i.17:00
above the surface of the pool then the wall yeah sort of it was a little alcovey bit

Russell:
Right so at either end of the room the wall at about two metres up seems to suddenly come in higher there’s recessed areas is that

Kate:
Oh hang on ah I’m not explaining it well it’s just one wall

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
Just one flat wall and yeah just underneath where where the pool is quite quite flush up to

I.i.17:30
to the wall it has a little alcove

Russell:
Right

Kate:
um and then so that if you looked up the wall it it would go straight down into the water

Russell:
Right

Kate:
Um so we had a little look around and so we went up again went through the back into more I suppose like non-public-access area and we went up a little tiny narrow staircase like really steep almost like part of a ship

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
And we virtually had to crawl along

Russell:
And where did you access this staircase

Kate:

Ah you had

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

Then there was another little sort of um a door that just said you know um private access only staff only which was I think they would use it for um or they used it for for lighting and there was like a little sound booth too so

Russell:

Oh yeah

Kate:

Very very tiny um and basically the hole was big enough to just squeeze your um squeeze your body through so it was a very

Russell:

Right that’s the hole to go up the stairs

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

for now what’s the hole in the wall itself

Kate:

It’s yes it’s a square hole

Russell:

A square

Kate:

which um very very small it’s it’s like a small also like a small manhole like you could just get your get your body through

Russell:

Yeah you could just get your body through

Kate:

I could just get my body through

Russell:

So did is that something you did in the performance you crawled through it

Kate:

Yes it was very impor yeah it was quite we had initially um just a head coming through

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

hanging down and we had the other person who was countering

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

So they held on to the legs and we also had a rope that went down

Russell:

Right

Kate:

um so

Russell:

And that then went straight into the water

Kate:

Into the water yeah

Russell:

Oh right okay

Kate:

And then there was another piece of rope rope which we suspended under the little alcove piece
Russell: Yeah

Kate: Sort of going across um so we used we came out of the hole and then we did little sort of interactony things we dove into the water and climbed back up

Russell: Yeah

Kate: So and that was (she laughs) really really tricky to climb back up and get back through the hole and of course you know at the last sort of image is just you know has this just this bum hanging but basically the whole idea was just to slither back in through off the rope

Russell: Oh okay the um and you said there were floating candles on the pool surface

Kate: Yeah

Russell: What other what other sources of light were there

Kate: I.i.20:00 Um I think Women's Business set up a few sort of like blue gels which did a little bit of sort of mood lighting but very little it was quite dark

Russell: Um how were how were the women dressed

Kate: There was quite a few women who didn't wear anything

Russell: Yeah

Kate: And then there were women who would wear just like bather bottoms

Russell: Yeah

Kate: And some who would wear tops or

Russell: Yeah

Kate: And some who would just wear bather bottoms and no tops

Russell: And some people actually really got dressed up in like um fantastic fifties bathing outfits and

Kate: Oh right

Russell: Yeah um and then there were sort of like I suppose the leather contingent

Kate: Yeah

Russell: Vinyl-leather contingent they were quite well dressed and they would just sit on the side (she laughs)

Kate: Vinyl-leather contingent they were quite well dressed and they would just sit on the side (she laughs)

Russell: And and so what

Kate: What other kind of explorations did you make of the space during the afternoon had you was it already decided that that pool area was where a performance would occur

Kate: Yes it was

Russell: Yeah so you just had to kind of make do with that did you go and check out other parts of the building

Kate: No not really I mean I did wander along just where there was like a row of showers
Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

And we popped inside the cubicles then we thought briefly we could have made like a more moving piece where an installation more of an installation piece where we got people to follow but um I think we decided to concentrate on the just the main pool area

Russell:

Did you um after the performance did you feel like using the place recreationally

Kate:

Um I sort of did yeah (she laughs) um (a silence) but I was yeah I think just I think was more interested in sort of watching and seeing what you know how comfortable you know women sort of felt and just

Russell:

How how how long were you there after your performance

Kate:

Oh I was there till um probably another three or four hours

Russell:

Right okay (I laugh a little) so there must have been a fair bit to watch

Kate:

Oh there was a fair bit to watch and also because it was it was quite a social event too there was lots of um lots of women that I knew

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

so it was like it was a big catch up you know it was great you know just and just being really incredibly flirtatious and just hanging out and

Russell:

Now well let’s start off with the watching to what extent did the place did the way the place was set up to what extent did it seem to facilitate watching

Kate:

Um I think the alcovey area

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

sort of set that up a little bit [unintelligible]

Russell:

The the benches

Kate:

The benches did yeah and also because we had there was also music as well so you know you’d have you know just people who’d sit there a bit like a nightclub too where you know people would just sit around and people would be having you know some champagne and drinking and talking

Russell:

Oh yeah was the music coming from where

Kate:

Oh I th just like I think they had set up some speakers but it wasn’t being operated from the area that we used

Russell:

Right

Kate:

to get down so I think possibly an internal [unintelligible]

Russell:
Were there any men in the building at all

Kate:

Um no not for the not for the evening not that I know of

Russell:

There were in the afternoon [unintelligible]

Kate:

In the afternoon they were yeah they were sort of [unintelligible]

Russell:

You certainly saw no men at all

Kate:

No I thought um I came in the afternoon no because ah Women’s Business then also had their own staff

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

So they really made it um definitely women only

Russell:

Did you did you find yourself wondering about what the place was like with men in it

Kate:

Oh yeah yeah just

Russell:

So can you tell me a bit about that

Kate:

Oh just thought oh what they would get up to (she giggles) he he he um yeah and I think it was it was that thing of like going well and it was a thing about it was really for want of a better word like it was really quite sort of nice and

Russell:

Yeah no no no yeah I think I mean my because I’m in like because also being a woman I can’t actually go into a male sauna when you know there are men there but my I just sort of think that men whether it’s um I suppose not a casualness but it seems that in terms of them going okay I’m I’m coming here to have um yeah to have sex so they’ll go there and they’ll just you know I don’t make eye contact

Kate:

And off they go it seems to be a lot less they tend to be a lot less worried or concerned or
Kate: About what

Russell: So you so you imagine that basically men are there having eye contact and then once eye contact's established

Kate: Yeah

Russell: they go off and have sex

Kate: Yeah but yeah

Russell: So

Kate: Yeah that's

Russell: So before we go further can I ask where do you imagine them making that eye contact like in

Kate: Ah possibly open area in the locker rooms

Russell: Yeah yeah

Kate: I reckon already it'd be established the foyer to begin with

Russell: Yeah

Kate: Where the little things can be set up there um sort of in having said that I think that that also happens like in with you know sort of women as well like sort of um I suppose more in a nightclub sort of environment

Russell: Yeah

Kate: So therefore that's the thing like you know it starts there you know and you follow it up and um um

Russell: But were there

Kate: Yeah yeah there was some yeah um I just sort of was what was I trying to say but with that night that was set up I think that was the idea that um you know women could just come in and you know and get together and be like more than you know just one on one you know they might be sort of you know you know four or five getting together so um but see where I actually was looking out for that I don't you know just seeing whether that happened but it was definitely you know there would be small groups of you know five or six women together and then lots of the little showers were being used as well so

Russell: The showers were being used

Kate: Yeah the showers were being used
For erotic play

Kate:
I think so yeah

Russell:
Yeah
Kate:
Yeah
Russell:
Um when you before that you said the showers were used as well
as well as what
Kate:
Um as well as the little as well as the main pool I think
Russell:
The main pool
Kate:
Yep
Russell:
Right yeah so the things were happening with the women in very public places
Kate:
Yeah being again
Russell:
Because the showers are open is that correct they're not really
Kate:
No the one's that I saw were um
Russell:
Oh yeah
Kate:
They was quite bad they were closed showers they were sort of
Russell:
They had lockable doors
Kate:
They had lockable doors
Russell:
Oh right
Kate:
There was like a little corridor
Russell:
Yeah
Kate:

I.i.28:00
So and then you know some were bigger than others um
Russell:
Where do you imagine the men when you said men would make eye contact and then go off where do you imagine they'd go off to
Kate:
Um they'd go off to maybe a smaller little steamy shower or maybe you know sort of jump in the spa um or decide to go somewhere else yeah I don't know
Russell:
Another another another place away from the building
Kate:
Another place altogether yeah
Russell:
Yeah yeah okay
Kate:
Or whether yeah I suppose I'll just just go back to what I was trying to sort of say with the um the difference between the men and the women which I don't know it seems to be yeah because the whole idea was to be able to set it up so that women could go and have casual I suppose casual
sex which um I'm sure a lot of women do you know I've done the same thing and um

I.i.29:00

but to ah there just seems to be something that for some reason women don't take to it as easily but I don't know (she laughs) [unintelligible] it's about taking to it as easily um

Russell:

As easily as men

Kate:

As men yeah

Russell:

Mm it's interesting like there's an assumption that men take to it easily

Kate:

I know which is (she laughs a little)

I.i.29:30

probably

Russell:

I'm wondering where that comes from

Kate:

Yeah I don't

Russell:

I'm wondering where that comes from for you

Kate:

For me um I don't know I mean I suppose the fact that they that the saunas do exist for for mainly men or that there is actually I mean the fact that there are numbers you know that can I suppose

I.i.30:00

um what's the word I've had yeah I suppose that there is actually there are numbers and there're obviously there is a need for it and whether or not yeah I've I've always just found that women I don't know it just hasn't it hasn't I suppose setting up the Volcano night and possibly it being once a month that um yeah where there and then you know the numbers were quite small and

I.i.30:30

I think they did try more than once so yeah I don't know

Russell:

Were there were there older women there

Kate:

Um there were a few older women it was again it was pretty much sort of the um very similar sort of Women's Business um

I.i.31:00

at the time nineties

Russell:

So it was more like a club type of crowd

Kate:

It was more like a a club crowd

Russell:

What um (a silence) what um could you describe for me

I.i.31:30

either of the kind of place that you enjoyed the most within the building and the place you enjoyed the least and don't overlook um things that might seem just really boring or mundane as well it doesn't have to be like you know cleaning cupboards or you know whatever you know like but just keep it really

I.i.32:00

open if you can once you're inside the building can you recall the place that you were kind of most attracted to being in

Kate:

All right um I really like the hole in the wall that was my that was my favourite thing I mean it was that whole yay look at me I'm (she laughs) up in the hole

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

And I think it was just a a period of my life too where you know the higher up I could be the better so

Russell:

How old were you then do you think

Kate:
I was um in my mid twenties late twenties

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Kate:**
Yeah um my least favourite [unintelligible]

**Russell:**
Which did you like actually passing through the hole or being looked at going through the hole or was it being on one side of the hole or

**Kate:**
I think it was a combination it would start with just being on the one side

**Russell:**
Yeah the

**Kate:**
And it was just at that moment of

**Russell:**
The private side

**Kate:**
Yeah the private side so that

**Russell:**
So we used weight and it was sort of um we were countered so it looked like you had no legs but you could hang right over the edge

**Kate:**
No because what we did initially was um we just came out with our bodies that's right we came out head first

**Russell:**
Oh right

**Kate:**
Then yeah as we came out as we came out down the hole it was lowered

**Russell:**
All right
So initially there was like no pre I mean there was a rope hanging over the water but not from the hole and I really enjoyed the little alcovey area too

Russell:
For just sitting
Kate:
Just for sitting there
Russell:
And watching
Kate:
For for and watching
Russell:
And socialising
Kate:
I really don’t like those I mean I
Russell:
Where were they
Kate:
Just on the ground so that you know people that slip in the showers
Russell:
So because oh because the floor was wet
Kate:
Yeah
Russell:
Yeah
Kate:
Because the floor was wet in some parts like main thoroughfares
Russell:
Yeah
Kate:
They would put them down
Russell:
Over what surface though if it was
Kate:
Over the tiled surface
Russell:
They were so the tiled surface
Kate:
Yeah
Russell:
And then on it was rubber mats
Kate:
Those they were sort of they’re sort of
I suppose the nonslip things that you get in pools or just

Russell:
Yeah
Kate:
in public you know saunas and and things
Russell:
So what didn’t you like about them
Kate:
I don’t know I mean I saw (she laughs a little)
Russell:
That’s interesting no no it’s really interesting
Kate:
It’s more that thing of like I just it’s that whole you know thing of like oh they’re just I’m sure they all get hosed down and I actually saw you know we saw the cleaners in there and everything’s taken up
Russell:
Yeah
Kate:
and gets hosed down but just all the bits of hair and slime (she laughs) [unintelligible]
Russell:
But did you actually see bits of hair and slime
Kate:
No I saw bits of hair there and I just
Russell:
Oh yeah
Kate:
I.i.35:30
You know a little bit you know sort of go oh you know would just [unintelligible]
Russell:

were you wondering whether it was men’s hair or women’s hair or it was just just hair
Kate:
It was just hair
Russell:
Yeah
Kate:
It was just like more that that icky and I mean I didn’t sort of get down and check to see if there was you know mould and stuff I was a bit but it was just that you know I think more that sensation of walking on it
Russell:
Yeah
Kate:
And it’s all sort of a bit squishy and
Russell:
Did you have bare feet
Kate:
Yeah yeah
Russell:
How were you dressed
Kate:
What did I have oh I did I wore um we had we got these costumes from Rose Chong which were um
I.i.35:30
ah gold lame but they were knitted and they were the style of older circus costumes
Russell:
Oh wow
Kate:
I.i.36:00
So they were sort of all in one with um a little collar and a little tiny gold fringe around a sort of waist and I was wearing um I had a string of pearls long string of pearls which I had around around my neck and my hair was tied up in little thingies I had a white face sort of a slightly whiter face um
which I  yeah I think I sort of ended up wearing that most of the night  um

Russell:
Did you spend  did you spend any time in the sauna or the steam room

Kate:
Ah no

Russell:
No

Kate:
Or did I  no I did go into the  into the steam room

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
And there would be like about  oh at one point you know sort of you know maybe eight  you know eight  eight people in there  eight women in there just sort of sitting around lounging talking

i.i.37:00
well the times that I went in there there were all these people just chatting  um

Russell:
And you didn’t stay in the steam room yourself

Kate:
Mm I stayed for a wee bit but then just got a bit too hot anyway  physically

Russell:
What happened to your make-up

Kate:
Oh that  that all came off  that  that sort of you know I think I ended up just going actually removing it because it was just a bit too

Russell:
much

Kate:
A bit too much (she laughs)  yeah  but it was really you know I was there and again like um

i.i.37:30
yeah um lots and lots of people that I knew and also you know past you know sort of um you know relationships there as well and so I’m just trying to think whether at that time whether I was really keen on anyone in particular  mm not really  oh yeah  not really again I  it’s just the thing like you know this is  hey maybe this might be a thing that could you know continue so I was quite

i.i.38:00
felt quite you know good about you know being part of that

Russell:
If  if a place like that were to be built for women and you had a say in the design what would be some of your priorities

Kate:
Oh would have to be really beautiful walk-in bath (she laughs)  beautifully tiled

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
Um

Russell:
A walk-in bath

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
Rather than  was

Kate:
Oh I’m sorry  no  like sort of ste  ah still sort of steps

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
i.i.38:30
I think coming in
Russell:
Does the pool have steps into it and do you think of it as a bath

Kate:
I think it does no it does actually one side no more to where the sauna is I don’t think there’s actually a oh sorry in that where that little what I was describing where the wall was with the hole

Russell:
Yeah yeah

Kate:
And that little alcovey piece there

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
Um the water it was almost like another little level so you could get up

Russell:
Oh yes so what

Kate:
Another little separate

Russell:
But you’re now talking about rather than a pool you’re talking about a bath

Kate:
Oh but a very big

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
I suppose bath-pool um

Russell:
Yeah so warm and

Kate:
Warm and I would have salt water I wouldn’t have chlorinated water I want it to be yeah um and possibly have little fountains too

Russell:
Oh yeah

Kate:
Fountains um and just really um just areas which possib um which were sort of glassed so that you could actually well as much as you can see into a steamy room

but you know from the outside to be able to look into it um yeah I think the thing is having having salt water and

Russell:
What what’s your associations with the chlorinated water

Kate:
Ah I just don’t like the smell

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
Um it burns my eyes a bit

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
Just that [unintelligible]

Russell:
Was it heavily chlorinated there

Kate:
No no

I mean you could smell it again like in the air and but I didn’t find it overly like being in the water it wasn’t sort of overly

Russell:
Do you remember first smelling the chlorinated smell

Kate:
Yeah almost when you come into the into the foyer area in the first little bit

Russell:
Right yep it's it's so it's that far into the building
Kate:
Yep

Russell:
Like even though that's a fair way from the pool
Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
Right okay and (the telephone rings) I'm going to let that go
Kate:
Okay

Russell:
In fact I'll just I.i.40:30 turn that down
Kate:
Sure

Russell:
(I walk into the next room, turn down the volume on the telephone, and return) That's all right
Kate:
What else yeah I suppose yeah just I suppose the aesthetic description of the pool um and again having um steam rooms dry dry and steam saunas and um I.i.41:00 actually a little diversion there um being in Sydney there's the Korean Bath House which has

Russell:
Oh yeah I've heard people talk about this yeah
Kate:
Yeah which is great because they have a woman's bath and a men's bath
Russell:
Yeah
Kate:
and it's all set up too as um having lots of little showers all little hand held showers and low benches and mirrors um they like a ginseng pool and then they have like a hot pool and a cold pool and a wet sauna and a dry sauna and then a whole sort of um section of where you can have um massages and they're all Korean women who speak very little English (I laugh a little) and they wear little bra tops and

Russell:
Yeah
Kate:
funny little cotton pants and you can have either you know sort of twenty minute or you know a full hour massage with all that
Russell:
And this excites you more
Kate:
Yeah (she laughs) um not that it excites me more I just I mean that sort of pampering type of thing
Russell:
Yeah
Kate:
I really that sort of indulgent thing I quite
Russell:
Do you feel that when you're at Volcano there just wasn't enough of that
Kate:

Oh it was a completely different thing I think or whether yeah I suppose that's the for me like to have like and then whether it does you know branch out to um having um you know sort of um sexual contact and etcetera but to set it up like that

I.i.42:30

I think would be much better [unintelligible]

Russell:

Yep um I want to ask you um a couple of questions that might seem a bit odd but they're pretty open so just you know take them any way you like really um how did you when you were there did you have a sense of at times feeling not quite yourself or at times

I.i.43:00

feeling very much yourself like being oh yeah I'm really Kate now or oh I feel a bit out of place like I'm not really me or anything like that and I'm wondering if you can just tell me a bit about that

Kate:

Um I pretty much felt like I was me and yeah

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

And that was all fine and I didn't feel um anxious at any point or um

I.i.43:30

like or that I was really out of place and I think because of the nature of the fact that I had done a you know I had actually done a performance there um which was sort of myself and sort of not myself which was great so I could play play with that um which you know I mean you do to an extent if you go out and dance for you know a night or whatever um

Russell:

You as sometimes yourself or you're playing with being yourself

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

but not being I.i.44:00

yourself as well

Kate:

Yeah yeah sort of a little

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

playing around with um being neither you know and then I suppose that other thing of being then flirtatious too

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

Like um do that but yeah I felt really yeah I think it was the thing like yeah this would be great to have as an ongoing thing just where women can go and just even if it's just to

I.i.44:30

sit around and chat but you've got a water environment which um is great it's just such a you know and it means that people can

Russell:

It's such a what

Kate:

Ah the water environment

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

um is such a um it's quite it is very sensuous it's you know it's really and most of the time you know if you're hanging around in water you wear you're wearing little clothing um which then I don't know within this society I think it's still pretty hard you know

I.i.45:00

whether it be men or women that whole thing of like you know you just sitting around without any clothing on so immediately you know well there's all these sort of little things that get put up and but if it is an ongoing
thing that um people can actually [sic] quite relaxed about it and yeah

Russell:
Um you said really early on that I think you said
I.i.45:30
you couldn’t go there when men are there

Kate:
Oh only because I wouldn’t be allowed I think well no I think but yeah

Russell:
Do you think you could pass

Kate:
Oh probably not at the moment (we laugh) um

Russell:
It’s never occurred to you

Kate:
It’s never occurred to me no probably no I probably wouldn’t I mean I’d have to walk around
I.i.46:00
you know with a pretty high towel but then but no maybe that’s not

Russell:
Do you think that women do go there

Kate:
Probably do

Russell:
For what purposes

Kate:
Um

Russell:
What do you imagine their purposes are

Kate:
It’d be to watch I’d say oh wow it’s quite intriguing actually hmm

Russell:
What about um people whose gender isn’t specified by the male or female

Kate:
Right [unintelligible: I was just going to say?] yeah um whether they would go there

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
Yeah I’d say they would I hope they do

Russell:
Do is there something about the place that you associate with men from being there did you feel like

Kate:
No I didn’t

Russell:
you were occupying a male place

Kate:
No no

Russell:
Right

Kate:
It wasn’t that at all no

Russell:
Right

Kate:
So I mean it was just a very you know
I.i.47:00
this is just you know baths and showers it’s a pool you know

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
So it wasn’t  no I didn’t get any

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
of that at all

Russell:
Did did you feel like that it was a female place

Kate:
It was a bit more sort of non-gender really it was

Russell:
Ungendered

Kate:
Ungendered it was

Russell:
Yeah I mean the fact that the night that I was there I mean it was obviously occupied by women but I didn’t get yeah I didn’t get that sense it was more that it was it was a venue it I mean to me it was actually more like a nightclub

Russell:
Right

Kate:
Yeah I mean the fact that the night that I was there I mean it was obviously occupied by women but I didn’t get yeah I didn’t get that sense it was more that it was it was a venue it I mean to me it was actually more like a nightclub

Russell:
Oh yeah

Kate:
or more just you know just people [unintelligible]

Russell:
On arrival or on departure

Kate:
Um more on the sort of departure or even as the night went on like people would go there and just hang out

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
in the locker in the locker areas as well

Russell:
Oh yeah

Kate:
So

Russell:
And so and that was kind of like um an erotically inviting place then you think generally

Kate:
Um

Russell:
Or do you think just for you or

Kate:
Um I think it was just for me

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
and that was just that um yeah just because I had you know spent a bit of time there I think and um so yeah [unintelligible] oh and and well I mean the steam rooms too

Russell:
that was you know the steam

Kate:
That was erotically inviting

Russell:
They were yeah

Kate:
You mentioned however when you went in there

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
there’d be eight or nine women chatting

Russell:
Yeah but there was still that thing of I think it’s that thing of like you know because you can’t really see

Kate & Russell:
Right

Kate:
And sometimes it it would be really quiet you know you would be there for a period of time and you wouldn’t hear very much

Russell:
Oh yeah

Kate:
Apart from just ssssssteam

Russell:
Yeah when you say you can’t really see is is there light in there or

Kate:
It’s very very low light

Russell:
Oh yeah

Kate:
So it’s quite sort of shadowy

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
Um

Russell:
and we’re [where?] just incredibly steamy

Kate:
How close would you have needed to’ve been to have been able to see a person’s face

Kate:
Um probably I don’t know probably (she brings her face near to mine) be about a bit more than that (she laughs a little)

Russell:
So that’s what we’re about thirty

Kate & Russell:
centimetres away (*Kate laughs*)

**Russell:**
Right okay right okay fine okay just for the record

**Kate:**
Yep

**Russell:**
Um is there anything you want to ask me

**Kate:**
Um oh right um

**Russell:**
Preferably not theoretical

**Kate:**
Okay

**Russell:**
But I’m quite happy to I mean you’ve offered me a lot

**Kate:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
so I’m happy to plunge (*I laugh a little*)

**Kate:**
Okay um (*a silence*) um I can’t think at the moment um

**Russell:**
That’s all right if it comes up ask um have you had conversations since that event about

**Kate:**
that event with people

**Russell:**
You’ve talked with me today about it have you talked with any other men

**Kate:**
I.i.51:30
not really no so mm I’d like to actually I should’ve talk to them about it yeah

**Russell:**
Well I’m here (*we laugh*)

**Kate:**
Yeah can I I mean can I ask you

**Russell:**
Yeah absolutely

**Kate:**
whether you that you know whether you you frequent saunas or is that forward

**Russell:**
I’ve I’ve been to saunas I’ve been to *Volcano*

**Kate:**
You’ve been to *Volcano* yeah

**Russell:**
Yeah yeah I’ve been there

**Kate:**
I.i.52:00
um ah I’d say many times now many times like I’ve lost count
Kate: Right

Russell: of how many times I’ve been

Kate: And can I ask you also

Russell: Yeah yeah

Kate: whether yeah whether you um are there to watch participate or

Russell: I’ve gone for different reasons at different occasions um sometimes I’ve gone there for long long binges of like I’d know I’m going to be there for hours ah I.i.52:30 like a minimum of six or seven hours maybe and there’ve been one or two times when I’ve known I’ve had an hour or two only up my sleeve and I’ve felt what do I could I do and just suddenly realised oh it’s in the vicinity I could just go there for a while and I don’t think I’ve ever gone there with an expectation a high expectation or need I.i.53:00 to have sex but um I’ve had sex there and I’ve often gone there I’ve often gone there with an open agenda I have sometimes gone there thinking I just want to use the facilities and that’s happened and I’ve left feeling fantastic you know just not you know no disappointment I.i.53:30 um so I’ve gone there for different purposes at different times sometimes it’s been like it’s a project like I I mean the fact that I’m researching them is because I’m just immensely curious about these places as much as I’m a participant and I guess that means I’m curious about myself as well um so they’re the different kinds of reasons I’ve gone but I’ve been to other ones in Melbourne as well

Kate: I.i.54:00

Russell: Oh the places change

Kate: Yeah the places

Russell: Yeah they do actually they they can be quite different um and I’m sure that sets up um something I mean they I mean Volcano itself has physically I.i.54:30 altered I think since you were there um and also um there are one or two things that are in your memory that are different from

Kate: Absolutely right

Russell: But I think there are some of those are because it has physically altered um one of the things I’ve noticed about a place like Volcano is it so when you say are the places different sometimes they’re different from themselves Volcano has physically changed over the last three years I.i.55:00 in a number of ways there are some things that seem to be consistent and some things that change like suddenly a hole in the wall opens up and there’s a new doorway passing through to another area um there’s a whole new restaurant and bar area

Kate: Right

Russell: So the place itself can is dynamic and changes but yeah then different places have different kinds of um I guess aes yeah aesthetics I.i.55:30 but it’s got something to do I guess with how much money looks like has been spent

Kate: Yeah

Russell: What the problems were in the space that they had to start with and how they’ve had to
solve those um who they think they want to
attract as clients you know but um some are
small some are very very big like Volcano
is now bigger than when you were there

Kate:
Wow

Russell:
Much bigger um

Kate:

Russell:
And that features in some of the advertising
rhetoric as well

Kate:
Right

Russell:
And it’s like a I’ve heard what you said
about the mats (we laugh) um so yeah so
there so I mean they’re the places are
different

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
And my attraction will vary they’re um
there’s at least one place I’ve been to once
only

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
and don’t feel inclined to ever visit again and
another place that I’ve visited once only but
only because it opened recently and I’m
interested in going back there cos the
facilities are really good

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:

Kate:

at some stage um but I it depends on my
mood sometimes I want neat and tidy and
sometimes grubby is interesting (we laugh a
little)

Kate:

Russell:
When you say frequent I mean you asked
me did I frequent them and now you’re using
the term yourself

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
Would you frequent them what what do you
associate

Kate:
Frequenting would be to do it like

Russell:
Like you don’t say visit (I laugh a little)

Kate:
Visit (she laughs) visit [unintelligible] frequent frequent to me means more than
you know a couple of times in a week say
[unintelligible]

Russell:
Do you think of frequenting a club

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah you do think of frequenting a club
okay so

Kate:
Yeah, frequent um not that I actually really use the word that much but yeah.

**Russell:**

But I’d be more likely to go to a cinema a couple of times a week.

**Kate:**

Yeah.

**Russell:**

than I would be to a sauna.

**Kate:**

Yeah.

**Russell:**

I guess I imagine there are people who go to saunas.

**Kate:**

Yeah.

**Russell:**

um more than once a week. I don’t have any kind of regularity myself about my thoughts about that. Like it’s it’s not like um

**Kate:**

Maybe for some people it is.

**Russell:**

Yeah.

**Kate:**

Maybe that’s what it is and the whole thing of like yeah that you can go there and have well yeah you can go there and have sex and it’s absolutely there’s no you know there’s well apart there’s you know no further commitment blah blah blah all that sort of stuff. I mean you could go to a club and do that too I suppose.

**Russell:**

but I don’t know because it I suppose it creates an environment where you can spend you know x amount of hours and um yeah and you can move around in those areas. I mean there are dry areas that you can be in you can know go full on in the wet area or you can just go there and watch
I'm sure it you know for all those reasons which is really

**Russell:**

I really enjoy watching what's happening

**Kate:**

Yeah hmm

**Russell:**

around me but I feel like

*li.60:30*

it's odd I can't tell like I feel like I'm studying what's happening around me I don't mean professionally

**Kate:**

Yeah yeah

**Russell:**

But I feel like the things that for instance from my background as a director is all about kind of watching

**Kate:**

Yep

**Russell:**

things you know that's what directors do

**Kate:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

And try and understand it and I think that's something I find myself involved in there except I can't be separate there I find there's no it's there's no

*li.61:00*

offstage to watch from *(I laugh a little)* so I feel like I'm onstage

**Kate:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

whenever I am there

**Kate:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

ah most of the time you when you were performing I guess you felt very very much onstage

**Kate:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

After go on

**Kate:**

Yeah um yeah again it it was the thing to it was the the height the added thing of this is also incredibly site specific

**Russell:**

Yes

**Kate:**

*li.61:30*

We hadn't really run through it I mean we had we tried technically is this okay you know can we do this this and this and then we talked about I suppose briefly talked about what what we wanted to actually achieve I mean what were we doing or what and the idea was um I suppose we just began having those Romantic images of you know sort of um turn of you know not actually turn of the century but um the water nymph

*li.62:00*

scenario um you know the it's you know a little bit of it's stuff you know between two women and we were it was quite sort of um I suppose it was really quite sort of subtle in a way too it was quite um suggestive of lots of stuff I mean you're coming through a hole in the wall you're dripping wet you know your clothes are riding up you know it's all and then you know

*li.62:30*

you sort of intertwine with somebody else and that you know there's all those sorts of possibilities were happening within this piece

**Russell:**

When when your performance was over and then you were just another person for the rest of the night were you just another person or was your performance persona
something that you were walking around with in the building do you think

Kate:

Um I suppose to a certain extent I mean oh yeah

Russell:

Like were you still in the costume

Kate:

Oh no I took the costume off

Russell:

Oh right

Kate:

Yeah but my hair was for a little while I wore it

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

Just for a wee bit and then because it was quite incredibly uncomfortable (she laughs) I wanted to take it off [unintelligible] um and then I think the hair you know the remnants of the hair and then the make-up was mostly gone

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

And just architecturally knowing not you know not structure [unintelligible] to a certain extent you know I was able to go you know sort of to the you know staff-only bits go up the stairs and um

Russell & Kate:

And

Russell:

Go on

Kate:

Oh sorry just again like the thing too and also I think like doing a performance because whether it you know even if it’s in a theatre um the thing about getting to know a space too if you know

Russell:
Yeah yeah but you tell me more though

Kate:

Okay (she laughs) I suppose yeah

Russell:

I’d like to hear more about that

Kate & Russell:

getting to know

Russell:

a space

Kate:

And for me I suppose getting to know a space is I mean structurally I mean physically where I can be within the space

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

And that’s often again um using a or being in places that

I.i.65:30 either defy gravity to a certain extent um

Russell:

Because you do aerial work often

Kate:

Yeah I do I do aerial work often yeah ah so um and that just immediately for me um once I’ve done that you know even just done that that um the space is so mine or I just feel so well incredibly comfortable um and that sort of s I think spills through

I.i.66:00 um you can carry that with you so that you can for example like go into a club or go you know to a certain thing and a s you know event or whatever and as much as you know how you also carry yourself can or how much you know you make a space yours too so if you you know you enter a space going okay I’m just going to take it all in and you can do that because you can sort of you know just

I.i.66:30 walk into a space and you look at ooh you know visually

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

what it does for you um but then also because I’ve also spent time where I’ve gone to lots of derelict places as well and also somethi getting things out of those places too like something that really creeps me you know places that have certain smells and it’s a little bit of a weird little thing of how far can I push myself you know can I crawl under the bowels of you know a particular theatre

I.i.67:00 you know with you know little fraction above my head you know little torch in my mouth but can I get up into the rafters of North Melbourne Town Hall and you know rig things and you know set up sort of situations so little bit I suppose diverging but yeah I mean those things are really I suppose quite important for me as a performer in terms of

Russell:

So so does the performance stop then like after you’ve done the performance

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

I.i.67:30 and then you’re walking around Volcano the rest of that night does the performance stop or is there another perfo

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

Is there or does it go into part two

Kate:

Yeah it does I mean that’s I think also entirely how I tend to feel too like I can go

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:
okay you know sometimes you know just being on a high and then you sort of go um yeah just being quite open to seeing how things happen um you know progress in a night as well

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:

L.I.68:00
So yeah I think so that can be like you know you can look at anything and go okay this is you know this is a performance or this is yeah

Russell:
What about the you talked about ah being flirtatious um would I be correct in assuming that that’s a kind of a performance

Kate:
Yeah it is yeah

Russell:
Okay all right how do you
L.I.68:30
how well from what you can recall of that night at Volcano how did what were the things about the place that actually were available to you to help you be more flirtatious or that you could work with in being flirtatious do you know what I mean like

Kate:
Right

Russell:
Or the things that were problems or the things that were really you know yeah that can really help me here
L.I.69:00
about being flirtatious

Kate:
Um I’m not there I’m not too sure what

Russell:
Was there something about the building

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:
that you were able to use like it was a set or a prop in the performance you’re making of yeah okay

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
I’m gunna do I’m gunna be flirtatious now okay so

Kate:
You mean are you meaning while
L.I.69:30
I was performing

Russell:
No

Kate:
Afterwards afterwards

Russell:
Afterwards yeah afterwards I mean you talked about being flirtatious moving around later

Kate:
(slowly) Yeah

Russell:
and you know flirting with people was there anything about that or was there ways in which the environment was getting in the way

Kate:
Right oh no I think well for me I think it’s the thing you can be standing in a doorway for you know a period of time and that can do it for you or you can
L.I.70:00
um be you know sort of like bouncing around the middle of you know a large group and that can do it for you so I suppose it’s just choosing I suppose choosing those those um yeah I suppose areas that you yeah want to have yeah want that to happen or you can just it’s because you
can put yourself in a situation where there’s you know where a particular energy is happening which you know makes you go wow I’m really quite

Russell:
So the actual um physical environment’s not particularly relevant

Kate:
Um not no maybe not

Russell:
Well let’s go back to the steam room you mentioned for instance being able to see someone’s face required you need

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
Need to be about thirty centimetres away did you have any experience of the flirting in the steam room

Kate:
Um (a silence) ah not really but I think what ah sort of getting a bit of a gist of what you’re um meaning I think then physically yes physically being closer to um oh I keep trying to think

Russell:

There’s no right answers

Kate:
Yeah oh yeah sure there’s no I’m just trying to work it out in my brain what I’m trying to say

Russell:
Just because I’m asking a question

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
I agree with that (I laugh)

Kate:
you’re expecting so much stuff and you just you’re so bogged down
and then you don’t see anything at all so absolutely I think the no expectation’s probably the best one of the best lines I think being in that frame I think helps a lot yeah and I think then also because it was the nature of being you know performing and too that whole thing of like you know you’ve had all these people watching you so therefore you know for this you know it’s your you know you know five minutes of fame so you have actually you know sort of put yourself out there more yet and um and

I.i.73:00

people do look at you quite differently you know afterwards whether you’re still wearing your costume whether they’re just remnants but people remember you so you’ve got this sometimes it’s a bit weird because people don’t they are a little bit reticent to sometimes approach you or say anything or they’ll just so that’s sometimes a bit weird hang on not really weird but it’s a yeah it just sometimes it’s almost like this little there is a bit of a distance that has

I.i.73:30

has sort of um been created or something could I just go to the toilet

Russell:

Oh yeah maybe we’ll just stop there

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah we’ll stop there

Kate:

Beautiful

Russell:

That’s fine that’s perfect

(I switch off the minidisc recorder)

I.i.73:44

END OF CONVERSATION
appendix 3: Randy I

The following transcript documents a conversation with Randy that took place on a sunny weekday afternoon by the lake at Melbourne’s Royal Botanical Gardens. Native bellbirds pealed while we talked. Other birdcalls, distant traffic and passers-by were recorded on the minidisc, too, but none of this is noted below. Randy sipped from and toyed with a bottle of soft drink throughout.

Russell:

I.i.00:00
Um the first question I want to ask you is when you were born was Randy the name you were given

Randy:

Is Randy my given name

Russell:

Yeah when you were born

Randy:

Yeah it’s um my actual full name is actually Friedrich Randy Joshua Marcs

Russell:

Right

Randy:

Um but Randy is the name my parents always used if that makes sense

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

Like um I don’t really know what the reason was I think um I got the name Friedrich from a colleague my parents used to work with who they had a lot of respect for so that’s how that came in and he was German and that’s the link to that name but um Randy was one that both my parents picked together that had meaning to them I suppose so that’s how that came about

Russell:

I.i.01:00
And so even though Friedrich is the first name in your name Randy then is the name you’ve picked up on but partly because your parents kind of picked up on that

Randy:

Yeah yeah and I suppose er I mean they always call me Randy and I just never found it peculiar that Friedrich was my first name and I was never called that for me it was just like oh they just call me Randy so that must be who I am

Russell:

Right

Randy:

If that does that

Russell:

That’s very helpful yeah

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

That’s all right

Randy:

So I mean it’s it’s that’s probably why I respond to that name but I mean Friedrich to me still has a lot of significance in terms of um I suppose maybe more symbolic of um but it just seems too wanky for me to use it like

I.i.01:30
people have suggested like since I’ve started with the art thing and er you know why not use Friedrich you know it sounds really wanky but I’m like no I don’t see myself as being um Friedrich seems to suggest you know that whole level of like being European that sort of thing and I’m I don’t know but yeah Randy is as well but you know it’s for me it just seems like it’s trying a little bit too hard

Russell:

So when you you cut yourself off a moment ago you said er it’s symbolic of was it symbolic of what
Randy:

Oh it it seems oh it’s symbolic a part of like I mean it’s part

Russell:

A bit different from what

Randy:

A bit different from um I suppose a more English culture a more English-based culture you know where Randy John um you know Chris fairly sort of yeah like it’s not a very common name I suppose outside the place where it really comes from um and in many ways I think um like my parents actually don’t have a Sri Lankan name because their heritage sort of is a bit more spread out than that

Russell:

You weren’t born in Sri Lanka were you

Randy:

Er no I was born in um the Middle East / laugh/ um yeah of all places my parents were working there at the time and so that’s where I happened to be and um I spent the first eight years of my life there and travelling around sort of Arabia

Russell:

When you um we’ll get on to all those parts that are you maybe in a minute

Randy:

Okay

Russell:

but um when you talk about um your identity being all screwed up is that how you actually experience it or is that just a turn of phrase or something else

Randy:

So what was your citizenship at birth

Randy:

Um I guess I was um Middle Eastern I suppose er a particular Middle Eastern nation was I had my passport there you know

Russell:

Right
No it is er it is the way I experience it in some ways because I think um I mean well people are really into classifying everything you know so one of the questions that you’ll always hear is you know you know [sic] are you male or female or where do you come from you know

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Randy:**

Country of origin seems to be something that really is important to people and I don’t know how to reply when people say where are you from well I was born in the Middle East does that make me Middle Eastern my parents were born in Sri Lanka but their heritage isn’t necessarily Sri Lankan so does that make me Sri Lankan like so it’s just a mixture of um and it it really is I mean I look through some of the photographs and stuff that my parents have and it’s it really is it’s Dutch-English on my dad’s side and African-Portuguese on my mum’s um my parents were both born in Sri Lanka um I was born in the Middle East and now I’m an Australian citizen so I in terms of a culture I don’t really know where I come from so I just say Australian these days and if push comes to shove I suppose I look Sri Lankan so I just say that you know I’m Sri Lankan and I just cut a long story short um but to me really I think it’s more important to accept it as a sum of all those parts rather than compromising for one bit do you know what I mean

**Russell:**

Right yeah

**Randy:**

I mean to me personally I mean I if you know if I’m just trying to make a long story short I’ll say whatever’s comfortable but

**Russell:**

When you say you look Sri Lankan

**Randy:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

What are you referring to

**Randy:**

Um oh

**Russell:**

How is it that you look Sri Lankan

**Randy:**

Well I’m not particularly Sri Lankan I suppose yeah maybe you know Indian Asian Indo-Asian maybe something like that so um I guess I don’t know I guess I look a certain way I look I look different whatever it is you know

**Russell:**

Different from

**Randy:**

Different from come from so I just say Australian these days and if push comes to shove I suppose I look Sri Lankan so I just say that you know I’m Sri Lankan and I just cut a long story short um but to me really I think it’s more important to accept it as a sum of all those parts rather than compromising for one bit do you know what I mean

**Russell:**

Right yeah

**Randy:**

I mean to me personally I mean I if you know if I’m just trying to make a long story short I’ll say whatever’s comfortable but

**Russell:**

When you say you look Sri Lankan

**Randy:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

Have you experienced people speaking to you in those terms or is this something you imagine happens for other people

**Randy:**

Um

**Russell:**
when they encounter you

Randy:

A bit of both. I think I can’t escape the fact that I’m aware of how I look even though that’s not necessarily

I.i.08:00

how I look doesn’t necessarily relate to how I feel about myself which is something different altogether but then yeah no people do I mean there’s there’s inescapable things that you know people do treat me differently or something. I mean I don’t think it’s all I won’t put it all down to paranoia or anything like that but um I mean classical classic classical things are people you know speaking really slowly to me sometimes because they don’t think I know English or um you know I

I.i.08:30

sometimes I mean at the moment I’m like doing some producing work or when I was doing my art work and organising spaces it would be a case of um I’d speak to someone on the phone and they’d see me in real life and they’d be taken aback you know they’d just like they didn’t expect to see me whatever me was

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

You know they had a completely different image which is just I mean that’s pretty typical I mean like I listen to voices on the radio and I go you get an image of what someone looks you think what they look like you know maybe it’s a mixture of fantasy and I don’t know what and then you see them in real life and maybe they

I.i.09:00

don’t relate to that as much

Russell:

Hmm

Randy:

So I don’t think there’s anything wrong with that and I’d be lying if I said that I didn’t make those sort of judgements too so you know

Russell:

How

Randy:

[unintelligible]

Russell:

(I wait while Randy drinks) Have you experienced um have you experienced er I.i.09:30

this phenomenon (Randy laughs) in relation to err any of your visits to saunas at any stage is there an incident or is there a series of incidents that spring to mind

Randy:

Um in terms of being received differently or something like that

Russell:

Yeah that the kinds of issues you’ve been discussing about to do with your identity have they come into play in your visits to saunas

I.i.10:00

Randy:

In some ways in actually pardon me in some really rather unsubtle ways sometimes but usually um it’s I actually don’t think I actually go into a sauna with I mean I’m used to being around myself all the time so it’s not like I’m aware of exactly you know er I’m aware of all these things about myself when I go out you know so when I go into a sauna I I’m just sort of me you know without

I.i.10:30

thinking about anything and then things will happen which will just make me realise oh my god you know this what someone else thinks of me you know is this what my look means to them I suppose I mean there’s been times where um you know I’ve been with guys and um all of a sudden they’ll they’ll do this whole treat me like this Thai massage boy or something like that (I laugh a little) which is just really weird because I mean there’s this whole thing that instantly maybe like I don’t know maybe

I.i.11:00

maybe it’s the fact they have this idea about what Asians are and that we’re like supposedly submissive and you know that’s what we do you know like that’s a part of our cultural practice or something or I don’t know where it really comes from but it suddenly just makes me really aware and I just sort of feel uncomfortable with that

Russell:
Er can you describe an example of what it is of what being treated like a Thai massage boy is (Randy laughs a little) like I don’t know so

Randy:

Oh what’s it like oh okay oh sorry okay well

Russell:

So what

i.i.11:30

if you can think of a specific example that actually occurred and tell me

Randy:

Yeah yeah okay this was actually my first ever visit to a sauna

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

And um I’d I’d been there for like you know I’d got off a couple of times and this was maybe the second or third time and I went into the cubicle with this guy and then um you know we just started the whole kissing thing and all of a sudden he laid on his stomach and he said oh you know well would you give me a massage which I thought was okay well why not

Russell:

(I laugh a little) Yeah

Randy:

You know I thought

i.i.12:00
gee that’s rather peculiar um and all of a sudden as I started doing that I just sort of went I thought to myself what am I doing you know like is this is this his fantasy is this like what am I really playing into and then um I think he might have made some sort of references to um you know that I was doing it well and you know was this something that I did um I did regularly or something like that which seems really insane to say but yeah he said that and of course I laughed with it and

i.i.12:30

then I realised what was going on and then I just played along with it and enjoyed it in a sort of subversive way you know like completely understanding what I was doing but still participating in it for a sick sense of enjoyment like seeing how far it can go you know

Russell:

So you took on a role as it were

Randy:

I did

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

Um if only to I guess I just wanted to see how much he really believed what he was into you know like and I don’t think he actually realised

i.i.13:00

the difference between me playing the role and me just like me consciously playing the role and me actually doing what I was doing so it was a case of like he thought maybe maybe it was wrong because he thought I was perpetuating the myth by actually doing what he wanted but I thought it was funny so I just did it and I walked out and it was a bit of a laugh and I’ll still remember it you know forever um but yeah it did make me kind of aware of that sort of thing what a bizarre thing to do I know I was just sitting there I was going oh

Russell:

Bizarre on whose part

Randy:

Um

i.i.13:30

both

Russell:

Right

Randy:

For me actually taking it on and him actually asking me to do it

Russell:

Did it ever occur to you that he might be playing out a role
Randy:

Um I thought that at first but I actually think that he no no I didn’t actually get the sense that he was actually playing anything and that’s what initially I was testing I just thought you know is he serious or not but I had a feeling he was actually quite serious and I mean stuff that went through my head initially you know when I realised I.i.14:00 what was going on I thought how many other boys would he have done this to and would they just have played along with it and yeah I I mean I just thought that would be particularly interesting I mean I do know um from experiences just chatting with other Asian guys in saunas and stuff like that it I do sort of get the sense that you know people sort of sometimes expect um expect Asian people just to you know to smile and you know and then of course I.i.14:30 you know he’s slim and thin so he must be a bottom and just really simple things like that which I kind of get I’m I mean I sometimes I think that you know look at someone who’s particularly effeminate or um or whatever and and you make assumptions

Russell:

Have you done that

Randy:

Oh I think I have

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

I mean because there’s some guys that I just go oh well you know well I’m not sure but I reckon they would be you know er a bottom or they’d be you know passive

Russell:

How do you tell

Randy:

How do I tell

Russell: Yeah

Randy:

Okay I guess I just base it on the whole stereotype of well you know if I guess for me effeminate equates itself with being passive which I know through my personal practice now that that’s not necessarily true because I consider myself to be you know along the sort of along the scheme of things reasonably effeminate um and I enjoy that part of myself as well like I enjoy the fact that I’m not completely butch and I.i.15:30 all that sort of thing I can be maybe a bit of both um but yeah I that’s sort of how I tell there’s a stereotype in my head and I just go yeah you know um

Russell:

Can you can you think of a particular person you’ve made that assessment of and describe that person to me

Randy:

That’s hard

Russell:

Someone in a sauna I’m thinking of

Randy:

Oh okay someone in a sauna um

Russell:

Where you’ve looked at them and even if it was just not someone you personally hooked up with

Randy:

Yeah um I.i.16:00 there’s nothing really real nothing really comes to mind um oh gosh I mean I can think back to a couple of months ago when I went to a sauna and there was um there was a couple of boys together and I remember um they actually really seemed to have that distinct different look you know one was very muscular very very toned and very masculine looking and by that I mean you know um sort of you know sort of five I.i.16:30 o’clock shadow type of thing and you know even the way he carried himself it was it
was like this macho performance down the aisle

Russell:
Yeah

Randy:
Down the corridors whereas the other one was you know um lispy throwing his hands about everywhere um and it was very distinctly different types of people um and I suppose I just classify that as you know if I had to look at masculine feminine I mean that's the first thing that came into my head I just thought oh you know and even with my experience I mean of

I.i.17:00
of me being sort of effeminate looking and being active as well as passive things like that go through my head where I look at someone and I go oh yeah you know well they could be a bottom but then I think about myself and you go well you just never know you know um I mean even things like I was I was in a relationship which I just came out of which um I was with an older man who was um a Caucasian older man and of course the basis the assumption

I.i.17:30
everyone made um was of course that he would have sex with me or he would fuck me and um

Russell:
Anally

Randy:
Yeah I'm talking about anal sex yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Randy:
And of course um that was only true in about no that was only true probably about twenty percent of the time usually it was the other way round and um it was something that he didn't necessarily like people knowing and when people did find out if it because I mean

I.i.18:00
we were quite open about our sex lives and stuff he'd um sorry THEY would be really shocked to know to think that you know here I am and I'm you know having anal sex with this older man and I'm active so that was er I mean people were actually were shocked I mean they just you know um yeah and I mean getting back to that whole thing of um what other like experiences I've had of other people treating me differently there was um I mean there's so many people that you know when they found out um

I.i.18:30
that me and my partner were going out together they'd they'd look at me and look at him and they'd always make this assumption that oh you know there must be a reason you know of course I was after (I laugh a little) after money or something which of course he didn't have you know (I laugh) and if it wasn't that it would be something like um oh you know Randy must have a really big dick and that's why Stuart likes him and he's obviously into black men blah blah blah which is of course again not true because Stuart has had a variety of partners throughout his whole life

I.i.19:00
and so have I like we're neither of us are into I'm not just like into older men or anything like that and Stuart's just not into do you know what I mean like um

Russell:
Yeah

Randy:
So just really funny funny things like that funny things like that and of course people always um occasionally we'd go to openings and you'd expect you know these people who you know have been practising art for so long you know great performers intellectuals writers we're talking all these you know people who at least have a degree behind them or something and they've come up to me

I.i.19:30
and've you know because I look a little bit different I might be one of two or three non-white people in in the whole room of you know fifty to seventy people and you would get people occasionally coming up to me going h-e-l-o-w-h-a-t-i-s-y-o-u-r-n-a-m-e (I laugh) and there's and I've got to admit I'm I'm

Russell:
You're smiling does that give you a source of pleasure those memories

Randy:
Well it it does because it it’s I mean of course I find it hilarious at the time and I still do I mean what else I can’t really
I.i.20:00
moan about it because I have this sick sense of humour which actually likes to send some of that stuff up like um part of me just wants to play along with it and see how serious people are about it again like that um but I mean it’s been an interesting couple of years I think it’s only really in the past three or four years that I’ve become aware of myself as being outside like really being aware of what it means to be gay and what it means to be non-white and I don’t know whether that’s a barrier
I.i.20:30
whether I’ve put barriers up in front of myself because I never used to experience that before and I think it’s as a result of those experiences I mean certainly the sauna has made me aware of it in some ways um maybe not always through my own experience I mean I’ve you know I think I was talking to you about this um the last time we met and I was saying that I so many times I’ve gone to a sauna and like a guy will walk into a room where there’s a few Asian guys around and he’ll just like make this (he demonstrates) t-huh noise you know
I.i.21:00
and walk out like he’s so pissed off because there’s only Asian guys in the sauna that day and he’s not into them which look I then again I can’t blame I have a particular taste and there’s nothing wrong with I don’t necessarily think there’s anything wrong with like you don’t just you don’t have to like everyone but I think there’s a level of reaction which you know I don’t walk into a room full of white guys and go t-oh white men oh I’m so fed up you know (I laugh) so there’s I think there’s a certain way of reacting to it I mean I thought we were
I.i.21:30
the plague or something for a second and that didn’t actually happen to me but as as someone

Randy

Which sauna did this happen in

Randy:

Um it actually I think it might have been either Volcano or Rear Entry

Russell:

Okay well that the first interesting thing is you’re not quite sure which but you can remember the actual spatial structure though

Randy:

Hm

Russell:

Can you describe that to me please

Randy:

Yeah um it was
I.i.22:00
I think it was like um god I’m just trying to think exactly where it was it’s just like that they all seem like corridors to me so I just um but it was just like an adjoining corridor like a y-shaped corridor maybe something like that and there was a bit of a space just next to it where people could sort of collect and I’m I think this must have been Volcano um and I think I was just sort of walking along just trying to go round and that sort of thing and I remember this guy walking past and I knew in
I.i.22:30
that in that adjoining space there was you know there’s a few Asian guys there and it’s just sort of as he sort of passed me and went into that space I heard him say that and then he walked out again so I mean stuff like that but I mean stuff like that happens all the time you know um so that’s quite interesting

(a large black swan has waddled up behind Randy)

Russell:

There’s a swan beside you

Randy:

Oh fuck oh my goodness go away

Russell:

Come on shoo shoo okay
Randy:
I thought that was someone just coming to sit up next to me

Russell:
No

Randy:
I.i.23:00
(to the swan) Hello we have no food for you

Russell:
Okay

Randy:
Lovely see the joys of sitting in the Botanical Gardens

Russell:
At least they’re not emus

Randy:
Go away

Russell:
Um

Randy:
Get out of here at least they’re not emus that’s true

Russell:
(a silence) You’ve talked about people being Asian and people

Randy:
(the swan distracts Randy) [unintelligible]

Russell:
That’s all right

Randy:
Okay

Russell:
And people being white

Randy:
Yeah

Russell:
Um how do you know they’re Asian

Randy:
I.i.23:30
How

Russell:
How do YOU know they’re Asian

Randy:
Um oh look I mean again it just comes to the surface look of things I mean I think each culture sort of has that again that stereotypical thing of a look you know I mean you I mean I tell you like Chinese Vietnamese um (distracted) the swan’s eating me (I laugh a little) um I mean yeah it just comes down to a look it’s like everyone seems to have

I.i.24:00
you know everyone’s got a mask and that’s like that you know that’s the look so I just can look at someone but you can’t always do that I mean I’ve found that with um Aboriginal people I’ve come across quite a few people who actually look quite Caucasian you know in terms of they’re as white as white is and um they’ve have Aboriginal um have an Aboriginal heritage so you can’t necessarily tell but um and but I do enjoy like part of coming from um all these different sort of backgrounds and stuff

I.i.24:30
like that is that I can sometimes play around with it like when someone asks me where I come from I can say Indonesian or I can say da da da because who’s going to know and I kind of like that aspect and I

Russell:
You’ve done that in saunas

Randy:
I think so sometimes I just sort of go oh what the hell you know where will I be from today you know that sort of thing um so that’s quite interesting you know and then then I sort of think well okay if I say I’m Malaysian you know well what what does that mean you know
Russell:
Do you do that away from saunas as well?

Randy:
I.i.25:00
Um

Russell:
or is it something that you take up in saunas

Randy:
Oh I've got to admit I don't it's not like a regular practice for me usually I mean

Russell:
Fine

Randy:
Yeah but I mean I have done it before and I suppose I suppose I've done it a couple of times in saunas a couple of times just when I go out you know um but generally I'm pretty truthful um I actually find it hard you know when um even if I'm just in a bar or something but especially in a sauna I never make up a fake name for myself and I know guys do that but I've just found that really absurd ah an absurd thing to do um and I've noticed like particularly the first couple of times when I went someone's asked me what's your name and I'd actually hesitate for a second and then just tell them my real name because I just thought I'd say oh should I say a false name um um um oh stuff that

Russell:
Do you ever tell them that your name's Friedrich

Randy:
No oh okay there's a reason the other reason I don't use that name is because I hate it when it's not pronounced correctly okay

Russell:
Right

Randy:
And um
Hmm

Randy:

(distracted again) I'd say this swan's going to get a Coke bottle in the head in a second

Russell:

Just tap it on the beak with the Coke bottle

Randy:

God (he laughs a little) oh okay

Russell:

I'd say this swan's going to get a Coke bottle in the head in a second

Randy:

Yeah to so I can just walk home from there and that sort of thing so it's it's probably Rear Entry I know it pretty well um

Russell:

following that would probably be Volcano but oh no Rear Entry definitely I know that really well

Russell:

Okay all right and I think you told me last time Rear Entry was the first one you went to

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

Was what I

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

Can you um can you describe Rear Entry to me generally

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

Just a general description to start with

Randy:

Okay okay um well it starts off when you walk in it's sort of got this sort of timber sort of entry way where you pay your money and that sort of thing and you walk in through this this big door oh I should actually I should actually say one of the things that attracted me to it and the reason I first went was it was one of the saunas that didn't advertise like take out full full pages in the MSO and that sort of thing and also in terms of a front it was
it just looked like a shed like it didn’t look like there was really anything in there like you know a warehouse space where they might just have er you know like a clothing warehouse or something and I thought that was quite interesting

Russell:
You mean at on from the street its appearance

Randy:
This is from the street when you look at it like I walked past it a couple of times you know before I actually went in and this is not actually on the day but over you know the period when I first thought I’d go to it and I found that that element to it was exciting and interesting because I didn’t necessarily know what was there whereas with a place like Volcano you know it says what’s in there

and um so

Russell:
In the advertisements

Randy:
Yeah in the advertisements you know it’s very blatant about what it’s about whereas with Rear Entry there was still a level of mystery to it and peo I’d heard people talking about it and stuff so finally when I first went in there’s like this this sort of timber thing you know there’s timber on the walls and you go and you pay your money and you walk in to the first space is like a communal loungey area you get your towel and stuff from there then um I th there’s a bit where your locker locker room is and there’s like rows of

lockers and from there onwards you can go into there’s a ground a maze on the ground floor and then there’s a second level and it’s all all the partitions are all black um the lighting’s ranges from red to er I don’t think it goes blue I think it’s all red lighting or pink um there’s a video lounge room there like there’s there’s a video loungey bit at the top which isn’t really loungey it’s just sort of like a space where a video’s playing but there’s an open space and the ground floor

um there’s a maze you can walk through and you can actually see the TV from through that maze from as you’re walking round but um I think one of the reasons I really like it is that it has a sense of flow like um and um when I first went to it I didn’t realise I just assumed all saunas would be similar to that having been to saunas that aren’t like that like Tops for example which is not really a sauna it’s like a clothing optional type thing you know people just go in as they’re dressed and then you know um

Russell:
It doesn’t have wet facilities really does it

Randy:
No no

Russell:
I.ii.04:00
No

Randy:
Um but it’s it’s just got a sense of um I think the best saunas are the ones where you can walk around and keep going around in a circle and not feel like you’re hitting dead ends because I think that really stops it it’s um particularly when you’re

Russell:
These are the best for you

Randy:
Yeah yeah and I think particularly I think when you’re doing the whole cruising thing because I mean I don’t know whether I don’t know really where I learnt that cruising behaviour from now that I think about it but you know

I.ii.04:30
you walk around oh well I walk around and I see like you know you might see someone and you sort of you know you might look at them and you might walk past them and you want to feel like you can oh I want to feel that I can sort of walk around and still feel like it’s new you know every time so you can sort of check it out a couple of times and not feel like you’re hitting dead ends because when you hit a dead end a dead end it’s like the fantasy’s got to stop and I’ve got to walk back it’s like um you know um so that’s yeah so that’s the space

I.ii.05:00
I probably know the best in terms of out of all of those
Russell:
Okay you’ve kind of given a general overview
Randy:
Yeah
Russell:
Can you um choose one part
Randy:
Yeah
Russell:
of the building that you know well that you actually enjoy or that you’re attracted to that you like to visit that you always visit
Randy:
Yeah
Russell:
Is there such a place
Randy:
There is and I think it’s common to all the saunas I really like the spa area I mean personally
Randy:
I’m not really one for for doing anything sexual in the spa because for me it’s like a place I sort of come to after I’m a bit tired after walking around and it’s kind of restful I enjoy I like that water it’s um so that’s the space I enjoy the most even though it kind of you know it’s a bit grotty and stuff at times you know it’s er you know
Russell:
Can you describe the spa at Rear Entry for me
Randy:
Yeah um it’s probably one of my favourite spaces because that particular spa area’s
Randy:
Quite intimate like once you actually get you’ve got to go up a few stairs and then you know um
Russell:
What are the stairs made of
Randy:
Timber I think from memory um it’s all pretty dark in there so you can’t really quite tell that much but what I like about that particular area is the spa’s actually lit up on the inside quite brightly so the whole room um in that whole area which is also adjoining to or the showers and just to the communal area where you can just sort of sit down and take it easy before you keep walking round it’s it’s all lit up by this beautiful blue glow that’s where I was thinking of the blue light um the blue glow from the pool and that’s quite nice from the spa
Russell:
So how big is the spa there
Randy:
Um
Russell:
Someone will read this who has no idea
Randy:
Oh okay
Russell:
So can you can you
Randy:
Yeah
Russell:
I’d really like you to describe it as meticulous as you can
Randy:
Okay um to be quite honest I don’t really know I guess um enough to fit oh look I mean it’s sometimes it can be uncomfortable in there when there’s just a few people but that’s more to do with personal space but it’s about couldn’t be more than ten feet by eight feet or something I mean it’s I don’t know if that’s large or not but I mean it’s it’s pretty big
And is it

Randy:

You know you can fit quite a few people in there

Russell:

What's it made of

Randy:

Um I think it's white plastic I think or some sort of um you know some sort of moulded thing um whatever they make spas out of fibreglass I suppose

Russell:

Glow from underneath

Randy:

Glow from underneath

Russell:

Yeah yeah

Randy:

And er it's interesting um yeah most people don't like it when the water's still and I do like it particularly after it's been been bubbling for you know like fifteen minutes or something I actually like it when it stops and the water stills but people feel uncomfortable because you

Randy:

Um yeah sometimes but generally I don't think it's a big deal like initially when I first thought about going to a sauna I thought I would I mean I'm a very private person generally when it comes to the closer it gets to home the more private I get as anyone is and I thought there's no way you know I could take my clothes off and you know walk around you know even though I'd be in a towel in front of all these people you know but I'll never forget like when I walk into the sauna um I remember being so nervous Rear Entry the first time I went in um I it's really kind of daunting because you're walking through that sort of that sort of timber um clad er entry way and there's this little hole you know hole in the window like a little tram tick a ticketing office or something and I remember asking the guy I said you know

Russell:

Can we have you finished do you think your description of the spa

Randy:

Um yeah

Russell:

When you're in it is it like the base of the spa is it

Randy:

It okay it's really it's very smooth I mean generally I'd say I mean I couldn't tell you whether it was clean or not because like I
said even though it's lit up it's kind of dark er really strong chlorinated smell and thank god for that because it's probably killing half the STDs in Melbourne

I.ii.10:00
(we laugh a little) um it's um it I guess I put it down to it's got that real Swedish kind of you know when you think of a Swedish sauna or something like that I just you just see timber there's I mean there's a oh you know all the surfaces are I think it's all timber clad from what I remember it's it's black and timber I think there's a carpet sort of um well carpet-like thing on the on the ground it's not like heavy carpet just

Russell:
Immediately adjoining the

Randy:
No at the base of the stair like
I.ii.10:30
from the stairs up into the spa

Russell:
Yeah

Randy:
That's all timber

Russell:
Right

Randy:
And then on on the ground floor there's just um er I'm just trying to think of the space [unintelligible]

Russell:
Well how elevated is it how many steps roughly would it be up to the level at which the spa

Randy:
About five I think

Russell:
About five steps

Randy:
About five steps

Russell:
So it's not very or

Randy:
Yeah no it it is kind of it's not that high I mean you can actually um rest your you can stand on the ground bit and you can rest your arms up where um

I.ii.11:00
where the top of the spa is and have a conversation with someone in the spa like it's it's not really that high off the ground but it is it actually does feel like a completely different part of it and it's also it has an element of being theatrical too because it's like it's like a closed off box but anyone outside that space is like looking into a box you know so it gets that feeling of you do become aware of yourself when you're getting into the spa because er you know people do look I mean it's a case of you know well they want to see what's coming in you know

I.ii.11:30
the same thing when you go for a shower too um except for me shower's always been a bit more about etiquette and I think well you know when you come into a place it's just like before you go for a swim you have a shower and um so it's yeah it's interesting

Russell:
So there are sight lines the spa

Randy:
Yeah

Russell:
is is is visible in the way it's set up

Randy:
Yeah it it definitely is

Russell:
And the showers are visible as well

Randy:
Yeah and there's there's defin there's like distinct spaces which I mean the idea is really I suppose from wherever you are you can almost
see everything and there’s actually mirrors too set up there so um particularly in that in that whole wet area I suppose where all the saunas the spa and all that is they’re they’re all in one sort of space in close proximity to everything else but in the centre of that room is just an open space where there’s a bench and actually a couple of benches so you can just sort of sit down and have a rest and in front of those benches often is a mirror um so that you can look at the person next to you without actually having to turn your head

Randy:

You can see the entries into that room without having to turn your head

I.ii.12:30

and sometimes you can see the showers or the the sauna or the spa without having to turn around

Randy:

So is this something you’ve done

Randy:

Yeah I I mean bef even before you talked to me about this I was just curious to see what it was about a space that made it work like what it was that I enjoyed or and just to see how other people used it as well and I thought oh okay I can see why that’s there and it’s it’s quite obvious that um the whole thing about a sauna about that space

I.ii.13:00

is that that level of voyeurism you know you really want to see as much as you can in a strange way yet all the lights are dim and

Randy:

Hmm

Randy:

You know um but it’s it’s also the space I think where people feel very vulnerable um because (he coughs)

Randy:

I think I have because it’s probably the most open space aside from the lounge area which I have to admit I’ve never spent time in in the lounge area where the video lounge is or you know where the café and stuff is never done that um

Randy:

What kinds of videos are in

I.ii.13:30

that lounge area

Randy:

Oh it’s not pornographic videos or anything often it’d be something um something quite bizarre like the video of the week at Blockbuster or something you know um

Randy:

could be an action movie Steven Segal I don’t know anything

Randy:

Sleepless In Seattle was playing once when I was there which (I laugh a little) it’s just one of my favourites but

Randy:

Yeah heterosexual love fantasies

Randy:

Yeah heterosexual love stories

Russell:

tend to turn up don’t they

Randy:

Unbelievable yeah yeah

Russell:

Yeah I’ve noticed this
That's quite unusual which I mean I think of all the movies to play

Russell:

Ever been at Volcano when Titanic's been screening

Randy:

(excited) Yes I have

Russell:

And the corridors are empty

Randy:

Oh my god they actually do that at Squirt as well which is interesting

Russell:

All right

Randy:

because that happened the other day I was really shocked I thought oh my god (I laugh) you know

Russell:

Okay

Randy:

Um so I mean I tend not to hang out in those areas (he begins an alphabetical list) A it's really well lit and

Russell:

This is the video lounge area

Randy:

This is like the video lounge this is sort of where you know anyone you can just sort of have a coffee and whatever and relax and a lot of people do use it but um I I have the same problem with that space as I do with that central space where

Russell:

the where the wet area is um because if you're just sort of sitting down there in the middle of that room you're really you know it's it's like everything's all around you and you know you're in the centre of being looked at whereas um

Randy:

How does that make you feel or does it is it does it change from time to time or is it consistently similar

Russell:

Um it it can change generally it makes I think situations like that

just make me it makes it aware makes me aware of myself and what I'm doing and often I'll actually realise that what I'm doing is when when I feel insecure I'll actually realise that I'm you know puffing myself up you know like a like a bird does to make themselves look bigger or um to make it look like you know no I'm not stressed out you know people actually do this really bizarre thing and I'll never forget this moment as long as I live I was walking down in Rear Entry through one of the corridors and they're all like black corridors they're all the partitions are all black

with this red light and that's all that you're lit up with and there's all these guys walking around you know trying to look as if it's like they're not there it really is it's like they're not there they they I don't know where they think they are

Russell:

That's what they're trying to look like

Randy:

Yeah it's like you know um they're parading past each other cruising each other and that sort of thing and they play music er which is like we're talking top forty maybe techno a bit of techno in there usually leaning more towards techno but there was one particular incidence where I was walking down this corridor and I was just leaning up against

a wall just watching people walk walk past and this song came on which was just hilarious and it was it's called What A Girl Wants right and it's a really tacky pop song and there was this these men would walk past and it was just a really funny moment and people would walk past as if the music wasn't playing you know and I just found that really weird you know it's um I just it made me think about what goes through someone's head when they walk through the space

Russell:
like for me I can’t think of it as being any place but a sauna like I know where I am and it’s not like but I mean there’ve been times when you know I’ve walked around like you know a couple of you know dozen times even where I still walk around with this sense of expectation like as fooling myself into thinking oh what’s around that corner as if I don’t know you know but a lot of people really forget where they are when they’re in the sauna or or they try to forget in some ways you know they try to look

Russell:

It appears that way to you

Randy:

Yeah it appears that way that I think they um and I think even probably myself um you try and shut it all off and it’s just about you know well you know how do I look because it is about that you’re looking at each other you know you know [sic] thinking oh you know looking for each other’s reactions the way you look the way you’re standing um all those things I mean I think you know different poses and that sort of thing make a huge difference and I think people really become aware of that and there

Randy:

Yeah it appears that way that I think they um I don’t necessarily think I pose um but I mean sometimes I’ll just sort of lean up against a wall or something. I mean not not I don’t particularly think I’m posing but yeah I just just sort of walk around I’m still not very I’ve never been really good at cruising I’m not that sort of guy who can you know or there are some people who are really good at it like they’ll look you straight in the eye they’ll you know really make eyes

Russell:

I want to interrupt you

Randy:

Um it’s harder to yeah

Russell:

Okay

Randy:

It’s yeah okay

Russell:

You’re not really posing and then there’s this kind of momentary pause and then you shifted off to tell me how you’re not good at cruising but

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

Can you just go back what are you doing when you’re leaning against that wall and where are you

Randy:

I suppose when when you’re walking around a space it’s not as if you’re just sort of doing it for the hell of it you know I mean after the first time you’ve been around it’s a case of well I know what’s here it’s pretty simple it’s plain
Russell:
that wall whatever that wall is

Randy:
Yeah I guess

Russell:
and what was that for  what was happening

Randy:
Yeah I guess I walked around for a while and usually this is what happens like I'll walk around for a while maybe and um I'll get a bit tired of walking like often what guys will do is they'll you know they might just stand next stand somewhere and I guess I get sick of walking round so I think okay I'm just going to stand here and just see people walk past for a change instead of being someone walking past so I so I guess that that's about and

Russell:

i.ii.19:30
But you lean against the wall you don't stand you lean is that a

Randy:
Yeah

Russell:
Is that a fair distinction

Randy:
Yeah I think so um I guess that's [sic] has to do with levels of laziness I don't really know whether it's just laziness or not like whether you know well I just go I'm going to lean against something at this stage

Russell:
That's all right I'm trying still though I want to (I laugh a little) I've warned you about this

Randy:
Yeah no that's okay

Russell:
I want to as much as possible if you can think of a specific moment

Randy:
Yeah

Russell:
when that happened once and

i.ii.20:00
as it were try and re-locate yourself in that moment of leaning

Randy:
Right

Russell:
What else what was there what else were you aware of

Randy:
Okay

Russell:
Who else were you aware of

Randy:
Okay

Russell:
What else were you aware of at that moment

Randy:
Okay um I was walking down a particular corridor this is Rear Entry um I'd just been walking around you know maybe done walked around two three times and thought okay look I'll just you know I'm sick of walking round I'm just going to find

i.ii.20:30
a my my first thought was okay wherever I stop it's got to be a place where I can actually have a good view of people walking past so that was the first thing it was a deliberate choice of where I stood and there was um I remember there being several other guys along that wall that were standing there as well

Russell:
Are we upstairs or downstairs

Randy:
This is downstairs

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

Um and this is kind of quite a dark mazey area and it was just pretty much right in the centre centre of that

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

Um and basically I just thought okay I'm going to stop here and I'll just rest against the wall and then all of a sudden I realised that I was a bit awkward in a particular way like the way I was standing felt awkward so I just adjusted myself and then I adjusted back because I thought it looked funny you know I was comfortable but I was looking funny and so I thought no okay that looks weird so I adjusted back

Russell:

What may have triggered that awareness of oh it looks weird

Randy:

Um

Because you couldn't see there wasn't a mirror

Russell:

Yeah I just sort of felt like thought oh that looks a bit oh no I thought it felt like it looked a bit funny I thought if I was looking at myself I'd think that's a funny pose to stand in and also I think it I was trying to maybe accentuate the best parts of what I felt were you know the most alluring parts of me and I do actually remember there was a light maybe just a foot or two above my head um a wall wall light and I remember actually making sure that the

Russell:

You mentioned there were other men standing along the wall

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

How did their positions inform your choice of a place to stop

Randy:

Um I guess I was influenced not so much by the fact that they were there I mean it (he begins an alphabetical list) A it was a good location because it was a case of like everyone would have to walk through there so it was a great place to be but also there were some cute guys there and I thought well you know if they're there well um you know maybe they might be interested or whatever I mean we can you know you'd find out so it seemed like a good location to be at at the time um and that's what made me choose that particular spot um because there's some spaces where people really just don't go maybe it's too dark and there's quite a few you know like dark spots in in saunas I mean every sauna has their you know dark spots where it's not quite as well lit and that sort of thing so I guess that's why I chose that spot and yeah I mean that's pretty much it I mean people would walk past and I guess I'd um just trying to think of my reactions to them as they did you know I mean being very shy of course I still making eye contact with people's a bit hard so for me cruising was a little bit hard but um it's sometimes it feels a bit like being in a firing line and of course because you subject yourself to being judged visually
instantly you know and if someone likes you they like you and if they don’t

I.ii.24:00

they don’t and you have to accept that um and so as people walk past you know they they’d they would do that and of course sometimes it can be a bit of a battering you know you do take a bit of a battering like you see someone and you think oh they’re really gorgeous or whatever um and they look at you and suddenly look away as if to not even like eye contact seems to be so important and if you can someone’s eye contact with you generally I think is what um can initiate contact with them

I.ii.24:30

I think especially in that setting

Russell:

Okay when you say eye contact seems to be important

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

Is it important for you

Randy:

Um

Russell:

Or do you feel like oh that’s important for other people

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

I have to

Randy:

Oh okay

Russell:

join in on this activity

Randy:

Um

Russell:

Because you talked about the difficulty

Randy:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

of maintaining eye contact I think

Randy:

I guess a bit of both um for me if I look at someone and they look back and they keep looking and I do as well it’s

I.ii.25:00

for me I suppose that signifies personally or some level of interest like okay I like you you like me you know and it’s often the point that for me in my experience that brings that person you know that I go to them or they come to me or whatever do you know what I mean and that’s how actual physical contact might begin generally

Russell:

Okay now when you’re at the wall this particular time

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

Leaning against it

Randy:

Hmm

Russell:

Do you have any recollections of eye contact you made with anyone

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

I.ii.25:30

Can you tell me about that

Randy:

Yeah oh oh look there’s throughout I mean at that particular time I think it was just
getting quite busy and there was lots of people walking through and of course my um I obviously looked at everyone as they walked past and there was a lot of that um I mean fairly typical um in my experience of um you know you look at someone and they look at you and then they they’ll either like they’ll either continue looking at you and they sort of check you out for a while and then continue to check out some of the other people around

I.ii.26:00
and walk around you know and walk away or they’ll they’ll look at you they’ll you know it it’s if they make it sort of clear through their eye contact and through their gestures that perhaps that you know they’re not interested and they’ll just keep continue walking on as if often as if they haven’t actually seen you and there’s that level of invisibility all of a sudden it’s like I’m here (I laugh a little) you know

Russell:
Hmm

Randy:
And then again I mean that comes down to

Russell:
But again we’re you’re talking a bit more generally here

Randy:
Oh no no but I mean in that particular instance

Russell:
Yeah

Randy:
that’s sort of what happened there was people

I.ii.26:30
would walk past and just like you know you might as well not have been there and then there were of course people that actually as they walked past they you know they’d look at me and then they’d come up to me and they might sort of touch me and walk away I mean I did actually ended up um I mean I walked around again after that point I stayed there for about ten minutes walked around again and did it again and then ended up meeting this guy and the way we actually met was that he um he he was just walking down

I.ii.27:00
that corridor and right from the point he entered that corridor he was looking right at me and he kept looking kept looking walked a little bit past me and then turned his head back and looked back at me and then came up to me and um subsequently you know we made contact

Russell:
And was that the first time he’d passed you

Randy:
That was the first time he’d passed me um although he’d um oh in terms of no I mean we’d we’d been past each other in the corridor but that was the first actual time I mean often he was maybe at the other end of the thing so we hadn’t actually passed each other properly

I.ii.27:30
and that was the first time in yeah so contact began from there

Russell:
So you were aware of him looking at you

Randy:
Yeah

Russell:
and then walking past you and then turning and looking back does that mean you were watching him the whole time

Randy:
I think so um I think once that initial eye contact happened I just sort of kept watching him just to see whether he would you know actually come up to me or what what he was going to do and he was also I mean obviously I found him attractive so I was looking at him as well and this is the thing like there’s all these people walking around and

I.ii.28:00
often it’s just as much fun looking at someone or just as as pleasurable I mean particularly for me because I think I’m a very visual person often I think I could be in a situation where I’m not actually even having sex but watching people have sex and it’s gratifying in a way that it’s almost more gratifying than sex itself because I get too
I'm fascinated by exactly what happens like I most people who would have had sex with me would actually have probably heard me say gee I wish I was I was outside my body so I can watch what was going on because that to me often is more interesting

Russell:
Right

Randy:
You know because you never like you can feel it but the way it feels I wonder whether that looks is anything like it looks like

Russell:
(I laugh a little) Right

Randy:
(he laughs a little) Isn't that weird it's a weird thing to think

Russell:
No no um I don't I think I know that

Randy:
Yeah

Russell:
I think that's why I'm aware of it

Randy:
I'm actually doing something er which is slightly off the topic but er I'm as a result of that I've actually um someone who I did actually meet in a sauna where he's coming down this weekend from Sydney and I actually emailed him and I said oh look I'm going to get a camera and we're going to tape ourselves having sex because I want to see what this looks like and actually I'm going to do that this weekend which is interesting because I have no idea what it looks like and I'd be fascinated to know

Russell:
Um when you I want to go back to the viewing thing then

Randy:
It it is too narrow yeah
Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

And I think people I guess they don’t want to confuse someone I don’t necessarily like physically or whatever that I want to be intimate with them just because I accidentally brush up against them and

I.ii.31:00

that’s it's hard to know because it’s saunas are so dark sometimes people just walk up to you and you’ll look they’ll just touch you and then it’s up to you to decide about whether or not you want to continue with that activity or you want you know and often in a dark area like that it can be really hard to figure out particularly if it is dark it can be hard to figure out whether or not you want that activity to continue and there’s that awkwardness of like oh look I’m sorry you know I’m not interested or I mean I tend to be quite frank when I’m in a sauna like if someone touches me I’m not that I don’t particularly like or I’m not

I.ii.31:30

attracted to I mean I’m quite apologetic I’ll say look I’m sorry you know I’m not just interested but um so yeah there’s lots of there’s areas of awkwardness there I suppose but um I guess what what you want to know how that makes me feel or I’m not quite

Russell:

I was wondering more about

I.ii.32:00

for someone who hasn’t been there

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

When you talk about being able to see people like if I’m in the top level of a stadium

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

like the MCG I can see all the players on the field

Randy:

All right okay right right

Russell:

So I’m just wondering what this viewing position

Randy:

Okay

Russell:

and being viewed position physically or spatially

Randy:

Okay I think I can describe it really well um it really is I mean well Rear Entry anyway and I suppose to

I.ii.32:30

a certain degree Volcano is as well designed it’s it’s like a little rabbits’ warren or something it really is it’s just a series of little narrow corridors and um seemingly it looks quite like you can pretend that you can get lost there because you know you can walk around in circles for a while but it’s basically like a rabbits’ warren it’s dark it’s like a series of tunnels almost that’s how I sort of just that’s the sort of feeling it evokes for me when I go in it’s dark it’s moody

I.ii.33:00

it often has a really strong smell usually of the chlorine um that comes from the pool-side often amyl amyl nitrate and um um yeah it generally it tends to be very dark spaces the the cubicles themselves are yeah are usually made of some sort of black vinyl or something something easy to clean and often often aren’t particularly very clean like you walk into a gross one sometimes and it’s still got cum all over it and stuff

I.ii.33:30

it’s quite gross um and adjustable lighting generally in the cubicles as well so you can have it as bright or as dark as you want it once you’re in that cubicle and it emits the light so I mean that’s but rabbits’ warren is how I describe it so when I talk about looking at someone when I look at someone it’s generally down a particular corridor sometimes there are corridors which you can stand at the end of and it actually gives you a view into two different corridors

Russell:
Randy:

That sort of thing so there are some that obviously are more advantageous [sic] to be on

so you can see more because I mean generally when you first well when I first walk into a sauna it's like what's around let me have a look um

Russell:

Do you mean when you say what's around do you mean the people or the premises

Randy:

Oh the people oh sorry yeah yeah I've got to sorry I've got to explain that

Russell:

Yeah yeah no no no no no that's all right

Randy:

It's like er yeah what men are around you know how many attractive guys are there around or should I just you know should I wait for a little while longer should I just take it easy for you know an hour or something um so that's usually I think my first oh no first thing I do is I generally it's I've got it down to

well not quite a routine but generally what tends to happen is I um I'll go to my locker and it's interesting my what I do at the locker when I think about it is I I take off all my clothes and I put them into the locker but it's always very orderly I always fold everything (I laugh a little) okay always put everything on hangers and stuff like that and when I take my underwear off I put the towel around my waist first and take my underwear off through that I don't just strip off for all the world to see and then wrap the towel around me which is really interesting because it wouldn't

matter if I did but it feels like it's something that I have to do and then when I actually do then I after that once everything's packed away I go and take a shower and then of course I take my towel off and then obviously because you I can't have a shower with my towel on

Russell:

Yep

Randy:

Um and then from there it doesn't matter that I'm naked and people are watching me but it's interesting this that at that first point and this is true of all my experiences at saunas I always do it that way um

so that's yeah yeah

Russell:

(checking the minidisc recorder) I just want to see how much time there is remaining

Randy:

Okay (checking the minidisc recorder) is that actually thirty-five minutes that we're talking

Russell:

Hmm

Randy:

God (he coughs)

Russell:

We've been talking a while

Randy:

(walking away) I'm just going to go to the toilet again [unintelligible]

Russell:

Okay

(I switch off the minidisc recorder while Randy wanders to the toilet)

Randy:

(I switch it back on as Randy returns)

Russell:

Memories Of A Geisha right which is quite interesting and there's this whole passage in it where um one of the leading geishas is talking to her apprentice about the subtleties
of eye contact and just I was just going to
the toilet before and I was just thinking about
it and how powerful it is in the context of

the sauna or any sort of cruising area
whether it’s a beat or just even when you’re
at a club or whatever the the power of that
and how just with that you can actually tell
someone a million things just by the way you
look at them and I guess going back to the
whole the whole thing of the way you know
the way I get received by other people and
all that sort of thing it’s all down to that you
know I can tell whether someone likes me
whether they find me attractive whatever just
by the way they they look at me um

it’s interesting because I think I come from
um I think I was raised in such a way that
direct eye contact’s a really hard thing to do
like it’s it’s it’s almost like you don’t really look
look at someone in the eye to do
that is a really um aggressive thing to do you
know when you look at someone in the
eye you’re trying to really put something into
them you know you want them to feel a
particular way often it has to do with
authority and all that sort of thing and I think
um in as far as the cruising for me I often
find that a difficulty I mean
even having a conversation with you now I find it easier to
think when I’m not looking
directly at you

Russell:

Right

Randy:

You know and I don’t sorry it’s not a
personal thing but

Russell:

No

Randy:

Um so when I’m in a sauna I actually not only am I trying to make myself perceivably
look you know more alluring but I’m also it actually it’s an effort for me to look at
someone to call them closer you know what
I mean to to actually to send a signal um
but that’s it I was just thinking about that

Russell:

When you say it’s an effort do you how do
you experience the effort do you experience
it just in your eyeballs or is it

Randy:

(he laughs) Oh I see what you mean okay it
no it’s just a it’s um I think it comes down to
risk you know um and I think that’s
something that you know every everyone’s
kind of afraid of that you know every time
you put yourself out there that you send a
signal out there’s the risk that someone’s
not going to be interested or

that you can be rejected and I think that
rejection is a big part of a sauna experience
and learning to deal with that and learning to
deal with the fact that yeah I know not
everyone’s going to find me attractive um
you know etcetera etcetera that’s all that’s I
guess what I mean by the effort

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

So I’m consciously putting myself out there
every time someone walks past um and
often my experiences when talking to other
people have been sort of like you know I’ve
been here all night you know and these
people walking around like what what are
they looking for you know because they’ve
obviously been

oh not obviously but they’ve maybe been
rejected a few times from being there and it
can be a bit tiresome particularly if you’ve
been looking all night you haven’t been able
to get exactly the sort of guy that you want
and it’s a bit like that I think you know I
was talking before about how sometimes I
feel like the people aren’t really in the sauna
they or I see them or it feels like that
they’re somewhere else I think they they
come in looking for I mean I go in looking
for a fantasy so maybe I’m judging

them by my standards so I come in looking
for a particular type of guy that I like and
when you don’t get that it can it can be a bit
you know or when when the people you like
um don’t necessarily like you it can be a bit
it can be a bit wearing you know

Russell:

What (Randy laughs a little) what is it about
the way
a place like Rear Entry or part of it is built and fitted out

Randy:
Yeah

Russell:
The way it actually physically is that is most supportive for you in this area of eye contact or of needing to make an effort what what is it that supports you in your efforts

Randy:
Okay

Russell:
We’ve talked about strategic corridors

Randy:

Yeah yeah

Russell:
and things like that

Randy:

Definitely um there’s there’s elements of the I mean I certainly think little additions like we were talking mirrors before I think they’re really helpful in terms of you can look at someone without directly actually having to make it look like you are um which is quite good and there’s they actually have made certain parts available where you can look at other people and not necessarily like like the corridors and that sort of thing you can actually look at a whole group of people walking down a corridor without necessarily while you’re just walking down

it do you know what I mean so it doesn’t necessarily look like you’re making an effort that’s the whole thing about going around in a circle is that you can pretend that you’ve never been there before and there’s this sense of oh I’m still looking around when the truth is you’ve been there for about four hours (I laugh a little) you’ve got off about five times and you know you know it inside out you can you know and it and it shows because I mean um a really good example of that was I was at Volcano and there was this um there was this guy who told me he’d just got there right and I said I want to take you down to this room where the mirrors are and again we get the um anyway long story and basically he he actually took me there so I mean it’s it’s this interesting thing where people are almost fooling themselves into oh like I’ve never been here before I’m just going to walk round and round [unintelligible] different

Russell:
So he already had taken you there on the

Randy:
No no he actually did take like I said let’s go to the mirrored room like he was initially playing like I’m an innocent kitten I don’t know where I am

Russell:

Oh right and he knew exactly yeah

Randy:
You know I’ve just got here and he took me

Russell:
Right

Randy:
you know because I got lost and he took me so that was really funny and um

Russell:
I was wondering whether um the mirror rooms at Volcano [unintelligible]

Randy:
It’s the most popular room

Russell:
Oh is it

Randy:
From what I’ve heard from what I’ve heard um because I’ve just often what happens is I get into conversations with the staff there because after a while of not talking to anyone it drives you a bit nuts and that’s really uncool to talk in a sauna sometimes and often the people I like the most are the ones that I actually end up having
I.iii.06:30
a chat to even though I mightn’t have sex with them um but I was chatting to the staff and they were saying that that’s I mean every time I walked past it was rare that that it the door was always locked because it was one of the few rooms that I know of that is actually every surface except the floor is mirrored and it’s just the most amazing infinite kind of thing and again because I’m a visual person what I enjoyed was obviously you know fucking someone and being able to see them on every surface because that was interesting like I
I.iii.07:00
don’t see me I see people fucking and I’m a visual person so that obviously gets it all happening

Russell:
Yeah

Randy:
Um so yeah that’s quite interesting and the other thing I was thinking of too was that the difference maybe between like the way a sauna’s designed and something like a beat happens like a beat is just coincidentally happens to be a place where people might get off like it’s not necessarily built for sex but the interesting thing about saunas is that often the spaces are (he coughs) built to recreate

I.iii.07:30
a feeling or a fantasy or like the sling rooms and you know the glory hole thing which I’ve never really had a you know fascinated by it but so there’s all these things that are you know definitely created um I had a friend of mine who’s actually heterosexual and this is just a really funny story because he was working out he does security and he was working out and he goes oh I was a bit tired one day you know and I was talking to one of my colleagues and they said oh you know you should just go

I.iii.08:00
for a you know a bit of a steam and a sauna down to this place called Volcano of course my friend knowing nothing about gay culture he’s in his fifties knows nothing about gay culture to save himself and and you think he would being in security but it’s very butch and that sort of thing so he goes in there and the funny thing like he pays his membership and everything because later on that night he actually came and he told my mum about how he’d been to this thing and he was appalled because it was like gay yet he went to every level and checked it out to see what was there
I.iii.08:30
I guess out of his own curiosity

Russell:
So he actually went by accident

Randy:
Yeah you should I was thinking you should probably interview him he’d be quite interesting

Russell:
Right

Randy:
As a heterosexual’s view of it but he found it he just thought it was absolutely abhorrent like that they had um um he was talking about the glory hole thing which he thought was gross and he found it awful that people were cracking on to him and that but he honestly believed that I was saying you know Andrew how could you not know that it was a sauna I mean there’s guys every well you know I know you know
I.iii.09:00
saunas are generally you know a particular sex type of thing but um yeah he that actually took him a while it’s not till he actually went up to the hardcore area that he realised and then walked into the porn room that he realised that it was a place where men had sex um and even then he stayed and and his experience of it was just that um what he didn’t like about it was the fact that once he figured it out that it was so blatantly sexual that these spaces were there so people can act out what he thought were sick fantasies but then it goes back to that whole thing about the subversion of public space

I.iii.09:30
and the way that it it actually uses those models of public spaces like toilets or whatever to recreate a fantasy that feeling of but a safe fantasy where the person who’s in there’s not necessarily going to beat you up or stab you with something er like all those stories you hear about

Russell:
Um (referring to minidisc recorder) we’ve only got a couple of minutes left on this one

Randy:
Okay

Russell:

Um how do you feel about talking about another fifteen minutes or so.

Randy:

Okay, don’t tell me I’ve filled up a whole thing.

Russell:

Yeah.

Randy:

Oh gawd, okay, okay, yeah, no that’s okay if you.

Russell:

You didn’t do it by yourself.

Randy:

No, thankfully.

Russell:

That’s all right, okay well um I might stop and just change it because there’s a couple of other things I want to ask you.

(I switch off the minidisc recorder)

Randy:

Okay.

Russell:

Can you just tell me what you recall of the earliest memory you have of hearing about such a place.

Randy:

Okay hearing.

Russell:

Or being aware of such a place you may not have heard about it for instance.

Randy:

Yeah, um I really, I actually read about it.

Russell:

Yeah.

Randy:

before I actually um even heard anyone talking about it and the first time I saw it was in I can tell you actually, Brother Sister, and they did this special on er cruising etiquette which I thought was particularly interesting so I thought okay well I read the article and it sort of didn’t really give me much of an insight into the space itself but yeah and I remember just thinking oh oh I would never go to a sauna because it seems like a it seemed at the time to me like a desperate sort of thing to do because I thought oh you can just go out clubbing and pick someone up you know why would you want to you know um it just seemed like a bit of a desperate type of thing.

(liv.01:00)

Um and then oh no then I sort of heard like I’d spoken to a few people about you know just come across people who started talking about it and I said oh tell me what it’s like and as is often with the way that goes with my sexual practices I like to hear lots of stories about people’s experiences and and sort of work it out from there because I don’t really you know now I realise not to just rule anything out but so that’s how sort of er you know people people would just they wouldn’t tell me much about.

(liv.02:00)
it you know they’d say oh yeah you know I had sex with this guy you know here there and everywhere you know all the different saunas and I’d just go what’s it like tell me what it’s like and most of them wouldn’t actually they said there’s nothing to tell which would be the response that I’d often get back they’d go there’s nothing really to tell um but they all seemed to say look Randy just do it you’ll find it really liberating or you’ll you know you’ll it’s worth it just do it once and see you know for the experience and I did get to that point where

Russell:  
Were those two factors connected it was it was it was least threatening because it was the one you’d heard most about

Randy:

Um no I guess because I’d heard a lot about it and positive things about it from people who’d been there it I thought oh it seemed like a safe option also it was close to where I live and I thought that’s another thing you know I

Russell:

Hmm

Randy:

Um it was just those two things I I guess and I I liked the fact that it wasn’t

Russell:  
And where is it

Randy:

Um it’s in Suburb R it’s in […] and it’s just down this like it just really doesn’t draw attention to itself well I don’t think it does and I honestly I think I would’ve walked past it you know ten times previously

Russell:

So what what did you imagine was behind that facade that innocuous facade on the street

Randy:

Um (this is a question) initially

Russell:

Before you went in

Randy:

Okay

Russell:

Like in what ways were you surprised in what ways were you were your expectations confirmed

Randy:

Um

Russell:  
It was nothing at all like what I thought it would be (I laugh a little) um (he laughs a little) I actually expected it to be I expected it like I think I’d say den of sin really comes across as

Russell:

Sorry

Randy:

It’s like den-of-sin-orgy-room is really what I expected it to be quite honest

Russell:
Yeah what kind of image was that

Randy:

Um sort of um I well the spaces were pretty much what I thought they might be in terms of quite dark and quite you know dark black um but in terms of the people in there

I.iv.05:00

and stuff I expected them to be much more aggressive in terms of the type of people I thought would be much more sexually aggressive in terms of open about who they liked you know touching you very openly gesturing and talking certainly I thought well you know um because certainly in clubs it was like that in terms of when someone came up to you you know it was quite obvious they were cracking on to you or you know they'd make it very obvious but instead I found saunas to be much more about subt the subtleties and I mean obviously when someone grabs their crotch that's not subtle but it still

I.iv.05:30

is you know when someone's across the room from you and that's how they're calling you instead of just coming next to you standing to you [sic] starting a conversation that doesn't really tend to happen in saunas it has to me a couple of times but generally it's it's almost like it's not cool to speak in saunas um and of course many times you know I'd um I'd be not like I'd be in the sauna with you know a friend or something and someone would walk past and they'd open their mouth and you'd have this screechy queen voice coming out and we'd just go oh you know that's a shame [unintelligible]

I.iv.06:00

(we laugh) no you know of course I don't mean that but it's it's funny um so in in terms of the image that I had yeah that was really kind of shattered for me because I expected it to be much more aggressive I mean a place that men gathered to have sex you know I think to someone who's never been to a sauna I mean the person who might be listening to this you'd think a place like that would be quite you know aggressive and my heterosexual friend who went to the sauna actually said that he felt that way once he figured

I.iv.06:30

out what it was

Russell:

That he felt aggressive

Randy:

Oh no no that that he actually felt that people that that it was really quite full on

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

You know that people were cruising quite full on but it took him to figure out what it was before he felt that way he just thought otherwise oh everyone was just looking at each other you know um so that was quite interesting and and subsequently I thought I'm actually more generally more sexually aggressive than most of the people here I mean aside from the eye contact thing I know

I.iv.07:00

I'm more I know what I want I'm I'm not afraid whereas I think a lot of people are generally a little bit timid about it they try to be brave and you can actually see them trying to be brave and then subsequently when you you know like when I've talked to them um you know sometimes I might be just sitting next to someone and we might start a conversation and they'll just go oh you know it's a bit of a quiet night yeah I'm not really enjoying myself I don't really like saunas because you know everyone's particularly Rear Entry

I.iv.07:30

I think has a reputation for being um younger prettier wog boy type of thing you know and when I say wog boy of course I'm referring to um Greek Italian or Spanish you know a particular look and it tends to have a majority of that thing and that although that's not generally true but I found that the guys look a bit like that you know certainly clubbing clubbing crowd whereas Volcano has a slightly different er demographic

Russell:

I.iv.08:00

So they have their own demographics

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

I've got one maybe it's one final question

Randy:
Yeah

Russell:
You talked about the place that you’re attracted to

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:
every time you go to Rear Entry which is the um spa

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:
And you did mention that there was a place that you didn’t really spend much time in which was the lounge but I’m wondering is there a place that actively repulses you at Rear Entry

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:
That you avoid if possible

Randy:

That I avoid

Russell:
That you don’t want to

Randy:

Um I um that’s a bit tough I guess um I guess there’s a position

Russell:
And

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:
I’m thinking of the entire building

Randy:

Uh huh um there there is a place that I no that I completely avoid would have to be I l.iv.09:00 guess er maybe a place like the sling room to me that sort of invites the idea that I might somehow want like this is what I goes through my head is I I wouldn’t want to possibly invite the idea that I might like to be fisted because I or or subjected to being restrained or anything like that um there’s also areas where the glory holes are often I find that interesting to to watch but again it’s that sense of being from a distance you know um but generally no nothing I’m l.iv.09:30 not really again I’m not there’s no space that I wouldn’t go into or that I haven’t gone into I mean like there’s there’s whole dark areas where you can’t actually see the person that you’re touching and that sort of thing certainly um there’s yeah there’s pretty much nothing I there there is something I don’t like going into which is the the wet sauna where it’s very misty and that sort of thing I don’t like that l.iv.10:00 often because it freaks me out because the air in there is so warm sometimes it makes you know it makes my heart go kind of weird and then of course there’s when someone touches you it freaks me out even more it’s like oh god I’m getting out of here so I tend not to go into those spaces because it feels claustrophobic

Russell:

Hmm

Randy:

But aside from that no I mean there’s I pretty much go to everything but generally I would say I I wouldn’t I probably wouldn’t sit in the sling for fear of what that might involve um l.iv.10:30 yeah yeah but no there’s generally no space that I wouldn’t go to I mean I’m I’m curious about everything so I’d go into every nook and cranny and see what was happening and I think most people do and um but um

Russell:

If no that’s fine um is there anything you want to ask me (we laugh a little) after all this

Randy:

I think we pretty much covered everything
Randy:
Um I mean

Russell:
Or anything or anything else

you want to just tell me tell me or ask me

Randy:
I can't really think about all all all I know is that um when when I look at it overall okay in terms of my experiences of saunas what they what they mean kind of in a whole sense I think they're actually they're good in the way that they're kind of honest I mean on one hand we're being exploited for sex and all that sort of thing but

I.iv.11:30

interesting that in that environment I mean I can kind of see where that's coming from too because I know that when now now that I know so many people in the scene and that sort of thing when I see them out at a sauna it can be really awkward particularly if I'm in a position where I'm perhaps revealing more about myself than you know per like it's it's not often like it's not unusual to find er like you know that that I find myself like

I.iv.12:00

and I've got to say for my first visit to a sauna was as people have suggested to me a liberating experience to feel that I didn't have to be connected to the scene and I didn't have to be connected to clubbing or or any of that stuff to find sex if I wanted that you know what I mean and it also meant that I didn't have to be in those in this structured relationship to have sex with someone either you know like I didn't have to go out with the same person I could have sex five times a night with five different people whatever and this space provided that for me so generally I think it's a positive thing but I think it must be negative for a lot of people who can't deal with the rejection part of it that's a big part of it as well um but er that and there's one more story which I thought about too which was when I was in the Sauna Volcano and this is something that's sort of in my mind as well um there was er an Asian boy

I.iv.13:00

I mean Chinese I'm not really sure what particular nationality but he was walking round and it's pretty dark in there as it is you know this is the main sort of spa area where that is and he was walking round with sunglasses on (I laugh) you know and um yeah I just thought it was it was particularly hilarious because there was this sense of like I mean he was sort of covering a bit of his face as he sort of walked around like he didn't want to be recognised um and I just found that particularly

I.iv.13:30

maybe in a corner of a particular place and I'm having sex with someone often like in a place where if you're walking past you'd see it and someone I know would be walking past and I'd just go (he laughs a little) oh my god I'm going to see them in a meeting Monday morning and that's going to be fun (I laugh) but um

Russell:
Another meeting

Randy:
(laughing) Another meeting exactly so I mean that can that's quite interesting but er

Russell:
Um I'll just back to the guy with the sunglasses um er it might be nice for you to there was

I.iv.14:00

a man I saw at Volcano maybe twice on two different times but definitely once

Randy:
Yeah

Russell:
Who wore his towel

Randy:
Yeah
wrapped entirely round his head (*Randy gazps*) as though he were in purdah but was naked from the neck down

**Randy:**

Oh my god

**Russell:**

*(demonstrating)* So his entire head was enveloped with this tiny

**Randy & Russell:**

*(simultaneously)* slit

**Russell:**

But jaw everything completely wrapped up with the towel like an enormous turban

**Randy:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

But also round

**Randy:**

Wow

**Russell:**

And um walking around in um a very loungey way (*Randy laughs*) very kind of physically slack way um

**Randy:**

Yeah trying to look cool

**Russell:**

I don’t know what he was trying to do

**Randy:**

Okay

**Russell:**

It was hard to tell

**Randy:**

That’s fantastic

**Russell:**

Yeah it was really interesting

**Randy:**

That must have looked so bizarre

**Russell:**

Yeah it was really interesting hmm

**Randy:**

*(very soft)* Oh my god

**Russell:**

Hmm

**Randy:**

I did yeah yeah sorry no I was just going to say I I remember

**I.iv.15:00**

sitting in at *Volcano* that very day and I was talking to this guy um who said he just comes down from from the country he lives out in sort of rural Victoria comes in comes in to *Volcano* like once or twice a month um to have sex and he was really young I think he was about nineteen and we were talking afterwards and it was interesting that when he was there we were sitting in the spa and we were talking about the guys that were just walking through and he said um and the way he was talking about

**I.iv.15:30**

the sex he was having there like or the sex he was going to have there was that he was like a collector you know oh well I’ve had a black guy today well I’m going to have this guy and I’m going to have that guy I I just thought it was really really funny and going back to the thing about race um that really when someone says stuff like that it just suddenly goes oh my god you know because it’s a bit like that and he was that was quite obviously from what he was saying anyway was what he was doing the the fascination oh I’ll try

**I.iv.16:00**

this guy out I’ll try that guy out and he was a he was going for the race thing which I thought was quite interesting

**Russell:**

Yeah um I do have another question

**Randy:**
Hmm

Russell:
Do you ever become very aware that you’re male at saunas?

Randy:
Um

Russell:
In the way that you’ve just said you know some suddenly you may have an awareness of race.

Randy:
Yeah

Russell:
Do you ever suddenly have an awareness of being male or of being a man or being some version of male?

Randy:
Yeah er levels of masculin

Russell:
Is male enough or is there a version of male that

Randy:
There’s levels of masculinity. I think there’s like a whole like yeah I think one of the things I do is I mean like when I walk into a particular environment for example in a sauna there’s all these men there wherever it might be whichever environment it is and I think I do sort of rate myself on a spectrum of all sorts of different things you know um but certainly to do with masculinity um there’s all sorts of things um er I mean ranging from something like dick size to how hairy someone is or how big someone is often how big someone is is a really big thing for me because most of the men

Russell:
Your own sense of your masculinity

Randy:
I think so and the way that I see myself um most of the men are quite tall and often I feel quite small and um

Russell:
How tall are you what’s

Randy:
I’m about a hundred and fifty-five centimetres something like that

Russell:
Yeah yeah okay

Randy:
So it’s not particularly tall but um most of the people are at least a foot or more taller than me in a general sense

Russell:
Yeah

Randy:
And I mean there’s stuff like that you know I there’s all these different levels of manliness then there’s like I mean I put it down to like maybe dick size how muscular you are how tall you are and they’re stuff that you can even though someone’s got a towel around them you know you can see you can tell and certainly when you’re alone in a cubicle with a guy I often find that that’s stuff that goes through my head instantly like how masculine or feminine am I in comparison to this person like

Russell:
So it’s a kind of comparative thing with the other it comes into play that way

Randy:
To me it is

Russell:
appendix 3: Randy I

Yeah

Randy:

To me er I never um oh I mean I don’t necessarily think about it but there are there are moments you know particularly when you know you you’ve unwrapped the towel of the other guy and he ends up being hung like an elephant you know I just sort of go well um it you know it my my maybe I do think for a second oh my god you know well that’s going to be interesting or there’s all these thoughts that go through my head so I guess yeah I do think I compare myself to other people there and certainly masculinity becomes a big thing but I never actually I’ve never thought about it actually because most of the women I know I don’t really know that many really girly I tend not to hang around those types of girls because I find that really annoying

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

but so a lot of the girls I know are quite strong and assertive anyway you know and they’re not necessarily lesbian or anything but they are um so I don’t really notice a big difference um yeah in terms of that so I don’t necessarily feel like oh I’m I’m really a guy

being a and I think if women were walking around I still don’t think I would find that any more weird like I don’t think I would find that weird if that makes sense

Russell:

Do you do you I guess then is it is it a fair question to ask do you feel that your gender identity can be fluid or changing in degree if not in kind in a sauna

Randy:

Yeah it it I think it goes like um I think like it goes like um I think like it just fluctuates throughout the whole experience and you can have all sorts of different experiences and I think it has to do like with that top and bottom stuff too um um some of the things the issues I go through in my head sometimes er is you know is it almost more masculine to to have someone penetrate you you know because often that can involve some sort of degree of you know letting someone inside you and er that sort of thing

and dealing with pain and that sort of thing whereas often there’s no pain associated with penetrating someone so you know what is more masculine and that sort of thing there but it throughout the throughout that whole experience of being in a sauna er there’s yeah there are times when that sort of thing happens you know I notice myself maybe like with that guy the the massage guy when we were talking about the the whole Thai boy massage boy thing I recognised something and I played a role and I think maybe that must happen maybe more subconsciously at on different levels when I’m just interacting with someone and I might choose to be um passive I might choose to be active and that might change within that whole sexual experience as well but I don’t think the space necessarily sets up whether you can be one or the other but sometimes that can I think that has more to do with the person the way the person uses the space

you know what role they choose to to wear

Russell:

Do you think the building is gendered

Randy:

Oh

Russell:

Oh no that’s ridiculous no it’s a ridiculous question no don’t even worry let’s stop (I laugh a little)

Randy:

Really I actually think it’s a really good question because

Russell:

No it’s more theoretical though it’s less more about what you’re experiencing

Randy:
Yeah

Russell:

And that’s why

Randy:

Okay

Russell:

It’s it’s drifting off into another conversation

Randy:

Okay yeah I know what you’re saying but it’s a good question though

Russell:

I mean we can have that conversation but it’s possibly outside what my real research is [inaudible]

Randy:

It’s not bad though in terms of how people respond to a space like that I just think um I just wonder whether it’s really important at all that the space looks the way it does sometimes because I mean most of the time if if the guys are I mean okay I’ll take it from me

Russell:

if if I’m walking around that space pretending that I’m not technically there or not really there then does it really matter really what it looks like can it just be corridors

Randy:

You know

Russell:

But then the question then is is the space only what it looks like like what about the fact that there are corridors a floor plan you know proximities distances

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

Turns um circuits dead ends

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

You know

Randy:

Well that’s it I mean like between something like Volcano and Rear Entry I don’t necessarily notice a huge difference except Volcano has a mirrored room which I wish Rear Entry had (he laughs a little) I mean it does seem to have that formula and and um a couple of new saunas have sort of popped up and there I mean there used to be Splash which I never went to which was supposed to be like the most beautiful five star sauna you know and I’m really surprised that there there isn’t something

Russell:

in Melbourne that is beautiful and luxurious that is also a a sex-on-premises-venue do you know what I mean

Randy:

I’ve heard that there is one being designed at at the moment

Russell:

Me too me too this is in the city as well isn’t it

Randy:

Yes

Russell:

Yeah yeah and I I really hope that that happens but the comment that I often get from people is that oh you know the gay community is never going to go for it they like it dirty and seedy and that’s the way they like it

Russell:

Well what do you like

Randy:
I like I like both sometimes I like it

**I.iv.24:30**
to be really filthy and sometimes I really like it when *(he coughs)* it’s just you know it’s nice to have a luxurious experience and at the moment I don’t have the I can’t choose because there’s nothing to choose from

**Russell:**

So you mentioned very early on the thing about you go into a cubicle sometimes

**Randy:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

Those places that people keep calling rooms

**Randy:**

Yes hmm *(he laughs a little)*

**Russell:**

Um that’s interesting isn’t it

**Randy:**

Yeah *(he laughs a little)*

**Russell:**

Um and there might be cum all over the vinyl

**Randy:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

And you say and you kind of winced a bit *(I.iv.25:00)* and *[unintelligible]* was grotty but is it always I mean was that wince for my benefit or do you

**Randy:**

Do I sometimes enjoy the pleasure um

**Russell:**

Or were you wincing

**Randy:**

That’s a rather good question actually

**Russell:**

Do you do you think that’s a nice place to be sometimes

**Randy:**

I I think you can be in the mood where um I know I’ve certainly I’ve certainly been in the mood where I can actually derive pleasure from what is technically would be perceived by other people as being a negative situation *(I.iv.25:30)* um again like with the massage guy I turn it around because I was curious to see what it would feel like what it would be like

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Randy:**

And I guess when it comes to a situation like the cum on the vinyl I just go oh what the hell I’m going to shower in a second and it’s just cum and something of the experience about being a gay male too and practising sex in a place like that or just generally is that when it comes to my internal fluids and things like that I’m so much more relaxed about it I think you know than I’m this is *(I.iv.26:00)* not to say that just because you’re a gay male or a gay female that you’re somehow going to be more in touch with yourself but I don’t like excrement and stuff like that doesn’t really freak me out I mean I wouldn’t really be involved in I don’t think I’d necessarily be involved in something that like scat or anything like I mean that’s probably a bit not quite my style but I’m not fearful of that whereas for some people even the thought of it is just vile you know *(I.iv.26:30)* and I think that comes from the fact that you know yeah I have anal contact or I have you know semen and those sort of things are just familiar things to me so I’m not freaked out by it but some some guys are really nice they’ll lay out a towel on the cum covered vinyl *(he laughs)*

**Russell:**

Their own

**Randy:**

Their own towel
Russell:
Yeah  Sir Walter Raleigh

Randy:
Isn’t that lovely (we laugh)  that’s romance
that’s how you know

Russell:
Let’s stop

Randy:
Okay  thank you very much Russell

Russell:
That’s all right

(I switch off the minidisc recorder)
I.iv.26:57

END OF CONVERSATION
The transcript documents a conversation with Yianis recorded on a weeknight in the living room of a house in Melbourne. The house belonged to a friend of mine who was out of town. When Yianis arrived, he seemed tired and told me that he wasn’t feeling well. Even so, he accepted a beer, settled himself on the sofa and our conversation began. We stopped talking just before midnight. Yianis never finished the beer.

Russell:

I.i.00:00
Um when I when I talked with you last um you made a couple of comments about a few things I was really interested in picking up on okay so I want to start off with one of those um you mentioned that porn the pornography was

an important factor for you in how you related to the sauna like in terms of choosing a place or whether it was a good place

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

Is that correct

Yianis:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

Have I phrased it

Yianis:

No I mean I like a sauna that has you know good porn

Russell:

Okay and then you said that you thought Rear Entry was the one that had the best porn

Yianis:

Yeah yeah and the best kind of you can hear the porn

and it’s you can it’s not it hasn’t been tinted or anything like that or

Russell:

Okay which is what happens elsewhere

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

That you can’t hear it and it’s tinted or something

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

for the pornography at Rear Entry

Yianis:

I mean both both those spaces are pretty good actually

Yeah

Russell:

Can we can we start talking about the porn though

Yianis:

Uh huh

Russell:

Um what I’m interested in is apart from the tinting and the sound levels is there anything else to distinguish the porn for you that they show at Rear Entry from the porn they show at other places you’ve been to
Yianis:

Oh it’s um it’s probably it’s not it’s not the B grade kind of porn or something oh I mean I guess it’s *(he laughs a little)* it’s the lush American A grade kind of porn.

Russell:

That they show at Rear Entry.

Yianis:

Yeah I think so you know it it’s you know the Falcon videos and which I’m you know a sucker for I guess and

Russell:

What

Yianis:

You know like the glossy porn really kind of glossy and you know full on and

Russell:

By glossy what do you mean

Yianis:

Um

Russell:

Can you describe something you’ve seen

Yianis:

It’s it’s beefcake or it’s um

Russell:

Can you describe

Yianis:

Not at all not at all *(he laughs a little)* it’s one big blur but it’s you know like it’s yeah it’s probably been has been made in the nine I mean I’m generalising in some ways but you know like it’s probably been made in the nineties and um

Russell:

I don’t know

Yianis:

Oh okay I guess one thing is you know like the kind of porn that I like and er is where the scenario is fully explored I don’t like porn where they start in the middle of the scene or they’re already having sex.
Yianis: Yeah narrative is very important and I need to know how they got there.

Russell: Right

Yianis: Even if it is kind of dubious I want to know like because it's it it yeah it just adds so much.

Russell: What kind of game did they play with the coach?

Yianis: No they were just basketballers or something no there was no sports I didn’t remember no I don’t think it was Dream Team but yeah there was a lot of um yeah it was great actually.

Russell: Okay so

Yianis: Yeah I kind of like um actually this wasn’t in the nineties as well I mean probably this was probably not made I mean it wasn’t made in the nineties.

Russell: While they’re having sex or prior to having sex

Yianis: Prior and during

Russell: Dialogue
All right

Yianis:

You know you know I really like dirty talk and stuff like that

Russell:

(I laugh a little) What would be an example

Yianis:

(he laughs) Of dirty talk um

I.i.06:30

I don’t know oh no no there’s this line that you know like oh it’s something quite horrible really but it’s do you know something like you know oh there’s a funny line something about a piglet or something eat me eat me out piglet or something or (we laugh) um stuff like that um you know or you know I really like the guy who’s

I.i.07:00

you know who’s dominating or who’s you know like um

Russell:

The penetrator in this case

Yianis:

The penetrator usually or the rougher guy you know sometimes they have gems and you know I can’t quite I mean you know I just like it to be there I mean it’s not so much as a memorable but it just makes it more authentic for me which is I mean authentic to what but or you know like or it’s just it’s just um

I.i.07:30

I don’t know it makes it makes it more more engaging

Russell:

You are more engaged

Yianis:

Yeah I’m more engaged with that

Russell:

Do you um

Yianis:

And oh I also like in porn where they almost um fumble

I.i.08:00

and stuff like they’re taking off their pants and they’re not coming off properly

Russell:

Yes

Yianis:

I love that

Russell:

Yes um I remember a moment myself that I’ve never forgotten in um a porn video that I didn’t view at a sauna I viewed it on a home VCR and er it was a scene where some guy who was obviously in his late twenties pretending to be

I.i.08:30

a high school student (we laugh a little) um was um penetrating the teacher who kept him back after class and made him write lines until his elbow brushed against his crotch and basically they’d rearranged the desks a bit and by this stage they were both naked and one was bent over the teacher and the supposed student who was about the same age um was rooting him and

I.i.09:00

there was this moment where the guy who was being rooted was just in the wrong position

Yianis:

Hmm hmm

Russell:

and the other guy just looked at the camera (Yianis laughs) and just looked back and just didn’t care about the camera he just shoved the guy around into a different position because he wanted to root him so much

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

And the camera he was thinking

I.i.09:30

clearly for a moment of whether he they should stop and just obviously thought no I’m going to keep on going and there was this mess of desks by the end of the scene but it was that moment where um his own
interests prevailed that made the whole thing more interesting

Yianis:

Yeah like yeah when someone’s being rooted and I don’t know the person’s being rough and they’re getting carried away like oh like what I’ve noticed is you know with some stars like some

Russell:

I don’t know him what does he look like

Yianis:

He’s got dark hair he looks like um he looks like Angel you know Angel Buffy Angel

Russell:

No

Yianis:

Buffy The Vampire

Russell:

I don’t watch television

Yianis:

Oh right (he laughs a little) so he kind of looks like a

Russell:

Quick police description of him

Yianis:

It looks um dark angular you know his face is quite

Russell:

Yeah

Yianis:

It’s just really square it’s he’s got dark hair and he’s just got just this amazing cock and

Russell:

I’m not no per se I’m not into you know I don’t know magnificent cocks or whatever I don’t talk about it but he does he’s just got and everyone and everyone who sucks him off or gets fucked he he’s just thoroughly enjoying like he is just amazing (he laughs) um and Ben

Russell:

I’m aware of Blake Harper

Yianis:

Yeah and Blake Harper loves getting fucked and when he gets fucked he’s really enjoying it and it’s like authentic like it’s just real like he’s so much enjoying it and he just gets really carried away and he is really kind of malleable not malleable but really kind of flexible and stuff and um

Russell:

And he’s kind of got dark features as well hasn’t he

Yianis:

Yeah yeah and um there’s this scene where he’s bent over and like someone’s pounding him too hard and he’s you know he um he kind of stag like he falls almost

Russell:

Right

Yianis:

And that’s great I love that like you know because it’s I don’t know

Russell:

Those messy bits

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

You were interested in a while for a while or you had an interest or I remember you talking about it in the kind of décor

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:

in in these films as well do you want to

I.i.12:00

is that an interest you still have

Yianis:

Not so much but I remember having oh you just reminded me of it actually yeah I I loved it you know when they had these you know like you know flowers in the background and um

Russell:

In in interiors or in fields

Yianis:

In interiors and stuff

Russell:

So flowers in vases or something

Yianis:

No no and and photographs of flowers

Russell:

Oh yeah

Yianis:

Or you know like a Maple [sic] you know like Mapplethorpe flowers I’ve seen

Russell:

Really

Yianis:

Yeah

I.i.12:30

yeah I mean obviously a print or you know a print of the photographic print or whatever um stuff like that and you know like that’s pretty cool I mean but that’s when I I think back then I used to watch a different kind of porn and now I guess with the Falcon stuff it’s a lot more flash or something and I take the interiors don’t interest me as much because I think

I.i.13:00

I don’t know why they don’t it doesn’t

Russell:

Are they more conventional now do you think

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

or they’re more controlled or something like that when you talked about them being glossier is it because the production values make them more

Yianis:

Yeah the prod yeah the production values have have you know it’s like a they’re like good TV sets now almost

Russell:

Right

Yianis:

You know where you don’t take you know like but before it was just like it looked like let’s put a flower a pic you know a photograph of a flower

I.i.13:30

on the wall

Russell:

Yeah

Yianis:

And it was just like do you know what I mean and let’s put this pillow there (he laughs a little) and stuff or you know this doona cover you know and it

Russell:

Did you find yourself trying to tell whether they were um location shoots or whether they were actually faked interiors

Yianis:

No I didn’t

Russell:

like sets

Yianis:
No I always thought of them as sets. I never

Russell:

As sets always

Yianis:

Yeah always sets

Russell:

Right um

\textit{i.i.14:00}

when when you sit do you can you remember the last time you sat down at Rear Entry watching a video like this

Yianis:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

Where were you sitting upstairs or downstairs

Yianis:

Upstairs

Russell:

Can you describe that place

Yianis:

It was really dark and it’s like a it’s got three tiers or a couple of tiers

Russell:

Yeah

Yianis:

\textit{i.i.14:30}

Oh and actually I um I wouldn’t I went to sit down and I fell over (he laughs) because I maybe I thought there was another tier or something but I remember something embarrassing happening

Russell:

Right

Yianis:

Like oh no

Russell:

Like what happens in the porn films (\textit{we laugh})

Yianis:

Yeah but oh no I think what happened was I thought there was a wall behind me I just went back and there was

Russell:

There wasn’t

Yianis:

The wall was like another metre away or something

Russell:

Right

Yianis:

Something like that and um and I usually you know try to isolate myself and just

\textit{i.i.15:00}

just watch the porn

Russell:

Can you describe it is that a room or an area how would you describe

Yianis:

It’s an area it’s it’s at a right angle so the the tiers are at a right angle kind of opposite the TV monitor

Russell:

Right

Yianis:

which is kind of um in the wall and you know like so you don’t have any contact with the TV so it’s behind I think Perspex or something but

Russell:

It’s

\textit{i.i.15:30}

in the wall

Yianis:

Yeah
Russell: Right

Yianis: It’s in-built in the wall I think and um and you know there’s an area of say you know two metres square in between the seating almost and the TV and that

Russell: Right so it’s like a domestic viewing how big is the television set

Yianis: It’s just yeah it um forty-nine fifty centimetre

Russell: Yeah so it’s it’s like a standard one you’d expect to find in a home

Yianis: Yeah yeah

Russell: Is it a homely environment

Yianis: No no

Russell: How would

Yianis: It’s too dark and

Russell: This tiered seating what’s it is it is it padded

Yianis: Yeah it’s kind of a mini-stadium and there you know there’s like leather leather just um for you oh no is it leather yeah I’m sure there’s leather kind of seating not seating but you know pillows er flat you know pillows and um people can actually

Russell: on one of on one of the sides people can peer over

Yianis: To what

Yianis: To the tiers where people’re sitting

Russell: So

Yianis: So at head height

Russell: Yeah

Yianis: they can actually you know look at someone’s back I think

Russell: Right

Yianis: or watch the TV at head height so standing up behind the seats

Russell: Right

Yianis: I think yeah that’s upstairs

Russell: About how long ago are we talking that you were there

Yianis: Mm that’s ages ago um

Russell: Two years (this is a question)

Yianis:
Eighty-nine oh ninety-eight (*he laughs*) sorry

Russell:
That’s all right

Yianis:
I wasn’t quite alive in ninety-nine ninety-eight um November

Russell:
You know it was November

Yianis:
Yeah probably November the twenty-fifth

Russell:
How do you know that date so specifically

Yianis:
(*he sighs*) I don’t know like things happen at saunas or something and I don’t go that I mean I can remember when I went because something happened that night that freaked me out and um so I remember that that was the date and it was just before I went to *this place overseas* so it was you know yeah it was a Thursday night oh Friday morning

Russell:
Right

Yianis:
After Q & A

Russell:
Oh right so you’d come a long way because Q & A’s in Fitzroy

Yianis:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
Is that because of an HIV concern

Yianis:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
And your assumptions that *this place overseas* was more likely (*Yianis laughs a little*) a place where men would be HIV positive than Melbourne

Yianis:
I guess and

Russell:
That’s okay we’re talking about two years ago

Yianis:
Yeah yeah so um yeah

Russell:
We don’t have to pursue this

Yianis:
Yeah no

Russell:
Okay um but can we keep talking about Rear Entry

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
Okay um

Yianis:
you said you like to isolate yourself

Russell:
From what

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
I don’t mind people watching me you know wank and stuff at all and but I don’t want
them to feel that they can approach me sometimes and you know yeah

I.i.19:30
I mean sometimes I just want to go there and watch the porn and I don’t you know it it’s you know I don’t I mean I never yeah I mean there’s more times where I just go there to wank rather than to have sex with people I mean I love watching people

Russell:

With other people

Yianis:

Sorry yeah oh not so much with other people either but I mean I guess you know the sauna kind of gives me an opportunity to watch

I.i.20:00
porn in an environment that you know it’s not like watching at home where my parents will I don’t know it’s just a little bit more tense even if (he laughs) I watch the porn in my bedroom you know there’s always a thing of me being in my house in my parents’ house so I’d rather just be relaxed

Russell:

So do at at home is it understood that they can walk into your bedroom

Yianis:

No I mean I watch I watch it late at night but I mean you know I like to have the volume

I.i.20:30
up but I can’t have the volume (he laughs a little) I can’t have the volume screeching you know at one o’clock in the morning at home

Russell:

Do you have a collection of your own videos

Yianis:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

How many would be in that collection

Yianis:

About twelve at the moment it just it exploded oh no it didn’t not exploded but a lot of when my friends get into relationships it seems like they give (he laughs a little) their porn to me

Russell:

(I laugh a little) All right

Yianis:

I’ve had two people do that

Russell:

Right has you say you

I.i.21:00
don’t really go very often to saunas in these days compared with how you used to is that correct

Yianis:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

Um has your porn collection increased in that period

Yianis:

Yeah (almost inaudible) totally

Russell:

Has that slightly taken away the need or the interest in going to saunas given that porn was one of the attractions

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

Right

Yianis:

And also I mean yeah I mean I I no okay it I guess

I.i.21:30
yeah my HIV fear really dominates my life in some ways and um and I just don’t want to put put myself in a situation where I’m at risk but when I say that I mean that in the most paranoid sense like I understand that what I do is not risky or

I.i.22:00
not that risky but I like to eliminate all risk

Russell:

Yeah
Yianis:
So I that is probably the predominant reason why I don’t go to saunas anymore because whenever I go and in the past and I can virtually remember you know I’ve probably been to saunas you know maybe fifteen twenty times in my life I could probably remember the dates of ten of them because they’ve been incidents of high you know like panic mode

Russell:
Right

Yianis:
and

\textit{i.i.22:30}
stuff and I always regret it and it takes me a year to recover almost from that one visit so it doesn’t seem like it’s very worth it

Russell:
But that would be I don’t mean to discredit what you’re saying but that would be ten years

Yianis:
What would

Russell:
When you say it takes you about a year to recover from it

Yianis:
Oh yeah that’s okay well you know and then a lot of the times are when I’m recovering I mean I just go there and have a wank there’s been times when there’s been absolutely no contact with anyone there and I guess you know I first went to a sauna when I was

\textit{i.i.23:00}
it was um Year Ten so I was sixteen so that’s four seven years

Russell:
Um

Yianis:
(almost inaudible) Sorry

Russell:
Yeah I think I want to talk with you about that first visit too at some stage

Yianis:
Uh huh

Russell:
but um um let’s let’s I’m just curious a little bit about starting I mean

\textit{i.i.23:30}
I’m curious about the centrality of the porn images on the screen for your interest in the place is that central is it crucial or are there other factors I mean when you spoke with me that’s what I walked away thinking or remembering that’s what I heard you say when we when we spoke last time um and I’m just wondering

\textit{i.i.24:00}
is it is it the kind of central thing for you in terms of an attraction that help that um gets you to overcome your fear or as you call it your paranoia

Yianis:
Yeah um

Russell:
Or is there anything else

Yianis:
Yeah no I mean I guess I like the chase I mean I ha I love and hate the chase

Russell:
Being pursued

\textit{i.i.24:30}
or pursuing

Yianis:
Oh it’s all these like games being played and stuff and I mean it’s a bit of both but I always find myself pursuing and I’ve I hate that and that’s another reason why I don’t want to go it just it seems so desperate to me or something and I just you know you’re continually you know \textit{(the coughs) after someone and stuff and}

\textit{i.i.25:00}
most times you’re not going to get them or something and or you know you don’t feel like you’re buffed enough or you you know you don’t feel you’re muscley enough or something or you know um
Russell:
Do you think you’re muscley enough
Yianis:
No
Russell:
or that you’re buffed enough
Yianis:
No so I always leave not feeling good about
my body and thus myself um
Russell:
Is that
Yianis:
I mean I get over it quickly but I don’t know
I don’t want to be in I don’t want to
feel that ever really
Russell:
Do you have you ever considered not
changing out of your clothes at a sauna
Yianis:
No
Russell:
Have you seen people who’ve not changed
out of their clothes at a sauna
Yianis:
Oh yeah I have I mean I guess I’ve walked
through with my clothes on like if I’ve been
there and with a friend and he’s still there
and I’ve got dressed and (he laughs a little)
oh shit I’m with a friend I’ve got to and then
I find them so I’ve done that and I always
presume
that people do that do you know what I
mean people with clothes on I’ve seen a
few people with T-shirts on I guess or have
I yeah I’m sure I have seen but I can’t
remember in what context or what they were
doing but no pants I think there’s towel and
a T-shirt that’s as much as I’ve seen
Russell:
I can remember a guy quite distinctly
because I knew I knew him from somewhere
and eventually I figured our where I knew
him from which was something completely
different er he he just happened to be
someone that I’d noticed in another place
several times

Russell:
er but this this guy was at Volcano one
night and for at least an hour and a half he
was wandering through the entire building
with the exception of the wet rooms like the
sauna and the steam room I didn’t see him
go in there but he was fully dressed in
street clothes a jumper jeans sneakers
Yianis:
Wow boy
Russell:
And was otherwise behaving as everyone
else was

Russell:
and then at a certain point he decided to
change out of his clothes and the next time I
saw him he you know had a towel but I saw
him several times and for me it made him
instantly very interesting because it seemed
such an unorthodox choice (Yianis laughs a
little) um seriously unorthodox and I found it
interesting for that reason
Yianis:
Yeah
Russell:
Um
Yianis:
buts I didn’t see him go near anyone or
anyone I saw people really interested in him

Russell:
Wow was he like like was it the clothes that
were making him attractive in some way not
attractive but just people were attracted
their eye or was he attractive just generally
or

Russell:
Um you’d have to ask other people I mean I
found him attractive in some way (Yianis
sighs) but there was

Russell:
nothing I mean I’d noticed him on other
occasions
Yianis:
Oh right  okay

Russell:
Okay  at a library

Yianis:
(he laughs) You go to libraries as well (I laugh) hmm

Russell:
I go to libraries as well (we laugh a little)

Yianis:
I don’t know

Russell:
But um it seems such an er a big choice to make though to keep clothes on like you for instance say you feel

I.i.28:30
odd you've you have um and well how would you describe your relationship with your appearance

Yianis:
I don’t know  I feel shorter there as well [unintelligible] you don’t have shoes (he laughs a little) and um

Russell:
(indicating Yianis’ feet) These shoes you’re wearing aren’t built up though

Yianis:
Oh you know they  I just feel like they give me something more

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
I.i.29:00
(he laughs) Um I mean I don’t want to  yeah um um it’s probably psychological  I mean and the towel doesn’t suit me and (he laughs) and it's it's always a you know like what length do you have the towel and it's always a question and you know what length of the towel suits you best and how low do you sling it and you know like do you have a bit of a stomach at the moment or you know

I.i.29:30
stuff like that

Russell:
I’m surprised then that you (I laugh a little) go to a sauna at all if you worry about such things

Yianis:
(laughing a little) I mean it’s not a huge concern  it’s not a huge concern at all  I mean it is a concern but it’s not  it wouldn’t stop me from going

Russell:
Right

Yianis:
You know

Russell:
Right

Yianis:
But you know what  yeah

Russell:

I.i.30:00
You  what what would you describe as if you were to go to Rear Entry say today tomorrow whatever is there a a place in Rear Entry  a part of that building that you would you know you would go to out of choice

Yianis:

I.i.30:30
I would just sit in the downstairs porn area in the little alcoves

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
Where the mattresses are  they’re kind of little

Russell:

Oh yeah those
Yianis:
I don’t know what [unintelligible]

Russell:
Can you describe them briefly

Yianis:
Um ah they’re probably two metres wide and then they go um about three metres long

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
So they’re little beds almost

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
But you know they’re surrounded by three walls

Russell:
Yes

Yianis:
And you can sit right down the back

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
and but you can see the porn as well

Russell:
Right

Yianis:
I like there

Russell:
And other people in the more open area

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
I don’t really see you unless they come and peer around the corner

Yianis:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
And you know like I don’t know you’re likely I don’t know I mean if someone gives me head there I mean that’s that’s probably just about what I want or something about all I want

Russell:
Right is there an area that you would avoid a part that you would avoid going to

Yianis:
No there wouldn’t be an area that I’d avoid but I don’t think I’d want to do the chase or something around the maze not the mazes the corridors and stuff and you know trying to be followed or following someone or something like that and then you know going (he coughs) you know going there at the start and going oh it’s too early to pick up and you know I got to you know (he laughs) you know you can’t pick up too early or you know and then if you pick up too late then you know you’ve wasted time and stuff I’m sorry I’m feeling quite negative toward saunas at the moment

Russell:
That’s all right you don’t need to apologise for it I’m just trying to find out (Yianis laughs) what the phenomenon is

Yianis:
Yeah
Russell: is okay

Yianis: Yeah

Russell: Do do you see what I mean

Yianis: Yeah yeah

Russell: Like if it's negative it's negative

Yianis: (laughing a little) Yeah

Russell: You know if it's something else whatever

Yianis: Yeah

Russell: But it's no problem

Yianis: Um so yeah I don't know I and I guess at the moment you know I'm in love (he laughs) and it's

Russell: Oh right

Yianis: And

Russell: (laughing a little) I didn't know about this

Yianis: (he laughs, then) And I don't know it it's totally incongruent with saunas for me

Russell: Right

Yianis: Because they're not for me my experience of saunas hasn't been about love (whispers) god that sounds so fucked (full voice again) but (he laughs) um

Russell: In what way does it sound really fucked

Yianis: (laughing) Um

Russell: And who to whom does it sound really fucked

Yianis: To me (laughing) for probably projecting um

Yianis: (laughing) um but um I don't know like I'm not you know like I don't consider myself one of these people that's righteous about you know saunas are bad because you know you can't you know they're not about relationships they're not about monogamy they're not you know they're just about you know sex and stuff I mean you know but that whole thing's doesn't interest me at all and it annoys me and I

Russell: That that discourse that rhetoric

Yianis: Yeah and I I don't place that kind of value judgement on either people or the place that you know the sauna or the people who go to saunas um but yeah it makes me mad actually um but um yeah I mean yeah um why is it fucked it's fucked I don't know there you know when you're at the sauna or something

Yianis: you know there there's this kind of oh no this acknowledgement that you know this is you know this is what we want or you know this is what we're really like or something or

Russell: When you say we who do you mean
appendix 4: Yianis I

Yianis:

Gay men you know or homosexual men yeah homosexual just general I mean that men that have sex with men *(he laughs)* [unintelligible] yeah in all their kind of subcategories or whatever but

_i.i.35:00_

um you know and or no it’s not I don’t know for me the experience of love isn’t about sex at all yet so yeah *(a silence)*

Russell:

When you um

_i.i.36:00_

let’s start talking about when you first went to Rear Entry

Yianis:

Right yeah

Russell:

You you’ve already told me that you were underage when you first went

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

Um that you passed like did they know you were underage

Yianis:

I mean I don’t know if it was then I went you know probably five times before I was you know turned eighteen or maybe four times

Russell:

Yeah

Yianis:

And I’m sure one

_i.i.36:30_

of those times there was this knowing smile or something

Russell:

Yeah

Yianis:

But I always had facial hair even even as a sixteen year old I’ve had facial hair

Russell:

Yeah

Yianis:

since then

Russell:

Yeah

Yianis:

So and not that I’ve ever you know been you know I wasn’t tall or anything I think I’ve stayed the same height I haven’t grown since you know I did most of my growing before that time and um I think it was the facial hair it you know

_i.i.37:00_

it’s a signifier of you know you don’t expect a sixteen you know Year Eleven to have facial hair

Russell:

Hmm

Yianis:

So I think you know you just let him in and you know like I was kind of I was wearing at the time suede coats or something

Russell:

Yeah

Yianis:

so *(he laughs)* they were kind of dinner jackety kind of thing er I don’t know like not that I was trying to look old oh yes I WAS trying because I wanted to go to a well known club nearby so generally I wanted to look older for both venues

Russell:

Yeah

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

I.i.37:30
The before you went through the door what did you imagine was behind it well first of all before we talk about the door if we just think about the façade of the building you’d already you told me a story about getting your father’s Melways out can you just tell me that again

Yianis:

Hmm yeah like I just went to the Outrage listings

Russell:

Yeah

Yianis:

And what I’d do is get all the addresses of the saunas and nightclubs and pinpoint them on my dad’s Melways

Russell:

When you say pinpoint them what

Yianis:

Just with a little pen

Russell:

With a little pen

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

So did your father notice this on his Melways

Yianis:

(laughing) No no it’s kind of a old you know like it’s an old

Russell:

An old

Yianis:

It was an old Melways with lots you know my dad kept lots of shit it’s not a clean Melways

Russell:

Right okay

Yianis:

So I mean you know yeah

Russell:

And did you do this in your room at home

Yianis:

Yeah yeah I did

Russell:

Do you remember actually doing it

Yianis:

Yeah I did it was you know it was around Easter that was the time when I got my first Outrage I remember and yeah and that’s when I did the pinpointing it was probably the holidays

Russell:

Right

Yianis:

And you know all I wanted to do was just to see where they were and I before I went I knew where they were you know yeah

Russell:

You knew where they were on the map

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

Had you gone to check

Yianis:

Yeah I’d walked

Russell:

Check Rear Entry out

Yianis:

Yeah yeah from the outside

Russell:
Okay what did you do when you checked it out from the outside was that on the day you actually went

Yianis:

No no probably

I mean it was a general kind of probably mission to that part of Melbourne so I was finding out where the well known club was and oh and I remember going to an art shop nearby as well because that was exciting and (we laugh a little) because I didn’t you know I hadn’t heard you know I knew this art shop was a big art shop and then I turned down Rear Entry’s street and checked out where Rear Entry was as well

Russell:

Right um the

I.i.39:00
did you only go that once in advance on the recon was it like a reconnaissance mission

Yianis:

Yeah no it was and I um

Russell:

Did you only do it the once

Yianis:

Did I did it once by myself

Russell:

Yeah

Yianis:

and another time with a friend but we were kind of going I got my you know I I got quite excited because we walked you know like I think we got off public transport nearby and walked past Rear Entry to get to the art shop

Russell:

Yeah

Yianis:

Because I had a friend who you know we were mad about crazy pencils and stuff

I.i.40:00

Russell:

Yeah

Yianis:

so it was kind of

Russell:

But did the friend know

Yianis:

No no but I was very excited

Russell:

Right was that was the secretiveness from the friend part of the excitement that you knew where you were walking and your friend didn’t

Yianis:

Um

Russell:

Did you disclose this to the friend

Yianis:

No no no not at all but it was just exciting walking past he had no idea where we like that part of Melbourne meant nothing to him

I.i.40:30

Russell:

Right okay where um so you walked past this façade what how would you describe that façade of the building

Yianis:

It’s like a factory

Russell:

Yeah

Yianis:

An old factory

Russell:

Okay
Yianis:
I don’t think I paid much attention to it I just wanted to know where it was

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
and stuff and oh I think oh no there were earlier occasions when I did walk in the foyer and just look around in the foyer yeah

Russell:
The just just inside the very front door bit

Yianis:
Yeah yeah no yeah and just walked in that area and never actually walked in

Russell:
Right so where

Yianis:
Before I actually went so I remember that yeah

Russell:
Right you’d actually step into the foyer

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
All right was the front door of the building was that open or did you have to open it to step into the foyer

Yianis:
No the front door was just open

Russell:
Right okay outwards or inwards

Yianis:
Can’t remember at all

Russell:
Okay (checking the time remaining on the minidisc) um we’ll go a bit further all right now what do you remember about what you imagined was behind that façade

Yianis:
No I had no idea really I mean I did

Russell:
Any images any images

Yianis:
I didn’t have images I just knew I’d you know read some articles in Outrage about what they were like but I get it I never really got a good impression of them I just thought they were probably an extension of a beat

Russell:
Right for some reason

Yianis:
Because I understood the lang by that stage I understood the language of a beat and was quite I don’t know savvy or something (he laughs) or not savvy um that’s the wrong word

Russell:
You’d been to beats

Yianis:
Yeah yeah and I understood how they worked

Russell:
Right and so you just thought this was like a beat except you paid to go in

Yianis:
appendix 4: Yianis I

Yeah and indoors and I had no idea what the sauna I had the wet bit

Russell:

Yeah

Yianis:

I had no idea about

Russell:

Did you

Yianis:

And the video bit I had no idea about

Russell:

Did you know it existed did you know that that's why it was called a sauna

Yianis:

No I never actually I mean I knew yeah but I never imagined the sauna you know like or

Russell:

Did you imagine it was a place where men wore towels

Yianis:

(a silence, then softly) I must have known that but

Russell:

You told me you'd read the Michael Anderson Daniel Dalladay article in Outrage

Yianis:

Mm yeah and all I can remember from that piece the impression that I get was they were being quite critical of the soggy carpet and how the saunas in Melbourne weren't up to scratch

Russell:

Right

Yianis:

And how they were dingy and and stuff and I just thought they were just being really kind of um over the I don't know I just thought they were over the top about I didn't take it seriously I just it was like an ex you know story an exciting

Russell:

Rather than what

Yianis:

Men in towels I didn't imagine men in towels

Russell:

I.i.44:00

So when you say meeting someone is it fair to say that you had a sense of what a relationship might be you imagined a series of relations but not the site in which the relations would occur

Yianis:

Oh it was just all this like abstract feeling of excitement everything was just this (he laughs) I didn't know but I did you know I knew there was sex you know but I hadn't experienced sex that was that full on actually THAT concentrated because at beats you know like whoa you know at that stage I'd had I'd had you know like um you know it was beyond masturbation or whatever you know but when I got to saunas it was just so full on like the sex I had with the men there were just it was more intense and it seemed like these men were more serious about sex they were like connoisseurs

Yianis:

(checking the minidisc recorder) Okay can we can we just stop for a moment and I'll change this

Russell:

Yianis:

Can I just have a cigarette outside for a sec
Russell:
Yeah sure

(I switch off the minidisc recorder)
I.i.45:12

(I insert a fresh minidisc into the recorder
while Yianis smokes a cigarette outside,
then switch it back on when he returns)
Russell:

I.i.00:00
Okay okay we talked about you we’ve had a break

I.i.00:30
and a cigarette and we talked about you um
imagining or not being able to imagine or
having a very particular kind of imagining of
what was behind the wall
Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
That basically you didn’t imagine the site
the building more the kind of relations that
would occur in it
Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
So you told me you vividly
I.i.01:00
remember that night
Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
Can you tell me a bit about that night can
you describe that night to me
Yianis:
I re I mean the overwhelming thing was of
just this red lights or yeah red you know and
dark red dingy and um and I’m sure you
know I was excitable and

I.i.01:30
I was excited about I don’t know I thought it
was underground or something or

Russell:
Literally
Yianis:
No but

Russell:
Oh do you mean underground as in what edgy or

Yianis:
Edgy yeah yeah I was very excited I
probably was very very excited and stuff

Russell:
Did you feel grown up

Yianis:
Yeah I felt really grown up I I thought you
know I was ready and yeah

Russell:
Ready for what

Yianis:
I.i.02:00
For the sauna (he laughs) for this place this
this space I thought it was it was at that
time I I felt liberated for some reason yeah

Russell:
Do you

Yianis:
Like there was no restriction at beats you
know there were restrictions but in this
space there weren’t there weren’t you
know I mean not that I was ever scared of
cops catching me at beats or anything but I
just here I was I didn’t even have to think
about things like that I

I.i.02:30
you know you know you know toilets or
beaches or whatever you weren’t meant to
have sex but here you could have you know

Russell:
Are saunas legal
Yianis:
To my mind yes but I'm sure there are so many loopholes that people somehow bypass with porn in Victoria and I wouldn't be surprised if saunas are part of that somehow loopholes like yeah probably some kind of you you become a member so it's a members club so really if there's that kind of thing then you don't yeah

Russell:
Did you become a member when you went in

Yianis:
Hmm I'm sure I I don't I can't remember if I paid a fee but I have paid fees

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
You know like the first time you go you pay five dollars or something or

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
I don't know extra

Russell:
Right

Yianis:
Yeah but I think I probably paid adult prices because I had I couldn't show my high school concession \( (I \text{ laugh}) \) or something so I'm so sure that I paid adult prices

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
In a towel

Yianis:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
Were you at all

Yianis:

The um the way when I asked you if you could tell me a bit about it that night you were describing things other than what you'd told me you'd been imagining you told me that your expectations or imaginings were about relations you'd have with men

Yianis:
Hmmm

Russell:
and that you hadn't been thinking at all about the place as such

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
And when I just asked you then you began by talking about red lights and darkness and dinginess and seediness or something

Yianis:
And I could move however I liked

Russell:
What do you mean

Yianis:
I I

Russell:
I had this confidence walking around

Yianis:
Right

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
In a towel

Yianis:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
Were you at all

Yianis:
I didn’t have a problem with my body then

Russell:
You didn’t then

Yianis:
No

Russell:
But you do now

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
How many years ago are we talking about

Yianis:
Seven [unintelligible: this week?] I wasn’t muscular or anything but I just I was just I was comfortable with my body when I was that age

Russell:
Right

Yianis:
Yeah tot it wasn’t

Russell:
You said it it was liberating for you for some kind of reason

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
Let’s not worry about the reason for the moment can you tell me how you knew it was liberating for you

Yianis:
I was happy yeah like it was just exciting I was excited and I had this

Russell:
Right do you recall hav

Yianis:
and and in a rush like and I had this adrenaline thing where I knew that Dad was picking me up from the from the social at eleven thirty or whatever so

Russell:
Because you your parents assumed you were actually at a school social

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
Right okay and you’d slipped away

Yianis:
I didn’t go to I didn’t even enter the social

Russell:
You were just

Yianis:
I just got dropped off

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
and I just

Russell: went straight to Rear Entry

Yianis:
No I went to the club nearby first but it was so early it was dead early no one was there it was useless

Russell: So you went to a sauna instead

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:

Okay

Yianis:

I mean I think if um the club oh I don’t know I probably wanted to do both that night

Russell:

Right

Yianis:

Yeah but I was running you know by

Russell:

So what so what kind of time frame did you know you had

Yianis:

Um I had from probably seven thirty to eleven thirty

Russell:

I.i.06:30

Right okay

Yianis:

And that I didn’t catch a tram there um I walked there like you know run like I was power walking

Russell:

Yeah to save time

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

Okay the

Yianis:

Or even running even (he laughs) I don’t know

Russell:

Okay so that there was this you said you were happy that you imagined you had a bounce in your step

Yianis:

Mm

Russell:

Um do you remember having a bounce in your step

Yianis:

I.i.07:00

Yeah yeah yeah definitely

Russell:

What were you walking on literally

Yianis:

Concrete

Russell:

Concrete

Yianis:

The pavement

Russell:

Through throughout the whole building

Yianis:

Oh oh not in I thought when I was getting there

Russell:

No once you were inside

Yianis:

(laughing) Once I was inside um I can’t remember

Russell:

Did you have a bounce in your step walking around the building

Yianis:

Yeah yeah

Russell:
While you were walking fast around the building

Yianis:
Yeah I was walking really fast I was in a hurry

I.ii.07:30
I wanted to find out what you know it was straight away and it was probably the first time I’d seen porn for a prolonged period as well so that was very exciting

Russell:
So when you arrived although your interest was in men did you find that in fact that you explored the building

Yianis:
Hmm

Russell:
Or did you

Yianis:
Oh yeah yeah

Russell:
Did you postpone exploring men until you’d explored the building

Yianis:
Yeah like I had a dip in the

I.ii.08:00
in the [unintelligible] saunas or stairs I was walking round and I I at that stage I wasn’t that interested in porn and it was exciting but the men were more exciting to me than the porn

Russell:
Right

Yianis:
was at that stage

Russell:
What night of the week was it

Yianis:
It was a Friday night

Russell:
And what did at was there a point where the building became less interesting for you and the men or

I.ii.08:30
the porn became more interesting

Yianis:
Yeah it probably took about I was probably there for about an hour before um um before um I was aiming you know aiming to get a guy

Russell:
What was the most delightful thing you found in the building

Yianis:
Nothing really delightful I mean the sex that I had was pretty full on and it was very vivid

I.ii.09:00
and I think it was probably the first time that I was rimmed (he laughs a little) and um that was very exciting and stuff but it all kind of went sour towards the end and stuff and and yeah I freaked out at the end and left I left and then I went back in to find the guy that I had sex with

Russell:
Right

Yianis:
To confront him (he laughs)

Russell:
Right

Yianis:

I.ii.09:30
and stuff and

Russell:
To confront him about

Yianis:
Um yeah I fingered him and left the building I realised that I had a small cut on my finger and I got really stressed out so I had to go back inside and I don’t know just talk to him or something yeah
Russell:
And were you able to do that

Yianis:
I was I think I was very I don't know I was just so

Russell:
Was that reassuring

Yianis:
No (he laughs a little) and then I left and yeah went back

to the social

Russell:
No I waited for my parents to pick me up

Yianis:
and I waited for like a while I thought it was probably an hour so I probably I walked back and it was probably yeah ten thirty still

Russell:
What so you were there two or three hours

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
So an hour of that was spent exploring the building

Yianis:
Yeah (a silence) I can't remember the exact time line I mean there's something missing there but

Russell:
Do you can you tell me about um what you found when you explored can you remember the pathway you took

Yianis:
No no no I can't at all I remember the gym room I remember the room that I had sex in that's it now because the gym room was the room that I found the guy in and we he got up and closed the door and we had a discussion in the gym room and I remember the sec the room we had sex in it was kind of as we you were walking upstairs in that kind of um where the staircase is is that corridor that runs from the staircase straight down

Russell:
Yes at in the upper level yeah

Yianis:
No no oh

Russell:
Downstairs you know where the staircase is

Yianis:
Yeah a room to the left I had sex in

Russell:
Can you describe that room

Yianis:
Yeah the it was um oh it's so hard to kind of distinguish the my memory of the room then and then without it being blurred with other thing you know other images I mean the only image I've got of (he laughs a little) of that whole experience is of is of his arse
L.ii.12:30

really

Russell:

Right

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

Did the room have a ceiling

Yianis:

Yeah no no it didn’t I mean I don’t know if I remember it then but I know it doesn’t

Russell:

Did it have

Yianis:

because I’ve looked I’ve like yeah

Russell:

You’ve looked over

Yianis:

into the other cubicles

Russell:

From that room

Yianis:

Well from rooms like that yeah

Russell:

Right okay at Rear Entry

Yianis:

Yeah in Rear Entry

Russell:

Okay all right

L.ii.13:00

when you when you last visited Rear Entry do you remember passing that room

Yianis:

Yeah yeah I always pass that room but I didn’t remember that time I was stoned I think

Russell:

Hmm

Yianis:

(he laughs a little) last time I went yeah (a silence)

Russell:

L.ii.13:30

Could you describe Rear Entry for me

Yianis:

Um god there’s so many missing gaps actually from memory I probably wouldn’t be able to draw a floor plan of it really I’m and I’m getting it mixed at the moment trying to imagine it I’m I’m mixing it up with all these other saunas

Russell:

L.ii.14:00

How many other saunas

Yianis:

I’m mixing it in with (this is a question)

Russell:

(distracted by the minidisc recorder) It’s all right it’s making a funny sound

Yianis:

No no no oh is that Rear Entry you know that you know oh I know what Rear Entry’s like the upstairs before you get into that TV room there’s a lot of other spaces before you get to that room I just remembered it then um and there’s quite a large space like there’s lots of bigger

L.ii.14:30

sized rooms with floor mattresses not floor mattresses but floor you know thinner leather mattresses and stuff and they’re [there’re?] bigger rooms

Russell:

What colour is the leather

Yianis:
Black and um

**Russell:**
And what colour are the walls

**Yianis:**
I don't know what the colour of the walls are um I presume a dark tone

**Russell:**
Do they have pictures hanging on them

**Yianis:**
No maybe as you first walk up the stairs there's probably some you know

**Russell:**
like those um gym pho gym prints

**Yianis:**
Oh yeah

**Yianis:**
you know but upstairs there's lots of rooms without doors and little kind of rooms thin rooms without any doors yeah you know there's group sex and it's very dark

**Russell:**
Hmm

**Yianis:**
Downstairs no I can't the lockers are in a L shape and

**Yianis:**
um near to that is this kind of little lounge with safe sex information and magazines

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Yianis:**
Old Campaigns and Outrages hmm I can't even no I I don't know how it all connects actually

**Russell:**
Mm that's okay

**Yianis:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
But having said

**Yianis:**
I know I would know my way around you know like once I was there I wouldn't get lost or anything

**Russell:**
I'd you know instantly know like I would I'd know where everything is but at the moment I can't imagine the space

**Russell:**
That's that's interesting I mean it's like um is it like riding a bicycle

**Yianis:**
Hmm

**Russell:**
That I'm just trying to that thing of knowing something but not being able to imagine it apart from the moment of knowing it

**Yianis:**
Like a

**Russell:**
bicycle yeah

**Yianis:**
Like I know that I ride my bicycle but it's not since that very first couple of times that that was when I knew how I was riding it now I don't know how I'm riding it like I imagining it just seems very very difficult there's just so much going on

**Yianis:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
But when I'm doing it I know it and I just do it I guess is it like that

**Yianis:**
Yeah I just do it yeah

**Russell:**
So it’s like the space comes flooding back as soon as you’re there

Yianis:
Hmm totally yeah

Russell:
Yeah right

Yianis:
Yeah I’m totally mixing them all up that with The Zone and a little bit of The Zone and Volcano I’ve a better idea of because its upstairs is quite unique and it always has this kind of portable feel to me like

Russell:
Do you mean the heavy duty area

Yianis:
No where the cinema area is and there’s rooms and stuff

Russell:
Oh yes

Yianis:
You know the bunks and stuff it just feels like a camp actually

Russell:
That’s all been rearranged in in the last month or two

Yianis:
Oh right okay

Russell:
Um or substantially so that I got lost and had to relearn it in a new way

Yianis:
Oh right

Russell:
I think they’ve been responding to the new sauna being

Yianis:
I.ii.18:00
opened and they’ve had a big rethink because they’ve changed a some of the changes are a bit pathetic like putting some fairy lights in the tree by the pool

Russell:
Yianis:
Hmm TV

Russell:
I think they’ve been responding to the new sauna being

Yianis:
I.ii.18:00
opened and they’ve had a big rethink because they’ve changed a some of the changes are a bit pathetic like putting some fairy lights in the tree by the pool

Russell:
Um and things like that but some of the things like they’re cosmetic changes but some of the things are more substantial like a rerouting of corridors or a knocking out of walls and reinstalling other things

Yianis:
I.ii.18:30
See I mean that interests me you know like while I say you know I won’t you know I’m not interested in going I am interested in seeing a new layout

Russell:
Yeah why or

Yianis:
It’s

Russell:
what interests you about that rather not why

Yianis:
I.ii.19:00
the newness the new just I don’t know I kind of put a kind of it’s a similar thing to going to a person’s house and wanting to know what their toilet’s like for some reason I don’t know (he laughs a little) for some reason that came up but you know it’s just wanting to know

Russell:
I.ii.19:00
it’s its I don’t know why I’m interested

Russell:
You don’t have to tell me why

Yianis:
Yeah
It's more like um yeah I'm interested myself in how that manifests for you like if you say oh yeah I'm interested in hearing that it's new like well what form does that take like that you think oh yes I'd like to go

Yianis:

I'd probably go to see it

Russell:

Right you'd go to see um with a view to doing what do you think

Yianis:

Oh just at the moment I just want a day off I'd like to go to the sauna and just chill out and yeah

Russell:

Have you been just to use the facilities

Yianis:

Yeah I have yeah

Russell:

Where

Yianis:

I mean there was a period where I was going with a friend one particular friend and I wasn't having sex at all and I probably went five times or six times with him and and there was a whole period where I just didn't have sex and he'd go round and he'd know that I you know when he was finished he'd be I'd be at the porn and stuff or you know and

Russell:

And was that quite satisfying

Yianis:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

Hmmm

Yianis:

Yeah yeah like going yeah having a sauna having one I mean not that I spend much time in the sauna I get pretty flustered hot but um you know I I yeah I don't mind I don't mind and we used to there were times where me and my friend just would have a spa together but there's a whole thing yeah I don't I don't want to see his genitalia so (he laughs a little)

Russell:

Your friend's

Yianis:

Yeah I just don't

Russell:

Have you ever seen his genitalia

Yianis:

I've seen a shadow of it but because I um you know when we have gone and I've been cruising around and you know I've been to this space and there's a sauna and he's having full on sex and I'm just going oh is that him in and I just kept on looking for a while it was just so full on and that's the kind of scene I like to watch (he laughs a little) and then I realise oh oh that's yeah

Russell:

That's your friend

Yianis:

That's my friend so I left

Russell:

Um you've reminded me about this now um because one of the things when we talked last time that first discussion we had that we didn't record was you talked a bit about um liking to watch you've mentioned already in this conversation um kind of peering over the top

Yianis:

Hmmm

Russell:
of um from one room into another room

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
over a partition

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
And you’ve also talked about liking to watch the porn

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
Um you’ve said you’ve talked a bit about feeling self-conscious about how you look presumably to other people

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
Is that right okay um but here we have this thing where suddenly there’s something you don’t want to see

Yianis:
Yeah my friend yeah

Russell:
Yeah um do you mind if we talk a bit about that a bit more

Yianis:
Yeah yeah no

Russell:
I’m trying to understand a bit more about what is what happens there not why it happens

Yianis:
to see your friend’s genitalia like how do you know you don’t want to see it

Russell:
I I guess I don’t want to get that close to him yeah although he did make a series (he laughs a little) he made a series of photos just recently where he was naked so I have now

Yianis:
Yeah yeah (he clears his throat) he’s nothing like what I imagined so but

Russell:
In the photos you’ve seen him

Yianis:
Yeah yeah (he clears his throat) he’s nothing like what I imagined so but

Russell:
But you HAD imagined it then

Yianis:
Well I imagined I saw something when I saw him having full on sex

Russell:
Right

Yianis:
But you know yeah

Russell:
Is is it a kind of taboo for you or is it

Yianis:
I don’t know it it’s

Russell:
Do you think it would occur with another friend

Yianis:
that that would be the case

Yianis:
Yeah most friends I don’t want to see their genitalia I mean that yeah I just don’t it’s my friends I yeah I yeah I yeah I just don’t want to see yeah I’m sorry what was the question again
Russell:
The question initially was would that happen with other friends

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:

or sorry the most recent question I asked

you was would that happen with other friends too

Yianis:
Yeah totally I I yeah I don’t it it is it’s not taboo it’s it’s but the thing is you know oh I mean I guess I never had brothers but um so I don’t know but I I’m not I’m not not used to seeing penises that aren’t in a sexual context yeah so when I see a penis it’s in a sexual context so if I see

my friend’s penis then I mean I don’t (he clears his throat) I mean it’s not as if I’m not I don’t find my friends sexually attractive not because they’re not to other people I’m just just to me my friends are totally like nonsexual beings yeah

Russell:
Would you have a problem about seeing a female friend’s genitalia

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:

Has that been a problem

Yianis:
Yeah I don’t I’ve got quite a few close female friends and I don’t want to see their breasts

Russell:
Their breasts

Yianis:
Yeah I don’t I don’t want to see their nipples er breasts are fine just the nipples I can’t (laughing a little) I don’t

Russell:
Okay what if

you you what if you were well first of all correct me if I’m wrong did you describe a situation where you were seeing at least two people having sex in a part of the sauna which part of the sauna

Yianis:
Mm um I can’t remember if it was the wet sauna or the it was the is oh my god I just can’t vis I saw them at The Zone so it was the wet sauna in The Zone my friend

Russell:
Right okay this is Splash

Yianis:
Yeah yeah Splash

Russell:
Yeah okay yeah and that wet sauna was a complicated space wasn’t it it was a large and space that was kind of circuitous as I recall like it I’d walk I would walk in the door

Yianis:
No it was the dry sauna it was the dry sauna because it was a small space

Russell:
That was a small space right okay

Yianis:
It was a small space it was probably as big as this room

Russell:
Right okay yeah that is the dry sauna

Yianis:
It was the dry sauna and it was it wasn’t square it was kind of some kind of

Russell:
Yeah

**Yianis:**
I’m sure it was a diff you know

**Russell:**
Okay now so and that was a place that was dimly lit as I recall and

**Yianis:**
Yeah yeah

**Russell:**
So you went in you saw two people having sex

**Yianis:**
and a lot of people watching

**Russell:**
And a lot of people watching

**Yianis:**
Probably three people watching

**Russell:**
Okay so three people becomes a lot of people or a lot of people is three people it feels like a lot of people

**Yianis:**
It felt like a lot of people because it’s a small space

**Russell:**
Yeah okay so

**Yianis:**
There were definitely people there was an audience

**Russell:**
There was an audience

**Yianis:**
Definitely an audience

**Russell:**
Okay so and then this is the bit that I’m interested in you said you tried to see if it was your friend is that right

**Yianis:**
No I saw actions I was attracted to the action first

**Russell:**
Right

**Yianis:**
And that was fantastic

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Yianis:**
The action (laughing a little) and I was going this is my kind of you know what I want to see

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Yianis:**
when I go out and watch

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Yianis:**
And it came to me this could be my friend and I noticed his legs probably yeah his legs because I can tell kind of his legs are very familiar to me I was going yeah that’s him I didn’t see his face but I’m sure he could see because yeah

**Russell:**
So so you

**Yianis:**
And he was so in it into it that he didn’t see me
I.ii.28:00
Right and at that point was when you you did what the moment you you thought this could be my friend then you searched for signs that it was your friend

Yianis:
Yeah
Russell:
You saw his legs and you realised you were seeing your friend’s legs

Yianis:
Yeah
Russell:
Then what

Yianis:
I walked out
Russell:
How what did you do how far in were you how close were you to what you were watching

Yianis:
Oh probably two metres away
Russell:
Was there (indicating) that’d be from here to the fireplace

Yianis:
Yeah
Russell:
Okay and was there anyone between you

Yianis:
No
Russell:
The the other three people

Yianis:
were like behind

Russell:
Okay

Yianis:
So (indicating) the door’s here they were there

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
And the audience was there

Russell:
Right okay so were you in a way not in the audience you were in another place

Yianis:
I was kind of in the doorway but not totally obstructing the doorway

I.ii.29:00

Russell:
Right but not in were you part of the audience or did you think of the they were the audience

Yianis:
They were the audience I was just trying to figure out if it was

Russell:
So what were you if you weren’t the audience what were you

Yianis:
A brief visitor (he laughs a little) left yeah

Russell:
But at first you didn’t know you were a brief visitor I’m thinking of the bit before you knew

I.ii.29:30
it was your friend before you suspected it was your friend they were the audience were you

Yianis:
I think implicitly in my mind um I because I was with my friend I would always have a checklist if in those situations of trying to find out if that was my friend do you know what I mean yeah

Russell:
If it hadn’t been your friend do you expect you would’ve become part of the audience
Yianis:
Oh yeah definitely
Russell:
But you weren’t yet
Yianis:
No
Russell:
What would becoming part of the audience have required that you just simply still stay there and knowing that it wasn’t your friend
Yianis:
Yeah stay there
Russell:
or moving to sit where the other men were
Yianis:
No getting a better view even getting really close you know
Russell:
Two metres wasn’t really close
Yianis:
No getting really close
Russell:
How’s how close is really close
Yianis:
No I was probably three metres away um probably a metre away I’d probably want to get
Russell:
I.ii.30:30
Is that within reach
Yianis:
Just within reach and probably in my mind just within reach in if they wanted to include me they could
Russell:
And you could have the option as to whether or not
Yianis:
Yeah you’d be included
Russell:
Yeah but I’d definitely like wank yeah
Yianis:
I.ii.31:00
Um okay so you said you left out you left
Yianis:
Yeah
Russell:
So you’re in the doorway you realise you didn’t step closer to find out whether it was your friend
Yianis:
No no I knew yeah
Russell:
You knew
Yianis:
And they were reaching climax or something so I just I don’t know that felt very more weird so I had to quickly yeah
Russell:
Now when you left
I.ii.31:30
how did you leave did you back up or did you just turn and open the door or did s was there

Yianis:
I can't remember how I did it

Russell:
You can't

Yianis:
No

Russell:
What's the next thing you remember

Yianis:
I remember like *(he clears his throat)* seeing him an hour later probably and I was probably looking to having sex and stuff and I don’t know for some reason

I.ii.32:00
I’d always run late like *(he laughs a little)* we’d agree we’d be there for like an hour or two hours but I’d always hav I wouldn’t have I wouldn’t have found someone I wouldn’t have had sex yet I wouldn’t have cum yet so he’d always have to be waiting around for me so I’d probably at some stage oh I need another half hour

Russell:
Okay so you remember seeing him an hour later but you don’t remember you remember turning

I.ii.32:30
and leaving

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
Do you actually remember leaving through the door

Yianis:
No

Russell:
Or do you just know that you *(I laugh a little)* must have left because you weren’t there an hour later

Yianis:
Yeah yeah yeah

Russell:
Okay and it’s not like you had amnesia or anything

Yianis:
No it’s just

Russell:
It’s just that on this occasion now how what time frame are we talking how how long ago did this happen

Yianis:
Oh prob *(he coughs)* ninety-eight beginning of ninety-eight

Russell:
Okay the beginning of ninety-eight

Yianis:

I.ii.33:00
Ninety-eight oh no no mid ninety-eight probably

Russell:
Mid ninety-eight yeah it closed in August ninety-eight I think

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah okay so

Yianis:
 Probably the summer of ninety-eight because we were going

Russell:
Oh yeah

Yianis:
That was our period that we went to saunas
The ninety-seven ninety-eight summer

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah okay so it’s lucky I didn’t bump into you (I laugh) because I mean dur it was during the period from late ninety-seven through till it closed in ninety-eight that I used to occasionally visit it

L.ii.33:30

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

Um

Yianis:

On most occasions we’d go on a Friday morning after Q & A

Russell:

Oh yeah

Yianis:

On most of the occasions

Russell:

The so just so now the time that that event is something that you remember but you and you know you left or or rather you know you must have left do you actually remember turning

Yianis:

L.ii.34:00

No I don’t

Russell:

No you just remember the decision

Yianis:

to leave

Russell:

And

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

Then the next thing you recall about that event two years ago is something else

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

Okay that’s all right you said that when you saw the photos of your friend’s genitalia they were different from how you had imagined

Yianis:

Yeah I mean it may have been basically because he was you know they were flat you know his dick was flaccid

L.ii.34:30

Russell:

So you’d imagined his genitalia not being flaccid

Yianis:

No I I didn’t he was in a cold bathroom so you know it just changed (he laughs a little) so with the photographs so

Russell:

It’s just that what what I’m curious about here is the element of surprise you talked about how it was different from what you expected in some ways you talked about different from what you imagined right and I’m wondering did you mean different from what you expected

Yianis:

Yeah different from what I expected

Russell:

So if you had an expectation is that because you’d actually

Yianis:

imagined his penis
Russell:
Yes

Yianis:

1.i.35:30
No because I mean I did see when I um when I saw him in the sauna he was he was jerking himself off and just the movement of his I didn’t see the penis I saw the movement of his hand so that somehow gave the impression of what at least what size his penis was and just from 1.i.36:00
getting changed together I’d always see him in his underwear I’d have some imag I’d imag I could imagine what his testicles looked like so it was just from his underwear and from the movement of his hand that I kind of

Russell:
Okay is it is it is it fair then to sss to understand that what you’re saying is that as long as you didn’t actually see with your eyes

1.i.36:30
it was okay to as it were build up a picture through other kind of indications

Yianis:
Yeah I mean that’s how well my mind wor I mean works like that I mean there’s you know I’ve got bits of pieces pieces of information I mean I don’t get consciously go I’m correlating all this information

Russell:
Right

Yianis:
It just correlates itself

Russell:
Yeah yeah that’s fine that’s fine 1.i.37:00
can you describe yourself to me can you

Yianis:
Myself

Russell:
Yeah can you describe yourself

Yianis:
Um

Russell:
Not to me can you describe yourself to someone who’s reading a transcript of this interview to an examiner of my thesis

Yianis:
Right

Russell:
Can you describe yourself

Yianis:
Um describe myself

Russell:
Somebody sitting in an office at a university at a desk

Yianis:
Okay

Russell:
With a full-time job (I laugh a little)

Yianis:
I

Russell:
Sorry one more thing

Yianis:
Yeah I

Russell:
In terms that you feel completely comfortable about

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
So you don’t have to venture into anything you don’t feel
Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
in the least bit uncomfortable about

Yianis:
I tend to have a lot like ideas ideas creative ideas come very easily to me and I have a almost like a I never have a problem thinking of something new or an idea but it’s the organisation of those ideas it’s there’s always a mess of ideas um and the way I’m going to um describe myself is probably says something about how you know I think about myself because it’ll be all over the place and there’s always tangents um and I think I work with tangents a lot um they have nothing to do but oh they do but they don’t um I’m

Yianis:
I’m a worrier oh that’s not I I worry I’m I get nervous and I get anxious very easily and there’s either like high anxiety or um about anything or um yeah I like to be busy all the time um and (he clears his throat) my yeah my relations with my friends are very important to me and my art’s very important to me and being a viewer of art is very important

Russell:
Being a

Yianis:
viewer of art is important to me and um being um of European background is important to me (laughing a little) and we’ve just to go with the important to me bit and um and my sexuality’s a very messy area and um that’s probably it

Russell:
Is there anything you want to tell me

Yianis:
About saunas

Yianis:
Is there anything you want to tell me

Russell:
Right

Yianis:
I.ii.41:00
can I just think about it (he laughs a little) um (he clears his throat) no I I came here tonight like already kind of no not I can’t really articulate that very well but um I came in knowing that I was going to be quite negative about saunas but you know like the majority of time the majority of times that I’ve gone they haven’t been a negative experience really just retrospectively have been and um yeah those kind of sexual relations that I ha like that I can potentially have at saunas don’t interest me any more at all

Russell:
But the possibility that a wall’s been knocked out at Volcano does

Yianis:
Yeah yeah like someone I know worked at a furniture store and um the new sauna bought their furniture from the store

Russell:
You did tell me

Yianis:
And um did he tell you that or did you oh I can’t remember

Russell:
No you told me

Yianis:
Oh okay yeah so

Russell:
You did tell me

Yianis:
(he laughs) Yeah and see that interests me you know where would they put the furniture
(we laugh) and I couldn't quite tell I mean it's probably for the office er I'm not quite sure oh probably for the kitchen or the kind of café area maybe

I'm not quite sure

Russell:

There's the video lounge as well

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

Have you been to the new sauna

Yianis:

Yeah yeah once

Russell:

There's the video lounge where they show movies

Yianis:

Yeah yeah that's prob

Russell:

I saw Mission Impossible there

Yianis:

Oh so that would've been good (he laughs a little)

Russell:

Perhaps (I laugh)

Yianis:

Yeah that's it

Russell:

Then let's leave it okay

Yianis:

Yeah okay

Russell:

Thanks
appendix 5: James 1

The following transcript documents a conversation with James that was recorded on a weekday afternoon in the living room of his flat in Melbourne. Initially he'd requested that we record the conversation at my place but this proved difficult so we relocated to his. When I arrived, he offered me coffee, explaining as he made it that it wasn't his usual brand. We sat on his sofa surrounded by his things and I switched on the recorder. A venetian blind rattled lightly in the breeze.

Russell:

I.i.00:00
I think what I want to do is just start with something that's just really more straight forward um I was thinking about this after we met um can you just let me know just a few bits of information um just you know fairly swiftly when was the first time you went to a sauna

James:
When I was seventeen

Russell:

Right how long ago is that  
I.i.00:30
(we laugh)

James:
I'm not giving THAT information away  
(James laughs, then) no sorry

Russell:

I said it'd get personal (we laugh)

James:

What's that twenty something years ago twenty-two years ago I'm thirty-nine now so

Russell:

Right right and the was that in Melbourne

James:
No Sydney

Russell:

In Sydney when was the first time you went to one in Melbourne

James:

Er nineteen oh god I came back I came to Melbourne in nineteen ninety
I.i.01:00
ah so um gee I can't remember the exact time but it would've been in the early nineties

Russell:

Right and had you been in Melbourne some time

James:
Yeah I'm just trying to think when I did just try I really can’t picture because I lived in Melbourne in eighty-three and I never went at that time nineteen ninety I know I must have been because I'd been living in a third city and I'd been going to the saunas
I.i.01:30
there so I would've come across here so I imagine pretty soon after arriving I think it would've been Volcano maybe because I lived on that side of town

Russell:

And when would've been the most recent time you've been to one in Melbourne

James:

Last week

Russell:

Right okay um which was the one in Sydney

James:

Sauna W or I think
I.i.02:00
yeah I think it was Sauna V when I was there but at that stage but I think it changed to Sauna W

Russell:

Yes yeah when I was there it was called Sauna W

James:

Right
and now it's actually called *Sauna XXX*

Oh is it

Yeah yeah

Oh right

Yeah they call it that now but the *Sauna V* sign is still inside the building

Right well this would’ve been nineteen seventy-eight when I went

Right so you were underage when you went

I.i.02:30

were underage when you went

Yeah

Right that’s interesting um can I I want to ask you a few things about that um which aren’t the main thing I probably want to talk about but just to check up on some things that ah I guess I’m curious about that the first one is do you remember when you first heard or became aware that such things as saunas existed

Mm that would’ve been connected with *Sauna X* because my first memory of it is someone talking about how there was a raid there and I must have been fourteen or even younger and I don’t even think maybe when they were first talking about it I wasn’t living there because we actually lived up the road from it

Right right yep

and er but when they talked about it they talked about this raid that they had and all the men had to come out on the streets in their towels and I remember thinking oh my god how embarrassing

Right and were you at that stage apart from thinking it was embarrassing were you kind of aware of your own potential interests

I.i.03:30

I I was I knew I was gay by when I was twelve but um I don’t think I don’t think at that stage I would’ve imagined myself in that environment

Right and what did you imagine that environment was physically when you first heard and you pa and you knew what that building looked like from the outside

Yeah

I assume you would’ve looked at it a bit more closely

Well that’s what it was it I kept on going down there and I’d sit across the road and I’d watch people going in and out

Right

And to be honest I don’t think I had a perspective of what what it was inside I just knew that it was a place that men went to have sex I knew there was something like that I didn’t know what was inside had no idea that you know it had like a spa or whatever
Russell:
Yeah

James:
You know I imagined the sauna idea and people walking around in towels and but I had no picture I don’t think in my head of what that might mean

Russell:

I.i.04:30
Did you could you see if um from where you used to sit across the road and it WAS literally you’d sit across the road

James:
Yeah I’d sit at the supermarket across the road

Russell:
Right okay

James:
and watch and one night I went in

Russell:
You yeah how um how often how many times do you think you would’ve done that sit across the road

James:
Oh I couldn’t give you a number but for you know fairly frequently I mean not every night you know once every month or once every couple of weeks or something or at you know when I went down I’d see who went in there

Russell:

I.i.05:00
from about the age of fourteen or fifteen onwards

James:
Yeah I think so

Russell:
Yeah okay and when do you remember making the decision to actually go the night you went

James:
Hmm yeah I don’t think I’d made the decision till I sat and watched and I think my memory if memory serves me right someone young and good looking went in

Russell:
Yep

James:
A young spunk and I just went oh I’m going in and I went in I had no money or anything I had board shorts and those big thick thongs

Russell:

Yeah (I laugh a little)

James:
And I went up

I.i.05:30
to the guy at the counter and he was very friendly and he said do you know what this place is and I went yeah I think so he said do you want to take a look around and I went okay so he let me in for free I didn’t pay

Russell:
Yeah

James:
He said you can take a look around so I’m walking round this sauna with board shorts white board shorts a singlet a T-shirt and these big slap thongs walking around just looking at all the in the downstairs to where the pool was

Russell:
Yeah

James:
and this guy started speaking to me

Russell:

Was it the one you’d been watching

James:
No
Russell:  
Another one  

James:  
No he disappeared into the void I never saw him  

Russell:  
Yeah  

I.i.06:00  
(we laugh) yeah and so another guy started talking to you  

James:  
Yeah hmm  

Russell:  
And then what happened  

James:  
We went into a cubicle  

Russell:  
Right so you never had a towel the first time  

James:  
No and he’s that he stopped me he said you’ve got no idea how weird you look do you that’s what he was a few years older than me  

Russell:  
But youngish  

James:  
Yeah yeah  

Russell:  
Did was there any comment made about you being underage or  

James:  
No  

Russell:  
Did you pass  

James:  
I think so  

I.i.06:30  

Russell:  
Yeah  

James:  
I think so I mean you know I would’ve been turning eighteen that year  

Russell:  
Yeah yeah  

James:  
Because it it yeah it would’ve been um it was probably seventy-nine actually I think it was the final year so it would’ve been in that time I imagine oh maybe no maybe it was still seventy-eight so Year Eleven  

Russell:  
Do you know why um Sauna X was raided a few years earlier  

James:  
Oh got no idea I imagine it was a vice raid of some description probably someone wasn’t getting paid I don’t know I didn’t have the details I  

I.i.07:00  

mean they didn’t have the details  

Russell:  
And do when you went in that first time did you have any awareness that this was a place that could be raided still or had that kind of vanished a bit  

James:  
I I knew that yeah oh there was probably an element of that but I think there was more a sense of the surreptitiousness of having to go and not hoping not to be seen going in  

Russell:  

Oh because you lived in the area

James:

Yeah that's right

Russell:

Of course so crossing the road

James:

Yeah

Russell:

And you were kind of checking both ways (I laugh a little)

James:

Definitely yeah yeah yeah

Russell:

I.i.07:30

Right what about coming out of the building (I laugh a little)

James:

Um I don't have a memory of coming out of the building I just know that the sex that we had was kind of fairly ordinary and there was a sense of going oh you know I mean that was the second time I'd had sex and it was a bit like oh is that all there is kind of thing

Russell:

Yeah

James:

So maybe that oh vaguely I guess

I.i.08:00

because I actually became a bit friendly with the guy who ran who was managing it or organising it because I I'd come back then after I came back I don't know how long after but we became a bit friendly well he was very nice to me anyway so I imagine him just saying I think yeah did you have a good time or did you enjoy it or something that's I don't know I'd be making it up now

Russell:

And roughly how long do you think were you there that first visit

James:

Oh I'd say at least three-quarters of an hour to an hour

Russell:

Right and when you went wandering around the building I.i.08:30 to have a look around did was what was that for what were you looking around for were you looking for the boy you'd followed in

James:

Well I think that was the impetus it was like a sexual kind of

Russell:

Yeah

James:

And curiosity as well

Russell:

Yeah

James:

But there would've been I guess the impetus because he was the impetus to go in

Russell:

Yeah

James:

And I've never thought of that actually I hadn't I hadn't remembered that but that was the thing because I used to see it and I used to just see older men going in but this was someone who was young I.i.09:00 and looked athletic and everything

Russell:

Yeah

James:

So I guess that was the impetus so I guess there was that thing and then when I started speaking I I don't think there was necessarily a plan to have sex but when this young guy started speaking to me I guess it
went from there and I think he suggested it and I think I was kind of like oh yeah okay

**Russell:**
And was that down by the pool

**James:**
Yeah downstairs

**Russell:**
By the pool or

**James:**
Oh in well it was in that area I mean they’ve changed it a lot a lot now since that time

**Russell:**
Yes I imagine the pool would’ve been hard to change though

**James:**

I.i.09:30
Yeah I mean it was downstairs

**Russell:**
Yeah

**James:**
Yeah the pool was downstairs so it was in that area but you know I mean I could point to the area now but I mean I think it’s all changed because I think they’ve put a dry sauna there where before it used to be just like a space

**Russell:**
Right okay

**James:**
It’s down there

**Russell:**
The place you went to last week what was that place

**James:**
That’s um up the road in er

I.i.10:00
Subur [sic] High Street

**Russell:**
Oh yeah

**James:**
Suburb A yeah

**Russell:**
Oh yeah be because it’s so close

**James:**
Yeah I guess that’s the main reason it’s yeah basically it’s closer than the others I can walk home

**Russell:**
Um

**James:**
But I like to spread myself around in various places (he laughs a little)

**Russell:**
Can I ask you where you haven’t been

**James:**
(he laughs) In Melbourne

**Russell:**
Yeah in Melbourne saunas I’m thinking of specifically

**James:**
Yeah yeah yeah

I.i.10:30
I haven’t been to the one in Suburb B and I haven’t been to the one at Suburb E

**Russell:**
Right

**James:**
I’ve been to Rear Entry Volcano I used to love going to Splash when it was open I think that’s it oh I went to the one that was up um I forget what it was called up near Melbourne Uni north of the city when that was open

**Russell:**
The Academy

James:

The Academy yes been there yeah so and I’ve been to er Squirt

Russell:
The new one

James:
Yeah

Russell:

I.i.11:00
Um ah I’ve been to all of the above but not to Suburb E

James:
Right

Russell:
I have been to Suburb B once

James:
Oh okay right it’s small like this one isn’t it

Russell:
It’s different from this one

James:
Right

Russell:
Um okay so you went there can I ask what time of the day it was that you arrived

James:
The one up there

Russell:
Yeah

James:
Yeah it was Friday night

Russell:
It was Friday night about

I.i.11:30
what time though

James:
It would’ve been around eight o’clock eight nine eight between eight and nine

Russell:
And you stayed for about how long

James:
Left about twelve twelve thirty

Russell:
Right okay can you describe that building to me or that place

I.i.12:00

James:
can you describe that place

Russell:
In any terms

James:
Um

Russell:
Or do you want like physical structures

Russell:
Could you describe it so someone who hadn’t been there would recognise it

James:
Okay

Russell:
if they then encountered it

James:
All right so

Russell:
and would be able to distinguish it from other saunas

James:
Okay well basically it’s upstairs above shops in a fairly busy street it’s just a single glass door you open you walk up
quite a few stairs narrow stairway and at the opening entrance there's um like a grill a small reception area and then the door's on the right and you walk in as soon as you walk in there's a bar café in front of you or the side of it anyway if you look to your right there's a table and chairs and then further on there's lounge chairs um it's oh I don't know about I'm terrible with metres and stuff like that but

Russell:
That's good

James:
It's not much bigger than you know I think it's probably twice the size of my flat

Russell:
Yeah

James:
In width

Russell:
The whole flat or just this room we're in

James:
Just this sorry just this room

Russell:
Yeah

James:
I'm just talking about the width

Russell:
Yeah yeah

James:
You know from wall to wall

Russell:
It's domestic in scale

James:
Domestic yeah
So you’re once you’re in the room if you’re on one side you can’t get to the other

Russell:

Like visiting time at prison

James:

Yes yes *(he laughs)* and there’s a video monitor in the room that shows the same porno that’s on in the room up the front

Russell:

Yes

James:

Then if you go past that room you can either go right and go round to this other side where there is

*I.i.15:30*

cubicle it’s much darker around that part there’s kind of little solitary standing cubicles with holes in the wall glory holes and then as you walk around to that part then further round there’s an area that’s like completely dark and it’s like a grope sort of ledge it’s like a mattress and and then if you keep on going further there’s a few more cubicles and then there’s a glass partition or a wall with a glass window at the end that you can look into the TV room at the front so instead of when we passed

*I.i.16:00*

the room on the left with the grill the jail visiting room instead of going right keep on going round left to your right there’s a washing room like for their towels and stuff washing machines and things like that

Russell:

Yes

James:

Turn left and keep on going down there is the showers on the left three showers and hopeless water pressure hopeless *(I laugh)* the worst in Melbourne the worst in Melbourne and if *(he laughs)* if this can if this thing can influence them to get [unintelligible: fixed?]

Russell:

No no no of course

James:

I.i.16:30

It’s terrible anyway and then to the right there’s a spa and then also to the right there’s a dry sauna and in front of you there’s a kind of a steam room and then toilets to your left

Russell:

And what’s beyond that

James:

And there’s a little um drink water fountain and then the wall at the back I’ve got no idea where that leads to I imagine it there’s a car I think there’s a car park area out the back with all those buildings

Russell:

Is there a door or a wall

James:

Ah I can’t remember I don’t know

*I.i.17:00*

if there’s a door or um I imagine it would be a door just in terms of fire regulations

Russell:

Right

James:

But it it’s definitely locked

Russell:

Yep okay *(a silence)* that was thorough

James:

Hmm I’ve been there a few times

Russell:

I.i.17:30

It was thorough though um when I talk to some people in fact this has happened more than once now people have said almost identically it’s all blurring they’re all the same

James:

Right

Russell:
Trying to think of a place but that’s not the case for you

James:
No I don’t think that at all I think they’re very specifically different and that’s why I go to them too they have different feels when I go to them and different clientele

Russell:
What’s on on Friday night what was ah a stronger consideration for you um the different feel or the different clientele

James:
I think on Friday night it had a lot more to do with the fact that it was close

Russell:
Right

James:
But also the fact that I’d been to the others recently and I hadn’t been out for to there for a while

Russell:
About how long how long is about for a while

James:
That one I hadn’t been there for about a month

Russell:
Right

James:
And at the moment I’m going once a week that seems to be the pattern over the last three months I then hadn’t been for months before that to any of them

Russell:
Yeah

James:
But then when I started now it seems I go at least once a week sometimes twice

Russell:
Is that are you describing a pattern that has emerged or has that been something you’ve kind of that you are consciously regulating

James:
That it’s kind of it hasn’t always been like that but it’s over the last few months definitely it’s definitely a sense of er er er like a date that I make for myself that I’m going to go at least once a week and that sometimes twice but and I always try to do a different one if I go that’s not a regular that hasn’t been like a past experience of how I do it

Russell:
Yeah

James:
But recently that’s how I do it it’s like a you know I know I’m going I make the arrangements to myself but I make sure it’s a different one each time or as much as possible

Russell:
And is the focus on saunas as such or

James:
Yeah

Russell:
are there other kind are there dry venues that you go to

James:
Dry yeah no I prefer

Russell:
Dry venues (laughing a little) a technical term

James:
Oh I mean I go to the beat I go to the Beach

Russell:
Yeah

James:

Happy Beach but that had more to do with economics than anything although sometimes you know it has a very different feel to it as well but usually I go to

l.i.20:00

the sauna because it’s um you can have a shower after sex and I don’t usually have just have one sex partner when I go so I like that the fact that you can have a shower after sex

Russell:

Can you um can you describe your night last Friday night for me now that you’ve described

l.i.20:30

the place can you describe your night for me um

James:

Yeah I do you want it in that kind of depth I mean I don’t know how do you mean I mean I set it up like that I think because you said you know describe it as if someone had never seen it before

Russell:

I um yeah um

James:

This one just whatever

Russell:

Now it’s well I’d like um a sense of the itinerary for you for the evening last Friday evening

James:

Right

Russell:

Like you arrived

James:

Arrived

l.i.21:00

said hello to the person at the door went in got changed and of course it’s winter lots of jackets and things like that and I remember turning around and seeing a fairly handsome guy there and I thought oh that’s a good sign because often that one is not very pretty clientele it’s a lot older um but I thought oh okay that’s interesting then I walked out the back

l.i.21:30

and had a shower and I guess I looked around and once again it seemed to be mostly older guys (he clears his throat) like you know over fifty sixty kind of thing um went into the sauna the wet sauna steam room sorry steam

Russell:

Is this straight after the shower

James:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah

James:

Then wandered around a bit looking at the different rooms seeing who was there realised it was dead

l.i.22:00

um I think at that stage there was a young Italian guy in the room watching the videos

Russell:

The vidi the kind of porno lounge

James:

[unintelligible] porno lounge room

Russell:

Yeah yeah

James:

And so then I thought okay so then I went and got a cigarette from the locker my locker and went and sat outside and Young Einstein was on I’d never seen that before so I started watching that and it was hideous so then

l.i.22:30

there was an a young guy and I can’t work out if it was the same one in the porno or another it was a young Italian guy he came and sat sort of next to me in one of the lounges then he got up and left and I still watched the movie for a while and then I got up and went for a wander and came round
to I think I went into the sauna again and I think that young guy was there and then he left

Russell:

So when you say into the sauna again

James:
The steam room

Russell:
The steam

James:
Sorry steam room steam room I mean I

Russell:

Yeah yeah do you think of it as a sauna though

James:

I.i.23:00
Er yeah I get them confused just in my mind sometimes this to say the sauna I you know the sauna to me is the dry sauna and the steam room is different but often I confuse the words as to what they mean

Russell:

Yeah

James:

But I don’t usually like the dry sauna as much although I did go into the dry sauna that night

Russell:

But let let’s just come back to the point we left off from

James:

Okay so

Russell:

Because we might be leaping ahead there

James:

Yeah okay so I think I went

Russell:

You’ve gone into the steam room for the second time yeah

James:

Into the steam room and

I.i.23:30
there was an old guy sitting next to me and they tend to be at especially at that sauna they tend to be a bit more upfront there the older guys they tend to make overtures to you even if you don’t even give the slightest acknowledgement and I usually try to be kind of ah okay without being too accommodating (demonstrating) like I just sort of grab their hand I hold it for a second and then I just put it away from me

Russell:

Are you telling me this because this man made an overture

James:

Yeah

Russell:

Right okay

James:

Because the old guy sort of made makes a move and

I.i.24:00
I’m not interested and the young guy who was sitting across on the other side he left and then I think I went out and I think I went

Russell:

Had you realised sorry you hadn’t told me that he was in there until that moment

James:

I thought I did

Russell:

Oh no no

James:

But anyway okay

Russell:

So you’d seen him go in
James:
No
Russell:
No
James:
I got in there and he was there
Russell:
Right
James:
but I wasn’t sure because it was so steamy
Russell:
Yeah
James:
but it looked like him so he left I stayed in there for a little bit longer and then I left then I went into the dry sauna sat there for a while

I.i.24:30
I’m just trying to remember I think there was a guy in there but he showed no interest um anyway he left and then I left and I went for a wander now I’m a bit confused now I don’t know if I went back to the TV room again I think I walked up to the TV room and watched the TV then came back and then I went for a wander around and I went round to the dark area and I walked up towards and I know I walked up

I.i.25:00
and as I was walking up towards the dark area the young Italian guy was walking backwards oh walking towards me he’d been up there and walked past we sort of looked at each other slightly and he sort of stopped at the corner and looked around a bit and I kept on going went to the window then came back and when I came back he’d stopped in the dark corner and so I just went up to him and started playing with his chest and he reciprocated we started kissing and we went and I sort of grabbed his hand and went into one of the rooms and started

I.i.25:30
having sex and we were there till we had sex and then we chatted for a while I gave him a massage and we had sex again then it was like twelve o’clock we went and had a cigarette together and and then we left

Russell:
Which room was it
James:
It was the room that when you walk into that dark area on the ri on the left there is like the standing cubicles the glory

I.i.26:00
holes on the right there’s the ledge the gropes ledge
Russell:
Yes
James:
If you keep on going if you went straight into the wall
Russell:
Ah yes
James:
That room there that first one
Russell:
Right so it’s still in the dark area
James:
It’s
Russell:
Near the entrance to it
James:
Yeah but it’s got lights in the room
Russell:
Right
James:
So like that’s you’re walking that way so the wall’s there and on the right is the ledge if you if you pushed through if you just pu pushed a hole in the wall there in that corner thing
Russell:
Yeah
James:
It was there that first room basically the first cubicle room.

Russell:
Yeah when you say there are lights there

James:
There’s lights in the room

Russell:
It has does it have a ceiling

James:
No

Russell:
Do you know where the light switches are

James:
Yeah

Russell:
Did you know where they were without having to look for them

James:
Oh pretty much with that one because I think the light is right near the lights there I’ve kind of I think it’s just on the wall and it’s kind of like an oblong shape light

Russell:
Yeah

James:
And the light switch is right next to it and I think the room was I think the room was fairly lit because I always like checking the floor before I walk in because the mat the mattress is on the floor

Russell:
Yes

James:
And sometimes it’s not cleaned up before you come in again

Russell:
Yeah

James:
So I avoid that so it must have been fairly well lit because I checked the floor but I did I think changed the light a little because there’s a dimmer switch

Russell:
Right okay so you dimmed it to what level (suddenly) YOU dimmed it

James:
(laughing) I dimmed it

Russell:
Yes that’s

James:
(still laughing) Enough to feel pretty

Russell:

James:
So it was dark as no

Russell:
Oh James

James:
Just a just a moment

Russell:
No no give me information

James:
(hesitates then) I don’t like it too bright

Russell:
Right okay

James:
I don't like it so a kind of reddish glow that you can get it to whereas it you can see a person but it's not too full on

Russell:

What do you mean not too full on

James:

Not too much light not too much clarity

Russell:

I.28:00

Can you um you reach for the dim um I want to kind of just hang around this for a minute you reach for the dimmer

James:

I'm it's one of my first things I'm [sic] automatically go for the light if there's a light in the room I don't like it too dark I don't some people actually really turn it down

Russell:

Yeah

James:

To the to the lowest level I don't like that

Russell:

Yeah

James:

I like it up so that you can see the person clearly

Russell:

So so that YOU can see

James:

So

I.28:30

you can yeah so that I can see them clearly

Russell:

Yeah

James:

But with a soft glow not with a stark light

Russell:

As you were adjusting the light where were your eyes looking

James:

Well I walked in the door I would've been looking at the light and then yeah no I looked back at him I checked the I checked to see the reflection on the skin I guess

Russell:

All right which part of his skin

James:

I would've been looking at the chest area and the face

Russell:

His chest and face area

James:

But yeah

Russell:

So he was facing you

James:

Yeah because he walked in behind me

Russell:

I.29:00

Yeah

James:

Yeah

Russell:

I went to the dimmer switch he came up behind me and as I turned it down it's like checking to see the kind of quality of reflection that happens on the skin when you do I mean I'm making this more intricate than when it happens but that's the that's that's

James:

Yeah no no no no I'm asking it intricately in I mean so that's no problem

James:

Yeah yeah well that's no that's def and I mean I'm kind of um surprised by that that (he laughs a little) clarity but that's what I do
I turn the light down but I actually check the person to see

Russell:
When you say that you’re surprised by that clarity do you mean that you can tell me

James:
Well it’s yeah that I’m
\[I.I.29:30\]
that I actually have a um an objective

Russell:
You haven’t thought about that before

James:
Not as clearly I know I know that I don’t like the light too bright and I don’t like it too dark

Russell:
Good

James:
But the fact is I I realise now that I actually do when I turn the light down I actually do often check the person to see that I can see their form clearly but that it’s got a glow

Russell:
So you become it’s a bit like (laughing a little) Dietrich organising her lighting

James:
(laughing) Yeah

Russell:
except you’re doing it on the other \[I.I.30:00\] person

James:
(still laughing) Pretty [unintelligible]

Russell:
So your first comment about yourself and your appearance is actually not what you think about it wasn’t what you thought about last Friday you weren’t thinking about making yourself dim

James:
Um

Russell:
You were thinking about something about his appearance is that right

James:
I think it’s I think it’s part of no I think it’s part of that it’s like well if they look like that in that light then I probably softens mine I think too

Russell:
Right okay

James:
Yeah definitely I don’t want to be seen in that light

Russell:
I don’t definitely don’t want to be seen in that light but I don’t necessarily want to see them in that light either

James:
Is now you said that you would’ve looked at his chest I’m pretty sure that’s what you said does that mean that you can’t be absolutely certain that you did on last Friday night but that you have done something similar on other occasions

Russell:
Well that was the first memory that came to my mind as I turned the light down to look \[I.I.31:00\] to look over and see the person so I guess I’m looking at the whole upper torso really I mean I’m not just focussing on the chest but what I’m seeing is that I can see the person clearly so it’s not too dark but there’s a the light is softer I was going to say romantic but it’s like that when I say it’s that red it kind of has a reddish glow so everyone looks a bit softer and more more

Russell:
More what

James:
More beautiful or more less flawed

Russell:
You told me he was Italian

James:

Russell:

What led you to that conclusion

James:

Well I know because we talked

Russell:

Oh right so did

James:

But but he looked Italian he looked ethnic

Russell:

Had you thought that earlier

James:

Yeah

Russell:

Okay

James:

I thought Italian or Greek or something but more inclined to Italian there was something about his the waviness of his hair and it was so black and the kind of softness of the skin

and the quality of the lips seemed more Italian than Greek or you know Lebanese or Turkish

Russell:

Right okay have you been in a situation that you can recall where you’ve gone into um do you call them cubicles or rooms

James:

Cubicles usually

Russell:

Right

James:

But I guess when I’m describing saunas to people in other I often say cubicle
Russell:
The
James:
because rooms make it when you’re there in the place and you say room like it’s obvious but when I say room to someone outside the environment it suggests something different to what it is because it’s a cubicle it really is that’s the best way it’s a cubicle but but you know in in the environment it lends itself to going well if you say room it means some it’s it means that’s

I.i.33:30

where you’re going to

Russell:
When you were in that ROOM (laughing a little) on Friday night

James:
(laughing a little) Yes

Russell:
Were you in a room or were you in a cubicle then

James:
I was in a cu a cubicle I think it felt a bit cramped

Russell:
Right

James:
And and yeah no cubicle (he laughs)

Russell:
You were in a cubicle

James:
Yeah especially with the mattress on the floor like it is and just that sense of like who’s been here before and you’ve also got to miss judge the kind of tray that’s like a smokers tray that where all the used condoms go

Russell:

I.i.34:00

That so that’s on the floor too

James:
That’s on the floor

Russell:
On top of the mat

James:
On top of the mat

Russell:
Or beside it

James:
No the mat goes from wall to wall

Russell:
Okay

James:
So it’s like you know

Russell:
So does the door open inwards or outwards

James:
Inwards

Russell:
So it’s above mat level

James:
Yeah yeah and and I noticed the other night as we were talking I there was quite a big gap I noticed that it actually came into my mind that oh there’s quite a big gap between the door and the floor because it actually comes up above that much above the mattress like an inch or two above the mattress

Russell:

I.i.34:30

You noticed that while you were talking

James:
Yeah we were lying on the floor lying on the mattress floor chatting and talking
Russell:
Do you think of it as lying on the mattress or lying on the floor

James:
In that situation it’s both because the mattress is the floor it’s a floor-mattress

Russell:
Do you think of it as both or do you think of it as neither

James:
(a silence, then)

I.i.35:00
Probably neither in a way yeah probably neither when you when you’re there I’d guess I don’t think of it as a floor or a bed or a mattress

Russell:
This is last Friday night again

James:
Yeah

Russell:
You thought of it as neither a floor nor a bed

James:
This is the vinyl mat this is this is the room or the cubicle

Russell:
Right okay all right now you said that when you were talking you noticed the gap did that become something that you talked about

I.i.35:30

James:
No no um

Russell:
Who was talking when you noticed it

James:
He was probably doing the talking because I was asking him questions and um and he

he was doing most of the talking and I was asking him questions about his life and I think maybe the the crack under the door suggested to me like the ease I mean there’s no ceiling but the ease with which sound must travel and and also too while we’d been having sex his knee kept on banging against the door

I.i.36:00
and it was like a

Russell:
His knee kept banging against the sorry I’ve just suddenly lost the image (we laugh)

James:
(recovering) His knee or whatever kept on banging against the door

Russell:
No I need to know where his knee kept banging against the door

James:
Well he was on his back

Russell:
Right

James:
And his knee was his left knee was against the door

Russell:
Right

James:
And so

Russell:
Was his backbone parallel with the wall on which the door was

James:
Yes

Russell:
Okay

James:
Yes, that's right

Russell:

I.i.36:30
Right, that's right, now I just need something to align things.

James:

Yes, yes, his head was up against the wall that if you kept when you first walked in that dark area if you kept on going you'd hit his head (smacking his hand) hit his head.

Russell:

Okay, um, so while he was talking did you become conscious?

James:

There was something about, I guess the [unreadable] it's funny, I was surprised about looking at that crack as he was talking and kind of what was I thinking? I.i.37:00 there was some thought I had when I looked at that because he was lying on his side and I was sitting a bit more up and looking over him in so I was against the wall not against near the door so I was looking over towards the door.

Russell:

Yes.

James:

And I remember seeing that space, no I can't remember what I was thinking about it but there was a particular thought, either had to do with the sound or surprise that there was such a lot of space and wondering perhaps too? I.i.37:30 if people could see under it? that yeah.

Russell:

So this had, this was the first time in terms of this awareness about the door.

James:

Yeah.

Russell:

Okay.

James:

I don't think I, yeah I don't think I've ever (laughing a little) noticed it before but I did notice it last night last Friday.

Russell:

Was he talking loudly?

James:

Not not really, no, fairly softly spoken.

Russell:

Could it, um, now?

I.i.38:00 this is a leading question, ah, as if the others weren't in some way (we laugh a little) but if um, could it have been the case that you started to wonder about how private the conversation was?

James:

Ah, possibly, I'm very conscious of that although there's something about I know this because I'm very conscious of that like if I'm standing next to someone on a train or a bus or a tram.

I.i.38:30 I am very guarded about how I speak, how softly I speak and I get really kind of put off if someone speaks loudly especially if it's personal I can't bear it, in the cubicles I think I'm conscious of it but there is I think there's a little sense of unreality about it, the the last two times I've been that, that guy and the guy before, who was also Italian and we actually had fairly in-depth conversations and I think when I came out of it because when you're walking in the corridors you can hear.

I.i.39:00 everything I mean there's it's basically a bit of laminex but when you're in the room there is something, there is a quality of privacy even though you can hear the people fucking next to you and everything else like that, there is a sense of it being a protected space in some way that.

Russell:

You, you feel that?

James:

Yeah that I I recognise later that I I both times now especially the conversation I had with the guy before.
Russell:
So these are um l.i.39:30
two s
James:
Two separate
Russell:
The last two occasions you've been
James:
To a sauna
Russell:
To High Street
James:
No
Russell:
No to a sauna
James:
So High Street and the one before that which was at Splash having fairly in-depth conversations with someone and jokes and laughing and then not feeling inhibited whilst I'm in there but thinking about it later and having a sense of oh my god I wonder if people heard what we were talking about
Russell:
Sorry you said the one before was Splash
James:
Yeah
Russell:
Was it Splash
James:
Oh Squirt sorry l.i.40:00
I get them confused
Russell:
That's all right
James:
Squirt in the city the new one
Russell:
Yeah yeah
James:
And it too I mean particularly the one at Squirt it was right on a corner where like where people pass all the time you know like a thoroughfare area um but once you're in the room though there there is a quality of feeling a bit protected
Russell:
Even though there's no ceiling
James:
Even no ceiling nothing there is there is a sense of that because I know the conversation
Russell:
You said you said the wall is a piece of laminex
James:
Yeah
Russell:
Is it
James:
Well it not at not at High Street but at Squirt yeah
Russell:
What what's the wall in of the room you were in in High Street
James:
It's more like ply
Russell:
Ply
James:
Yeah

Jackson: Is it treated in any way

James: Yeah it's some sort of dark paint. Either black. I'm colour-blind so it's either black or dark green I guess

Jackson: Do you mean literally

James: Yeah

Jackson: You're literally colour-blind

James: Yeah

Jackson: I didn't know that

James: Hmm

Jackson: You said there was a reddish glow. [unintelligible]

James: (indicating) Well I can see you know I can see. I know what red is sort of but I (he claps his hands together, audibly) put it this way. Oh I can't show you now

Jackson: But someone was with me the other day and they pointed to a chair and they said that's a red chair right and I went yeah okay and it was but if they had told me it was brown with all with all sincerity I would've gone okay it's brown

James: Yeah

Jackson: Right. [unintelligible]

James: Yeah

Jackson: You said before when I asked you about um [unintelligible] about going to what you were calling a safer

James: Yeah

Jackson: What you were calling a safer

James: Yeah

Jackson: huh about going to what you say to someone about where to go next and you said oh yeah do you want to go to a room for a while maybe play for a while or something like that. Do you is it characteristic for you to locate a person and then as it were retire with them to

James: Yeah

Jackson: Yeah

James: Yeah
Russell: What was the way you described that I don’t remember now.

James: Well I think I described it as a protected environment in terms of something you can talk and in a way you’re not conscious of, if you’re listening or even your mind wandering, whereas on a train or somewhere like that which has the same amount of you know possibilities of being heard as this you know I’m I’m I don’t see it as protective.

Russell: Does it jingle?

James: No not as much as when it’s on your leg that’s why I flip the badge thing and the key under the rubber band so it doesn’t jingle when I walk.

Russell: Why don’t you want it to jingle when you walk?

James: (laughing a little) there’s something about the sound of this jingling key that feels particularly uncool.

Russell: Can you tell me more about that?

James: Well it’s definitely something that I do.

Russell: Can you recall an occasion where you’ve experienced that?

James: Ah no because the minute it starts I flick it under like I don’t if it falls out I flick it under.
I don’t it just feels uncomfortable um having this sound as you walk like locating each step you take

Russell:

What about other people’s keys making noise

James:

I haven’t noticed to be honest although I guess sometimes if you’re in a room just say a grope room or a dark room and you can hear someone coming but I guess maybe a lot of people do it too in some way but I don’t have a recognition of hearing it that much but I don’t like hearing it as I walk it makes me conscious of my walk

Russell:

Is there let’s still concentrate on High Street for the moment um is there a part or a place of that sauna that you always enjoy or look forward to visiting that you know yes I will go there that it’s a priority for you to at least visit that place because for reasons other than utility for reasons of pleasure

James:

Um I I guess hmm

Russell:

No is acceptable as an answer

James:

Yeah yeah but I’m just thinking there’s one it’s weird because the steam room there is small and more often than not it’s because the clientele most of the clientele I’m not attracted to and there’s something about it because it’s so small and you know you get four or five guys in there that you’re not attracted to and it feels hideous but I know that there’s some level in my mind maybe that’s the same with all the steam rooms in different saunas but with that one there is an image I guess or a fantasy that within that room you will make contact with someone attractive so there is an element I and there is a sense of the warmth that I like about the steam rooms so I guess out of all the there is a quality of um forethought about the steam rooms um there even though like I said often it’s hideous but there is an element and I guess there must have been a few times where something has been activated from there a meeting from there um

Russell:

Um if the room is empty and you go into it

James:

Yeah

Russell:

Where do you sit

James:

Um usually on the wall away from the door so hang on so you walk in the door and there’s a wall to the right and there’s a wall in front I usually sit on the wall near the door because it’s darker

Russell:

Because it’s darker

James:

Yeah

Russell:

Is

James:

Darker and less obvious so that there’s more chance that if someone comes in and sits next to you you can sort of like get something happening without as soon as someone walks in the door seeing you

Russell:

Does the door open outwards or inwards

James:

It opens outwards

Russell:
Okay and is there if there this what you're what are you sitting on when you say you're sitting what are you sitting

James:

It's like a tiled bench

Russell:

A tiled bench

James:

Tiled well it's just like the whole room is like white tiles and that the benches are tiles as well

Russell:

Right and so you're sitting on a tiled bench and you're sitting on the same wall as the door and the door's on your left

James:

Yeah

Russell:

Is there er would you sit within reach of the door so that if you

James:

No

Russell:

No you'd sit

James:

Further down

Russell:

Further down so you're out of reach of the door

James:

Yeah so near there the back wall so that there's a kind of sense of (indicating) if someone sits there or someone sits there there's a sense of being in contact with each other

Russell:

Hmm okay how many steps in is that roughly for you

James:

To there it's about three or four

Russell:

Three or four steps and how many more steps beyond where you would sit before you couldn't go any further

James:

Well I hit the end

Russell:

Yeah

James:

I sit in the corner basically

Russell:

Right okay

(a silence) what else is in that room

James:

There's a shower in the corner in the opposite corner so if you walked in the door when you walk in the door there's a kind of wall in front of you but behind that wall there's a little access or alcove where there's a cold water shower

Russell:

And do you have you used that shower

James:

Yes yeah

Russell:

Did you use it last Friday night

James:

No

Russell:

Can you describe what standing under that shower's like

James:
Um

I.i.50:00
sometimes it’s good because if you want to stay in the room for whatever reason the the shower cools you down and sometimes too because the showers are so crappy there the proper showers the three of them that if there’s anything been going on in the steam room and you want to wash off a bit there’s a sense of not having to go out to the showers to do it

Russell:
Right okay
James:
You can do it in that room

Russell:
Do you leave your towel outside or do you take or do you wear it in

James:
I usually I usually lose leave it outside for that one

Russell:
Yeah
James:
But not always the case depending which sauna

Russell:

I.i.50:30
It varies from sauna to sauna

James:
Yeah

Russell:
But at that sauna it would be consistent

James:
Yeah pretty consistent

Russell:
How do you think you make those decisions

James:
That one I just realised then it’s clearly to do with the fact that the towel rack is right next to the door

Russell:
Yeah

James:
and there’s a sense of that I can get in the door without people seeing me from outside

Russell:
Right

James:
Whereas the other saunas sometimes it’s not so clear you have to come out to an open space or be seen more

Russell:
Can you describe another

I.i.51:00
sauna where you would take your towel in

James:
Ah Squirt

Russell:
Yep

James:
Squirt and Volcano

Russell:
But the rack at Squirt’s not far from the door

James:
Yeah but there’s more of an entrance because of the way the door opens and there’s a way that people can be in the in the spa they can be watching the door and people can be in the showers and people on the bench so that (demonstrating) you would have to come out of the door and come around that way whereas the door in at Squ at Splash um whatever it is at High Street is right there

I.i.51:30
you put your towel on and you open the door

Russell:
So how many seconds difference of exposure are there?

James:

Oh probably five seconds difference

Russell:

About five seconds

James:

Five to ten seconds

Russell:

But that’s enough

James:

That’s enough for me

Russell:

That’s fine, that’s fine. Um, that space at Squirt is highly organised in terms of looking isn’t it?

James:

Yes, that

Russell:

That open space at Squirt

James:

Yeah, it’s a bit uncomfortable. I always go to the shower down in the far left corner

Russell:

I know the one you mean but where do you put your towel then?

James:

I put it on usually because there’s a pylon the shower

Russell:

Yeah

James:

So usually on the hook furthest round

Russell:

There is a hook round that corner

James:

Yeah

Russell:

Do you we’re talking about the shower that’s round the corner

James:

Yeah, hang on, so there’s two pylons and there’s no hooks right down those two end ones

Russell:

Yeah

James:

But the next pylon along has a hook on there

Russell:

Okay

James:

I would never I think go to their showers near the the se the pool closest to the pool

Russell:

Yeah

James:

I put it on usually because there’s a pylon the shower

Russell:

Yes, yeah

James:

So I don’t think I would ever go there

Russell:

That’s interesting (we laugh)
James: I've been lucky enough

Russell: You continue to surprise me *(we laugh)*

James: But that's all

Russell: Yeah um let's go back to High Street you talked about the water pressure

James: Yes and yes lack of heat and water pressure

Russell: Oh lack of heat

James: Lack of heat if there's two people using the showers even then it's tricky have a third person hopeless even with one person sometimes it's not enough water pressure

Russell: I read an article where the someone who makes decisions I don't know whether it was the owner or the manager at High Street talked about how he'd spent ten thousand dollars installing those three showers there are three aren't there

James: Yeah

Russell: Yeah

James: They were robbed *(I laugh)*

Russell: What's under your feet in those showers

James: Tiles

Russell: What size are the tiles

James: Fairly small fairly small squares

Russell: Bigger than a postage stamp

James: Yeah but not much bigger

Russell: Right

James: I think I could be wrong

Russell: Here where you live what's the water pressure and water temperature like

James: Excellent *(I laugh)* I could run a decent sauna from my place

Russell: All right

James: I hate that I really do it's the one thing I hate about that place it's just hopeless

Russell: Right and yet that's a place that's necessary for you too the showers

James: The showers

Russell: You mentioned yeah

James:
Very necessary yeah very necessary [unintelligible] if it’s crappy you don’t feel like you you know clean again or it takes a lot of it takes a lot of work

Russell:

I.i.55:00
Um (a silence) I know I want to keep asking about

I.i.55:30
this light and this Italian boy in the light (James laughs a little) and I’m not quite sure how professional I am about (we laugh) but it but no there is well let me put it this way have you can you recall a situation where the first part of that scenario has occurred and you’ve gone in and you know the invitation has come to go to a room whether spoken or not spoken whether by you or by someone else and then you’ve

I.i.56:00
gone into the room and the other person has adjusted the light

James:

Yep

Russell:

You can remember

James:

Oh yeah

Russell:

Has that happened only once

James:

No no no it’s left a few times that’s happened

Russell:

And can you remember them distinctly those times

James:

Ah I can’t remember exactly no

Russell:

Can you

James:

but I know there’s moments and particularly if they had it down too dark. (starting a list) one I take it as an affront like an insult

Russell:

So it becomes about you

James:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

if they’re adjusting the light

James:

If they turn it down dark

Russell:

Yeah

James:

I kind of go well I think they don’t want to see me

Russell:

Yeah

James:

That’s how I think so it feels a bit insulting and also too I don’t like it dark

Russell:

You don’t you’ve not ever thought that they might be feeling modest or embarrassed

James:

Sometimes but my most the surface feeling is they don’t find me attractive

I.i.57:00
but yeah intellectually I can go yeah you know they’re shy they’re modest or whatever but intellectually I go they don’t want to see me

Russell:

Um the next question I’m going to ask you I before I ask it I want to remind you that you can at any stage say you don’t want to answer any question

James:
Sure

Russell:

What we're doing at the moment is having a conversation which I'm going to transcribe and change some sort of details

James:

Yes

Russell:

Eventually that'll be published in full as an appendix to my thesis and there'll be I think three examiners who are academics somewhere sitting in a room at some point reading the whole thing trying to get a sense of what this is in order to assess it or whatever can you describe yourself for those people to those people (James laughs) so they know

James:

Yeah

Russell:

But I'm thinking first we're I'll just ask you initially can you describe yourself

James:

Yes is that the first question

Russell:

Yeah

James:

Is that finished now

Russell:

Yes that's the first question (James laughs) and now having answered yes to that will you please do so

James:

Okay yeah I find this interesting because talking to people about classifieds and stuff I there's no way I could write a classified but I feel like I can do this because I'm not cla I'm not advertising myself so

Russell:

Okay

James:

Okay so I'm about five foot ten brown hair I'm thirty-nine probably look about thirty-five thirty-six especially in the dark (laughing a little) with red light um quite thin looking um I'm about sixty-five kilos um fairly toned I go to the gym but not a big body um oh high cheek bones sort of bit gaunt around the cheeks and a big strong chin fairly slim lips (we laugh) ah hairy chest but I clipper it um um fairly thin long legs um sort of pale skin I guess bluish-green no bluish what I don't know sort of bluish eyes

Russell:

Can you describe yourself now other than your appearance

James:

Um depending on the situation

Russell:

I'm thinking of these people sitting in some office (laughing) somewhere in a uni

James:

Right

Russell:

with a light on

James:

Right

Russell:

looking at a page

James:

Yeah

Russell:
trying to work out what was who was this person who said this but again it doesn't have to be any how do you want to present yourself to them

James:

Oh

I.i.60:30

that's a hard question how do I want to present myself to them don't don't know because I don't know who they are um um I think I'd rather stick to how how I might describe myself in ways other than physical um fairly fairly softly spoken um I think there's a level

I.i.61:00

of um um ah there's a kind of analytical approach to my personality a fairly um fairly conscious I don't think I have a kind of vague um persona I think I'm fairly kind of sharp I don't mean intellectually sharp I mean but I think my kind of manner of persona is fairly sharp um I mean I can be kind of relaxed and calm but I think

I.i.61:30

my general intensity is quite sharp and um I imagine yeah I mean it depends on the people that are around you I mean so much of that stuff depends on the chemistry of the other people and what they bring out in you but I'm I always imagine myself as having a sense of um either being completely invisible there's a sense

I.i.62:00

of me being like a nonentity that people don't see or um a fairly kind of intense persona that sometimes people are drawn to but sometimes people find a bit disquieting so there's there're [they're?] those kind of extremes that I feel that I really relate to but there's a a general sort of quiet sort of invisibility but then there's an intensity and I don't think people would look at me and think that is a you know sort of vague nebulus kind of person

Russell:

Thanks um now I want to go back to the light

James:

(laughing) Yeah okay

Russell:

Because now

James:

(putting on a voice) Don't go to the light

Russell:

No you talked about the light softening

James:

Yeah

Russell:

And you've just talked about yourself in some respects as being sharp

James:

Right

Russell:

Is there a relationship

James:

I'm sure there is yeah

I.i.63:00

I'm very conscious of my face very conscious of my features particularly my face and there's a sense of er I you know and this isn't what's consciously happening when I turn the light down

Russell:

Yeah

James:

but I'm sure that's part of it is a softening of that a kind of relaxing of that persona that hard sort of sharp featured kind of thing

Russell:

When you turned that light down last Friday night did you feel softer

James:

I.i.63:30

I feel more comfortable so yeah I guess yeah there's a sense of being protected by it or softened by it perhaps yeah less flawed feels a thing for me that seems to resonate by turning the light down a little there's a there's a you know the pores get smaller or something (he laughs)
Russell:

I.i.64:00
One of my other interviewees talked about um an early awareness of being at a sauna and he also er was talking about an occasion when he went when he was underage and he described the men as connoisseurs he had this sudden he’d now not

I.i.64:30
that he he didn’t claim that that’s what he thought then but his way of describing what they were to him then now was that they were connoisseurs

James:

Right

Russell:
of of ss I think he said connoisseurs of sex

James:

Right

Russell:
Do you think of yourself as that

James:

(laughing) No I’m the Smorgies version I’m

Russell:
The what

James:
The Smorgies version

Russell:
What’s Smorgies

James:
You know Smorgies is like one of those kind of (he claps his hands together, audibly) you know all you can eat or you know those

I.i.65:00
steakhouse joints or The Keg or that you know

Russell:
Yeah yeah

James:

Nine dollar chicken meals and all you can eat and stuff like that so

Russell:
Nine dollar chicken (we laugh)

James:
You know whatever you know low grade you know definitely not sophisticated no I don’t think of myself as a connoisseur no and that in fact that really doesn’t seem to relate to me

Russell:
Hmm

James:
I can see what that person means and I can see how it does work like that you are using doing a lot of um

I.i.65:30
er constant analysis on some other level people that aren’t really conscious of it there is a constant analysis going on of you know what kind of what kind of person you’re attracted to and how they might be attracted back to you

Russell:
Was that happening for you last Friday

James:
That happens all the time

Russell:

Can you can you recall though a moment last Friday night specifically where you were aware of that

James:

Um not as clearly because the I was a little bit er surprised by

I.i.66:00
the ease with which this interaction took place I thought because this this guy was quite young he was twenty-four and you know really handsome beautiful really um I was a little bit surprised by how easy the interaction had occurred like basically we’d really only ca well he’d only acknowledged my eyes once as we passed and then he obviously turned he sort of looked and then
waited in the corner for me to come back and then so

that yeah that last Friday no there wasn’t a great deal of having to calculate you know is this person attracted to me am I attracted to them how are we going to negotiate this I guess the thing though that I was put off by the word connoisseur because it suggested to me that there was a level of um that one would only accept the finest

Russell: Yeah

James: And that’s not how I see it

Russell: Right I don’t think the phrase was intended in that sense of a collector but in the sense of someone who does appraise

James: Right yeah definitely well definitely there’s an appraisal process going on

Russell: Yeah

James: An analytical but but like I said to me the word connoisseur suggests a higher a more sophisticated kind of um tasteful elegant kind of approach to it where that’s not always the case but definitely there’s a a sense of appraisal going on a constant er analysis for me anyway of the atmosphere what’s being given back what what what’s going for all that kind of stuff

Russell: In that in that part of your time at the sauna

James: Which part

Russell: That part where you’re analysing

James: Yeah

Russell: And calculating

James: Yeah

Russell: Is that’s a different part from when you feel that’s different from when the light’s now at the right level and now you feel comfortable

James: I never feel completely comfortable I’m very conscious of what the other person’s thinking of me always that that never really changes I guess the maybe the moment after sex sometimes where not often you speak but sometimes you do get into a conversation or a chat with someone afterwards that’s perhaps but then no even then there’s a thing there because then they’re often asking well not always most people like to talk about themselves but there’s a kind of you know information exchange

Russell: Do you like talking afterwards

James: Yeah well recently yeah I feel that that’s been part of it for me I go there for contact on that level and I look for it in a way doesn’t always happen but the last two times there has been a kind of a quite nice connection afterwards

Russell: Last Friday night did you initiate the conversation

James: Yeah definitely

Russell:
And you said that you were asking questions and he was answering at length

James:
Oh no he

Russell:
Yeah

James:
He was a bit he was I was I was um intrigued by him really because he was such an other culture not I don't mean ethnic I mean just how he was like this yeah he he intrigued me on that level

Russell:

I.i.69:30
I'm sorry I need more what do you mean other culture

James:
He he he ah he well he just came from a different place to me he was um young he worked a lot he worked hard and he um you know he was like a manager of things you know he was a manager at twenty-four and hard worker and and kind of just simplicity to how he saw things and you know he was he'd been involved with a woman up until recently and

I.i.70:00
I I don't know whether he used the word gay or whether he or maybe we did but you know he wasn’t out to anyone none of his friends no one knew and so I was intrigued by that and his kind of sexuality because he you know he was so sensual and not one of these guys who was like (his voice drops an octave) we don’t do that we don’t kiss we don’t (his voice returns to its usual pitch) you know he was open to the whole exchange in a very sensual kind of way and but he was you know basically I guess more attracted to men but he still had sex with women and he’d get went out with all his straight friends

I.i.70:30
you know you know [sic] and obviously there’s a whole heap of you know and I asked him why did he come to High Street because he lived twenty to thirty kilometres away

Russell:
Oh woah yeah yeah

James:
And and er and then er you know when he told me that he wasn’t out to anyone [unintelligible] er I think I’ll censor myself there

Russell:
That's all right

James:
Um you know I said to him well this is why you’ve come to High Street and he sort of laughed and said yeah probably because he doesn’t want to run into people that he might know you know

Russell:

I.i.71:00
So he’d driven specifically

James:
Yeah

Russell:

twenty to thirty kilometres

James:
Yes yes to find

Russell:
Because he knew this was almost as far as he could go

James:
Yeah

Russell:
Although there was one further

James:
Yeah

Russell:
Was he aware that there was one further

James:
Ah I don’t know if we talked about that I can’t remember if we talked about Suburb E
Russell:

It'd be odd to know given that they're publicised in similar ways

James:

Yeah

Russell:

It'd be odd to know about one and not the other

James:

Yeah guess so yeah I have a vague memory of maybe talking about that but I don't

Russell:

I had a conversation I'll tell you a story I had a conversation with a guy at Splash once or who was Thai and was chatting away to me in English and I'm a person who doesn't like often having conversations although there are notable exceptions and I realised after a while I thought oh he wants to practice his English (James laughs a little) and I

James:

I.i.71:30

don't remember

Russell:

think I was right but he was also just a very friendly person

James:

Right

Russell:

And as we were talking away and I enjoyed talking with him um one of the things that came up was I asked him what suburb he lived in and he told me he lived in North Melbourne or Flemington or somewhere like that and I said I'm surprised you've come here to Splash because Volcano is closer and he said oh yeah that's where my friends and I normally go and I said well why have you come all this way he said oh we heard they don't like Asians here and so my friend and I thought we'd come over (James laughs a little) and find out for ourselves

James:

Wow

Russell:

And he just just told me that and then I'm thinking what am I doing here hang on he's in this room with me have I just been part of something but also am I part of something else at Splash that I'm not aware of

James:

Right

Russell:

Like have I been visiting an anti-Asian place

James:

I.i.73:00

Right

Russell:

Or is that the whole thing suddenly became quite complicated for me but it had seemed completely uncomplicated for him but that was just suddenly the thing about somebody crossing town

James:

Right okay

Russell:

For strong reasons

James:

Yes I think this person goes to Volcano sometimes but you know he obviously goes there

Russell:

Can we have a break for a moment

James:

Yeah sure

Russell:

I.i.73:30

(I switch off the minidisc recorder)

I.i.73:31

(after a cigarette and a short chat, I reload it and switch it back on)
Okay when you um went to High Street last Friday did you what’s the word I’m after do you modify your behaviour

but so that once you’re off the street and you’re in the building do you feel like you’re doing something different from what you were a few minutes ago I don’t mean obviously the activities are different but in terms of who you are do you have a new persona

James: Ah

no I would say basically not but there’s a kind of um what’s the word I’m thinking of now then kind of etiquette I think to the sauna world that um I don’t think it’s a place to be too spontaneous or I don’t find myself being particularly spontaneous and er I guess I’m I guess I’m very conscious of er not doing too many fast movements you know in terms of walking fast or you know slipping or that kind of thing so I guess one is conscious of having a smooth carriage you know like a there’s not a lot of um possibilities for sudden kind of you know walking round a corner and running into someone because that happens sometimes so there’s a kind of care about that and also because the floors are often feel a bit slippery so you know

Russell: What’s on the floor there at High Street

James: Er carpet for most of the place er except I think round in the dark area it’s I don’t think it’s carpet there I could be wrong definitely out near the shower and sauna it’s I don’t know tile or vinyl

Russell: Yeah

James: Lino

Russell: Um

so last Friday you were conscious of adopting a certain kind of etiquette or

James: Yeah

Russell: Do you think of it as adopting etiquette or deploying it or what what is it having it or producing it

James: Maybe producing it may um maybe it’s because there is a sense that there is potential gaze going on (he spells it) G A Z E you know that that one becomes a bit more conscious of how one holds oneself physically how I move how I might appear to other people

Russell: So is that etiquette or deportment

James: Well what I just said then was I guess more deportment

Russell: Yeah

James: But there is etiquette in terms of you don’t tend to be too friendly you know you don’t go around smiling and saying hello to everyone (I laugh) and so that that would be more etiquette

Russell: Yeah

James: And so the etiquette comes into the way that one approaches communication with people there’s a guardedness everyone’s guarded the the eye thing is the most movement that goes on generally
Russell:
You mentioned earlier that with this um young Italian man there was an eye contact moment
James:
Yeah
Russell:
That was a significant moment
James:
I think so I think that's a signifier [sic] for most most times that there is some kind of quality of contact eye contact that often people who are not interested in you will not give you eye contact that that's very clear that if they're not interested in you they show no kind of you sit next to them they don't even turn to look at you

Russell:
Without going into too many details part of the work you do is to do with um working as an interpreter of some sort isn't it
James:
Hmm
Russell:
Yeah okay so and the idea and something about understanding what someone intends is important for you
James:
Yes
Russell:
Professionally
James:
Yeah
Russell:
But that's also um important for you in the saunas as well
James:

Yeah
Russell:
In the same way (this is a question)
James:
Ooh that's a loaded question there are so many different levels to that so many different possibilities because my first reaction was a lot of my er working experience is fear of not getting the right intention not understanding the right intention um the potential consequence is for complete breakdown if you don't get that right
Russell:
Yeah
James:
So there's a fear there but I know there's also a fear about that aspect in the sauna as well this is where it gets more complicated because my sense of walking into a sauna is often a sense of escape it's like you walk in from the city it's like a place that you know almost womb-like but within that womb there's kind of dangers and you know self-esteem issues all that kind of stuff but I guess in terms of that guardedness so one is you're trying to censor perhaps how you might project certain things so that er you're not giving off too much signal you're not giving off a desperate signal but er you're not giving off a completely cold signal um and then in terms of the other people I guess one is being very conscious of how they might respond to you so you watch for their nuance yeah I'm v I guess I'm very conscious of someone that's showing no interest that I stay away from them or if I if they're showing kind of non-interest because in the past sometimes people will do that but they'll warm to you eventually um that if I approach them and I don't get you know an awful reaction or I'll pursue it to some level and after that point if I still get that non-contact then I make sure that when I walk past them I don't look at them
Russell:

Right so

James:

After a certain point if they’re not going to if they’re not interested and after that point or playing hard to get or whatever you want to call it after that point I sort of make it an issue not to even look at them as I walk past

Russell:

Even though you might in fact still be really interested in them

James:

Oh yeah absolutely

Russell:

Yeah okay

James:

Absolutely

Russell:

So can we go back to Friday night like is it fair to say that the very first time you noticed this Italian guy you knew you were interested in him

James:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah

James:

Absolutely

Russell:

But you did not let on as it were

James:

No because I think like I said there was that confusion about seeing that person in the video room and going and then not being sure later if it was the same person

Russell:

Right

James:

And normally I’m much better at that as soon as I see them but there were two I’m sure there were two guys there that were young ethnic but anyway the next time was when I was in the TV room like just the normal movie room and this young guy sat next to me and I remember going oh nice but he showed no kind of looking to the side or anything like that

Russell:

But he sat next to you

James:

Well there was a table in between us

Russell:

Yeah

James:

And he sat there

Russell:

Yeah

James:

and then he left

Russell:

Were there other places he could have sat

James:

Yeah yeah but that to me that didn’t necess necessarily mean anything

Russell:

Right

James:

Because he showed no real he didn’t look so there was a wariness actually when I approached him even though we’d had eye contact

Russell:
Because he hadn’t shown any

**James:**
It hadn’t showed beforehand

**Russell:**
Right okay

**James:**
And so when I went up to him when he was standing in the corner I was half expecting him to walk off

**Russell:**
Yeah

**James:**
As I when I touched him I half expected him to put you know move my hand away and he’d walk off

**Russell:**
But he didn’t

**James:**
No (a silence)

**Russell:**
Do you think you can tell me what you know I don’t want you to try and invent something on the spot but what you feel you know about how you learnt that etiquette you don’t have to justify this either just

**James:**
I guess from experience I guess from having it having both things happen people approach you

**Russell:**

**I.i.09:00**
Do you think you can tell me what you know I don’t want you to try and invent something on the spot but what you feel you know about how you learnt that etiquette you don’t have to justify this either just

**James:**

**I.i.09:30**
in a particular way um you know I I particularly find it a bit kind of weird when people approach you not not even in like grope rooms or stuff like that where kind of the laws are a little bit more open like if you’re in there one can’t assume to be too you know you know um choosy or you know like designate you can touch you can’t

**Russell:**
Right

**James:**
you know like um but I guess it’s those things where people actually get quite aggressive with you that

**Russell:**
you you’ve made no no kind of overture to them like not even looked at and yet they take um they take liberties (he laughs a little) you know they they and it’s like the shock of that it’s like I don’t want to be angry back to them but there’s a sense of like no you know no so from that and also from the experience I have of people being kind of you know making an overture to them and them being like not interested or

**Russell:**
people that perhaps show some interest only for a moment and then kind of go oh I need a break or walk off or you know mid sort of whatever so there’s a sensitivity to that perhaps

**Russell:**
Do you think this Italian (I hesitate) man

**James:**
Boy

**Russell:**
We’ll call him whatever boy (I laugh a little)

**James:**
Young young man twenty-four

**Russell:**
This right okay this young this young Italian man

**I.i.11:00**
do you think um he knew what the etiquette was in the way that you knew it

**James:**
No

**Russell:**
Right okay

**James:**
Not not as consciously not as consciously like I said though that’s what I [unintelligible]

**Russell:**
So what gave you that impression?

James:

More about what we talked afterwards, I guess, the fact that I realise that he didn’t calculate things the same way that I do.

Russell:

Yeah.

James:

And by calculate I don’t mean calculating, I mean analyse the situation, he doesn’t.

Russell:

I mean.

James:

I ii.11:30

Yeah.

James:

do that necessarily it might be more unconscious response mechanism, but you walk into a place, you know, you know a place like that has, you know has a mood, you know people generally unless you get drunk guys in there or you know, you know sometimes you get people in there as groups, you know friends and they, you know they titter and they laugh round the place and all that kind of stuff and it’s um you know it’s, it’s disquieting, doesn’t fit and I guess if you walk into that place and I ii.12:00

you know you bring, yeah you bring that sense of, you know because it is a sexual venue and I think the sex world tends to bring a kind of um a secrecy or an undercurrent, you know I don’t think you can escape that in any sense of the sexual usually there’s an undercurrent and I guess an environment that is about sex brings with it that so you know the etiquette almost I ii.12:30

almost comes with it.

Russell:

Do you find, have you found that you’ve needed to alter your etiquette from venue to venue?

James:

Ah not not.

Russell:

Alter your behaviour or conduct or.

James:

Not completely, I think there is a general theme that one is not too expressive er yeah I think that’s probably the thing, you I ii.13:00

don’t go in there, yeah there’s a guardedness you know generally, one is displaying the physical rather than you know one is conscious of the physical in those environments and not going there on personalities generally.

Russell:

You’ve talked about breaches of etiquette as being in potentially negative in terms of their I ii.13:30

effect in some way, have you ever witnessed or encountered a breach of etiquette that you envied or that you’d even done yourself and suddenly felt really pleased about or that um you thought of as creative (James laughs a little) that someone had done that or inventive.

James:

I ii.14:00

No I can’t think of one at the sauna, I can think of one at the beat but um.

James:

I ii.14:00

one, this is kind of, I feel a bit odd talking about this one but there is that sense of sometimes when an old, a really old guy you know makes a play I usually like will grab their hand put my other hand on it hold it for a second but put move it away so there’s a sense of for me the etiquette of going well look I recognise the fact that you’re a human being and you know I ii.14:30

Russell:

Yeah.

James:
you want and I’m not going to completely treat you like a nonentity here

**Russell:**

Yeah

**James:**

So that’s a very slight break um I guess sometimes there’s a sense of oh is there a sense of joking you know recognition I guess sometimes of I don’t know where where I’m thinking of this maybe running into someone or um you know because sometimes you see people that you know and you’ll sit and chat

**l.ii.15:00**

and stuff but other times I’m thinking more of that well no even though generally if you run into someone by accident like actually knock into them in the corridor there’s a kind of a guarded apology from both of you but no I can’t think of any time where I’ve seen people break I mean because I find it really annoying if people get really tittery and and you know giggle in groups you know three or four friends walking around

**l.ii.15:30**

I find it really kind of annoying so yeah the other kind of I generally don’t see it people are very kind of sedate generally in those environments

**Russell:**

Do you feel sedate

**James:**

Ah yeah oh sedate I’m never completely comfortable there but but yeah in terms of how one portrays I keep on saying how one

**l.ii.16:00**

how how I portray myself or how I move it you know you tend to be like I said fairly level you don’t tend to do too many things in a jerky sort of way

**Russell:**

From the moment you arrived last Friday night to the moment you actually were back on the street again

**James:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

what was the most comfortable moment the moment when you felt the most comfortable

**James:**

**l.ii.16:30**

(a silence) Um the thing that comes to mind is actually when we were fucking that was I guess the most actual [sic] in the moment of fucking yeah

**Russell:**

The moment you felt most comfortable

**James:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

Yeah okay

**James:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

Um do you have a favourite sauna in Melbourne

**James:**

(laughing) Used to

**Russell:**

Splash

**James:**

(still laughing) Yeah

**Russell:**

All right let’s talk about Splash (we laugh) um it’s okay to talk a little bit longer (this is a question)

**James:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

Okay I miss Splash

**James:**

Yes
What do you miss about it?

Oh it just felt so kind of full of potential it was so kind of big and and felt a bit kind of up-market or a just luxurious in some way it just felt like such space and um.

It certainly wasn’t very cramped was it.

It was just it was yeah amazing that kind of mid section with the the water thing and the statue and the and the private rooms on the side just.

(laughing) With the glass walls yes.

Yeah that no one was ever in and

Oh yes they were (we laugh)

Well I didn’t see too many people in them.

No I never was in them.

Right no I never got there either but I was intrigued by it and just the sense of it of it being like this kind of I don’t know fairly special kind of place you know in that you could still have a kind of raunch and and it was often you know such beautiful men went there as well I found that it was just so kind of beautiful.

Where do you think they go now.

Rear Entry um and Squirt a bit but Rear Entry generally.

I remember um oh I’m possibly going to bore the examiners because I think I’ve said this on tape before but I remember being at Splash on a Saturday afternoon once and there was a staff member on duty.

Right.

and one other man in whom I had no interest and I think he had no interest in me and I felt a bit like Daffy Duck it’s all mine (we laugh) you know and I I just became this vast and it felt vast.

Yes.

It felt vast but I could well what will I do.

And and I was there I think there was no one else there apart from the three of us for the best part of three hours.

Yeah.
Wow

Russell:
And I was ecstatic

James:
Right

Russell:
And I left as people started arriving I thought I want to get out and I left and

James:
Okay

Russell:
And I just felt so so happy

James:
Right

Russell:
Wandering around this empty mansion or something

James:
Yeah yeah yeah it felt mansion I don't think I would've liked it to be empty (I laugh a little) but but I know what you mean yeah and the steam room was fantastic you know

Russell:
I agree but what was fantastic for you about the steam room [unintelligible]

James:
Oh just the fact that it had so many possibilities it it well

Russell:
How does it differ how did it differ from the steam room at um [High Street]

James:
Oh well for a start I mean [High Street] is like a closet space and you know like a wardrobe and and [Splash] had was huge it was big and it was had it reminded me of The Poseidon Adventure you know

Russell:
(laughing) Oh really

James:
(laughing) Yeah

Russell:
I haven't had the pleasure (we laugh)

James:
Yeah just that all that kind of ship kind of quality

Russell:
Well what what were the physical features that contributed to that effect

James:
All those kind of piping the piping on the walls um the lighting er

Russell:
Was the piping what for plumbing purposes

James:
Yeah well it looked like it looked like you know ship plumbing

Russell:
Right okay

James:
In the in the you know what do you call the bottom of the ship I don't know whatever the bottom of the ship

Russell:
it felt like you were at the bottom of the ship with these things and

James:
Yep
And that kind of little aluminium or whatever steel stairway thing half way down and then down the end was like an area that especially I mean not at the start because they had the door open down that end eventually had two doors and they closed it off and that was kind of like an orgy area down the end that was filled you know it was the amount of scenes that I’d seen there that were so amazing so it was just full of that it was just that whole mixture of the filmic nature of it the sense of it being like a playland

you know a sex playland with that kind of warmth and light

Russell:
Do you can you tell me about the source of light for it

James:
The thing that I have in mind though is up near the entrance um it’s I mean it may not have been I can’t remember now but in my mind it was like um what do you call those little lights the little di di dichroics sort of light dichroics is it

Russell:
I don’t know the term like little halogen lights

James:
Yeah like

Russell:
That make just a thin shaft a beam yeah

James:
Just a beam yeah I felt like it may not have been but that’s what I had in my mind now

Russell:
Yeah

James:
And there was a kind of reddish light near the um the aluminium stair stairway thing and then down the end there was not much light at all

Russell:
Do you remember sound in the room

James:
Ah yeah because you could hear it wasn’t full on but you could hear the muffled music from outside

Russell:
There were actually speakers in the s

James:
Oh was there

Russell:
Yeah

James:
Oh wow

Russell:
My memory is

James:
Yeah right

Russell:
So maybe I’m wrong

James:
Right

Russell:
But my memory is that there were actually speakers and I used to um on a couple of occasions I remember being in that steam room even with men there but thinking I wonder how the speakers don’t short circuit

(we laugh)
James:

[unintelligible] right

Russell:

Because it was definitely in there

James:

Okay yeah oh it was fantastic

Russell:

No I agree

James:

That was the best best part of that place

Russell:

I used to enjoy sitting in there so much

James:

And I liked it too when they

I.ii.23:00

were going to close down the place and so they opened up the other end as well so you had at one stage I mean they closed off the area where there were all the cubicles and the rooms but at one stage there was that area open that was originally there when the sauna was plus the area that was like the sex club and they opened that up as well so it was part of the sauna that was great it was just huge it just felt like a playland it felt like anything was possible

Russell:

I miss it

James:

(laughing a little) Yes I do too it was so much closer too

I.ii.23:30

than the others it w oh yeah it was a sad day when that closed

Russell:

Did you go to the the final weekend

James:

No I don't

Russell:

It was like the world's biggest toga party

James:

Was it (laughing a little)

Russell:

I've never seen so many men standing around

James:

Wow

Russell:

anywhere chatting

James:

Right

Russell:

It was so the etiquette of course

James:

had broken

Russell:

It was just there were men everywhere just chatting

James:

Right

Russell:

And happy

James:

Right

Russell:

Happy

James:

Yes you don't see a lot of happiness

I.ii.24:00

in the saunas you don't see happy-happy

nuh sometimes the staff in the in the lounge-room areas they'll be kind of chatting and stuff in there and often they're very friendly with people but not in the maze area generally not generally
Russell:
What was the most surprising thing that has that you can recall
I.ii.24:30
in a sauna in Melbourne

James:
The most

Russell:
Yeah the a surprise

James:
Er it was a shock actually it was one day at Rear Entry um there was some was it Rear Entry yeah no Rear Entry yeah um there was a fight in a room um and it sounded like one guy was being raped or trying to get out he was sort of screaming and saying let me
I.ii.25:00
go and there were guys outside gathering saying what’s going on another guy trying to get over the top to see what was happening um and it would calm down and then it would take off again and then it would calm down I forget what happened at the end I think it just quietened down but there was a real sense of of someone being in physical viol oh physical danger and we were stuck outside you couldn’t get in that was the most I’d never seen that before I’d never heard that before
I.ii.25:30
(a silence) oh another surprising thing was a sauna in another city and one night one night when obviously a woman came in with her friend they the guy got her in she came in and as soon as I saw her come in in clothes I thought oh there’s something wrong there just [unintelligible] and I thought it’s got to be a woman and it WAS this woman was walking around [unintelligible]

Russell:
A real
I.ii.26:00
woman

James:
A real woman yeah

Russell:
Are you sure

James:
Yeah yeah I’m positive absolutely positive she’d obviously been brought in to see the place and I mean she got to the point where she was in a towel and the towel was up around her top (I laugh a little) and she went into the er steam room

Russell:
What did you think of that

James:
Ah I felt very uncomfortable felt very uncomfortable it felt like an invasion of the space it’s a real change to the atmosphere it’s like ooh the kind of sexuality I.ii.26:30
changed

Russell:
Right hmm (a silence) the sexuality changed what about when do you become aware of your gender when you’re in a sau sauna do you have
I.ii.27:00
any feelings about being whatever gender you are (we laugh a little) when you’re at a sauna

James:
Yeah I think so I think I’m pretty conscious of that yeah

Russell:
In a more heightened way than elsewhere

James:
I think I’m pretty conscious of it all the time

Russell:
Yeah

James:
I think it’s a strong image

Russell:
Does it alter in a sauna

James:
I guess it’s more in your face you know especially

I.ii.27:30
you know with the videos like at somewhere like er Squirt where every corner has basically got a video with guys fucking and and you can’t help but be you know bought [sic] face to face with you know like ballsacks and you know cocks and the male body and you know the image of men you know who don’t get penetrated being penetrated and and all that

I.ii.28:00
so yeah

Russell:
Do you feel more male in that environment

James:
Oh

Russell:
when you are surrounded by those kinds of images

James:
Male hmm no I don’t think I feel more male I’m conscious of what you know what masculinity might be you know what does it mean I guess I don’t don’t have the answer what I’m saying is I’m I’m very conscious of you know what ma and specially

Russell:
Of questions about masculinity

James:
Yeah well you know just that image

I.ii.28:30
of masculinity and you can sometimes a guy will come through who’s obviously like incredibly um in their being more masculine the you know the there’s some quality that they bring it’s the way they walk the way they their aura or whatever you want to call it and I find that always interesting in those spaces it’s almost like there’s something about them I consider that they almost

I.ii.29:00
like um they haven’t been touched by the etiquette in some way or they they’re kind of not as er self-conscious as I think a lot of gay men are the so they kind of stand out for me

Russell:
Okay you talked I’m now making a very quick link you talked about um the image in the pornographic videos of men being penetrated and it seems like that that makes raises a question

I.ii.29:30
about what is normally offered as an image of masculinity and that raises a question is that fair

James:

Russell:
Okay I’m just wondering your sense of caution about being looked at is it about being looked at or about being penetrated by a look being looked

I.ii.30:00
into or something

James:

Russell:
Are you armoured in your towel

James:

Russell:
Is it like a penetration though

James:
Well I guess I guess that’s in a way what you look for in a way you look
for people who are actually looking at you as a sexual object, you know you want to be seen as a sexual, a viably sexual object you know and if someone doesn’t look at you then you know if someone looks at you with those kind of eyes then there’s something good about it.

Russell:
And what are those kind of eyes?

James:
Well there’s a look of acknowledgement of you exist (laughing a little) you know you’re in the space and

I.ii.31:30
I want to have sex with you.

Russell:
Right, okay now I’m wondering about the jingling key or the non-jingling key as it turns out.

James:
Right.

Russell:
Is that also about a kind of guardedness?

James:
Yeah perhaps it’s making sure perhaps it’s being in control it’s making sure that I’m seen when I want to be seen.

Russell:
And you have the control over how.

James:
I have the control to make sure that less you know I mean.

Russell:
So but seen.

I.ii.32:00
in this case isn’t just to do with visual but it’s also the sound.

James:
Yeah yeah.

Russell:
that you have control over.

James:
Yeah the.

Russell:
The status of your presence or something like that.

James:
That’s right that they don’t hear me before they see me or you know what I mean but I don’t know yeah I’m not sure about that it’s interesting because I hate that I hate the jingling the same the same.

Russell:
But you don’t but you don’t notice other people’s jingling.

I.ii.32:30
is what you said.

James:
No I don’t.

Russell:
Right.

James:
I don’t. I don’t but I notice my own (laughing a little) jingling and I think it’s got to do with the frivolousness of it and I think that gets back to the whole etiquette of the place that the jingling key or whatever the badge suggests a kind of lightness and a kind of um er a femininity I guess because an image I had before when I was talking about it was in like um dan er belly.

I.ii.33:00
dancers or

Russell:
Yeah.

James:
that kind of thing you know all the jingling all that.

Russell:
Yeah.
James:  
I think there’s a femininity to it  

Russell:  
All right  okay  

James:  
I think  I think that’s part of it  

Russell:  
All right I’ve got more now about the locker key (James laughs) last Frid (I knock the microphone) ooh I hope that’s all right (checking and adjusting it) yeah last Friday now the lockers correct me if I’m wrong  the lockers at High Street  there’s an upper level and a lower level of lockers  

James:  
Yeah  

Russell:  
Did you have an upper locker or a lower  

James:  
I had an upp-er level  

Russell:  
You had an upper locker (I.ii.33:30) you say that with a certain kind of specific  

James:  
I’m just interested in the fact that I’m so (laughing a little) so um clear about that  

Russell:  
That that was an upper one  

James:  
Yeah yeah  

Russell:  
Were you  would you have preferred an upper locker or a lower  

James:  
I think I can remember the number actually (he laughs)  

Russell:  
You don’t need to give it to me at the moment but I’m just wondering if you could tell me would you (I.ii.34:00) have preferred an upper locker  

James:  
Yes  

Russell:  
Why  

James:  
Because a lower locker would mean having to bend down (he laughs) to crouch to be uncomfortable  an upper level you just have to stand  

Russell:  
Okay all right  now the other thing is when um  

James:  
I don’t think I’ve ever  

Russell:  
(continuing over James’ speech) But there’s a bench to sit on there in that area isn’t there  

James:  
Yeah  

Russell:  
All right  um  

James:  
I.ii.34:30  
But still putting stuff in the locker is  is  

Russell:  
Oh okay  

James:  
And I don’t think I’ve ever had a lower locker there  

Russell:  

Yeah okay

James:

I think they generally try to keep it to the upper levels

Russell:

Okay was there somebody else in the lockers when you arrived

James:

Yes in fact there was a guy in front of me or it no I came in first but then his locker was in the corner near me I had to move so he could get past and then someone else who was in the sauna already went to their locker to get something out of it and it was right next to mine

Russell:

Right so you were kind of in the sandwich

James:

In the middle yeah

Russell:

Yeah okay you suddenly don’t look pleased

James:

No (I laugh a little) I do that whole thing about you know out of all the lockers someone has just come in behind me and they’ve been given a locker too close to me and then the timing of me opening my locker and then this other guy coming so there’s a sense of having to organise yourself around these other people

Russell:

So your awareness of the locker area is an area where it’s not happening yet it’s not supposed to happen yet

James:

No yes

Russell:

Is that clear

James:

That’s right yeah

Russell:

So the the physical intimacies that are more understandable later need to be avoided at this place now

James:

Yes

Russell:

Okay now when you left you said WE left

James:

Yeah we left at the same time

Russell:

Yeah

James:

But there’s a difference though there’s definitely a qualitative difference to when you’re leaving how you relate to people than how you arrive

Russell:

All right so when you left the Italian boy was

James:

Yeah he

Russell:

at his locker

James:

Yep he was leaving his locker he had a low number locker near the door and I was down the other side

Russell:

All right okay

James:

And we left at the same time
Yeah so how did you feel about the fact that his

**I.ii.36:00**

locker was distant from yours as you were getting dressed

**James:**

Oh it was fine but I was very conscious of the fact of that the etiquette once again of if you know was he going to go or was he just going to say goodbye because I had in my mind that I wanted to actually give him my number. I didn’t want his number but I wanted to give him my number um so I wasn’t sure how I was going to work that whether he was just going to say goodbye and then I was going to have to sort of like scurry or if I got dressed too quick then I would be hanging around so there was definitely a consciousness of that

**Russell:**

Right okay

**James:**

But we didn’t speak

**I.ii.36:30**

I don’t think during it

**Russell:**

But you spoke as you left

**James:**

Yeah yeah

**Russell:**

Before or after you were through the exit door

**James:**

After we left the exit er when we were on the street

**Russell:**

When you were on the street okay

**James:**

We said something at the lockers I think something was said you know just casually he was sitting down putting his shoes on I was standing up putting my towel in the towel-bin

**Russell:**

Had you showered at the same time

**James:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

Okay had you talked in the showers

**James:**

Little bit

**Russell:**

Yeah

**James:**

I basically complained about the showers *(we laugh)*

**Russell:**

**I.ii.37:00**

A theme um

**James:**

Yes

**Russell:**

Oh I’ve just got one last question do you um ever give people a name that isn’t your name if they ask it

**James:**

No

**Russell:**

And

**James:**

I’ve never done that

**Russell:**

Right okay have you ever withheld your name if they’ve asked for it

**James:**

No

**Russell:**
When they ask your name do you tell them just your first name or do you tell them your first name and your surname

James:
No

Russell:
If they ask for your surname do you tell them

James:
I would tell them but I wouldn't. I would qu

Russell:
But you can't recall

James:
No one's ever asked me but I would question them

Russell:
No one's ever asked you in twenty-two years

James:
My sec second oh yeah not not at that. I'm just thinking you know obviously later if you meet or if you swap numbers

Russell:
Oh yes

James:
That kind of thing but I'm talking about if you're in a cubicle with someone and they ask you your name no I can never remember someone asking my second name and if they did I would probably go why

Russell:
Yeah and

James:

Russell:

James:

Russell:

James:

Russell:

James:

Russell:

James:

Russell:

James:

Russell:

James:

Russell:

James:

Russell:

James:

Russell:

James:
James:
I can’t remember yeah

Russell:
Okay good did he ask you your age

James:
No

Russell:
But you asked him his

James:
Yes yes

that had to do with the fact of the kind of work he was doing because I was intrigued by the fact that he’d he had so much responsibility and he looked young

Russell:
Yeah and then finally you said you were thinking about giving him your phone number did you

James:
Yes

Russell:
Did you give him your number here or your mobile

James:
I gave him my home number

Russell:
But not your mobile

James:
No

Russell:
Right okay

James:
I thought about it later though and thought I should have given him

my mobile but I don’t assume he’ll ring

Russell:
Yeah yeah that’s all right is there anything else you want to say or ask

James:
No no

Russell:
Okay thanks

James:
Thank you (James laughs)

(I switch off the minidisc recorder)

END OF CONVERSATION
The transcript documents a conversation with Joe recorded at his flat on a sunny but chilly weekday afternoon. Joe had timed his annual leave so that it coincided with the Sydney Olympics, and when I arrived he was watching a direct broadcast on TV. He switched it off as soon as I walked in and made coffee while I set up the recorder. Outside in the street, the din of municipal vehicles, power tools, and squealing kids punctuated the patina of suburban calm. Inside, his gas heater switched itself on and off at irregular intervals.

Russell:
Okay um can you tell me about the first time that you became aware that such places as saunas existed

Joe:
That I became aware

Russell:
Yeah

Joe:
Ah it was actually a friend of mine um we must have been ah it was a guy that I had gone to primary school with and we’d been good friends stayed good friends during our teenage years and then in my early twenties he’d told me about it um it was kind of weird actually because he was this ah straight and actually still is but we used to

Russell:
fool around together a little bit um every so often when we were teenagers which sort of went into into our early twenties although we were both both had girlfriends and stuff and then one time um after we’d had sex he told me that such a place existed um and then we proceeded to attempt to try and go to one and weren’t allowed in so that was actually the first time that I was aware that they existed I had never it was actually quite a shock I’d never existed I’d never heard that such a place existed

Russell:
When he when you said

Joe:
Ah ah Volcano in the city

Russell:
Yeah

Joe:
Although I think simultaneously he told me that there was a place in the city Volcano that he’d been to but there was also a place in Suburb A

Russell:
Right and when um he told you what did he tell you this place was what was it for what what happened there do you remember

Joe:
Mm I remember that he told me he’d gone there with someone to get a blood test

Russell:
which was why he’d gone there and how he’d found about it out about it um

Russell:
Was this in the eighties

Joe:
Yeah and yeah it would have been eighty-four eighty-five or something um and what did he tell me about it he told me that it was a place look to be honest I can actually can’t remember his description

Russell:
That’s fine but it was Volcano specifically that he referred to you’re pretty sure

Joe:
Yeah um

Russell:
it was definitely Volcano I’m just trying to think whether it was I I actually think yes it was definitely Volcano

Russell:
Do you remember whether he was talking about it as being a kind of place or was it as
though this one place was the only one of its kind on the planet

Joe:

Mm no he told me that he I’m sure he mentioned it the same you know within the same conversation that there was one in Suburb A

Russell:

Right

Joe:

Um to be honest I can’t remember the conversation that quickly

Russell:

Yeah

Joe:

but I do remember the sequence of events because then what happened is we then tried to go to the one in Suburb A and Volcano

Russell:

Right

Joe:

And we only went to the one in Suburb A because it was closer to where I lived so

Russell:

Yeah so you went together

Joe:

Yes

Russell:

And you said you weren’t allowed in

Joe:

That’s right yeah um we went to where did we go first we went to the one in Suburb A and I don’t know whether we were just you know nervous and therefore seemed a bit suspicious and they actually wouldn’t let us in and they said it was members only and then

Russell:

we went to then we drove straight to Volcano and we went in and they were also um quite suspicious and saying we’re members only and we didn’t have cards and um I remember there was quite a to do at the front desk actually the guy was saying um oh how have you heard about this place and my friend was saying look I have been here before and the guy was saying oh look you know sorry for being um so suspicious or whatever but you know we have to be careful about who we let in

Russell:

I.i.04:00

because we’ve had a problem with the police and right at that moment two policemen came up the stairs behind us and we left pretty quickly and that was um yeah my first experience of trying to go to a sauna how I ever got the nerve to try and go to one after that I don’t know it was pretty extraordinary

Russell:

But you did

Joe:

But I did yes

Russell:

Yeah okay

Joe:

Because in so now I knew where they were

Russell:

Right

Joe:

um and yeah

Russell:

The police raided Volcano and the Suburb A sauna which had a different name then in nineteen eighty-five and um so that would seem to

Joe:

I would almost say that it was within weeks or days of that

Russell:

Yeah
Joe:

and um yeah

Russell:

Um okay so when you first went did you go alone or did you go with your friend

Joe:

No I went alone um it was a sort of strange thing I hadn’t actually really wanted I suppose I did want to go but I’d

sort of I don’t know it was a strange thing that we were going to go together anyway um but what I would do then is then um I had a girlfriend who lived in Suburb A and when I dropped her off I would drive past the sauna in Suburb A and just because I knew where the door was and been in um and I would drive past just to see if people were looking and stuff and sometimes I would stop my car just to watch um you know who was coming in and out and then eventually I imagined I was um I imagine I’d had a few drinks or something

but I eventually got the courage to go up to the guy who was there and he said look it’s actually um nearly empty we’re about to close and he said but if you just want to come in and have a look have you been here before I said no well if you just want to come in and have a look you’re more than welcome so I actually did that and that was the first experience yeah

Russell:

So your first experience was of really looking round the premises

Joe:

Mm mm and ah it was a strange thing I mean I went I was there and it was just me and him and I um

you know got dressed in a towel and went and had a spa and sauna and stuff and he you know pretty quickly came down in a towel and stuff too um and then I think we fooled around a bit and then we went and just had coffee and talked and I sort of told him my life story about how I had a girlfriend and I wasn’t out yet and all that and he was very very kind and and sort of you know listened for hours and then we had a bit of a roll around on the floor but nothing too much

um but yeah and then I went back a few weeks later

Russell:

That was about fifteen years ago

Joe:

Mm

Russell:

What’s you had a girlfriend at this time um what’s the relationship then time-wise between that period and say when you as far as you’re concerned you were out

Joe:

Oh okay um two years later

Russell:

Yeah

Joe:

Was there a difference or

no first of all would you say there was some relationship between going there and the process of coming out

Joe:

Um

Russell:

For you

Joe:

It was certainly a place to go an anonymous place to go before I was ready to come out um I don’t think it actually had that much to do with coming out cos my behaviour didn’t change too much after that in terms of I still
continued to go to those places um so yeah no I don’t

I.i.08:00
think there was a great necessarily I mean perhaps you know it’s I mean I must have you know been having sex with men more readily and then become more aware that my homosexuality was ah something permanent I mean that must have become solidified in my mind by virtue of the fact that I kept having sex with men at these places um but apart from

I.i.08:30
that no I wouldn’t say it was a great relationship you know

Russell:

After after you went the first time you said you went back a couple of weeks later in that two year period what um frequency would you say

Joe:

Yeah it’s hard to say I imagine possibly once possibly as readily as once a week but I’m sure there were other times where I would have gone

I.i.09:00
month once a month because I’m at the same time when I was going I was also having huge guilt about the fact that I was going um and would try and resist it it was something I tried not to do and um um but then would still continue to do so so

Russell:

So when you were on the premises did you experience um kind of anguish or guilt while you were there or would it be afterwards

Joe:

Oh

I.i.09:30
immediately afterwards almost almost to the second of the orgasm subsided um whilst I was there I would be quite excited and nervous but um yeah very excited and then well you know as soon as I’d had sex I’d be thinking oh my god what have I done and leave pretty quickly

Russell:

Yeah that was my next question (I laugh a little) how quickly would you leave afterwards um did you find

I.i.10:00
that you’d go there and just enjoy the facilities ever or did you always have sex

Joe:

No I would rarely and that that even continued on through later years I would rarely go and not have sex

Russell:

Yeah

Joe:

Um I’d obviously have to be sexually excited before I went there and um yeah I wouldn’t yeah I wouldn’t probably be bothered going

Russell:

Now you said that you continued to go ah after you’d come out

I.i.10:30
did the way you went change after you came out

Joe:

Um well I guess I was you know well I was not sort of sneaking there after leaving my girlfriend um and yeah I guess I would possibly go I mean by that time you know within a few lea years later Rear Entry had opened up which was around the corner from you know the gay pubs so that made a difference and that I would just have a drink

I.i.11:00
and just go um I was still pretty I remember at first even when I’d come out I was still very ah secretive about the fact that I was going if I was with people I would just say I’m going home and go to the sauna unless I knew they were very close friends who knew I went there anyway so there was a little bit of still I felt a little bit of stigma or I felt there would be I don’t know if there was about going to saunas even amongst gay men so I would keep that you know sort of fairly secret as well um but I was certainly going more regularly

I.i.11:30
and um and then I must admit even when my first couple of boyfriends and stuff I would still go behind their back (he laughs a little) so

Russell:

Right

Joe:
in that sense there was it was probably less less secrecy but there was still a certain amount at first

Russell:
The friend who had initially introduced you to the saunas although he hadn’t gone with you did you ever end up going along with him

Joe:
Mm we sort of strangely did actually sort of a few years later and by that time I was quite experienced at it um and he

i.i.12:00
wanted he wanted to go and kind of have sex sex with me and the irony was by that time I’d actually because he wouldn’t at first the only person I’d ever had sex with and by at that time I was probably not interested in having sex with him you know um so when we went it was this strangely awkward thing we go into a cubicle and ah he started something and this was a friend from childhood so it was quite an unusual experience to have with them when I sort of stopped and he sort of said oh well don’t you want to anymore

i.i.12:30
and I just had to say well no not really and I think I lied and said I had a headache (I laugh a little) or felt sick or something

Russell:
Yeah

Joe:
Um but then promptly sort of left him and I I imagined we had sex with someone else I know that’s what I certainly wanted to do whether I did or not I can’t remember

Russell:
Did you leave together

Joe:
Yeah

Russell:
You said the last three years you’ve been going a lot less frequently um

i.i.13:00
you don’t have any sense of how that’s come about

Joe:
Yeah I look I actually don’t know entirely why but I think there was a couple of strange things happened at the same time I was working at a pub um across the road from the sauna called Splash

Russell:
Oh yeah

Joe:
And there was a whole gay complex at that time

Russell:
Yep

Joe:
and um I was working at the pub and had even before then been frequenting that sauna because I thought it was fantastic and it was so

i.i.13:30
big and you know whatever close to home um it was convenient so my boyfriend at that time and I used to go there a lot and then we both ended up working at that pub and because we worked at the pub you know you’d get in for free afterwards and it was quite a

Russell:
Was this the Splash pub or the other pub

Joe:
The Splash pub right okay

Russell:
The Splash pub the Splash pub

Joe:
I was working at the Splash pub across the road from the sauna and I used to have to take meals across people would order meals from the sauna so I would take them across

Russell:
By phone
Joe:

Yes

Russell:

Right okay

Joe:

[unintelligible]

Russell:

But it was the same ownership wasn’t it

Joe:

Yeah yeah and um

so yeah so that was so I mean I was going to the sauna anyway but we would go across there and we would get in for free so we’d go in after work and quite often there’d be things at the nightclub underneath so we’d go to the sauna to get changed and you know use the solarium and all that sort of stuff it was like a bit of a hangout place for all the people that worked there anyway and it was such a fantastic sauna and so busy by those by that time I think it had been pretty quiet when it first opened but I think once everybody knew it was going to close and that took a few months it was just you know jumping

um so and then what happened is that sauna closed and that was the only one I was going to um and very few months later for the first time in my life I didn’t have a car anymore I had to get rid of my car and couldn’t afford to get a new one and those two things happened close together and I just seemed to stop going so um I think it was ah yeah more the difficulty of not having a car and but also missing that sauna because I think I did go to ah Rear Entry a couple of times afterwards

and that seemed just so small and dark and dingy after this one had closed ah

Russell:

Can I can I just ask a second um first of all about a car what how does having a car affect going to saunas

Joe:

Well I guess getting they’re easy to get there and get home really

Russell:

But the other saunas are all located the other three that have been mentioned are all located near public transport

Joe:

Um I probably wouldn’t be I mean okay I guess I’d have

I.i.15:30
to say that I would always have gone at night

Russell:

Oh yeah

Joe:

I had always gone late at night I probably wouldn’t wanting to be catching public transport at that time and I guess that ties in too particularly when I first started going and I had this guilt thing that I wanted to get away and get home quickly then um yeah I wouldn’t have felt comfortable catching public transport home

Russell:

All right so late at night is kind of

Joe:

Oh yeah

Russell:

That’s a really nice time for you to go

Joe:

Yeah

Russell:

And whatever the origins

I.i.16:00
of that that would still be the time that you would prefer

Joe:

Mm years later I did start going um I did go after the nightclubs occasionally if I’d gone out to a nightclub and you know it was like ten in the morning or something sometimes I would go to saunas afterwards so you know on Sunday morning or something like that
but that was very rare usually it was quite late at night

**Russell:**

Right and you never did something like a weekday afternoon or *(Joe indicates agreement)*

-li.16:30
	right like you’ve been on holidays you would not think of spending a daytime

**Joe:**

No

**Russell:**

Yeah okay

**Joe:**

No no

**Russell:**

So for you are they night places

**Joe:**

Yes

**Russell:**

Very much

**Joe:**

Yeah there’s something there was always something a bit depressing if I found myself I was still there and I could see the sun coming up through and whilst there’s no natural light there’s always a few cracks

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Joe:**

And when I was first going pretty heavily going I would frequently go there late at night and stay you know and quite often

-li.17:00

be there when the sun came up um but that was always really depressing if that did so they were very much night-time places

**Russell:**

So you I mean I remember at Splash um in the daytime that where they painted out the windows you could see what a sloppy paint job that was because the bits of natural light would come through

**Joe:**

That’s right yeah

**Russell:**

And of course at night it would look like matt black or something like that

**Joe:**

That’s right yeah

**Russell:**

Yeah so was it the actual presence of the light or the way in which it showed the place being a bit more shabby or

**Joe:**

Oh it was more the fact that it would let me know that I’d been there for you know six or eight hours and

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Joe:**

what a silly thing to be doing or what a silly waste of time or something like that

**Russell:**

Do you think it’s a silly thing to be doing being in the sauna for six or eight hours

**Joe:**

Um I think I did

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Joe:**

Yeah yes um I mean I got over that I actually got um to the point where I wouldn’t stay for that long you know um um so yeah got over that but yeah

-li.18:00

you know I certainly did at the time I certainly carried a lot of guilt to ‘em and you
know about going there for a long long time so

**Russell:**

It's kind of interesting because it it seems that now that one of the things from if what you've said is true that since Splash's closed it's something about not the possibility of having sex but

**Joe:**

what the actual décor or building is like that seems to be an important factor is that correct

**Russell:**

Well you said that after Splash closed you went to Rear Entry a couple of times but it was so small dark and dingy that it was disappointing to be there and so you didn't go so it would seem like suddenly but I mean Rear Entry's also a very busy sauna and presumably a lot of the men who went to Splash would be

**Joe:**

at Rear Entry

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Joe:**

Mm yeah that that I mean that's very definitely true I mean there were there were some convenience factors like you know Rear Entry's a bit further away I no longer had a car um I'd been getting in you know for free to this you know

**Russell:**

Yes yes

**Joe:**

to the nightclub near Splash too so to have to start paying again was a bit weird um but yeah very definitely the actual space and the and the place didn't seem quite as good

**Russell:**

I was talking with someone else um

**Joe:**

about Splash and we both got very melancholy about it (I laugh)

**Russell:**

Yeah it was tragic when it closed (I laugh)

**Joe:**

It really was amazing yes

**Russell:**

Um

**Joe:**

It really worked so it was interesting it's it's hard to explain what it is I mean it was big
but it just kind of worked or something I don’t know

Russell:

Well

I.i.20:30
I’m going to ask you though to do that I’d like you to tell me what it is and what when you say it worked let’s start with that when you say Splash worked what was the work it did

Joe:

Um there was always there was always a good crowd there there was always attractive men there there was always um you always had pretty good sex when you went there um it was always very exciting there was always

I.i.21:00
yeah there was always sort of a sexual energy there like you know sometimes you go to saunas and no one’s doing anything whereas that place always seemed to be jumping there always seemed a real sexual vibe there you know the showers were open so there was sort of you know this titillation of seeing these naked men the steam room was you know sort of always writhing it was just yeah it just sort of really happened um yeah it was always very exciting

I.i.21:30
and therefore a satisfying sexual experience when you did have one I think so yeah

Russell:

Can you um what was your favourite part of Splash like when you’d go there the place that you would frequent you’re the first person I should say who I’ve ever heard mention the solarium there

Joe:

Well I see once again I should I mean the solarium was only because once again I was working across the road so we would get to use it for free

Russell:

Free right but there

I.i.22:00
was an additional charge for it otherwise

Joe:

Yeah absolutely

Russell:

Yeah

Joe:

It probably would have been quite expensive I imagine

Russell:

Yeah

Joe:

Um I mean sort of generally the whole thing was kind of pretty well laid out I mean there’s um there’s got to be there’s always got to be in a sauna you know places to to wait and watch the sort of passing parade and stuff like that and if you don’t get those ones those sort of spots

I.i.22:30
where you can just sort of sit and relax you end up just walking around and around and around and getting very very tired so um you know it’s just kind of well thought out I mean I suppose the um the sauna was incredibly exciting you know um

Russell:

The dry sauna

Joe:

The wet sauna

Russell:

The wet sauna yeah

Joe:

Yeah just in terms of um you know it had seats around you’d see these shadows and there were some part parts that were quite dark but some were quite light so and um and the orgies and stuff that would go on there were just

I.i.23:00
fantastic so really really exciting so um

Russell:

(laughing a little) Yeah they were

Joe:

Yeah so I spent a lot of time there um but also the spa was good and
Russell:
When you say it was good what features of it did you find most attractive
Joe:
What the sauna or the spa
Russell:
So [sorry?] but oh when you say the spa was good what features of it did you find
Joe:
Um I suppose its location really that once again it was in the middle of everything and you could just relax
I.i.23:30
there and watch people go past um it was big so that you didn’t have to know sit on top of someone else you know if you didn’t want to (we laugh a little) ah ah yeah I guess yeah it was yeah it was sort of ah comfortable I suppose um it was easy to get in and out of that’s always an important thing you know because especially if you’ve gone there and you’ve had a few
I.i.24:00
drinks or you’re stoned or something like that you don’t like to be negotiating any tricky steps
Russell:
Yeah
Joe:
Um yeah that’s about it I think the maze there was pretty good as well in that it was always it was um you know light parts dark parts um parts where you could wait to be seen parts where you could hide if you needed to so
Russell:
You talked about um watching the passing parade um have you ever been part of the parade
Joe:
I.i.24:30
Um yes definitely yeah definitely
Russell:
Do you think of yourself as parading
Joe:
Um
Russell:
when you’ve passed the watchers or do you think of that when you’re a watcher
Joe:
Um I think of it if if there was someone there who was watching and I was attracted to them I would certainly parade um if there was someone I was not attracted to and they were
I.i.25:00
watching I wouldn’t bother making an effort
Russell:
Fine when you make that effort to parade what do you actually do
Joe:
Um (I laugh a little) gee isn’t it funny um rely on that stuff I learned at drama school years ago (I laugh) just in terms of you know um sort of head up shoulders back um yeah not stooping yeah all that sort of stuff
Russell:
I.i.25:30
What about your pa would you slow down speed up
Joe:
Ah no I don’t think I’d necessarily well you wouldn’t yeah if there was if you wanted someone to get a good look you’d probably slow down um
Russell:
Can you this might seem odd but can you actually remember a particular time of parading past someone who you were attracted to at a sauna
Joe:
I.i.26:00
Mm I just have to think for a minute okay
Russell:
Yeah
Joe:
(a) silence) No, look, I can’t actually remember one specific time. In fact, I mean it would have been you know, in a sense every single time I went to a sauna, there must have been one.

Russell:
Yeah.

Joe:

time that it happened.

Russell:
Right.

Joe:

They kind of blend in really (I laugh a little) it’s just actually part of the cool behaviour. It’s just what you’re doing there constantly without even thinking without even.

Russell:
You said you learnt what you did at drama school?

Joe:

But they kind of blend in.

Russell:
But they kind of blend in.

Joe:

They kind of blend in really (I laugh a little) it’s just actually part of the cool behaviour it’s just what you’re doing there constantly without even thinking without even.

Russell:
You said you learnt what you did at drama school?

Joe:

Yes.

Russell:
Right.

Joe:

Um do you think that was instinctive for instance you you um went out with girls for a while did you find that there’d be the kind of courtship rituals and behaviours that you deployed in attracting women’s attention that they were ones that transferred intact to a place like a sauna?

Russell:

When you’re involved when you’ve been involved in those nonverbal um courtings at a at a is that what you’d call them what would you call them that’s the term I’ve introduced to you what?

Joe:

I don’t know if I’ve ever named it really um what are you talking about specifically picking someone up at a sauna?

Russell:

Yeah.

Joe:

Oh I’d just call.

Russell:

Cruising (this is a question)

Joe:

Um yeah cruising even cruising’s a bit dated now isn’t it but yeah I guess that’s what it is.

Russell:

Yeah.

Joe:

Cruising.
Okay um when you’ve been involved in that have you ever actually wanted to talk yourself or do you feel like I’ve got to talk because that’s what people do here rather
\[L1.29:00\]
than well what do I want to do

Joe:

Um I have had times I think, probably in sort of melancholy moments where I’ve actually been feeling sort of lonely in a general sense in life where I’ve wished I could actually talk to someone and then when actually what happens what has happened sometimes um sometimes you’ll get you won’t speak to someone you’ll get with you’ll end up in a cubicle with them and then you’ve ended up talking afterwards and sort of having connecting in a nice way then
\[L1.29:30\]
but very rarely we’d talk beforehand when I was actually the first few years that I would go um because I was shyer I would sit just where they have coffee and stuff and people would come and talk to me so in those days yes but when it was when I was more confident I’d rarely say a word

Russell:

Um
\[L1.30:00\]
when was the last time you went to a sauna

Joe:

Um oh okay um [unintelligible] it would’ve been May so that’s what four months ago

Russell:

Right and where would that have been

Joe:

I actually went to Suburb A strangely

Russell:

Yep

Joe:

Yeah old Suburb A

Russell:

Why do you say strangely

Joe:

Um because I hadn’t been there for years and years and um I wouldn’t normally because it’s so small and kind of dingy and it doesn’t
\[L1.30:30\]
kind of work that I wouldn’t normally have gone there if I was going to go to a sauna I’d go somewhere where I had a better chance of ah picking up but ah it’s sort of close now it’s close to where I live now so um it’s more expedient

Russell:

Is it all dingy

Joe:

Um yeah pretty much and it doesn’t work it’s sort of badly laid out there’s nowhere to sort of wait and watch the passing parade you’re either um
\[L1.31:00\]
it’s all so compact it’s [unintelligible: you know?]

Russell:

And yet it’s been in business for a long time is it more that when you say it it’s badly laid out do you mean it’s badly laid out for you

Joe:

For me yeah yeah

Russell:

Yeah okay when you went there that night how long would you have stayed

Joe:

Yeah it was

Russell:

It was a night-time

Joe:

It was night-time yeah um
\[L1.31:30\]
interestingly I was hum I’d got there probably only stayed about an hour and a half and what happened was I really didn’t want to I’ve actually yeah another thing was with me not going to saunas I don’t like the cubicles any more I’d much prefer to have sex in bed with someone um so this time I went and you know I there was no one there I was attracted to I didn’t want to
you know have sex in one of the cubicles anyway and then a youn a guy arrived

\textit{I.I.32:00}

there and we ended up in a cubicle together and almost immediately I said do you want to come back to my place and he said yes so we left rather than actually have you know sex there [unintelligible]

\textbf{Russell:}

Right and he drove

\textbf{Joe:}

Yes

\textbf{Russell:}

Right did you ask him if he had a car first

\textbf{Joe:}

Um [unintelligible] think so

\textbf{Russell:}

So how did you

\textit{I.I.32:30}

how did you meet him how did you pick him up or did he pick you up

\textbf{Joe:}

I saw him come in and um

\textbf{Russell:}

From where

\textbf{Joe:}

From outside so I was already [unintelligible]

\textbf{Russell:}

Sorry where did you see him from

\textbf{Joe:}

Um when he came into the I was walking through the change rooms and I saw him getting changed

\textbf{Russell:}

Right okay yep

\textbf{Joe:}

Um and then

\textbf{Russell:}

Did you know someone had arrived

\textbf{Joe:}

Um I’m not sure in that in that particular situation

\textit{I.I.33:00}

but you can because you can hear the outside door beep so sometimes when it’s quite quiet and nothing’s happening and the beep the door goes people go to check (I laugh) to see who it is that’s come in yeah

\textbf{Russell:}

\textit{(still laughing a little)} Yeah

\textbf{Joe:}

It’s quite funny I don’t know if I did that in that situation but I certainly have in others um

\textbf{Russell:}

Yeah so you saw him changing

\textbf{Joe:}

Yeah and then um um I not actually sure how I picked him up exactly I’m I do have a vivid memory of of very obviously staring at him sort of letting him know that I was interested and it it happened

\textbf{Russell:}

While

\textit{I.I.33:30}

he was getting changed

\textbf{Joe:}

No whilst he was then walking through the dark area and I think I stood there and he walked past and um we exchanged eye contact and then um I’m just trying to think how we actually got into the cubicle I actually can’t remember that part so much um but I know it happened pretty quickly because you know we didn’t stay you know five ten minutes of him being there

\textbf{Russell:}

Hmm

\textit{I.I.34:00}

so then you got into the cubicle shut the door and did you immediately ask him
Joe:

So we started I think no no no we started I think we laid down for a little while and it was obviously quite um it was actually quite passionate and it was obviously going to be quite good so I said um you know I had this place do you want to go back to your place he said where do you live I told him where I lived

Russell:

I.i.34:30 um he said um yeah I probably said then do you have a car I mean I given that it wasn’t that far away I would have got a cab I think

Joe:

But um yeah so that worked out well

Russell:

I.i.35:00 Yeah what’s the what’s one of the most memorable experiences if I was to say is there an experience that happened at a sauna that you were a witness to and as a participant or as somebody who would appear to be detached either way you know but you were a witness like I was in a car accident once and I was hit by a car but I was a witness to being hit by a car

Joe:

Sure

Russell:

Okay so if I were to ask you for one of the most memorable experiences could you I.i.35:30 tell me

Joe:

Um I’ve been so many times (he laughs a little) you know there’s I could yeah um look probably there just one thing that’s jumped into my head and I don’t know it sort of has jumped in um at other times and that I’ve always found it a really exciting memory and probably used it to masturbate about um and I don’t even know why it’s so exciting but there was a guy that went to Rear Entry who I knew I.i.36:00

was a policeman and I don’t know how I found out um I know I had sex with him a couple of times over a period of months and then once I found out again I found that incredibly exciting that he was and um yeah there was there was an orgy I was with and I don’t I think I’d been there and it hadn’t been a particularly good night and then I saw him with someone else and they were trying to organise an orgy and I remember um I.i.36:30 going into this room um which was actually quite light and with him and the other guy and just I’ve got this mental picture of him sort of standing over me sort of coming towards me and um yeah you know having pretty extraordinary sex with the three of them and then um I didn’t know who the third guy was but I remember this guy drove me ho home that night

Russell:

The third guy or the policeman

Joe:

No the policeman

Russell:

Oh yeah

Joe:

Yeah he actually drove me back to my where I’d left my car and um yeah just that I.i.37:00 whole sexual experience and him being a policeman was pretty exciting

Russell:

Even though there was no sign of him being a policeman other than this information you had

Joe:

Yeah yeah that’s right

Russell:

You said there was this image of him walking towards you inside the cubicle

Joe:

Yeah you know what had happened is that I I.i.36:00 think we did actually start it we were sort of in a more public space the orgy had
Russell:
Right

Joe:
And then there was

Russell:
This is at Rear Entry

Joe:
At Rear Entry yeah upstairs

Russell:
Ah yes

Joe:
And then moved into a um

I.i.37:30
ah moved into a cubicle which had sort of a
a um sort of mat thing sort of in the middle
and me sort of lying there and um yeah
actually me finding it and going in lying down
and then him and the other guy I wasn’t
sure if they were going to come in and follow
me or not um and then they did and um
yeah

Russell:
So when you said it started in one of the
more public spaces what

I.i.38:00
what is that

Joe:
Um well there’s an area I mean there’s
upstairs there’s cubicles around sort of the
walls and then there’s you know sort of
corridors that run between them um and the
corridors aren’t particularly you know wide
so um and they have dark sort of dead ends
and stuff like that so quite often you can
start something in one of those dead ends
and then if it’s sort of going well um you can
move into a cubicle and that’s what had
happened

I.i.38:30
in this sort of stage and um ah and
although I think I’d been quite interested to
get him so I was quite brazen about you
know sort of starting something as he
moved past probably rubbing his chest or
something like that um maybe groping him
whatever and then something started there
and then I moved into the cubicle and sort of
lured him in

Russell:
How the thing I’m thinking of still

I.i.39:00
is that image of him walking towards you so
how much space are we talking about here

Joe:
Oh

Russell:
Because other people have described under
the term cubicles something which is big
enough that’s maybe only big enough to
have the mat that’s actually in there

Joe:
Sure sure um this was a sort of unusual set
up of a place they actually had the mat was
actually sort of raised

Russell:
Yeah

Joe:
It was more like um I don’t know I mean it
was like the size of a table off the floor

Russell:

I.i.39:30
Yeah

Joe:
um and the mat was actually centred cent
centre of the room

Russell:
Yeah

Joe:
Um and there was space to walk around the
entire size

Russell:
Around all four sides

Joe:
Around all four sides
Russell & Joe:
So it was
Joe:
actually quite unusual
Russell:
Right
Joe:
You don’t sort of see that very often
Russell:
When we and now we’ve been both talking about a mat what is this thing this mat what is it materially
Joe:
Oh it’s no it’s vinyl vinyl um sort of mattress but very thin like a gym mat or something
Russell:
Yeah and what colour would it be
Joe:
Um
usually they’re black um I’m just trying to think in this particular for some particular reason I’ve got in this particular memory I can remember as being light brown and I remember it being quite light but yeah
Russell:
No that’s all right I mean that’s fine it’s what it’s what you know now
Joe:
Sure
Russell:
It’s what you know now that’s important so you don’t have to make anything up
Joe:
Sure
Russell:
But also you don’t have to try and
Joe:
make it logical
Russell:
Yeah make it logical
Joe:
Great yeah
Russell:
That’s that’s not a problem um okay so and you said it was quite light do you mean the the lighting conditions in the room or the colour of the mat
Joe:
Ah both actually
Russell:
Yeah
Joe:
The colour of the mat was quite light and the lighting conditions of the room
Russell:
All right but you’d come from a darker area
Joe:
Yes that’s right
Russell:
which was one of these kind of cul de sacs
Joe:
That's right
Russell:
One of these dead ends which is like off the corridor
Joe:
That’s right

**Russell:**

All right, and was this room was this ah cubicle adjoining

**I.i.41:00**

that cul de sac or did you have to

**Joe:**

No you had to move out into the central

**Russell:**

corridor

**Joe:**

Yeah, central sort of area and then into it as well

**Russell:**

All right, so you’d initiated something in the cul de sac then you initiated a

**Joe:**

move

**Russell:**

A departure away from there, you went into this cubicle and you lay down

**Joe:**

Yep

**Russell:**

On the mat

**Joe:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

Right, without your towel

**Joe:**

Um

**I.i.41:30**

probably not, can’t actually remember but I doubt I would have done that

**Russell:**

That’s all right

**Joe:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

That’s fine, and you said your what hope or expectation was that they would follow and there were three other men

**Joe:**

Yes

**Russell:**

Yeah okay, and they all followed

**Joe:**

They all came in

**Russell:**

And then the door got shut

**Joe:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

**I.i.42:00**

Did the light level stay up or down

**Joe:**

It actually did strangely, I think that’s probably why it’s so memorable because normally um, the light would go off or be turned down or something and in that situation it wasn’t so it was actually very, very light and I guess it made sense you know consequently when we were [unintelligible]

**Russell:**

Do you, do you prefer the light being up or down or does that vary

**Joe:**

It actually varies, yeah

**Russell:**

Because you’ve talked

**I.i.42:30**

a lot about dinginess, you know um you talked the two things you didn’t like about
Rear Entry and about the Suburb A sauna were you used the term dingy and in both cases that was part of it not working so I'm just wondering about

Joe:

Um if it's too dark and you can't see what anybody else looks like or what anyone else's body's like or whatever um yeah it makes it difficult to make an informed choice so (I laugh a little) so that's that's probably you know that's probably what I meant when we were talking about dingy um yeah that's more the thing really so it's um sort of seeing what you're getting um but and also too I mean I and also too if they don't look like I mean these places are never spotless but if they don't look like they've been cleaned or that sort of stuff it can somehow affect you know your your feeling about being there and stuff like that

Russell:

How does it affect yours

Joe:

Um makes me feel uncomfortable you know um um yes not it's just not as relaxed not as comfortable you feel that um um yeah yeah less less relaxed and that you want to have sex um I mean I'm thinking of a specific thing when I went to this one in Sydney which is always after Mardi Gras or Sleazeball is always really really busy um

Russell:

Which one is

Joe:

Ah it's the new Sauna Y

Russell:

Ah yeah

Joe:

But there was Sauna Y had a big space and then I don't know why they lost the space and they moved to another building and it's absolutely tiny

Russell:

It's just off a well known street isn't it

Joe:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

I've not been to it

Joe:

And um originally where it was it was fine but they I think there was a lease on the building and they had to move it and it's now in this dingy sort of three storey place that is very dark and narrow it's got quite steep steps it's got sort of lino everywhere and of course once it gets wet it's like you know

Russell:

Yep

Joe:

um quite slippery and dangerous um the cubicles are really really small sort of quite claustrophobic to be in um and once again it's kind of quite dark and and cold too I think that's one thing there's a lot of saunas too um if they don't get the temperature right it can be really uncomfortable so um so yeah

Russell:

But you were going to tell me something about Sauna Y though

Joe:

What was I going to say oh just that one particular time yeah I went there and I can remember it was it was dark and busy and there was um just that the floor was really wet and it was dirty when it had obviously been you know so many people through there that day there was like towels all over the floor and all that sort of stuff and it just felt you know pretty tacky so um yeah

Russell:

So is is some sense of um visible cleanliness or hygiene or
Joe:
Yeah it

Russell:
Kind of important for you

Joe:
It probably helps I mean it wouldn’t I mean I mean the irony is of course you don’t know how many people have been there that day and you know I’ve probably had sex in cubicles that you know many men have been in before in the space of just you know the preceding hours but um um I don’t want it to look like it’s that

Russell:
(I laugh) Okay um have you been at have you been to the new sauna

Joe:
In the city

Russell:
Yeah

Joe:
It’s called Squirt no I haven’t

Russell:
Right um yeah I didn’t figure you would have been given your dates um

Joe:
People told me I mean I’ve asked a lot about it and people tell me that I would like it and everything

Russell:
What have people told you

Joe:
Um

Russell:
other than you would like it what have they told you

Joe:
Um oh look I can’t remember specific details just that I would like it it was very good it’s very crowded it’s full of spunks um you’re allowed to drink in there which is I’ve never you know never been able to do that or not in Australia anyway and um that’s probably about it I think it’s in the city it’s um near I’ll like sort of vaguely try and describe where it is but I can’t sort of get a clear picture of it and that’s about it really but being in the city and once again me only going at night and not having a car kind of makes it a bit tricky to go to so

Russell:
Is there anything else you know about it

Joe:

Russell:
You say people you’ve asked people or people have told you

Joe:
Oh both

Russell:
All right okay so how did that come up in conversation

Joe:
Ah that friends had been there um I’ll say to so and so what did you do and they’ll say I went to the nightclub and afterwards we went to the new sauna in the city and I say oh what’s it like and they go oh it’s good I’ll say [unintelligible]

Russell:
Are you are you now sorry I just need to clarify this are you now describing a specific

Joe & Russell:
Joe: Yeah yeah okay

Russell: Or is this

Joe: It’s a bit of a generalised but it would

Russell: Yeah can can we get a specific one for a moment as much as you can part of what I’m interested in

Joe: Yeah

Russell: is how saunas circulate before people visit them

Joe: Sure um well look it would have been pretty much like I was saying I think um ah um I.i.48:30 you know I’m just now thinking of my best friend actually said yeah that he’d been to a nightclub he went to the new sauna afterwards I said what it’s what’s it like um he told me what it was called he said it was good it was full of spunks and the best thing is you’re allowed to have a drink there which we’ve said for years wouldn’t it be great if you could do that

Russell: I.i.49:30 funny um there’s someone I know always says to me see anyone we know (I laugh a little) you know like that’s the question the only question he’ll he might say did you have a good time or the other one is to say did you see anyone we know

Joe: Mm yeah that’s what I was always asked too did you have a good time or did you see anyone we know

Russell: What do you think that’s about

Joe: I.i.50:00 Um I don’t know if it’s a specific sauna question I would ask that if my friend said he went to a pub

Russell: Ah right okay

Joe: And I’d say did you have a good time did you see anyone we know

Russell: Would you ask it if he went to the supermarket

Joe: No
Russell:
No so it’s a kind of soc a particular

Joe:
It’s a social

Russell:
It’s a particular socialising place

Joe:
I mean I guess when I think about it more am I am I wondering am I

I.i.50:30
trying to find out who is going to saunas oh no not especially

Russell:

Joe:
No

Russell:
No more just (a silence) I guess maybe there is a slight difference between asking when he’s been to a sauna as opposed to when he’s been to a pub and that um it’s maybe good to know who does go to get an idea to their attitude to casual sex I’m sort of making this up as I speak
I.i.51:00
but I wonder if that’s something to do

Russell:
Yeah again you don’t need to you don’t need to try to give me a reason why

Joe:
Yeah

Russell:
It’s more what if I say like what’s that about it’s a slightly different question from asking you well why

Joe:
Mm don’t know now I think about it yeah I don’t know am I just asking look honestly I mean I’m

Russell:
But it does feel a little different from

I.i.51:30
asking about did you who did you see at the pub

Joe:
Yeah it does feel a bit different

Russell:
Right

Joe:
because it’s a dem it gives me a very different different information

Russell:
Right okay

Joe:
But um yeah but generally speaking it’s asked in the same spirit as if I’d asked [unintelligible] yeah

Russell:
Um you said that there’s been some talk for some time about um not being able to drink at saunas um what’s imp what’s important about that for you

Joe:

I.i.52:00
Oh look it was just a funny thing I mean we um ah I had ah my best friend and I had spent so much time at saunas we sort of had a bit of a joke as if we were sort of sauna experts and um what would make them better and I don’t think we’d you know we’d ever we’d ever really we just thought that would be really glamorous you know um

Russell:
to drink (I laugh a little) at a sauna yeah

Joe:

I.i.52:30
To drink yeah at a sauna we’d just think that would be glamorous we thought it would be you know something like in New York or something like that (I laugh a little) I don’t know so that was kind of the joke um

I.i.52:30
um and then I did go to one in Bangkok where you can drink and that was um I just could not wait to tell him you know there
was this you know um waiter service and stuff like that

Russell:
Waiter service

Joe:
Waiter service

Russell:
Now that's impressive

Joe:
That was extraordinary so

Russell:
I went to one in Amsterdam that had not only a bar but a restaurant

Joe:
This had a restaurant too actually yeah I think we were there a bit late but yeah pretty amazing

Russell:
All the signage and all the announcements were in English

I.i.53:00
which I thought was kind of strange anyway but all the Dutch seemed to be bilingual or trilingual so the alcohol though would you take that as far as like being in a cubicle drinking in

Joe:
No I don't think I actually ever would I mean um

Russell:
So what

Joe:
there's nothing worse than being in a sauna drunk there's

I.i.53:30
nothing more unattractive um so no I wouldn't have done that um I'd probably I mean he he I quite enjoy the sort of social thing possibly but no I wouldn't

Russell:
Volcano has a bar now

Joe:
Really

Russell:
Mm yeah it's kind of in a different part of the building though um and it's not open all the time I think they set it up as a club separately for

I.i.54:00
a while and it wasn’t working

Joe:
Next door

Russell:
Yeah

Joe:
Yeah I look I have heard about this bit too yeah

Russell:
But but now it's open at various times of the night and you have to kind of yeah you go next door it feels like you're going underground but you're actually going at ground floor street level and um you go in there and there's a clear sign saying you can't take alcohol back at beyond this point but it's a really large open bar lounge area and they've

I.i.54:30
got entertainment

Joe:
Isn't that funny yeah

Russell:
(very softly) That kind of stuff

Joe:
Yeah but for me you know whilst it was a joke that we thought how fantastic it would be um I'd pretty much go to saunas for sex and not to socialise much and if I see people I know um I know my best friend will actually sit down and have a coffee with them as if they met in the street whereas I would just say hi and move on I wouldn't you know I wouldn't um

I.i.55:00
bother you know having a conversation

Russell:

(I laugh a little) A week ago I would have said I agree but not this week (we laugh a little) um (a silence)
.i.55:30
is is there part of a sauna that you avoid is there a um a room or part of the sauna that you've consistently avoided or not been attracted to

Joe:

(a silence) Um sometimes they have I was going to say something else um no in a word I mean I probably wouldn't go into
.i.56:00
the spa I used to go to the s in the spa a lot I don't bother anymore because you just sort of get wet really and you know um um

Russell:

And that's anywhere

Joe:

Sorry

Russell:

Anywhere

Joe:

Yeah I used to more and sometimes I I still would've I mean this is when I still went but no I mean more and more to when I was going to saunas at the end I wouldn't go in the spa very much you know um but no pretty much anywhere else I would go
.i.57:00

yeah

Russell:

(a silence) You no longer feel the last few times you've been you've not felt guilty about going anymore that's long behind you (Joe nods) right
.i.57:30
um do you think there may be a connection do you think that's maybe why the saunas are getting further behind for you too

Joe:

Um

I.i.58:00
I don't know I don't know actually

Russell:

Great I don't know is a good answer

Joe:

Yeah no idea

Russell:

Okay

Joe:

Yeah it's amazing for me that saunas that had been such a big part my life for so long and I actually at one stage it felt problematic it felt like there's actually I thought my god there's something wrong with me I'm you know spending all this time at these places that I'd actually and then feel incredibly guilty about it afterwards what's wrong with you but then I'd keep going back um and um then even
.i.58:30
you know even when I had boyfriends in in a supposedly monogamous relationships I was still going and of course they'd invariably end because you know um I couldn't be trusted um so it did sort of feel problematic in that sense but then um when I was still going at the end I mean I would I would go pretty quickly I wouldn't spend all night there um
.i.59:00

yeah yeah as I said I mean I really think it was a combination of just a couple of things you know um and just time was so like you know the car Squirt closing and then not long after that sort of

Russell:

Splash's closing

Joe:

Yeah when that closed I mean that's all this is when I stopped and but at the same time it all coincided with my last long term relationship breaking up now that's I don't know whether that's
.i.59:30
got anything to do with it or not but um yeah don't even think about them anymore don't even doesn't even seem like yeah don't even remember to think about (he laughs a little) whether I'm going to go or not yeah
just don’t go and I actually think it’s got more to do with actually the sort of sex I enjoy more now um which is sex in a bed so

Russell:
If saunas had beds would that be sex in a bed

Joe:
Um it’s sex in my own bed

Russell:
Right

Joe:
Yeah

Russell:
Right so not just A bed

Joe:
No yeah my bed

Russell:
Home

Joe:
Home sex at home

Russell:
Someone else’s home or your home

Joe:
Yeah possibly someone else’s home but primarily my own

Yeah

Russell:
(softly) Yeah

Joe:
And I think that’s that’s feels like the strongest reason of why I don’t go anymore rather than anything to do with cars or particular saunas closing I think that’s actually it

Russell:
You talked about um a part of the sauna being like a a think either you said a public area or a semi-public area

I.i.61:00
um are there can you describe or name for me a private area at a sauna

Joe:
Well a cubicle with the door locked yeah

Russell:
Yeah and the cubicle is private for you

Joe:
Mm

Russell:
What about in if it if sound carries

Joe:
It still feels if I’m in there it still feels pretty private you always

Russell:
It feels

I.i.61:30
private

Joe:
Yeah you always hear things

Russell:
Yeah all right and what if there’s several people in there is it still private

Joe:
Yeah if the door’s locked it’s private

Russell:
Great now when you talked about an area being semi-public what do you mean

Joe:
Um

Russell:
What’s the difference can you tell me a little bit about the difference between a public
area or a semi-public area if you like you can just give me examples rather than

Joe:
Sure

Russell:
try to theorise it

Joe:

Um well a public area would be any area where anyone can sort of walk through as has access to um um you know a semi did I use the word semi-private did I

Russell:

Semi-public

Joe:

Semi-public did I

Russell:

I don’t know you might I have a memory of you doing it I mean I'll find out when I do the transcription I’ve been wrong horribly wrong in one um interview where I told someone no no no you didn’t I.i.62:30 say that you didn’t tell me that and then of course they had

Joe:

Had yeah

Russell:

So you know do you think of things being semi-public is it that you

Joe:

Yeah probably do actually I probably do have distinctions in that um you know there’s the general area of the corridors where you walk around where it ah um anyone can walk in and that through or whatever

Russell:

Right

Joe:

A private place is

Thoroughfares I guess places like the dry sauna the wet sauna um the cul de sacs I.i.63:00 which are dark at the end um are sort of semi-public in that they’re darker and you wouldn’t you’d have to pretty much make a definite decision to go there you wouldn’t just um have access to it on your way to somewhere else

Russell:

Right

Joe:

Okay

Russell:

Okay yep

Joe:

Um and then the private areas would be just the cubicles

Russell:

Are there any places at any saunas that you’ve been at that you have thought the place I.i.63:30 is intimate or the place could be made intimate you’ve made it intimate

Joe:

(a silence) Um no not really I don’t know it’s not really a word I would use in connection with saunas I don’t think I.i.64:00 private’s probably as far as I’d go

Russell:

Is intimate a word you’d use about your bed at your home

Joe:

Yes

Russell:

Right (a silence) can you tell me a bit about what the difference is between a private place and an intimate place

Joe:

A private place is
um somewhere that no one’s you know people don’t have access to an intimate place is I suppose I wouldn’t necessarily call a place intimate necessary except to say that it’s a place where acts of intimacy take place

Russell:

Right

and for you that couldn’t be at a sauna anymore

Joe:

Ah no not the place anyway sometimes the act is sometimes the actual sex there can and I don’t even know why sometimes sometimes it actually becomes intimate but that’s not to do with the place that’s to do with the person or the act or

Russell:

Does the place seem to change if what happens with another person becomes intimate

Joe:

No

Russell:

Does it seem to change in the sense of even it becomes more the inappropriate place

Joe:

No I’ve been sort of been to too many and had all sorts of experience and kind of know that anything’s possible really um the only tricky bit about when something intimate happens when you make a connection with someone

I.i.66:00

um I’d always be disinclined to sort of date anyone that I’d met at a sauna so then it becomes a bit fuzzy but I just you know tend to try and enjoy the experience for what it was and then move on

Russell:

Do you have a funny sauna story to tell me

Joe:

(a silence) Ah god I must um

Russell:

(I laugh a little) I’m not asking you to be humorous

Joe:

No look probably probably the the sauna in Bangkok there was something um funny about my boyfriend and I trying to find this sauna in Bangkok which we’d heard a lot about and working out approximately where it would be and you know Bangkok’s a pretty you know tricky place to negotiate at the best of times

I.i.67:00

but then managing to find um this hotel that we knew it was ah near and ended up going and asking at a Seven Eleven (I laugh a little) you know where it would be and some tourist telling us where it was and getting there and ah it was just and then once we were there it was just so plush and opulent and there was like this sort of dining room and waiter service and they’ve got this balcony outside and you sort of sit there in a towel it was just seemed um like something out of a movie it was just so fantastic that it was (we laugh a little) and

I.i.67:30

ah and my ex um had red hair too we were the only two ah white people there it was just full of Asian boys and of course you know red hair it was just like a feeding frenzy (I laugh) the things they were saying to him and as he was moving through were just hysterical it was just so funny and um

Russell:

Like what

Joe:

Oh hey red boy and yeah

Russell:

Oh yeah

Joe:

All that sort of stuff um then I I was virtually ignored you know but um

I.i.68:00

then the the finally funny part was I ended up getting off with this boy and of course he didn’t speak any English at all so not that you know I do a lot of talking when having sex in a sauna but um the total like even
afterwards you just kind of no thank you or I mean I could thank you but there was no sort of exchange of you know pleasantries um but the funny thing was is that um my ex picked up a guy and as my ex was having sex with him he became aware that um

  i.i.68:30
this guy had said something oh yeah or whatever in and and Alan said oh you know my ex has thought um oh this guy speaks English and he’s got like you know and ah um so when they finished the guy said to my ex um where are you from and he goes oh Australia and then he goes oh where you from and says oh Melbourne and Alan said to him oh where are you from and he said oh Fitzroy (I laugh a little) and it turned out that he was a Chinese guy that lived in Melbourne and he was just there on holidays as well so you know it was just sort of funny to go all that way you know so you’ll delete his out his name of course sorry

Russell:
Oh yes no that will all be changed

Joe:
Yeah absolutely

Russell:
That’s all right there’s no problem about that

Joe:
Cool

Russell:
There’s um many things will be changed

Joe:
Sure

Russell:
That’s fine

Joe:
But that was pretty funny and ah and it’s actually a kind of nice experience because now I think neither of us were particularly it just was a very exciting thing to do overseas just that and

  i.i.69:00
very funny the way it turned out really he ended up sleeping with someone from Fitzroy so

Russell:
You um only went the once

Joe:
Yeah we did

Russell:
Yeah it was just like something that was on your itinerary for Bangkok before you arrived or

Joe:
(he sighs) No because I only found about it that day actually I was drinking in the bar of the hotel and I met this um sixty year old Scottish guy who’d

  i.i.70:00
retired in Bangkok (I laugh) and he was going and he told me where it was

Russell:
Right

Joe:
Yeah isn’t that interesting but um we had a lot of fun at you know at saunas and we’d just go with my best friend and um and we used to go after big dance parties and big nights out and stuff like that and we’d almost sort of meet there as this and we’d sit around and

  i.i.70:30
you know talk about you know what had happened and all that sort of stuff and it was actually there was something nice about it you could have a shower you know after dancing in some warehouse for hours you know you’d feel pretty grimy and there was something sort of quite cleansing about you know going there and um if you were on drugs you know you wouldn’t be tired but you could (?) around in this comf comfortable atmosphere having coffee watching videos um

Russell:
The the group thing like the thing about arriving with a group of people or arriving even with one other person that’s

  i.i.71:00
been something that's been fairly consistent for you like the social aspect of it

Joe:

Yeah to a less

Russell:

I don't mean the socialising once you get there but the actual social event of going with other people

Joe:

Yeah I probably wouldn't go with other people I would tend to meet up with them there

Russell:

Right

Joe:

I don't think I could ever think of an example where I went with more than one person

Russell:

Yeah

Joe:

Maybe occasionally I went with a friend but um yeah

Russell:

But you'd meet up with them accidentally or you'd make a plan to

Joe:

Oh it just seemed to be a thing that people did in you know for a while there after dance parties and stuff so you could pretty much go there and always know there'd be someone you knew there

Russell:

Would that be specifically to do with Splash

Joe:

Ah actually for some reason I'm actually thinking more Rear Entry as I'm speaking

Russell:

Right yep no that's fine

Joe:

Um slightly earlier time-frame

Russell:

Yeah

Joe:

But Splash was certainly very social too because um you know all the staff and we sort of socialised together at that time as hospitality people tend to so

Russell:

The thing about that is over the fifteen years would you say that one thing you could say is that saunas have periods of change I don't mean just the physical but does what they are socially

Joe:

Sure

Russell:

alters over time

Joe:

And you sort of see it too I remember when um when Rear Entry was like THE sauna for years um and then when ah Splash was very popular um Rear Entry sort of dropped off so you sort of see their popularity wax and wane as well um yeah I mean particularly you know Splash had a quite specific vibe too in that um particularly because it was above a nightclub sort of as well so it was a place that you know lots of people went sort of afterwards or you know I even heard of people going to it and then going back to the nightclub

Russell:

Were you at the um the big closing party

Joe:

Mm mm
Russell:
Do you remember how they had the music from the club playing through the sauna as the club was having its kind of final party?

Joe:
so was the sauna

Russell:
that was the sound though that we were listening to so you'd have things like DJ's making announcements to friends in the crowd but that wasn't to us who were there

Joe:
No it was pretty amazing

Russell:
It was amazing

Joe:

I.i.73:30
It was actually an amazing weekend because I was working there I worked Friday night went to a nightclub went back to work went to a nightclub I mean I hardly slept you know and then I think had was involved in demolishing the nightclub the next day and actually was then went up to the sauna as it was being packed up and was sitting there in broad daylight and it was quite bizarre you know watching fittings being ripped out and all that sort of stuff

Russell:

I.i.74:00
It was very sad some of those fittings are at Squirt

Joe:
Oh are they right

Russell:
Yeah I've recognised one or two minor ones there um

Joe:
(softly) But it was funny

Russell:
And one staff member um I don't really think I have very much more to ask you is there anything

I.i.74:30
you were told I was doing this research what made you pick up the phone

Joe:
Um my friend said you were doing this research on saunas and I said look if it's on saunas he needs to speak to the expert (I laugh) and ah my friend said ah (putting on a voice) well I don't think so I think look you're an amateur by comparison so we had this quite

(The minidisc recorder switches itself off when the disc fills. Neither Joe nor I notice that this has happened for a minute or so. Once we've noticed it we agree to take a break.)

I.i.74:59
(During the break I ask Joe if there's anything he thinks I should've asked about. He tells me he's surprised I haven't asked him about the tricks he uses in saunas. The recorder is loaded with a fresh minidisc and switched back on.)

Russell:

I.i.00:00
Okay I think this is working

Joe:
So where where do you want to pick it up from

Russell:
I would like you to tell me your tricks

Joe:
Oh okay okay

Russell:
and techniques for picking people up

Joe:
Well one thing I used to do is I used to um one thing I actually always enjoyed actually is massage too so um I'd very calculatingly stand in the corridor

I.i.00:30
um and I’d always stand under a lit spot too

Russell:
A lit spot

Joe:
Yeah I’d stand in the light um

Russell:
Sorry under the light or where your face is lit or

Joe:
Where your face is lit

Russell:
Where your face is lit yep yep

Joe:
Yeah um and um rub my neck like this (he demonstrates) as if it was sore

Russell:
(I laugh) Right yeah okay

Joe:
And invariably you’d get someone over saying oh you know well can I give you a massage or whatever um cos

Russell:
sometimes that’s what [unintelligible] you know and got some great massages um um they’re you know they’re the eye games um they’re you know that you’re interested just by staring at them um but also getting away from people you’re not interested in because it’s a bit of an art in itself as well and you learned very quickly to develop these techniques of doing quick double backs in the maze

Russell:
Yes

Joe:
So if they’ve seen you go in somewhere you double

Russell:
For you the maze is a good place to lose people

Joe:
Yeah that’s probably what it is

Russell:
Rather than to find people yep

Joe:
Yeah it’s actually yeah I find it mm there’s there’s better places to pick up the video lounges and stuff like that

Russell:
Okay I’ll just ask one more about the maze what about um while we’re on technical matters what about the shortcut to

Russell:
you’ve just passed someone and rather than being seen to do a U turn you do the shortcut

Joe:
That’s right

Russell:
and intercept them

Joe:
That’s right

Russell:
unexpectedly early as well

Joe:
That’s right yeah absolutely yeah

Russell:
Okay right okay

Joe:
Um yeah I can actually [unintelligible]

Russell:
They’re not really mazes are they
Joe:
No and I remember getting quite excited by um the ma the actual maze part when I first went to them they there was I think the child in me sort of really enjoyed um the getting lost thing and we were always very excited my friends and I would ring each other on the phone if they’d changed the maze at Rear Entry.

Russell:
Oh please please

Joe:
because that’s that’s always you know because that’s always it’s always a bit exciting when they do that but it’s it can be a bit problematic because then you know you lose your shortcuts and your escape routes.

Russell:
Now just a what you told me was your friends would always ring you or each other up if they changed it now the hard question now is how often do you think that’s happened.

Joe:
Um

Russell:
that.

Joe:
How often do you think my friends have rung me.

Russell:
Yeah

Joe:
Oh look I mean I don’t know if that would be the point of the call but it would certainly be mentioned oh I went to Rear Entry last night oh they’ve changed the maze and we’d say and we’d make a big thing of it oh thank god because I was so sick of that you know da da da

Russell:
Right okay yep yep no that’s great.

Joe:
Whatever I mean we it’s a we get a lot of humour out of it I mean um with my friends we had a thing about um that you should be given awards you know at the you should have little rosettes that you could wear on your towel so we always said that I had the because the other thing about the policeman which I didn’t say is the policeman said to me that I was the best kisser at Rear Entry (I laugh a little) so we always said that I had a rosette I had a Victoria Police award for kissing at Rear Entry (I laugh) um once um my friend who’s always a lot more social than me as I said always does a lot more chatting played canasta at the sauna once so he said he had the rosette you know canasta champ.

Russell:
Right

Joe:
Um there was another rosette which we used to pass around for [unintelligible]

Russell:
I assume he took his own pack.

Joe:
I don’t think they had cards there.

Russell:
Right.

Joe:
Yeah I don’t know um we always there was there was a sort of wandering rosette for orgy starter who was the best at starting the orgies.

Russell:
Yes.

Joe:
and all that sort of stuff so um

Russell:
Let's go back to techniques you um you talked about the maze then you talked about the video you mentioned the video lounge

Joe:
Video lounge yeah that video lounge is I've found it's more become a more recent thing they had some video lounges which is sort of um

Russell:
Yeah it's [unintelligible] some things seem to go on there quite a bit and

Joe:
I suppose I'm talking about upstairs at Rear Entry

Russell:
Oh yes

Joe:
Cos pornos actually are sort of a more recent development at saunas I think I'm right in saying

Russell:
Right okay

Joe:
And um quite often there you get sort of quite good orgies starting there as well so that's quite enjoyable

Russell:
Are you describing what you do

Joe:
But where does now you're describing that as a place where that happens but what's the technique

Joe:
Um

Russell:
What skills do you draw on what tricks

Joe:
I'd probably there's quite there's places where you can go where you can where you're semi-private you're out of sort of like you can walk in and then there's like a little seat which is um not ah which other people sort of can't see but it's like a beat scene and people will sit there um you might

Russell:
Which which sauna are we talking about

Joe:
I suppose I'm talking about upstairs at Rear Entry

Russell:
Oh yes

Joe:
Um although there's one in Sydney I'm thinking of as well which has got a similar sort of set up where you can sit on the bench there beside someone I guess you'd ah first of all let them know that you were looking if you were interested um although if you weren't interested in particularly if you weren't sure if you were interested in them

Russell:
Sorry I need to interrupt again

Joe:
Sure

Russell:

Yes

**Russell:**

Yeah okay right

**Joe:**

Um so I would sit there I would let them know if I was interested

I.ii.06:00

um by looking and letting them see that I’ve looked um I may start sort of playing with myself and um or even take my towel off um um

**Russell:**

Would you play with yourself um with your if you had your towel on would you play with you you mean you sort of handle your own penis right basically

**Joe:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

All right so would you do that under the towel or would you do that

I.ii.06:30

through the towel

**Joe:**

Through the towel first

**Russell:**

Yes

**Joe:**

Yeah through the towel first and um and not very obviously at first too um you know just sort of very subtly and then possibly start playing with yourself but you’d sort of wait for them to respond in the same way so if say for example if I started playing with myself through the towel if they started doing it then I would you know start playing with myself under the towel if they’d start doing it and

**Russell:**

And how do you know that that’s that’s I’m I’m I recognise this but I want to know how YOU know

I.ii.07:00

that that means it’s on

**Joe:**

Um it’s [unintelligible] a mirroring kind of behaviour it’s like a game it’s like a yeah

**Russell:**

A mirror game of some sort

**Joe:**

Yeah yeah I mean you don’t generally speaking sit around and play with yourself so you’ve let them see that you’re doing it they start doing it you’ll do a little bit more

**Russell:**

Now when you say you start off subtly you start off subtly is do you mean imperceptibly or barely perceptible

**Joe:**

Barely perceptibly

I.ii.07:30

and then more obvious

**Russell:**

The leading question is it barely perceptible in order to find out how hard they’re trying to notice you like if they started

**Joe:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

responding and it’s barely perceptible then you know they’ve got their attention on you

**Joe:**

Yeah yeah

**Russell:**

even though they’re supposedly looking at the screen

**Joe:**

Yeah yeah absolutely

**Russell:**

Is that right okay
Joe:

Yes very definitely yeah

Russell:

Right good all right we’re talking business now

Joe:

Mm

Russell:

Okay

Joe:

Um I.ii.08:00

and then I probably too I probably too always try and make them make the first move so this sort of touching on a towel um under the towel whatever um I would probably hold off as long as I could um to make them do the first move and the reason I do that is it kind of gives you an out if you change your mind or something starts not to go well or whatever that I.ii.08:30

um um like it’s yeah so if they’ve made a first move then I still feel like I’ve got the right to stop it whereas if I’ve made the first move and then I sort of stopped I’d feel a bit mean-spirited or something

Russell:

What if you made the first move and it wasn’t reciprocated

Joe:

Oh then I’d just stop eventually

Russell:

Right rejection isn’t a big issue

Joe:

Um no I.ii.09:00

not really

Russell:

Right

Joe:

I’m only there for sex you know it’s like um I mean you know there’s some gorgeous guy and you know you make a move and he’s not interested and you think oh drat it but you know you move on um um although you have some nights where (he laughs) you can’t pull a trick you just feel like no matter what you’re doing (I laugh a little) you’re just like rejecting them and it’s like nights like that you think well what’s wrong have I two heads and then but then strangely and

Russell:

That could be an attraction (I laugh)

Joe:

Yeah yes it could be I.ii.09:30

and then there’s some nights where you just can’t seem to do a thing wrong you know it’s like you know it’s actually ridiculous you feel like you just you know just let me alone for a second so I can make a choice but yeah um and there’s also the thing too of other other techniques is when you’re walking though corridors or closed spaces you touch them um but acc you know as if it was accidental so you might just brush hips or shoulders or something like that um

Russell:

They have to be I.ii.10:00

very finely calculated don’t they

Joe:

Absolutely yeah

Russell:

Because if you’re moving you don’t want to knock them as such it has to be a touch doesn’t it um so there’s a great deal of focus goes into that for you at when you’re doing those kinds of movements like do you feel like they’re movements that you’ve refined and honed over time

Joe:

Mm mm yeah and just things yeah I mean um and there’s I.ii.10:30

I don’t know if you’ve ever seen the Seinfeld episode there’s good naked and there’s bad naked you know
Russell:
I haven’t but I’m aware of the concept

Joe:
Yeah and so you’d always be careful I mean just even things like I’m just thinking about how I would pick up my towel um when I came out of the spa or the sauna and how I would dry myself and all that sort of stuff and then even that there’s kind of a I’m probably aware of a particular way of doing it that I would believe I would look my most attractive as I was doing it um

Russell:
What’s that for you if that’s not (I laugh a little) too personal a question after all this

Joe:
I don’t know I think I have to understand

Russell:
What what is the way in which you would pick up a towel where you think you make yourself most attractive

Joe:
Um oh what sort of things am I thinking of I mean it would vary sort of depending on the actual space about how far the towels were

Russell:
Yes

Joe:
you know from from so how long you actually have to be naked in front of someone um I mean you wouldn’t bend over um you’d probably not what strangely even though people are in towels I don’t think the absolute nakedness is actually all that attractive and I think you’d you’d probably not want to um be naked sort of too long um

Russell:
Are you more attracted to men who are in towels rather than men who are out of towels

Joe:
Oh yeah definitely

Russell:
Yeah okay

Joe:
Um

Russell:
You don’t need to say why that’s more than enough

Joe:
Yeah and I actually think it’s actually a bit of a common thing I mean I think um

Russell:
So you imagine that that’s happening for other people so you try to prevent being seen out of a towel for very much time

Joe:
Too much yeah

Russell:
Okay

Joe:
Yeah um

Russell:
What about at the lockers then when you arrive when you’re leaving I guess it’s not so much an issue but when you arrive am I correct is it not so much an issue when you’re leaving

Joe:
It no it’s not such an yeah it’s not such an issue when you’re leaving but yeah you’d probably want to I mean I guess you’d be thinking about look to be graphic I guess you’d be thinking about what are people going to be thinking when they see your penis you know it’s the size thing so if you’ve just come in from outside and it’s cold um and your penis is sort of shrunk a bit you’re probably
going to try and hide that a bit from anyone that might be walking through the change rooms

Russell:
Because you think size is going to be a factor
Joe:
Yeah yeah and that would be a consideration too is if you’d come out of a steam room or a sauna and had been having some sort of sexual interaction and had an erection and there’d be times where you’d probably want people to see that but there’d be other times when you’d want to hide it so um

Russell:
What would be the difference between those two
Joe & Russell:
times
Joe:
Oh
Russell:
Can you give me two examples
Joe:
Sure if if there was someone you were attracted to who wasn’t in the
in the steam room and you’d been having sex with someone else you wouldn’t want them to see that you’d been having sex with someone else um

Russell:
Right
Joe:
Um
Russell:
Because
Joe:
Because they will think that you’ve already been with someone else and that may make you less attractive

Russell:
Yes
Joe:
You may look a bit you know trashy

Russell:
Yeah yeah
Joe:
or think you’re a slut or something like that (/laugh a little) and um um ah other times where is if you didn’t want if you yeah but then the reverse as if you’ve just been
sitting in this sauna and you know you um didn’t have an erection and you felt like your penis didn’t look as big as you wanted it to then you’d probably hide that you know once you were once you were getting your towel on so yeah

Russell:
Do you (a silence) do you think that a
lot of these skills and techniques or tricks you called them do you think um in your experience have you witnessed other people using these same techniques

Joe:
Mm oh yeah I mean you see people very definitely sort of show sort of showing off grandstanding sort of show-ponying um they might you know be incredibly masc do sort of like really overt masculine kind of gestures as they’re sort of drying themselves you know I think a lot of it is very much
presenting a sort of a masculine persona in that sort naked semi-naked state

Russell:
Do you offer a masculine persona in that state
Joe:
I’d always try to yeah
Russell:
What does that entail

Joe:
Um

Russell:
What is a masculine persona

Joe:
Shoulders  oh shoulders  probably shoulders back  probably presenting your chest  um probably ah ah having your arms sort of away from your sides

Russell:
Right

Joe:
I'm not explaining that very well

Russell:  
I.ii.15:30
No no that's no that's clear to me

Joe:
You know  you know what I mean yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Joe:
Um not walking too fast  not taking too small a steps  um yeah

Russell:
Before you went to saunas how consciously do you think that idea  
I.ii.16:00
of a masculine persona was a thing for you

Joe:
Oh

Russell:
Do you think you were already working with it

Joe:
Yeah huge  I mean I grew up with four brothers no sisters in pretty sort of rough upbringing so yeah that was probably something I was um believed to be important for a time anyway so

Russell:
If it's something you adopt what is happening the rest of the time  what's the persona that's

I.ii.16:30
there when you don't adopt or before you've adopted the masculine persona

Joe:
Just me

Russell:
(I laugh) That's wonderful  oh I'm so glad you said that  (Joe laughs a little)  all right so but when you say just you you don't think of just you as being a persona

Joe:
No

Russell:
Right so

Joe:
No it's the same

Russell:
No no that's

I.ii.17:00
that sorry  you were going to tell me something

Joe:
Ah but if the sense of um if the sense of when nine people are looking at you is when you adopt this persona  I mean I'm not  I'm not at the sauna the whole time posturing and posing and

Russell:
Yeah yeah

Joe:
putting on this persona but there are times if I'm aware that I'm going to be looked at where I will adopt it and put it on  so if I think
these people aren't looking or I don't care if people are looking then I won't probably try and do anything um

Russell:
And the image you have is of putting it on

Joe:
Oh

Russell:
That's the term you use is that the image

Joe:
Yeah putting it on I'd probably just be more aware it's a subtle thing I mean it's like it's not a total character or anything but it's just a maybe an awareness of how I would perform each particular gesture

Russell:
Do you if you see other people um adopting a masculine persona do you find them attractive

Joe:
Um if they do it well (I laugh a little) if I can tell they're just putting it on if it looks too whatever then it's ridiculous and rather funny

Russell:
Is it like watching bad acting

Joe:
It's like watching bad acting yeah

Russell:
Yeah okay and then it's not attractive any more

Joe:
Yeah if I can if I can see it's put on then ah

Russell:
What about people who adopt a persona but it's it's not masculine at a sauna do you find that attractive sometimes

Joe:
Um

Russell:
I.ii.18:30 what if they adopt a female persona

Joe:
That well that could be one yeah

Russell:
Mm I guess I mean I've never seen anyone adopt a female persona I suppose you know you get particularly camp guys and stuff like that and in that sense I wouldn't be attracted to them or whilst but whilst I would laugh and enjoy the fact that they're doing that um I guess if you see people that are incredibly incredibly nervous about being there incredibly uptight that's standing with their arms crossed that um are very sort of um pinched or you know uptight in their bodies then that I wouldn't see that as attractive um there's this (he demonstrates) I guess yeah there's a sort of a ah a sort of an at ease or a relaxed nature or something which is I find attractive whether it be put on or not I guess

Russell:
The policeman I.ii.19:30 was he a policeman or was he a person who adopted a policeman's persona

Joe:
Um

Russell:
Was he like pretending to be a policeman

Joe:
No no he wasn't well I knew he was before

Russell:
I I don't mean no

Joe:
Yeah

Russell:
I know he was professionally employed as a policeman.

Joe:

Yeah.

Russell:

I don’t doubt that, what I’m wondering though is was there a quality about which he had this kind of a persona a layer.

Joe:

Oh yeah absolutely so that’s probably why the story’s from memory. I mean ironically I had sex with him once and then I found out and it was actually very good and then I found out he was a policeman and THEN the second time which is what I’ve remembered today was when I knew he was a policeman and that’s very definitely he was the policeman coming towards me as I was lying down in front of him which was um so exciting.

Russell:

Were you adopting a persona as he was walking towards you were you offering him a persona a masculine persona or were you just you.

Joe:

I actually can’t remember.

Russell:

Fine fine.

Joe:

to be honest but I it wouldn’t surprise me if I was putting on a persona.

Russell:

All right and did you did you have sex with him just him or did you have sex with the policeman.

Joe:

Oh the policeman.

Russell:

Right.

Joe:

Yeah.

Russell:

Okay all right.

Joe:

Very definitely.

Russell:

And is that actually what you really enjoyed about it.

Joe:

Um yeah certainly a big part of it.

Russell:

Right.

Joe:

Um it was actually fantastic anyway.

Russell:

Yeah.

Joe:

But yeah.

Russell:

All right um voices people’s voices ah one of the things about not speaking is you don’t get to hear people’s voices especially given that often people will whisper what’s that moment like when you hear a person’s voice that first time is there any particular memories you have of that.

Joe:

No nothing particular the only memorable thing is if it’s an accent comes out and that’s surprising.

Russell:

Oh yeah yeah.
Joe:

That’s always interesting um and I will always I’ve always I’m always sort of interested in voices and accents so I will always ask where it’s from

Russell:

Yeah

Joe:

Um other than that I I try and resist talking too much at all you know um sometimes strangely I might be in a bit of a chatty mood and you know something um conversation may develop afterwards but rarely

Russell:

Yeah

Joe:

But yeah the accent thing would be interesting you know I would [unintelligible] you know but

Russell:

Let’s leave it there

Joe:

Sure

Russell:

Okay that’s great

Joe:

Cool

Russell:

Thanks

Joe:

Thank you

(I switch off the minidisc recorder)

END OF CONVERSATION
appendix 7: Willow I

The following transcript documents a conversation with Willow that took place in a suburban park on a weekday. Willow and I seated ourselves under a large tree and her dog set off for a romp. It's worth noting that at the time of the recording the park was well known not only for its daytime community of dog walkers but also for its nocturnal community of men. In the previous year it had also been the site of several violent assaults upon such men by gangs of armed youths. Willow was aware of these facts when she chose it for our meeting.

While we talked, a wind blew noisily through the tree tops. Most of the time Willow held the microphone in her hand.

Russell:

I.i.00:00
Okay um (removing the minidisc ear pieces) I'll take these off [unintelligible] you told me that you

I.i.00:30
got a a women's night at the old St Kilda Sea Baths

Willow:

Yes I did

Russell:

Okay so that was your first experience of some kind of erotic sauna environment

Willow:

Ah yeah it was it was my first time to a sauna full stop

Russell:

Oh yeah

Willow:

Yeah

Russell:

That when was that

Willow:

It was about I.i.01:00

fifteen years ago a long time

Russell:

And you were taken along to that

Willow:

Yeah a friend of mine was working at a university it's when I was studying and she asked if I wanted to come to the women's baths and I went along and I had no idea what to expect and I got the shock I.i.01:30 of my life (she laughs) when everyone started undressing and didn't put on any bathers and I'd just been shopping and I'd bought this fantastic pair of bathers and I had really really long hair and I bought a pair of platform shoes Charles Jourdan so I put on my toggies put on my shoes had my hair out and walked into these baths and it was just full of girls naked (we laugh a little) I.i.02:00 so I felt quite bizarre

Russell:

Did when you when you got changed your friend didn't get changed with you

Willow:

No she did yeah

Russell:

So did she have anything on

Willow:

No

Russell:

Did you think she might be in the majority or that you would be in the majority

Willow:

I didn't actually know that it would that people weren't wearing clothes like I assumed that I.i.02:30 I knew that there were baths but I assumed that people went into them dressed so I felt quite naive but it was good fun

Russell:

Did you take your Charles Jourdan platforms off
(she laughs, then) Once I got to the side of the pool I did

Russell:
What about your bathers

Willow:
I did later on

Russell:
Right

Willow:
because what ev because it was double layered so you could go up onto this balcony

1.03:00
look over St Kilda and the ba and the sea

Russell:
Oh yeah

Willow:
and then everyone would just run out and jump into the ocean and run back in so a whole gaggle of naked girls late at night

Russell:
would what race across the

Willow:
Yeah

Russell:
Oh so this was late at night

Willow:
Yeah

Russell:
What time

Willow:
Oh not that late no it was about it must have started about six or something

Russell:
Yeah

Willow:
It was on it might have been on a Sunday

Russell:
Yeah but but the these women how many women would have been there

Willow:
Maybe

1.03:30
about thirty

Russell:
All right and that they coll they would go in bunches and race from the sea baths across the beachfront into the water

Willow:
Yes

Russell:
and then back again naked

Willow:
Yes

Russell:
All right so there were thirty women in total in the whole building

Willow:
Yep

Russell:

1.04:00
and most of the people were in that one and then there was a smaller one which I think was a heated one

Russell:

Willow:
Yeah
Willow:

and um that was a bit more exclusive there weren’t so many like everyone kind of stuck together and hung out

Russell:

So how oft

Willow:

It was it was very different to say the baths in the city the the saunas like it was just a really different vibe and a really different atmosphere

Russell:

Sorry when

I.i.04:30
you say the baths in the city the saunas do you mean

Willow:

Like Volcano

Russell:

Oh right okay we’ll get onto that in a minute (we laugh a little) for sure but um the

Willow:

I think I was nineteen

Russell:

Right you were nineteen yeah

Willow:

when I went

Russell:

Did you buy your new bathers and the platforms especially for this event

Willow:

No I didn’t I didn’t but I’d been watching a lot of always grown up on old films like forties fifties sixties

Russell:

Yeah

Willow:

So 1.i.05:00

going off to a women’s event I kind of got glammed up so that was my version of glamming up and showing off

Russell:

All right now you arrived and then realised that were you the only person who had any kind of clothing on

Willow:

Yes (she laughs)

Russell:

You were the only one okay all right and you said that later you took it off how much later

Willow:

Oh quite a while

Russell:

I that doesn’t give me information

Willow:

Ah well I would have been there for about maybe three hours I would have done it after a couple of hours

Russell:

All right okay um

Willow:

I think it was when I was going from one bath to another

Russell:

So was there a had was this the first such event that had been had with this group of women or

Willow:

I don’t think so I don’t know I it was the first one that I mean I hadn’t started going to women’s events and my friend was working

1.i.06:00

at a university like for the SRC or something like that […] so she was hanging out with a
lot of girlies so she was a bit more informed than I was about going out to events

Russell:
I guess what I’m
interested in was did the women have a kind
of um a set of a set of behaviours or
expected behaviours like that they knew
they could in a bunch run out of the building
naked into the water and back to the
building naked and that that was okay to do
and that that was okay for them all to do with
each other was that a thing for instance you
had even imagined would be occurring
before you went that night

Willow:
Um (she sighs) yeah it was very open and
very relaxed and there was a real sense of
togetherness and informality so it was it
was groups of friends because it was you
know spread through groups of friends I
guess a little bit different
to say the later events which were
advertised

Russell:
Right

Willow:
No I went out and hung in the bath for a
while (she laughs)

Russell:
Right where they were

Willow:
Yep

Russell:
Okay so it

Willow:
So I wasn’t really playing by the rules

Russell:
Right so there was a sense of rules was
there

Willow:
There was when I walked in and um I was
completely ignored because I had my
toggies and my platforms on yeah

Russell:
Right and did you find that as time passed
you became aware of what the rules were

Willow:
Yeah and as I spent more time there I
became a bit more accepted

Russell:
because you were starting to follow the
rules or play by the rules or

Willow:
(a silence) I guess so

Russell:
For instance when you said you remember
how people left the others alone because
they were getting amorous that’s as distinct
from you remember that there were two
people who were getting amorous you

Willow:
I was really surprised that no one else was in the other bath and that there were a lot of women in one bath one girl in the water and one girl lying by the side and that was it and they were left there for you know no one ventured over everyone hung out together so there wasn't that much exploration.

Russell:

Um so when you went into that other bath where there were just these other two women

Willow:

they didn't mind at all

Russell:

They didn't mind at all but did you think you were doing something that was vaguely bending the rules or stretching them at that stage

Willow:

No I thought I'm here or were you just doing something you wanted to do

Russell:

Yeah I'm here to enjoy myself I haven't been to the baths fuck it so I guess I was I knew that no one else was in there so I thought it would be all right that it was public and I shouldn't be intimidated by it

Russell:

So this was organised through networks of groups of friends this event

Willow:

Yeah I've got no hope no idea who put it on but interestingly the girl who took me the time there must have been one before that because she took her mother along

Russell:

Right

Willow:

Mm

Russell:

Were there other people there who looked like they might be people's mothers

Willow:

No it was predominantly gay predominantly lesbian girls

Russell:

And she decided not to take her mother to this one

Willow:

(she laughs) No she took me

Russell:

You arrived with her did you leave with her

Willow:

I think I did I can't remember

Russell:

And you hadn't been to the Sea Baths at all prior to that

Willow:

No no and I've never been back that was my one time

Russell:

It's a bit hard now isn't it

Willow:

It is

Russell:

Well giv (I laugh) given that they don't um happen any more um okay so that was that we might kind of skim a bit of the history initially so then there was this other later event can you tell me what that was
Willow:

(she laughs a little, then) It was a... it was run by a group called Alice In Wonderland who would put on events specifically for women so it might be dancing night or a sauna night so they would take over Volcano for one night charge a fee to get in they’d show films um have masseuses there I don’t think there were any DJs though and it was advertised it was advertised in the gay press

Russell:

Did you so you went to one of these events or two or how many

Willow:

I went to a couple of them and one of which

I was involved in helping setting it up so I was involved in publicity and promotions and on the actual night

Russell:

Was that the first one or the second one you went to?

Willow:

Second one

Russell:

Was that as a result of being at the first one you felt it’d be good to be involved in the second one

Willow:

No one of the organisers I had met

had heard about my work ended up employing me for another organisation and on the side she was involved with Alice In Wonderland and that’s how I got to work on it working for her

Russell:

Right so

Willow:

Actually the first time I went to one of these later events I wore bathers then too (I laugh a little) and there was a photo of me in the
Yeah how many friends did you go with a carload

Willow:

I think it was definitely two maybe three

Russell:

friends

Willow:

Yes

Russell:

Right okay and you arrived together

Willow:

Yes

Russell:

Okay now do you recall seeing the advertising or do you recall hearing about it from them

Willow:

I heard about it from them

Russell:

Did they know you’d been to this other event at the St Kilda Baths

Willow:

No

Russell:

And the event at the St Kilda Baths is now one that you kind of link with these later events is that right

Willow:

Well I do because some of the girls at the St Kilda Baths were at the later event

Russell:

Right

Willow:

But um I hadn’t thought about it in a long time but it was actually thinking about the later events that I actually recalled the first event which I’d forgotten about

Russell:

Right okay now you arrived at Volcano

Willow:

how did you drive there did you go by public transport how

Willow:

No I would have driven

Russell:

You but you don’t recall

Willow:

Not in my car well I know that we all turned up together

Russell:

Right okay

Willow:

so it would have been by car

Russell:

All right okay and had you ever did you have an awareness at that stage that Volcano existed as a place for men or did you only find out about it through hearing about this event

Willow:

No

Russell:

no I’d known about it for quite a while before and I actually because of the stories I heard I thought it would be a lot bigger

Willow:

Oh yeah

Russell:

Because I heard about how it had all these rooms and um I’d been to a dinner party which was quite an event and each person was asked to dress differently and I was asked to dress in drag
and there were must have been about twelve people seated and it was the whole event was videoed and there were a couple of maids boys dressed in girls clothes and one of the boys everyone got so rotten one of the boys ended up at Volcano and the rumour was that he got lost in the labyrinth (I laugh a little) and woke up the next day so I had this perception of it being quite large and that there were a lot of rooms in there

Russell:

I.i.18:00
So the rumour was something that happened after the dinner event

Willow:

Yes

Russell:

Right so it was like in one of those um what happened afterwards

Willow:

Yes

Russell:

mopping up

Willow:

Yes

Russell:

exercises okay all right now so you had this sense of it being large and the term labyrinth

I.i.18:30
do you remember that specifically being used or

Willow:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah okay he got lost in the labyrinth

Willow:

Or they might have used maze

Russell:

Right right but okay

Willow:

Labyrinth

Russell:

Yeah

Willow:

is what I remember

Russell:

That's fine that's that's um what what I'm kind of interested in is what you feel confident that you know you don't have to justify things it's just the stuff you feel confident you know and and if you don't know something that's something you know you know [sic] that you don't know

I.i.19:00

Willow:

Right

Russell:

Or that you're not sure about that's all right ah so what was the kind of time gap between was that the first time you'd heard of Volcano at all that incident like when someone when you were told oh this boy got went to Volcano and then he got he lost he got lost there and woke up there the next day did you think ooh what's this place or had you already heard of it

Willow:

I'd heard about it but it was the first time I'd heard specifics

Russell:

Ah right

Willow:

So it was the first time I kind of had a a visualisation

Russell:

All right so that visualisation was of what

Willow:
I.i.20:00
(a silence, then she laughs a little) I guess it was images of like interiors from Tom of Finland or something um I imagined room after room so I imagined a whole gym facility (she sighs) a motorbike room you know sex dens labyrinth
I.i.20:30
so I imagined a sequence of rooms and I imagined it to be quite ornate and I knew that within the labyrinth there were little nooks and crannies and so I guess I was curious about that because I was quite curious with the notion of voyeurism but also the fact
I.i.21:00
that you might be wandering down a corridor and something unforeseen would happen so it really aroused my curiosity and that this boy could fall asleep get lost in the labyrinth and fall asleep in his his maid’s outfit

Russell:

(suddenly excited) Oh he this happened in his maid’s outfit

Willow:

Yeah

Russell:

Oh right (I laugh)

Willow:

Oh it yeah it just really got my imagination going

Russell:

That IS a good story (I laugh)

Willow:

It was a very um debauched dinner party I must say

Russell:

Of course um you were describing a series of architectural features I mean it’s interesting you say ah Tom of Finland because I actually don’t recall what the décor is like in the images the Tom of Finland images but do you have an awareness of that

Willow:

I think was To of

I.i.22:00
Tom of Finland is cartoon based cartoons have a sense of repetition and spatiality so my perception is of a repetition but different things within that repetition and I guess there are two men at a bar so the space is quite shallow but there are always figures within it and there’s
I.i.22:30
a fairly large object in it so I imagined um gym gear in a room or you know the motorbike in a room so I guess it was a the notion of repetition and a sense of space but a shallowness

Russell:

Yeah you also said you’d imagined um sex dens can you describe what a sex

I.i.23:00
den is as a as a place please

Willow:

That’s a very personal question

Russell:

Well I mean you listed it and and like you said you don’t have to answer it if you don’t want to but I’m curious as to what you’re imagining of a sex den is

Willow:

Sex den

Russell:

Like you you labelled it as though it were a kitchen or (Willow laughs) do you know what I mean like and I have an imagining of what a kitchen is but what’s a sex den

Willow:

I.i.23:30
(a silence) I guess in a labyrinth part of the the sex den would be alcoves so sex happening within alcoves like seated and not seated I guess a den which is something removed so not open to other people or that maybe people can come into but it’s still not within the main thoroughfare and that within
I.i.24:00
this space its primary function is sex be it one on one or be it multiple
Russell:
So you arrived with your friends at Volcano about what time of the day

Willow:
(a silence) Well it was an evening event I don’t really remember

Russell:
    I.i.24:30
But it was evening

Willow:
It was definitely evening it was a night-time event

Russell:
Yeah you went inside at what point did you start to realise that the place resembled or was different from your expectations
    I.i.25:00
and imaginings

Willow:
I was surprised how dowdy it was

Russell:
(I laugh a little) How how did that manifest itself that dowdiness

Willow:
Um it was smelly and all the fittings were quite tacky and what I thought would be expansive was
    I.i.25:30
quite small even like the bath the baths were quite small and the labyrinth wasn’t a labyrinth (we laugh a little) it was a series of walls um and just going in like I remember going up the stairs and the small booth at the top of the stairs that you go through so there’s a sense of
    I.i.26:00
the front being very blocked off and what’s on behind it you’ve got no idea so going through into this space and you know kakky brown carpet and you know very tiny bar old lockers so my perception was something that was I guess part shining and gleaming and it wasn’t
    I.i.26:30
it was actually like a you know a nightclub that has been around for a while and got dirty marks on the carpet and so it was actually a little bit saddening I found

Russell:
Very soon after you arrived you f it got saddened

Willow:
Yeah and also I think my expectation like
    I.i.27:00
I’ve always read a lot of erotica so I’d you know had an idea that there’d be sex dens that it would be quite elaborate and there’d be a lot of people there and there weren’t that many women there were quite a few but it wasn’t it wasn’t filled I mean I was qu

Russell:
How many women is quite a few thirty again or

Willow:
No there were more than that

Russell:
    I.i.27:30
(a silence) How did you rather than trying to calculate the number how did you what was an image you have a specific image which let you know there were quite a few women

Willow:
Oh the place was quite sparse I mean downstairs there were more women but upstairs it was incredibly sparse
    I.i.28:00
I think my what I’d imagined which is which was really quite important to me was like something out of Eyes Wide Shut in the in the scenes when they’re in that big mansion and they were lobby

Russell:
Oh yeah

Willow:
You know it’s filled with people and it’s quite outrageous and debauched I guess I kind of imagined it would be like that or parts of it would because it had been
    I.i.28:30
I knew that the men who go there do have sex and it’s quite open and I guess is a little more debauched so women are quite or the events that I were at were quite different

Russell:

Were you when you were there were you aware of the men who weren’t there

Willow:

Oh they were one of them there was a man in the office and it really pissed me off that he was there it really annoyed me so only that time was I conscious of it

Russell:

But when you looked at the lockers or at the the labyrinth that was what just a series of walls as you said um did you think of the men

Willow:

speaking of you speaking of these places to you or did you think try to imagine how the men inhabited these places and used them or

Willow:

No not at all

Russell:

Right okay

Willow:

There was very much a feminine vibe

Russell:

Oh yeah

Willow:

And very matter of fact as well

Russell:

Yeah

Willow:

I think once the girls stripped off it was very matter of fact

Russell:

So did they undress in that locker area

Willow:

Yeah

Russell:

Okay can you describe Volcano for me please what you know

Willow:

What I know of it or what I know of the layout

Russell:

Um we’re talking about describing the place um you know the materiality of the place you’ve already sketched in bits and pieces I’m wondering if you could now offer something that um is less disparate and more coherent

Willow:

(a silence) I remember once you go through the the opening upstairs on the left hand side’s a small bar and the lockers on the right and behind that are small rooms where they were doing the massage and there’s quite a large open space and on the right hand side further away was um projections on the wall films and there’s a downstairs I think but I don’t remember how to get there and I remember a large bath and a smaller sauna

Russell:

A dry sauna or a wet sauna

Willow:

Wet sauna and there was a dry sauna off it and then to the left were the showers then behind that was I think a padded room and then behind that was the labyrinth space

Russell:

And you said the labyrinth space was a series of walls

Willow:

Mm
partitions

Russell:

Partitions ah that were all interconnected or

Willow:

They were interconnected I’d imagined something a little bit more complex but it was actually quite simple and just very dimly lit

Russell:

Coloured light

Willow:

I think it was a it was really dim it might have been a red light

Russell:

Yeah

Willow:

I.i.32:30 And I I remember the padded room but I don’t remember what kind of lighting was in it and upstairs seemed a little bit too bright

Russell:

So there were only these two levels

Willow:

That’s all I remember

Russell:

Yeah

Willow:

I can’t remember the other rooms

Russell:

That’s all right okay and how many hours were you there that first night do you think

Willow:

I.i.33:00 I think on all the occasions I went I would have been there for about three hours

Russell:

And what did you do when you arrived can you give me a sense of your itinerary

Willow:

(she laughs) My itinerary

Russell:

Yeah

Willow:

First time I was there I was with a couple of friends I.i.33:30 so we went on a bit of an exploration and then went to the baths so it was important to have a look around and see what was there and to orient ourselves and to see what was true and what wasn’t (we laugh a little) from what we’d heard about

Russell:

I.i.34:00 Right

Willow:

And then we socialised and the second time I was there I sat at the bar for quite a while

Russell:

Can we focus on the first time

Willow:

Oh yeah

Russell:

at the moment okay so first of all you did an orientation with your friends

Willow:

Yeah

Russell:

and then you socialised

Willow:

Yeah

Russell:

Now I need to kind of really open that up a bit if I can
Willow: Okay

Russell: So the orientation with your friends what did that consist of

Willow: It consisted of getting undressed and walking around and opening every door that we could open

Russell: Right did you have um lockers near each other or

Willow: I don’t remember I mean there was a series of lockers I don’t even remember putting things away

Russell: That’s fine okay now but you do remember then that you set off um opening every door that you could open

Willow: Uh huh

Russell: Okay good so there were doors

Willow: Yuh

Russell: Can you give me some instance of one moment of opening a door where

Willow: I can but more in the second time that I was there

Russell: That’s all right then we’ll leave that for the second time

Willow: Yeah

Russell: Okay then so you did that for a while and did you get a did you get a sense that you’d opened every door you could’ve opened before you proceeded to socialise or did you orient yourselves so far and then decide to start socialising

Willow: I think we had a bit of a what we’d call a peer had a bit of a peer around and then because we were downstairs and we saw our friends you know jumped into the into the pool area and then you’d hang out for a while and then go off somewhere with other friends or

Russell: Are we now into the socialising

Willow: Yes

Russell: Okay so I need to know a bit more about what socialising consisted of

Willow: In the swimming pool or the big bath and um

Russell: Well can you tell me about the shifting from orientating to socialising how do you what’s the difference between them how did you know that you were you were now doing something else that was different

Willow: Because before we moved around and it it looked very much like we were on a mission whereas I think once we kind of oriented and seen enough we were at the point where we were in the big space downstairs where the pools and the saunas were
Russell: Right okay

Willow: So it's like well we might as well stay here now

Russell: Okay and did you split up from your friends at that point or did you socialise together

Willow: We socialised together

Russell: I i.37:30 Now what did you do when you say we socialised what did you do

Willow: We were in the big pool and we chatted to people and we played in the water and then might go off for a shower or might go off for a dry sauna or might jump in the hot sauna

Russell: Did I.i.38:30 so you got into the pool and chatted loudly or quietly

Willow: No you were quite close not whispering but you don’t I mean there’s very much a party feel

Russell: Oh yeah

Willow: So it was very social

Russell: Were lots of other women chatting

Willow: Yeah

Russell: Can you describe that pool area like the pool itself can we just can you try and describe that for me please

Willow: Well water’s

Russell: Your locker keys I.i.38:00

Willow: I don’t remember locker keys I don’t think we had keys

Russell: All right okay the um

Willow: I think we might have popped our towels somewhere

Russell: But people walked around naked basically

Willow: Yeah very matter of fact

Russell: Did I.i.38:30

Willow: But people walked around naked basically

Russell: Oh yeah

Willow: So it was very social

Russell: Were lots of other women chatting

Willow: Yeah

Russell: Can you describe that pool area like the pool itself can we just can you try and describe that for me please

Willow: Well water’s

Russell: If someone’s I.i.39:00

Willow: Never seen that pool

Russell: It’s square oblong rectangular and I can’t remember how deep it was it wasn’t shallow um and the water’s transparent and I think there were lights on the side of the pool like beneath I.i.39:30

Willow: The rim of it
Russell:
Oh yeah

Willow:
So there was quite a nice glow so it was a really nice atmosphere and then you’d just have to leap over one of the walls and you’d go into a smaller bubbling sauna

Russell:
Oh right

Willow:
So it was sunken so you didn’t have to go up into it

Russell:
Oh so when you say sunken it was below the floor level sunken below the floor level

Willow:
Mm

Russell:
Right okay yeah

Willow:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah okay

Willow:
Tootsie level yeah

Russell:
Did you find that you were looking at other women a lot

Willow:
Yeah *(she laughs)* yes yeah it was a big perve but it was really playful which was nice

Russell:
Oh yeah in when you say really *i.i.40:30* playful you say but it was really playful

Willow:
I guess it can be pervy and very sleazy

Russell:
Oh yeah

Willow:
But it was pervy and very playful and friendly

Russell:
Was there music playing

Willow:
I can’t remember

Russell:
Right okay but you can remember chatter

Willow:
Yeah

Russell:
Okay

Willow:
It was quite quiet but people were *i.i.41:00* like when you talk about chatting it wasn’t like in a café where there’s lots of chatting

Russell:
Yeah

Willow:
like a buzz but there was chatting and talking and a lot of intermingling so it was very social

Russell:
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Were was there a lot of touching

Willow: Not a lot no

Russell: Did you find that you were touching other people

Willow: No

Russell: No what about being touched

Willow: I mean in the pool area (a silence) which was quite social it was a lot more um (a silence) rather than petting happening it was friendly more like affection interactive but no pretty much it was to yourself unless people were going off into into the rooms or into the showers

Russell: Did did did you go off into a room at any stage

Willow: Not that time no

Russell: Right did you want to

Willow: No not really

Russell: Hmm um

Willow: But you have to be with someone that you want to do it with anyway

Russell: Fine had you gone along to the evening with erotic expectations or social expectations or both or neither (I laugh a little)

Willow: I I kind of expected friendly social interactions and I was curious to see you know from things that friends of mine had said if it would be erotic or what would or how that manifested like upstairs there was no sense of eroticism it was more like a nightclub whereas downstairs with the water and the heat and the showers you know it was a lot more provocative and intimate and it was more of an intimate feel

Russell: Were the showers a a kind of an intimate place

Willow: Very yeah

Russell: That’s interesting for me um can you tell me a bit more about that

Willow: Ah (she laughs) yeah that’s a there was a fair bit of um touching in the showers going on and the funniest sight was one girl spread-eagled (she laughs a little)

Russell: On the floor

Willow: No against a wall

Russell: Yeah

Willow: So it it was yeah

Russell:
Sorry she was just spread-eagled there by herself

**Willow:**

Yeah waiting *(she laughs)*

**Russell:**

Oh yeah did she have her back against the wall or her front

**Willow:**

She had her her front against the wall

**Russell:**

In the shower recess

**Willow:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

With the shower on

**Willow:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

Was the water hitting *(i.i.45:00)* her

**Willow:**

I can’t remember

**Russell:**

But the shower was on do you remember how many showers there are in the shower recess

**Willow:**

No

**Russell:**

Is there more than one

**Willow:**

I think so I don’t remember

**Russell:**

That’s all right

**Willow:**

I can’t

**Russell:**

Okay

**Willow:**

No there are but I can’t remember

**Russell:**

No problema um so she was there and that was funny what was funny about that *(i.i.45:30)*

did you laugh

**Willow:**

No I was a bit surprised

**Russell:**

You laughed you laughed today at remembering it

**Willow:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

What surprised you about it

**Willow:**

I thought it was wishful thinking

**Russell:**

*(I laugh)* Do you think it would have been wishful *(i.i.46:00)*

thinking for anyone or wishful thinking just for her

**Willow:**

Oh I think for anyone

**Russell:**

Yeah yeah

**Willow:**

Like here were my you know erotic expectations but actually seeing it was like
you know um an apple within a bunch of lemons

**Russell:**
I don’t know what you mean by that *(we laugh)*

**Willow:**
It was just a little bit different to everything else that was going on

**Russell:**
Right

**Willow:**
Like every when other stuff was happening it was you know in the labyrinth or in the padded room or it was a little bit more separate like I didn’t see

**Russell:**
But you did say that what was that there was activity in the showers intimacy in the showers and I assume that correct me if I’m wrong that that’s a reference to a kind of an erotic play

**Willow:**
Mm but it wasn’t hardcore

**Russell:**
Right whereas her spread-eagled against the wall was hardcore

**Willow:**
Yeah a little more yeah

**Russell:**
Yeah okay were there any pornographic um films being shown what hard were there hardcore erotica being shown

**Willow:**
Ah yeah there were upstairs but I don’t remember what

**Russell:**
Did they involve women

**Willow:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
Only

**Willow:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
The

**Willow:**
It there were a lot of um films of a woman from the fifties who was in a lot of pornographic images but I don’t remember her name

**Russell:**
All right

**Willow:**
Was it Betty Page I’ve got no idea

**Russell:**
Um I want to ask you a bit more about the showers and that is can you describe um one of the can you try and give me as much as possible um a description of one of these intimate playful erotic encounters in the showers

**Willow:**
Oh girls pashing

**Russell:**
Oh yeah but pashing and embracing or just pashing

**Willow:**
Yeah entwined

**Russell:**
Right under under running water
Willow:
Yeah it was very beautiful

Russell:
And if they were entwined like would their hands be moving or

Willow:
Some of the time

Russell:
All right okay all right

Willow:
Or they might be moving around like it was it wasn’t a stagnant thing

Russell:
I.i.49:00
it was a little bit like a dance because people were coming and going and you know might enter holding hands caressing coming together

Willow:
Um I.i.49:30
what’s the distinction between that and what you call hardcore

Russell:
I’d call hardcore’d be having sex

Willow:
Right fine the woman who was spread-eagled was her offer taken up by anyone

Russell:
I.i.50:00
Into the showers

Willow:
Yeah

Russell:
Right oh so you had a shower while she was there

Willow:
I think I went in and had a look

Russell:
Oh all right when you say you

Willow:
Check out the scene

Russell:
When you say you went in and had a look how was that sh what does that tell you now about what you know about the shower recess and how it’s work set up

Willow:
Um I remember a row of showers but that’s about it and I remember it off the I.i.50:30 baths but I can’t remember it to the left but I can’t really remember

Russell:
Do you remember looking at people in the showers from being in the pool

Willow:
I think there’s a part of the pool where you can see into the showers

Russell:
All right okay do you remember a view yourself into the showers from there or are you just logically constructing it

Willow:
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I think what I remember now is an amalgamation

Russell:
Yeah
Willow:
of showers (she laughs a little)  
I.i.51:00
so it I can’t quite remember

Russell:
The second time you went you were part of the organisers so did that mean that you arrived at the place before the other women did

Willow:
Yeah I was there before

Russell:
Did you arrive when there were lots of men there

Willow:
No there weren’t lots of men  
I.i.51:30
there there was just um girls and there were a couple of boys in the office but they left later

Russell:
And what did you do that second time what was your job in organising it

Willow:
Um  
I.i.52:00
(a silence) I wasn’t so much an organiser as a helper

Russell:
So how did you help

Willow:
Oh in a minimal way maybe by bringing stuff to Volcano  
I.i.52:30
and I think just faxing off press releases

Russell:
What stuff did you bring

Willow:
I can’t remember it would have just been stuff in the car I don’t know

Russell:
But it’s interesting I mean for me like what stuff did women want to bring there for the event was there any special décor or

Willow:
I.i.53:00
(a silence) There were T-shirts I might have brought the T-shirts I just know that whenever I was doing jobs on small events I was always carting things around

Russell:
When you went back there this second time  
I.i.53:30
did the place seem different

Willow:
I think because I went during the day it did seem a little bit more different it had a a lighter feel about it the first time I’d gone it was quite  
I.i.54:00
it had a heaviness about it and I think

Russell:
So you talk about lightness in terms of weight not in terms of illumination

Willow:
I think also because I knew the organisers I felt a lot more comfortable as well and I because I was involved in it  
I.i.54:30
I had a lot more idea of what was happening and what to expect in a sense

Russell:
So what happened the second time

Willow:
I sat at the bar for a while

Russell:
Was a woman working at the bar
Willow:
Yeah I can’t remember who though

Russell:

I.i.55:00
Were you wearing anything

Willow:
Yeah I was I think I got undressed afterward

Russell:
So you were in your street clothes

Willow:
Yeah because it would have been early on and then I went for a massage

Russell:
Oh yeah

Willow:
And I was in the pool area

Russell:
Where did you have the massage

Willow:
It was in a room behind the locker area I think

Russell:
Yep

Willow:
Yeah

Russell:

I.i.55:30
You’ve been somewhere I haven’t (I laugh a little)

Willow:
It doesn’t exist

Russell:
Ah no I think it does exist I’m convinced it exists

Willow:

I.i.55:40

But I just haven’t

Willow:
I’m pretty sure

Russell:
No I know there’s a mass I know there’s a massage room

Willow:
Oh okay

Russell:
at Volcano

Willow:
Yeah

Russell:
and that there are masseurs available for men um but I’ve never had one and never been in there so you’ve been to a part of the building that I haven’t is what I’m saying I’m not

I.i.56:00
correcting you I’m (I laugh a little) envying you slightly um I mean I guess I could if I wanted to but I guess I haven’t wanted to

Willow:
And

Russell:
So what was that room like the massage room

Willow:
It was small and warm

Russell:
Small as in what er there was a massage table

Willow:
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Yeah

Russell:
And
Willow:
And not much else

Russell:
Not much else but room on all four sides to
Willow:
Around the perimeter yeah

Russell:
Yeah what about the ceiling was it
Willow:
Don’t remember

Russell:
Right but was it well lit
Willow:
No it was quite low lighting

Russell:
Yeah
Willow:
And it must have been a bit smelly maybe you know oils burning

Russell:
You mentioned smelly before about arriving the first time what was the smell of
Willow:
Dampness

Russell:
I.i.56:30

(I laugh) And
Willow:
And smelly like sweaty

Russell:
Oh yeah
Willow:
Sweaty smelly

Russell:
Did it smell like men
Willow:
Well men are sweaty smelly so probably (she laughs)

Russell:
But you didn’t think of it smelling like men
Willow:
I didn’t walk in and go pwaah smells of men

Russell:
Right okay that’s fine
Willow:
But I do remember remember it being damp and quite I.i.57:30 heavy with smell

Russell:
So you had a massage what else after that at the bar did you talk to the person behind the bar
Willow:
A little bit but I can’t remember who it was

Russell:
Was it a woman
Willow:
Yeah it was a woman definitely a woman

Russell:
You mentioned the first I.i.58:00 time there’d been a man on the premises in the office
app\_

Willow: Yeah
Russell: Was there any man this time
Willow: Um in the office but I think that they went before it really started
Russell: So that was less irritating
Willow: Yeah
Russell: The bar the massage
Willow: I.i.58:30 The pools I think I had a bit of a look around again it was a little different for me that time because I was with a partner
Russell: Whereas the first time you’d been with just friends
Willow: Yeah so we did go into a room and have sex
Russell: Can you describe that room for me
Willow: It was a padded room and it had a door and I think it had mirrors
Russell: When you say it was a padded room and it had mirrors
Willow: The floor was padded I mean initially when I think of it I think of a room completely padded but then I think hang on a minute there must be mirrors in there as well
Russell: That’s okay you don’t need to sort that out for me now it’s more I.i.59:30 I mean it it’s interesting that it could be completely padded and mirrored (Willow laughs a little) that’s that’s fine that’s fine but unless it’s important to you to change that
Willow: No
Russell: What about the ceiling
Willow: I don’t remember the ceiling
Russell: Did it have one
Willow: Yeah it had one
Russell: So you were completely enclosed
Willow: Yes
Russell: Yeah was the
Willow: It was a very small room
Russell: Yeah was the door lockable
Willow: No it wasn’t I.i.60:00 so anyone like there was a door but it wasn’t lockable so we could close it but we couldn’t control it
Russell: Did when it closed did it kind of click shut or did it um did it have a door knob or was it just a push thing or did it just swing shut and dangle there on its hinges

Willow: I don't remember

Russell: Okay was it a sliding door

Willow: No it wasn’t

Russell: Now you say there was a padded floor what do you mean by a padded floor

Willow: Cushioned like a um kind of like quilting (she lets the microphone tilt out of range and I adjust it) oh

Russell: That’s all right (returning to the topic) yeah

Willow: Like quilting but maybe in a vinyl something like that it was quite cold to touch

Russell: What furniture was in the room

Willow: None I think it was all padded the floor it was quite a small room

Russell: How many steps could you take

Willow: If you were lying down you could probably it was a bit longer than a person but not much and you could probably fit four
Russell:
Did you have your towels with you

Willow:
I think so not not in that room maybe I don't maybe yeah I think we did (she laughs a little)

Russell:
Did you hang them up somewhere in the room

Willow:
No we just chucked them on the floor there was nowhere to hang things

Russell:
I.i.63:00
Um did anyone open the door while you were there

Willow:
No not that I was aware of

Russell:
Right did it feel like you were in did did it feel like you were alone with your partner

Willow:
Not really because it always felt like anyone could walk in so was there was a consciousness about other people being around definitely

Russell:
What about the building did you feel like all the women there were alone together and that not anyone could walk in from the street

Willow:
Yeah definitely
I.i.64:00
but women's events have that feel about it anyway like there's such a a strength of feeling with a large group of women coming together that it excludes everything that's outside of them becomes it is a reality and it's a really nice one it's very different

Russell:
From

Willow:
You don't have to worry about the outside world
I.i.64:30
coming into it

Russell:
Do you think of that say in a women's toilet

Willow:
Sorry

Russell:
Do you think that way when you're say in the women's toilets somewhere

Willow:
Actually yes yeah at work we had um boys and girls toilets and we've just changed it to staff toilets and other toilets for men and women combined and um yeah I find it really invasive now so it is not an escapism but a somewhere a little bit safe

Russell:
Is there something invasive about me asking questions about these places

Willow:
I.i.65:00
No not at all

Russell:
I wasn't asking the question seeking reassurance I was asking seeking information

Willow:
(she laughs a little, then) No I'm not doing it for reassurance

Russell:
Yeah

Willow:
Um it's hard answering
I.i.66:00
the questions because the women's events aren't that regular so I feel a bit funny with some of the answers thinking am I fibbing is that in my imagination have I you know twisted that that answer so it feels a little bit awkward in that circumstance but questions no I mean in fact you know I don't mind if you ask more

Russell:

The were there condoms on the premises when you were there

Willow:

Used

Russell:

No or well (we laugh a little) I was thinking when I asked the question of unused but I would have assumed there were no used ones but I'm you can correct me if

Willow:

I didn’t notice any

Russell:

Did you notice any condoms at all

Willow:

No

Russell:

What about lube dispensers

Willow:

Oh look no

Russell:

I didn’t I don’t didn’t really pay attention

Russell:

Right

Willow:

I mean I’m sure there were are but that doesn’t matter I mean often at the those kind of events not that I remember it being at at this event but some of the dance parties you know they offer safe sex packs anyway

Russell:

Oh yeah I’m just

Willow:

So that's

Russell:

I’m wondering though like what you recall about those kinds of facilities being there

Willow:

I don’t I don’t remember the toilets at all

Russell:

Do you remember any décor like any images in the building had like all the décor been taken down that was normally there

Willow:

I don’t actually remember any

Russell:

décor being up

Russell:

No posters photographs

Willow:

No I don’t remember it at all

Russell:

A notice-board with things on it

Willow:

No I don’t remember

Russell:

Right good um so it was more or less imageless

Willow:

Mm

Russell:

What about the actual materials out of which which the interiors of the building had been kind of lined with or made of

Willow:
think there was a lot of wood panelling

Russell:
Oh yeah

Willow:
And downstairs tiling I just remember upstairs was a lot more clubby in feel because it had the bar and the screen and music and maybe a disco light a disco ball

Russell:
Would there sorry

Willow:
But downstairs was a lot more kind of atmospheric

Russell:
Can you expand on atmospheric

Willow:
Oh just in terms of lighting and you know lots of because there was water and nudity

Russell:
So people upstairs would put their clothes on or towels on

Willow:
No oh they might have been sitting with their towels some of them I didn’t really stay upstairs the only time I was upstairs was at the beginning at the bar and then going into the massage room and the massage room I took a towel with me

Russell:
(a silence)

Willow:
These were the only two times you’ve been to Volcano

Russell:
Were there other events at other saunas that you’ve been to at other gay saunas

Willow:
No I actually haven’t heard of hadn’t heard of any other ones

Russell:
What um these events have been infrequent

Willow:
Mm too infrequent

Russell:
How do you account for that I mean you want them to happen more frequently

Willow:
Yeah I think they’d be great um I don’t think the turnout wasn’t huge so I think financially it’s quite hard to keep generating an event and also the saunas are gay saunas so financially you couldn’t it’d be hard to set one up because I don’t think you’d have the turnout mind you there’s the Coogee Women’s Baths so in Sydney which I haven’t been to

Russell:
What have you heard about them

Willow:
I’ve heard they’re really nice but I haven’t heard anything else I’ve been to the

Russell:
Are they an erotic venue or are they

Willow:
No no I think it’s like just a women’s bath

Russell:
A women’s place all right
Willow: so you get your old I think it’s more like the Turkish Baths overseas where you get

Russell: Yeah

Willow: your old ladies and young kids going along you know every girl in the vicinity and I think that’s a problem too with the the girls’ gay baths is that you know there is an expectation that they’re quite sexual

and because they’re kind of not nightclub oriented but have that association there’s a lot of people it excludes because people girls don’t like going out onto the scene they actually socialise quite differently

Russell: Can we um just stop for a moment while I change the tape

Willow: Hmm

Russell: Okay

Willow: There you go (she hands me the microphone as I switch off the minidisc recorder)

(We have a short break and a chat. A fresh minidisc is inserted and the recorder is switched back on.)

Russell: I.ii.00:00 Okay (a silence while I fiddle with the recording equipment) I.ii.00:30 was the place clean

Willow: Yes it was

Russell: I.ii.00:00 Okay (a silence while I fiddle with the recording equipment) I.ii.00:30 was the place clean

Willow: Hmm how do you know

Russell: I.ii.00:00 Well there wasn’t I don’t remember garbage piling up and I don’t remember surfaces I.ii.01:00 being grimy and I don’t remember the water being dirty I mean it kind of felt I mean upstairs with the carpet it kind of felt a little bit grimy but downstairs I.ii.01:30 I didn’t have an issue

Russell: You said um it felt a bit grimy do you mean underfoot or do you mean the atmosphere

Willow: Well I think because I mean what I remember is like if it had wooden walls and carpet it was all quite brown and dank so it I.ii.02:00 tends to lead to a bit of you know looked a bit aged so you knew that there was a bit of a build-up

Russell: Of

Willow: You know just grot and grime

Russell: What is grot and grime

Willow: Huh drink spillages and cigarettes

Russell: Ah

Willow: I.ii.02:30 And food and bodily fluids

Russell: Was there f right was there food at this event

Willow:
Ah there might have been stuff on the bar like chips and stuff

Russell:

Oh yeah

Willow:

I can’t really remember

Russell:

Um bodily fluids what bodily fluids do you have in mind (Willow laughs) no seriously

Willow:

Well if lots of sex is happening (she hesitates) semen

Russell:

But did you have a sense though that what grot and grime there was may include semen whether or not that was justifiable

Willow:

Oh I doubt there’d be semen on the carpet but

Russell:

Oh I’m I’m aware that you doubt that (Willow laughs) but when I asked you about see what I’m

Willow:

Grime

Russell:

curious about though is whether you doubt that intellectually as you walked across that carpet and thought and felt that it was a bit grotty or grimy and

Russell:

Um yeah I guess so because I imagine a lot of men going through there and I imagine a lot of sex happening so in the sex rooms I did kind of wonder

Russell:

But well let’s go back to that in a minute but you were talking about the carpet though upstairs

Willow:

No it was more like vinyl I think

Russell:

Now when you’re in the room downstairs was that a like now this is a room with mirrors and a padded floor was the padded floor like velvet or

Russell:

Yes so the sense was that it had been washed or I’d hoped it had been washed

Russell:

Did you check it
Ah I did go in and think hang on let me just have a bit of a look but I didn’t I was conscious of it at the beginning

Russell:
Yeah

Willow:

Or if anyone else wondered if anyone else had been in there I mean we’d come out of the the baths so we were wet anyway

Russell:
Did did were you conscious of other women
having been in there before you that night

Willow:
Yeah

Russell:
or other men having been in there before you the day before

Willow:
No I thought that it would have been cleaned

Russell:
Right

Willow:
Yeah

Russell:
At any stage did you imagine that this was a room where men had been

Willow:
Yeah but I was conscious about the space being primarily used for men so it was set up for men in terms of the labyrinth and the little booths you know the gym room and

Russell:
yeah there was there was a sense that this was a space for men and that

Willow:

So when you talked about booths what what were they you haven’t mentioned you’ve talked about rooms and partitions but

Willow:
Did I say that in the sentence with the labyrinths I just meant like alcoves

Russell:
Oh yeah

Willow:
or rooms

Russell:
And they were just set up for men

Willow:
Yeah like you get the sense
or I’m very much aware that the space is men’s space

Russell:
Did you use the toilets while you were there

Willow:
I don’t remember actually

Russell:
That’s interesting

Willow:
Mm

Russell:
What about do you have any memory of any sign or image of um menstrual blood while you were there

Willow:
No

Russell:

Did you wonder about that when you were in the pool with lots of other women

Willow:
No I think that’s more a boys wonder (we laugh)
Russell: Oh yeah well it might be

Willow: No it’s not it’s not an issue

Russell: What about um fluids and water

Willow: What kind of fluids

Russell: Well bodily fluids

Willow: Bodily fluids

Russell: I mean it’s it’s interesting like the thing about an environment that’s very watery downstairs and also the temperature is up and you have an awareness that this is a place where bodily fluids um may be spilt or excreted or whatever ah overall or produced in some way is there something about

Willow: I don’t I think it’s I think it’s more the term of excretion is a little bit more a male thing too in terms of ejaculate like there’s not many women that ejaculate so there’s less I mean there are bodily fluids but it’s not as productive maybe so I think there’s a sense of flesh and water and you know the tactility of it and a sense of openness and and beauty and sexuality

Russell: How how different do you think it is when men are there from when women are there how different sorry do you imagine it is

Willow: I think men are a lot more forward so I imagine there to be more touching and more sex

Russell: In open spaces

Willow: Oh I don’t know I think there’s more touching openly and I don’t know if they go off or not

Russell: And you talked about the showers being a place where um there seemed to be intimate exchanges between women intimate physical intimacy between women um do you would you expect that when the men were in the showers there would be physical intimacy between them

Willow: Uh huh yeah definitely

Russell: Right

Willow: I was just thinking that I was thinking about the sex rooms at the dance parties and how or what I heard about them and how open it was in terms of boys having sex so I was wondering about the boys sauna and where the line is drawn between going for relaxation and enjoyment and maybe a bit of petting and where it kind of entered into more of the sex room stage I don’t know (a silence) because I’m thinking um do I think that gay

Russell: Did

Willow: saunas are sex rooms or do I think it’s somewhere where men go to relax or what is relaxation because on the girls’ nights there was a mixture of both

Russell: Did

Willow:
you think of yourself as being there with other people or as being there with other people or with other women

Willow:

(a silence) The very first time I went to the St Kilda baths it would have been with other women

Russell:

And was the place itself gendered did you feel like it was women in a men’s place like you mentioned gym but women have gyms don’t they

Willow:

Yeah they do um I was conscious of it being set up for men

Russell:

and I was conscious of that partly because there were the men in the office when I first got there so it was an ownership thing

Russell:

Yeah

Willow:

And um

Russell:

So you were kind of renting it for the night

Willow:

Yes

Russell:

Borrowing it

Willow:

Yeah so it that definitely was a feeling that it was a space that was being used that wasn’t set up for for girls

Russell:

If there was one that was going to be set up for women how physically would you want it well in what ways or just even that one or two examples of ways in which you would want it to differ physically materially from the way Volcano was

Russell:

Did you promenade a bit when you were at these nights

Russell:

Oh yeah did other people tend to promenade downstairs and not upstairs

Russell:

So what’s the difference between promenading or not promenading what did what did what do you do that’s different when you’re promenading

Willow:

I think it’s about walking around and being comfortable in the environment and having somewhere to walk to walk around

Russell:

So is it just walking around promenading

Willow:
Yeah hanging around and walking around yeah

Russell:

I.ii.16:30
(a silence) I’m happy to leave it there um is there anything you want to ask me or tell me

Willow:

No I don’t think so

Russell:

Let’s leave it there

Willow:

Okay (she hands me the microphone) there you go

(I switch off the minidisc recorder)

I.ii.17:00

END OF CONVERSATION
appendix 8: Apollo I

The following transcript documents a conversation with Apollo that was recorded on a chilly weeknight in the kitchen of his home, a house in suburban Melbourne. While we talked, we sat drinking coffee either side of a table with the microphone more or less between us. Soon after I arrived, Apollo told me how I’d been calling him for some time now by a name that was no longer his; he’d had it changed several years earlier. It’s to this social gaffe that he refers in his opening remarks. Throughout the conversation, I ate cakes and he smoked cigarettes.

Russell:  
I.i.00:00
Right
Apollo:  
Just just get my name right this time remember it’s changed
Russell:  
I know but it’s gunna change again
Apollo:  
(he laughs, then) Oh cos I’ve got to think of um
Russell:  
I know but it’s gunna change again
Apollo:  
My pseudonym
Russell:  
your pseudonym
Apollo:  
Mm um okay can you can you remember the first time
you ever heard that such places as saunas existed
Apollo:  
The first time yep they were through friends that’s how I found that’s when I first heard about them I when I was really young
Russell:  
When you say really young about how young
Apollo:  
Oh god eighteen seventeen eighteen yeah I heard about Volcano
Russell:  
Right
Apollo:  
A friend of mine um told me about it and he sort of um admitted that he’d been there and I was curious
Russell:  
Was he about your age or was he older
Apollo:  
Same age
Russell:  
Same age yeah
Apollo:  
Yeah same age
Russell:  
And this came out of the blue that he’d been there and
Apollo:  
Um I can’t remember how it came up in conversation but he mentioned it and um I was very curious just to find out you know whether it was just a um
Apollo:  
a um you know like (he laughs a little) a health type place where you go and have a spa or you know or you know what exactly it was and it was that but it was obviously a lot more than that it was sex you know and I’m like (as though quoting himself) ooh really really those places exist so yeah that’s the first time
Russell:  
When he told you about it did he tell it to you as a place that he’d been to to have
Apollo:  
I.i.02:00
sex or

Apollo:

Yep

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

Yep

Russell:

Did he make it sound like it was a place that people went to solely to have sex or did but you said the reason I ask that

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

is because you said oh you were curious as to whether it was just a health type thing or whether

Apollo:

Place yeah um well it became pretty obvious when he told me what it was by the end of it what it was and it was a place you know um where he went and I imagined by the end of it had wild orgies (I laugh a little) and the thing that sticks in my mind it's interesting because now that you talk about it I remember this guy's name's Billy and um the image that I have what was of this sort of Greco-Roman sort of pool

Apollo:

I.i.02:30

type situation you know I thought it was really that's what I imagined you know from the way he spoke about it what it would look like um but all the other kind of parts that go with that with a um you know an establishment like that like you know all the nooks and crannies and glory holes and all those cubicles and stuff I didn't have a clue about so I was curious to find out I was curious in my own mind where

Apollo:

I.i.03:00

where people engaged in sort of you know you know did their stuff

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

because he spoke I remember he didn't speak that long about it but I remember him speaking about a pool

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

A pool and a sauna um but you know I you know I was pretty young I didn't because I'd never been to a place like that before I didn't really know much beyond his description basically so until I went myself which was many

Apollo:

I.i.04:00

years later I didn't really follow it up there and then

Russell:

Right but this Greco-Roman thing

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

Um I know it's hard because we're how many (I laugh a little) excuse me but how many years ago are we talking about

Apollo:

Oh jeez (the phone starts ringing at the other end of the kitchen) we are talking about ah we are talking about seventeen years ago

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

I.i.04:30

do you want to get that or leave it

Russell:

No it's cool let it go it's cool

Apollo:

All right okay (the answering machine, its volume turned up, switches on) um where do you think you got the specific images of some sort of Greco-Roman atmosphere of building from (a woman's voice has started
leaving a message on the machine, mostly in a language other than English)

Apollo:

Um probably my own um (he stops a moment) just listening to my mum here (I laugh a little)

1.05:00

ah (the message ends) um just my own image of what it might be like that's all not from didn't come from any sort of um you know um preconceived idea about what I thought you know it might look like ah well just my

1.05:30

own kind of imagination I guess

Russell:

Um when you talk about being Greco-Roman did you have kind of architectural images in mind

Apollo:

Yeah absolutely

Russell:

Yeah what can you tell me a bit about what they might be might have been

Apollo:

Well I just imagined I imagined the pool but I imagined um sort of columns and Greco-Roman columns and you know quite formal a formalised sort of environment that was architecturally kind of um

1.06:00

you know ah Greco-Roman in style and I just imagined a big room you know with a pool and lots of columns Greco-Roman columns everywhere and um it's funny talking about this (he laughs) um

Russell:

I told you it would be

Apollo:

It is it really is because I was sort of kind of um you know just thinking about it I sort of never thought about it until now but um I just imagined it like a really big kind of pool

1.06:30

with lots of formal kind of rectangle with lots of columns around it and just lots of I guess men you know

Russell:

So it was a populated imagining

Apollo:

Yes [unintelligible]

Russell:

And what were the men

Apollo:

Who were they

Russell:

Um well how did they appear

Apollo:

Um nude quite beautiful the image was quite beautiful

1.07:00

and we're talking sort of you know I think had had he told me post oh AIDS I think that would have changed I think I had quite a romantic idea of quite a beautiful aesthetically pleasing idea of what what it you know like a bathhouse type situation you know um yeah

Russell:

And did he tell you about where Volcano was in Melbourne

Apollo:

Oh

1.07:30

I honestly don't remember

Russell:

Fine fine so you had no sense of how this interior that you're imagining how that sat in relationship

Apollo:

to the location

Russell:

say to Melbourne

Apollo:

A location
Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
Um I had no idea where it was  I no it was just imagined just the a space somewhere

Russell:
Right

Apollo:  
(softly) Yeah

Russell:

I.i.08:00
And was he enthusiastic about his experience when he spoke to you

Apollo:
Ambivalent

Russell:
Ah

Apollo:
And I never I remember that quite clearly he was never um like he didn’t speak about it for very long with me but I remember him saying um that um you know which which kind of made me think god what are these places like you know um

I.i.08:30
his attitude towards the whole thing was kind of a love hate thing like a like hate thing you know and um I found that interesting but I never never pressed him oh you know about about why why he felt like that because it was at the time too pretty kind of personal and even though we were best mates at the time um you know doesn’t you know did didn’t matter it was more kind of where we were

I.i.09:00
both at with sort of coming out and sort of being honest

Russell:
Yep

Apollo:  
and frank about all those kinds of thing you know because it was pretty young sort of age you know so that’s the my very first image I would have to say of of um what a place like that might look like

Russell:

Did you um think that this was a unique place or did you think that there were other places like that it was a type of place that you might find either elsewhere in Melbourne or in other cities or

Apollo:

I.i.09:30
Um mm that’s interesting I knew deep down that these places had to exist

Russell:
Ah fantastic yeah

Apollo:
I just knew they did

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
They had to

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
But why I hadn’t investigated it beforehand myself I don’t really know it was um you know I was

I.i.10:00
I remember at the time I was really busy with school and I was pretty young and you know um

Russell:
Were you still at high school at that stage

Apollo:
Yeah HSC

Russell:
Yeah
it was that's when we I remember that quite clearly because that's when we were where I met err when we were seeing each other as friends and um um I knew that they had to exist and ah I was really deeply kind of fascinated by the whole thing but I never really um

l.i.10:30
pushed it you know he only told me about it very briefly and it seemed to me that he'd been a few times actually

Russell:
Right right

Apollo:
And I was really kind of curious but um very guarded at the same time because despite the fact that um I was dying to kind of check it out myself I was highly ah if you like like you know I was still discovering myself

l.i.11:00
and I I would I would be too embarrassed to go and which leads me onto the you know my first experience where I did go

Russell:
Well how many years later was that

Apollo:
It was terrifying (he laughs)

Russell:
Well before we get onto how terrifying it was can you tell me how many years intervened

Apollo:
Oh jeez god maybe

l.i.11:30
a long time five years four or five years

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:
Okay and you went this first time and you were terrified

Apollo:
Terrified

Russell:
How did you come to go was it something that was planned or something that was spur of the moment

Apollo:
It was something that was planned and spur of the moment it was something that was planned in that I'd wan really thought about it a long time

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
For a long time but it was impromptu in that

l.i.12:00
one day one night I just thought that's it I'm going to go

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
Even I I'd been thinking

Russell:
So it was a night-time

Apollo:
Yes

Russell:
Yes

Apollo:
Most definitely

Russell:
Yep

Apollo:
Oh I would yes not not not not the day no way

Russell:
Right
Apollo:
I couldn’t bear being recognised or seen. I was just so frightened and embarrassed about going there.

Russell:
So where did you go that first time?

Apollo:
Volcano.

Russell:
You went to Volcano now by the time you went to Volcano that first time were inter. 12:30 you aware that there were other venues in Melbourne or not or you don’t remember?

Apollo:
I don’t remember.

Russell:
Okay.

Apollo:
I just remember, you see and by that stage I’d actually come into contact with people who had talked a lot about Volcano.

Russell:
Right.

Apollo:
So it’s only kind of make sense that I would choose that place because it was kind of THE place you know and it’s been around for so long but I honestly don’t remember with if there are if there were other places.

Russell:
I 13:00.

Apollo:
The when you say other people were talking about it.

Russell:
I 13:00.

Apollo:
Yeah.

Russell:
By the time you went there that first terrifying time.

Apollo:
Mm.

Russell:
Um was the Greco-Roman square rectangular pool with nude men appearing around it still in place.

Apollo:
Yes.

Russell:
Right.

Apollo:
Absolutely.

Russell:
So nothing you heard modified or shifted that.

Apollo:
No.

Russell:
Right.

Apollo:
I 13:30 but did you hear other information new information or was it just a repetition of what you’d been hearing in that initial brief conversation with your friend.

Russell:
Oh yeah repetition but I I from memory and it’s not that great but um.

Apollo:
That’s fine just what you know.

Apollo:
I I just came to sort of by the time I went understand and realise that um it was I 14:00 a place where you know guys got their rocks off (he laughs a little) basically and that’s what I wanted to do and um I mustered the coura up the courage to go there and I was...
just terrified terrified of running into someone I know

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

Because

Russell:

Even your friend

Apollo:

Even I.i.14:30 my friend

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

Even my friend because I was still very um even though I was going I went by myself I was still not out a hundred percent I was to myself but not to the world and I was absolutely terrified that of who I’d run in run into obviously like really curious too I.i.15:00 about what it was going to be like um the experience too but more well I shouldn’t say more but also what the place would look like you know and what what I’d find there you know from a design point of view and you know what um yeah what the um you know what I was in for you know what I was in for and you know what I would face and you know and stuff and I went (he laughs)

Russell:

I.i.15:30 What’s what’s um

Apollo:

I went

Russell:

What time of the day what time of the night sorry did you arrive

Apollo:

I just remember it oh really I was really late oh elevenish ten elevenish

Russell:

Elevenish yeah how did you get there

Apollo:

I drove

Russell:

Right and you parked (this is a question)

Apollo:

Nowhere near the place (I laugh) nowhere near the place

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

I drove past

Russell:

Yes

Apollo:

And I thought oh god it’s bloody huge it was like a bloody I.i.16:00 office building and I thought my god and that the scale of the place was also really quite threatening as well

Russell:

So you’d never checked out the front of the place before

Apollo:

Never

Russell:

It was just that night the same night you decided to go

Apollo:

The same night I went

Russell:

Right

Apollo:
And I found I saw it and its size was just awesome and it blew me out and I thought my god you know how can a place like this exist in the downtown Melbourne so big

Russell:

As you were arriving

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

No let's go back get away with it what do you mean get away with what

Apollo:

Oh get away with it what I mean by that is how how it was allowed these sorts of this sort of place was allowed to exist

Russell:

Allowed by whom

Apollo:

Society you know um and for it to be public and because it was so it's so public because it's so big and so um so there and obvious and so physically kind of there you know I thought my god you know it's just it was really big and very powerful like and and I found it show its size really threatening initially

Russell:

But you

Apollo:

parked the car and you walked there

Apollo:

I walked there

Russell:

And when you walked there did you walk straight up to it

Apollo:

No (we laugh) okay I hung out the front across the road

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

And it just just waited there and tried to look inconspicuous yeah right

Russell:

What did what does that involve

Apollo:

Oh well what does that involve it involved sort of you know trying to sort of make my focus my attention on something else but but looking to see who was going in and coming out basically but I didn't want anyone to kind of know that my my focus was directed at looking to see who was coming in and out of the place

Russell:

So the focus was now not so much on the building but on the door

Apollo:

Yeah and

Russell:

what sort of people were going in and out

Apollo:

Can you describe what you saw from across the road was there anything you recall if there isn't that's okay

Apollo:

No there is I remember for some weird reason I just thought that um this place would be filled with older fat (I laugh a little) um

Apollo:

married (I laugh) um kind of guys you know and I didn't think even though my friend had been there for some warped reason I thought I wasn't expecting to see young people there younger people or people of my age and um I remember being surprised um and surprised but also it made me feel
I was excited but also more threatened because I started to see men young men *(emphatic)* young attractive men

**Russell:**

*(I laugh a little)* Yes

**Apollo:**

going in and coming out and I started to think oh my god how am I going to do this how am I going to just get the courage to do it so I hummed and hahed and I would have been out the front for maybe oh a while half an hour

**Russell:**

*I.20:00*

before I just thought I picked my time and my time was when no one else was gunna go in there like the clear like for it to be absolutely clear of any people

**Russell:**

Yep

**Apollo:**

So I almo I pretty much walked very briskly almost ran across the road and I just stuff it I just walked in and straight upstairs and um you know and my heart was racing and

*I.21:00*

um you know I remember the guy at the booth was quite nice and friendly I thought oh well that's good and um I didn't come into contact with anyone um wanting to get in at the same time and ah um I went in

**Russell:**

Okay you said you went up the stairs you opened the door and there was a

*I.21:00*

flight of stairs in front of you were you expecting that

**Apollo:**

Yes because I could see peo I could see the stairs from across the street

**Russell:**

Right okay right

**Apollo:**

So you you could see that it was upstairs

**Russell:**

Right okay

**Apollo:**

When you first saw the stairs from across the street were you surprised

**Apollo:**

No because the building's so big and it's on many levels

**Russell:**

Right okay

**Apollo:**

Two levels or three or whatever it is so no it wasn't a surprise

**Russell:**

I just want to um check something

*I.21:30*

else too which is earlier you said you had this image of a Greco-Roman environment with all these um attractive men standing around and yet as you were across the road at elevenish you told me that your expectation was

**Apollo:**

Yep

**Russell:**

there'd be older

**Apollo:**

Older people there

**Russell:**

fat married men

**Apollo:**

type there why

**Russell:**

Um can can you just tell me not so much why how

*I.22:00*

that image changed how it came to change
Apollo:

Ah

Russell:

Can you pin that down for me or is it obscure for you now? Did it only change when you saw the building or had it changed over time?

Apollo:

I think all I can say about that is that the first my first image or idea I think was perhaps maybe what I wanted to imagine was like a fantasy

Russell:

I.i.22:30

Yeah

Apollo:

I think all I can say about that is that the um the first my first image or idea I think was perhaps maybe what I wanted to imagine it was like a fantasy

Russell:

I.i.22:30

Yeah

Apollo:

My idea of sort of the kinds of guys that went there I'm pretty sure that happened before

Russell:

Even even though your friend your own age went there as well

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

That changed it

Apollo:

Yeah

I.i.23:30

I think that had something to do with it

Russell:

Okay

Apollo:

But um I can't think of any other reason

Russell:

Okay

Apollo:

basically

Russell:

So you went up the stairs and you're at the reception area

Apollo:

Yep

Russell:

and you said the guy was friendly

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

What form did that take

Apollo:
Oh he was just really personable and quite nice and I didn’t feel he wasn’t rude or or you know he was quite chatty and you know made me feel okay about coming to a place like this.

Russell:

Did you tell him it was the first time you’d been

Apollo:

(emphatic) No no absolutely not no in fact I just wanted to do it as quick as possible get the transaction done pay the money and just do it quickly

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

And I was I was quite um you know I mean it did happen quite expediently expedient whatever but um not not not enough as far as I’m concerned because I just wanted to just I was too freaked out about running into someone else I knew yeah it’s funny how that kind of was a part of my fear about running into someone I knew

Russell:

You’ve told you’ve told me that he was friendly with you how were you with him

Apollo:

Oh well friendly I mean on a sort of superficial level you know all right but I was scared

Russell:

Were you concealing your fear from him

Apollo:

Yes

Russell:

How what did you do

Apollo:

Very well I’m an actor

Russell:

Yes but what did you do what did

Apollo:

I just smiled

Russell:

What did you offer him instead

Apollo:

Money (we laugh) I mean what did I offer him I mean I just you know I smiled at him and you know um I tried to avoid eye contact

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

I remember that very little eye contact just enough to sort of you know get the get the thing done and um he was nice enough and you know

Russell:

You said it wasn’t a very fa that although the transaction was expedient

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

it wasn’t expedient enough for you did you

Apollo:

I told you why that was fear based

Russell:

Yes

Apollo:

Fear
But did you let him become aware that you were in a hurry?

Apollo:  

Yeah

Russell:  

Yeah

Apollo:  

Hoping yeah

Russell:  

Do you remember what he was wearing

Apollo:  

No oh maybe a tank top of some singlet or something something like that yeah but it was you know he was quite attractive and you know I just kind of wanted to get the business over and done with quickly so I can go inside because by that stage you know I'd made

Russell:  

Okay then you went inside

Apollo:  

(he whispers) Yes

Russell:  

How long were you there that first night

Apollo:  

Ages (he laughs) ages

Russell:  

How long is ages

Apollo:  

Oh god oh four hours long time

Russell:  

How did you know it was about four hours
well I don’t but I remember it being really late just really late and it could have been five hours I don’t know

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
And it was you know two three o’clock something like that

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
Yeah and I was just blown out

Russell:
As it were (I laugh a little)

Apollo:
Yeah pretty much pretty much and um

Russell:  
I.i.28:00
So what happened to the Greco-Roman rectangular pool (I laugh a little)

Apollo:
It was there

Russell:  
I.i.28:00
The Greco-Roman rectangular pool

Apollo:
Well not exactly like I imagined it

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
but there were there’s an area there

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
You know it’s like oh it’s very kind of high camp in a way there’s this there was this pool and there were chairs and there there were columns there there were a couple of columns um I don’t know if they’re there now but there was that sort of um um form form you know formality

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
about that pool area that that rang true I mean it wasn’t exactly like I imagined it nor did I you know think it would be but I was surprised that some of those images that I had had were you know kind of true

Russell:
Right so you had a bit of doubt about them all along

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
Yeah oh yeah and like I didn’t know what to expect I didn’t know you know what what to expect I didn’t know what what I’d find

Russell:
Okay

Apollo:
when I first went there

Russell:
What did you do

Apollo:
What did I do I just

Russell:
You went through the door

Apollo:
I explored

Russell:
You went through the door you immediately explored

Apollo:
Well the first thing you do obviously is I tried to find the lockers

Russell:
So

Apollo:
They give you a locker

Russell:
that's what you did yep yep

Apollo:
Yeah I did that

Russell:
I.i.28:30
Yeah

Apollo:
and um

Russell:
You had the specific number

Apollo:
Yep

Russell:
Yep

Apollo:
And I wasn’t really sure what you’re supposed to do the whole protocol and you know they give you a towel and I didn’t know what the towel was for um until I see other I mean you see pretty quickly what goes and you know guys strip off and wear the towel so I thought oh yeah that’s cool um I.i.30:00 so I found my locker and ah um put all my gear in and stuff and then I went look I went exploring and um I can’t remember exactly where I went first it was so long ago but um I just remember ah being absolutely amazed at all the nooks and crannies (he laughs a little)

Russell:
Right so when you went exploring

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:
What were you exploring

Apollo:
The place

Russell:
The place not necessarily the people

Apollo:
The people too

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
Yeah sure

Russell:
But

Apollo:
But more the place

Russell:
Okay

Apollo:
and then the people

Russell:
All right and at did you stop exploring when you felt you’d exhausted the place like you’d gone everywhere or did you stop exploring at some other point
Apollo:
No
I remember I wanted to I wanted to know where everything was

Russell:
Everything

Apollo:
Everything

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
And what what was in the place

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
So I made sure that I checked that out

Russell:
And are you

Apollo:
completely just to see what it was all about

Russell:
And you’re confident that you actually did that completely

Apollo:
Completely

Russell:
Yeah okay

Apollo:
Yeah and then and then you know I guess you start I started exploring you know I got I cottoned on pretty quick what

Russell:
I.i.31:30
was going on there and um

How
Apollo:
Oh you just see you hear

Russell:
You saw

Apollo:
And you hear

Russell:
What did you hear

Apollo:
Sex (he laughs a little)

Russell:
What did you hear

Apollo:
Everywhere

Russell:
Yeah but what did you hear when you say you heard sex what what what did you hear

Apollo:
I heard okay (he laughs a little) I heard guys getting off I heard um you know people

Russell:
l.i.32:00
cumming um

Apollo:
I heard okay (he laughs a little) I heard guys getting off I heard um you know people

Russell:
So what did you hear though when you say you heard people cumming

Apollo:
What did I hear

Russell:
Splash (I laugh a little)

Apollo:
Oh right oh right

Russell:
No what did
Apollo:
You know like groans

Russell:
Yeah okay all right

Apollo:
You know lots of male (drops an octave) male sounding voices

Russell:
Right and when you heard you said guys getting off what did you hear

Apollo:
The same

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
Like groans

Russell:
Yep

Apollo:
Um I remember hearing um bums getting spanked

Russell:
Yes

Apollo:
And I found that I remember I remember finding it absolutely fascinating because up until that point in my own um you know sexual life I hadn’t had that I’ve never had it mine or nor nor had I spanked anyone’s (he laughs a little) bum (I laugh a little) and I remember hearing lots of bums being spanked and trying to work out what they were doing what was going on

Russell:
Okay where were you when you heard this and where were you hearing it from

Apollo:
Oh okay I was yeah sure it was um in

Russell:
Everywhere or only in some

Apollo:
No it was in um definitely not in the rooms like the steam rooms

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
But outside walking outside the um the cubicles

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
Cubicle areas where people go inside after you’ve met someone

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
Yeah around there

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:
And did you were you standing in those areas or were you moving

Apollo:
Mm very interesting um both both

Russell:
Why do you say int very interesting
Apollo:

Because I I sat down I hardly
sat down

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

No one does I mean hardly anyone does
and I mean I I wasn’t even like some
some of the guys there they’re just like
nonstop

Russell:

Non stop

Apollo:

You know they’re fast in their you know in
their walking

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

And then they they do the whole perimeter
or move and you run into them again-and-
again-and-again

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

Really quickly

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

I I’m I’m not like I wasn’t like that

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

Nor

Russell:

I.i.34:30
was I subsequent to to that

Apollo:

I.i.34:30

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

The night when I went I have a very slow pa
slow paced walk and I did walk but I would
find a comfortable place or position and just
hang there

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

and watch and wait

Russell:

Right and listen by the sounds of things

Apollo:

And listen

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

Yeah

Apollo:

and take the whole experience in

Russell:

Okay

Apollo:

basically and um I.i.35:00
I remember it’s interesting because like
leaning you do a lot of leaning

Russell:

You do

Apollo:

Yeah everyone does including myself yeah

Russell:

Right everyone does a lot of leaning

Apollo:

Yeah
Russell:

Yeah okay yeah yeah

Apollo:

Oh yeah and how you leant was really important to me because it was and

and how you you wore the towel (he laughs a little)

Russell:

All right was this something you became aware of on your first visit

Apollo:

Yep

Russell:

Okay so

Apollo:

Absolutely

Russell:

So let’s start off with the leaning

Apollo:

Absolutely

Russell:

When can you recall how you became aware that leaning was important was it because you were watching other people or

Apollo:

Um I think because I was watching other people yeah absolutely like when you find

when you found found someone that you liked or you thought that there was a possibility that you might get together it became this kind of mating sort of play you know and how you you know like I didn’t have the guts to just go up to someone like you know and say (putting on a voice) hey (I laugh a little) you know let’s do it baby (I laugh a little more)

I had to I had to it was

Russell:

Did anyone do that around the place

Apollo:

Around me

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

Oh I don’t I don’t think so

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

I think there were people I remember people talking to each other and I remember being a bit freaked out about that thinking oh people must come here with friends or you know I thought these these were places where no one knew anyone

Russell:

(laughing a little) Right

Apollo:

Where you know it was all kind of behind closed doors and it was all sort of which gives you an indication of where I was coming from

Russell:

So there were other sounds you were hearing not just

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

You heard people talking to each other

Apollo:

Talking

Russell:

Yep

Apollo:
Yep absolutely

**Russell:**

Right were they coming from inside the cubicles as well

**Apollo:**

No

**Russell:**

Right

**Apollo:**

No

**Russell:**

Where were those sounds coming from

**Apollo:**

From just people walking and talking like there were people that were obviously knew each other

**Russell:**

Right

**Apollo:**

And people that met each other

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Apollo:**

And also in the lounge area people were talking

**Russell:**

Yeah in the saunas *(this is a question)*

**Apollo:**

No never

**Russell:**

Right

**Apollo:**

Never not in there

---

***I.i.37:30***

and um yeah when you sort of you know you found someone that you thought mm this is a goer um depending on where it was whether it was in the the dry goods area *(he laughs a little)* or in the the wet area you’d you know I kind of and you know and the way I operate really even many years after that hasn’t changed I don’t think and

**Russell:**

So most of it

***I.i.38:00***

what occurred for you in later visits

**Apollo:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

was formed or developed in that first visit

**Apollo:**

Um well yeah I guess because I haven’t really when I think about it and thought think what I do there I obviously feel a little more comfortable mm you know many years later and I don’t worry about it as much but it how I go about finding *(he begins a list)* A finding people and

***I.i.38:30***

and courting them or trying to get them hasn’t changed

**Russell:**

Right

**Apollo:**

I don’t think

**Russell:**

So that first night well let’s go back to the leaning you were watching people when you were watching people lean or you were aware of yourself leaning

**Apollo:**

Both both

**Russell:**

All right okay

**Apollo:**
I was watching people and I was leaning on um oh I don’t know I found I I became I remember I think I remember it was really important to me that

\[\text{I.i.39:00}\]
to place myself in the right um on the right wall or in the right corner in a very particular way in a very particular stance um it all had to be right

Russell:

Okay sorry here comes the hard stuff or maybe it isn’t hard I don’t know

Apollo:

You’re not going to [unintelligible]

Russell:

How did you know

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

it was

\[\text{I.i.39:30}\]
the right wall or a right corner what would make it the right wall or the right corner for you

Apollo:

For me

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

Okay well that’s interesting or the right corner or the right wall well

Russell:

I mean you were really clear about that a moment ago

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

so how did you know it was the right wall or the right corner
Steps  let’s just say maybe twelve feet
twelve to fifteen feet  right and and I would
check them out  right and see what they’re
up to and then I’d move in closer

Russell:
Okay when

Apollo:
Yes and dark

Russell:
Right okay

Apollo:
The lighting’s really important

Russell:
Right okay and secondly the um enclosed
what was enclosed because you walked
straight in the front door

Apollo:
That’s right

Russell:
So what was enclosed

Apollo:
Um well you know I mean even though that
place is a big place it you feel  because it’s
dark  like you know

Russell:
I felt sort of secure because it was dark and
enclosed and you know that’s what was a
good thing  (laughing a little) you wouldn’t
want it to be bright now would you  I mean
you know  I mean you know it’s brighter in
some  ah some parts of that place like the
bar and stuff  the you know place where
people hang out and talk and stuff  but most
of it is really dark and I understand why it is
and it does give you that

Apollo:
feeling of security and it does I guess um
make you look more flattering  (he laughs a
little) you know but that  that  even though I
said that many  like I can’t remember exactly
when but after um um HIV/AIDS came in

Russell:
um I would if I’d meet  met someone and
decided  you know we’d agreed to kind of go
into wherever I would switch the light on
Russell:
You have a place where you can lean
Apollo:
Yeah
Russell:
and watch the other person
Apollo:
Yeah
Russell:
Do you have a specific memory by the way of that first visit of doing this with someone
Apollo:
Um
Russell:
or is it kind of an accumulation over time
Apollo:
I think it’s an accumulation really
Russell:
I have to say I do remember like very I do remember exploring and I remember the um the fear that I had the very first time I remember that really clearly um and not knowing what to do with the towel and you know all that sort of stuff but um I don’t
Russell:
Do you
Apollo:
I don’t honestly I can’t remember
Russell:
leaning the first time
Apollo:
the very first time I leant yeah
Russell:
Fine do you remember though leaning on your first visit
Apollo: Yes

Russell: Right

Apollo: I do (he laughs a little)

Russell: Yeah so by the end of your first visit you had leaned

Apollo: Yes

Russell: like other people

Apollo: Yes yes and the how you leaned and the image that you projected to the other person was the most important thing in you know in trying to project the kind of image that you wanted to to [sic]

Russell: them um and hoping you know um that they would respond in a favourable kind of way but also you know seeing how other people um meet (he laughs) um was really um important to me mm and

Russell: So did you work

Apollo: with some form of selective mimicry

Apollo: I'd adopt certain there's certain poses that I still use (he laughs a little) that are about me and are if I find someone I like how I would try I guess it's sex more than anything an

Russell: Can you describe one of those for me

Apollo: Poses

Russell: Mm I mean it sounds like this is very consciously done

Apollo: Yeah it is

Russell: Is that the case

Apollo: Yeah absolutely

Russell: Okay so what is it that you decide to do

Apollo: Absolutely

Russell: Rather than describe the pose tell me what you decide to do with the pose

Apollo: Make it sexy

Russell: Yeah

Apollo: No it just happens automatically

Russell: It's automatic

Apollo: Automatic

Russell: All right so what do you do then

Apollo:
What you do okay well then you’d you’d you okay I should say not you um the towel was really important where where the towel was and where I would place my um both hands

1.48:30
um and both thumbs (*he laughs*) had to be placed in the towel

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
Right and the um the rest of the hand outside the towel right so I would um and the towel had to be really tight right so I would use the thumbs in in my

1.49:00
towel um you know as a way I guess um you know luring (*he laughs a little*) someone I liked

Russell:
This might seem naïve but how do thumbs tucked into a towel towel lure someone

Apollo:
It’s it’s

Russell:
What do you do I mean where do you tuck them in

Apollo:
Into the towel here (*he demonstrates*)

1.49:30
right

Russell:
Right just in front of your hips

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:
But slightly around the front

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:
on each side

Apollo:
And and by pulling the towel down

Russell:
Yes

Apollo:
Right to me I thought and felt I was conveying um something really you know sexy and um

Russell:
Do you know where you got that

Apollo:
That was real that was that was

1.50:00
that was um I do I do that all the time

Russell:
Do you know where you got that from

Apollo:
Ah what that doing that action

Russell:
Mm did you invent it entirely yourself or

Apollo:
Ah

Russell:
is it derived from something else

Apollo:
I think it’s I’ve just did it [sic] because it’s me and I

1.50:30
felt that um I felt I was trying to um seduce someone as best I could so it was my own I saw it as my own kind of way vocabulary whatever of doing it so you know I mean I’ve it’s funny because now that you mention that I

1.51:00
still do that to other places I’ve been to that aren’t um you know you know [sic] where you don’t take your clothes off
Russell:
Oh yeah

Apollo:
Right like The Basement

Russell:
Oh yeah yeah yes

Apollo:
And I still (he laughs a little) with whatever daks I've got on still put my thumbs (he laughs a little more) in there and

Russell:
Just inside the waistband

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:
Yep

Apollo:
And and pull the pants like the towel down

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
Maybe it's got something to do with quick access I don't know of what well I don't know but I actually there's nothing more to it than just finding it sexy

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
and pleasurable

Russell:
Right and it's and it's elicited the correct responses from other people

Apollo:
Oh yeah it has

Russell:

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:
Not always

Apollo:
You know you're not gunna you know it's impossible that you'll that everyone's going to like you but when it works when it worked it was great and um you know I mean

Russell:
Do you think you were doing that by the end of that first visit

Apollo:
Yes

Russell:
Oh you're clear about that

Apollo:
Yes I do and I remember the thing that I also found fascinating and that I really loved playing with apart from my thumbs and leaning maybe this comes from having been an actor I loved being able to um play with the various lighting combinations there on my body

Russell:
Tell me more

Apollo:
I found that exhilarating

Russell:
Oh yeah so what had tell me about the lighting first of all before we start
Apollo:
Exhilarating
Russell:
We start getting I mean because up until now you’ve said it’s dark
Apollo:
Yeah
Russell:
But there is light
Apollo:
There is light but
I.i.53:00
there’s shades shades of it and even though it’s dark um you know you go into areas or maze type areas that are pitch black
Russell:
Yup
Apollo:
for example I didn’t like those much
Russell:
Right
Apollo:
I in fact I kept away from the places that are or the areas I should say that were completely pitch black
Russell:
Right
Apollo:
I didn’t want to engage with them
Russell:
Right
Apollo:
I did like the the darkness but um for example
I.i.53:30
um I used oh this is so embarrassing um I used to love you know
Russell:
Sorry if you find it too embarrassing you don’t need to talk about it
Apollo:
No I but I want to it’s cool
Russell:
Okay
Apollo:
You know I’m open I mean you know I know I trust you so it’s okay
Russell:
Yeah okay
Apollo:
Um I used to really love you know those door you know the doors that like to the cubicles
Russell:
Yes
Apollo:
I.i.54:00
I used to love hanging out right leaning against those like half almost half quarter of the way in right and I used to love the light that like a slip of light that you could control by um by where you had the door does that make sense
Russell:
So the light from the cubicle
Apollo:
No from outside
Russell:
From outside
Apollo:
From outside in
Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:

_In the hallway in the passageway whatever it was_  

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

Not only there but also

Russell:

Oh sorry so the cubicle would be dark

Apollo:

Yes

Russell:

and you could as it were retreat back into it

Apollo:

That's right

Russell:

through the semi-open door

Apollo:

That's right

Russell:

Okay right

Apollo:

And what you could reveal like I um like the you could control um to a to a point what part of your body

Russell:

And was that something else you developed from that by the end of that first visit

Apollo:

I'm not sure I'm not sure about the the lighting stuff but definitely the leaning

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

and the thumbs in the towel and stuff

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

But the lighting I can't I mean that maybe was cumulative I don't know

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

you know

Russell:

That's fine

Apollo:

But um I used to love being able to kind of play with the light and um and lighting up parts of me and my body um in various kind of ways that would I guess it was related to I think um again ah sexual being sexu

Russell:

sexual

Apollo:

Did you have colour preferences or was the colour unimportant

Russell:

Colour of what

Russell:

The light

Apollo:

Unimportant
Russell:
But it was important that it was a specific shaft or beam or

Apollo:
Shaft's a good word pool yeah all those words

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
I I I love the theatricality of it

Russell:
Right right

Apollo:
Because you could have been quite you had the choice to be quite kind of theatrical about it if you wanted to

Russell:
Were you studying acting by that stage

Apollo:
Yes (he laughs) I'd just finished

Russell:
You'd just finished right

Apollo:
Mm so you know I was a young actor you know

Russell:
Did you I mean you're sitting here now telling me about how you were working with some kind of acting skills and theatricality um do you recall being conscious of that at the time or is that an idea that has happened since

Apollo:
No I don't recall not at the time

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
being conscious about it at all um well obviously I remember being conscious yes of of you know my titillation or you know ligh loving playing with light but not in a theatrical way I didn't think of it in that context

Russell:
Okay

Apollo:
Yeah (a silence) hmm (he laughs)

Russell:
(softly) Um

Apollo:
While you're doing that I'm just gunna I'm a bit cold actually I'll just go and close the window a little bit

Russell:
Okay

Apollo:
There's a draft coming in (he walks to the window and closes it) that's all right (he returns to the table) I mean I could continue talking I'd say anything you want I mean I can continue

Russell:
I'm aware of that I'm just

Apollo:
without you asking (I laugh) me any questions (I laugh) about the emotional roller-coaster the emotional journeys I used to go on in these places were outrageous

Russell:
In the early days

Apollo:
Out-fucking-rageous

Russell:
What kind of emotional roller-coasters

Apollo:
Um oh god just so many Russell like you know

Russell:
Well can I ask you about a simple one

Apollo:
Sure yeah

Russell:

I.i.58:30
You said the dark areas

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:
The areas where it was black

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:
were you didn’t like those

Apollo:
Hated them the ones that were completely black because I was scared I just didn’t know what was going on in there I just wouldn’t touch them and I still don’t

Russell:
Did did you ever venture in though

Apollo:
Yes

Russell:
How far

Apollo:

Ah I don’t remember like the first time but I remember um and it would have been near the first

I.i.59:00
time I would have um gone the whole way like this maze but I didn’t like it and so I never stayed there

Russell:
So can you just

Apollo:
Because I had no control

Russell:
Right no control of what

Apollo:

Over you know what was happening to my body because you know you go in there and there’d be fucking hands you know trying to grab you or whatever and I just couldn’t didn’t like that I hated

I.i.59:30
I hate um group stuff I just hate it and it seemed to me that that was the sort of place where you know people were kind of getting on with everyone and I didn’t like that and it (he begins a list) A it didn’t turn me on and also B I felt scared just from the dark I just you know no thanks

Russell:
And so that hasn’t shifted for you either

Apollo:
No

Russell:
All right

Apollo:
It hasn’t

Russell:

I.i.60:00
So that’s a part of the of a sauna that even recently you wouldn’t venture into

Apollo:
Absolutely
Russell:
All right okay um how when was the last time you went to a sauna
Apollo:
The last time
Russell:
Yeah the most recent occasion in
Apollo:
Oh god
Russell:
The most recent occasion anywhere though
Apollo:
Anywhere
Russell:
Yeah
Apollo:
Ah Canada
Russell:
I.i.60:30 Yeah how long ago was that
Apollo:
God months six months ago
Russell:
Yeah
Apollo:
Um right I found that while kind of you know having amazing sex with someone that you might have found that you thought was wonderfully good looking or there was something about them that you really liked was ah good I just found and I don’t know why I kept going back I just found it so empty afterwards and I just found totally it some sometimes confused cheated
Apollo:
I.i.61:00 Um right I found that while kind of you know having amazing sex with someone that you might have found that you thought was wonderfully good looking or there was something about them that you really liked was ah good I just found and I don’t know why I kept going back I just found it so empty afterwards and I just found totally it some sometimes confused cheated
Russell:
Is this the one in
Apollo:
Vancouver
Russell:
Vancouver and this is the one you found on the net
get you know not so much now but when when I was a lot younger really depressed and even though I was depressed this is this is this is what I couldn’t understand it was so weird I went through periods

\textit{i.i.62:30}

where I'd just go go every night (he laughs a little) right and it was like this self destructive self destruction sort of phase I was going through and I was I guess I I was so kind of desperate to um you know to be loved and you know like to meet someone um and despite those and I still can’t understand why despite

\textit{i.i.63:00}

those intense feelings that I just talked about of of you know anger and and guilt and um of being you know thinking this is all fucked I was obsessed for a while and I just couldn’t stop

**Russell:**

Did you did you feel this this kind of sense of um

**Apollo:**

alienation

**Russell:**

bad feelings bad feelings

**Apollo:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

at

\textit{i.i.63:30}

the end of your first visit

**Apollo:**

No

**Russell:**

Oh yeah how did you feel at the end of your first visit

**Apollo:**

Wonderful (he lights a cigarette)

**Russell:**

(I laugh, then) You felt wonderful

**Apollo:**

I felt wonderful because I remember that I was just so awe-struck by the whole thing and I was I was young too and I thought how wonderful you know it's a place you can go and you know get your rocks off even you know if it is you know you don’t see these people

\textit{i.i.64:00}

again but it was just so kind of um liberating in a way but that didn't last long it didn't last long and um even though as I said and I still can’t work out myself um why I continued to go when the kind of sort of feelings of depression or or you know set in I just you know I just it was like this it was like this

\textit{i.i.64:30}

bloody um compulsion I just had to do it

**Russell:**

Um yeah okay you had to do it but did you have to do it

**Apollo:**

But I yeah but I’m not like that now

**Russell:**

Sure I'm just trying to think back to then though for the moment you felt like you had to do it there was this you talked about a compulsion or an obsession you had to do what

**Apollo:**

\textit{i.i.65:00}

I had to do what I had to go there and um have sex

**Russell:**

And that would be it I mean is that what you went there for given that you were saying that that became because initially you you talked about I’m going to backtrack you talked about initially the idea that getting your rocks off

**Apollo:**

Yeah wonderful

**Russell:**

was an exciting prospect

**Apollo:**
It was but

Russell:
and then that first night

Apollo:
It changed

Russell:
I.i.65:30
after that because I saw that initially that perhaps there existed a possibility of developing some kind of meaningful relationship with someone right and I you know I mean I still I guess many many years later hope that that you know might be the case but I'm a bit sort of older and wiser now and I think that primarily

Russell:
I.i.66:00
and I still believe that that establishments like that exist for sex and not much else basically and I started to realise not long after I started going that it was going to be very difficult if not impossible to meet someone um in this environment and see them out and see them outside the environment and

Russell:
I.i.66:30
why I kept going (he laughs) I don't know

Apollo:
Did you continue to

Russell:

Apollo: [unintelligible] torturous at one stage

Russell:
Oh yeah

Apollo:
Mm it really was because I got I also got obsessed with um very much obsessed with um amyl (he laughs a little)

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
And I think that was a really

Russell:
I.i.67:00
big part of the turn on in that environment that I just became totally enamoured with and um it was really evil that stuff and um

Russell:
What do you mean

Apollo:
Well just the effects after-effects after prolonged use it's really not good and I developed headaches and like you know

Russell:
After prolonged use in one evening or after prolonged use over a series of time

Apollo:
Over a period of time

Russell:
Yep okay yep

Apollo:
After a period

Russell:
Yep

Apollo:
And I disc I discovered amyl it wasn’t the first night but I discovered it in one of those probably Volcano I’d say and um I loved it I just loved it because it’s so kind of um you know it’s just so heightened and it makes the experience really intense and passionate and

Russell:
I.i.68:00
all those things you know but um I became really like not a happy person and I would I would frequent you know um these kinds of places like for you know every day for say a week and then I’d stop for I don’t know a couple of weeks

Russell:
I.i.68:30
and then I’d get back into it

Russell:
What do you mean by frequent

Apollo:
Frequent I frequented these places

Russell:
Yeah that’s a new verb you’ve introduced
Apollo:
Frequent
Russell:
What do you mean
Apollo:
I'd go there I'd go there a bit you know
Russell:
Yeah but you were saying that earlier like going there and visiting but now you're using the term frequent is there is there what are you doing when you're frequenting a place
Apollo:
You you're more than visiting
Russell:
Do you frequent your home
Apollo:
No I don't frequent
Russell:
But you hang out here
Apollo:
Yeah but I'm here all a lot of the time I don't I wouldn't say I frequent my home I just don't think I'd use that word for my home
Russell:
Right okay right
Apollo:
You know um
Russell:
(laugh a little) Okay
Apollo:
But also too I mean the all the stuff with to do with you know ah HIV while I was going there used to really freak me out it still does um even though I've become a lot a lot better at dealing with safe sex issues I used to think and I've had counselling about this that it was every gay man's destiny and um irrespective of safe sex and um I've sort of worked through that you know and
Russell:
That was understandable for a while
Apollo:
Yeah and I don't feel like that now as much even though it does worry me as I've told you but um yeah the emotional roller-coaster I used to go on ah was pretty intense for a while and I just found myself as I said obsessed with these places and um I couldn't keep away from them you know and um I don't have that obsession now
Russell:
Um I'm going to ask you a couple of other questions which ah have come up out for me out of this but again I let me know if you don't feel like answering them don't that's okay
Apollo:
Yeah cool
Russell:
Was the rest of your life away during this period where you were going obsessively and frequently was your life outside the sauna interesting
Apollo:
Interesting
Russell:
For you were you excited by what you were doing outside the sauna in the rest of your life
Apollo:
No no I wasn’t. I wasn’t happy.

Russell:
Was there

Apollo:
And only I know that I mean you in fact you’re the first person I’ve told this to um I don’t yeah I was I was depressed in my life generally speaking outside of going there as well and um I just kept going.

Russell:
You talked about at the end of a visit during this period you would feel um not good you used a number of terms which I’m going to assume mean you didn’t feel good okay what about as you arrived during those other times though let’s say it’s the fourth night in a row as you’re arriving.

Apollo:
How did I feel

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
Um

Russell:
Not good

Apollo:
Not good

Russell:
Even as you arrived

Apollo:
Mm

Russell:
The same kind of not good as when you left

Apollo:
Yeah pretty much but I just couldn’t get out of it I just it was a pattern

Russell:
Was it still an intense experience being there

Apollo:
Sorry was it intense experience

Russell:
Being there at the sauna

Apollo:
Always always

Russell:
Even whether it was negative intensity or positive intensity

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:
It was

Apollo:
always intense

Russell:
Okay and was it intense in the rest of your life away from the sauna

Apollo:
No no not always no.

Russell:
no because I mean you know I mean it’s a confined area there and you’ve got people and you meet people and you know just that some of the experiences you have in those places are intense and the whole it’s very at times it’s almost it you know it can be it you know I felt claustrophobic as well but I didn’t feel that outside that environment ah I did feel feel

Apollo:
it while I was in there

Russell:
It's interesting because before it was enclosed and safe now it's claustrophobic (*I laugh a little*)

Apollo:
Well yeah but that's what it became

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
That's what it became

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
when I was in a period of my life where I was you know not very happy with myself

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
for whatever the reason

Russell:
So the physical structure hadn't changed

Apollo:
No

Russell:
No no but you had

Apollo:
Yeah I had

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
And um

Russell:

Apollo:
*found out pretty quickly that* that for me that didn't happen and um

Russell:
Did you go to the socialising areas the areas

(*the minidisc fills and the minidisc recorder switches itself off without me noticing*)

Apollo:

Russell:
*(When we realise what's happened, Apollo and I take a break. We replenish our various supplies, chat a bit, replace the minidisc with a fresh one, and resume.)*

Russell:

Apollo:
*I don't have an*

Russell:
issue problem with rejection because I mean you know I don't think that um I mean look you know you're going to get rejected whether you like it or not at those places

Russell:
Yeah you mentioned that earlier as well yeah

Apollo:
It didn't bother me

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
Because I knew that and I did um get my rocks off every time so I knew that I'd find somebody there you know and I
I.i.01:30
didn't have an issue with rejection I don’t think that’s um while I was there anyway does that make any sense

Russell:
Yes it does um it leads me to ask have you ever gone to one of those places with a view to not getting your rocks off

Apollo:
Never

Russell:
Right never occurred to you

Apollo:
Never occurred to me

Russell:
To just go there to socialise

Apollo:
Nah

Russell:
or to just use the facilities

Apollo:
Ah maybe once

I.i.02:00
yeah maybe once I remember going down to um the place in ah in ah Suburb L

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
High you know High Street

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
And um I like that place

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
because it’s small and I haven’t been to Volcano in a very long time

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
And I won’t go there I don’t think um oh I shouldn’t say again but you know it’s too big and I don’t like places that are that big

Russell:
I.i.02:30
Right

Apollo:
You know now

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
if I were to go I

Russell:
Because the size of it

Apollo:
It’s

Russell:
was really an important factor

Apollo:
It was huge

Russell:
that very first time

Apollo:
Yeah yeah yeah

Russell:
Yeah so you like High Street which is small

Apollo:
Small

Russell:
And is it because it's small that

Apollo:
Yes

Russell:
Okay

Apollo:
Yeah and I mean I have been there I remember once I could say honestly that I thought oh I'd like to have a you know a sauna and you know sort of chill out and kind of

Russell:
hop in a spa and you know just do that

Russell:
Was that nice to do

Apollo:
It was nice to do really nice to do actually

Russell:
And did you have sex anyway

Apollo:
Ah

Russell:
Or don't you remember

Apollo:
I don't remember *(he laughs)*

Russell:
That's nice okay

Apollo:
I don't remember but I remember feeling

Russell:
But you remember though that you enjoyed the facilities

Apollo:
Yeah yeah I did I did

Russell:
What facilities did you enjoy the most there

Apollo:
There

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
Um the

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
Okay can you tell me a bit about the wet sauna what did you specifically enjoy about the wet sauna

Apollo:
Just you mean about that that one particular time

Russell:
Yeah that one that one yeah at that place

Apollo:
Oh just the feeling that a sauna gives you it's a cleansing sort of feeling you know of um you know it relaxing you know it it revives you

Russell:
Has that happened for you at Volcano

Apollo:
on previous occasions

Russell:
Ah yeah
Yeah

Apollo:

Yep it has. I mean yeah it has because you know I mean just the feeling of you know coming out of there you feel sort of feel cold but you feel coming straight out but you do I have felt rejuvenated

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

Yeah afterwards

Russell:

And the spa there at High Street

Apollo:

At High Street yeah

Russell:

You said you used the spa there as well

Apollo:

Yep

Russell:

I.ii.04:30

What did you enjoy about the spa in particular

Apollo:

Um being able to sit down because it lends itself to it because you have to hop in a tub and um just relaxing basically um yeah that's all

Russell:

Do you remember much about that occasion that you went there just to use the facilities specifically or do you know that there was such an occasion

Apollo:

I.ii.05:00

I know there was such an occasion and I remember having a good time and feeling like I'd achieved what I wanted to
Okay let's talk about this place in Vancouver

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:
because I'm really curious about um I mean when we first talked about this interview you mentioned it and I said don't tell me now the Apollo:

Yep I remember that

Russell:

So because I'd really like to hear about it

Apollo:

Sure

Russell:

Um the the place in um Vancouver you found it on the net and you did a search under gay saunas you told me is that right

Apollo:

That's right in L.A.

Russell:

And you right and you were in L.A. and

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

Okay

Apollo:

And I was going to Vancouver

Russell:

Fine okay now where you did the net search where was that in L.A.

Apollo:

Where

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

At the place I was living at

Russell:

So it was at it was in Lii.06:30 a home

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

It wasn't like in an internet lounge or something like that

Apollo:

No no

Russell:

Okay or a work place

Apollo:

No

Russell:

And was there someone else in the room with you when you did it

Apollo:

No (he laughs)

Russell:

You're quite clear about that

Apollo:

Yes

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

Because it wasn't my computer

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
and the guy that I was living with at the time
was straight and he wasn’t home so it was a
perfect opportunity he’s a nice guy and
everything but I didn’t want him to know

Russell:
Yeah
Apollo:
that I
Russell:
Yeah did he know that you weren’t straight
Apollo:
He knew yes
Russell:
Yep
Apollo:
Yep
Russell:
I.ii.07:00
he did know
Apollo:
How do you describe yourself
Russell:
How do I describe myself
Apollo:
Yeah is not-straight a description that you
would use
Russell:
Apollo:
Yes
Russell:
Yeah okay
Apollo:
Yes I’m not straight

Fine that’s all right

Apollo:
(he laughs) I don’t wanna be
Russell:
Um okay so this sauna came up a web-site
for this sauna
Apollo:
Yeah
Russell:
or was it on the listing on another web-site
Apollo:
No it was a web-site
Russell:
Okay
Apollo:
that came up when I did the search
Russell:
I.ii.07:30
So what can you tell me about the web-site
what did you find what did the web-site
show you that made it clear to you that when
you went to Vancouver you’d go to this
place
Apollo:
Well what did it show me
Russell:
Was it just one page or did was it a series
of pages with links
Apollo:
There were links
Russell:
There were links okay to what from what
and to what
Apollo:
The links weren’t to any other web-sites or organisations it was just they were links to the

Apollo:
I.ii.08:00
to the place itself

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
basically and ah there were two I remember there were two two pages

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
basically um and um there were images of the place um the sort of they had a photo of ins of what it was like inside

Russell:
Of what was like inside

Apollo:
Of what the sauna was like inside

Russell:
The ac the dry sauna the wet sauna

Apollo:
The pool area

Russell:
The pool area

Apollo:

I.ii.08:30
Yeah

Russell:
Okay and where were they taken from

Apollo:
Where were they taken from

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:

I.ii.09:00
Yeah

Russell:
Okay were they
Apollo:
which is like a bar area

Russell:
I.ii.09:30
Oh only those two areas were photographed

Apollo:
Yes

Russell:
Okay so let's just go back to the guys around the pool who were looking happy were they interacting

Apollo:
Yes

Russell:
In what way

Apollo:
Ah well I don't remember the exact details but I remember

Russell:
Did it appear as thought they were conversing

Apollo:
Yes

Russell:
Right okay

Apollo:
Yes it was

Russell:
So did it remind you of that

Apollo:
Yes but it not just it didn't remind me specifically of Volcano but it reminded me of those sorts of venues

Russell:
Yep

Apollo:
generally

Russell:
Yep yep

Apollo:
And I didn't think of Volcano when I um when I saw the photo I just thought of every it reminded me generally of of you know er gay

Russell:
saunas

Russell:
Yeah okay

Apollo:
because they're they're the same

Russell:
What about in the bar area then

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:
Were there people in the bar area

Apollo:
In the photo or

Russell:
In the photo

Apollo:
Yes there were

Russell:
Okay

Apollo:
And it looked like a bar  like a bar-bar not

Russell:
And  oh go on

Apollo:
Not like  um you know there was no  um you know there was nothing kind of  how can I say  gay about the image that I saw  I mean there was but not

Russell:
Okay

Apollo:
And it looked like a bar  like a bar-bar not

Russell:
And  oh go on

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Russell:
And  oh go on

Apollo:
Not like  um you know there was no  um you know there was nothing kind of  how can I say  gay about the image that I saw  I mean there was but not

Russell:
Okay
Yeah the list of there was that's right they had yeah there were

Russell:
An address

Apollo:
Address there was an address

Russell:
Was there a map

Apollo:
No map

Russell:
Was there an indication of in some way of how the bar and the pool were in the building in relation to each other or to other things

Apollo:
No

Russell:
Right okay

Apollo:
No but it was very high tech slick and um and it was very high tech and slick it was exactly like the advertisement for it

Russell:

Apollo:
And I was surprised because um you know I imagine that they would've I don't know why but I just imagined that it wouldn't wouldn't be as nice looking as what it was in the photos but it

Russell:

Apollo:
Is that because you'd had previous experiences of checking a place out on the net and then comparing it

Apollo:

Russell:
No no I just I just I mean most of the places that I've been to except for maybe a place that closed down up here or The Zone

Russell:

Apollo:
Splash

Apollo:
Splash yeah have got something scuzzy about them yeah you know it's they're just like that

Russell:
Sorry can you tell me what scuzzy means

Apollo:
Oh you know they're what scuzzy means um for example the bar area you know is pretty tacky

Russell:

Apollo:
Yeah

Apollo:
You know the food and the drinks they sell are pretty tacky the food's not very good ah the drinks are minimal

Russell:

Apollo:
Ah the furniture's pretty ordinary

Russell:

Apollo:
Um and you know I mean

Russell:

Apollo:
But that didn't feel that way at Splash

Apollo:
No
And you didn’t feel this way in Vancouver

Apollo:

Absolutely

Russell:

What was the name of the place in Vancouver do you remember

Apollo:

No I don’t

Russell:

Right that’s okay (Apollo laughs a little) do you remember whether there were other places in Vancouver or that was

Apollo:

Yes

Russell:

There were

Apollo:

There were

Russell:

Did you go to any of them

Apollo:

No I just went to one

Russell:

Right okay how many more do you think there were

Apollo:

I know for a fact there were four or five

Russell:

Right okay right

Apollo:

in Vancouver

Russell:

All right

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

So you went to Vancouver and then you’d already decided you were going to visit this place

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

Okay did you find it easily

Apollo:

Yes it was hilarious because I got the address there was no map right and the place I ended up staying at

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

was about thirty seconds to a minute walk

Russell:

from it

Apollo:

From it

Russell:

Okay

Apollo:

And it just happened that way (he laughs)

Russell:

The place you were staying

Apollo:

It was so funny

Russell:
The place you were staying at

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

Um

Apollo:

Was in Gastown

Russell:

Is that a kind of a gay precinct

Apollo:

No it was just a part of um

Russell:

Vancouver

Apollo:

A tourist part of Vancouver

Russell:

Right okay

Apollo:

near the downtown area

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

and um I was right round the corner from it  
so you know when I get there I was trying to
find it and I’ve  I  I

I.ii.15:30

I saw the street it was around the corner but
I didn’t think it’d be that close

Russell:

Okay

Apollo:

It was just funny

Russell:

All right so when you went there then

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

which did you encounter first the bar area or
the pool area

Apollo:

(a silence, then) The bar area

Russell:

So it was in the reverse sequence from what
it was on the web-site

Apollo:

As soon as you walk in  
I.ii.16:00

yeah

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

That’s true

Russell:

Okay

Apollo:

The bar area

Russell:

And did you recognise it as the bar you’d
seen in the photograph

Apollo:

I did and I I was actually um impressed
very impressed at the layout the you know
everything the whole package the furniture
was really like nicely set out and very
I.ii.16:30

pleasant in in every way I thought mm this
is one of the nicest places I’ve ever been to

Russell:

So

Apollo:
You know sort of up market very up market

**Russell:**

Right but the you’d already seen these things in the image on the web-site

**Apollo:**

Yep

**Russell:**

So was it the case that you hadn’t expected it to be like the image in some way

**Apollo:**

I hadn’t expected it for the reasons I’ve told you

**Russell:**

Which were that most places

**Apollo:**

Scuzzy

**Russell:**

Right so in a sense **I.ii.17:00** you somehow or other disbeliefed the web-site

**Apollo:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

But you went to this place anyway

**Apollo:**

Well yeah

**Russell:**

Right okay

**Apollo:**

because it was not for any not I think because it was just the first one I clicked on or something

**Russell:**

Right okay

**Apollo:**

Not for any other reason

**Russell:**

So it was the one you knew existed

**Apollo:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

Yeah okay

**Apollo:**

I hadn’t heard about it or anything

**Russell:**

Yeah did you find web-sites for any others in Vancouver

**Apollo:**

I did but I didn’t click on them

**Russell:**

Right they were just listed

**Apollo:**

Mm they were listed

**Russell:**

Okay all right and the pool area **I.ii.17:30** was it like the photograph

**Apollo:**

Yes it was

**Russell:**

And was the experience like the photograph

**Apollo:**

Experience like the photograph **(this is a question)**

**Russell:**

Yeah did you become
I had a good night  I had a great experience there

**Russell:**
But did you become one of those men chatting in the pool area that night

**Apollo:**
No

**Russell:**
Did you become one of the men sitting fully clothed in the bar that night

**Apollo:**
No

**Russell:**
Did you watch men sitting fully clothed in the bar that night

**Apollo:**
No  oh that’s interesting because the photo of the men clothed there were no men that were clothed there

**Russell:**
Right okay  and the pool area  did you watch men chatting in the pool area

**Apollo:**
I did

**Russell:**
Right

**Apollo:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
From where

**Apollo:**
Um from around the pool and a  you know ums  not far

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Apollo:**
Just from around like close to where the action was happening  to where the talking was going on around the pool area

**Russell:**
This is a leading question

**Apollo:**
Sure  give it to me baby

**Russell:**
Did you at any stage recognise that the place you were standing in was the place that the photograph was taken from or must have been taken from

**Apollo:**
Yes

**Russell:**
You were aware of that consciously

**Apollo:**
Yes in the pool area

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Apollo:**
And the bar area

**Russell:**
Right

**Apollo:**
Even though the guys um were  weren’t dressed

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Apollo:**
like they were in the
Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
on the web-site um I remember
I.ii.19:00
the um just the bar area and the bench and
the way the drink the drinks were set out as
being the same one the same bar I saw on
the web-site and the pool as well

Russell:
And did you consciously think oh this is
where the photograph was taken from

Apollo:
Yes

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
I did

Russell:
Did you actually seek that place out or did
you accidentally find yourself in that place

Apollo:
No I didn’t seek it out

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
I didn’t seek it out
I.ii.19:30
but I yeah I sort of found myself there

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
The same with the pool area as well

Russell:
Right okay and how did you feel at that
moment did you feel differently in that
moment of recognition or did you feel the
same

Apollo:
No I felt the same

Russell:
Right did you go oh right that’s where it was
taken from and that’s that

Apollo:
Yeah and I felt like um I didn’t feel cheated
and I was quite impressed by the whole
experience

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
and and I’d go back there again (he laughs)

Russell:
Right and did the
I.ii.20:00
rest of the place match up to your
expectations in some way given that you
were only given these two images and some
written information and some graphic design

Apollo:
Yeah it did because the whole place was
really classy the whole place not just the
two photos like you know there was kind of
um you know those cubicles those dime a
dozen cubicles they were just
I.ii.20:30
you know they were spotless and you were
um it was really clean and you know I like
that and um and and oh but this is
interesting I want to tell you this I found
and maybe it was just that particular night
who knows but I found the people there
much friendlier and much more open and
willing to engage in just
I.ii.21:00
social interaction separate to sex and I was
actually I remember being quite struck by
that and I’m I don’t know if it was just the
night I went or whether it was me or
whatever but I I found people there to be
really quite um chatty

Russell:
All right um when you say whether it was you

**Apollo:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
Who were you that night

**Apollo:**
Who was I *(he laughs)*
I was a bitch on heat *(we laugh)* um well who was I I was me I mean

**Russell:**
Who were you to them do you think

**Apollo:**
I think perhaps I mean the whole sort of tourist

**Russell:**
Did you introduce yourself as

**Apollo:**
I introduced myself as myself but I found that perhaps maybe the fact that I was an out-of-towner

**Russell:**
Right

**Apollo:**
Or Vancouverians I don’t know what you call them

**Russell:**
Had when you when you’ve been to places in Melbourne

**Apollo:**
Yes

**Russell:**
What was by the way would have been the most recent time in Melbourne that you went to a sauna

**Apollo:** *(he yawns)* Oh god excuse me um would have been either January of this year or December of last year

**Russell:**
Right okay do people

**Apollo:**
Before I went away

**Russell:**
Fine do people here ask you where you’re from

Apollo: I.ii.23:00

No no they don’t

Russell:

It’s interesting because um my most recent visit to a sauna

Apollo:

Yep

Russell:

that’s the only question I was asked by someone

Apollo:

Where are you from

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo: Because you look like an out-of-towner whatever

Russell:

No where did I where was I from in Melbourne I was asked

Apollo:

Oh in Melbourne oh okay

Russell:

I wasn’t asked my address I was asked what suburb I was from

Apollo: I.ii.23:30

Oh okay

Russell:

That was the only question I was asked I wasn’t asked my name or anything else

Apollo: I don’t I’ve had people ask me here like because I’m dark and stuff like you know where are you from as in what country were you know

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

You know what ethnicity and that sort of stuff but but that’s only after ever after meeting someone

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

you know but I found that to be the friendliest out of any other any sauna I’ve ever been to in my life

Russell: I.ii.24:00

in Vancouver

Russell:

And you felt very comfortable there

Apollo:

Very

Russell:

Right

Apollo: Very and I mean you know I mean I feel much better now like that part of my life that I was talking to you about before

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

where I was really depressed about stuff that was a long time ago

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:
you know and even though I have I sometimes have those feelings now um and those feelings of um I guess you know loneliness or trying to kind of find I don’t know someone there that’s going to be you know sort of a little more meaningful I kind of have a different perspective on it now and I think that just comes with age I think you know and having been to them and having gone through that experience many many years ago I’m just now for whatever reason better able to maybe because of my maturity deal with

I.ii.24:30
um ah my um myself and I’m not now in my personal life in a depressed state so you know and I know now that it is possible to go out and have a good time

I.ii.25:00
at at you know but don’t expect (he laughs a little) my expectations have lowered because I know what to expect I know now what to do and how to operate and what the whole deal is when I go there you know

Russell:
I’ve a
Apollo:
Yeah
Russell:
I’ve a couple more questions about the web-site
Apollo:
Oh yeah cool
Russell:
The lighting in the pool area and in the bar in
Apollo:
Oh yes
Russell:
in the pictures
Apollo:
Yes

Russell:
Was that the same as the lighting when you went there
Apollo:
No it wasn’t
Russell:
Oh right
Apollo:
(we laugh) It wasn’t it’s interesting isn’t it in the picture I think for the picture’s sake it was bright and the colours were really like full on like really you know vivid

Russell:
The colours of what
Apollo:
The colours of the pool um of people it was very bright
Russell:
Yeah yeah
Apollo:
Like it was almost white
Russell:
Yeah
Apollo:
and it looked very clean and it was clean but the actual ah pool area itself wasn’t wasn’t that bright
Russell:
What about the bar
Apollo:
The bar was actually the same it was lit much more for the photo but in the actual um um when I went to when I saw it even though I did recognise it um it was darker

Russell:
Was it darker generally or was it that it also had pools and shafts or beams?

Apollo: Darker generally I'd say

Russell: Yeah what about the pool was that darker generally or was it kind of more spot lit that theatrical quality

Apollo: Theatrical quality

Russell: Right

Apollo: I found every pool area to be like that had sort of you know spot lights and be a little theatrical actually

Russell: Have you been to the new sauna in Melbourne

Apollo: No no I haven’t been I haven’t been to one since coming back and I’ve

Russell: The kind of spa area there has

Apollo: Is it outrageous

Russell: Is lit underwater

Apollo: Oh is it

Russell: It’s lit underwater yeah

Apollo: Oh my god how Hollywood

Russell: I wouldn’t say that myself

Apollo: No

Russell: But I’m not quite sure what you’re imagining it’s a small s it’s a spa but it’s a large spa (the phone starts ringing) but it has underwater lighting in it

Apollo: Who’s calling me at this hour

Russell: Do you need to check it

Apollo: Yeah I’ll get that just stop there

Russell: Okay it’s all right

Apollo: (I switch off the recorder while Apollo takes the call. It’s from a man he’s recently met. The man wants to meet up for a drink tonight. I offer to end our recording session there but Apollo wants to continue. He makes some tea and the recorder is switched back on.)

Russell: Okay all right what I want to ask you about is ah what when you go to saunas let’s think of a recent time you’ve been to a sauna even though there are several months you know (as though beginning a list) one

Apollo: who are you

Russell: Okay I

Apollo: You can give me simple answers to start with if you like
Apollo:  
Who am I I'm myself

Russell:  
All right

Apollo:  
I mean

Russell:  
So when you go along

Apollo:  
Yeah

Russell:  
do you um ah consciously you talked about that first time and those early visits

Apollo:  
Yeah

Russell:  
I.iii.01:00
about learning how to present yourself in certain ways

Apollo:  
Yes yes

Russell:  
It's like in and presumably not present some parts of yourself and to present some parts of yourself for instance that image of being in the door and some of it's in the light and some of it's in the dark right what do you put in the light and what do you keep in the dark not just visually but

Apollo:  
I.iii.01:30
I don't really understand what you kind of mean

Russell:  
Well

Apollo:  
A lamb

Russell:  
No not a lamb um like a cat

Russell:  
Oh yeah

Apollo:  
at times but one that's
um physically open *(he laughs a little)* I become like a vessel that’s becoming receptive for what’s what’s about to you know happen

**Russell:**

Does that happen spontaneously or do you as it were switch some things on or off to do that

**Apollo:**

It

*I.iii.03:00*

happens spontaneously I think I don’t consciously think right now I’m going to act like this

**Russell:**

Right

**Apollo:**

I just think when I walk through those doors I mean I am myself ultimately but you do I do um I do become like this predator in a way mm

**Russell:**

Predator

**Apollo:**

Mm

**Russell:**

Um you talked a few times *I.iii.03:30* tonight about looking at the other person

**Apollo:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

I might be wrong but I don’t recall you ever saying looking at the other man

**Apollo:**

Well you might be right um why why person and not man *(he laughs)*

**Russell:**

Not so much not so much I’m not so much interested in why but more do you ever have do you ever th *do you have a recollection of these people* *I.iii.04:00*

being people or being men who you’re around what what is the thing that makes sense for you in your experience

**Apollo:**

Men

**Russell:**

They’re men

**Apollo:**

It’s a very male experience

**Russell:**

Right

**Apollo:**

Very

**Russell:**

And do you feel that you’re a man

**Apollo:**

Yes

**Russell:**

Do you feel that you’re more of a man when you’re in those environments

**Apollo:**

Yes

**Russell:**

What is it that

**Apollo:**

I do

**Russell:**

That that’s fine now I need to know what is that extra bit

**Apollo:**

What what’s that extra bit

**Russell:**
When when yeah when I asked you do you feel MORE of a man what

Apollo:
Yeah yeah
Russell:
That last term masculine
Apollo:
Yep
Russell:
What’s
Apollo:
What does that mean
Russell:
Yeah what or what are the parts of that (Apollo laughs) can you kind of
Apollo: (he laughs) in my in my pants or towel somehow to me conveys that more masculine animal-like sexual um
Apollo:
Oh well okay my thumbs
Russell:
Yep
Apollo:
(he laughs) in my in my pants or towel somehow to me conveys that more masculine animal-like sexual um
Apollo:
when I’m when I’m there
Russell:
All right
Have you ever been

Apollo:
It's not a passive experience

Russell:
Ah it's not passive

Apollo:
No

Russell:
So the thumbs are not just sitting there they're as you said earlier they're pushing the towel down

Apollo:
Yeah pushing the towel down

Russell:
But the towel's tight

Apollo:
Yes

Russell:
And resisting that

Apollo:
Yes

Russell:
Do you enjoy that feeling

Apollo:
I love it

Russell:
Do you enjoy that feeling if there's no one there

Apollo:
I.iii.06:30
That's interesting no I don't

Russell:
You enjoy being watched doing that

Apollo:
Yes I wouldn't do it if there was no one there

Russell:
The person

Apollo:
It's all related to the play

Russell:
Right okay so

Apollo:
between between me and not only the play between me and someone I might be interested

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
but also between me and all of the all of the men there

Russell:
I.iii.07:00
Right

Apollo:
All of the men

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
Because I want to be viewed as that as someone who is masculine and and that's what I do in order to feel that way

Russell:
Do you find that you're attracted to men who do that back to you

Apollo:
Who do that back to me

Russell:
That gesture with the thumbs

Apollo:
I.iii.07:30
Not necessarily but I have been I remember been attracted to that to to other men who have had a similar way of responding to me

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
But not always

Russell:
Right and when you've been attracted to them has that often led to some sort of sexual encounter with them

Apollo:
Yes yes

Russell:
Has that been a satisfying encounter usually

Apollo:
I.iii.08:00
I don’t remember

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
to be honest

Russell:
Has it been a memorable (I laugh a little) has it been a memorable encounter

Apollo:
At times yes

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
But I do remember all I can remember more than whether or not the experience was satisfying I do remember being attracted to and following on following through ah with

I.iii.08:30
um other men who have acted or who have had that similar kind of stance physicality as me

Russell:

Apollo:
I do remember that more than what the actual experience was like

Russell:
When you talk about projecting can you tell me a bit more about what that is what you do to project

Apollo:
What

I.iii.09:00
I do to project

Russell:
For instance is there an increase in effort

Apollo:
Yeah oh there is

Russell:
Yeah okay

Apollo:
There is and I’ve sort of talked about it you know tonight I think it’s um it’s that sort of open physical um animal-like um feeling that I develop

I.iii.09:30
that I assume or imagine filters through to my body and that I carry with me when I when I walk around the place I don’t feel um like effeminate in any way when I go to those places I in fact feel a lot more butch

Russell:

Apollo:
l.iii.10:00
Masculine whatever you want to call it

Russell:
Do you think

Apollo:
And that and consequently they’re the sort of I guess people that I’m trying to attract

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
Or yeah what I consider to be masculine and butch and you know in my in my own mind

l.iii.10:30
attractive

Russell:
So are these men who are projecting themselves um this projecting seems to suggest a movement out

Apollo:
Yes

Russell:
Is there any movement in for instance is there any sense

Apollo:
Yes there is

Russell:
that their projection hits you or strikes you in some way or comes to you

Apollo:
Well

l.iii.11:00
when you say movement in there’s a movement in in the darker areas

Russell:
Oh yeah

Apollo:
I find that um you know I mean I kind of contradict myself now but I said it’s never...
Russell: Yeah you used the word protocol

Apollo: Protocol right I think I might have meant like how how you do it

Russell: Right okay do you

Apollo: in the environment and you learn pretty quickly because you watch and you see and you know

Russell: Okay do you see what you’ve just been telling me

Apollo: Yeah

Russell: as being part

Apollo: For me

Russell: Yeah

Apollo: Yeah it is I think it is

Russell: But not all men do that

Apollo: They don’t

Russell: Ah do that’s a question not a statement on my part

Apollo:
I think they do

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

In their own way

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

you know and there are they do it in their own way but there’s also

I.iii.14:30

an accepted protocol or way in which you operate and you you seek to be with someone to get someone

Russell:

Okay can you recall a time

Apollo:

Yep

Russell:

when you were witness to either from a distance or because you were involved in some way

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

with a breach in the protocol that was so surprising

I.iii.15:00

or

Apollo:

Yeah oh yeah

Russell:

Yeah any any particular one in particular

Apollo:

Yeah there was this oh yeah (he laughs)

Russell:

Tell me

Apollo:

Yeah there was this ah older guy I remember once and he abused the protocol totally by being really rough upfront and broke all the rules

Russell:

In which part of the sauna did this happen

Apollo:

In um

L.iii.15:30

ah the where the cubicles are like floating around you know next to the sau next to the um next to the the wet bit around the pool around there

Russell:

Is this at Volcano

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah okay

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

If if he’d done this in the dark if he’d done the same things in the dark area would that have been an abuse of protocol

Apollo:

For me yes

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

because I don’t I don’t like

Russell:

the dark areas

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:
Okay all right

Apollo:

I.iii.16:00
And I know that people touch and whatever but no thanks

Russell:
All right okay so what was it that he actually did that was

Apollo:
He was aggressive towards me and

Russell:
What did he yell at you

Apollo:
No with his body he forced himself upon me against my free will

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
and I didn’t like it and I pushed him away and he was insistent

Russell:
He kept coming back

Apollo:
He kept coming back and I had to bolt

I.iii.16:30
and I remember that really clearly and that was a real abuse of the protocol you know my space and um I didn’t like it (he laughs a little)

Russell:
Because my experience has been that often it’s just a simple deflection a very light touch is enough to let someone know that no means no

Apollo:
Well it is it can

Russell:
Is that your experience

Apollo:
Absolutely

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
and it can be as subtle as

I.iii.17:00
a look

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
It can also be um the most obvious is someone walking away

Russell:
Yep

Apollo:
when you’ve encroaching on their territory

Russell:
Yep

Apollo:
That’s the most obvious and you think oh well they’re not interested and they’re not um or it can just be a vibe that you get you know when you’re sort of trying to put out and you’re not getting anything back you know and you know because we’re all instinctive and we know when

I.iii.17:30
when it’s mutual or when we want to get closer or go in you know it happens on a on a you know on both levels

Russell:
I have a question now to ask you about this man’s behaviour would you describe it as masculine
Apollo:  
Yes yeah it was masculine *(as if predicting my next question) why *(he laughs)*  
Russell:  
No no I mean we’ve talked about things picked things being direct forthcoming  
Apollo:  
Yeah yeah it was masculine but he was just being too aggressive for me  
Russell:  
Too aggressive  
Apollo:  
Yeah and not respecting me  
Russell:  
So there’s  
Apollo:  
My space  
Russell:  
So part of the masculinity that’s formed you know the protocol of masculinity involves a certain amount of restraint as well or respect  
Apollo:  
*(a silence) Yeah I’d say it would but it also*  
Russell:  
Or or it does  
Apollo:  
It does involve  
Russell:  
Right  
Apollo:  
a certain amount of respect of course  
Russell:  
Right okay  
Apollo:  
Of course it does yeah I think so  
Russell:  
All right um I’m oh this is *(as to myself) where do I go now the*  
Apollo:  
you don’t have to tell me the outcome but what I’m curious about now is when you’re in a cubicle with someone how do you negotiate the the ways  
Russell:  
What we do  
Apollo:  
in which images of masculinity and images of  
Russell:  
or the ways in which the masc the masculinity and the erotic encounter are respected or or or sit in relation to each other because  
Apollo:  
By express by expressing yourself and by engaging once you’re in there and you begin to feel and touch and engage with someone you know pretty quickly sense your body senses whether or not you know um generally speaking it’s going to happen or whether it’s for you now you you asked me in terms of masculinity  
Russell:  
Well I’m thinking for instance do you have a situation where somebody just says to you  
Apollo:  
let’s  
Russell:  
Whether it’s a whisper or whether it’s a thing do they ever say to you what do you like doing  
Apollo:  
Always
Russell: Right okay

Apollo: Often

Russell: All right but that comes

Apollo: Not always sorry often

Russell: That doesn’t come that doesn’t come as soon as you shut the door

Apollo: No

Russell: So there’s you do something for a while and then someone

Apollo: Yeah

Russell: will say that

Apollo: Yeah

Russell: And often they will say that to you

Apollo: Often

Russell: Right

Apollo: Yep and um I don’t know you work sort of pretty quickly

Russell: Verbally

Apollo: Sometimes sometimes um but not always ah what what you’re going to do

Russell: Is part of that for you how much is respecting the other person’s masculinity and respecting your own masculinity part of that

Apollo: Um

Russell: Like because part of what you’ve said is about it all being a male thing to what extent do you like to keep that going for both of you

Apollo: For the whole time

Russell: Right

Apollo: And I I try to

Russell: And does that become quite a difficult and delicate and skilful operation

Apollo: It does because not everybody has that sensitivity and not everybody is um respects you I try

Russell: despite the environment I try to respect them as much as possible and I would hope that they would do the same for me but it doesn’t always happen that way and that’s when you get out

Apollo: (a silence) When you talk about a place

Russell: being a clean place is that to do with respect that the place respects you if it’s clean
Apollo:
I never thought of it like that um

Russell:
Then that might be an answer do you feel you the place is looking after you a bit if it’s clean

Apollo:
Yes I do

Russell:
I.iii.23:00
Right

Apollo:
Don’t you (this is a question)

Russell:
I guess so (I laugh) I haven’t thought about it I just was thinking about it in relation to what you’re telling me I think I have to stop there for now

Apollo:
Okay

Russell:
but (I laugh a little) I think this is a really interesting discussion

Apollo:
Yeah it is

Russell:
Um
I.iii.23:30
I think we just have to stop because we’ve just got so much

Apollo:
All right

Russell:
that we’ve done and it’ll be a bit overwhelming otherwise but we can talk more about it

Apollo:
Sure

Russell:
and also we’re going to have another interview but we can talk before that

Apollo:
before that

Russell:
before that interview or we can talk at the other interview as well

Apollo:
There’s something about male to male kind of masculinity that you know is a real turn on (he laughs a little)

Russell:
and that’s what you well that’s what I kind of try to not consciously but act out and also want back when you’re with someone and you know I mean it plays itself out obviously when you when you lock the door you know and it’s like you know what you know what’s going to happen and um

Apollo:
I.iii.24:00
I think a lot of it has to do with respect absolute respect and people who don’t even though I might have people guys who um have I might have gone wow you know he’s hot um if he doesn’t respect me um and is like that other guy really rough with me um (he claps his hands together, audibly)

Russell:
I.iii.24:30
I’m out of there I don’t know about you but a lot of it has to do with respect

Apollo:

Russell:
Yeah I think it’s important for me yeah I do it’s interesting because I’ve not thought about that until this conversation

Apollo:
Right

Russell:
I.iii.25:00
strange as that may seem (I laugh a little) here I am doing all this thinking about these experiences but I haven’t thought about respect as an issue

Apollo:
I think it’s a lot  it has  it’s a big part

Russell:
I think it’s an enormous part of what I do and what I’m responding to

Apollo:
But but separate

Russell:
But I haven’t thought about it

Apollo:
No but separate to the respect there’s got to be that animal kind of you know um thing between you that it you know that that makes you want to kind of do it

Russell:
Is that
I.iii.26:00
what the balancing is then that play between

Apollo:
I guess I guess it is  yeah it is  it’s on one it’s  it’s a combination of  of having respect for each other and enjoying what you’re doing

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
um you know with someone that you think or that I think is um I don’t know masculine

Russell:
Can I just ask a simple question

Apollo:
I.iii.26:30
Sure

Russell:
That thing about doing something but there are certain constraints on it  that is there’s the animal which would seem to be pred  as you said a predator  on the other hand there’s

Apollo:
I do feel very predatorial in there

Russell:
Yeah but on the other hand there’s also a quality of respect

Apollo:
Yes

Russell:
That seems to suggest two like

Apollo:
opposing forces

Russell:
Yeah opposing forces  to what extent (I laugh a little) are the thumbs pushing down on the towel
I.iii.27:00
(Apollo laughs a little) some kind of little indicator of that or a sign of that or does that make sense to you  that it feels that it’s the same  the thumbs are pushing down

Apollo:
It does  it does in terms yeah it does in terms of the masculinity but not  I don’t think it’s  it’s obviously a sign of for me masculinity but but I don’t think you could could say that it has anything to do with respect for me

Russell:
Well for instance if somebody just took their towel off

Apollo:
I.iii.27:30
Right right

Russell:
Instead of that thing of their thumbs pushing down against the band but the band was resisting  because the towel being in place means

Apollo:
I wouldn’t expect someone to do that though
Russell:
Right

Apollo:
I just wouldn’t

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
Just because I do it you know

Russell:
Right do you find yourself when you walk around the sauna ever see men who’ve just got a towel draped over their shoulder or something like that who

Apollo:
And none and nothing nude

Russell:
Yeah yeah have you ever seen people walking around like that

Apollo:
Nah no never never

Russell:
Oh really that’s interesting okay

Apollo:
Never

Russell:
Well we’ll leave it there

Apollo:
It makes you think a lot okay

Russell:
Because

Apollo:
All right

Russell:
we’ve gone now well over an hour

Apollo:
Okay cool and I’ve got to call give that guy a call back

Russell:
Yeah yeah yeah okay but we can talk more or whatever

Apollo:
All right sure

Russell:
Okay thanks

Apollo:
No worries

(I switch off the minidisc recorder)

END OF CONVERSATION

I.iii.28:00
never but um yeah very interesting (he laughs)

L.iii.28:00
appendices 9–16
appendix 9: Edward I

The following transcript documents a conversation with Edward that took place over tea and cake in my living-room on a weekday morning. Where Kate and I had sat at the table while we talked, Edward requested the floor. He was suffering from a cold, a pretty bad one that found him increasingly congested as the session unfolded. This became especially evident during the latter part of the conversation when I asked him to describe the scene in the cubicle. The transcript reproduces neither his ironic wit, his sense of mischief, nor his very funny repertoire of stereotypical voices and personae.

Russell:

I.i.00:00
Right we’re on (referring to the recorder) it makes these funny little noises but we’ll just ignore that (Edward stretches and moans a little) ah okay what’s becoming a common question I ask people is do you remember the first time you ever became aware that such places as saunas existed

Edward:

Yes very much

Russell:

I.i.00:30
Right can you tell me about that

Edward:

Okay the first time was um after I’d gone out to ah a dance club with a friend of mine and he said that he was going back to a sauna or going out to a sauna afterwards and my vision of a sauna was something from America like that belonged to a men’s club that were you know with I had that was something like out of a movie where there were scantily clad

I.i.01:00
women walking around and um and er you know boys bringing drinks on trays of glasses on an image from like the nineteen twenties type thing which he then informed me what a sauna was and I thought oh foul [how foul?] you can’t do that oh you’re disgusting

Russell:

Did you go

Edward:

No I didn’t go until oh prob jeez

I.i.01:30
probably five years later when a friend of mine said you’re so god damned fucking frustrated (he laughs a little) you need to go and get a root

Russell:

Well let’s go back this first friend

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

You said he he told you and then you said oh that’s you know whatever what did he tell you

Edward:

Oh he just said that um yeah I mean he’s very honest and very casual and he just said oh it’s it’s a place where um you go just to have sex

I.i.02:00
and then I remember his explanation of small dark rooms that you walk around being semi-naked and partly at that point of time I had such bad body image that I just thought walking around semi-naked was I would kill myself first the idea and also the idea of um because I still believed at that time in the act of falling in love and and meeting someone and you know the whole

I.i.02:30
consent of sex through liking someone as opposed to lust more than than love so but yeah he just he just he’s sauna like the image of just like a big heated sauna really you know like not the fact of spas or small rooms or or places to sit down and watch movies or cafes or anything like that he didn’t describe that

Russell:

Right

Edward:

Walking around in the dark scantily

I.i.03:00
clad looking for men

Russell:
Right um was this in Melbourne

Edward:
Yes in Melbourne

Russell:
Right okay so about five years later oh roughly how old were you at that time by the way when you first heard that

Edward:
Ah about I would be thirty-three I didn’t sleep with anyone until I was thirty-two

Russell:
Right

Edward:
So that was yeah thirty-three

Russell:
Okay and it was about five years later that you first went

Edward:
Yeah I’ve been only probably four because I’ve I’ve only been going to saunas for a couple of years

Russell:
Yep yep same here

Edward:
So it’s like very fresh

Russell:
So do you remember how you came to go how you came to go that first time

Edward:
Yeah yep Craig was um hassling me to go and he which in the long run was because he wanted to go and he didn’t want to go by himself so he wanted to go with someone so basically he convinced me that I needed to go so then we both went

Russell:
Right you were you in a relationship with him at that stage

Edward:
No no

Russell:
He was how would you describe your relationship with him at that stage a friend

Edward:
Yeah a f

Russell:
(laughing a little) A an employee

Edward:
A friend first then employee and then um yeah no he was ah more of a friend it was probably two weeks before we actually slept with each other the first time

Russell:
Right so he had he had not been either

Edward:
Oh no he had been he had been going since he was thirteen or fourteen

Russell:
Really

Edward:
Yeah

Russell:
Well we’ll leave that for the moment (we laugh a little) but um but he was keen for you to go

Edward:
Yes yeah

Russell:
because he thought you were frustrated
Edward:
Yeah I mean he’s yeah he’s a complex
cracter so there were many reasons

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
sitting on the same plate but one
I.i.05:00
of them because he thought that I
needed to go and one was he wanted to go
and go with someone

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
Another one was he needed to go as well

Russell:
Right okay so the first time you went along
you went with a companion

Edward:
Yes

Russell:
Right okay that’s interesting because a lot
of the people I’ve interviewed their first time
was all done alone

Edward:
God they’ve got more guts than I have

Russell:
(I laugh a little, then) Well it it makes
interesting listening hearing about it but um
where did you go

Edward:
I went to ah Volcano

Russell:
Right
I.i.05:30
okay and were you was that the only option

Edward:
I had no idea where any others were

Russell:
Right did you have an awareness that there
were any others

Edward:
Yes I I mean I know er

Russell:
then

Edward:
Tops or something I don’t know now
[unintelligible] confused it’s only a couple of
years ago I think that may have been open
ah something in Suburb A or

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
Ah I’ve been told there’s one in Suburb T as
well I may be wrong see I don’t I don’t I
don’t know

Russell:
There used to be

Edward:
I really don’t know

Russell:
I.i.06:00
There used to be one in Suburb T okay so
your your knowledge or information about
Volcano existing was that obtained through
Craig

Edward:
Yes

Russell:
Right okay

Edward:
I knew that it was in the city I mean I was
working one block away from it and I had no
idea where it was
Russell:
Oh right oh right so when you went with him
Edward:
Yep
Russell:
what happened like first of all
Edward:
It was like a guided tour
Russell:
Well before we get into that
Edward:
Yeah
Russell:
um what time of the day did you go
Edward:
It was about I.I.06:30
Russell:
Right
Edward:
Eleven o'clock at night
Russell:
That you arrived
Edward:
Yeah
Russell:
Yeah okay
Edward:
Because we'd been working I had a big function so
Russell:
Yep what day of the week was it
Edward:
Thursday
Russell:
Okay and so you arrived there on foot or
Edward:
No drove there
Russell:
You drove there and parked
Edward:
out the front
Russell:
Just out the front okay and at what point did you recognise which building was the building you were going into
Edward:
After when Craig pointed and said that's it over I.I.07:00 there and I said oh I thought it was a pub
Russell:
(I laugh a little, then) You thought it was a pub right okay so looking at the outside of the building what did you start to imagine
Edward:
I had no idea none whatsoever I really did not I mean I'm one of these people that I don't conjure up an image of something I um when Casey had told me one thing I didn't take that as I.I.07:30 being an absolute gospel
Russell:
Yeah
Edward:
I'm sure I know I mean I'm old enough to know that not everything is going to be exactly the same
Russell:
Edward: Yeah

Edward: so I wait until I get there so the I'm not someone who is surprised easily because I haven't formed a picture of something

Russell: So what when you say it looked like a pub did you get a sense that all of the building that you could see would be available to move through

Edward: No I

Russell: or that only a small part of it would be

Edward: I saw that there were you know more than one floor

Russell: Yeah

Edward: I I.i.08:00

Edward: I saw that there were you know more than one floor

Russell: Right okay so is Volcano

Edward: No I've been to um er the one on oh the new one Squirt

Russell: Right okay

Edward: It's more like either going to the Hilton or going to the pub around the corner you've got a choice (we laugh a little)

Russell: And which one's the pub around the corner

Edward: Volcano

Russell: (I laugh a little) Okay right all right let's go back to that first night now you said it was like a guided tour at what point did it begin being like

Edward: As soon as we got through the front door Craig just started went into well this is the front door and this is where you go and this is what you do and this is the café and this is the change rooms and up there all I got told was up there is like heavy duty if you go up those steps he only took me downstairs and showed me downstairs not not upstairs because I know and not where the the video room or anything was he didn't show me that only because that's sounds really silly but that's his protection of

Edward: Oh yeah
Edward: Right

Edward:

That upstairs was not you know I remember him saying you don’t want to see what’s up there (I laugh) it was like you know you can have some form of debauchery but you can’t have it all it was like so I didn’t question him I just went okay you know you know what I’m like I probably won’t like that

Russell:

Fine fine

Edward:

So

Russell:

All right so that guided tour went on for a while

Edward:

Yeah for about

Edward:

Well the that kind of guided tour was yeah then I went and had um a sauna and a spa and he went off and had sex with someone

Russell:

Um what happened at reception when you arrived the reception area like what was happening for you you talked about what he’s doing he’s giving you a guided tour

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

Were you completely involved in the guided tour or

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

Right okay um is it always on for you has it been on ever since
Edward:
Not anymore no can’t be bothered anymore

Russell:
Right

Edward:
It’s a nice shift in and I think that certainly that is totally contributed to saunas

Russell:
Right

Edward:
That has been a big learning curve for me where seeing so many semi-naked men that aren’t in magazines

Russell:
(laughing a little) Yes

Edward:
So you suddenly go by god there are normal bodies out there and it’s fine and I don’t give a fuck

Russell:
Right

Edward:
And you can and also

Russell:
(laughter)

Edward:
I thought oh oh someone’s interested in me that’s nice (putting on a voice) let go of my foot (I laugh) yeah it was it was it was funny

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
I mean it was funny

Russell:
Were you laughing

Edward:
I did at one stage and I got told to be quiet by Craig

Russell:
Oh while you were with him

Edward:
Yeah

Russell:
During the guided tour

Edward:
Yep

Russell:
Okay what stage was that

Edward:
Oh going through the little dark rooms at the back there was some sling thing or something hanging up (laughing a little) and I just went oh my you know just started going

Russell:
my god and having a good cackle and I got told that shh you know shouldn’t be talking you know I should be quieter and I thought well that’s not me

Edward:
Were you aware that other people around you were quiet

Edward:
Yeah I thought they had problems
Russell:

(I laugh a little) Oh yeah ah tell me more about that

Edward:

That well it’s so serious it’s so serious they’re so intent

Edward:

on on on not being foolish on not on looking right on you know even the fucking ugly ones and even the even fantastically beautiful ones are all exactly the same they don’t smile they don’t you know they don’t converse with their bodies they they’re just these like walking statues until they see someone who they really know and then you see this smile break on their face and they sit down and have a chat

and then I think by god you’re actually attractive so they’re walking around and they’re so serious you know they’ve got their eyes lowered and they make these quick glances and then you get the ones that have done it so many times

[unintelligible] (he snaps his fingers) snap it out so quick and they do their three little glances and then walk back past you again and I find it pretty humorous really it’s pretty funny I mean I certainly don’t I mean I don’t go in there to make fun of people but certainly

situations sometimes are pretty funny I mean I’ve been cruised and then burst into laughter and then had the best sex (I laugh a little) because they suddenly go oh my god I wasn’t sure if you were interested then you start chatting and then like it’s really good it’s a lot of fun whereas yeah I’m not I can’t I don’t find the the coldness of of I mean the quietness is not enjoyable

for me

Russell:

I must say when I bumped into you recently um that was really enjoyable to just sit on that bench by the pool and just chat with you

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

Very enjoyable and what I found was that in the rest of the evening I found myself unusually wanting to talk with people in a way that is not characteristic for me

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

Um so I’m just kind of interesting because your

Edward:

have a chat

Russell:

Yeah that I it it was just delightful to just be chatty with someone and then find that oh I can be chatty

Edward:

Have a chat

Russell:

with other people and the conversation’s

Edward:

I think that you know how people go to the sauna there is the closeness that they’re missing out on and they obtain that by bodily contact

but then if if they get to talk as well then there’s there’s a release there is much more of a I mean I’ve had sex with I mean I’ve gone there a little bit pissed and just could not talk couldn’t be bothered talking and had fantastic sex with someone and that was I mean that was really good but it was completely different from

Russell:

The this thing about um emulation that I’ve brought up

Edward:

I’m aware that one of the things that happens for me is that I’m interested in finding the ways in which I do or don’t fit in with a mood or an atmosphere but it sounds like you’re much more interested in staking out some terrain of your
own or some behaviour of your own and not 
emulating I mean that you don't want to 
become one of these statues walking 
around

Edward:

No I don't I don't want to but I think 
that definitely there are times when I do

Russell:

Oh yeah

Edward:

I do emulate because I mean you go and sit 
in a little room where they're showing little 
porn videos

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

You you take on the stance of being there 
you sit you watch those you don't talk you 
don't turn around and stare at anyone you 
just watch the video

Russell:

Can you um can you recall a specific recent 
experience of doing that at Volcano

Edward:

Oh yeah definitely the the night I met you

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

That I mean I just went up there 
but also I mean part of that is too I mean I 
love you know go up there and watch a bit of 
porn

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

to get somewhat aroused by by watching that

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

Where I mean one night I did chat to 
someone in there it was this old guy it was 
just very friendly very chatty I mean this is 
also experience as well but the older guys 
go up there and and talk to you and then 
now I know eventually it leads on to they just 
want to have sex and their talking is about 

obtaining sex and their friendliness 
is carried on that when they see you walking 
around or anything else they talk to you then 
but then it becomes a status thing as well 
like they've actually had sex with you or that 
they will talk to you when someone good 
looking is standing by or or someone is 
noticing and they will talk to you then as if 
they are very good friends or you've just had 

sex

Russell:

Right

Edward:

with them

Russell:

As if they're not a lonely person or

Edward:

Yeah as if they can still score

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

Well

you know as if that that's still part and 
parcel of them

Russell:

(softly) Okay

Edward:

and that I don't like because that's yeah you 
can see straight through I remember one 
guy came one old guy the very first time 
the old guy I was chatting to down there and
yeah just eventually led to oh you know come and I'll suck your dick and I just said oh sorry no and then walked away and then later on I met him and he came up and he wanted to put his arm around me and I just said ugh you know go away from me you know and then he came up in the change room when there were a lot of people there and he said oh I’m sorry I didn’t mean to hassle you before and he shook my hand and he had semen all over his hand (I laugh a little) and I just said you’re a dirty fucking old cunt now piss off and everyone looked and I just went look see and showed people the semen all over my hand and he got so embarrassed he ran away and I just thought you’re not going to put me in this predicament you know I’ll put it straight back on you be responsible for what you do and so you do I mean sorry getting back to the emulation I think you do emulate you naturally emulate

Can you describe it for me

Edward:

Ah I’d say small lounge room size in um as oh god similar to a sunken

Roman theatre where you have levels of seating and a screen in front of you mostly quite dark carpeted the levels are carpeted the same colour as the floor and walls um you can enter from one side walk across in front of the screen and go round um yeah it’s pretty dull on one side of the entrance leads out into the the hallway

on the other side there are it’s like I don’t know a dark room with beds or something like that I haven’t quite worked it out yet I’ve never stopped long enough to have a look but often you hear people sleeping there so there must be something there but

Russell:

Yeah you have to watch out for people asleep there

Edward:

But décor is not good too dark

Russell:

What do you mean not good

Edward:

It’s just so dark but then again I suppose that’s what they’re require you’re not going up there to look for opulence although then

if you go to um Squirt they’ve got these you know big lounge chairs that you can just fall back into and

Russell:

Is that for the porn videos or for the

Edward:

That’s just for the video the television

Russell:

Yeah television whatever yeah

Edward:

or whatever movie or whatever it is yep
Russell:
I’ve been there when Ban um Bananas in Pyjamas has been screening by the way

Edward:
*(through a mouthful of cake, and putting on a voice)* That’s interesting

Russell:
On the porn videos

Edward:
*(as above)* That’s very interesting

Russell:
But we won’t go into that um

Edward:
*i.22:00* when you go to the um what do you call that room again with the videos at *Volcano* how do you term it

Russell:
The porn room all right um when you go there do you have um an um a habitual place that you will want to locate yourself

Edward:
Porn room

Russell:
The porn room all right um when you go there do you have um an um a habitual place that you will want to locate yourself

Edward:
Ah

Russell:
or what happens let’s

Edward:
*i.22:30* think back to that recent

Russell:
That recent time

Edward:
Well you go up and down like a yo-yo

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
cos if there’s nothing happening downstairs or whatever

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
you’re just killing time you just go up there

Russell:
Yeah why do you go up there if you’re just killing time

Edward:
Well specifically I suppose you’re waiting for someone to come along who actually pushes your buttons and if there’s no one there you can only spa and sauna so many times and I’ve given up going into the wet sauna because you can’t sit down in there for one it stinks and the second one you can’t

Edward:
*i.23:00* actually have a sauna in there without someone sliding their hand on your cock or but the I don’t know maybe it’s just me but the act of asking permission or having an indication of a willingness from the person you’re approaching would is a nice indication that you can actually put your hand on their dick and so that kind of freaks me out a bit um but if you if I go upstairs it usually it depends if there’s no one in there I’ll just sit right on the very edge but

Russell:
When you

Edward:
*i.23:30* say the very edge do you mean the edge of the seat or

Russell:
Yeah because it’s in a horseshoe shape the seating

Edward:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
Um just through the door and sit on the very edge of the very the beginning of the seating
Russell:
Right

Edward:
really as opposed to

Russell:
Like the kind of one of the

Edward:
Yeah

Russell:
unconnected ends of the horseshoe

Edward:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
I mean I think there are different levels of seating for what you want to achieve

Russell:
Oh yeah

Edward:
Because you go in sometimes you go in there’s guys sitting on the top level with their towel up around their neck (I laugh) you know exposing their gooly bits sometimes there’s

I.i.24:00
people lying in there giving someone else a head job on the very top level or

Russell:
How many levels are there

Edward:
Three I think three maybe it’s got to do (he laughs a little) to do with (he lisps) experience (then reverts to his usual voice) which level you get to sit on have I progressed to the second level (I laugh a little) uh uh

Russell:
Um so you talked about that being a place where you could go if you hadn’t met anyone yet who’s kind of pushing your buttons

I.i.24:30
how do you get to meet them there

Edward:
Meet them where

Russell:
In that room if you go there are you going there

Edward:
Well I

Russell:
to still continue that project of hoping you can sort of see someone

Edward:
No well usually I go there just have a look at the film

Russell:
Oh yeah

Edward:
(he begins a list) One because I take my glasses off everyone looks beautiful in that room it’s so dark everyone looks like a blur (I laugh) so there’s um you know not much hope um but

I.i.25:00
I mean yeah you get guys that walk that you know specifically walk in front of the screen so they’re lit from one side to the other and why I mean obviously they’ve never been on stage because they can’t see anyone looking at them but yet they still stare in the hope of seeing someone’s face but um obviously they’re they must know that they’re showing showing off showing themselves as well to see in case there’s potential client customer root

I.i.25:30
whatever

Russell:
You’ve never done that yourself
Edward:
No no

Russell:
But

Edward:
I've been paid to be on stage

Russell:
(I laugh, then) Um so do you think if somebody's caught in the in the projection the video projection that in a sense it's like they're on a stage

Edward:
Yeah because sometimes you see them shoot across realise that they're in the light and they just like kind of duck and weave to get out of it and cross the other side that's pretty funny sometimes better than the video

Russell:
I.i.26:00
It is the shortest distance I mean speaking for myself going in coming in there one like if if I'm using that route as some sort of shortcut or because I'm interested in intercepting someone

Edward:
Yeah

Russell:
or something like that then the shortest point

Edward:
Yes between [unintelligible] yeah

Russell:
between the entrance to that room and the exit is straight through the light briefly

Edward:
Yeah

Russell:
and I have no qualms about doing that but you you

Edward:
I.i.26:30
get this sense that there are some people who actually want to be seen or something

Edward:
Yeah I do I think I think some people coming though knowing they're going to be lit

Russell:
What is it about what you see that makes you think that

Edward:
The slowness of pace crossing the room

Russell:
Oh yeah

Edward:
As you said when you you know you've done it walked straight across people do that as well to get from one point to the other as quickly as possible but yeah

Russell:
What do you think of um the porn videos they show there

Edward:
Pathetic (I laugh a little) home made I'm sure they make them out the back room they're the cheapest nastiest possible I'm sure on the scale I mean I'm the only the gay man I know who doesn't have any porn

Russell:
Right

Edward:
(putting on a voice) I'm such a pathetic gay man

Russell:
I don't have any

Edward:
All right that makes two pathetic gay man um there's obviously some scale of you
know whether you watch a Hollywood blockbuster or you know an Indian film um

I.i.27:30
I think a scale of one to ten they're they would be probably one

Russell:

(I laugh a little) I thought you'd go for two at least

Edward:

No having a look at Squirt's ones hooley dooley I mean there's some they've actually you know they actually have some very good videos where there's at least a moment of story line

Russell:

Ah so story line's interesting for you

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

Okay can you tell me bit more about that

Edward:

I.i.28:00
Well I mean I suppose a start and a finish is always good (I laugh a little) the ones the ones at um at Volcano are kind of I think they must go through very bad porn films and take out the pieces that are full of action where the ones you see at S at um Squirt are I mean if you're watching them

I.i.28:30
there'll be a beginning you know with a some kind of story line whether there's a good policeman or um Jack and Jamie go up the hill or something you know there's a beginning

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

to the fucking scenes or there's

Russell:

And that interests you

Edward:

Well there's obviously yeah there's still that you know that mm seduction

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

happening where the ones at at Volcano there doesn't seem to be that and also the quality of the film

I.i.29:00
as well is not as good

Russell:

It does tend to be like looking into an aquarium sometimes doesn't it (I laugh a little)

Edward:

Underwater porn

Russell:

(I laugh, then) Yeah or a snowstorm

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

Um the I'm just wondering does that that sense of a a plot line or a

I.i.29:30
scenario does that play a role for you in what's happening as you move through the sauna

Edward:

Absolutely

Russell:

Oh yeah can you tell me more about that

Edward:

Well I'm I mean if I see someone I like I'm not going to go straight up and think

Russell:

I like you (I laugh a little)

Edward:
and do the big come on yeah it's like I like that whole kind of smiling looking at someone because I mean I don't I don't if it's still just going in to obtain a fuck I could stay home and have a wank

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
You know so

l.i.30:00
there's got to be some portrayal of interest of for me so the looking walking past watching all that is part of the seduction for me and I mean I I often get accused of I didn't know that you were interested where for me it's part of of being interested is to and also I suppose

Russell:
Sorry part of being interested is to

Edward:
Is to play a a

l.i.30:30
a seduction game

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
Because I mean you know you can stand in a doorway and have someone walk up or you know you just see some people just naked face down on a mat or whatever they are waiting to be fucked by anything that walks through that is not of interest to me so there is

Russell:
Is that more like the Volcano videos

Edward:
That's more like the Volcano videos definitely

Russell:

l.i.31:00

Right

Edward:
That kind of mm

Russell:
Cut straight to the action

Edward:
Yeah kind of I was interested in thinking of the word faceless sex but it's not faceless sex

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
It's it's just there's no room for I mean I can't be sexually motivated or or aroused if it's just going to be you know I've got to see that person walking around and and make some contact with them ah before

l.i.31:30
I find it you know arousing and then it becomes fun that's enjoyable

Russell:
It's do you find yourself um constructing scenarios in my head

Edward:
All right well we'll go with that

l.i.32:00
for the moment because I wasn't going to ask that but go ahead

Edward:
No

Russell:
No do you find yourself though sometimes constructing elaborations or prolongations of that seduction because the seduction's interesting

Edward:
No but I find that happening

Russell:
Oh yeah so you do ah you're not wanting to kind of as it were eke out a moment
Edward: No sometimes I just think oh for fuck's sake I've given you enough indications come to me because I'm no good at making that first-step-up-to-your-face advance

Russell: Right

Edward: I'm just you know for all the bravado that I have I don't have the courage to take that first step and it's I used to think it was fear of rejection but in looking at that and addressing it and summing it up for my own self no it doesn't actually bother me if someone's not interested but ooh pardon me um you know I just don't have that faith I suppose I don't know to make that first step so sometimes yeah it's it's prolonging itself too long and I think how much or obvious do I have to make myself and at that point I can lose the interest as well I mean I'm not going to beat a dead horse if I don't think they're interested in me then I will just not even

Russell: Do you (a silence) do you have um parts of the sauna of Volcano let's focus

Edward: Yeah

Russell: on Volcano for the moment that really interest you as a place to be and

Edward: No

Russell: No you're indifferent

Edward: Yeah

Russell: Okay what about plar parts of it that you don't want to be in at all like you mentioned early on that first night Craig said don't go up there

Edward: Yeah the hardware area well I'd never actually gone into the hardware area but I mean a stream of faith in Craig I'd never gone up there I just thought well it's not of interest to me and then I actually met a guy who worked at Volcano and started having some form of relationship with him and he would always take a room upstairs he and I would always go up there which was really good huge room room to move um

Russell: Did you meet him there

Edward: Yes yeah

Russell: While he was working

Edward: Well after he'd finished working he'd gone down obviously

Russell: And so does that mean that since then that area has been an area that isn't a problem for you to go to

Edward: Yeah not a problem to me

Russell: Right so there's no area in Volcano that you wouldn't you know think about going to
Edward:
Oh there is one little area which is the c walkway up the very top

Russell:
Oh yeah

Edward:
I.i.35:30
where you view down

Russell:
Yes can you describe that walkway because you’re the first person who’s mentioned it

Edward:
Well I’ve only ever been up there once

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
Once and that was when you’re walking downstairs going through the cubicles (he begins a list) one there’s an entrance on the way out or you can take some stairs up which go up er above the area where the pool is and the spa is and the little seats are

Russell:
Yep

Edward:
and there’s holes cut in the wall where you could actually look out and down and that actually

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
I.i.36:00
continues around and then comes down on the other side of that all concealed behind ah pine boards or whatever

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
I just don’t see the sense of it I mean why I don’t know it doesn’t interest me walking up there

Russell:
So you went up there the once and you wouldn’t be bothered going there again there isn’t any kind of sense of

Edward:
No it’s just like what’s what for it’s silly

Russell:
When you went up there that time that only time um was there anyone else up there when

Edward:
No only with Craig

Russell:
Oh yeah

Edward:
took me through up there

Russell:
Oh yeah what did he seem interested in it

Edward:
No no he was just showing me the layout

Russell:
Yeah yeah

Edward:
down the bottom

Russell:
Yeah um the the holes you peer through can you describe them

Edward:
Ah (he makes a noise) pwner maybe large enough to put your head through I don’t I’m not sure I just know they’re holes that you can

Russell:
Were they circular square
Edward: I think circular rounded edges maybe oval

Russell: Were they

Edward: No they vary and I think there's three I think there's three

Russell: Yeah

Edward: I know that there's coming down there's a beam or something across the walkway that if you don't know it's there you can whack yourself on it

Russell: Yeah

Edward: which Craig pointed out to me so I thought my you've been here a few times

Russell: (I laugh) All right and what and you say it overlooks the pool what can you see what

Edward: The pool (I laugh) and the bench where people sit I didn't stop to look long enough it's just like I don't know I'm not a voyeur

Russell: Right

Edward: as such so

Russell: Right right oh can we go back to your glasses

Edward: Yeah

Russell: Um you um mentioned ah er you need your glasses for what

Edward: Seeing

Russell: (I laugh a little) For seeing for seeing ah but

Edward: It's okay I don't ah

Russell: If you don't have them on and you're not

Edward: If I'm really tired things are a little bit blurry

Russell: Right

Edward: A little fuzzy around the edges

Russell: Right

Edward: Um but they're because it's one eye focuses around three inches ah before the other eye focuses so my eyes work like a camera lens continually focusing in and out and they just get very tired after a while

Russell: Right right so it's no problem for you to not have them in the sauna

Edward: No if I if I take them off after about four or five hours my vision is pretty good
Russell:
Yeah
Edward:
But by the end of the day I’ll actually have quite you know sore a soreness
Russell:
Yeah
Edward:
in my eyes
Russell:
And it is necessary for you to have them off at the sauna
Edward:
Yeah cos they cost me nearly eight hundred dollars and if I lose them I’ll spit chips
Russell:
Right and there’s a chance you could lose them
Edward:
Well I have done on a dance floor and it was a very expensive night out
Russell:
(I laugh a little) Right
Edward:
so um yeah I just don’t I also wear a a chain that has cross that has diamonds in it that my grandmother gave me I take that off as well
Russell:
Yeah
Edward:
I mean never adverse to a little rough sex so I’m not going to you know wear all that my glasses or my chain
Russell:
Fine um your key for your locker
Edward:
Yeah
Russell:
Where do you wear that
Edward:
Ankle or wrist depends on the sizes of the elastic whether the circulation’s going to get cut off in my foot or not
Russell:
So it’s that’s the sole criteria
Edward:
Oh and yeah
Russell:
So there are two sizes ankle size or wrist size
Edward:
Ah yeah well I haven’t worked it out depends what the elastic is
Russell:
Yeah
Edward:
Um the difference between Squirt and Volcano is that in Squirt they don’t tie the key or the the number on so when you walk it hits together and makes a tinkling noise which is really annoying
Russell:
That annoys you
Edward:
Yeah where at Squirt ah Volcano it’s not they’re actually separate so they don’t make a noise when you’re walking or
Okay can can I ask you a little bit about this noise then

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

Um what do you find annoying about that tinkling noise that you make as you walk along

Edward:

I sound like one of Santa’s reindeers (I laugh a little) tinkle tinkle tinkle

Russell:

Well what’s wrong with being a bit foolish a minute ago you were talking about how it was fine to be a bit silly or ridiculous

Edward:

No I just find it annoying

Russell:

Oh yeah

Edward:

I mean I was just given my apprentice just went to Ricky Martin and gave me a key ring from Ricky Martin the concert

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

and I put it onto my keys straight away it’s going to last about another day (I laugh a little) because it tinkles with another key or something

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

and it just I pick it up I notice it it’s not something I can get over not noticing so it’s just the noise basically more than anything else I mean I

Russell:

Do you hear the other men walking around with their keys

Edward:

Yeah it’s enjoyable sometimes to hear them coming you think ooh Prancer Dancer (I laugh) or some of them hang onto them when they walk

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

and some of them you can see actually don’t want it to make a noise and try not to let it make a noise

Russell:

You’d think that in a funny way if it was such a source of anxiety or irritation

Edward:

that they’d do (he laughs a little) something about it

Russell:

that something would be done about it

Edward:

Well probably no one mentions it no one says look I really love this place but the tinkle of those keys is driving me around the bend you know I don’t know

Russell:

Do you find um that when you go to a place like Squirt apart from oh how do you deal with that tinkle at Squirt do you (putting on a voice) Give in to it

Russell:

choose to deal with it or do you

Edward:
(puts on a voice again) Relax

Russell:
just tolerate

Edward:
Tolerate

Russell:
You just tolerate it

Edward:
(and puts on a voice again) Give in to the tinkle (then returns to usual) you know

Russell:
Does it change how you move

Edward:
No that\'s too much effort

Russell:

I.i.42:00
Are you more likely to put it on your wrist than on your

Edward:
Yes I would be more likely to put it on my wrist

Russell:
than on your ankle

Edward:
than on my ankle but then the elastic there is smaller so it\'s definitely turn your toes blue sometimes

Russell:
Um do you find that when you\'re at Squirt your behaviour is different from when you\’re at Volcano or do you

Edward:
Yes I\’ll go into the the um the steam room if there\’s a lot of people there I\’ll go in there

I.i.42:30

because if there\’s not then the door hasn\’t been opened continually and the heat in there is unforgivable it\’s hideous

Russell:
At

Edward:
At Squirt

Russell:
Right it\’s too hot in that steam room

Edward:
It\’s too bloody hot

Russell:
Right

Edward:
But then at the moment the last few times that I\’ve been to Volcano the um the the spa has been set on boil

Russell:
(I laugh a little) Right

Edward:
Now so you go in uncooked and come out slightly slightly boiled

Russell:

I.i.43:00
(laughing a little) Parboiled

Edward:
The um I mean my probably most often times I go to a sauna is when I\’ve finished work

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
If I\’ve worked you know a few eighteen hour days and I\’m absolutely fucked my main objective is to go and have a spa and a sauna

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:

If I meet someone and something else happens fantastic but if to actually go there specifically to look

I.i.43:30
ah to get a fuck is for me is is pacing disappointment placing disappointment in your head but um yeah I do actually and I have to say the best sex that I’ve had in those places has been going there to have a a a spa and a sauna because I’m just exhausted so I like Squirt because it has a beautiful spa it’s huge you can sit in there without being hassled you

I.i.44:00
know and and it’s fine it’s really nice and it’s incredibly clean

Russell:

How do you know it’s clean

Edward:

Clean as in it whatever chemicals they use the stench is not underlying

Russell:

Yep

Edward:

Um the temperature is quite nice they are continually cleaning the floors and that all the time obviously they have to for for safety reasons they have to cover their own back and I suppose it doesn’t have the age

I.i.44:30
that Volcano has so it doesn’t have the the underlying scent of the chemicals in the wood ah leeching into the atmosphere

Russell:

Um you when I asked you if your behaviour changes um you talked about how your um how you deal with the steam room might alter because of temperature

Edward:

I.i.45:00
Yeah

Russell:

But is there anything about your persona that alters

Edward:

Um between the two

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

Yeah I think I think there is a difference I think um is sort as the um

I.i.45:30
Squirt has more beautiful men going there which is probably the reason why I don’t expect that I’m going to pick anyone up there probably as well I don’t know I’ve never looked into that but I I think because you’ve got the gym just up the road and a lot of big boys seem to go there more so than go to to um Volcano so yeah my my persona probably does

I.i.46:00
change well certainly because I haven’t been to Squirt that often so I didn’t know it and I was still somewhat a little shy about going there where now probably now I’m not as shy of going there and I’m more relaxed in being in there as well but there’s no um yeah I don’t know maybe maybe there was but maybe now there’s not I don’t I’m not sure

Russell:

You mentioned the gym up the road

Edward:

I.i.46:30
Yeah

Russell:

Do you think that the men

Edward:

I think so

Russell:

are going to the gym up the road

Edward:

Yeah I think so because one one night I had sex with a guy who and he was a huge muscle boy and he said that he’d just come
from the gym up the road which then indicated to me because I hadn’t actually really thought about it that much

**Russell:**

Yep

**Edward:**

and that was very early stages that um oh you know maybe guys do go to that gym and then come down here

**Russell:**

**Edward:**

Yes yeah

**Russell:**

Yeah right um they have a gym night too don’t they do you know about that

**Edward:**

No

**Russell:**

They have a night when um if you

**Edward:**

Is there a gym at Squirts [sic]

**Russell:**

No no but they have a night where if you can show a current gym membership you get in cheap

**Edward:**

Oh okay

**Russell:**

And they advertise it as such as well

**Edward:**

Oh okay

**Russell:**

But you weren’t aware of that

**Edward:**

Uh uh

**Russell:**

**Edward:**

Right okay um

**Russell:**

But damn it I’ll be getting out my gym card now wiping the dust off it

**Edward:**

Woo hoo but pay more

**Russell:**

Ah yeah um no it doesn’t have a gym there but there is one at Volcano have you ever been in the gym at Volcano

**Edward:**

Yes yeah Craig and I used to use it

**Russell:**

Oh yeah

**Edward:**

Yeah I mean um I’ve been there three times with Craig

**Russell:**

I haven’t met anyone who’s used the gym

**Edward:**

It’s quite good but I’d some of the exercises you’ve got to be careful with

**Russell:**

Such as

**Edward:**

As if you’re doing dead weights or something because um careful with those
say as in  because you’ve got to straddle certain pieces of equipment which spreads your towel and slaps your gooly bits up there for show and tell

Russell:

Um are you a member of a gym away from the saunas

Edward:

(laughing a little) Yes  yeah

Russell:

Yes  okay so the gym at  um at Volcano

Edward:

That’s got some

Russell:

Would you say that that’s a really well equipped gym

Edward:

Ah yeah it i well for a small gym yes  yeah it it’s got some good weights  they’re well maintained but you have to  again for  for um health and safety you have to maintain them but they’re  they’re okay

Russell:

Have you been there when there’s a supervisor on duty

Edward:

In the gym

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

Never seen a supervisor in there

Russell:

Yeah  there’s I believe um a trainer there at least once a week

Edward:

Oh that’d be good  I probably don’t go  see I mean for me to go there

Russell:

I’ve only went once at five o’clock straight after I finished

Russell:

Five a.m. or five p.m.

Edward:

Five p.m.

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

After I finished work when I was working nearby  um and that was pretty funny  but I just wanted to see all the guys in their suits coming in and that was pretty funny  I mean everyone who walked in I imagined was wearing a suit seeing as I got there at that time but they were probably

Russell:

But were you in the gym at that

Edward:

No  no  no  I’d just gone into there but um I’m  I mean I’d never see the supervisor  I’d never

know what most of the things are happening in there because I’d go after my work

Russell:

Right

Edward:

which is sometimes twelve or one o’clock in the morning

Russell:

Right  okay  yeah the  um you said you went in there with Craig three times

Edward:

Yeah  I think three times

Russell:

Something like that  okay but does that mean that you haven’t been there without him into the gym
Edward:
No once I went into the gym

Russell:
Oh yeah was there anyone else in there

Edward:
Ah no not when there was someone came in after

Russell:
And when you went there with Craig were there other people in the gym

Edward:
I.50:00
No I some guys walked in but they were a little intimidated I think

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
The fact that there were people in there actually working working out

Russell:
Do you get the sense that it’s an area that’s used very much

Edward:
Oh yeah it’s used by boys with muscles that go in and pump up so they can walk around and look good

Russell:
Right you’ve seen that happen

Edward:
Yeah with Craig basically so if I mean you know we are all similar to ninety-seven percent of the population so if one person does it you

Russell:
No once I went into the gym

Edward:
I had to ring my mother up to ask her how to turn the computer off (I laugh a little) I.51:00 okay

Russell:
From Volcano

Edward:
(laughing a little) No from my work

Russell:
Right

Edward:
So that’s I’m just indicating

Russell:
Oh right

Edward:
to you my ability with computers Ma how do you turn it off there are three buttons what do I push no

Russell:
All right okay

Edward:
I don’t know how

Russell:
Um have you ever set foot inside the cyber lounge

Edward:
No

Russell:
No

Edward:
In fact I didn’t know there was one
Russell:
Ah that’s interesting right
Edward:
But they get their cakes from a well-known supplier is that any good for you
Russell:
(we laugh) I don’t
Edward:
know um what is the most surprising thing you’ve witnessed at a sauna
Russell:
I.i.51:30
Edward:
Oh a fight between
Russell:
A fight
Edward:
Yeah a verbal fight between two Asian boys it was surprising
Russell:
Where at
Edward:
as entertaining at ah Volcano
Russell:
Yeah
Edward:
Well (putting on a voice) apparently (back to usual) not um no one boy had
Edward:
gone home with that other boy several months beforehand and he’d stolen stuff from him but obviously it must have been a dark night because he asked him if his name was Joe Blow and this supposed Joe Blow said no it wasn’t his name but then began to talk to this other guy as if he didn’t know him but tried to be friendly but this other guy was convinced he was Joe Blow so he started yelling out that Joe Blow was a
Edward:
thief and a liar and couldn’t be trusted
Russell:
Where was this happening
Edward:
Down beside the pool
Russell:
And was it in English
Edward:
Yes yes my Mandarin only exists for hello and how are you
Russell:
(laughing a little) All right you think they may have been native Mandarin speakers
Edward:
Um ah no I think they were from Singapore
Russell:
Mm mm you think they both spoke the same other language
Edward:
Er they may have
Russell:
but were choosing to quarrel in English
Edward:
but they were quarrel
Russell:
quarrelling in English
Edward:
Right okay and
Russell:
That was surprising because it was totally unexpected
Edward:
Yeah
Edward:
Like suddenly it was there another thing I mean sexually things happening
Russell:
No no we’ll stick with the fight for a moment  

Edward:  

Oh yeah  

Russell:  

because the I mean I don’t abandon it um where were you  

Edward:  

I was sitting at one end of the bench seat this supposed Joe Blow and a friend were sitting at the other end  

Russell:  

This is the bench seat which is built into the wall  

Edward:  

That’s it beside the pool yeah there’s built into the wall  

Russell:  

Because there’s two beside the pool  

Edward:  

The little fella on the other side and the larger one it was on the larger one with the mirror backing  

Russell:  

All right okay  

Edward:  

(putting on a voice) So you see yourself when you get out of the spa if you don’t wear glasses  

Russell:  

Yeah I always forget about that mirror I mean I know it’s there but I keep forgetting about it because I always keep thinking  

Edward:  

Well when you’re sitting on it watch people walk past you they always fidget with their hair  

Russell:  

Do they  

Edward:  

Yeah  

Russell:  

I haven’t noticed I all right I’m always very aware of the person on the bench  

Edward:  

Oh okay  

Russell:  

rather than the mirror behind them I guess but you’re aware of the mirror and its effect on people  

Edward:  

I’m yeah more of aware of the effect on people  

Russell:  

Right okay so these guys were quarrelling but they were sitting down quarrelling  

Edward:  

No one was standing up and one was sitting down but it only lasted probably a minute at the max  

Russell:  

Yeah  

Edward:  

because he ran up the stairs leaving the bottom part yelling out Joe Blow is a liar  

Russell:  

Ah sorry the accused ran up the stairs  

Edward:  

The accusee  

Russell:  

The oh right the accusee okay the accuser or  

Edward:
Russell: Yeah okay all right um is that the only time you’ve um witnessed any form of um altercation or fight or quarrel
Edward: Yes yeah
Russell: Right so do you think of it as a place then that is um
Edward: Yeah unless that’s what they want
Russell: Do you think it as a safe place
Edward: Yes absolutely you’re walking around semi-naked you are exposed to all elements so there is a I think a great feeling of safety not that I doubt if anyone ever really questions it I mean maybe it’s certainly be a good film if someone was slaughtered in a sauna (I laugh a little) it’d certainly stop the people visiting
Russell: Um
Edward: But yeah there’s
Russell: But you you feel safe
Edward: Yeah I feel incredibly safe there
Russell: What are the things that
Edward: But I feel safe in all gay venues
Russell: Yeah
Edward: I’ve never seen a fight in a gay venue apart from someone yelling out fucking cunt at someone
Russell: Yeah
Edward: and that was it
Russell: Um do you think of Volcano as being a gay venue
Edward: Yes but I do know some a couple of straight boys who go there to have a sauna and spa without sex so they say and all my friends say yeah sure but I believe them I don’t have any reason not to believe them
Russell: Yeah but then straight people go to gay venues at other times
Edward: Yes
Russell: But when I’m but what I’m saying is if I say is it a gay venue what makes it a gay venue
Edward: Well I think it’s specifically pointed towards men sleeping with men
Russell: Yeah
Edward:
It’s not an entertainment venue other than that the café’s not open you know for a café you can’t get a dinner in there without stripping off you know there it’s it’s a bar as well but it’s specifically aimed for men having sex with men so gay venue yeah

Russell:

Um would you think of a prison as being a gay venue *(I laugh a little)*

Edward:

No because you’re not going in there with the proviso that you’re going to have sex with another man you’re being put in there you don’t have a choice of going into a prison as such

Russell:

Do do you imagine beats as being gay venues

Edward:

Beats

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

Ah yes but see I mean I imagine any man who has sex with another man in whatever form is gay

Russell:

Right

Edward:

whether they’re married and have children and live a heterosexual life is not um doesn’t come into it as such they are still gay I mean the words having gay tendencies you are still gay gay tendencies or non-gay tendencies

Russell:

Right

Edward:

You have gay sex

Russell:

Right right

Edward:

I.i.58:00

You can also have heterosexual sex at the you know you can be so I suppose it makes you bisexual but you are still you know bisexual is just a a lumping it all together

Russell:

What about um being male or masculinity do you think of a place like Volcano or Squirt as being a a male venue or a masculine venue

Edward:

Well it’s a male venue yeah because there are no females there um masculinity comes in many shapes and forms so yes it is very masculine the testosterone that’s thrown around that place at times is is huge

Russell:

Can you can you um describe one of the more surprising forms that masculinity takes at one of those venues something you’ve witnessed

Edward:

Surprising forms of it well I suppose I mean you look you see a man who is quite

Russell:

I’m thinking of if you can think for a moment of something specific

Edward:

Mm no see I traits of of masculinity can also be deemed as being feminine

Russell:

Well I’m asking for what you your experience

Edward:

But yeah I can’t I can’t I’m not
Russell:
I'm not asking you to be an expert here
Edward:
Yeah
Russell:
I'm saying like you've witnessed something you thought that's masculine but you'd never thought of that being masculine in that way before or you never thought of that as being masculine
Edward:
No I probably I've not I couldn't specifically say something it's it hasn't taken me by
Russell:
Right
Edward:
storm at all
Russell:
Yeah what about non-masculine behaviour or non-masculinity
Edward:
I.i.60:00
No I I couldn't say that either because I don't I don't you know I mean I know as you said I'm not I'm not looking at it from being an expert but I have my own beliefs that
Russell:
Yeah
Edward:
I.i.60:30
Because if a male does something thus it is for me it's masculine whether he flaps all over the place or he goes and chops down a tree it's masculinity doesn't come in in a box and that it is not black and white it is very grey so if you have a
man hopping down on his knees and you know giving you taking a um a lesser role to perform just say oral sex on you that could be seen as as a feminine trait because they're they're being demure and stepping away from you and and where I don't believe that I think that is just
Russell:
You you don't see it that way
Edward:
I don't see it
Russell:
I.i.61:00
Right okay
Edward:
as that way so
Russell:
But you're aware that other people could
Edward:
Well I'm I'm aware that other people do
Russell:
Yeah
Edward:
They have said that
Russell:
Yeah
Edward:
so it's but that's their view so that's okay
Russell:
Yeah have you ever seen anyone in drag
Edward:
Yes
Russell:
at a sauna
Edward:
Yes
Russell:
Oh yeah, ah were they working there or a client

Edward:
No they, they were a client wearing stockings actually because

Russell:

Edward:  

I.i.61:30
Under a towel

Edward:
Under a towel and fishnets and I've seen him a couple of times and I've thought you can't slip in those it must be great grip

Russell:

Edward:
Oh with bare feet with fishnet stockings

Edward:
With bare feet and fishnet stockings

Russell:
And a towel

Edward:
And a towel

Russell:
Anything else

Edward:
Ah once pearl earrings

Russell:
Pearl earrings

Edward:
Very stylish

Russell:
Makeup

Edward:
No makeup

Russell:
Wig

Edward:
No wig only once with pearl earrings

Russell:
The pearl earrings with the fishnets or was that a separate

Edward:
With the fishnets

Russell:
Right

Edward:
Clip-ons

Russell:

Edward:  

I.i.62:00
Right where did you see that

Edward:
Oh downstairs near the pool at Volcano

Russell:
Right okay

Edward:
I've seen him three I'm sure I've three times I've seen him there and each time he's had fishnets on but only once he had pearls

Russell:
Right and you is this because you seem to spend a fair bit of time by the pool or this is a place where you watch people

Edward:
Oh it's a good time to watch people

Russell:
Right

Edward:
It's a good place to watch people that I'm

Russell:
And you enjoy sitting there watching people
Edward:
Ah yeah

Russell:
What do you enjoy about it

Edward:

\[I.i.62:30\]
Ah seeing differences entertaining as in not making fun of but just watching people watch how they walk how they hold themselves if they they feel strong or if they don’t seeing who’s looking at who why why they’re looking you know um

Russell:
Where you’re watching this is from that bench with the mirror behind it

Edward:
The long bench

Russell:
Yeah do you

Edward:
Or the short bench sometimes

Russell:
You’re you’re at the short bench sometimes

Edward:
Yeah

Russell:
Do you have a preference for the long bench

Edward:

\[I.i.63:00\]
Mm no not really

Russell:
Right okay um when you’re watching do you feel like you’re an audience member or

Edward:
No I think you’re always a participant

Russell:
You you and you feel that yourself

Edward:
Yes

Russell:
when you’re sitting on that bench

Edward:
If you’re if you’re if you’re there in a contained room because they’re also looking at you from time to time you become a participant

Russell:
And that happens for you as well

Edward:
Yeah

Russell:
Right okay has is there any situation

\[I.i.63:30\]
there where you do feel you’re a spectator or an audience member

Edward:
Ah yeah if you’re in the spa and you’re sitting back and they don’t know that you’re in that room and you’re just looking and they’re there and you’ll see them doing things that are more obvious like standing in front of the mirror to fix themselves or

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
Or um

Russell:
How is it that you could be in the spa and people wouldn’t know you were there

Edward:
I guess a darker area it’s it’s never I don’t think it used to be but now it’s not as
appendix 9: Edward I

1.1.64:00
well lit so you can actually and if you’re sitting down it’s really bloody deep you could drown or short people like me you could drown

Russell:

I want I need you to describe that room the layout because where the spa is near the pool isn’t it

Edward:

Okay so you know if you

Russell:

Because what we’ve got is bits and pieces now just for a second someone’s going to be reading a transcript of this interview

Edward:

Yep

Russell:

Probably a few people examiners who

Edward:

don’t know what the room looks like

Russell:

may have never ever set foot in there

Edward:

Okay

Russell:

and never will can you describe

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

1.1.64:30
this room with the bench the pool and the spa

Edward:

All right it’s about fourteen foot across and probably twenty foot yeah in length um at one end you come down a set of stairs which has ah which is the the opening where you walk through and you can actually see the pool right in front of you which is er a kidney shaped pool um

1.1.65:00
and then behind you is the bench seat which has the mirror uh backing if you walked past the bench seat you’d walk straight down um past the showers past the sauna the wet sauna if you’re still standing at the entrance you can look through to some shrubbery plastic trees and and partly behind that is the spa which has a glass square block tiles um on two sides

1.1.65:30
of it it which back it and there’s a strip light one of those red flashing strip lights that are above it okay um so that’s directly in front of you to your ah left on the side of the pool you can walk all the way around the pool um to

Russell:

Do you mean circumnavigate it

Edward:

Well two of the sides sorry you can’t go all the way around on where you’re standing in in the entrance looking straight down the pool kind of goes in

1.1.66:00
to the wall where there’s a seat and that so you couldn’t walk straight through there you can go round the left and around the pool which you pass the dry sauna and get to the other ah bench seat and also you know the steps that lead around to the other corridor which is in a horseshoe shape well square

Russell:

Is there anything else

Edward:

Well you can look up where I said about

1.1.66:30
the walkway that’s above the pool that you can look down on you can actually enter where the entrance is there’s an entry to the right which you can go into that little passageway that goes up above that area

Russell:

How’s it lit you’ve mentioned this one little strip of red light behind the spa

Edward:
Okay it’s got it’s dimly lit but not it’s not dim dim you can actually

I.i.67:00
see people and and talk it’s okay you wouldn’t be able to read down there and there’s piped music as well and a clock that people watch at times

Russell:

Oh yeah which wall’s the clock on

Edward:

Above oh it’s er where the spa is a little bit to the left of the spa and up and there used to be a rail that would help you get down into the spa but they’ve taken that away

Russell:

Um what’s the floor surface

Edward:

I.i.67:30
Terracotta red ah tiles I think

Russell:

Is it slippery

Edward:

Yes I’ve seen quite a few people fall down and there’s when you’re walking down one of the little corridors that are there’s some steps going down

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

and I’ve seen people fall down those steps

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

and actually one guy really hurt himself also another drunk guy fell into the pool I had to drag out one night

I.i.68:00
that was interesting

Russell:

I have to stop for a second

Edward:

Yep

(I switch off the recorder and insert a fresh minidisc)

I.i.68:05
(we resume almost immediately)

Russell:

I.i.00:00
Okay you mentioned the music

Edward:

Yep

Russell:

What kind of music plays

Edward:

Ah elevator mundane music it doesn’t make any it makes a big enough impact to go oh there’s music playing but I

I.i.00:30
have no idea

Russell:

Does it is it like walking through a department store listening to music

Edward:

Yes

Russell:

Very much

Edward:

Well

Russell:

For you it is

Edward:

as in to the point of it’s not recognisable

Russell:

Right okay have you ever had an experience where you’ve suddenly noticed the music
Edward:

No

Russell:

Right okay

Edward:

Oh yes when the spa goes off then you hear the music it’s stronger

that’s the next thing after the spa after recognising the spa is stopped bubbling then you can hear soft music

Russell:

What about um at Squirt are you aware of music playing there

Edward:

Yeeoh I’m I’d say I know there is but I’m not sure

Russell:

Oh yeah

Edward:

Often you can hear the film that’s being shown you can hear that

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

Oh and

yeah ah the oh baby I think is all I can remember hearing off one of the um the porn videos showing or something

Russell:

(I laugh a little) Right

Edward:

It’s stuck in my brain oh baby

Russell:

Oh baby it’s better than it’s my first time

Edward:

It’s my I want to have your children

Russell:

Um

Edward:

I I want to ask you um and you don’t have to if you don’t want to but I’d I’d really like to try and get into some detail and asking you to describe a recent sexual encounter inside a cubicle

Edward:

Yep

Russell:

Is that okay

Edward:

Mm hmm

Russell:

Okay all right um what I’d like you to do is begin at the point where you where one of you locked the cubicle door

Edward:

Yep it was

Russell:

And so a specific instance recently

Edward:

Yeah the

Russell:

Preferably recently

Edward:

Well I’ve been to the sauna only once since I’ve come back from Europe and

Russell:

Oh that was the night I bumped into you

Edward:

No actually oh twice that was that night and um the Squirt I went to Squirt
Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

and there was a guy there um yeah he locked the door and

l.ii.03:00
then it was like oh it started off actually quite I mean it was very interesting because it was incredibly violent more like I mean I like a little rough sex which is nice but this was violent and I had to at one point think do I continue on with this or do I get out and I was actually interested in the fact that it was at this point and knowing that I do like um

l.ii.03:30
occasional rough sex that this was a new area for me so I found it enjoyable where he was incredibly rough and then I had to be he wanted me to be incredibly rough and I actually really it was an enjoyable experience it's not something I would want to go back to hence I wouldn't give him my phone number and told him I wasn’t interested in seeing him again so it was it was interesting

l.ii.04:00
it was very interesting

Russell:

He locked the door

Edward:

He locked the door

Russell:

What happened next

Edward:

Um he virtually just ripped my towel and well he did he ripped my towel off um we kissed just for a moment and then he just ah lied me back down on the the bench and um I’m trying to think of the actual step-by-step blow-

l.ii.04:30
by-blow instructions

Russell:

Would it help if I asked you to describe the cubicle itself

Edward:

No not really all I can remember is it was

Russell:

Was it a large one or a small one

Edward:

It was a large cubicle that actually had one of the the televisions above it that was showing porn

Russell:

Right

Edward:

So that was interesting and there was and that was actually quite rough sex happening on on that as well and he kept looking at it and he was like almost inspired by what he

l.ii.05:00
saw so um like I remember he just held my arms back straight away and and whacked me in the face like just slap not punch not hurt didn’t hurt it was a slap like to the the back of the jaw before the ear more of a playful slap more than something that was designed to injure and I could see at that point he was looking for what my reaction was

Russell:

Were you standing up when that happened

Edward:

No lying down he’d lied me down

l.ii.05:30
and and pushed my arms up and was holding my arms above my head

Russell:

And you were lying on your back

Edward:

Yes on my back

Russell:

Did he have his towel still on

Edward:

No his towel was off

Russell:
Okay um small question

Edward:
Yep

Russell:
Where were the two towels

Edward:
Um on the floor

Russell:
Not on the

Edward:
Not on the bench and not hung up behind the door

Russell:
Right okay

Edward:
In the corner down beside the

Russell:
Were they together or separate

Edward:
Ah together

Russell:
Okay

Edward:
I.ii.06:00
so he was holding you down you were on your back did that mean you had a view of the television from where you were lying

Edward:
Yes yeah I could see it not at that point I hadn’t really looked at it it was only um when he actually turned and glanced up at that and I looked up as well

Russell:
Was there any um speech that either of you came out with

Edward:
No no there was none

Russell:
So he ripped your towel off when you say I.ii.06:30 he lay you down how did he do that what did he actually do

Edward:
It was actually the the pulling up of the towel was quite firm

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
Like he just slid his hand down the front of it and then just pulled it and all I felt was lucky you didn’t have both sides of it or you would have actually pulled me off my feet

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
Um and then he just placed it behind me then took his off placed it down beside and um then just kind of put his arms around me and then kind of stepped back so I then I lied down on I.ii.07:00 on the the bench

Russell:
So when you went in and he locked the door

Edward:
He locked

Russell:
was that because you were in deeper into the cubicle than he was

Edward:
Yes yes

Russell:
Okay and was the the bench as you call it behind you

Edward:
To the side

Russell:

To the side. Okay, right. So then he lay you down. Like, what did he do? Did you give your weight over to him or?

Edward:

Yeah, well he kind of walked into me so I had to move back.

Russell:

Yeah.

Edward:

And he... I think he had one arm behind my back or something and was the indication of lying down.

Russell:

Did you get a sense that he was leading?

Edward:

Yeah, he was definitely leading.

Russell:

Okay, all right. So then you said he had your hands up in the air?

Edward:

Yeah, he.

Russell:

How did that happen?

Edward:

Oh, it was he just lifted my arm. My hands with both his hands and held my hands up behind my back.

Russell:

Yeah.

Edward:

Behind above my head and just held one hand not forcibly.

Russell:

Yeah.

Edward:

Just held them up.

Russell:

So there was a sense on your part that you were ah co-operative?

Edward:

Yes.

Russell:

That yes, it wasn't just him doing things you were doing things.

Edward:

No, no. I was... yeah, he was indicating and I was following.

Russell:

Right, okay.

Edward:

There was no apprehension there.

Russell:

Okay, and because he'd taken this initiative.

Edward:

Yeah.

Russell:

You were interested in simply going along with it.

Edward:

Yep.

Russell:

To see what would happen.

Edward:

Yeah, to see what would happen.
Russell: Is that a fair appraisal did you have any expectations of him
Edward: No um no not at all
Russell: Right okay
Edward: I'm he was very sweet looking usually not what I'm interested in a man I don't find that sweet young man a sexual interest to me
Russell: Was he physically smaller than you or bigger
Edward: No a little a little bigger
Russell: Right okay the he then slapped you
Edward: Yep
Russell: and then as it were he looked at you to see what your reaction would be
Edward: Yeah he looked [unintelligible]
Russell: You you have a distinct recollection of that
Edward: Yes yeah because I smiled and I thought why am I smiling that's dumb yeah
Russell: So you can remember smiling and thinking that at the same time
Edward: Yeah
Russell: Yeah okay
Edward: Because then he looked up he I mean he looked he watched my eyes then he looked up at the screen
Russell: Yeah
Edward: and some guy was getting because I looked up ah I'm following his vision
Russell: Ah yeah
Edward: when he turned his face to look and just remember some guy being either thrown down or pushed down or something like that
Russell: On the screen
Edward: On the screen
Russell: But that was after you were down
Edward: Yes
Russell:
Right okay all right it was almost as though the screen was following

Edward:

Yeah but they were in the middle of something where we were just in the beginning

Russell:

Right okay all right so what happened then his eyes were on the screen your eyes were on the screen

Edward:

Oh he just turned back and then I think we started kissing and rolling he was very physical as in moving my body like he would roll me around or roll himself under me and pick me up on top of him and then sit me up and push me back

Russell:

When you say you started kissing who initiated that

Edward:

He did

Russell:

I.ii.10:30
Right did he do it um suddenly or gradually

Edward:

Yeah it was no it was more sudden it was like he knew exactly what he was going to do he didn’t hesitate I just followed I became this is what I was saying like

Russell:

You were saying

Edward:

That I um I just followed him so I was seeing where it was going and it just continued on but then becoming a little bit more kind of aggressive but interesting interesting enough to keep me there he was very good at what he did like he would put his hand over my mouth so I couldn’t get a breath and or and be masturbing me at the same time and but not enough that I would force

I.ii.11:30
his hand away but then if I tried he would hold his hand there firmer but he would allow me to get a breath so it was he kind of he’d done it obviously many times before

Russell:

You had a sense you were with someone who was practised

Edward:

Yeah and there was I didn’t fear there was no fear there at all which I would because I mean I have the reason why I’d never slept with anyone for such a long time was because I’d I was taken by a group of men when I was er in my late teens and raped and kept for a day or two so I have a even even though I like a little rough sex um there is a point where I have a fear reaction that will stop it and with him I didn’t have that fear reaction at all whether it is disappearing as I get older or what I don’t know but um yeah so his aggressiveness was not to the point that

I.ii.12:00
I was frightened at all

Russell:

You started kissing you said that he was moving you around rolling you around does that mean there were times when you were physically above him

Edward:

Yes yeah

Russell:

At those times did you find the dynamic altering or was he still as it were leading

Edward:

Not in the beginning but it in the beginning he was still he would hold my arms and I and pull me towards him and kiss me

Russell:

Pull pull you down towards him

Edward:
Yeah pull me down

Russell:

I.ii.13:00
Right so even though you were above him

Edward:

Yeah I was definitely yeah in that position I was still ah the weaker party or the the one who was being controlled

Russell:

Well were you being controlled

Edward:

Well er in a game yes but I was a willing participant

Russell:

Right okay

Edward:

so I wasn’t there was there was no apprehension on my part I suppose it’s like being with a a rag doll that you move around wherever you want to

I.ii.13:30
and that's the the the position that I'd taken was right you know what you want let's you know just do this let's enjoy it and then he said to me ah slap me so I did

Russell:

When you say he said to you did he say it or did he whisper it

Edward:

No he said he said it slap me I want you to slap me

Russell:

Okay he said

I.ii.14:00
slap me I want you to slap me

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

Okay and did he say that with a voice that would have been audible to somebody immediately outside the cubicle

Edward:

Ah no probably not audible to me as to be not a whisper but not unless someone was out there with a milk glass with their head pinned up against the wall listening in probably not

Russell:

All right um how far was he how far was his face

I.ii.14:30
from you when he said that

Edward:

I was I was um he actually rolling me over he had been on top of me and he was rolling me over

Russell:

Yeah now when he said slap me I want you to slap me what did you understand him to want

Edward:

Um to be slapped I didn’t questioned it any more than that

Russell:

Yes but to be slapped where and how

Edward:

Yeah that I wasn’t sure so that’s

Russell:

Did

I.ii.15:00
you like slap him on the sole of the foot

Edward:

I could have his leg was in that position no he um I where did I I slapped him on his chest

Russell:

On his chest right so you didn’t slap him where he’d slapped you

Edward:
No

**Russell:**
Right okay

**Edward:**
I didn’t slap him in the face

**Russell:**
Okay so what happened then

**Edward:**
Then um

**Russell:**
Did you slap him like flat down on his chest were you were you above him at that point

**Edward:**
Yes at that point by the time we'd kind of he’d said slap me and he was shifting me around

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Edward:**
and by that time I was on top

*I.ii.15:30*
so I just yeah hit him on his chest

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Edward:**
And he ah rose up at that point

**Russell:**
You mean his torso

**Edward:**
Yeah his body

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Edward:**
He sat up

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Edward:**
at that point

**Russell:**
And then what happened

**Edward:**
It became softer softer because that’s um er I suppose my style of having sex is a softer sex which is obviously I mean well obvious to me one of the reasons why I like someone else taking control but then I have a softer

*I.ii.16:00*
side which always counteracts that so then it became softer more caressing and then

**Russell:**
On his part

**Edward:**
As well on his part as well and then it progressed again to when I I became the aggressor more and he took the more subdued role

**Russell:**
Can I just go back when you said it became softer did you initiate that or did he

**Edward:**
Yes I initiated that when he slapped

**Russell:**
So you slapped him

**Edward:**
I slapped him then when he sat up I think I stroked his face or something then we kissed

**Russell:**

*I.ii.16:30*
Right

**Edward:**
Edward: Yeah I found it pleasurable and non-threatening

Russell: Yeah and you and that and I.ii.17:30 did you understand that part of what was happening was he was teaching you things that would please him

Edward: Yes at that point yes I did

Russell: Right okay and so you then proceeded to offer some of these

Edward: The yes

Russell: This repertoire back to him as it were

Edward: Yeah definitely

Russell: Okay right all right now you said you didn’t think you did it as well as he did

Edward: No

Russell: because he was practised do you think

Edward: Certainly I was

Russell: Even though you were unpractised do you think you nevertheless were able to offer him the kind of pleasure he offered you

Edward: I.ii.18:00

Um sorry say that one again did I what
Russell:
Even though you were unpractised

Edward:
Yeah

Russell:
You were a first timer with this

Edward:
Yeah

Russell:
This technique of

Edward:
That I could still do it for him

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
Yes yeah obvi I mean yeah I held his mouth so he couldn’t get a breath and then allowed him to take a breath and held him firmly like hugged him very tight during this time he would masturbate or masturbate me and he would you know suddenly there would be a change where he would grab a hold of me and push my head back and I mean some of the slapping became very hard I mean very loud certainly you could

Russell:
On whose part

Edward:
Both both parts but not of the face again it was when he actually went to slap me I think part of my body I don’t know where it was but I moved my head and he actually hit my face and I pulled back he grabbed me and he said are you all right are you okay did I hurt you and I said no no no it’s fine it’s okay

Russell:
Is that the only the second thing that was said when he said that

Edward:
No there was um

Russell:
Because the first thing was slap me I want you to slap me

Edward:
Yep that was

Russell:
And there was some speech between that and are you all right

Edward:
There was some but ah speech within passion so I can’t I could not say exactly what was said oh like that’s good or or fuck or

Russell:
Could you say who was saying it

Edward:
Both of us were

Russell:
Right right ah simultaneously or in turn

Edward:
Sometimes simultaneously sometimes

Russell:
Yeah okay all right

Edward:
His I mean his yeah his aggression certainly um was stronger than mine was you know a couple of times he’d like bang me back against the wall

Russell:
What’s the wall made of

Edward:
Something pliable because it moved. It certainly made a noise. I mean like if I was outside the cubicle, I would have been going oh my god and hustling away somewhere else.

**Russell:**

Were you wondering about the outside of the cubicle?

**Edward:**

Yeah I did at one point and occasionally he would glance up at the screen as well.

**Russell:**

The event occurring on the screen was it around changing positions. Ah started to reciprocate to him some of the things.

**Edward:**

I didn't look. I personally didn't look again.

**Russell:**

Oh so after that first time.

**Edward:**

So I'm yeah I'm not sure.

**Russell:**

So you weren't sure whether its duration was similar to the how long were you.

**Edward:**

Yeah it must be because actually I did look. It was when we were finished so and it was still going.

**Russell:**

Right okay.

**Edward:**

It was still going and I must admit I did think my god that's a long video.

**Russell:**

Right okay let's so let's go back. So what I have a sense of is of the the um the slaps and kissing ah holding rolling around changing positions. Ah started to reciprocate to him some of the things.

**Edward:**

Yes.

**Russell:**

That had been done to you. What else happened.

**Edward:**

Um.

**Russell:**

Was it just a question of kissing and.

**Edward:**

There were intermittent moments of softer which were always um er started by me but they didn't last long. It was just a fleeting moment and then as I mean certainly towards the end it wasn't. I mean um he he came. I didn't it was for me more of a a game whereas he end up he would he was masturbating as I was holding him. And holding his breath. And he would at times push his head his face into my hand more and more so.

**Russell:**

That he was I suppose suffocating or whatever more but obviously as an indication for me to control his breath more.

**Edward:**

So would you say that after a period of time you became aware that this was about you servicing him.

**Russell:**

Yes yeah.

**Edward:**

Is that I did just put words into your mouth or.

**Russell:**

No no no no no no that became aware.

**Edward:**

It was still going and I must admit I did think my god that's a long video.
Right okay and

I.ii.22:30

you were then prepared to go with that

Edward:

Yeah it was fine

Russell:

Yeah right okay um and so it wasn’t a case of him learning from you and reciprocating

Edward:

No he I mean

Russell:

He didn’t that wasn’t an interest it was more like he had a repertoire that you were acquiring from him

Edward:

Yes

Russell:

with a view to offering it back to him

Edward:

Yes yeah definitely

Russell:

Great okay and when you say it being over basically him ejaculating

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

I.ii.23:00

was it being over

Edward:

Yeah and after that he was incredibly tender incredibly tender I mean if you saw him walking around you’d you’d say by god what a sweet young man sweet sweet little smile like he had set up with me much earlier that he was interested in me but I was not interested in him at all and he had the little tip of the head looking down then looking up and smiling and

Russell:

Was he much younger than you

Edward:

I.ii.23:30

Ah probably would have been in his twenties definitely and probably mid twenties twenty-eight or something like that

Russell:

When you say he was very tender like he ejaculated and I’m going to get very forensic here where

Edward:

Um he ah came across his belly the top of his belly [unintelligible] his chest

Russell:

So he was leaning back

Edward:

He was like we were actually he was pushed back

I.ii.24:00

we were half on virtually ah ah on an angle half off um the mat and so my feet were on the floor his feet were on the floor he was pushed back into me I was pushed back into the mat and the wall um with behind him with my arm wrapped around his chest and my other hand wrapped around his face holding his his head still and he was um masturbating

I.ii.24:30

and fighting to get away from my grip at the same time

Russell:

But he had encouraged that

Edward:

Oh yeah he didn’t want to get away from the grip he wanted me to hold him

Russell:

Right

Edward:

Hold him tighter

Russell:
So the fighting was a provocation  

**Edward:**

Yes yeah that was part of his enjoyment he obviously needed that to

**Russell:**

Okay

**Edward:**

To reach climax

**Russell:**

Okay so he came

**Edward:**

He came and then

**Russell:**

Then what then what happened

**Edward:**

There was a relax of his body into mine and then I just put my hands back and pushed myself up and he

**Russell:**

So you let go of the grip

**Edward:**

Yes I let go of the grip put my hands back slid back push up to sit against the wall and he did exactly the same and then kind of ah rolled into my body and placed I remember him placing his head down on my shoulder curling up underneath so I just wrapped my arms around him and he wrapped his arms then around mine and we sat like that probably for about five minutes six minutes (

**Russell:**

I.ii.25:30  
What was happening for you during that five or six minutes

**Edward:**

Mm I was thinking by god something’s going on with you and just being concerned actually concerned thinking well you know you have these behaviours where you need this aggression but you want this tenderness wondering what had actually been involved in his life to get to this point where that sex for him was about aggression but his what I felt his um his real self or his was actually about tenderness and love and human contact so because he was quite pretty he was very good looking was he abused as a child or kept by an older guy or whatever all these scenarios were then running through um my head as to why he was like that

**Russell:**

You were no longer paying any attention to the video

**Edward:**

No

**Russell:**

Okay how did you get from that situation to the door being opened

**Edward:**

I think I said to him I’ve got to go now I’ve got to go and he said yes and then he had an accent he looked like a young Swiss boy I thought when I first saw him walking around and he was he was a tourist

**Russell:**

Sorry let’s go back a bit

**Edward:**

(he sings two notes) Doo derd

**Russell:**

Um there’s just a lot happened there um you said I’ve got to go now

**Edward:**

Yep

**Edward:**
Or I think I've got to go now

Edward:

No I said I've got to go now

Russell:

All right okay how did you initiate that like you you've been sitting there thinking about him curiously

Edward:

I kissed him on the side of his face

Russell:

Well I'm thinking more

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

first of all how you initiated it in yourself

Edward:

In myself

Russell:

Because

Edward:  

Yeah

Russell:

you were reflecting

Edward:

I was holding him yeah

Russell:

and holding and thinking about him how did that shift from that to

Edward:

Typical selfish man I just thought I'm really tired it was about two thirty in the morning

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

and I just thought I'm really tired and I thought I mean

Russell:

And were you going to go when you said that or did you mean you wanted to go away from him

Edward:

No no no I was going home I was going home

Russell:

Yeah okay good all right

Edward:

We actually went and got changed together

Russell:

Sorry before

Edward:  

I.ii.28:00

that

Edward:

All right

Russell:

That's all right so then you said I've got to go now

Edward:

Yes I said I've got to go now

Russell:

And he said yes

Edward:

He just said yeah yes or okay or made an indication

Russell:

Now that's interesting because now suddenly you've heard an accent

Edward:
Yes

Russell:
But you didn’t hear the accent earlier

Edward:
I didn’t hear the accent earlier

Russell:
Right okay and what kind of accent was it

Edward:
It was Swiss or Scandinavian or

Russell:
Something like that

Edward:
Yeah

Russell:
Okay

Edward:
Not French not as broad as French but

Russell:
Did you ask him about his accent

Edward:
No

Russell:
Okay so he just said

Edward:
Yeah

Russell:
Did you then say anything back to him

Edward:
Um I said thank you and said that it was

Russell:
back to repeating and he smiled and then we kissed just ah softly on the lips

Edward:
Did you find that dialogue was like a
continuation of the tenderness in the same key or was it

Edward:
Yeah I think it did it from I think

Edward:
I actually had some concern going on inside me as well it was towards him but also knowing that I I didn’t want to become involved with him either and I didn’t think I got an indication from him he didn’t want involvement

Russell:
And so you who unlocked

Edward:
He did

Russell:
Who

Edward:
He handed me my towel

Russell:
Ah

Edward:
He stood up and ah used I think his towel to

Russell:
Right and it was your towel you got handed

Edward:
Yes yeah

Russell:
(laughing a little) Okay how do you know
Because mine was in the corner thrown down first and his was thrown down beside mine

**Russell:**
Okay all right good and then did you walk to the showers

**Edward:**
I just went to the lockers

**Russell:**
Yeah and did he go to the showers or go to the lockers

**Edward:**
No he actually went to the lockers as well

**Russell:**
Was he wearing clothes that surprised you

**Edward:**
Yeah they were bogan *(I laugh)* a green and white striped

**Russell:**
It was a green and white stripes um football jersey um

**Edward:**
and cream trousers that weren’t long enough for him I didn’t think he was that tall but he was taller than than that but he left before I did and then

**Russell:**
Did he dress very quickly

**Edward:**
No no quicker I couldn’t get my shoelaces undone
Russell: All right

Edward: And um they’re the new

Russell: Oh when you arrived you hadn’t undone them you just took your shoes off

Edward: No I just flicked them off

Russell: All right go on that’s okay

Edward: But I can’t get my foot back into them I’m just lazy

Russell: Yeah okay

Edward: Um I.ii.31:30 so then yeah I had to get my shoelace undone and then and he left whilst I was doing that and

Russell: Did he say anything

Edward: No we just said good good bye

Russell: Well that’s saying something

Edward: Yeah

Russell: Just good bye

Edward: Yeah or bye something like that

Russell: Did he say that

Edward: No I said it I said it first

Russell: And he responded

Edward: Yeah

Russell: Yeah

Edward: He said bye smiled and then left and then when I left he was actually walking around the corner along a well-known road and I thought oh he must be staying at that hotel nearby

L.ii.32:00 I don’t know why it could have been anywhere it could have been international student a lot of them stay in that area

Russell: Um did you say bye to him because you didn’t want him to leave without you saying good bye

Edward: No just good manners and being bought up that way I looked up he looked at me I said bye and he said bye or something and then kept smiled and kept walking

Russell: Right

Edward: It was automatic

Russell: I.ii.32:30 Thanks that’s really helpful thank you very much

Edward: (softly) My pleasure
Russell:
I want to ask you just a couple more things
Edward:
Yep
Russell:
In that cubicle what else can you tell me can you describe the cubicle now for me
Edward:
I think slate grey the colour a little lighter darker grey or black mat the tele um the door the mat when you open the door the mat or bedding or whatever you want to call it is on the left hand side
Russell:
What do you want to call it
Edward:
Mat because it reminds me of a mat we put down for movement classes
Russell:
Yep
Edward:
but a little thicker it's about a foot and a half off the floor
Russell:
Yeah
Edward:
Um yeah it's on the left hand side in the high right hand side corner was the television um the roof is there is no roof to it's open top
Russell:
Yeah
Edward:
the way the building was originally built a um er the hanger is behind the door
Russell:
There's only one
Edward:
There's only one hanger yeah there's um a lube container and I think condoms there as well I've never no I went into one cubicle there and couldn't see a cubicle er like that had a condom dispenser
Russell:
Yeah
Edward:
but a little thicker it's about a foot and a half off the floor
Russell:
Fine that's good thanks is there anything else you want to say because I'm about to wind it up otherwise
Edward:
No I don't think so
Russell:
Great okay thanks
Edward:
(a lot that's good)
Russell:
(I switch off the minidisc recorder)
Edward:
END OF CONVERSATION
appendix 10: Max I

The transcript documents a conversation with Max recorded in the living room of his flat on a weekday afternoon. Outside, it was hot. Inside, Max offered me an orange juice and, aware that he had someone coming round at four, we began recording. Through the open window we could hear workmen engaged in some sort of maintenance activity all the time we talked.

Russell:

i.i.00:00
Okay we’re on  how long have you been um going to saunas

Max:

Um I remember going to a sauna in Sydney in about nineteen eighty-four that was probably the first time that I’d ever been to a sauna

i.i.00:30
and I think yeah mm

Russell:

So you’re not sure exactly or

Max:

Oh look my lack of surety is to do with a vague it’s it’s it would be I could pin it down exactly and tell you because I know I was doing a show in Sydney and I suspect it was I’d have I’d just have to think it through in terms of you know remembering now where was I staying and I remember now I was staying at a friend’s and so yes it would have been because it was when I did that show in Sydney so it was in nineteen eighty-four mm

i.i.01:00

Russell:

And do is the experience of that night kind of vividly etched for you

Max:

Yeah absolutely absolutely because I don’t suppose I quite knew I mean when I look back on it I mean it it is for all sorts of reasons I mean (he begins a list) A because I had an encounter and I was anally fucked and I’d never been anally fucked before and I quite liked the guy but secondly because it was unprotected

i.i.01:30
and it would never have occurred to me at the time to be protected so that means in nineteen eighty-four despite the fact that I had actually been doing research for a a show for a gay show on the AIDS epidemic you know at the time that some part of me and maybe it was to do with my first encounter maybe it was to do with a feeling that you know I think maybe a lot of kids now feel of being sort of you know um invulnerable I don’t know that I allowed that to happen so

i.i.02:00
so I always remember (laughing a little) going up to the guy he was because we parted and then he was swimming and and I was about to leave and I think I hung around a bit longer I don’t remember quite but I think I remember going I went over to the pool to say I’m going now (he laughs) I needed to for whatever reason you know to say

Russell:

Say that mm

Max:

I was leaving yeah so I always remember that but actually I don’t think I I have a sort of a very strong image in my mind of the configuration of it too because I remember there was a square swimming pool like a square

i.i.02:30
I’m sure it was a swimming pool it wasn’t a sau it wasn’t a um you know spa bath a sort of square I always remember meeting him in that and coming up and walking up the stairs up a set of stairs and I always remember that because I remember the image of walking behind him and looking at his legs as we were walking up and something about his back and I actually had this kind of strange notion that his back was tattooed and I think ultimately it wasn’t at all it was to do with the sort of the light or something that played on and I also remember he asking him why were you attracted

i.i.03:00
to me and he said something about my features and it was something to do with him being East European so you see there’s a lot of a lot of memories actually in relation to it yeah

Russell:
Do you remember about the decision to go

Max:

No no except that I had never I mean I’d kind of had kind of gay encounters I’d sort of been with men but not in any kind of ongoing capacity and I don’t mean by that relationships I mean I just you know I wasn’t kind of into gay sex at all really but I because there was such a fascination with it I think there was probably a lot of excitement about the thought of doing that you know and certainly yeah more than anything I think but I can’t actually yeah I can’t quite remember mm the journey to it precisely

Russell:

Did you arrive late at night or in the day or

Max:

See even that I’m not sure about but I I suspect it was probably late afternoon because I actually came back to a friend’s place a woman I was staying with afterwards and I kind of enjoyed and I think this is right I don’t think I actually told her precisely what where I’d been but I kind of was was sort of playing with the fact that she kept saying you’re in an extraordinarily happy mood and so I think I was kind of not in any sense of concealment but I think I was kind of enjoying the fact that um that I was noticeably in it you know that I was in that state and I remember I remember kind of playing with that and that was at night so she was obviously still up so obviously I hadn’t been there till late so I suspect yes I’d gone late afternoon

Russell:

Right and (a silence)

Max:

No I don’t I don’t at all

Russell:

Right okay I want to go back a little further can you remember the first time when you became aware that such places as saunas existed

Max:

Mm now this is now suddenly I realise that wasn’t the first time isn’t that interesting because I was living

Get it back a long way it goes back much further actually it probably goes back and it must have been Volcano because that would have been the first wasn’t it Volcano was it the first one or was there one in another location or something but anyway um I remember I lived in a distinctive building somewhere in Melbourne I think in about nineteen seventy-nine eighty I was there

Russell:

in Melbourne

Max:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah

Max:

And this was with this very beautiful European man who shared a name with a figure in a work of fiction that was his real name but they called him from the because he looked like that fictitious figure and that was what they’d called him and he was um there with his boyfriend

Russell:

Sorry that was his real name

Max:

No it wasn’t his real name his a group of gay men back in Europe had called him that name he was labelled that and his lover […] had come to live in Melbourne and so they lived in a kind of a resplendent sort of situation in this building and the European man occupied or ruled the upper the top floor and I had moved in down below and he and I had he and I had an encounter and I always remember one
day I was outside with a friend about to hop into a car and he came out and says *(he affects an accent)* you coming to the sauna *(I laugh a little, then Max drops the accent)* with me and I remember thinking oh god I probably would if I wasn’t with the friend but I was also slightly intimidated and a bit probably embarrassed and um so I said no *(he laughs a little)* but I was aware that he that he went to the sauna I didn’t probably quite I probably didn’t quite know what that was I mean I obviously I knew it was to do with gay sex but I wouldn’t have I don’t

I.i.07:00
think I’d really imagined in my mind exactly what it was or even knew where he was going

Russell:
Right

Max:
But then I was living in a house in um another part of Melbourne ah in about nineteen eighty-one eighty-two and the there was a gay guy living there at the time who used to go to Volcano and I actually now remember going to Volcano and I remember actually being um sucked off by this by an old bloke in the

I.i.07:30
sauna which I probably would *(we laugh a little)* never allow now and it being quite extraordinary because it was it was I remember sitting in in the the wet sauna and it being incredibly foggy like I couldn’t hardly see and this person coming and starting to touch me and then sucking me and I thought oh I’ll just let this happen and I remember putting my hands down and realising this man was quite elderly but it was quite but I ejaculated and so it was actually quite you know and I also remember seeing that

I.i.08:00
friend I always have an image of him diving into the pool with an erection I always remember him coming out of a room

Russell:
Right

Max:
with an erection and diving into the water so that so yeah that was my memory of Volcano

Russell:
Do you

Max:
I happened to be driving that would have been in the daytime because I remember driving in the daytime to Volcano

Russell:
Right do you

Max:
Now why I went there I don’t think it was necessarily to do with that friend but there must have been must have been just a decision to um you know to

I.i.08:30
explore it at that stage now I can’t remember going there again I can’t remember other visits there I may have but I can’t it may have only been the once

Russell:
Do you mean that you may never have been back there since then

Max:
Oh no I’ve been back there since then

Russell:
Yeah right

Max:
but in that period of time

Russell:
Period of yeah okay

Max:
Yeah

Russell:
Um so do you have any sense then like you mentioned like the European man talking about um

I.i.09:00
going to the saunas or going to a sauna and there was a sense that oh there was this place um and you think that may well have been the first awareness you had

Max:
I think so I think so I really can’t yeah I can’t remember what it would have been before that.

**Russell:**

Do you have any sense of what you imagined when with that name of that place the sauna like what were there any images that came to mind any expectations that you can recall now clearly.

**Max:**

Um not really I think actually what I imagined wasn’t far removed from what I discovered to tell you the truth I think yeah.

**Russell:**

And what did you discover.

**Max:**

Oh I think I felt an enormous sense of freedom when I arrived there I thought oh I see there’s nothing to hide here you know you can you’re with other men you know you’re you walk around you can do what you like really I think it was enormous sense of freedom and sort of an adventure too you know um mm

**Russell:**

Were you in a relationship at that time.

**Max:**

Ah no no I never went when I was in them because I was in heterosexual relationships and I never went when I was in relationships mm.

**Russell:**

It was incompatible with being in a relationship or was it incompatible with being in a heterosexual relationship.

**Max:**

Um probably a little of both because it was because my homosexuality was fairly unreflected upon really at that stage so there probably may have been some not guilt so much as kind of um an awkwardness about it about doing it um and it certainly would have been secret it wouldn’t have been something.

**Russell:**

I would ever have talked about you know with whoever I was with so probably maybe in order not to have to talk about it I didn’t do it.

**Max:**

Mm

**Russell:**

Which sauna was that.

**Max:**

Well you see it’s interesting because I to this day I can’t I really can’t work out which sauna it could have been because I know it wasn’t Sauna XXX I know it wasn’t there.

**Russell:**

It wasn’t there.

**Max:**

Yeah I’m I’m absolutely certain yes I know it wasn’t there it wasn’t there um the only other ones I’ve been to but then it’s shifted is Sauna Y but it was certainly wasn’t Sauna Y that was because it’s now a new venue and I can’t even quite remember where it was before that I suspect it must have been one in Oxford Street but I’ve never in the times I’ve been to saunas in Sydney I have no memory I’ve never refound that that sauna.

**Russell:**

Right okay.

**Max:**

Yeah so I yeah I don’t know

**Russell:**

Sauna X has a square pool.

**Max:**
Oh I know but it wasn’t

**Russell:**
Yeah that’s interesting

**Max:**
But it’s also reflects and it’s got a glass bottom hasn’t it

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Max:**
And it didn’t have a glass bottom

**Russell:**
Um would you how would you describe your sauna going now in terms of frequency or

**Max:**
Um it fluctuates it fluctuates a bit I mean I suppose I mean I have periods where

_i.i.12:30_
I’ll go a lot like I mean by a lot maybe three I mean I might go two or three times a week

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Max:**
But then I’ll have periods of um where I won’t go for four weeks or something

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Max:**
So it’s kind of a bit erratic

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Max:**
But I don’t know it’d probably average out once every two weeks over a year possibly

**Russell:**
Whatever

**Max:**
Maybe a bit more

**Russell:**
Yeah okay and over what timeframe has that been in place

**Max:**
Um

**Russell:**
Because you talked earlier

**Max:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
about having a period [unintelligible]

**Max:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
Probably about over the last sort of

_i.i.13:00_
six or seven years I’d say mm

**Russell:**
All right

**Max:**
It follows pretty close on I was in a relationship with a woman and that kind of finished in about nineteen ninety-two and one of the sort of defining moments of that was that I actually went interstate and went to a sauna and I hadn’t been to one for quite a while it was in a city interstate and I came back and that was really because I started to talk about that and that was one of the things that started to you know things were already you know not

_i.i.13:30_
right but but that was kind of yeah that sort of um propelled it you know so I think really in a way that was probably the beginning of
a sort of so we’re probably talking yeah seven or eight years really mm

Russell:
And do you go to other types of sex-on-premises venues

Max:
Um no

Russell:
No

Max:
No

Russell:
So what

Max:
I go to beats

Russell:
Right I’m thinking

Max:
But not on premises (he laughs a little) yeah no no I don’t to those like the R lounges or stuff like that

Russell:
Yeah whatever yeah yeah

Max:
Or whatever no no

Russell:
All right

I.i.14:00
and so what is it um that the saunas offer you that the other type of sex-on-premises venues don’t

Max:
Well I’ve never been to them so I don’t know what they’d offer me but I suppose the thing about the thing I like about the sauna is that it’s kind of recreational like I actually do enjoy as part of going there and having sex I actually do enjoy being able to um you know have a sau you know actually have a sauna to sit in the steam room

I.i.14:30
and sometimes I can kind of almost go for that you know um to sit in the sauna um yeah I kind of like it’s sort of like

Russell:
Have you ever gone solely for that

Max:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
Mm I have had times where I’ve um been feeling muscually kind of stiff or something I don’t know that I ever think (he laughs) I’m just going solely for that do you know what I mean but I but I have but I have thought I’ll go to the sauna in order to relax you know

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
(still laughing) So but who

I.i.15:00
knows whether somewhere in there there’s a I mean obviously I think oh I’ll go to the sauna but yeah I’ll leave it at that (he laughs a little)

Russell:
All right um so when when was the most recent visit that you made

Max:
Huh when was the most recent god oh about I don’t know when was it Saturday night

Russell:
And where did you go

Max:
To Rear Entry

Russell:
Right okay

um can you describe Rear Entry for me

Max:

Can I describe Rear Entry oh that's interesting um well you drive down you turn right in I'm in my car I go by car so I'm driving up a particular main road I think it's that road and I turn right

into the street and I always it's always interesting because as I approach that so that's one of the little games I play with myself oh will I get a park there and if I don't I always have to drive much further down I notice that other people park their cars kind of in at right angles and I think I've always assumed somehow they must be members or something and that I'm not I don't have I've never really checked that out whether I have the right to park my car there so I always end up driving you know so I might end up

there or I drive further down um it always it has a kind of a feeling like the back of you know like the back of shops in lanes because there's the my memory is that there's just a single light over the door it may be a fluorescent light and that um I go in through that door and then immediately on you turn right and there's a kind of a little corridor and I don't think there's another door I think so there used to be but I have a feeling there's you go straight through and then

there's the rec the little reception window and then there's that funny thing they do where they make this clunks thing that they do that makes a clunking sound that releases the mechanism that lets you in and then there's a can I draw it (he takes a pencil) no

Russell:

Yeah yes you can yep (Max reaches for my note book)

Max:

Is that okay

Russell:

Yeah it is (I pass him a dark ball-point pen) can you use that

Max:

Yeah

Russell:

It'll reproduce better (I laugh a little)

Max:

So (suddenly he checks the note book) what is this oh that's yours

Russell:

It's just mine yeah

Max:

Okay um yeah (he starts drawing as he speaks) so I've come in there there's

the façade so I come in and there's the reception there there's a door there and then that's the lounge in there with the television the video lounge and then there's a bar here and then you walk down and there's lockers on either side there's a mirror at the end there you turn left and then there's lock then you go down here and there's lockers on either side and then you go through and there's a this will all be out of proportion but then it goes like this the corridor goes d-dum d-dum is that right oh that's

right yes there's there's another corridor you go down there's another corridor you can go there's a weight room and everything in there and there's a little one that sort of winds through and there's some couches and things and then reconnects up with the lounge in there and then you go down that corridor and then there's this corridor and then this and then there's one that goes off to the left and in here is the hot room (he speaks a rhythm) b-b-b-boom steam bath showers there and then there's a central bit there (he laughs a little) with mirrors where everyone sits on a bench here (I laugh a little) and looks at themself in the mirror while they can look at other people as well so you can check yourself out while you're checking everyone else out (he laughs a little)

and there's sh so there's the showers there's the there's another toilet there and
there’s a toilet there and then there’s the swimming pool here with a deck up the back there and then you go round and then there’s another corridor here and this corridor just goes has a slight bend funny sort of bend in it and goes down and it eventually meets up with this one that you’ve come through here through the room and then there’s a um kind of a maze type corridor in through here and then in through here as well yeah and there’s a television video in here

I.i.19:00
with little wanking booths on either side there and and sort of couch and everything in there and then you go down here you go down a corridor up stairs (he speaks a rhythm) b-boom boom boom and then you’re upstairs and then there’s a maze there’s a corridor up there goes virtually straight down to another um video there in there and then there’s a dark room kind of off in there and then there are cubicles around here and there’s

I.i.19:30
hmm I think that’s about it

Russell:
So that’s
Max:
No I’ve described it in terms of yeah okay I’ve described it in terms of that’s the kind of geographic layout of it um

Russell:
Right okay
Max:
Hmm how else would I describe it well it’s I find it quite a um I remember when I first went there I actually found it incredibly sort of stark I felt oh I see it’s like an old warehouse and it felt a bit like an old warehouse

I.i.20:00
um and what do I think now I suppose I quite like that aspect of it now I kind of li quite like the configuration of it I hate the steam room it’s got I think the steam room’s really bad I don’t I hardly ever go in there it feels very seedy and you know I kind of it’s not the kind of I never feel like you’d ever meet anyone in the steam room and I never use I very rarely use the dry sauna not mad about the shower area I think what I like about it

I.i.20:30
is the actual I like this area here I like the kind of maze in that area there and I really like the upstairs

Russell:
I’m I’m sorry on the ground floor
Max:
On the ground floor but I really like the upstairs maze too mm mm

Russell:
All right is there anything else you want to tell me in answer to that question
Max:
I could probably go on for hours about it but no I think that’s probably maybe if you ask me questions I don’t know [unintelligible]

Russell:
Right good okay can you tell me now about the décor
Max:
Um
there’s a lot of kind of panel wood panelling

Russell:
Where
Max:
In the actual um corridors and in the mazes I’m just aware of wood it’s like yeah kind of wood panelling

Russell:
Do you mean wood like this tabletop is varnished wood
Max:
Yeah but in panels yes
Russell:
Yeah okay it’s not painted though
Max:
I don’t no no I don’t think so no no
Russell:
Okay so there's this wood panels are they

Max:
Sort of dark browns and things

Russell:
Are they vertical or horizontal

Max:
They're vertical

Russell:
I.I.21:30
Right okay (Max laughs) and do they go from floor to ceiling

Max:
Um I I from memory I think there's something that divides them halfway there might be a kind of a and that then there's the (he laughs) wood panelling I feel like I'm making all this up because because I'm actually aware as you're asking me I'm not entirely certain so I would say I think I I I seem to think that there's a kind of flat plain surfaces and then this wood panelling

Russell:
Yeah just about the thing about making things up

Max:
I know it yeah

Russell:
That's absolutely fine

Max:
Yeah sure I understand

Russell:
Um the surface there's carpet fairly worn carpet in most of it um otherwise it's just kind of painted concrete I think

Max:
Um

Russell:
So carpet um when you say it's worn is it kind of

Max:
Feels very thread it feels very thin the carpet it's not kind of like
Russell:
Where people walk or right to the edges of the wall

Max:
Um no right to the edges it’s a fairly cheap carpet I think

Russell:
Right okay

Max:
And it’s a fair it’s a bit more like matting than carpet it has that feel a little bit

Russell:
Right okay yeah yep

Max:
Yeah

Russell:
And any upstairs

Max:
But but the area upstairs like like the stairs going upstairs are concrete

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
And the whole upstairs

surface floor surface is I think is concrete yeah

Russell:
Yeah okay

Max:
Mm mm

Russell:
How’s that feel under your feet do you wear thongs or sandals or

Max:
No no

Russell:
No okay

Max:
No

Russell:
How does that feel under your feet

Max:
I quite like that feeling actually under the feet I mean it’s

Russell:
Is it cold or chilly

Max:
No no no it’s not cold no it’s quite no no it’s quite temperate (he laughs a little) it’s not no

Russell:
Have you ever

Max:
Cool cool maybe rather than cold

Russell:
Have you ever had any part of your body other than your feet touch the floor upstairs

Max:
Oh god yes (suddenly we laugh)

Russell:
(I recover from laughing, then) Because I’m just thinking

Max:
(still laughing a little) Yes

Russell:
I haven’t so
Max:
Oh right oh I think at times my knees have

Russell:
Your knees

Max:
My knees probably have you know

Russell:
Yeah I've never ever

Max:
(still laughing a little) And I probably

Russell:
No no I don't think my knees have either no

Max:
No I think I've been on my knees in one of those rooms

Russell:
Yeah okay

Max:
And um possibly on my back I'm not sure certainly on my knees and I probably sat in them I may have sat on the floor in them (his laughter subsides) mm

Russell:
Yeah okay

Max:
Mm

Russell:
I.i.24:00
Um any sense of what the colour is

Max:
Well that's interesting I have a sense of reds I think the doors from memory must be the doors to like the toilets are probably red um interesting no I don't really have much I don't have much other sense of colour um in the lounge the the lounge themselves are sort of beigie brownie colours um

Russell:
What's the furniture like in the lounge

Max:
Oh there is sort of red lights there's there's some like in there's that little on the way you know there's that little there's a tiny little kind of lounge place just near the between the lounges and I think there's a from memory there's a red lamp in there and there may be a few of those yeah what is the

Russell:
Oh the furniture like in the lounge

Max:
Um I don't actually I haven't spent much time in the lounge but um so it's really more the from what I've looked it's it's um large sofas and armchairs um in either vinyl or leather probably vinyl um soft mm

Russell:
Lighting

Max:
Lighting is pretty subdued um particularly different to downstairs to upstairs upstairs is is is fairly dark as in kind of quite minimal you can make out figures but it gets quite dark upstairs whereas the the downstairs the actual corridors out outside of the maze are are muted lighting but it's quite you know it's quite easy to see people um yes I mean it's you know the lighting is intimate of course um

Russell:
What do you mean intimate

Max:
Oh that it's um soft I suppose it's fairly soft lighting mm there's always that interesting because I've been there I've been there at closing time and suddenly I was very aware then of lights
of suddenly fluorescent lights going on the whole atmosphere changing as you know it was like kind of a door being opened and sunlight coming in

Max:

And I remember that feeling once and thinking oh I’m glad we don’t have to walk around in this (he laughs) in this light

Russell:

What why why are you glad about it

Max:

Oh because one’s much more attractive in muted lighting and (he laughs a little) it softens certain aspects of the body I suppose

Russell:

Now when you said one is more attractive in muted lighting

Max:

Yeah

Russell:

Who’s this one do you mean yourself or the other person

Max:

Oh myself and others yes myself and others my

Russell:

So everyone is

Max:

Yes I think so my general feeling is that that it’s like I can equate it with sometimes badly designed changing rooms and a badly designed changing room is one where there’s a fluorescent light over the mirror so you you look ghastly it’s like you s you feel like you’re seeing yourself at your worst you look sick you look you know the body doesn’t seem to have any tone etcetera etcetera

Russell:

You you don’t you look [unintelligible]

Max:

I don’t yes I don’t as I look in it so I like yes I li it’s kind of quite important for me like I quite like that the the quality of light in the sauna because it’s sort of particularly when it seems to me to enhance yeah enhance the body’s attractiveness I’d say

Russell:

I’m just

Max:

So there might look people people might look a bit slightly more tanned or or or or olive skinned than they might otherwise be something like that

Russell:

Are you more attracted to people with tanned or olive skin than you are to people who have pale skin

Max:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah

Max:

Mm so there yes it’s a very particular predilection

Russell:

Yeah

Max:

Mm mm

Russell:

Does Rear Entry have tanning facilities a solarium
Max:
Um not that I’m aware of

Russell:
Okay

Max:
No

Russell:
What’s the light like in the
steam room what did you call it did you call it a steam room or a wet room or

Max:
Oh I could have called it the wet room but in the stea

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
Yeah I know in the steam room oh I I would describe it as sort of gloomy I find it a very gloomy place the steam room um I don’t know what they’re trying to do with the lighting in there but it just feels yeah I just

Russell:
Do you know where the source of light is in there

Max:
I don’t actually no I’m not even sure there is a source of I mean it no I don’t

Russell:
I I suspect it’s only it’s it’s very small and so as you go in the entrance there’s just a little area to the side there and then it kind of goes like that

Russell:
Like what

Max:
It well you walk in and if you turn to the left you can then turn to the left again and there’s a slab of there’s like a a a marble table there that you can walk around

Russell:
Yes

Max:
And then to your right there are just two like um um steps but you know that you can sit on you know I think around there is where the light is

Russell:
Right okay is that because you have no visible image of those steps as you call them

Max:
Yes you can’t actually see them you actually can only feel them well I can’t anyway

Russell:
How far are they from the door

Max:
Um oh you walk in the door

Russell:
In terms of steps

Max:
it’s probably about one two steps at the most to those

Russell:
Okay which way does the door open

Max:
The door opens um this way (he demonstrates) it opens

Russell:
towards you if you’re going towards it from outside (he laughs a little)

Russell:
Yes

Max:
you have to do this
Russell:
So you it the handle is on your left and you pull it tow
Max:
No the handle the handle’s yes on the left and you pull it towards you
Russell:
And you pull it towards you
Max:
Yes
Russell:
But you you demonstrated it with your right hand so so would how
Max:
I would go on with my right hand
Russell:
Right hand
Max:
I would grab hold and pull it like that
Russell:
Pull it open so the door is on your right as you pass though
Max:
That’s right
Russell:
into the steam room
Max:
That’s right yes
Russell:
Okay good okay
Max:
Mm
Russell:
All rightie have you walked around
I.I.30.00
that marble table or slab
Max:
Yes yes you want to know which direction
(he laughs)
Russell:
Yes
Max:
Um I think I I think I have always gone around it um so if I come in I go to the left I don’t immediately go to the left I go around it that way (indicating on his sketched plan) like so how would you describe that I I go to the furthest wall first
Russell:
You’ve gone in an anticlockwise direction
Max:
Mm it depends which direction you’re
I.I.30.30
facing in doesn’t it
Russell:
Well if if it’s being looked at from above
Max:
Yes
Russell:
it would be an anticlockwise direction
Max:
Well if you’re looking at it from the from the front of the sauna
Russell:
If you’re looking at it from above if you’re looking down on the table
Max:
But but yes but in which direction which direction are you facing when you’re looking down on it which direction are you facing
Russell:
It doesn’t matter it’s clockwise or anticlockwise it doesn’t matter

Max:
Nonsense I’m I’m I’m looking at something

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
and I’m facing from that way

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
That’s clockwise yeah that’s anticlockwise

Russell:
If you’re looking from above which is what we’re doing

I.i.31:00

Max:
Yeah

Russell:
then

Max:
Oh I see you mean (laughing a little) but what if I’m looking from above from this direction

Russell:
It still does doesn’t matter that that’s still anticlockwise look (rotating the sketch plan 180 degrees) isn’t it

Max:
Why is this so odd to me

Russell:
I don’t know why it’s so odd to you

Max:
Oh it is too that’s right isn’t that interesting I was confused about that for a moment yeah so I’m (laughing) I’m walking in an anticlockwise direction

Russell:
if we’re looking from above

Max:
Yeah

Russell:
Okay all right but maybe that says something about I.i.31:30 do you imagine that from above do you imagine I asked you about walking around it and I’m thinking a way of thinking

Max:
Yes yes

Russell:
I’m just thinking of it as looking from above

Max:
Yes yes

Russell:
because you’ve drawn plans

Max:
Yes yeah

Russell:
but do you have do you imagine that table as being viewed from above that marble table

Max:
Isn’t that interesting because as I thought of it I did see it from above I saw it like that yes

Russell:
Right okay you saw it but then when the thing about clockwise or anticlockwise that wasn’t helpful for your sense of direction

Max:
No no no

li.32:00

no oh well if you want to pursue that you
know like in great detail I think my first
impulse would have said no I walk
anticlockwise around it but I just suddenly
got confused when you said above because
I suddenly began to think that clockwise had
to do with (he laughs a little) what direction
you were facing in

Russell:

Right okay

Max:

But anyway yeah

Russell:

Now one of the things one of the things
about that is that if I were to walk that path
that you’ve just said one of the first things I
would be aware

li.32:30

is that if I if instead of doing a sharp left
inside the door and going up around that
way and if I do in a clockwise direction but
if I immediately start going in the
anticlockwise direction around it on that um
on that wall that I face as I come in through
the door

Max:

there’s a little bench

Russell:

There’s a little bench

Max:

Yeah

Russell:

and often there are people sitting on that
wall insofar as often applies to that

li.33:00

room at Rear Entry and I’m aware that

Max:

You have to squeeze past

Russell:

I would need to squeeze between those
people and the table

Max:

Now isn’t that interesting because because
every time for some reason the majority of
times I’ve been in there

Russell:

Yeah

Max:

people aren’t sitting on that little bench but
I’m very aware if I turn immediately to the
left there’s bound to be someone engaged in
something in that small space between the
edge of the table and that wall I’ve always
found that there are people in there do you
know what I mean

Russell:

Right

Max:

If I immediately turn to the left so I go over
there so then I can lean against the wall
and look across there and observe what’s
happening there

Russell:

li.33:30

Right okay now

Max:

Because that’s been my experience that
people gather in that little area there
frequently mm

Russell:

Now if that’s the case is there anything to
stop you from when you come in the door
just peering around the corner to see if the
coast is clear

Max:

Yeah my nature the way I work (he laughs)
I wouldn’t do that I wouldn’t do that

Russell:

You’ve never done that

Max:

Never done that no
Russell: Okay
Max: No no no I like to look from afar if I can
Russell: I.i.34:00 Right okay what do you think that's about what strategy or purpose or
Max: I don’t want to feel that I’m immediately engaged in something or even um thought to be about to be engaged in something I think it’s something like that I prefer to stand back and I prefer to stand back at a distance that that doesn’t involve me before I make a decision to be involved
Russell: mm
Max: You described that steam room as small
Russell: Yep
Max: Yes yes you see that’s one of the interesting things about it perhaps that I that it’s it I don’t feel I don’t it’s it doesn’t app it never has pleased me aesthetically that space like there’s a steam room at a um at High Street
Russell: Yeah I love that the arrangement of that that wet sauna it’s just
Max: I haven’t been there I’ll have to go now
Russell: Yeah
Max: Yeah okay
Russell: Yeah I just I just have always liked it and that’s interesting because it’s a situation where you open the door and there’s just a tiny little like you know there’s like a tiny like corridor about from here to there at the most as you walk
Max: How how
Russell: big is that
Max: Well it’s about this wide (he stretches out his arms to the side) it’s probably about this wide
Max: (laughing a little) Tell me how wide that is
Russell: I have no idea I don’t know measurements probably about
Max: You’ve got your arms wide spread
Probably about what three four feet wide

Russell:
Yeah a metre

Max:
Yeah a metre

Russell:
Let's say a metre okay

Max:
Yeah a metre and so immediately you're confronted with a wall with a bench yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
And when you turn it's a corridor and the bench goes down the entire length of that corridor

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
And at the end it turns as an L shaped and this only goes this would go probably the little corridor then continues

for a for about five maybe four or five feet enough and

Russell:
A couple of steps

Max:
And the bench continues enough for a couple of people to sit on it

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
On that bench yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
It's got a um v a very clean feeling about it it's all white the benches are white the walls are white

Russell:
But it's basically this one single L shape

Max:
Yep yep yep

Russell:
Right okay

Max:
Yep

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
It's literally (drawing again) so you go so you go in and then it goes

I.i.36:00

like that and then it goes like that so it's like that and the bench is there and the bench goes all the way down to there and like that

Russell:
Oh wow

Max:
Yeah

Russell:
And that's the entrance here

Max:
And that's the entrance there

Russell:
Can you mark that for me

Max:
There yeah

Russell:
You push the door in there

**Max:**

Um no you no you pull the door now why have I done it so you pull the door out pull the door towards oh not that way

**Russell:**

Yeah okay

**Max:**

Like that

**Russell:**

Oh yeah

**Max:**

I.i.37:00

Yep it comes out that way I'm just trying to think what is it

**Russell:**

But that doesn't feel small

**Max:**

No no

**Russell:**

And yet in actual terms of square metres or something is it comparable with

**Max:**

Probably it is actually

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Max:**

Yeah probably it is I mean if you're sitting on that bench and you put your leg up you'd you'd hit the wall your leg would be touching the wall

**Russell:**

Yours

I.i.37:30

would

**Max:**

Well mine would

**Russell & Max:**

Yeah yeah

**Max:**

I mean I've seen tall blokes who can't you know you wouldn't even do that you know

**Russell:**

So the fact it's it's

**Max:**

So when you're sitting on the bench the wall is probably about *(indicating in his flat)* where that heater is

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Max:**

That's how close it is yeah

**Russell:**

All right

**Max:**

I think I kind of like it because um you can't stand in there there's no point it doesn't make sense to stand people do but but it's really doesn't feel right because if you stand you're standing up against that

I.i.38:00

wall and to stand is very much to put yourself in a kind of a very active relationship to the person in front of you who's going to be sitting on the bench

**Russell:**

Where's the lighting in this room I mean you've said it's all white is it is visibility

**Max:**

No visibility's quite good but it's isn't this interesting the light thing I don't again it there must be

**Russell:**

What about round the corner

**Max:**
No the corner is darker it's darker there

Russell:
Okay

Max:
It is slightly darker there

Russell:
So that would seem to suggest that the source of light is

Max:
Yeah comes from there in fact

I.i.38:30
I always feel that the light is the light that comes in from outside that just isn't provides enough light somehow

Russell:
Is the door translucent

Max:
Yes it's translucent

Russell:
Right okay

Max:
Yeah it's clear mm see other one of the other things I quite like about it because straight outside here is the um spa bath

Russell:
Oh yeah

Max:
and sometimes you can sit there and you can you know I mean of course it gets kind of fogged up but you but you can kind of see out into the spa bath and so there are kind of there are sort of

I.i.39:00
things you can do in relation to if someone you know if there's something going on or someone in there you might go in there and sit and you can tell whether you know whether the person's coming in or not do you know what I mean so you can sort of observe from there

Russell:
You've done that

Max:
I've done that yeah

Russell:
You've done that okay

Max:
Yeah mm

Russell:
So it sounds like this thing about visibility over a longer distance is kind of important for you I mean I think you said that a few minutes ago or something like that

Max:
I think it's

I.i.39:30
actually an element of being in of control too

Russell:
Right

Max:
Um because there's something quite controlled about that situation now why do I say that

Russell:
Well with this situation I would imagine because I haven't been that one of the things would be that there's you have that I if I were there I would be able to control in terms of where I chose to sit

Max:
That's right yeah

Russell:
Would be to do with terms of commitment

Max:
That's true

Russell:
Max: Yes that's right

Russell: And um also that there would be a diff

Max: That's right you make a very strong statement if you if there was someone [unintelligible] all the way down there yeah

Russell: If I if I sit right near the door where it's really brightly lit

Max: Yes that's right

Russell: I'm not very committed because I'm right near the door I'm really well lit and somehow or other further in the deeper in I go I'm deeper into whatever is possible is that

Max: Mm yeah well possibly I mean that's a theory yes I mean I equally I could want to sit there because I am lit and that could be you know um I don't necessarily think that going down there means one's more committed

Russell: Fine no that's fine

Max: That's all yeah

Russell: I suppose it depends if there's anybody else down there (we laugh)

Max: Well that's right you can go down there and disappear

Russell: Hide

Max: Yeah (the laughter has subsided)

Russell: Um so let's go back to um ah that steam room in Rear Entry um and walking around and so you don’t here (indicating on the sketch plan) and you it's never occurred to you to just do a U a sharp U-ie as you go in and if you need to just change direction

Max: No I've never done that I don't think no no no

Russell: Do you find yourself changing direction in a venue like Rear Entry

Max: Um

Russell: Think about last Saturday night can you recall a case where you suddenly stopped and changed direction

Max: I tend to changes of direction are generally motivated by other people

Russell: Yeah

Max: rather than my of my own volition meaning you know there's someone I'm walking suddenly someone that I've I don't want to encounter you know so I change direction or you know there would be things like that

Russell: Yeah

Max: Yeah
Max:

I think rather than I mean I’m very aware I kind of it sort of strikes me I kind of get how do I describe it I’m often kind of very observing myself as I’m in a sauna.

Russell:

And do you think you were thinking that on Saturday night while you were there.

Max:

I had that yeah I think I did have that thought on Saturday night.

Russell:

About a pier or a beach.

Max:

Oh about a pier no no no not necessarily.

Russell:

Right okay.

Max:

No no.

Russell:

So do you imagine do you recall on Saturday night imagining other places other than the sauna other than Rear Entry.

Max:

Um no because that that would be kind of a betrayal I think I kind of um I think oh well I’m here you know this is laughing I’ve made the commitment to Rear Entry tonight um so I don’t no I don’t go that far I don’t go that far it’s just a

Russell:

I think it’s a relation it’s overall a relationship I have to saunas I think a little bit where I will sometimes go to the sauna not really not having had any thought why I’m going other than I just need to get out of the house or I just want to go yeah without really think I mean it’s kind of what I call my low times when I’m just I just go there.

Russell:

Did you go there on Saturday night from home.

Max:

Um yes I did yes I’d actually oh no hold on Saturday night what was I doing Saturday
night um oh no no I’d been to a party I’d been to a party it was about it was actually quite late it was like two o’clock see this is a this is a good examples two o’clock in the morning I was exhausted I really just needed to go to bed I often go to a sauna when I’m s not no not often but I will go to a sauna

I.i.45:00
sometimes when I’m slightly intoxicated

Russell:
And were you slightly intoxicated

Max:
Yeah I was

Russell:
Yeah okay

Max:
Yeah yeah yeah

Russell:
Um were you in your state of intoxication were you slightly aroused or feeling arousable

Max:
Not in the least

Russell:
Not in the least

Max:
No

Russell:
Now the location of the party to go to Rear Entry did it take you out of your way from what would have been

Max:
Ah no I went no no I came straight home from the party

Russell:
Oh yes and

Max:
and then I went to Rear Entry from here

Russell:
And then you

Max:
That’s also because

I.i.45:30
because I wear glasses I hate wearing glasses to a sauna

Russell:
Right

Max:
So I generally if I decide to go to the sauna I have to get my contact lenses

Russell:
Right so does that mean you came home knowing that you were going to come home and change into your contact lenses and then go

Max:
Yes I think by the time I got home I would have decided to go I’d made the decision to go yeah

Russell:
Okay all right and so that was at about two a.m.

Max:
Two a.m. yeah

Russell:
So you put in your contact lenses

I.i.46:00
and headed off arrived at Rear Entry then what happened

Max:
Was given a locker that was that was on the floor at floor level on a corner I hate that so right I’m off to a bad start I’m thinking why have I come I shouldn’t be here I should be home

Russell:
Okay so tell me a bit more about that
Max: (he laughs, then) Um

Russell: When you say you hate that it makes it sound as though um

Max: Oh it's just

Russell: For instance the difference

Max: Yeah

Russell: between you saying I hate that

Max: Yeah

Russell: and I hated that. I hated it makes it sound like oh that night that this happened to me and

Max: No no no no it can happen. I mean I mean I've happened a number of times

Russell: It's happened several times so

Max: where it where it

Russell: you have a general thing about lockers on the floor

Max: Absolutely absolutely yes yes

Russell: Oh now yes now that's what I want to hear about okay

Max: Yeah it's just a convenience thing. I mean it is so much simpler to open a locker at this level take things off and put them in to have to kneel down and put things in is just an extra amount of effort that I'd rather not have to go through. I also don't like being in that position when people are walking past it just feels uncomfortable

Russell: What is that position

Max: It's a crouching position

Russell: So do you bend your knees or do you bend from the waist

Max: No I no no I have to crouch down. You that's the only way you could do it would be to crouch down

Russell: All right okay

Max: to put things in

Russell: And it was in the corner you said

Max: No no no not a corner it's as as you go into you go down a corridor and lockers on either side then you turn immediately to the left

Russell: I.i.47:30

Max: Yeah

Russell:
and it's the first locker to your left on the ground down the bottom

**Russell:**

Right okay

**Max:**

So it's also a difficult position because people coming around the corner might fall *(he laughs)*

**Russell:**

Right

**Max:**

Fall over you or bump into you things like that

**Russell:**

Did that happen

**Max:**

No no

**Russell:**

Okay

**Max:**

But there were people coming down from you know this direction I think the other thing about that is that I have a er er that's connected to something that happened to me a couple of weeks ago where I had gone there and I had this beaut this favourite jumper that I've had for a couple of years I love it it's my winter jumper

**Max:**

I adore it and I'd gone this night and anyway I remember the next day I couldn't find my jumper and I suddenly realised that I'd taken it off and I think because and I had one of those lower lockers and I thought I took it off and put it on the top because I thought oh well I'll eventually get other things you know like it was just to do with arranging between having to dig so I put it up I must have left it on top and subsequently I think oh I think I went back the next night and it hadn't been handed in it had gone so

**Max:**

I think there's another agenda there *(he laughs a little)* I think I feel that no no it's somehow that the night I lost my jumper I had that lower locker

**Russell:**

Right okay so last Saturday night you had a low locker

**Max:**

I had a low locker

**Russell:**

around the corner

**Max:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

Then what happened

**Max:**

I think I was very aware that I'd arrived the thing about a Saturday night at Rear Entry is that it can can get very frenetic it like very fr a lot of men there

**Max:**

and it's a very it's probably a fairly young sauna I think that's my impression that younger men I mean younger than me go there and that's kind of nice to look at but I don't it's it's not necessarily from my experience being the kind the men that I'll have encounters with so I feel so I think then then what I I sort of as much as I kind of can quite enjoy the feeling of that um it's sort of oh yeah so I'm going to have to

**Max:**

wait you know or it's not even as clear as that but I'm just it feels very um how would I describe it I suppose it's a mixture of things I mean I quite like it but it also feels that I'll be an observer I think a little bit

**Russell:**

When did you become aware of this because

**Max:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

I've asked you then what happened

**Max:**
Russell: So did you become aware of this after you'd been at your locker or Max: After I'd been at my locker yeah Russell: Okay so not prior to then Max: No no Russell: So what I.i.50:00 did you do Max: Oh then I Russell: to become aware of Max: Oh because as soon as I actually went down look I think I headed I generally go well this is interesting I spent when I arrive (he laughs) I'm just realising myself my tendency is to go straight down to the kind of s the sauna area the wet the wet and the dry sauna and the shower area and the pool Russell: Where that mirror was Max: That feels to me I suppose that feels to me I would say that feels like the hub of the place Russell: Right Max: That feels like the hub so I think I always even not necessarily with a sense of going I.i.50:30 to any of those Russell: Yeah Max: You know into the sauna or whatever but I will pass through there on the way to wherever else I might end up going Russell: Yeah Max: So as soon as I was going as I'm going down there I'm already aware of a lot of you know people and so when I go there were about four or five guys in the pool there were people showering there was a lot of activity so that would be the point at which I'd think oh I see I've come at peak hour you know mm Russell: And you saw younger men Max: Yeah Russell: And that then led you to develop some I.i.51:00 sort of awareness or expectation about Max: I just know that the other other thing I Russell: You just know what Max: Well the I know that or or it's a phenomenon that I think I observe because it's certainly the case on beats that often when there's a lot of activity there's there's not a great deal of encountering happening there's a lot of kind of um you know sort of eyeing up and measuring up and kind of but but not as many encounters that's my experience I.i.51:30
that's how it seems to me (laughing a little) that just means I'm not encountering but it's not necessarily that it seems to me that it's that there's more encountering happening when there's fewer people

Russell:
I agree (we laugh)

Max:
Yeah mmm

Russell:
But it seems that way to you because that has been your experience

Max:
No not necessarily

Russell:
Right

Max:
Because I mean that has happened but I just I think it's come more from beat culture for me because it really is the case when there are a lot of men at the beat there's very little committing happening

Russell:
_to_ the hub yeah

Max:
And then

Russell:
Can I ask you

Max:
Yeah

Russell:
before that what do you what did you do with your key last Saturday night

Max:
(laughing a little) Ah that's interesting it's a funny thing with the key (he hears a sound and realises that it's one of the workmen outside) oh it's just him um

Russell:
I'm I'm sort of fascinated with keys with the way the whole key thing works because um High Street in Suburb L have a system now of just a piece of string with (the demonstrates) around that you put the key round your neck
Russell:
Yeah

Max:
And initially I thought oh I find it kind of odd but I quite like that now because there’s no constriction it just hangs there I’m not mad about this the piece I generally put it I’ve alternated

sometimes I put round like I think actually I quite like it around my ankle

Russell:
Right okay is it on elastic at Rear Entry

Max:
It’s on elastic yeah

Russell:
Yeah okay

Max:
But

Russell:
Narrow elastic or broad elastic

Max:
Narrow no it’s narrow elastic yeah

Russell:
Okay yeah

Max:
It should be broad elastic it would be better it’s narrow it always reminds me of those footballers when the footballers you know do their when you see them with their little bit of black tape they put round for when someone’s died

Russell:
On their biceps

Max:
Yeah it has those associations for me I think um I always feel a bit like Indian prince or you know like you’re pretending (he laughs) you know when

I.i.54:30
you put it round your ankle you know it kind of flops there

Russell:
It flops there

Max:
Yeah I always have a feeling I quite like it it’s sort of like a

Russell:
So the key’s loose on the elastic

Max:
The key’s loose yeah

Russell:
What else is on the elastic there’s the key is there a key ring or

Max:
Yeah well there’s the little metal tag with the almost unreadable you know frustratingly unreadable number I always

Russell:
Locker number

Max:
Locker number I always have difficulty with the locker numbers I invariably have difficulty getting the locker open particularly when when I’m they’re on the bottom

Russell:
Did that happen

I.i.55:00
on Saturday night

Max:
(laughing) Yes when they’re on the bottom I can never work out does it go in this way does it go in this way have I got it the right way up

Russell:
All right okay

Max:
Yeah anyway that's something that happens

**Russell:**

Now so where did you wear the key on Saturday night

**Max:**

Well I think I actually held it from memory I think I actually held it in my hand for a while I'm pretty sure I did that because I thought yeah I think I did sometimes I don't want to put it on my arm but I get caught because I think yeah but I don't particularly want to put it on my ankle so I end up holding it and then I there's a point where I go what am I holding this for and I just

*li.55:30*

put it on and I think I ended up putting it on my arm

**Russell:**

Yeah okay

**Max:**

Mm mm

**Russell:**

So you went down to the hub

**Max:**

Yeah I probably I can't remember distinctly I probably walked did the you know walked round the maze area a bit I eventually head upstairs

**Russell:**

Right

**Max:**

Becau yes I I yes yeah I would have gone

**Russell:**

When you say eventually

**Max:**

Mm that's kind of my ultimate destination at Rear Entry

**Russell:**

Right okay

**Max:**

is upstairs

**Russell:**

And that was the case last Saturday night

**Max:**

Yep

**Russell:**

*li.56:00*

Okay right can we just talk about you entered the maze area downstairs from which end did you enter it

**Max:**

I tend to enter it from um if I'm going if I've been in the kind of sauna area *(referring to the sketch plan)* there's the pool there there's the beginning of the corridor you walk there there's an entrance there that takes you through the kind of maze it's such a corny little maze it takes you through the maze there I generally don't do that but then there's another entrance here into the maze into there yeah

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Max:**

And I go in

*li.56:30*

I al I generally always go in there

**Russell:**

Right okay

**Max:**

Yeah and then walk probably through maybe come out that one there immediately or go all the way through and go back around through the hub and through

**Russell:**

Yes

**Max:**

Yeah
Russell: Yep so that’s at the north end of the building
Max:
Russell: You’re not aware of the cardinal points
Max:
Russell: Oh that’s what about the street
Max:
Russell: Yeah you’d always be aware of where the street is when I’m in there I’d always know where the street was if you asked me at any point in that sauna where’s the street I’d know where it was
Max:
Russell: Oh yeah fine okay
Max:
Russell: This second entrance
Max:
Russell: Right okay ah at the north end and which is the one closest to the lounge and bar area as well
Max:
Russell: Okay all right and you went into the maze area and then what
Max:
Russell: I think I probably just I think I probably walked through I probably didn’t stop there I think I walked through and then
Max:
Russell: So you walked all the way through to the south end
Max:
Russell: Yeah I do that quite a lot actually
Max:
Russell: I do that that kind of walk I [unintelligible]
Max:
Russell: Yeah
Max:
Russell: walk that and back through here and then I would have gone up the end and then I think I would have headed upstairs I think that’s what happened
Max:
Russell: So just one circuit through that maze
Max:
Russell: Okay and not and non-stop last Saturday
Max:
Russell: Yeah yeah
Max:
Um what I tend to do when I go upstairs is that I'll go straight
down to the video to the the what do you I don’t wha I always call it video lounge but then that becomes confusing because the other thing’s the video lounge so it's the hardcore.

Russell:
What’s the other thing

Max:
The the general community lounge where the video where they have videos playing movies and things

Russell:
Oh yeah

Max:
I mean yeah

Russell:
What kind of movies have you ever seen one

Max:
I don’t know I’ve never sat I very rarely sit there sometimes they just seem to have it on television

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
And there’s the dark room there’s a room the dark room that you go in through there

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
Yeah and then there’s this this here

Russell:
And you come into this video

Max:
There’s a there’s a screen there it’s quite odd here but there’s actually a wall there but there’s another screen that probably intersects about with that screen on a diagonal

Russell:
Yes

Max:
And then there’s another wall there

Russell:
Can you draw the video unit

Max:
And the video unit is just slightly is on an angle there kind of and there's a couch here

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Max:**
Yeah just a black couch behind this panel then you can go in and stand behind this

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Max:**
And then I others

I.i.59:30
quite like *(he laughs a little)* standing behind there and looking over because you know at men sitting here

**Russell:**
On the couch

**Max:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
From behind

**Max:**
Yeah and you can go in here and then you go in here and there's a raised kind of platform there with with a um black cushion on it you know the black vinyl cushion and then there's another lower bench there that goes like that yeah so you can either sit there or you can get up on there and so my favourite possie is I come and I lean there against

I.i.60:00
that wall

**Russell:**
Oh right

**Max:**
Yeah

Now when you say you lean you lean back against that wall

**Max:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
You don't lean to the wall along that way

**Max:**
No no no

**Russell:**
Okay

**Max:**
I lean back against it

**Russell:**
Okay

**Max:**
It's quite a strong vantage point because I mean *(he begins a list)* A you can watch the television A [sic] you can watch the activity of people going in and out there then you've got you can also see then you can also see men going in here you know so I suppose that's why

**Russell:**
And all the way up the corridor

**Max:**
And all the way down the corridor that's right because as they come around there you can see there mm

**Russell:**
I mean apart from anything else being

I.i.60:30
whether it's a strong vantage point it's a vantage point

**Max:**
It's a vantage point yeah

**Russell:**
And that again's something [unintelligible]
Max:
Yeah yeah I suppose so in terms of you know observing

Russell:
Yeah okay um so you leant against that wall last Saturday night

Max:
Mm mm mm

Russell:
What parts of your body when you were leaning against it were actually touching it

Max:
I tend to lean with my upper torso the back my back against it and I would be so
I.i.61:00
I'm sort of balancing on one leg and I'll crook a leg or put a flat foot you know my foot up against the wall

Russell:
Which foot

Max:
Oh it differs but probably um I don't know let me think I'd probably be on my left stand on my left foot and put my right foot up against it

Russell:
You think you did that last Saturday

Max:
Well I would have done that at some stage but also I'm I'm into this thing at the moment (he laughs) of free-standing as well so I might have been doing some free some free-standing

Russell:
When you say I'm into this thing is this is this is this a

Max:
Oh no very

Russell & Max:

Max:
conscious

Russell & Max:

I.i.61:30
Oh absolutely conscious it's all very conscious for me

Russell:
Right oh

Max:
It's all extremely conscious yeah

Russell:
Oh yeah that's great

Max:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
Well just let's go back to this leaning first of all though

Max:
Why is it great

Russell:
Hm

Max:
What do you mean that's great

Russell:
Um it excites me to hear that

Max:
Does it why

Russell:
Um it's something to do with I guess my sense of um (laughing a little) oh someone else thinks about these things

Max:
Oh
I.i.62:00
I see all right okay right yeah

Russell:
I think it’s something about that

Max:

Yeah

Russell:

A rec a recog yeah I think it’s to do with that

Max:

Yeah I understand mm mm mm

Russell:

It’s a good question

Max:

Mm oh no no I’ve very it’s very interesting like I’m very aware of the kind of really aware and I kind of I find it fascinating to observe how how people yeah I mean I am I’m fascinated because I’m you know being in theatre I suppose I I’m fascinated how people dispose themselves

Russell:

Yeah

Max:

And so (he gets up from his chair and moves to the wall to demonstrate the following by enacting it) I mean it gets as particular for me as whether

I.i.62:30

I’m standing with my towel with my hands like that in the towel I find it very difficult just to stand

Russell:

What your thumbs kind of hooked into it

Max:

Yeah I tend to do that I tend to do that but then I’m also aware as I do that that that looks I have a thought that that looks kind of aggressive or butch or something you know

Russell:

Yeah

Max:

And what will often happen is I do that and I think oh no I don’t want to stand like that and then I that feels very odd to stand like that so then I’ll do something like that yeah

Russell:

With your arms folded

Max:

With my arms folded but then if I’m up against that wall that’s why often I end up like that

Russell:

So with your arms

Max:

So I’m on my I’m leaning I’m standing on my left foot

Russell:

Yeah

Max:

with my right foot up against the wall and my arms

I.i.63:00

crossed yeah and in that position I can then oh no actually it’s very rare that I will do that that feels too open

Russell:

With your hand arms just loosely

Max:

Just by my side like that I would never stand just like that that that feels very odd for me

Russell:

Free-standing with your arms just by your side

Max:

Yeah yeah yeah yep mm

Russell:

The

I.i.63:30
even though you said you’re likely to alternate your feet in speech and in
demonstration it was your right foot that was up against the wall

**Max:**
Against the wall yes it probably is mostly that actually

**Russell:**
With the open corridor to your left

**Max:**
Mm mm yes yes

**Russell:**
Do you think the choice of foot is a function

**Max:**
Is determined by that

**Russell:**
of the fact that

**Max:**
No actually when I think about it it is that that actually feels very I don’t know how you could do that that feels very odd

**Russell:**
Having your left foot up feels odd

**Max:**
Yeah yeah I think it must be most of that

**Russell:**
Right okay

**Max:**
That that actually feels very comfortable

**Russell:**
so I think it’s probably that foot

**Max:**
Right okay how much time do you think would have lapsed between you arriving parking you know arriving at reception

**Max:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
and then reaching the point where you were in that position on the wall

**Max:**
Oh look it probably wouldn’t be (he coughs) excuse me It wouldn’t be more than probably fifteen or twenty minutes

**Russell:**
Okay

**Max:**
I left at about six o’clock I think

**Russell:**
So you were there about four hours and you said that you’d had an encounter later in the evening

**Max:**
Mm

**Russell:**
Okay so how did you spend the bulk of the time then I mean we’ve covered say the first fifteen minutes

**Max:**
I think it was probably I mean well I know um I think what

**Russell:**
happens is it become I suppose I I alternate between being I I can spend quite a long time there I can spend up to you know periods of probably fifteen or twenty minutes

**Russell:**
Yeah in that corner

**Max:**
In that corner yeah or I might go round and lean against that wall there yeah

**Russell:**
Right the one which is behind that barrier with the bench in
Max:
Yep that’s right I very rarely lean on that barrier

Russell:
Right you wouldn’t lean forward you’d lean back

Max:
No no I’d be against this back wall

Russell:
Okay

Max:
I wouldn’t go and actually as as lot of men do go and put their arms on that barrier

Russell:  
I.i.65:30
And lean

Max:
and either watch or lean over I won’t I don’t do that no

Russell:
Okay

Max:
That’s partly to do with the height of that barrier it always feels to me like I’m (he demonstrates and laughs a little) like this so it doesn’t feel very comfortable

Russell:
With your arms stretched up

Max:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
Okay yeah

Max:
So so I would alternate between there and just a a series of kind of other places that I

Russell:  
I.i.66:00
visit I would go into the dark room I would walk back down this corridor go downstairs

Max:
I would do that thing that I said I describe where I always I come down I go in that particular entrance again that north entrance

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
I might spend oh there’s another place (he refers to the sketch plan and laughs a little) there I quite like when you come in there’s the corridor here’s the lounge here yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
So this is the street was that north is that north is it

Russell:
The street’s um west

Max:
Oh west (I laugh a little) oh I see

Russell:
The main road’s north

Max:
So that so where’s north then is that north there this is the this is the lounge and this

Russell:  
I.i.66:30
is the the pool

Max:
Here’s the lounge here’s the pool
Russell: Right
Max: So that’s west east oh I see so that’s north there south is that what you’re saying
Russell: No no the pool (I laugh) the lounge
Max: Yeah
Russell: is closest to the street the building faces
Max: And there’s the street there’s the street
Russell: The lounge is west
Max: Yeah
Russell: The pool is east
Max: Yeah east so that’s north south
Russell: Yes that’s right
Max: North south east west
Russell: Yes that’s right yeah
Max: So so you know um so you know there’s that ent so there’s the entrance yeah
Russell: Yeah
Max: And you know there’s the the booths there
Russell: Yes
Max: Those little booths yeah and there’s a a kind of little funny little area in there that leads into those two rooms there
Russell: Yes
Max: Do you know what I mean and then you go there yeah
Russell: Yes
Max: And then there’s the there’s just a little area like that but then there’s the panel that goes along like that do you know that how it goes
Russell: Yes
Max: It’s quite specific and you can go round there and you can even go down there and I think there’s actually a tiny little booth I’ve never been into that I think there’s a little booth there isn’t there
Russell: I.i.67:30 somewhere
Max: Yeah
Russell: Er it’s
Max: Or is it just a little
Russell: It’s an alcove
Max:
An alcove  right

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
I like that area there  I often do the same thing there as I do up at that like lean  just lean  I could stay there for quite a while because I'm observing people coming through here  I'm observing people coming there  I'm observing people going in there etcetera so I often will sort will will sort of yeah stay there

Russell:
I think I bumped into you just about there

Max:
Yes

Russell:
Yeah  all right yeah yeah

Max:
I do remember that yeah yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
And then from there I will actually do the journey through the sauna (he utters a rhythm again) da da da down there  I've  I'm not mad about sitting on that bench there because I don't like looking at myself in the mirror so I I I but occasionally I'll do that sit on that bench there I might go in for a swim go and have a shower spend a little bit of time in the place I don't particularly like being in that wet sauna yeah and then walk around yeah so and then you know then I'll alternate that with going back upstairs again

Russell:
It's interesting you said you'd never been just round that tiny corner

Max:
No

Russell:
there to find out what was there

Max:
I don't think I have no no in the same way that I'd never really been interested in going into this area here if we're staying with this oh sorry so we go there then you know you go down there then then we come into that and I think I don't even sure what the configuration I think there's a bench there a bench there the television's up here somewhere isn't there and there's that there's the little

Russell:
All right

Max:
Okay what we're talking about is this downstairs area now

Russell:
Yeah yeah yeah yeah

Max:
That's right and there's the cubicle there

Russell:
This isn't the one that

Max:
What I call the wanking cubicles there's those two cubicles there that's right

Russell:
Right okay but this this is not television that's on the television set

Max:
No no this is the vid this is hardcore yeah yeah

Russell:
Right okay yeah

Max:

Yep now I have never

Russell:

So there are actually three areas where there are videos

Max:

Hold it there are three videos in Rear Entry

Russell:

Yeah

Max:

The one shows television shows and all the rest of it and the other are porno

Russell:

The other two are porno

Max:

Yep

Russell:

One downstairs and one upstairs

Max:

Yeah

Russell:

Okay good right so and this so basically there’s an area um in the downstairs in the heart of the maze perhaps is that a way of describing it

Max:

Yeah I suppose so yeah mm well

Russell:

Don’t we don’t have to I mean I’ve called it

Max:

We don’t know it might be a hard [heart?] it might be (he laughs a little) different for someone else but

Russell:

Yeah okay

Max:

Yeah

Russell:

But basically in that area that you’ve walked past a few times because it’s possible to walk past that area

Max:

Oh yeah yeah

Russell:

And in fact if you come in the

Max:

Oh sorry you’re talking about this area the hub what I call is maybe the hub of the sauna

Russell:

No the hub of the sauna’s the open area with all the wet facilities

Max:

Yeah yeah no no that’s what I thought you’re talking about this little place here that I described

Russell:

Yes sorry yeah this little place here

Max:

Yeah sorry yeah yeah that place yeah

Russell:

That in in there

Max:

Yes

Russell:
where there are these wanking booths as you call them

Max:
Here

Russell & Max:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
And there’s the video [unintelligible]

Max:
The video yeah

Russell:
And then there’s also a kind of a

Max:
Yep

Russell:
Um a bench area

Max:
Yeah

Russell:
in an L shape

Max:

Russell:
And that can be peered into

Max:
It can be peered into but I would say I have n I could almost say with certainty I’ve only sat in there once that doesn’t that int area doesn’t interest me particularly

Russell:
All right okay it’s interesting one of my other interviewees was completely interested in the wanking booths and that was his major interest at Rear Entry

Max:
Ah as as someone as someone in in terms of observing

Russell:
who’s in them or being or both and being in them as well

Max:
As of being in them

Russell:
Oh being in them oh right yeah mm

Max:
That was major interest

Max:
Mm well he’s yeah that’s interesting

Russell:
How um effortless do you find working with a floor plan like you’ve been drawing floor plans for me and describing things how effortless

Max:
That’s pretty effortless I think mm I don’t have any yeah I have a

Russell:
it’s interesting what you’ve brought to my attention of the birds-eye view I I suppose I have a very it feels to me like I have a very strong birds-eye view of it mm

Russell:
When (I hesitate while I check the recorder)

Max:
What do you have to watch the tape

Russell:
Yeah it’s what I might do is change it at this point and just talk with you a bit further

Max:
Yep sure

Russell:
Okay
Max:
Do you want another orange juice

Russell:

I.i.72:00
If you’re having one

Max:
Yeah *(he laughs a little)*

Russell:
Thanks

*(I switch off the minidisc recorder)*

I.i.72:03
*(Max makes me an orange juice, a fresh minidisc is inserted, a bit of chat, and we continue)*

Russell:

I.i.00:00
Right okay we’ve kind of identified that earlier part of the evening and if you like the bulk of the evening as being characterised one way by talking about how there was an encounter later in the evening so first of all was that the only encounter

Max:
Um

I.i.00:30
yes um but that encounter was a group encounter I mean so it sort of blurs the definition a bit of encounter because um there were a kind of a sequence of those encounters at the end of the evening so when you say was there one more than one encounter it depends on how you define encounter I suppose

Russell:
Well I’m just guess I’m hearing a word that you’ve used

Max:
Right oh yeah sure

Russell:
You said oh there was an encounter later in the night

Max:
Right yes

Russell:

I.i.01:00
and so then on one

Max:
Yeah I could use other words I could say that finally there was some action later in the night you know or I had sex with a number of people later in the night mm

Russell:
And all those phrases would be completely interchangeable for you

Max:

Um well they’re only phrases I’m probably partly using them in an interview setting I mean they’re partly phrases I’m using as in an interview situation

I.i.01:30
because I don’t particularly want to go into the details of it um so I’m finding words to describe in a kind of discreet way perhaps what those encounters were perhaps does it make sense

Russell:
Yes it does um at some stage did you go into a cubicle that was locked or a room that was locked

Max:
Um yes that was closed that we that we

I.i.02:00
could close

Russell:
Yes

Max:
Yes

Russell:
And where and where someone closed the door

Max:
Yeah mm
Russell:

Would you be prepared to tell me about what happened between the closing of the door and the opening of the door?

Max:

Yeah um was that a very interesting situation because actually because we fucked and in fact what happened was the door burst it opened in the door burst open someone had actually forced the door like

Russell:

I.ii.02:30

had had (he laughs a little) it was quite I actually didn’t I mean I I wasn’t shocked by it or even kind of like I thought oh here come oh so and so (laughing) wants to break in you know whereas the person I was fucking was very horrified by that you know it was quite a um mm so it was very quickly so whatever you know so our encounter our our fucking was very quickly interrupted and that person kind of you know left

Russell:

I.ii.03:00

All right now is is that the end of your description of what happened (we laugh)

Max:

Mm no you could ask me questions if they if they depends what you need to know I suppose

Russell:

Yeah that’s fine and you are completely at any stage you can just say I don’t want to answer that

Max:

Yeah yeah sure

Russell:

you know

Max:

Yeah yeah I understand that

Russell:

and really that’s absolutely fine

Max:

Russell:

because I’ve already noted you’ve said you might not want to talk about some things and be discreet and but that’s absolutely fine okay it really is

I.ii.03:30

all right who closed the door

Max:

Um now let me have a let me think what was they closed the the other man closed the door because I wasn’t remember I wasn’t sure I mean the door was open we went in there because it was dark I was quite willing I was quite open to whatever was going to happen I had no sense of of

I.ii.04:00

it being as some other occasions I might be with someone where I think no I want privacy and I I will close the door or they will close it but it’s understood that that’s what both of us want at that moment I didn’t necessarily feel that so they closed the door and I quite liked the fact that they did as an offer but in that situation yes they closed the door

Russell:

Okay so when (I emphasise) THEY closed the door (we laugh)

Max:

(still laughing) Yes

Russell:

Are we by the way

I.ii.04:30

is is there only one other person

Max:

Yes there’s only one other person

Russell:

Okay

Max:

Yeah

Russell:

Okay all right and where were you what was the
Max:
Upstairs
Russell:
Upstairs okay
Max:
Yeah
Russell:
And what was this place which had a door
Max:
There's as you go upstairs as you come up up the stairs you immediately turn right
Russell:
Yes
Max:
Yes and as you know there's the there's the bathroom on the left
Russell:
Yes
Max:
and toilet and then you turn right
Russell:
Yes
Max:
in order to go down the corridor but as you turn right there are
there's a kind of a open space an alcove with two rooms going off it
Russell:
Yes
Max:
It was the furthest on the right of those two rooms
Russell:
Right okay
Max:
That's yeah
Russell:
All right okay
Max:
What I'm aware of with those rooms is is that there's quite a lot of um group activity happens in those two room for some well I can understand why because you can actually lean you can actually be in that alcove leaning against the wall looking at the two rooms and often the doors are left open so they're a bit they often take on the um the sort of quality of the dark room that's further down yeah but in in a kind of a sort of voyeuristic you know like they allow that you know yeah
Russell:
So you you went into this room with (I emphasise) THEM (I laugh a little)
Max:
(echoing me) With THEM (we laugh) with him
Russell:
(choosing) With him okay and he closed the door
Max:
Yes
Russell:
Okay and did he lock it
Max:
I'm not quite sure what you mean by that because you can't
Russell:
Is there is there a locking
Max:
It's a sliding
Max: Yeah
Russell: it shut
Max: Yeah
Russell: but it means that someone on the outside can’t simply open it
Max: No no
Russell: Okay fine
Max: No that’s right
Russell: That’s what I mean
Max: Yeah so [unintelligible] so I see what you mean [unintelligible] yes you’re right
Russell: And you call this place a room
Max: Yeah yes I don’t see it as a yes it’s not like the cubicles because there’s quite a lot of space in them although there is the standard you know kind of bed you know bench or whatever there’s quite a lot of room in them room in them so it is more like a room I wouldn’t call it going but I
Max: but I don’t use the word cubicle I’m aware if I say to somebody do you want to go to I don’t say do you want to go to a cubicle I say do you want to go to a room so I don’t I don’t really use the word cubicle however having said that it is it feels different in you know in shape and size to the cubicles most of which I mean most the that the most of the rooms downstairs I would define if I had to make you know define them I’d say yes they’re more like cubicles yeah
Russell: But you would say to someone if you were going to one of them
Max: I’d say let’s go to a room
Russell: Let’s go to a room
Max: Yeah yeah
Russell: Okay so you were in a room upstairs
Max: Yeah
Russell: Can you describe that room first of all
Max: Not very well because that room I don’t think I’ve ever seen it lit it was actually very dark very dark in fact
Russell: Well that tells me something
Max: So dark that you actually have to find your way towards the bench and I must say that when we first went in there I wasn’t at all sure that there were there may have been someone else in that room so even at the moment when they locked it it’s interesting you asked me that question even at the moment they locked the door for all I knew there was someone else in the room I wouldn’t have
known I mean it didn’t seem to be but there may have been

Russell:
Yeah okay so it was so dark that you couldn’t actually quite tell but you were aware it was big

Max:
I know that it’s big yeah

Russell:
Okay

Max:
because it’s the same size as the one beside it and I’ve been in that room when it’s lit

Russell:
How do you know it’s the same size as the one on the other side

Max:
I don’t but I assume it is for some reason (he laughs) oh I can pretty much tell from outside that the amount of well how can I tell that because I can’t really see it but it feels like it is

L.ii.08:00
is probably all I can say I’d I’d lay any bet that it was the same size they feel like twins you know because as you probably know that there’s a d

Russell:
But you’ve been in it now so surely you should know

Max:
Oh not necessarily there’s a door there

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
and there’s a door there

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
The door goes into one and the door goes into that one so

Russell:
So you expect that the second room will have proportions which

Max:
Well I know that the bench it’s got the bench there and it’s got they’ve both got the bench you know there and I know that in this one there is quite a lot of space here

L.ii.08:30
yeah and so it feels to me though that’s the same in that one there’s quite a lot of room

Russell:
Well you said they’re like twins

Max:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
Yeah okay all right so there’s a kind of symmetry at work with this all right so you went in did you walk into the room first or did he

Max:
Um no he did

Russell:
He walked in first so does that mean

Max:
He was very much initiating what was happening between us

Russell:
Okay

Max:
so I was sort of following his lead

Russell:
So does that mean then that you

L.ii.09:00
needed to walk past him for him to shut the door
Max:

I think he I think I must have followed him in and he must have moved back we would have landed in the the probably somewhere in the middle of the room together and you know we probably kissed or whatever we did there and then he went back and closed the door

Russell:

Okay

Max:

That's right

Russell:

All right I I need to ask you some more questions about the room

I.ii.09:30

I realise because you began describing it saying you didn't know because it was dark

Max:

Yes

Russell:

It's like the joke on Robin Hood where the person said what was the weather like in London I couldn't tell you it was too foggy (we laugh a little) okay so that's in print now um so did the room have a ceiling

Max:

No ah now isn't that an interesting because hold on I say no

I.ii.10:00

no I'm not too sure about that see I don't no I'm not too sure I assume it hasn't I assume it it works like any of the cubicles but then I've got this odd feeling that upstairs no but see it's not really I'm not saying this I'm saying this more because I'm I'm pretty sure that they probably don't but if you but really to be honest I'd have to say I'm not sure mm yeah I assume they probably don't

Russell:

What does it feel like does it feel

Max:

It feels like it doesn't it no no sorry

I.ii.10:30

it feels like it does because it feels much more I mean one's very aware in a cu in those cubicles that yes that that over there is another one

Russell:

Yeah

Max:

You know over there is another one

Russell:

Over the top of the wall

Max:

I yeah whereas I had more a sense of in there there's another room beyond that wall is another room

Russell:

Right okay yeah

Max:

So I don't yeah so [unintelligible]

Russell:

That that that's that's very helpful for me yeah all right um what was under your feet

Max:

Concrete it's kind of like pa it's like smooth it's painted

I.ii.11:00

concrete

Russell:

But you had no sense of what colour it's painted

Max:

No

Russell:

Okay and what are the walls

Max:

The walls would be um I think one side is wood with with a panel but I think the other side is concrete
Russell:
That's two sides

Max:
Yeah then then the side that's on the corridor would be is wood as well

Russell:
Okay that's three

Max:
Like wood wood panelling

Russell:
Is it a three-sided room

Max:
Oh yeah no it's four sided and the other is concrete too

Russell:
Okay so so were they

Max:
So it's like so

Russell:
So two two walls are like structural for the building

Max:
Yeah they're structural

Russell:
All right okay

Max:
That's concrete because that's the stairwell out there

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
and that's that's concrete because I suppose it must be the street out there the
Russell:
it it basically prevented you walking to the wall opposite the door

Max:
Yeah mm mm

Russell:
And it went from the wall on the left

Max:
From one side to the other yeah across yeah

Russell:
Okay right okay

I.ii.13:00
how many steps in the area of floor

Max:
Yeah about three or four I suppose from the door to the bench

Russell:
Okay and from

Max:
one wall to the other

Russell:
either end of the bench to the other

Max:
Yeah um probably they’re probably pretty much square it’s probably square shaped so therefore the distance from door to wall you don’t experience because you’ve got the bench you don’t actually get there

I.ii.13:30
but in fact I think they’re pretty much square shaped so they’re probably four to five steps in you know mm

Russell:
What was the temperature in there

Max:
The temperature feels always I quite like the temperature in Y in um Rear Entry it always feels about it feels like body temperature I don’t experience it as being too hot nor too cold so it’s kind of body temperature

Russell:
So the concrete and on the floor and the walls

Max:
Oh I suppose that that might

I.ii.14:00
feel cool but never never for me uncomfortably so

Russell:
Right okay

Max:
Yeah

Russell:
All right um and how high is the bench

Max:
Um

Russell:
On your body against your body like

Max:
It probably comes up to (he stands and moves away from the table) oh that’s interesting what would it be it feels it feels like it’s about there (he indicates) mid thigh yeah

Russell:
About as high as this table

Max:
No no not as high as this table

Russell:
Oh that’s interesting
Is that what I said

Russell:

because that's where you actually pointed to

Max:

Oh well that's interesting well it's actually lower

I.ii.14:30

no it's lower than that yeah it's actually about the height of that um of the lounge

Russell:

The sofa

Max:

which is actually (he laughs a little) considerably lower isn't it

Russell:

Well it's a lot lower than your thigh that's your knees

Max:

(he has moved to the sofa and measured his standing height against it) [unintelligible] knee isn't that interesting yeah yeah it's like that Feldenkrais thing um yeah no it's probably more that height so it's about knee height

Russell:

Right okay

Max:

on me

Russell:

All right okay and what's on the bench

Max:

Um a black vinyl um you know square cushion which would have foam or whatever inside with black vinyl

I.ii.15:00

on it

Russell:

How do you know it's black

Max:

I don't actually it could be green but um I suppose because I've seen in in the areas that are lit they're black and so I sort assume that they're probably black in there as well but it could be a dark green or it could be a dark burgundy or something I wouldn't know

Russell:

Yeah you mentioned standard earlier (Max laughs) but you did

Max:

Your standard saunas

Russell:

No but I mean

Max:

I know I did well yeah I suppose um it's a new it's interesting

I.ii.15:30

because that's not the case is it it's actually but I mean standard is is the standard how do you describe that precisely you know the standard cushioning that they put on the benches that THEY put on the benches um you know that's well it's about two inches deep and but it's interesting because I think from I th I would say see I'm not certain no no I'm almost certain that that at um High Street that they're green olive green but I'm pretty

I.ii.16:00

sure at Rear Entry that they're black

Russell:

Okay and is there anything else in this room

Max:

Yes there's um a um lubricator dispenser and beside it a little to the left of the lubricator dispenser a little tray with um rubbers

Russell:

Right okay where where are they when you say to the left to immediately to its left

Max:

No if you're (refers to the sketch plan) here's the bench here
Russell: Yeah

Max: Yeah the um lubricating machine you know dispenser is there and so if I was if I was kneeling on the bench

Russell: Yes

Max: it would be kind of like I could just put out my hand and touch it probably

Russell: Right okay so

Max: So it’s probably about three foot up from the from the bench

Russell: Yeah

Max: Yeah that’s my experience of it

Russell: Right okay

Russell: And to the left of it is the little tray with and I find that’s interesting that’s kind of a st that that I would describe as standard too for some reason you put the little the little container of condoms is always to the left of the dispenser it would feel quite odd for it to be on the right now I wonder I wonder why that is I don’t know would that be your experience

Russell: I’ve never I have never paid attention to which one’s on which side

Max: Yeah well I know that

Russell: I’m I’m aware they’re next to each other

Max: Yeah I know at High Street they’re always on the left and I think at Rear Entry they’re always on the left I don’t know about Volcano

Russell: Is there anything else

Max: In there

Russell: Sorry when did you become aware that they were always on the left

Max: I think it’s just something I’ve always known if you were to have asked me years ago

Russell: Okay

Max: Is there anything else in the room

Russell: Yeah

Max: Ah no no I don’t think there is

Russell: Okay he closed the door whe as he closed the door where were you

Max: I would have been you know roughly in the centre of the sp of the room I was neither
You were or you would be

Max:
I was

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
Okay then what happened

Max:
Then he came in and we had connection in the middle of the room and then we moved to the bench

Russell:
All right first of all when you say he came in

Max:
Oh sorry he came from the door from closing the door he came to me

Russell:
Did that feel like he was coming in though

Max:
No no no no

Russell:
It didn’t

Max:
No no

Russell:
All right okay and he came to you so you just stood there in the middle of the room not leaning

Max:
(he laughs a little) No not leaning

Russell:
Free-standing probably not particularly thinking about how I was standing at that stage

Max:

Free-

I.i.18:30

standing

Max:
Free-standing probably not particularly thinking about how I was standing at that stage

Russell:
Yeah with your arms folded

Max:
(he laughs, then) No probably not I think I don’t think so

Russell:
Probably hanging loosely

Max:
Mm mm

Russell:
Which was the position previously that you said you didn’t want to stand in when you’re in that other space

Max:
Yeah mm but that was in the other space

Russell:
But we’re not sure that that’s how you were standing though

Max:
No not absolutely certain

Russell:
Okay he came to you and

I.ii.19:00

he touched you

Max:
Yeah we would have touched each other and then

Russell:
Would have or did
Max:
No no we did then we did (we laugh a little) we touched each other

Russell:
Sorry I have to I have to

Max:
No no no then we touched

Russell:
But remember you can stop at any time

Max:
Yeah yeah no no exactly

Russell:
You can say no

Max:
Yeah yeah no no then we touched each other

Russell:
Yeah okay

Max:
and then we moved then he moved to the bench and I followed him

Russell:
All right was your key on your arm

Max:
Yes

Russell:
Okay the thing about

Max:
I.ii.19:30

Russell:
Yeah (we burst out laughing, then) it is what happened to your towel you said you removed it

Max:
Yeah it was on the floor

Russell:
Where you were standing

Max:
Yes and that's very interesting because that's to do with I know that was to do with with me not really having any agenda with this particular guy I mean it was his initiative and I was kind of oh

Russell:
I'll see what's going to happen here as opposed to sometimes when I might go to a room with someone very much with the intention (he begins a list) A that I wanted to be you know without my towel with them um
and so I might I would go into the room and take my towel off say and hang it up or

Russell:
On what

Max:
Oh that's interesting there's sometimes well a hook there's often a hook mm

Russell:
Is there a hook in

Max:
Or I'll throw it onto the ah I don't know I don't know it's too dark so I've never seen

Russell:
You've never

Max:
I would never have bothered to try

l.ii.21:00
and find it you know maybe that's the reason why one ends up throwing it on the but that's unusual for me to leave it on the floor I kind of

Russell:
Did you just drop it where it fell

Max:
Yeah yeah mm

Russell:
Okay

Max:
And I think at some stage I probably kicked it away or something

Russell:
Was there much light in the room

Max:
No it was quite dark

Russell:
But you could see him coming towards you

Max:
No I could just sense him coming towards me I sort of felt him no no I probably I mean I can sort of see I mean I could hear him you know see him but no it was very dark it was very dark yeah

Russell:

l.ii.21:30
Sort of see him and hear him or hear him or sense him

Max:
Sense him I would say

Russell:
You're not sure about the source of information

Max:
No it's not that it's just that I would say I couldn't see him

Russell:
Right

Max:
But but he's but you know I could feel him you know

Russell:
Okay so when he touched you was it with his palm or with his fingertips

Max:

l.ii.22:00
I think we sort of em I think we embraced so it was kind of like he embraced me I think

Russell:
Yeah okay did you have to (I laugh a little) probe around to find where each other was

Max:
No

Russell:
or did you know that
Max:
No I think we knew that yeah we knew that yeah

Russell:
Okay

Max:
He had left me and I think he was assuming I was still in the same place when he returned

Russell:
And you were

Max:
Mm

Russell:
Okay and the towel just dropped at your feet

Max:
Mm I think I yeah I probably pulled it off and it dropped

Russell:

I.ii.22:30
Yeah okay and you say did he have his towel still on when he first came to you

Max:
Um he let his towel drop when he reached me

Russell:
Okay so were your towels beside one another on the floor or

Max:
I don’t I mean his would have fallen wherever you know like they probably ended up slightly yes possibly yeah

Russell:
Okay all right

Max:
I’m not certain about that

Russell:
Okay so then there was embracing and touching

Max:
Yes

Russell:

I.ii.23:00
while you were still both standing

Max:
Yeah

Russell:

I.ii.23:00
and then at some point you shifted

Max:
Yeah

Russell:
in the room

Max:
Yeah we went to the bench

Russell:
To the bench

Max:
Yeah

Russell:
Right to where on the bench

Max:
Um

Russell:
Did you go to the middle of the bench or to one end of the bench

Max:
No I think that he wanted me to fuck him and I think that I remember what he did is he went to the bench and sat on it and I then

I.ii.23:30
moved and probably it was at this stage not probably *(he laughs a little)* it was quite dark and I remember trying to there was just that moment of where you know like a finding him and so yeah so he had gone to the bench first

**Russell:**

How did you know he wanted you to fuck him

**Max:**

He asked me

**Russell:**

With his voice

**Max:**

Yeah he asked me if I would I would like to fuck him

**Russell:**

But did he speak or did he whisper was it a voiced request

*I.i.24:00*

or *(I laugh a little)* an unvoiced request

**Max:**

*(laughing a little)* Gosh um it was probably an unvoiced request I think mm it was yeah it was an unvoiced request

**Russell:**

Could you the reason I’m asking is like

**Max:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

for instance did do you have a memory of hearing his voice or did you just hear the words

**Max:**

I would say I heard the words

**Russell:**

Okay right okay and what were the words

**Max:**

Do you want to fuck me

**Russell:**

Were they the only words that had been spoken

**Max:**

Yeah

*I.i.24:30*

they were the only words yeah

**Russell:**

Okay and what did you say

**Max:**

Yes

**Russell:**

And then he went

**Max:**

Yeah to the bench

**Russell:**

But did you lose physical contact with him when he did it

**Max:**

At that moment yes

**Russell:**

And then you weren’t sure where to find him

**Max:**

Well for a fraction of a moment

**Russell:**

Okay right okay so you had to search for him a bit

**Max:**

Mm mm

**Russell:**

Right okay

**Max:**
I just wasn’t sure in going to the bench how he had gone to whether he’d gone and and

laid down on the bench or whether so I was sort of as I in that split second of walking towards it I didn’t quite know how he was going to (he laughs a little) arrange himself on the bench

Russell:

Right okay

Max:

I suppose you know yeah

Russell:

Did you know at that stage oh no well let’s leave this for a moment um so you found him at the bench and was he where you expected or how you expected

Max:

I don’t know that I had an expectation oh well probably

I did I I thought in in going to the bench that he’d gone to I don’t know no I don’t think I had any expectation actually

Russell:

So you found

Max:

I mean I knew that however he went to the bench however he was there would be some indication of what he wanted to do (he laughs a little) maybe

Russell:

Like a further indication of what he wanted to do

Max:

Yeah yes I mean it would be different if he went to the bench and lay down on the bench or he went to the bench and lay on his back and stuck his legs in the air would be different too

Russell:

Right okay

Max:

You know I mean etcetera etcetera

Russell:

All right so when when you found

him at the bench you said he was sitting on it

Max:

He was sitting on the bench yes

Russell:

So he’s what his legs his feet on the floor

Max:

Yeah yeah yeah yeah

Russell:

And him just sitting

Max:

Yeah

Russell:

And which end of the bench was he at

Max:

He was probably in about the middle of the bench

Russell:

In about the middle okay so then what did you do when you found him

Max:

Um I I think I no that’s right I stood in front of him and

yeah I think I just stood in front of him (a silence) I think I stood in front of him he started sucking me off and I think from there we eventually ended up lying on the bench yes I know that’s how it happened yeah

Russell:

Lying on the bench

Max:
Lengthwise

Russell:

Lengthwise

Max:

Yeah

Russell:

With your heads at the same end

Max:

No no no

Russell:

Right okay which end of the bench were your feet at

Max:

The end opposite to where the dispenser is

Russell:

Okay so you

Max:

So it’s the kind of the street end

Russell:

So you were okay and your heads then were towards the dispenser

Max:

Yeah

Russell:

Okay and so once you were in that lying position

Max:

then what occurred next

Max:

I think we well we kissed and were probably feeling each other and I think from there he kind of indicated he wanted me to fuck him then and I remember then I probably and that’s why I always find it quite I think they’re quite well placed (he laughs a little) the lubricator

Russell:

I probably reached for I think I reached for lubricant he actually reached up behind him and got the and got a er condom

Russell:

Is that how he indicated to you that he was ready

Max:

No he said again he said I want you to fuck me

Russell:

He said it a second time

Max:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

This is the second time

Max:

That’s right yeah

Russell:

And this was again you you heard the words not his voice

Max:

Pretty much although I think we’d actually been saying things to each other that I can’t remember we’d probably been saying things to each other as we were feeling each other or kissing

Russell:

Yeah

Max:

Um but that yes but I was it was more

Russell:
But you’re not certain about that whether you’d spoken or not

Max:
Yeah I’m pretty certain mm mm

Russell:
That you had spoken

Max:
Mm mm

Russell:
But you’re not certain what the words were

Max:
No

Russell:
Okay

Max:
No

Russell:
But then this second statement I want you to fuck me

Max:
Yeah

Russell:
you were clear about

Max:
Yeah or just fuck me fuck me

Russell:
Fuck me

Max:
That’s probably yeah mm mm

Russell:
Which you understood as meaning I want you to

I.ii.29:00

fuck me

Max:
Mm

Russell:
Okay

Max:
Mm

Russell:
Okay

Max:
Mm

Russell:
And how did you respond when he said that again did you say something back to him this time

Max:
No no um I think I I responded by I responded by getting ready to fuck him

Russell:
All right now you said he reached for the condom did he reach for the condom before I.ii.29:30 you reached for the lubricant

Max:
No I reached for the lubricant

Russell:
Yes

Max:
Yeah and I remember lubricating him and in the meantime he had reached up with his hand and got a condom

Russell:
Right okay and did he hand you the condom

Max:
No he opened it himself which I was very grateful for because my teeth don’t quite meet (laughing as he speaks) I have great difficulty getting condoms open

Max:
No he discovered it because he had it and he went oops wrong way

Russell:
Okay

Max:
He said something like that  oops wrong way

Russell:
He said

Max:
I think  yes

Russell:
Oh yeah  okay

Max:
Yeah  yeah

Russell:
Okay  and when he said that

Max:
Yeah

Russell:
did you hear his voice or did you hear the words

Max:
What do you  what do  what’s the distinction you’re making there

Russell:
Um  I.ii.30:30

Max:
No no no no no there was it wasn’t no it would be like oops wrong way I mean what whatever it was it was voiced though  yeah

Russell:
Okay  was  earlier was it voiced or not
Max:

No I think earlier it was unvoiced because it was kind of whispering because we were in closer contact it was like we were whispering because we were kind of and I think we were very consciously kind of you know you know playing with that

Russell:

Yeah

Max:

Playing with whispering do you want to fuck me whatever

Russell:

Yeah okay all right

Max:

Yeah

Russell:

All right so then there was that oops wrong way

Max:

Yeah

Russell:

And

then did you assist him in rearranging it

Max:

No no no

Russell:

Just let him do it

Max:

I'd never do that

Russell:

Again please

Max:

I would never do that
So what's this routine

Max:

Oh a routine that that I that

lii.32:00

I experience as people kind of um having a certain oh I describe it as people people who um who just want to have a fuck and aren’t very much into fantasy or into anything that kind of sits outside of how do you you know in order to have a fuck you have to lubricate put on a condom and you know stick your dick in you know what I mean like that yeah

lii.32:30

so I suppose given this is a situation that I’m not I mean the situation I mean is kind of just going with someone that I’m not even sure I particularly wanted to fuck anyway so I was kind of in this situation just going with okay that’s what you you know I’ll see what happens so it’s not really a it’s not a situation in which I’m particularly imaginatively involved I suppose so it was a bit of a relief so in a way the kind of the the thing of it being the wrong way around oops wrong way was kind of a rel little kind of

lii.33:00

diversion I suppose from the inevitability of the fuck in that situation

Russell:

So how do you know though that you wouldn’t help him (Max laughs a little) because I’m

Max:

Yeah

Russell:

Is that an answer to that question

Max:

Yeah

Russell:

how do you know you wouldn’t help him or

Max:

No no it’s

Russell:

have you yet to answer that question

Max:

No no it’s not actually no (the phone rings) no it’s not I’d better just get that because I’ve got someone um

Russell:

Yeah

Max:

But let’s but hold that

Russell:

Yep I’ll put that on pause I’ll just pause this

lii.33:31

(I switch off the recorder, Max answers the phone, and when he’s finished we resume)

Max:

lii.00:00

Now you were asking was that an answer to that question oh no look if I think about it if I if I was in a situation (referring to the recorder) is it is it going

Russell:

Yes I think so

Max:

I mean if I was in a situation with someone and we were both hot and really wanting to fuck and you know and they were doing it they were doing that I I would probably help I think when I said that I I think it’s situations where I’m I I don’t feel any I’m not really hugely involved

lii.00:30

I’m kind of going along with it because it’s kind of you know but it’s not and so I think in that situation I can sometimes become observer and so I’m quite if I mean part of me is perversely is quite is quite interested to see what they’re going to do and so I won’t help

Russell:

Right

Max:

Maybe that’s what I was talking referring to
Russell:
Why do you think that's perverse trying to find out what they're going to do

Max:
I.iii.01:00
Oh look I only use it I I kind of use it a bit sort of light-heartedly

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
in terms of a sort of yeah I mean that it's it feels a bit wicked or a bit naughty or something I suppose for me to not help (he laughs) because I don't think necessarily they're aware that that's what I'm doing why should they be you know

Russell:
Right

Max:
I think it feels a little bit I don't know I suppose I feel a bit manipulative or I'm I'm kind of manipulating the situation because part of me feels in those situations that I sometimes I think I could just leave too

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
Like you say oh you fucked the condom sorry I mean I don't know it's kind of like playing with I'm playing with power and stuff like that in those situations I think

Russell:
Okay

Max:
Yeah

Russell:
All right so then you put it on then what happened

Max:
Um well then I think I yeah we started fucking he was very he he was very um open and so I think we started fucking straight away

Russell:
The p sorry when you said open do you mean

Max:
He was very accessible (he laughs a little)

Russell:
Oh okay so you mean anally he was quite

Max:
Yes yes

Russell:
Okay fine all right so the you weren't talking about a state of mind

Max:
(we laugh) No certainly not

Russell:
(still laughing) Sorry

Max:
I have no idea of his state of mind

Russell:
That's all right the position that you got into

Max:
Yeah

Russell:
whatever that was

Max:
Yeah

Russell:
who organised that or how was that organised

Max:
Oh look that it sort of happened because he was lying on his back that it just happened from how we’d ended up at the point he said do you want to you know do you want to fuck me

Russell:
Just a minute you both reached up

Max:
Yeah he was lying on his back yeah

Russell:
Yes

Max:
I was lying on top of him

Russell:
Yes

Max:
He said you know fuck me I reached
I.iii.03:00
up for lubricant he it was int I mean I it was quite an ambidextrous act but he somehow reached up behind him with his hand I think if [unintelligible] I would have had to get it but he somehow got just did that and got the condom

Russell:
And you got the sense he really knew where it was

Max:
Yeah I did actually yeah yeah yeah

Russell:
And you knew where the dispenser was could you see it

Max:
Probably just I think just I could see it

Russell:
All right

Max:
But I I knew where it was I did I do have that sense of a I have a very I do have a sense of kind of the relationship between the whether it’s it’s not just that
I.iii.03:30
room either between the bench and where the they seem to but it makes sense that they seem to put the lubricant and the dispenser mostly where you need to have it

Russell:
Yes (we laugh a little) funny that isn’t it

Max:
Funny that

Russell:
All right um

Max:
But that’s not strictly true either when I think about it but anyway yeah

Russell:
Had he selected the room

Max:
Yes yeah not that you’ve got a great deal of choice up there because actually what happened was that we had met in the dark room (indicates on the sketch plan)

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
We’d come out of there we walked straight down
I.iii.04:00
the corridor these two all those cubicles on the right were closed

Russell:
Yes

Max:
so it was it was either that room or that room or
Russell:
Yeah okay

Max:
what now we have to go downstairs and so we went into that one

Russell:
Okay right

Max:
Yeah

Russell:
All right so and then while and while you were fucking did you alter position

Max:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
All right okay who altered the position

Max:
I altered the position

Russell:
Okay all right so more or less when you began you began

1.iii.04:30
with where you both were and then at a certain point you altered the position can I ask you how you came to alter the position

Max:
Um oh probably to get better um thrust or something or to I think I was actually quite aware with him of of wanting just to try a whole lot of different positions

Russell:
Right okay

Max:
I think because he was so it was it was so he was actually

1.iii.05:00
so easy to fuck I think that there was something about the ease of that that because I don't often don't I mean I I I quite like to settle into a position (he laughs a little) and stay there

Russell:
All right okay

Max:
And I think it was to do with that

Russell:
All right and did you alter position more than once

Max:
Yes I think we from memory we probably altered positions about four or five times

Russell:
And did you in altering position withdraw from him

Max:

1.iii.05:30
No no but that was quite unusual and I don't know where that that I was kind of stuck by the by the kind of uniqueness of that at the time actually this is quite interesting talking about this particular fuck because I remember that was something that yeah that kind of surprised me

Russell:
Did you find that enjoyable

Max:
I don't know about well it was certainly different and it certainly

Russell:
Was it interesting

Max:
Yeah it was interesting and I think it was a little bit to do with the thing of I mean I'm I'm both active and passive and I think that and so

1.iii.06:00
I think often in yes I think to feel it kind of enhanced the feeling of being active I suppose or in control you know mm
Russell:
All right

Max:
Mm

Russell:
And it was after a series of these alterations that the door got

Max:
Yes well I remember specifically he he was on his back in front of me I had my back to the door I'm standing I'm fucking him

Russell:
Yep

Max:
And then suddenly the door (he makes a plosive sound) prawh burst open behind

Russell:
And that was the point at which the door opened

Max:
Yeah

Russell:
And that was the end of the encounter

Max:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
Yeah okay all right and the person who burst in

Max:
It was there's a number this is you know if you think about it this is probably about five half past four in the morning and there's a bit of a I've noticed there's a phenomenon of often fairly elderly men who seem to gather or be yeah around that area later in

to anything that's going and yeah it was a he was I mean I just it was more from his figure in in silhouette because the light behind and he was you know quite um I could see he was he was quite old

Russell:
Okay

Max:
I think he'd probably been at the door listening whatever

Russell:
That's good thanks that's really helpful hearing about all that information

Max:
Is it yeah

Russell:
Mm um do do we have a bit more time to

Max:
Now the only thing is I have actually got someone coming we haven't really because I've got someone coming round at half past four

Russell:
All right so [unintelligible]

Max:
But if you want to if you wanted to you know if you wanted to do more at some stage I don't mind

Russell:
No we can do we can there's some other things I can save for a follow up

Max:
Yeah sure

Russell:
That'll be fine because we'll have a follow up in a few months

Max:
Right oh that’s right yeah

Russell:
Yeah okay

Max:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
We’ll leave it there for now

Max:
Okay

Russell:
Okay

(I switch off the recorder)

I.iii.08:06

END OF CONVERSATION
appendix 11: Frosty I

The transcript documents a conversation with Frosty that took place at his home. We met on a weekday when some of his housemates were in so we retired upstairs to his room. The room is large with a bed in one corner, a desk in another, and a high ceiling above. It’s one of many such rooms above a row of old shops in an older suburb of Melbourne. The room also has no window other than a skylight that beautifully illuminates the floor but not the walls. We sat on the floor sipping some drinks near Frosty’s wardrobe and recorded the following exchange.

Russell:

I.i.00:00
Okay all right um I think what I want to start with is you told me that you lived next to Volcano you you were like its neighbour

Frosty:
Yeah oh

Russell:
Could you describe more precisely like I haven’t actually asked you before where precisely you were in relationship

Frosty:
Yeah it’s it’s not actually next to it it’s down the lane a little bit so if you go um past Volcano which going up the main street and there’s a laneway

I.i.00:30
next to a pub and Volcano left down that laneway and the f second right that’s where I used to live

Russell:
All right

Frosty:
So that lane so it was a little bit away from Volcano

Russell:
So you’d you’d be walking up your west in a westerly direction

Frosty:
Mm […]

Russell:
Right okay and there’d be Volcano and the pub is immediately next to it

Frosty:
Mm with a lane there’s a lane

Russell:
And the lane is

I.i.01:00
between the pub and Volcano

Frosty:
Mm

Russell:
Okay so you’re going down one side of Volcano

Frosty:
Yep

Russell:
when you’re going down that lane

Frosty:
Yep yep

Russell:
Okay and there’s a lane on the east end of Volcano too as I recall

Frosty:
Yep out the back of Volcano

Russell:
Yeah on the main street

Frosty:
Yeah yeah there’s a there’s a little laneway out the back of Volcano

Russell:
Yeah

Frosty:
and there’s two and that’s on the left as you walk

away from Volcano and then there’s two laneways on the right

Russell:

Right right when you say there’s two on the right do you mean like you go down one and then you go down another or

Frosty:

No no they just run parallel to one another

Russell:

All right okay

Frosty:

Up

Russell:

Okay

Frosty:

And in between those two laneways that run up

Russell:

Yeah

Frosty:

um there’s there’s there’s a whole series of buildings

Russell:

Right okay

Frosty:

that exist sort of in between the two lanes

Russell:

Okay

Frosty:

Yeah

Russell:

And how long did you live there

Frosty:

Um about a year and a half two nearly two year actually two years I’d say yeah

Russell:

And was your entranceway to your home visible from the main street

Frosty:

No no

Russell:

So you’d go down to the lane then you would go somewhere else

Frosty:

Yeah

Russell:

as far as someone from the main street was concerned

Frosty:

Yeah

Russell:

You’d just be seen disappearing into the lane

Frosty:

Disappearing yeah into the lane

Russell:

And um how many other people lived with you

Frosty:

Ah three

Russell:

Three and were they all men

Frosty:

No two um one man two women
Russell:
Okay

Frosty:
So two and two and two

Russell:
All right when did you first know that you were living near a sauna (I get a pen and paper out of my bag)

Frosty:
I didn’t actually know that it was a sauna very early on but I reckon within that two years at the beginning of that two years um when I started living there I knew there was some form of activity happening in there that was associated to say gay community

Russell:
Right

Frosty:
Um but I wasn’t you know I suppose a hundred percent sure that it was a volcano ah sorry a sauna

Russell:
Right

Frosty:
Um I suppose the name Volcano probably um I guess ah yeah it creates it for creates it for you I suppose [unintelligible]

Russell:
Did it create it for you

Frosty:
Um I it’s certainly suggestive of heat (he laughs a little) something happening in there that’s associated to heat

Russell:
Had you heard do you I mean since then you’ve had that kind of confirmed for you I mean

Frosty:
Um yeah yeah well I would have been at that stage so that was probably when that was maybe eight months ago yeah

Russell:
So somehow or other that accumulated over time that awareness

Frosty:
Yeah um

Russell:
What are some earl ah go on

Frosty:
I now this is interesting because I observing people that are going in and out of there with bags with like a gym bag and towels

Russell:
Did you see people carrying towels into there

Frosty:
Yes yeah sort of

Russell:
Right was that often
Russell: that you saw people carrying towels

Frosty: Ooh well they'd have it with a bag so it would either be a towel sitting on a bag or a towel in their hand and holding a bag at the same time you know not sort of ah you know the towel around the neck or anything like that but um ah it was reasonably often yeah more more as many times as I'd see somebody going in there with nothing I'd see somebody going in there with you know a bag or a towel so

Russell: Okay and where would you see them from

Frosty: Um walking when I'm wal actually walking either past it myself um walking past Volcano myself or from ah the I suppose the side of the street on the other side opposite Volcano on the main street when I might maybe crossing to get to in front of Volcano to turn down the laneway or I would see men that would park in the in the car park which is sort of behind Volcano there's a kind of a car park there so I'd see men coming from their car or to their car from Volcano I ass I suppose this is an assumption as well

Russell: I've never seen it um

Frosty: I didn't follow them directly from Volcano's door but I assumed that they were coming from Volcano and they'd have a bag and a towel

Russell: The um did you see women use that car park

Frosty: Yeah oh that car park is um ah also I used it there you know everybody kind of anybody

Russell: Yeah

Frosty: Anybody it's just a sort of a one hour car park or an all day car park

Russell: How how how many um parking spots are there

Frosty: Oh gee it would be um at least they really jam them in I within a hundred or more people I reckon

Russell: Yeah

Frosty: Yeah

Russell: I well I don't drive

Frosty: Yeah

Russell: but I wasn't even aware there was a car park

Frosty: Yeah

Russell: tucked in that area

Frosty: Yeah

Russell: So it's actually behind Volcano
Frosty:

Yeah

I.i.08:00

there’s another building directly well there’s a laneway directly behind Volcano and then another kind of warehousey building which is a really weird place um and then then there’s the car park so it’s sort of within that same block so I reckon they’d jam a hundred people in there in the hundred cars or you know or so in there I reckon

Russell:

Okay um (a silence)

I.i.08:30

so there’s an early awareness of seeing people go in with gym bags and towels and that about half the people seem to you know have that kind of luggage with them um what about the other half

Frosty:

Um I’d see they would just sort of be rocking in with just their clothes you know what they’ve got on was the kind of thing um

Russell:

I.i.09:00

And what did they have on

Frosty:

Ah what did they have on there was all sorts of I suppose there’s all sorts of dressed people there was um ranging from men in suits in men in um ah kind of you know those parachute tracksuit pant type types um (he laughs) to

I.i.09:30

I suppose more of a kind of a camp a camper wear

Russell:

Oh yeah what would

Frosty:

You know um tight tight clothes I suppose that could be I could say that um

Russell:

Do you mean like going out clothes

Frosty:

Um oh no it could have been casual but like kind of a a tight T or something

Russell:

Yeah

Frosty:

but you know cut off at the sleeves

Russell:

Yeah

Frosty:

Um

I.i.10:00

I suppose and I sort of maybe pants that are kind of cropped off what are those quarter

Russell:

Yeah

Frosty:

Quarter pants with sandals or something like that you know um clothes that I actually wear too (we laugh) um what else I saw some I have I have seen I remember seeing some guys that people probably wouldn’t assume

I.i.10:30

that would would enter those places

Russell:

Oh yes

Frosty:

Guys that

Russell:

Can you describe one or more

Frosty:

Probably guys that are kind of dressed ah more either ockerish like we you know the term we use ockerish or or labour labour-like ah working-class-like or or um you know Blundstones Bluey’s T-shirt al almost a Bluey’s T you know Bluey’s singlet almost but you know that kind of workman’s

I.i.11:00

type of uniform

Russell:


Right when you say people wouldn’t assume (I laugh a little) do you mean (I um)

Russell: Did you have experiences of surprise

Frosty: I think [unintelligible] within no well yes and no because I reckon um drawing from

I.i.11:30

of me that go yeah surprise and then
drawing from a world that ah maybe more
of a [sic] educated world through the
through the things that I’ve read and and
studied and and um learnt along the last
few years I’m not surprised

Russell: Right

Frosty: Does that make sense

Russell: Yeah it does

Frosty: Now there’s a

Russell: (laughing a little) but I’m going to keep going

Frosty: Yeah there’s a there’s a and that’s mixed so yeah

Russell: I.i.12:00

So can you recall specifically a particular occasion of seeing someone going in and
being surprised that that person turned in to go in someone you might have expected to
just keep walking past

Frosty: Well I often used to because I became interested in that strip because I always used to walk home that that way and I became

I.i.12:30

interested in doorways and things in in some of my own research so I started to kind of when I’d get to the corner of the two main streets nearby um be interested in not necessarily I I would never stop my sort of ah my path I would kind of just normally walk as if I was normally walking home but I’d get in behind somebody or or some a group of people and I would just sort of walk behind them

I.i.13:00

not trying to pass them just but still walking kind of a normal slow kind of pace and try to think in my mind oh is he going to turn into this doorway so I would quite often do that so there

Russell: You said that you were following a group though

Frosty: Ah well in the sense of not they were grouped together but you know traffic

Russell: Right okay yep

Frosty: A group of traffic

Russell: Yep yep

Frosty: I suppose so I didn’t actually know whether there was

I.i.13:30

you know these people were together or not um so they existed as individuals I suppose in in a big group so I would just sort of wander in and wander kind of home and then I’m trying to think whether how many times I was right or how many times I was wrong (he laughs a little) and I

Russell: I’m thinking I’m thinking though if you can think of a specific time
Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
when you were surprised that someone went in

Frosty:
Nuh I don’t know I don’t reckon

Russell:
But there were you have an awareness though that there were occasions

Frosty:
Yes yeah yeah definitely I have an awareness but not a specific time really

Russell:
Yeah okay

Frosty:
Um I suppose it’s not a glaring you know it’s not so glaring like it you know they do really melt together as a little bit you know the types of people that kind of go in there but yeah

Russell:
I’m aware that exactly yeah you know like men in suits men in da-da all sorts of

Frosty:
Did you see people go in who you wouldn’t think of as men or people come out who you wouldn’t think of as men

Frosty:
Um nuh no

Russell:
That’s a different question from asking if you saw people go in and come out who you didn’t think of as male

Frosty:
Mm yeah yeah um no no I know what you’re saying but no

Russell:
Do you well what am I saying

Frosty:
As in are you are you saying as in man as in what we sort of or what um I suppose parts of society see as man

Russell:
No I’m asking for you

Frosty:
For me

Russell:
For you

Frosty:
For me

Russell:
For you yeah yeah your own sense

Frosty:
Well then no no no

Russell:
No no okay all right all right I’ll ask another one did you see anyone go in or come out who you would think of as a boy

Frosty:
No nuh

Russell:
Did you see anyone go in or come out who you wouldn’t think of as being masculine

Frosty:

Russell:
Did you see anyone go in or come out in groups of more than one
Frosty:

No no I don’t think so however

Russell:

I I I I yeah I’ve reckoned that um I’ve seen men go in there that have identified one another on the street as they’ve gone in there whether they’ve known each other or not I you know I I what I’m trying to say is that I think that they know each other so they’ve identified one another through probably either a

hello or or a kind of a um some form of greeting

Russell:

Oh yeah

Frosty:

Yeah um that

Russell:

As it were so they’ve kind of bumped into each other as they’ve arrived

Frosty:

Yes

Russell:

All right okay yeah

Frosty:

Yeah yeah more so than

Russell:

All right

Frosty:

I don’t I couldn’t I couldn’t say whether it was actually a a rendezvous or anything like that but yeah there’s certainly there’s been a a kind of greetings

Russell:

And what about the age range

Frosty:

Um what I saw I would start at maybe in the fifties somewhere in that kind of ten year fifty bracket down to probably maybe late twenties I reckon that’s about the sort of

the range I would see

Russell:

Fine can you describe the building for me

Frosty:

The building is

Russell:

Go on

Frosty:

It um there’s one small laneway next to it on if if I’m actually facing the building the doorway of Volcano on the main street there’s a small laneway that’s next to it on the

left ah usually with a car parked in there kind of sporty car with a um a kind of a a big um industrial bin at the end of the laneway and then on right hand side there’s another laneway that goes in between Volcano and a pub and then at the back there’s another very small laneway often with a car parked in there and often I’ve seen workers there as well working at the back there so

I I just remembered that um and it’s kind of a I suppose a red reddish brick brick um building with I would imagine two levels but possibly more at least two levels um the windows are blackened and there’s two entrances ah sorry there’s um three three entrances ah the most

the one that I’ve seen used well and I’m assuming there’s entrances at the back as well but at the front there’s three entrances and the one I’ve seen one entrance used the most um one other entrance is a kind of a a sliding door with a um a big um ah the fla rainbow coloured flags flag in the window and there’s another

entrance with um I think three steps going up and a kind of a a door that opens like that (he demonstrates) well two doors I suppose I

Russell:

Swings open outwards like
Frosty:
A swing yeah kind of a little bit like you know clubbish type of you know

Russell:
entrance yeah

Frosty:
Entrance

Russell:
Have you seen that entrance used

Frosty:
I haven’t seen that entrance used um the only entrance I’ve seen used is um the one that’s in between the sliding door and the

Russell:
Okay

Frosty:
that swings out

Russell:
Can I ask you a question if you haven’t seen them used how do you know they’re entrances

Frosty:
Um well there’s there’s a little sign there’s this it looks like it gets used I suppose with a sliding door

Russell:
Yeah

Frosty:
Um and there’s a clear sign on it I’m sure there’s a clear sign on it saying sliding door now I don’t

Russell:
But if you have

Frosty:
you can

Russell:
that’s that’s information

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
I need

Frosty:
Yes yeah

Russell:
That’s all right

Frosty:
Um and I suppose I don’t know whether they’d use the the door with the two doors I don’t know

Russell:
But you think of that as an entrance

Frosty:
I still think of all of them as entrances

Russell:
Yeah

Frosty:
Er whether for one form or another of deliveries of I

don’t know what if they do have deliveries or um bringing in certain things into the establishment whatever that may be storage

Russell:
Yeah

Frosty:
Who knows but I have I also have heard I heard have heard in the door with the
sliding door um loud loud really loud kind of music coming out from that

Russell:

(laughing a little) Yes

Frosty:

That room

Russell:

I.i.22:00

Yeah

Frosty:

Um so I know this it's getting actually

Russell:

Classical music (this is a question)

Frosty:

(he laughs, then) No dance music

Russell:

Right okay

Frosty:

Um so I know whatever's in that particular room's you know something's getting is getting used

Russell:

Have have you heard that at daytime or night-time

Frosty:

Um mostly I heard it on a Sunday morning (I laugh) which is kind of interesting and what I I.i.22:30

would assume they would be um is is and I don't just assume it about this place but people are into recovery parties um so I was I'd always hear that from my house and I'd assume oh there's a recovery party at Volcano

Russell:

Right

Frosty:

Um

Russell:

Does that make sense to you a recovery party at a sauna

Frosty:

Um whatever I don't know um I th yeah well it can

Russell:

I.i.23:00

Well

Frosty:

It can make sense

Russell:

perhaps I'll ask it a different way what sense have you made of that

Frosty:

What sense I've made of that is that the

Russell:

You don't need to justify by the way it's just simply telling me what you know

Frosty:

Yeah yeah um what I would ah make of that is that like any other recovery party I suppose people go out at night rage along and then there's a venue the next day that is I.i.23:30

already organised within that community and they cool themselves down which is kind of funny in a pla if that's a word you could use in a place called Volcano um and I also would I suppose associate some form of um at times I would associate some form of drug taking with a kind of a recovery I.i.24:00

party probably not actually drug taking at the recovery party but um previous to that or the night before so

Russell:

Are we talking Panadol or

Frosty:

No we're probably talking ecstasy perhaps

Russell:
Right

Frosty:

or or speedy

Russell:

Yeah okay

Frosty:

aw type of drugs and that’s my I mean that’s why I’ve been to recovery parties so

Russell:

Yeah

Frosty:

As a way to get rid of the um the the toxins in your body so

Russell:

Can can we continue have you finished

Frosty:

Yeah

Russell:

the description of the building

Frosty:

Oh no oh there’s more there’s downstairs blackened windows um the entrance that I’ve seen used physically used by by men um has a long staircase up and

Russell:

Sorry where are the doors in relationship to the staircase

Frosty:

Um the door that I’ve seen used ah the staircase is directly if you open the door and the staircase is straight in front of you
Yeah

**Russell:**
to block out the sun

**Frosty:**
Yeah I haven’t done

**Russell:**
Cupping them around your eyes

**Frosty:**
Yeah yeah

**Russell:**
You haven’t done that

**Frosty:**
No no but

**Russell:**
But you would imagine that’s what you
would need to do

**Frosty:**
Yeah yeah yeah

**Russell:**
Right okay

**Frosty:**
And then there’s a sign the sign with um
well last time I looked it was red with
Volcano very low on low on the bottom of
the window

**Russell:**
And oh go on keep going

**Frosty:**
I was just going to say up the top I think
there’s about one two three windows three
or four windows facing out onto the main
street

**Russell:**
Are they blackened

**Frosty:**
Um I can’t remember now

**Russell:**
Do you remember when you say you
remember the windows do you remember as
it were the the cavities on the façade of the
building or do you remember the actual
window

**Frosty:**
Um there’s

**Russell:**
there’s glass

**Frosty:**
Yeah there’s glass um and the entrance way
is a kind of a ah an entrance that is about I
suppose I don’t know I suppose a metre I
guess before you get to the actual door

**Russell:**
Oh this is the entrance doorway with the the
with the doors that swing open

**Frosty:**
No just the one single door there’s a um an
entrance

**Russell:**
that’s sort of like a it’s a ca I suppose a
cavity you know

**Frosty:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
Quite a large one but it’s about a metre and I
don’t know whether there’s it’s it normally
would be a place where you would put a
doormat

**Russell:**
Oh yeah

**Frosty:**
before you open the door but I think that
particular door pushes not comes out
Russell:
Um

Frosty:
And there’s a big flag on top

Russell:
with rainbow colours

Frosty:
Ooh um mm I don’t know I reckon it’s pretty old but it’d wanna be nineteen yeah it’d be

Russell:
Before the second world war

Frosty:
Um maybe or maybe around then or or

Russell:
Yeah  

Frosty:
It’s it’s a bit older and and the building that I for example lived in ah Squizzy Taylor it was apparently Squizzy Taylor’s hideout

Russell:
Oh yeah

Frosty:
so it’s really old and that actually particular block um is quite ah actually well um

Russell:
Well Squizzy Taylor predates the second world war

Frosty:
Yeah exactly yeah and I’ve seen quite a lot of photographs of of that particular block too which I forgot to tell you about I know a guy that’s researching it so

Russell:
Describe the interior to me

Frosty:
(he laughs a little, then) I couldn’t think to imagine what I I would say that

Russell:
You’ve already said a couple of things sorry if I can remind you

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
You’ve also said um that you’ve seen a staircase

Frosty:
Yep

Russell:
But what I’m interested in is and you might not know you know this but what you know of the interior

Frosty:
Yeah yeah I I would um okay when the staircase that you can see from the entrance um is quite a steep one and I would assume that when you go got to a um

Russell:
well I yeah when you got to particularly at the end of that staircase wherever that went I imagine the first floor of the building it would be some sort of greeting not a
greeting but some sort of a perhaps foyer area or um you pay for these the use of these places so I would say that there’s some some exchange there

Russell:
Can I can I I just need to shift this

Russell: Slightly at this point I’m I I’m not after a logical deduction of what is inside the building

Frosty: Yeah

Russell: What I want to know is what you KNOW is inside that building

Frosty: Right okay

Russell: without having to justify it

Frosty: Yeah

Russell: Do you follow

Frosty: Yeah yeah or giving a plan of it

Russell: Do you see the difference

Frosty: Yeah

Russell: Do you follow

Frosty: Yeah yeah or giving a plan of it

Russell: Do you see the difference

Frosty: Yeah

Russell: Okay

Frosty: I know that there’s there’s um er there’s water there’s running water and there’s probably water that like baths or steam or steam rooms um that men use um and I know there are kind of ah I suppose a labyrinth type design to these to this place

Russell: Yeah

Frosty: Um rooms that you you could probably get lost in I suppose if you weren’t initiated or knew um the space

Russell: Yeah

Frosty: Um dark dark perhaps dark rooms

Russell: All of it dark

Frosty: No I don’t know

Russell: Yeah okay

Frosty: No I don’t reckon

Russell: (Frosty makes a noise as if to speak) oh go on

Frosty: And I would I yes and there’s there’s um my I would know that there’s there’s rooms where

Russell: You would know or you do know

Frosty:
No I well I do know um that there but no I can’t say that I do know because I’ve been TOLD

Russell:
Ah okay

Frosty:
I’ve been told

Russell:
All right

Frosty:
Right I’ve been

Russell:
But these other things

Frosty:
These oth

Russell:
you haven’t been told

Frosty:
No these other things I haven’t but this one I have been told

Russell:
Okay

Frosty:
And

Russell:
Let’s

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
Let let’s start with the things that you know rather than the things you know

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
Running water can you just elaborate on that a bit more for me

Frosty:
Um well

Russell:
Are we talking about a dripping tap

Frosty:
Um wash something to do with washing so some yeah and I suppose it’s water steam’s from water

Russell:
Yeah okay

Frosty:
Yeah so

Russell:
So are we talking about running hot water

Frosty:
Yeah and probably cold yeah

Russell:

Yeah okay so there’s

Frosty:
Hot and cold is like yeah

Russell:
All right um again just allow yourself to stick with what you reckon you know

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
you know so

Frosty:
Yeah
Russell: You with me on this
Frosty: Yeah yeah
Russell: Okay good all right
Frosty: Hanging in
Russell: Are we talking about like something like a cascade something like a stream something like water from above there's running water
Frosty: Shower-like
Russell: I.i.34:30 Shower-like
Frosty: Mm
Russell: As distinct from showers
Frosty: Um yeah I yes yeah yeah yeah
Russell: Yeah okay all right and the water is already at a temperature or you adjust the temperature
Frosty: I.i.35:00 I don't know
Russell: Fine
Frosty: Yeah I don't I don't I couldn't say what I could imagine but
Russell: No that's all right just yeah
Frosty: you don't want that so I don't know
Russell: No that's fine um steam rooms could you do describe one
Frosty: Um (he is suddenly distracted by something he sees near me) [unintelligible]
Russell: What is a steam room
Frosty: I.i.35:30 I [unintelligible] a big spider (laughing a little) that just crawled into that fucking cupboard
Russell: (laughing a little) That's all right
Frosty: Bizarre (he returns to the conversation) um a steam room four walls um and probably and a low ceiling something that
Russell: A low ceiling yeah
Frosty: Yeah that something contains the steam and gets quite (suddenly emphatic) steamy
Russell: So the room we're in at the moment has a very high ceiling
Frosty: Yeah
Russell: That wouldn't be appropriate
Frosty:
Nuh nuh nuh

Russell:
Right okay so a low ceiling

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
How high above your head if you reached up would you be able to touch the ceiling

Frosty:
Um

Russell:
Probab oh if you were tall may no

Russell:
No would YOU

Frosty:
Oh would I

Russell:
Yeah

Frosty:
Um no no

Russell:
Right okay if you jumped up would you be able to touch the ceiling

Frosty:
Mm probably

Russell:
Yeah okay so four walls

Frosty:
Yep

Russell:
Okay so it's rectangular room

Frosty:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
So the walls are at right angles to one another

Frosty:
Um yes

Russell:
Fine okay how do you get in and out of this room

Frosty:
Well there's a door obviously

Russell:
Is there

Frosty:
Yes

Russell:
Okay right okay and what can you describe that door you're interested in entrances

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
Do you know what that door is if you don't that again that's fine

Frosty:
Um no I could I yeah I could give a description of what I think it is but

Russell:
Yeah

Frosty:
Um
I.i.37:00
But you don’t have a really strong sense about it in the sense that you do have a strong sense there is a steam room

Frosty:
Yes

Russell:
Okay now you said steam rooms though

Frosty:
Yeah I did it’s a big building

Russell:
Right

Frosty:
So

Russell:
Are the steam rooms like all next to each other

Frosty:
Um separated mm

Russell:
And are they part of the labyrinth

Frosty:
No no

Russell:
So it isn’t is it the case that when you talked about labyrinths that the building is a labyrinth or that there’s a labyrinth in

Frosty:

Russell:
Can we just look at the initiation for a moment (we laugh) what would that initiation process be for YOU what would it need to be for you in terms of what you’re talking about here

Frosty:

Russell:
To understand the to understand what’s

Frosty:

Russell:
To know the labyrinth

Frosty:
To know the labyrinth um to me I I mm I don’t know I don’t have any you know I haven’t been in there or or I don’t
Russell:
But you did
Frosty:
probably
Russell:
But you does it feel still right though to say
you’d need to be initiated does that kind of
feel like are you confident that
I.i.39:30
you need to to know the labyrinth
Frosty:
How say it again
Russell:
You said it’s a labyrinth
Frosty:
Yeah
Russell:
and that you could get lost in it if you weren’t
initiated or you didn’t know
Frosty:
Know the build yeah
Russell:
So my question is even though you’re not
aware of you don’t have any clear sense of
what the initiation
I.i.40:00
process is do you still know that yes you
need to somehow or other be initiated in
some sense to be able to traverse the
labyrinth
Frosty:
Um yes
Russell:
All right
Frosty:
You would
Russell:
Yeah okay
Frosty:
Yes yes I can say yes to that much anyway
Russell:
Can you describe the labyrinth
Frosty:
No
Russell:
Fine
I.i.40:30
is it something you can walk around the
exterior of
Frosty:
How do you mean so you can actually see
that there’s something in the middle or
Russell:
I mean can you circumnavigate the labyrinth
Frosty:
Um no
Russell:
Right is it something that you’re in before
you know you’re in it
Frosty:
Um possibly
Russell:
Right okay it’s something you need to be
careful of
Frosty:
Yes
Russell:
I.i.41:00
Okay the dark room did you say dark room
or dark rooms
Frosty:
Um I think I said rooms yeah
Russell:
Can we choose a dark room for a moment
Frosty:
Yeah
Russell:
Can you describe it
Frosty:
It's dark (we laugh a little) that's it
Russell:
Where are you how do you know it's dark
Frosty:
I.i.41:30
Because there's no light or there's perhaps dim lights actually more more to the point
Russell:
Okay what's in it
Frosty:
I don't know
Russell:
(laughing a little) All right
Frosty:
(laughs, then) MEN men men well
Russell:
Does it have a does it have an entrance
Frosty:
I.i.42:00
I don't know oh well I yes entrance and
Russell:
Do you know in the sense like I asked before about the steam room
Frosty:
Yeah yeah
Russell:
I mean again you may deduce there's an entrance but I'm thinking at the moment do you know the entrance
Frosty:
No I don't
Russell:
Right okay
Frosty:
No
Russell:
And again is it a place that is defined that you could circumnavigate or you know oh that's the dark room or it is a place that you could inadvertently slip into
Frosty:
Um inadvertently I.i.42:30
slip into
Russell:
So again you're meant to be careful
Frosty:
Hmm
Russell:
All right okay (a silence) do you have any knowledge that you have of what that recovery party's like where the music is the dance music you said there's probably music in the building but that's interesting because you said that after you told me that you've heard loud music
Frosty:
Yeah
Russell:
on Sunday mornings
Frosty:
Sunday mornings
Russell:
So the music in the building is different from the loud music you've heard from this other sliding door entrance.

Frosty:
Yeah well it's different in the sense that of the volume at least.

Russell:
Oh yeah.

Frosty:
Um but I have walked past and I've heard similar kind of music like sort of a dance based music but with a lower volume um.

Russell:
Through where.

Frosty:
Through where.

Russell:
Yeah from where have you heard that music.

Frosty:
Um just as I was ah walking past the entrance on the main street.

Russell:
The the entrance with the swing doors and the staircase beyond.

Frosty:
Um.

Russell:
or the sliding door entrance.

Frosty:
The sliding door yeah sliding door entrance.

Russell:
All right okay so Sunday morning when you've passed there and you've heard the loud music is that it like I mean what image do you have of what's on the other side.

Frosty:
Um my image of it is that there's probably guys dancing so.

Russell:
Well again not so much probably again what you know.

Frosty:
What yeah dancing.

Russell:
There's dancing.

Frosty:
Dancing.

Russell:
And are there any women there.

Frosty:
I don't know.

Russell:
But there are guys.

Frosty:
Yes well I've seen guys go in there at times.

Russell:
Yeah are they in what.

Frosty:
I've seen guys going there in a kind of a Saturday night wear whatever that.

Russell:
Going out clothes.

Frosty:
Yeah.

Russell:
Yeah

Frosty:
Yeah or a Friday night wear

Russell:
Yeah

Frosty:
but you know going out clothes night-time attire

Russell:
But going in on a Sun

Frosty:
Not tuxedo tuxedo

Russell:
Yeah Sunday morning though

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
Um (a silence) earlier you used a phrase that um I’m still thinking about and I’m not quite sure what to ask about it you talked about a volcano so there’s this place called Volcano and the name of it’s like its business name or whatever is Volcano but then you talked about a volcano like as though there were a generic sort a kind of place which we call a volcano in the way we might talk about a frisbee

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
or something like that

Frosty:
Yeah yes so I’d probably um I su yeah within that title I whether homogenisation is the kind of the word I’m looking for I don’t know but that title seems to represent these places for me I guess when when I said a volcano um knowing well not knowing but assuming that the other saunas that are around are named different names but I don’t know of any others’ specific names so I think I was yeah just kind of

Russell:
That strikes you as being a really good name for a sauna

Frosty:
(laughing quietly) I don’t know I yeah I guess you know it’s probably quite an obvious name perhaps (he laughs a little) when I said that I thought about what I’d said maybe it’s not obvious

Russell:
Um you mentioned earlier something about um the gay community in relation to it you saw it as being there’s activity related to the gay community am I correct in that

Frosty:
Um

Russell:
or is that

Frosty:
Yes

Russell:
Yeah okay

Frosty:
Yeah yeah that’s correct

Russell:
Given the array of men who you’ve seen going in and coming out the range of men has that um altered the sense you have of what the gay community is or have you started to
wonder whether or not there's a community there that is not just the gay community

Frosty:

Um (a silence) it's um gee yeah

Russell:

Look perhaps I could put it another way

Frosty:

Yeah put yeah

Russell:

Would you describe every man you've seen going in there as gay

Frosty:

I don't know I I whatever that is (we laugh) like I um yeah whatever that is

Russell:

I'm not sure whether I can answer it so

Frosty:

And the place um well there was I know well there was a guy that's asked me to get in his car one night

Russell:

Well can you answer this what is it that has kind of triggered for you an association with the word gay and the place

Frosty:

And the place um well there was I know well there was a guy that's asked me to get in his car one night

Russell:

Um another one was a guy that which is really weird and it has freaked me out at times I think this guy's a very fucking weird guy

Frosty:

Um from a look I suppose yeah whether whether I can come to a conc conclusion that that's that's what [unintelligible]

Russell:

You don't have to justify it I'm just more interested not um

Frosty:

Yep from a from a from a look or an obs or observing me or um yeah sussing me out

Russell:

Can can you recall a specific instance

Frosty:

That guy in the car was one

Russell:

Yeah

Frosty:

Um another one was a guy that which is really weird and it has freaked me out at times I think this guy's a very fucking weird guy

Russell:

um watching me and for some reason we we had these encounters very close to Volcano quite often whether we were on some sort of same finish work path or what but I always seemed to kind of bump into him and quite often he would watch me go into or past Volcano and

Russell:

and that laneway is quite a small laneway so one could assume that you're going into Volcano if you saw somebody going down that laneway um and I know people that have left there use that laneway to get to the car park so if he knows about that place then he could I was thinking he could come to some conclusion that I was leaving Volcano going to my car example and

Russell:

But have you spoken with this man ever

Frosty:

No never spoken to him he's
Russell:
So what's the nature of these encounters

Frosty:
Um I don't he yeah I've the way I've observed him which is just quite it's interesting in itself to me is that I'd observed him observing me through Volcano's window but the reflection of him in that window does that make sense

Russell:
Ah sorry you've

Frosty:
Walking

Russell:
You have had your eyes on the window and used it as it were like a mirror

Frosty:
Mirror

Russell:
in order to observe him

Frosty:
Yes

Russell:
and but he's been doing the same thing

Frosty:
He's been and he's observing me yes

Russell:
In the same way

Frosty:
No but opposite or opposite the over the other side of the road

Russell:
Yeah

Frosty:
or um ah walking past one another in front of Volcano on the same street yeah

Russell:
So you your eyes haven't met his

Frosty:
Um they have in other occasions yeah yeah on actually down on just on the corner of a main street nearby and the street Volcano is on and quite often when they've they've kind of met because I've suppose in that those eye meeting you know those those meetings I've I guess within that eye contact I've I it's an acknowledgement oh we do bump into each other I suppose and then when I've walked past I can see him looking at me or you know PERVING (I laugh a little)

Russell:
I suppose a word you can say (he laughs)

Frosty:
So well what's this word perving what does that involve

Frosty:
It's very similar to when a man perves at a woman I suppose I don't know

Russell:
Do you feel you're being looked at in the way a woman gets looked at

Frosty:
Ah no no I'm getting looked at as a man however it's I suppose it's a parallel that I've drawn in in the sense that that that

Russell:
Do you see him doing something that you've done

Frosty:
Um

Russell:
I see him yeah possibly yes and but in a scrutinising sense you know or a um an objectifying I suppose uncomfortable
Russell:
You feel uncomfortable with that

Frosty:
Yes yes from this particular man yes

Russell:
Can I ask why

Frosty:
I just

Russell:
Or or sorry I won’t ask why I’ll ask how do you know you feel uncomfortable

Frosty:
Um

I.i.54:30
I feel a bit um [unintelligible] I don’t know what the word is I just feel a bit I actually feel a little bit frightened I suppose um but I

Russell:
What form does fear take for you

Frosty:
Um

I.i.55:00
I move very fastly or very fast

I move fast out of the out of the range of of that their scope I suppose and whether that if that means turn down a laneway then I’ll do that or or whatever means to get out of their their sight um but it’s this particular guy I find him kind of weird (he laughs a little)

Russell:
Is he physically larger than you

Frosty:
Ah yeah he’s pretty tall he’s taller taller yeah

Russell:

I.i.55:30
When you were looking using the glass as a reflecting surface was that a conscious choice

Frosty:
Um yes yeah

Russell:
So you became aware of him and then you would avert your eyes to the glass in order to keep an eye on him without directly looking at him

Frosty:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
Can you tell me

I.i.56:00
a bit about what does that make you feel safer

Frosty:
Um

Russell:
or more secure or something

Frosty:
Probably um it yeah yeah it makes me feel more secure

Russell:
Yeah

Frosty:
and I guess it enables me to um ah feel secure and sum up a situ or or gain some

I.i.56:30
understanding of a situation that that I feel I’m in without um I suppose acknowledging to that person that I am looking but you know ah yeah

Russell:
When you said you feel frightened what are you frightened of

Frosty:

I.i.57:00
(a silence) That guy

Russell:
But just him being there and looking
Frosty: Um the way he looks or the you know the way yeah I don’t think it’s a bit it’s creepy I find him a creepy person

Russell: 

Frosty: 

Russell: I.i.57:30 

(a silence) Is it just him being there or is it something he might do

Frosty: Um

Russell: Or is it something you might do

Frosty: 

Russell: 

Frosty: 

Russell: (a silence) 

Frosty: 

Russell: 

Frosty: 

Russell: 

Frosty: 

Russell: 

Frosty: 

Russell: 

Frosty: 

Russell: 

Frosty: 

Russell: 

Frosty: 

Russell: 

Frosty: 

Russell: 

Frosty: 

Russell:
Do you assume

he’s somebody who visits the building

Frosty:

Don’t know no um no

Russell:

But have you connected him with the building

Frosty:

Um not really no not necessarily I think he connects ME with the building but I don’t so

Russell:

But he would never have seen you go in or come out of the building

Frosty:

No

Russell:

of course

Frosty:

No

Russell:

so what

how do you know that he connects you with the building

Frosty:

Um

Russell:

Is that what you’re afraid of

Frosty:

No I’m not afraid of that

Russell:

Right okay

Frosty:

I don’t I don’t care if I really don’t no I don’t care who connects me with what really

Russell:

Yeah

Frosty:

but I just find his action as in the way he I find that f more frightening [unintelligible]

Russell:

But is it something about you you seem somehow like you’ve bought it up in the context of this conversation

and it’s somehow or other associated for you with you being near the building

Frosty:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

and you’ve linked him linking you with the building

Frosty:

Yeah

Russell:

Is that correct

Frosty:

Yeah

Russell:

And I’m just interested in finding out a bit more about how that has happened

Frosty:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

If there’s no evidentiary basis for that how has that happened

Frosty:

How has it happened um

Russell:
And what does that mean I guess the how has it happened for you

**Frosty:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

So let's just so let's clarify this that you're assuming not only that they may be going to Volcano but that they know that you know that

**Frosty:**

they're going

**Russell:**

they are going there

**Frosty:**

Yeah yeah

**Russell:**

And that's somehow or other all been communicated

**Frosty:**

Yeah somehow yeah um and I suppose the guy that we're talking

**Russell:**

about before I think I'm chucking in him in that kind of ah interaction nest of interactions with men in that vicinity in that area because it's happened happened to happen in front of Volcano whether he I don't know whether it's something like I'm thinking that he's associating me um with ah men that go in there or within the gay community or he he might be

**Russell:**

assuming that I'm gay I don't know but ah

**Russell:**

Well my question was are you assuming that he is either homophobic or homosexual

**Frosty:**

Um I think he's homosexual not homoph

**Russell:**

Do you think he's also homophobic

**Frosty:**

Well I was going to say I don't know he could be he could be one you know either or or but I'm not

**Russell:**

But not both
Frosty:
He could be both yeah yeah

Russell:

I.i.64:30
Um now now we'll go back rather than the could-be's and everything I'm just trying to get a sense of do you know he's homosexual do you know he's homophobic do you know he's both

Frosty:
No I don't know

Russell:
Okay do you know when he looks at you that your identity shifts

Frosty:
My identity shifts in the sense that I I I.i.65:00 I um become I think it's a bit by becoming frightened I think that's a shift in identity so

Russell:
Well you've already said that you're being objectified in some

Frosty:
Objectified and I think that's a shift in in one's identity I think also

Russell:
Is it a shift in your identity

Frosty:
Yes

Russell:
Yeah yeah so I don't nuh

Frosty:
I I would probably say that it's not too shag pile carpet nuh if if there's water around something that

Russell:
Yeah again more a sense of I'd like to shift away from something you're deducing

Frosty:
Yeah yeah so I don't nuh

Russell:
Any anything you can scan about what you know that there's a sensory dimension to it at any level

Frosty:

I.i.67:00
(a silence) No no

Russell:
When you talk about the running water was there a sound that goes with that or is it the feel of the water running or seeing the motion of the water

Frosty:
Seeing I suppose yeah (softly) yeah

Russell:
Okay and there's no kind of architectural or building structures
or

**Frosty:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

Okay

**Frosty:**

Okay good

(\textit{I switch off the minidisc recorder})

\textbf{l.i.68:24}

END OF CONVERSATION

Um have you ever held another man’s penis

**Frosty:**

No

**Russell:**

No right okay

**Frosty:**

Oh (\textit{a silence, then we laugh a little}) no

**Russell:**

No

**Frosty:**

No

**Russell:**

Okay all right and do you have any questions you want to ask me

**Frosty:**

\textbf{l.i.68:00}

No I don’t think so

**Russell:**

Well then we can leave it there (\textit{Frosty starts to laugh and I join in})

**Frosty:**

(\textit{as though singing}) I don’t believe I have

**Russell:**

That’s fine
The transcript documents a second conversation with Charlie II again recorded in a movement studio at Victoria University.

We sat in chairs facing each other with a table to one side. The recorder and microphone sat on the table. Charlie informed me before we began that the night after our first recording session he had visited a sauna and had revisited it and other saunas several times since. He had also begun having sex with other men at these venues. None of this was explicitly stated by either of us during the recorded part of the interview. Throughout the recorded part of the interview, Charlie would often perform, as it were, directly to and overtly for the microphone, speaking towards and into it as if an audience were listening live at the other end.

Russell:

Okay um I’ve been reading through the transcript of the previous interview and I asked you about your first visit to Volcano and a bit about how it happened

and you told me that it was not pre-planned as a decision then a few minutes later you told me that in fact you’d planned it so that you would be able to go home before midnight

and I’m just not sure about the degree to which that was just a trick of memory or you know what was occurring for you but I’m wondering now if you can tell me a bit about how you came to go that first time again like was there a mixture of planning and spontaneity

Charlie:

(a silence) Yeah

(another silence, then) yeah I um curiosity and and I think probably a sense of play um could relate to the planning part of it um

I guess I’d always or not I’d always since being reasonably comfortable with flicking through street gay street newspapers community newspapers as they’re called I believe in Melbourne since becoming comfortable you know with flicking through those pages and I only flick through the community newspapers

um the back page is always the ones that ah I kind of not kind of the back pages are the boldest and um and yeah the back pages contain images and information relevant to locations

which are available to any ah um man or woman for that matter that wants to ah yeah that wants it that wants the venue er I’ll continue [unintelligible: in a second?]

(a silence, then) I still find the images in the advertisement for the saunas seductive today um and I still wonder where (he laughs a little) where or how

the advertisements actually match with the venues and just how they you know how do they um how do they get to taking up a full A4 A5 page in a newspaper um how do they come about that you know and the models you know looks twenty twenty-one or in his twenties

and you know quite young and fresh kind of image with his little towel wrapped around his groin um that’s a particular image from a particular er venue I’m thinking of and it’s a full

Russell:

Which which is that the Squirt

Charlie:

Yeah

Russell:

image

Charlie:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah okay the current one that’s around

Charlie:

There’s a full A5 thing

Russell:

Yeah yeah

Charlie:
you know and it just won’t disappear from the bloody paper you know it won’t disappear from that back page that back spot it’s almost you know entombed

II.i.05:30
in that position and so I guess looking back with my memory back over five years say or ten years or twenty years or thirty years who knows um prior to the last you know prior to me reading community newspapers before my first visit to a sauna yes I was coming my only

II.i.06:00
time I was coming into contact with the sauna would have been through the community newspaper well I did speak to one person in a city I was living in he wasn’t a close friend just an acquaintance from the scene who had mentioned having gone to Sauna X ah in Sydney but at that point

II.i.06:30
yeah at that point I just didn’t need to consider it or think of it because I believed that um um oh I guess it’s just a place you think about and you go well you don’t think about it you don’t just don’t you know it’s not an interest so you know I guess then I asked

II.i.07:00
well why did it become an interest and that’s probably your question or how did it become an interest is that the question

Russell:
Yeah more like how did it become an interest and do you what do you know about that time when it became an interest

Charlie:
Um

Russell:
If you’re uncertain about things

Charlie:
Yeah I’ll just

Russell:
don’t worry about them it’s more the things that you feel very certain about

Charlie:
Mm

Russell:
That you know they’re the things I’m really interested in

II.i.07:30

Charlie:
Yeah I might just expand on that maybe later

Russell:
Sure okay

Charlie:
or ah

Russell:
That’s fine

Charlie:
Um yeah I think I’ve answered that question like between the sort of planning of going to the sauna

Russell:
II.i.08:00
So can I cos I’m not I need to follow it up a bit though because if you think you’ve answered it then there are some things I need a bit more clarification on

Charlie:
Mm

Russell:
Does is what you’re saying something along the lines of that a that through looking at the community newspapers what emerged was an awareness of the through the advertising

II.i.08:30
that these places were there and that at some point there was an awareness that they were there for you possibly so that if there was some kind of spontaneity the first time you went that it was a spur of the moment decision there was in a sense also an awareness behind you that you had a sense of possible scenarios

II.i.09:00
of going so that you didn’t need to sit down with your diary and write a time and a date that you were going to go but the you already had in some way composed scenarios fantasies speculations whatever
about what your first visit or what you as a visitor might be like

**Charlie:**

**Russell:**

and then one day in that context there was a spur of the moment decision and there was already if you like a pre-packaged version available to what extent is that kind of version of it accurate or inaccurate do you think have I just described your experience or have I described someone else’s

**Charlie:**

Mm quite possibly someone else’s yeah um quite possibly but maybe to an extent to some extent maybe also mine um

**Russell:**

Can you tell me about the things I’ve just said that you know have some strong relationship with what happened for you and if you can’t of course that’s okay

**Charlie:**

I think a lot of that first visit is over my head really um I think I went there to possibly possibly um to um further an interest (he laughs a little) and this is going to sound completely sort of what it is in other gay people other than the pub or other than yeah I guess that’s really it the pub or

**Charlie:**

the nightclub for gay men like gay gay [sic] men who go out not necessarily with you know rainbow clothing but who do go out to advertised openly gay venues um on their own and particularly I think that’s I think that’s quite an important or important (putting on a voice) very important (he returns to his usual voice) issue um but is that thing of aloneness and saunas or aloneness and and me going I think it did swell

**Russell:**

Do you mean that’s an important that’s been an important issue for you

**Charlie:**

That’s my story

**Russell:**

Yeah yeah

**Charlie:**

Yeah I said that’s my story

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Charlie:**

It’s more along the lines of why I went the first time

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Charlie:**

It wasn’t that I had enacted or thought about a particular series of scenarios or even speculated what the sauna had would be like not from memory my memory might be bad

**Russell:**

Yeah that’s okay

**Charlie:**

But from memory

**Charlie:**

I don’t im recall ah speculating it I er I recall and I think I’ve told you this I recall speculating on the entrance would I be visible um who would b would I know anyone there I was more interested in my um not being seen (he laughs a little) and not being heard but somehow wanting to go anyway

**Charlie:**

so that that’s why I didn’t I remember not engage with anybody there that evening because of that reason I wasn’t scared or you know completely cold to being horny or um fantasising about men once I was in there of course oh once I got in there the first night you know I was yeah completely fantasising about the men once I was in
there but not in my bedroom or in the kitchen or at home about the venue prior to going there because I didn’t know what it would look like I didn’t know what a sauna would feel like it would smell like I didn’t have an idea about the senses and how they would relate to a venue such as that my only you know my only experience of seeing that was on television through some video a gay video about set in a sauna it’s a horrific it’s an American one do you know the one

Russell:
The Ritz
Charlie:
Oh it could be it’s where um Barbara Streisand first (laughing a little) was it Barbara Streisand you know that the big kind of like piano bar and blah de blah
Russia:
Yeah I know what you mean
Charlie:
Yeah
Russell:
I haven’t seen the film yet but it is The Ritz
Charlie:
Yeah The Ditz that’s The Ditz (he laughs)
Russell:
Tell
Charlie:
I think have I unders um clarified that a bit more
Russell:
Yeah
Charlie:
Yeah
Russell:
Yeah I think you have
Charlie:
I think for myself I have as well um that’s a good question a good point um
Russell:
Can you tell me you just talked about how there are gay gay men as distinct from gay men you
Charlie:
Look I’m no psychoanalysis
Russell:
No no no no no no no no no no no no (Charlie laughs) I’m not asking for that I mean er but it’s a term you used that’s all what I’m interested in is that a term gay gay men that you would use to describe yourself generally or is it a term you would use to describe yourself on specific occasions or indeed is gay man a term you would use to describe yourself generally or a term that you would use to describe yourself on specific occasions I don’t mean in conversation with other people more in conversation with yourself
Charlie:
Whooooooo that’s sort of blown me moved me away from the last topic or the la this is like a new topic we’re on
Russell:
Yeah
Charlie:
It is really um and
Russell:
Yes it is
Charlie:
Yeah and suddenly it has everything to do with clothing that word gay
Russell:
gay man or gay man um the first point is for me visually that it has the meaning is
contextualised in appearance ah possibly
I’m not saying it is for anyone

Russell:
Well for you for you

Charlie:

But for me I at this early stage um of my
career I feel that it is *(he laughs a little)*
about yeah it’s about costume it’s about
clothing it always

**il.i.16:30**

yeah it’s about stereotypes um well
possibility of questioning stereotype
questioning well take for example the picnic
in the recent the recent fest the recent
event at Midsumma Carnival

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

You know one would be able to if one were
being you know observant go oh there’s I
would I would sort of sit down and go

**il.i.17:00**

there’s a gay gay man and there’s a gay one

Russell:

But hang on did you go to the carnival

Charlie:

No but I saw I saw the documentary on
Bent TV last night which went for an hour

Russell:

Oh right okay

Charlie:

And they had a roving camera around the
park for an hour

Russell:

Oh right so while you were watching the
documentary rather than what ONE would
think what what happened for you and

Charlie:

Well yeah the um

Russell:

Were there gay gay men that you saw on
the TV screen

Charlie:

Yes

Russell:

Okay

Charlie:

Yeah

Russell:

So how did you know they were gay gay

**il.i.17:30**

men

Charlie:

Um well see I mean I first firstly and
foremost I want to say I don’t want to cut
anyone down firstly and foremost they’re
human beings right and that’s and that’s
probably something that I’ve realised about
the saunas bless my cotton Catholic socks *(I
laugh a little)* is that you know everyone’s
human and it really shows on hairy men at
the sauna that we’re all just

**il.i.18:00**

human um you know I thought I was in a
zoo the first night I went to the sauna *(he
laughs, then)* you know and um like I like
my boys to be I like men to be glamorous
basically or at least sort of at least a sort of
um post *(he laughs)* at least a postmodern
glamour yeah which is kind of sort of a um
*(he laughs)*

**il.i.18:30**

a sort of technologically advanced um *(he
laughs)* technologically advanced costume
um we’re not talking about the colour and
the sort of silkiness of the eighties um
anyway yeah so so I guess I’m emphasising
the difference between um the sauna and
the difference between

**il.i.19:00**

the other possible ways of meeting men
which is why I thought why I planned to go
to the sauna in the first place um and why I
spontaneously went was I thought well let’s
you know I’m just going to get up and go
because I’d probably been I had you
know I have a I’ve gr I’m a you know
probably like a lot of other people you know
procrastinate about going out alone really
um particularly if it’s a weekend god’s sake
you know

**il.i.19:30**
um but you know I mean given the conditions I’ve been living here for a few years I thought well what the hell I can only go out and possibly meet some people so I mean you know so with that sense it’s taken me a while to realise that um you know bless my I’ll repeat myself now bless my cotton Catholic socks um or religious socks that we’re all human being and there’s a sense

II.i.20:00
that the gay gay man is possibly a little bit less apparent in a venue where costume and appearance somehow isn’t as revealed or isn’t as kind of um yeah it’s just not there um

Russell:
Are you is this another way of saying that a gay gay man is less visible in a sauna than

II.i.20:30
he is at the carnival

Charlie:
Well a gay oh god we’re you know a gay gay man or a gay man um I think when when I brought that word up it was in different kind of possible meaning for me that it is for you now where you’re taking it I feel I feel that I’m yeah I was probably looking at it in a different way um to try and understand something else where you’re sort of

II.i.21:00
looking at it as rather something else and that’s fine um um

Russell:
No not really I’m just trying to find out about it you made a distinction between gay gay man and gay man and I’m just trying to find out more about what that distinction is um so it’s not really like um

II.i.21:30
I’m not it’s not like I’ve latched on to something it’s like instead I’ve heard something but I’m not quite I have a I can tell myself a story about it but that’s precisely not what I want to do

Charlie:
Okay

Russell:
I want to know more about what your

II.i.22:00
the sense you make of that so all I’m trying to do is find out what for you is the difference between a gay gay man and a gay man and do you think either of those terms ever applies to you once I’m a bit clear about that then I might be interested in asking you a bit more about how that might function in a sauna as well but we might not get to that

II.i.22:30
are you a gay man

Charlie:

(he laughs) Sometimes

Russell:
Right are you

Charlie:
I might be

Russell:
Ah fine are you a gay gay man sometimes

Charlie:
Quite possibly

Russell:
Yeah

Charlie:
Yeah

Russell:
For yourself or for others if you’re saying possibly

Charlie:

II.i.23:00
I think sometimes for myself and for others

Russell:
Okay all right

Charlie:
as yeah

Russell:
Now can you think of a time in a sauna when you've known that you've been a gay man

Charlie:

(he laughs a little, then) I've said very little I've acted dumb

II.i.23:30
I've pretended that body was all that mattered and my bum was numb (he laughs) and after about two sentences we decided to walk into the room and that's when I felt like I

II.i.24:00
was acting like a gay man

Russell:

Are you when you said after two sentences we decided to walk into a room

Charlie:

We made an agreement in about two sentences to go private

Russell:

Okay

Charlie:

in a sauna

Russell:

Are you now describing for me

Charlie:

a gay man

Russell:

Right but are you also describing a particular occasion or a type of occasion

Charlie:

What's the difference

Russell:

A particular occasion

II.i.24:30
is an occasion that actually happened

Charlie:

Right

Russell:

and it only happened once a typical occasion is a a type of occasion is one where whatever the differences though there are some basic things that were repeated on several times so it became a type and recognisable as a type are you describing something that happened once only or something that's happened

II.i.25:00
a few times

Charlie:

Oh well it's something I've tried in inverted commas it's something I've played with in saunas

Russell:

Right consciously

Charlie:

Um I'm looking yeah I'm looking for a word to kind of

II.i.25:30
say something before something else consciously I'm looking for those things like I'm trying to s

Russell:

You're indicating brackets with your hands

Charlie:

Yes yeah yeah yeah

Russell:

So that's not the word you feel is is that another way of saying

Charlie:

I don't I don't

Russell:

you don't think that's really the word

Charlie:

I don't really yeah I don't really have

II.i.26:00
I would like um wait a minute mm consciously unconsciously I'm really unclear about what that means for me those two words
Okay

yet

That's all right

Um um but I want to try and be helpful um yeah they are unclear to me

Then let's leave it

at this point

Let's leave it

Um conscious and unconscious

That's helpful telling me that they're not clear for you that's helpful

Do you can I say something

Yeah

related to that um do you sometimes go you have have you been to a sauna to just um to just sort of undo in a way to sort of

Undo myself

Yeah to sort of just strip back and just chill in the sauna

Russell:

Ah

I don’t know whether I’d use the term strip back one thing I have done is let go I’ve let go of things I’m attached to I’ve gone to a sauna to let go of things I’m attached to about myself and produce other things

one thing I could tell you is that the experience for me is often like when I travel for when I travel away from home for extended periods and I start to feel unmoored in some way and that I could almost through a process of drift become someone else and it's for me it's a place where I have become different people or have become aware of the possibilities that I could be someone other than whoever I am the rest of the time but that’s a di when you use a term like stripped back it makes it sound like for me that there’s a reference to layers and then there’s a real self behind the layers if you strip back you come back to the origin and that’s not my experience that’s not my experience can I pick that up though and ask you when you talked about gay gay men having costumes you mentioned clothes most of the time but you used the term costume once and now you’re asking questions about stripping back the question you’ve just asked me about stripping back is that something that’s happened for you at the sauna that you’ve gone to a sauna either with the intention of stripping back or that the effect has been that you’ve stripped back whatever your atten intention is can you remember an occasion when either of those things happened

I think my imagination can um I go to a sauna and have a wonderful time sometimes with in relationship yeah with myself and my imagination um and that sounds like probably a bit of lonely thing to be doing in a such a in a social venue um but let’s face it you know I do not find saunas inspiring um you know I find certain people inspiring but the saunas
way they're built. the couple I've been to
they're just yeah they're they're just they
don't they're not inspiring I must admit um
and that's something
II.i.31:00
that you know I'm taking into consideration
and I think I'm frequenting them less
because of you know because of that um
and there are a lot of factors involved in that
um yeah I guess probably relating back to
that first question that you asked about well
why did I go the first time or how did I go
how it happened
II.i.31:30
and had you know had I planned to be
home before twelve well I think how it
happened was that I was alone on that
particular evening and you know and yes I'd
planned planned it sub unconsciously
during however many months prior to that
could have even been years that I was
reading that image and feeling that yes there
was a place for me to go to
II.i.32:00
and somehow maybe it relate it could relate
to the sense of being alone and going to a
sauna I have been going and I have seen
people arriving there and other than alone
so I've seen people arriving there in groups
or just with one other person or sometimes
certainly when they get in there it seems to
me through body language that they've
II.i.32:30
met someone in there that they've known or
they've met beforehand you know you know
when someone's saying hello to someone
well we hope we do anyway ah so that thing
of going alone um I think is a vital kind of
psychological issue for gay men and

Russell:
Is it a vital psychological issue for you

Charlie:
For me yes

Russell:
Yeah

Charlie:
For me

II.i.33:00
and yeah I feel that it's important for me now
to kind of try and look at it and unders
somehow consider it um consider it um and
reconsider that whole the building of it yeah
um reconsider the people that
II.i.33:30
congregate in that building because these
places are open twenty-four hours a day
seven days a week um so in a sense they're
convenient Seven Elevens you go in there
and you get what you want if you know what
time to go and when to go and and you're
not too fussy um now this you know I mean
this knowledge comes from just talking to
different people in the saunas
II.i.34:00
um I myself tend to go pretty much at the
same time um and on the same on a
particular night you know it might be a
weekend or something approaching the
weekend but you know I was talking to
someone who you know doesn't have a full-
time job or doesn't or isn't a full time student
around that you know and he was talking
about going during a particular time of the
day when this sauna had made it cheaper
for people
II.i.34:30
in men living in working in the city to go
there on their lunch breaks

Russell:
Oh yeah which sauna was this

Charlie:
Squirt

Russell:
Squirt yeah and

Charlie:
So I was

Russell:
Sorry but and all right tell me more

Charlie:
So this guy who was in his twenties um let's
say he wouldn't have been over thirty-five
for sure

Russell:
Yeah

Charlie:
He was saying that you know oh I love
coming here during the day at about eleven
a.m. just before the lunch the peak period of
lunch because
II.i.35:00
it's now cheap cheaper at lunch for office men to come in here and I love being in here I get value for money (he laughs a little) when I come in here before the lunch break and um you know value for money and I sort of asked him what does he mean well he said he likes it when there are lots of men to choose from for him value for money's when there are when it's a huge marketplace in there for

Russell:

Well not in that as being a total interest anyway but yeah the idea that it's like bait

Charlie:

Mm yeah the idea that there's a theme night

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

Well I mean that's a bit of a particular thing but

Russell:

Can I ask you about this conversation though with this man what time of the day or week did you have this conversation with him

Charlie:

Friday evening ah at about he was leaving at about seven

Russell:

p.m.

Charlie:

I'd got there I arrived there at about six and it's that was the first time that I'd ever arrived at six p.m.

Russell:

And he was leaving at about seven

Charlie:

Yeah because he'd been there since midday

Russell:

Right okay so he

Charlie:

He'd been there for the lunch
And stayed for afternoon tea as well (we laugh)

Charlie:
And he yeah he was wanting to get home

Russell:
For dinner (we laugh)

Charlie:
Yeah

Russell:

II.i.37:30
Um okay and I want to ask you a few more questions about this conversation can I ask you about where it happened at Squirt

Charlie:
Where

Russell:
Yeah where did you talk with him

Charlie:
On the um bench facing the lockers

Russell:
Right

Charlie:
I was sitting having a ah break

Russell:
Oh yeah

Charlie:

II.i.38:00
(he laughs) I was having a cigarette that clears things up I'm a smoker and so smokers at any of the Sauna Venues can only be found in the entrances smokers in any of the two Sauna Venues that I've been to they can only be found in the entrances

Russell:
In the entrances or near the entrances

Charlie:
Well near the entrance the corridors

Russell:
Right

Charlie:
So not in the so-called cruising areas

Russell:
Right

Charlie:
or the video oh no you can in one video area

II.i.38:30
depends which the where the layout is

Russell:
Yeah okay all right

Charlie:
But in this particular sauna which was Squirt the layout is that smokers can congregate in that reception area where the television and the café bar is and then where the lockers are they can smoke there because they do provide ashtrays

Russell:
Okay

Charlie:
So I was sitting having a cigarette

Russell:
Right can I ask how you met this guy like were you did you meet him at on your break or

II.i.39:00
had you met him prior to your break

Charlie:
Met him (this is a question)

Russell:
Yeah

Charlie:
Like hello
Russell:
Like you had you were having a conversation with him

Charlie:
Yeah

Russell:
which seems to indicate that you've (laughing a little) met him

Charlie:
Yeah

Russell:
at some point

Charlie:
Okay I think our eyes met

Russell:
Yeah

Charlie:
should I say prior to that meeting

Russell:
You'd seen him

Charlie:
Oh yeah I'd been I'd been

Russell:
in another part of the sauna

Charlie:
Yeah I'd seen him in other parts of the sauna

Russell:
Right had you had some sort of encounter with him

Charlie:
Not I wouldn't no I wouldn't say it was explicit

Russell:
Right ok

Charlie:
I was hoping I was hoping to talk to him he looked interesting

Russell:
Yeah and so then

Charlie:
And he had he had a brilliant tattoo and I wanted to question him I wanted to ask him some questions about this tattoo

Russell:
All right so did you ask him some questions about the tattoo

Charlie:
Yeah

Russell:
Right ok

Charlie:
Yeah

Russell:
So so did it happen that your break coincided with his departure so you were able to strike up a conversation with him

Charlie:
That's how it happened

Russell:
Yeah okay that's good um

Charlie:
Yeah I didn't I um

Russell:
I didn't feel like you know um talking to him in any of the other venues the crui the areas other than like I just thought well fine you know um you know I just make ob I'll just make an observation but then when I when I went for a cigarette and found that he was leaving well it was just obvious that you know I want I had to talk and just find out
Russell:

Oh yeah

Charlie:

Twenty-five

minutes and discussed yeah just we had a really nice conversation it was good and um and then he just yeah he left

Russell:

I want to ask you if you can tell me how I assume that the tattoo was the starting point for the conversation

Charlie:

You’re assuming um no no I think that’s quite um I mean that’s the sort of crazy thing about these venues is just they are really sexual places I can’t we can’t oh I don’t certainly want to skim over that in this time we’ve got um but I think that relates to the whole psychological my psychological interest in the saunas is that you know let’s face it they have sexual there’s sexual vibes all sorts of things more so than more so than many other venues I don’t know I think I’m touching on something here that um yeah I sort of

Russell:

But my well maybe I can simplify it rather than getting into what’s behind it can we simply come back to um some simple things that you witnessed when you were be when the conversation began did he initiate it or did you or don’t you know

Charlie:

Yeah I think it yeah I think I I think a bit of both yeah I’m not quite I don’t really know exactly

Russell:

That that’s

Charlie:

Yeah

Russell:

That’s fine telling me that you don’t know is telling me something that you know you’re telling me that you know you don’t know and that’s fine that’s useful now was the tattoo which you said earlier was a big interest for you about him was that an early topic of conversation or did it never get discussed did you ever ask him about his tattoo

Charlie:

Yeah I did

Russell:

Did you ask him early in the conversation or late

Charlie:

I think

I asked him sort of later on about three quarters of the way

Russell:

Okay the part of the conversation you’ve been telling me about was that before or after the part about the tattoo

Charlie:

Can I ask why you’re asking me

Russell:

I’m trying to get a sense of the structure of the conversation I’m so I’m asking you if you like forensic questions in order that rather than having a general summary of the conversation I have a sense of being able to of some of its building blocks and the sequence they were in if you don’t know that’s okay

Charlie:

Yeah I mm yeah I don’t know

Russell:

But
but you did discuss the things you’ve told me

Charlie:

Yes

Russell:

Okay, all right

Charlie:

Can I, can I just

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

It’s quite yeah I just need to (a silence, in which he drinks water, then)

II.i.44:30

I’m okay

Russell:

II.i.45:00

The thing about the conversation that I’m really interested in is something about the fact that it happened and you said that you didn’t want to talk to him when you were in the cruising areas and then you also said that it was nice that you felt comfortable talking with him, or words that I’ve remembered that are like that

Charlie:

Can I just go back on something that I’ve probably said

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

Um I feel I did (a silence, in which he drinks water, then)

II.i.45:30

want to talk to him

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

in the other areas

Russell:

Yes

Charlie:

whether it was the showers or the television sauna area um you know we could are you suggesting they’re all cruising areas

Russell:

You said you talked about the cruising areas as being

Charlie:

Yeah

Russell:

where you didn’t want to talk

Charlie:

I’m just wondering do you think that you could you could we agree that everything in the sauna is a cruising area

Russell:

Oh we could (Charlie laughs a little) but one of the things that interested me was that you’d initially said you didn’t want to talk to him in the cruising areas however when you were at the lockers you did

Charlie:

Yeah, okay

Russell:

So I was wondering

Charlie:

Right

Russell:

oh does that mean the lockers aren’t so

Charlie:

Okay

Russell:

now you’re touching on the things that I’m interested in in particular that have interested me
in following it up like are the lockers a cruising area (I laugh a little) for you sometimes all the time never

Charlie:

All right they it’s brought a few things for me now

Russell:

Okay

Charlie:

Um okay

**II.i.46:30**
you know one is the question is it all cruising area um and why how do you differentiate between

Russell:

Well how do you

Charlie:

Yeah but there’s something I want to say before that I think it’s personal interest where I choose to cruise it’s personal interest

Russell:

Oh absolutely

Charlie:

You know it’s not about much else um it’s I want to sit here I enjoy sitting here because it’s [sic] interests me what I’m what I observe so it’s yeah and

**II.i.47:00**
and you know it’s yeah it’s all clear to the people that are there as well and that’s that’s another whole issue of saunas is this whole being observed kind of ritual and and psychologically my interest is in if someone goes in there and they don’t particularly feel like being watched and they are being watched and all this sort of agreement on ownership of the body you know agreement on being watched sometimes you just sort of

**II.i.47:30**
look I just you know and you go well why have you why have I gone why have I come here tonight I ask myself sometimes because I’ll get in there and I don’t want to be watched well I do but I have mixed feelings shall we say I feel that there are mixed feelings sometimes of wanting to be watched and not be watched and that’s where performance that’s where I begin to kind of either that’s where I leave and I realise that I just stay there for a short time or something will

**II.i.48:00**
occur to sort of that something else an in another interest will happen and I’ll kind of get over that initial and I’ll realise well what was it psychologically so I might just follow my interest about that

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

because sometimes I do work in in the sauna but what I wanted to say was that um the ah and I and I work it’s just out of self development really more than anything and awareness

**II.i.48:30**
um it’s not work either any other work um the interesting thing about this conversation that I just sort of want to clear up for you because that was the original question um yes I did want to talk to him but I didn’t I didn’t really know what to sort of you know where to sort of talk to him at

**II.i.49:00**
like I didn’t feel comfortable in expressing myself in any of those sort of areas that I’d sort of seen him crossing um and then I rememb I remember he went into the steam room and (he laughs a little) I recall that he received oral sex or he gave oral sex in the steam room and immediately I (he laughs a little) I just went oh well um he’s not that interesting (he laughs)

**II.i.49:30**
if he’s sort of run you know if he’s I guess it was a judgement yeah I just thought that somehow he was different from just rushing into things with people um

Russell:

Ah sorry earlier you had thought that

Charlie:

Yeah

Russell:

But once you saw him um offering

Charlie:

Or yeah making offerings
Russell:
What's the term yeah
II.i.50:00
receiving oral sex
Charlie:
Yeah or
Russell:
Once you saw him receiving oral sex
Charlie:
Or or giving it I didn’t know because I didn’t
go in to the steam room with him
Russell:
Yeah
Charlie:
But um yeah I don’t I just guess I didn’t feel
that there was any real place for me to go up
and talk to him in those in the areas and I
guess the locker room that area is bright it
is fairly lit well lit
II.i.50:30
and yeah maybe I felt I do feel more I’m
aware that I do feel more in tune with myself
in those more lit areas more in tune with
everyday transactions people are either
dressed in there or getting ready to go in or
getting ready to leave and they kind of yeah
I don’t know so just to keep it simple
II.i.51:00
yes I feel more at ease in those lit areas in
the foyers and stuff because going in those
other areas I feel that I don’t quite know oh
not that I don’t know because I that’s
bullshit I do know what exactly what to do
Russell:
Yeah
Charlie:
I just feel more at ease and more
myself in those areas
Russell:
(I laugh a little, then) Okay and
II.i.51:30
I want to ask you some more questions
about the incident of the conversation you
went to have a break did you go to have a
break and discover that he was at the
lockers
Charlie:
Yeah I don’t know
Russell:
Okay was your locker because there are
series of bays there was your locker in the
same
II.i.52:00
bay as his locker
Charlie:
No
Russell:
When you went and sat down to have your
cigarette did you sit down opposite your
locker bay or did you sit down opposite his
Charlie:
I think I didn’t I think I sat down um neither
I sat down in the middle there are only two
benches and for me it’s just finding an
available spot
Russell:
Okay
Charlie:
and sitting
II.i.52:30
on it it’s not a question of who who I’m
facing at that point
Russell:
Okay could you see him getting dressed
from where you sat
Charlie:
No I think I said I didn’t realise who got
there first but I think I was there first
Russell:
Yeah
Charlie:
and then he went to get go home
Right okay

Charlie:
Yeah

Russell:
And did he come and

Charlie:
I'm pretty sure

Russell:
say sit beside you when you were talking or
were you talking across the space or did you
walk up to

Charlie:
Yeah I think he came and sat beside me

Russell:
Okay and so you were in your towel

Charlie:
Yeah I think he came and sat beside me

Russell:
or was he still

Charlie:
No he was getting dressed

Russell:
Was he say putting on his shoes or had he
finished getting dressed

Charlie:
Yeah no he was he was getting dressed
from beginning to end

Russell:
At his locker or near you

Charlie:
At the locker

Russell:
Right okay

Charlie:
which happened to then be near me as well

Russell:
Right okay and he stayed talking with you
after

Charlie:
Oh he took a long time because he sat down
to you know dry his hair or something and
put his socks on and blah de blah and just
assemble himself I suppose like he wasn't
that's one of the things that charmed me
about him. (he laughs a little, then) he
wasn't he didn't appear to be the sort of guy
that was in a hurry in one of those places
and you know and I kind of keep away from
guys that just look like

Charlie:
they're on speed because they're just so
yeah you know this guy just appeared
relaxed and that's what appealed to me
about him um yeah that he was relaxed and
you know he continued that whatever
performance right up until he got changed
you know he didn't change a lot and that
was nice about him

Russell:
You said that you tend to feel much more at
ease when you're in the locker area

Charlie:
Yeah yeah well on that particular evening
anyway

Russell:
Yeah oh that's you know of course now
just I'm wondering now to what extent is that
a is that something that he has as a quality
that you would like to have

Charlie:

Russell:
(he yawns, then) I haven't thought about it
Russell:

Fine (the sound of a motorised gardening equipment being used directly outside the building suddenly and loudly intrudes - it continues unabated for the next five minutes) that doesn’t worry me does it worry you (Charlie indicates no worries) okay

Charlie:

Um yeah I haven’t thought about it quite

Russell:

Um

Charlie:

But oh yeah I am aware that that’s a nice quality to have for sure

II.i.55:30

but I’m aware that that quality in a person also limits them to some experience and to some extent like not going in a sense with the flow like a person who always wants to who always wants to be in control doesn’t really is always relaxed or something yeah and there’s something quite like they’re not from that place (he laughs a little) like he didn’t seem from the that

II.i.56:00

place but in fact when I spoke to him yeah he’s frequented it quite regularly just not at the times that I usually go but anyway sorry that’s a bit off the point or off not off the point but just adding more to it

Russell:

Well I’m I’m going I’m going to change the topic

Charlie:

Yeah

Russell:

Because there’s a few other things that have come up in the time we’ve got available that I wouldn’t mind touching on can you tell me about the word frequent (I pronounce it as in the infinitive to frequent)

Charlie:

II.i.56:30

I can’t frequent no I sort of that was a word frequent

Russell:

It’s a word that you spoke when you used when you talked to me the first time um and it’s a word you’ve used a couple of times today and it’s a word that other interviewees I’ve had have used talking about frequenting places rather than say going to them or visiting them

II.i.57:00

or maybe in addition to saying visiting and going but using that term frequenting

Charlie:

I think I’ve s I first heard that word from you

Russell:

Oh yeah

Charlie:

Yeah and I think I’m just I use it when I’m speaking to you

Russell:

Yeah

Charlie:

um as sad as that sounds um yeah it’s something that sort of

Russell:

II.i.57:30

It’s interesting because it’s interesting you say that because I’m not aware it’s a word I use that’s why I hear it when other people use it because I think oh that’s interesting they think of frequenting saunas whereas I don’t

Charlie:

Right

Russell:

So if I’ve used it

Charlie:

Yeah

Russell:

then that’s interesting
Charlie: Yeah you use two words

Russell: Oh yeah what's the other one

Charlie: Frequency and regularity

Russell: I might ask about frequency and regularity but in terms of the verb as to frequent something I can't think of any place that I think of myself as frequenting which it's almost like it's a word the police use you know um and yeah I'm really interested because a couple of people

II.i.58:30 I've spoken with have used that term so for instance I've well no I'll leave it at that you've answered it you've told me you know you think you've heard me say it and you've picked it up from that is it a word you use to apply to other places do you frequent the supermarket

Charlie: No

II.i.59:00 probably not I don't know whether I frequent the supermarket I go regularly to the supermarket

Russell: That's fine um can I change the topic again I want to ask you about light because this thing you've been really clear about the brightly lit aspect of the lockers that it's really brightly lit and you've also been clear about how sometimes being visible to others is an issue for you as well (the sound of the gardening equipment diminishes as it moves away) and I'm not seeking

II.i.60:00 a clarification of a possible contradiction in that either what I'm curious about though is I remember the first time we spoke you talked about the dark area as being the dark area at Volcano as being a place you didn't want to go into very far at all and that you weren't there very long and that you left very swiftly let's go back to this day you had this conversation with this man did you on that day have any did you go into a dark area

II.i.61:00

Charlie: Can I say I don't think that Squirt has any

Russell: Fine

Charlie: really and the particular one I'm thinking about at Volcano is black and there's an explicit entrance and exit whereas the one at Squirt it has the same entrance and the same exit so it's just you end where you begin

II.i.61:30

Russell: Oh right okay

Charlie: Whereas in Volcano you begin and end at a different place that's very different

II.i.62:00

Russell: Well then let's talk about the one at Volcano because when I asked you about the one at Volcano when you went that first time

Charlie: Yeah

Russell: I asked you if you left it the way you had gone into it

Charlie: Right

II.i.63:00

Russell: That is you'd left by the same entrance and you said you had

Charlie: Yeah
Russell:
But now you’re clear that there’s an exit that or that you can enter one way

Charlie:
Yeah

Russell:
and exit another way

Charlie:
Yeah I haven’t I mean I haven’t I think I’ve been to Volcano maybe once in the last year quite possibly

Russell:
Do have you been in the dark area

Charlie:
Well I did recently

Russell:
Oh yeah

Charlie:
Um

Russell:
And I ran (laughing) I ran through it pushing pushing all these other bodies aside it was quite silly people must have I mean I just thought you know I don’t want to get cornered here and I don’t want to be here I’m merely doing this to kind of get past something ah this fear or this curiosity or I just don’t want I don’t have an interest in kind of hanging out in that area um in that place do you know what I mean but I really wanted

to know where all the men had gone I found (he laughs) I found them all in there it was something I don’t know it seemed like there was about twenty bodies in there or more it was just heaving I thought with people and I was really kind of um yeah I just wanted to leave but I wanted to trace myself and I could hear people hitting their heads trying to get out (he laughs) it was a bit like a um yeah an experience

Russell:
Can I ask you did you know how to get to get to the exit from the entrance

Charlie:
Well see that’s the dark no because there was absolutely no light in one particular corner of this mazey thing

Russell:
So did you leave by the way you came in (Charlie laughs) or did you leave by a different way

Charlie:
No this way I decided I was going to leave by the exit

Russell:
Right

Charlie:
And I’m kind of walking out like Eddie Munster with my hands like

Russell:
Yeah

Charlie:
You know just gunna in the in the in the ready pose like I’m gunna choke I’m gunna choke someone if they’re in my way

Russell:
You mean like Herman Munster

Charlie:
Herman Munster you know that sort of thing

Russell:
Yeah
where he goes *(he demonstrates)*

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Charlie:**
That's how it was *(he returns to his seat)* I was taking these little steps with my arms really outstretched going I've got to get out of here out of this yeah but I was just curious about it and I didn't want to be kind of touched by anyone I just felt my whole boundary my body myself *(II.i.64:30)* being really too exposed

**Russell:**
Is that is that is that the only time you've been through the dark area

**Charlie:**
That yeah that evening yeah

**Russell:**
Okay

**Charlie:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
And did you find your way through it easily enough

**Charlie:**
Oh yeah it's not I knew from I knew from the whole sort of perspective of the building that it it wasn't you know it wasn't anything that was *(II.i.65:00)* too big a deal yeah

**Russell:**
Can I ask you how did you know that one of the doorways was an entrance and that the other one was an exit

**Charlie:**
Well no that's just purely subjective that's purely

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Charlie:**
Neither of them are ex nei they're both the same

**Russell:**
So it's just that

**Charlie:**
They're both exits

**Russell:**
the one you went into was the entrance

**Charlie:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
Is that is that is that the only time you've been through the dark area

**Charlie:**
That yeah that evening yeah

**Russell:**
Okay

**Charlie:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
And did you find your way through it easily enough

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Oh yeah it's not I knew from I knew from the whole sort of perspective of the building that it it wasn't you know it wasn't anything that was *(II.i.65:00)* too big a deal yeah

**Russell:**
Can I ask you how did you know that one of the doorways was an entrance and that the other one was an exit

**Charlie:**
Well no that's just purely subjective that's purely

**Russell:**
Yeah
That's okay

Charlie:

But quite possibly I think I did because the entrance and exit that I'm thinking of that I went in II.i.66:00 to put my head in the first time seemed to be the one that most people regularly went into

Russell:

Oh yeah

Charlie:

So the other exit entrance didn't really have as much appeal to me because it was not it didn't seem to have as many people coming and going and the reason for that is because there's that big circular bed thing right near one of the entrance exit doors

Russell:

Yes

Charlie:

which keeps so people don't have to sort of go through any maze of darkness II.i.66:30 in that area they can just sort of put their head through the entrance exit door you know make take three steps still there's still light

Russell:

Yep

Charlie:

and they can be there

Russell:

Okay

Charlie:

So that's

Russell:

so is that the one is that the entrance you came in the one near that big circular bed

Charlie:

Entrance exit thing

Russell:

Yeah yeah

Charlie:

Yeah that's the one yeah

Russell:

Okay right

Charlie:

It's more clearer to see just what I think it's clearer there's more light yeah in that II.i.67:00 yeah I remember you saying you had an experience of where you were

Russell:

Yeah um

Charlie:

observing in an area like that

Russell:

Yeah um I've go on

Charlie:

I mean I don't want to say anymore just because it might not be but you were observing something taking place and the people that were the subject or the objects I suppose II.i.67:30 um of your gaze weren't aware that you were actually there

Russell:

That's correct

Charlie:

Yeah

Russell:

The dark area has been reconstructed since we last spoke and that little alcove that was my loved hiding place because I although I'd had that one experience of standing there almost an hour there were many other occasions when I went back and would never II.i.68:00
stay quite so long again but would stay for an extended period until I could see until the dark area was no longer dark and I could see and not be seen but that area’s been reconstructed and that little alcove no longer exists and I feel a bit sad about that there used to be a third entrance-exit as you put it and that

II.i.68:30
no longer exists so my time of standing in the dark area letting my eyes adjust and then watching people has gone but one of the I’d be interested in trying to work out if there’s another similar type of possibility in there I think what I told you that first time was that I was watching someone

II.i.69:00
who was watching people who hadn’t realised I was there within centimetres of his body (a silence, then) when I grew up our toilet used to be

II.i.69:30
outside and all I have two brothers and a sister all four of us grew up being scared of the fact that the area behind the little toilet building was very very dark at night and we would always be quite scared going to the toilet not because of the toilet itself but the dark area just behind it and we’ve often talked about that but somehow

II.i.70:00
or other we collectively grew up with that that was our kind of scary place and I don’t know what we were scared of I still don’t know did you have any kind of dark areas that (I laugh a little) you were scared of before you were scared of the dark area at Volcano

Charlie:
I mean

II.i.70:30
you know what child isn’t afraid of the dark really it’s sort of loaded on loaded on

Russell:
Was that a general fear of the dark that you had

Charlie:
No I don’t really I don’t I don’t actually really kind of fear the dark

Russell:
Yeah

Charlie:
at all in a sense but I don’t want to be touched I don’t want my body to be touched basically (he laughs a little) when I haven’t you know said

II.i.71:00
yes god’s sake you know there’s such a you know there’s a real difference between being afraid of the dark and and wanting to walk through a maze full of groping men basically

Russell:
So it’s it’s really simply that

Charlie:
It’s not yeah

Russell:
It’s that thing about permission then

Charlie:
Absolutely

Russell:
Yeah

Charlie:
for god’s sake you know it’s so (he growls) errr yeah it just there’s something that makes me kind of like the other night this this guy said sorry to me

II.i.71:30
and I said for a moment there was a pause and then he went (laughing a little) and touched me on the arse after he’d said sorry and then walked on so he’d obviously had the thought or something in his mind prior to it and had apologised before interfering with me okay yeah I can say well that’s funny it’s really funny ha ha ha but then I can take that further and

II.i.72:00
go well you know what sort of justification are we talking about just because he said sorry and I’m in this venue what are the laws basically what are what are for me what are the laws about um yeah about those places and and you know where I’m I’m reading that they’re safe places for men to go but are they really

II.i.72:30
um are they really (he laughs a little) it sounds like a kind of beginning of some kind of a horror documentary or something

Russell:
appendix 12: Charlie II

Well no I mean are you saying that

Charlie:

(checking the timer on the recorder) It’s almost seven

Russell:

It’s going to run out soon um are you saying though that within the sauna it’s possible for you not to feel safe

Charlie:

Yes

Russell:

Right

II.1.73:00

but it is that another way of saying within the sauna it is possible for you to feel safe

Charlie:

In the sauna I have a very different experience of myself and um the question of safe seems to be magnified when I go in there

Russell:

All right

Charlie:

The question

II.1.73:30

of yeah that’s that question am I safe seems to somehow drip through my sort of subjectivity repeatedly

Russell:

So in a sense you become more aware of that question when you’re in the sauna than when you’re on the street outside the sauna

Charlie:

Yeah possibly yeah yeah yeah there’s

II.1.74:00

yeah (a silence, then) yeah I think I have a relationship with the street you know I have a relationship with the city you know I’m familiar with it I know where I’ve where I can walk and where not to walk and you know in the saunas I’m not you know I’m still a novice you know and I don’t really want to grow to

II.1.74:30

being someone who’s old and knows saunas really well like you know I just feel that I’m ready to kind of just yeah experience them for what they were this last twelve months that I’ve started going and yeah I really want to kind of not need them or if I do need them I want them to really change for me I want to change what I feel in them like why did it have to be you know

(the minidisc fills and the recorder switches itself off automatically)

II.1.74:59

(Charlie speaks for a few more minutes, developing his theme with increasing eloquence. When he stops, we realise the recorder has ceased functioning earlier, but only by a minute or two.)

END OF CONVERSATION
appendix 13: Albert I

The transcript documents a conversation with Albert that took place on a weekday afternoon at his flat in suburban Melbourne. I timed my daily swim so that it would finish just before our recording session was due to begin, but when I arrived at the pool, not far from where Albert lives, I discovered him in the crowded changing room subtly but discernibly engaged in picking up an impatient-looking younger man. Albert approached me and without lowering his voice assured me that our interview would begin within the hour as planned. Hearing this, the young man frowned. After swimming my laps, I cycled to Albert’s flat. There was no response when I pressed the intercom but almost immediately Albert drove up in his car and ushered me into the building explaining as he did so how he had managed to pick up the young man, bring him back to the flat, engage in a bout of hurried but satisfying sex, exchange phone numbers, drive the young man back to his car parked at the pool, and return for the recording session with me, all in the time it took for me to finish my swim. Albert shares his flat with his beloved dog, here known as Doggy, and a male flatmate, here unnamed. Doggy sat with us throughout the recording session, whining, panting, and suffering from an infection.

Russell:

Um we’re running now

Albert:
Okay let’s start

Russell:

So ah I want to um begin with some origins so what I want to ask you about initially is um do you recall the very first time you ever went to a sauna

Albert:
Not the time but I know where it was yes

Russell:

Oh do you know where it was

Albert:

Yeah Sauna X in

Russell:

In

Albert:

In Sydney

Russell:

Right okay and you don’t recall the occasion though

Albert:

There have been so many times the original one would be really hard to identify I mean I can remember the way the venue was then um right down to the details of you know there being sheets on the on the beds

Russell:

Oh yeah

Albert:

And the steam room was positioned in the centre of the building rather than where it is at the moment if you like at the front um and the mazes were a lot darker of course this was in the late middle seventies would have been around nineteen seventy-six seven

Russell:

Right okay so in telling me these things are you drawing on say a series of visits in that period

Albert:

Um the vi

Russell:

the visits in that period seventy-six or so would have been when I started going to a sauna

Russell:

Okay

Albert:

Um seventy-five saw a a marked change in my lifestyle um so there’s a collage of what the sauna was like in that period before it was renovated
Russell:
Okay and so in a f but the first visit in a sense is blended in or vanished in some way with the subsequent visits

Albert:

Yeah yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
Yeah yeah there's

Russell:
Okay

Albert:
That's become a seamless Sauna X has always been Sauna X except when they change their décor and I can tell you when that was

Russell:
Fine what about what about the events leading up to the visit do you have um a strong knowledge of what those were did you happen in there by accident

Albert:
Oh no no

Russell:
Did someone take you

Albert:
It was always a very delib it always has been you know a very deliberate choice I never have gone out with the view that I'll go out you know have a drink tonight and see what happens it's always I've gone out and I'll go to the sauna so it's always been a very deliberate choice and I should imagine with hindsight that the first time was also a deliberate choice I very rarely do things by accident or spontaneously sadly

Russell:

But again you don't recall that choice being made

Albert:

No no

Russell:
Right

Albert:
No but I can I would guarantee that it was a deliberate choice

Russell:
Yeah that's fine

Albert:
because it's consistent with everything else in my life

Russell:
Were you living in Sydney at that stage or visiting

Albert:
Um I was visiting

Russell:
Um can you recall then how you came to know that Sauna X existed it was was it called Sauna X then or was it called

Albert:
Oh it's been called several things

Russell:
At that stage was it Sau

Albert:
It was called Sauna X Sauna W Sauna V um what else has it been known as Sauna U

Russell:
Yes
Um just trying to think what else it has been known as there were a couple of other names along the way there [unintelligible] too but I I think at that time it was Sauna X [unintelligible] it's gone back to its oldest name

Russell:
Do you recall how you first heard of it or came to know it existed

Albert:
I'd be playing my hunches um I think if you go back and check

I.I.04:00
the what later became Campaign formed out of a group called Syd in Sydney called Campaign Against Moral Persecution as in CAMP Inc [Ink?] they had a newsletter

Russell:
Yep

Albert:
which advertised various venues around town and I suspect that um it would have been through that um more than anything else so

I.I.04:30
I've always been a keen follower of the press and related things

Russell:
And the final do-you-recall question then is do you recall when you first heard that such places as saunas existed or when you first came to know that such places as saunas existed

Albert:
I should imagine not long before I went there

I.I.05:00
um

Russell:
But you're imagining that rather than

Albert:
Yeah yeah I mean I'm just imagining that as you do with a new venue or these days at least you go there to check it out and I can't see why going to Sauna X would have been any different at that stage even though we have you know sort of issues around criminality and hiding and all that sort of stuff going on

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
(attendance to the dog now tangled in the recording equipment) Doggy [unintelligible] paws

Russell:
I.I.05:30
(I laugh a little, then groan as I attempt to untangle her) That's all right ah there's just a few too many wires for her

Albert:
(calling the dog) Come here baby

Russell:
(this is a question) Her

Albert:
Her

Russell:
I'll just put that there okay

Albert:
Are you all right

Russell:
Um

Albert:
Recall prompts next prompt

Russell:
No no I don't want

I.I.06:00
to prompt you too much on it the thing that interests me about what you've just said is you're the first of my interviewees who has no vivid or specific sense of that event as distinct and that may say something about the interviewees I've you know
Well do you want me to hypothesise on that?

Russell:

No no not at all no no I’m very happy with what you’ve told me I’m extremely happy with what you’ve told me.

Albert:

No no I would hypothesise on it that because of my own comfortableness with the site the inverted commas trauma or the event-ness to depathologise it is not there.

Russell:

Yeah.

Albert:

because there they’re walking in and out of gardens parks houses bars they don’t hold that event status that say you know my first dance party did or something like that.

Russell:

So your first dance party you have a very strong sense of.

Albert:

Oh yeah.

Russell:

Oh right.

Albert:

Yeah.

Russell:

And that has a strong sense of occasion.

Albert:

Occasion event.

Russell:

and vivid event.

Albert:

Because there were a whole lot of other things tied up with that [unintelligible] tied up with er going with my then boy then boyfriend for the first time taking um speed for the first time.

Russell:

Right.

Albert:

(laughing a little) Having a threesome for the first time with him at least.

Russell:

Right.

Albert:

I and I can remember going to the new Sauna Y when it first opened.

Russell:

In Melbourne.

Albert:

In Melbourne yeah.

Russell:

Oh yes.

Albert:

I and I can remember going to the new Sauna Y when it first opened.

Russell:

In Sydney.

Albert:

In Sydney um I can remember going to Volcano on its opening night I can remember going to Splash on its opening night I can remember going to Squirt on its opening night.

Russell:

This is interesting because did you get invited to these opening nights or were you so clear that you didn’t um I’m now thinking in particular of Volcano Splash and Squirt um were you very determined that you were not going to miss on their opening nights.

Albert:

No I was on their guest list (he laughs).
Russell:
You were on the guest list okay

Albert:
A person to be invited because he brings with him a whole coterie of other people

Russell:
Right now how did you get on the guest lists

Albert:
Well the oldest one is the Volcano one ah in Melbourne

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
And

Russell:
The oldest sauna or the oldest guest list

Albert:
Probably the oldest guest list um that I’m on and that’s I think they used the membership list of one of the gay hotels in those days probably either I think it was called Blades

Russell:
Right

Albert:
It was in Alfred Street where um I can’t remember what surname um woman died Queenscliff restaurant

Russell:
Mietta’s

Albert:
Mietta O’Donnell had a restaurant in Alfred Street er Place in the city

Russell:
Right so you’d been a regular at the hotel and then through the hotel

Albert:
which had a membership list

Russell:
Which had a membership list how did that operate can you tell me a bit about that

Albert:
You pay your two dollars you get your medallion and you get on a mailing list

Russell:
And would the mailing list be for events or did the medallion mean was this the kind of hotel where you had to queue on busy nights

Albert:
Um it was well we’re talking about days before legality

Russell:
Right

Albert:
and so being on a mailing list having a membership badge um sort of certified you as not being undercover police

Russell:
Right

Albert:
and therefore a safe patron

Russell:
Right

Albert:
to have in the venue um because I mean those were the days of police raids and all that sort of stuff and the way to get around that was by making sure your
patrons were not likely to jeopardise the establishment whatever the establishment was

**Russell:**

So *Volcano* in Melbourne opened in what nineteen seventy-nine eight

**Albert:**

Ah about there yeah late seventies yeah

**Russell:**

Okay and there was then clearly a a sense that people who were on the hotel list would be suitable people for the sauna list

**Albert:**

I suppose that's what it was assumed yeah

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Albert:**

Yeah I mean

**Russell:**

Do you think that's a reasonable assumption that people who go to gay pubs now

**Albert:**

These days no

**Russell:**

are linked up very strongly with saunas

**Albert:**

No these days there there there's a significant overlap

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Albert:**

but they're separate clientele

**Russell:**

Right

**Albert:**

Um you know if you do your Venn diagram you’ll find a a sizeable overlap but there's there is clearly a group of men who don’t go to saunas and don’t go to hotels who do go to saunas or who don’t go to saunas

**Russell:**

Right

**Albert:**

But there’s a fairly large intersection the Periodic Survey would say for example about a third of men go to saunas and hotels because they asked that question ah three years ago

**Russell:**

Are you one of that third

**Albert:**

I do both yeah

**Russell:**

Yeah okay you DO both

**Albert:**

I'm socially mobile *(he laughs a little)*

**Russell:**

Okay can can you just say that you DO both can you just tell me a bit about that you DO

**Albert:**

Do in a sense that I go to

**Russell:**

Right okay

**Albert:**

Um

I wouldn’t I wouldn’t add any attach too much to the doing to the do
Albert:

Um that’s going to be fun to transcribe isn’t it but more in the sense that I go to both and my weekend going is usually preceded by having a drink because my inhibitions go down and the sex is dirtier as opposed to mid-week going where I’ve had nothing to drink and it’s less carnal

Russell:

Right

Albert:

in that sense of carnal being dirty being filthy being drunk being off your face being uninhibited

Russell:

Do you mean pleasurable

Albert:

Pleasure’s the same no carnality is is what’s that about it’s um I don’t rim mid-week (he laughs)

Russell:

Okay I think the first thing that stands out is that the freshness of the venue and that needs to be explored particularly from my own background

Russell:

It was virginal

Albert:

It was virginal yeah

Russell:

Like wedding night sheets (I laugh a little)

Albert:

Like wedding night sheets everything was crisp everything was clean the carpet smelt clean the paint smelt fresh um

Russell:

Was that sexy
Albert:
No

Russell:
Right

Albert:
The air wasn't thick with men if you like

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
Um great phrase must remember it the walls weren't dripping with men

Russell:
Right

Albert:
Um yes I think virginal is but not virginal in the sexy sense

Russell:
Right so is that is that a similarity between all three of those opening nights

Albert:
Yeah because they were all new venues

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
They hadn't been taken over they were newly painted they were you know

Russell:
It's hard to imagine Volcano (I laugh) like that

Albert:
Volcano being fresh and virginal um yeah I mean it I think something that's important for your work is that the sense that the the space hadn't become sexualised

Russell:
Mm mm

Albert:
Um in the sense that when you move into a new home it's not YOUR home until it's got your paintings on the wall you know your choice of carpets your rubbish in the linen room um your smell on the lounge and all that sort of stuff

Russell:
Right

Albert:
It's very I think it's a very basic animal instinct of marking territory

Russell:
Yeah I was just about to say like a dog marking territory yeah

Albert:
Yeah yeah and you know and that's what happens

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
Um people come in they walk around they get confident with the space they proceed to fuck in the space it then becomes a charged space

Russell:
So how did YOU make Volcano YOUR territory that night

Albert:
I probably didn't have sex in fact I'm pretty sure I wouldn't have had sex because it was very much a here's-how-beautiful-this-here-space time

Russell:
Yeah
Albert:
Um and in fact it was all clothes on it was actually you know a formal opening with speeches and all the rest of it um

Russell:
Right how weird did it feel weird

Albert:
Oh it felt very strange sort of it it felt like going into a display home (I laugh) um

Russell:
What time of the day did it happen

Albert:
Oh early evening

Russell:
What so sevenish

Albert:
Seven seven thirty yeah

Russell:

I.i.17:00
Yeah yeah with drinks and nibbles (this is a question)

Albert:
With drinks and nibbles and standing around with men in suits and

Russell:
Did you have what did you eat do you remember

Albert:
What did I eat oh god I can’t remember canapés of some sort um

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
Um

Russell:
Which part of the building were

Albert:
Upstairs in the lounge

Russell:
Right okay

Albert:
And you were free to wander through the rest of the building and um you know have a look around but and the the facilities weren’t operating

Russell:
So the steam room had no steam in it

Albert:
The steam room had no

I.i.17:30
steam the dry room had no dry the pool had water but wasn’t heated and the spa wasn’t running

Russell:
So men in

Albert:
Very much the display home

Russell:
So men in suits were walking in and out of the steam room with no steam

Albert:
Yeah looking at it yeah

Russell:
Oh how amazing and how dim was the lighting level for it

Albert:
Quite bright

Russell:
(laughing a little) Quite bright

Albert:
You could see I mean Mr Volcano wanted to show off how good his venue was

Albert:

And part of that is that it's all new it's all clean it's all shiny it's all spick and span um it was a display home you know the baby (he laughs a little) hadn't been bought across the hearth you know whatever metaphor you want to use

Russell:

Who which people made speeches

Albert:

I think Mr Volcano obviously spoke as the proprietor um I think various gay community leaders there may have been someone of the order of say Jamie Gardner who was active in gay politics at that time um

Russell:

So the sauna was linking up with community activism consciously

Albert:

I think so I mean it just needed a a a person who was able to be an out gay man without consequence to whom the rest of the community could aspire

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

You know Jamie was someone who was out who we recognised and can say well if Jamie goes there it must be fine

Russell:

Right
Um it became my bedroom

Russell:

Right

Albert:
as opposed to a room in which my bed rested

Russell:

Right

Albert:

Um

Russell:

Did tell me about the opening night of Splash then

Albert:

Again it's a similar thing there it was a huge production event

Russell:

I can imagine (I laugh a little)

Albert:

A huge production event because the whole complex the hotel the bar

Russell:

Oh everything opened

Albert:

Everything opened on the same night and um the proprietor had a very extensive mailing list from another hotel

Russell:

Yes

Albert:

It was same owner um and er it was very lavish lots of drinks the lights were on throughout it um

Russell:

People were moving

Albert:

People were moving between all venues

Russell:

between the various venues within The Zone yeah

Albert:

Yeah and it was it was all very much um I think I think my friend friend of mine referred to it you know as as Kate's Pleasure Dome (I laugh a little) Kate's Pleasure Palace

Russell:

Where did Kate come from

Albert:

As in the proprietor

Russell:

Oh right that was

Albert:

Katie

Russell:

Katie oh yeah okay

Albert:

That's the proprietor

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

Um

and it was again it was very much here's how how magnificent I am here's how almost gaudy this place is now men turn it into something dirty something sexual no value judgement attached to dirty

Russell:
Well can I just ask which one did they turn it into for you something dirty or something sexual

Albert:

I turned it into sexual

Russell:

Right

Albert:

And something dirty

Russell:

Right and other men turned it into

Albert:

Ah well it failed as an enterprise so it didn’t achieve in becoming an established sexual site

Russell:

My my recollection of the information was that the other venues in The Zone lost the money and that Splash

Albert:

Yeah the sauna was the last to go

Russell:

But that Splash itself was not losing money is that

Albert:

It was just breaking even

Russell:

Right yeah

Albert:

Um it was the whole complex was too big for Melbourne at that time and wrongly located

Russell:

Yeah yeah it’s a sad loss that the Splash is gone

Albert:

Oh it is it had I had some good times there but um and the vision of it as a pleasure palace um and being very upfront about being a pleasure palace um was good it it was good in the sense that it was very open and upfront about sexual fantasy it catered for that

Russell:

Can you

Albert:

Almost too much

Russell:

tell me a bit how you understand it catered for that

Albert:

Oh you know rooms with lofts rooms with slings fantasy theme rooms

Russell:

I remember the fantasy theme rooms

Albert:

Um

Russell:

Did you ever book into any

Albert:

I had sex in a couple of them but never in never in

Russell:

Did you book into them or did the other person

Albert:

Oh the other person did (I laugh) but never um you know never did I go into THE BOXING ROOM to have THE BOXING FANTASY it just it happened to be the room that somebody was using um
I’d rather

Russell:
That one was called The Ring as I recall

Albert:
I think it might have been yes

Russell:
Yeah and with the little pair of boxing gloves on the coverlet of the bed

Albert:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
What else was in that room

Albert:
Um

Russell:
that catered to the fantasy other than a pair of boxing gloves

Albert:
I just think some posters that’s about it

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
I’m just trying to think what else was there I mean and the bed was the bed with sheets um was a different frame to the other rooms so in the

i.i.24:30
country room whatever it was called The Stockade or whatever had a wooden rustic bed where I

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
The other one had an iron frame bed or something like that that was

Russell:

Yeah the country one also had a saddle in the room

Albert:
And had a saddle yes had a saddle

Russell:
Yes I recall that

Albert:
I mean that was cute but from the onset I was I was convinced it wouldn’t work it was too forced um there was no spontaneity about it and I think for me at least sexual experience is about the spontaneity

i.i.25:00
and the use of the space and if there happens to be a saddle where I’m having sex um let’s make that useful

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
Rather than here’s a saddle and in this room we’ll have these fantasies

Russell:
So if other men booked in to these rooms that and then you went in with them because you’d you’d pay separately for that

Albert:
Yeah

Russell:
An an additional charge

Albert:
Presumably they’d made

i.i.25:30
a choice that they want this room or that room for

Russell:
So did

Albert:
For some other reasons

Russell:
So did you find that those other men in your experience were attached to the particular décors in the room or they'd just chosen a room.

**Albert:**

I think they'd chosen at random. You know there's these rooms. Which one do you want. Pick a number between one and five.

**Russell:**

Right. So you didn't find them trying to um lasso you into some kind of cowboy fantasy or.

**Albert:**

No no no no.

**Russell:**

Anything like that.

**Albert:**

None of that. None of that.

**Russell:**

Right.

**Albert:**

Um not in.

I think sling rooms are a slightly different thing.

**Russell:**

Yeah.

**Albert:**

Um if, because of the connotations with leather sex and a sling um if one goes into a room with a sling in it as opposed to the room next door that doesn't there are expectations made by the presence of the sling that aren't made by the presence of a saddle because a saddle is really for riding horses.

**Russell:**

(I laugh) Yeah.

**Albert:**

Sling really only has one connotation.

**Russell:**

(still laughing) Yes, I understand.

**Albert:**

You can't lay back on a sling and pretend it's a Sunday afternoon in the south of France (I continue to laugh) um whereas you know you can sort of have a room with horses and and with saddles and bales of hay that's what was in it bales of hay.

**Russell:**

Yeah.

**Albert:**

Um and you can think you're out on the Ponderosa um and have s and (I.27:00) it's not as forced.

**Russell:**

Right.

**Albert:**

Or it or rather more exactly the saddles and the bales of hay are forced whereas the sling because of its connotations within our community speaks of a particular activity that is legitimated or desired in that space we'll say let's say for example when I go to Sydney and I go to Sauna Y um.

**Russell:**

I haven't been to ah Sauna Y yet.

**Albert:**

I always well it's got a sling room.

**Russell:**

Yeah.

**Albert:**

It's also got a private sling room and a public sling room.
Russell:
Oh yeah

Albert:
And you know it’s always a highlight of my trip to Sydney to go and inverted commas have a ride in the swing

Russell:
Right

Albert:
Um and it’s quite a deliberate choice and it’s usually on the last night because in a public sling you’re not exactly discreet and I’m not going to be in town for another three months and everyone will have forgotten

Russell:
That’s interesting

Albert:
Except me

Russell:
You say that’s usually the case

Albert:
You mean to say well let me let me bring up a couple of things here you’ve mentioned about having a drink before going to a sauna on the weekends but not on a weekday

Albert:
Yeah

Russell:
Um that there’s this usual um event in Sydney the last night the Sauna Y sling

Albert:
Last night gets a bit dirty

Russell:
How do these things fit in with what you told me earlier about your attachment to spontaneity do they

Albert:
Ah there is none there’s no spontaneity it’s the last night in Sydney I now is the night to use the sling because I’m not going to be here for another month and who cares if I won’t see anybody on the street the next day not that I’m embarrassed about being in the sling but I won’t see anybody the next day who’ll say oh that’s the guy who had his arse in the air in a sling getting done by everybody

Russell:
Right

Albert:
Well by selected everybody (he laughs a little)

Russell:
(laugh a little) Do you get to select when you’re in a

Albert:
Oh yeah

Russell:
All right that’s fine

Albert:
Power to the bottoms

Russell:
Okay the Pat Califia would disagree (we laugh a little) the um

Albert:
Those phalluses in my case are definitely not disembodied

Russell:
I’ll ask you a bit about that in a minute

Albert:
I’ll ask you a bit about that in a minute

Russell:
but um does this mean then that spontaneity is also a choice for you you choose sometimes to allow yourself to be spontaneous

Albert:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
And other times there is what would you call it the other times

Albert:
Control over my experience say

Russell:
To render it usual

Albert:
To render it usual so

That the um the day after a dance party for me is a time of spontaneity or structured spontaneity

Russell:
Right

Albert:
Because I've been out I've been dancing I've been in the back room I've had drugs um I'm drug fucked the consequences of that I'm feeling particularly sexual and cock hungry (he laughs a little) um and so it's

get as much while it's there because that's what you've set up to do and and

Russell:
That's what you've set up to do

Albert:
That's what I've set up to do and it's and I mean that's what a lot of other people've set up to do too

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
And that's why saunas are exceptionally busy the day after after dance parties because that space allows people to be as abnormal and spontaneous seemingly um as they

want to be

Russell:

How does that space allow YOU to be abnormal and spontaneous

Albert:
Well instead of saying you know there's only going to be one root had tonight there may be several or today let's not limit limit sex to night-time um and the chances of doing boundary things um

are higher because the other people there are similarly so disposed it's very hard to rim somebody or let yourself be rimmed when the other person doesn't want to do it it's very hard to be fisted when the other person doesn't want to be fisted and it's very hard to fist when the other person doesn't want to be fisted but there needs to be you know a consensual time when this becomes a possibility and

being drug fucked creates that consensual time um

Russell:
And so a knowledge that there's a kind of a community event where there'll be recreational drugs being generally used is it puts the

Albert:
Expectations

Russell:
Yeah expectations

Albert:
I mean there's the man who shall remain nameless who I almost inevitably see the day after a dance

party and we alwa inevitably have sex together

Russell:
Oh yeah

Albert:
And it's inevitably extremely filthy in that it's a drug fucked um totally carnal about bodies minds don't exist um pushing each other to boundaries whichever way we're going


um no relational stuff not even the slightest hint because outside of those times we don’t even acknowledge each other

Russell:
Did this happen after Red Raw this year

Albert:
Sure did *(he laughs a little)*

Russell:
Did it happen after Red Raw the previous year

Albert:
Sure did and it happens after Sleaze Ball in Sydney and it happens after Inquisition in Sydney

Russell:
So

Albert:
*I.i.33:30*
So the rest of the times we meet

Russell:
you and he are on the same party circuit

Albert:
On the same party circuit so let’s call him for the sake of the exercise Paul um Paul does the same parties that I do we know each other socially and semi-professionally ah we don’t talk to each other socially or semi-professionally because we actually have nothing in common um whereas

Russell:
Speech-wise

Albert:
Speech-wise whereas sexually when disinhibited ah

*I.i.34:00*
we make exceptionally good sex with each other because we both have the same dirty carnality about our sexual experience he’s similar to me in that that he’s you know um structured spontaneous it’s the only time when he gets to be to allow the space for that spontaneity for that messiness of self

*I.i.34:30*
because both of us have dare I say some somewhat um responsible positions that require clear decision making um

Russell:
In your professional lives

Albert:
In our professional lives

Russell:
Can can I just ask given that there are this this may seem obvious to you but for the record given that there are six saunas in Melbourne

*I.i.35:00*
how is it that you and it is at a sauna after the party

Albert:
Yeah

Russell:
that you meet him um how is it that you both end up at the same sauna

Albert:
Because we both end up at the same sauna quite often but

Russell:
So whi

Albert:
only engage each other when both drug fucked

Russell:
So which sauna did you end up at after Red Raw

Albert:
*Rear Entry*

Russell:
Right

Albert:
Um now something along the course of the night will be said and I’ll say you know (he performs both sides of a conversation) hi Paul how are you oh I’m good Albert

I.i.35:30
I’ll see you later on in the day probably (the performance ends) arrangement made

Russell:

Did that happen at Red Raw

Albert:

Yep and at Sleaze Ball and at Inquisition and at Mardi Gras

Russell:

Now the conversation you just related to me which was typical to what extent was that specifically actual at Red Raw

Albert:

Those are the exact words

Russell:

Right and where did that happen at Red Raw

Albert:

Passing each other on the dance floor he had a bunch of people with him I had a bunch of people with me

I.i.36:00

you know (he enacts the conversation) hi Paul good to see you havin’ a good night fucking fabulous I’ll see you later probably (the performance ends) and that’s all the social discourse that we’ve ever had with each other

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

Um professionally I can gi you know he knows my professional background I know his professional background ah and when we do see each other in professional spaces

I.i.36:30

it’s it’s where we didn’t know we didn’t know that side of each other because it’s probably better when we deal with each other professionally that we don’t know that side of each other

Russell:

Right so how how how many years has this been going on

Albert:

About ten

Russell:

Ten

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

So in the conversation

I.i.37:00

you didn’t mention Rear Entry

Albert:

Never

Russell:

Again this may seem obvious to you

Albert:

Never never we never mention or in Sydney we never mention in Sydney I go to Sauna X after a dance party

Russell:

So the venue is in let let’s just take the this recent specific incident though

Albert:

Okay

Russell:

The venue was understood

Albert:

Yes

Russell:

So were you going to the venue because you knew you’d be able to meet up with him at that venue or were you going to that venue and if he had never shown there

I.i.37:30
it wouldn’t have made any difference

Albert:

Wouldn’t have made any difference but inevitably he does

Russell:

Right

Albert:

Because that’s the venue that I go to

Russell:

Right

Albert:

I mean he will have had sex with several other people in the course of the day and so will I

Russell:

Yeah yeah

Albert:

Um it’s just that when we’re both there at the same time it seems like an exceptionally good idea when we’re both drug fucked

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

Whereas I’ve been there when he’s been altered and I’ve said no Paul it won’t work or when I’ve been altered and he’s come up to me and said no it won’t work just stop there

1.1.38:00

I need to go to the toilet

Russell:

Oh sure no problem

1.1.38:04

(I switch off the minidisc recorder for a toilet break, then we resume)

1.1.00:00

And we’re back on

Albert:

Okay

Russell:

Um I want to go back to the opening night of Splash

Albert:

Okay

Russell:

You talked about the first time you had sex at Splash did you have sex at Splash for the first time on the opening night at Splash or was it a subsequent occasion

1.1.00:30

Albert:

No it wasn’t the opening night it was two or three days later

Russell:

So was that a suit night again the opening night at Splash

Albert:

Yeah oh very much

Russell:

Were you in a suit

Albert:

No no but there were men in suits

Russell:

Right okay two or three days later

Albert:

Yeah and that was just a matter of that was the next time I had the opportunity to get back there

Russell:

Oh right you were just too busy

Albert:

Just too busy with

Russell:
other things

Albert:

With life yeah

Russell:

It with life as

Albert:

Getting on with other things

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

With with my was I working at that stage no I wasn’t with my studying

Russell:

Yep okay the Squirt opening was that suits and speeches

Albert:

Um not so much suits and speeches but there were certainly speeches

Russell:

Right

Albert:

and dignitary and you know and a sense of occasion about it um

Russell:

Where did that happen

Albert:

Around the bar thing

Russell:

In the front part of the sauna

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

Right okay between the entrance and the lockers

Albert:

Yeah yeah and the sa the opening of The Academy which has since closed

Russell:

Yes

Albert:

That was a particularly big tits and glamour show um including you know drag queens performing on the bar it was a spectacular

Russell:

I went there once I think

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

and then it quietly vanished

Albert:

It did the Melbourne wasn’t big enough to maintain

Russell:

There was

Albert:

that many saunas

Russell:

There were seven at that stage

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

Both it was The Academy and um
Splash were all about the same time um and from the opening of Volcano was the decline started the decline of Suburb A from Volcano Rear Entry was started by Mr Rear Entry

I.ii.03:00 who poached the staff from Volcano

Russell:

Right

Albert:

who later bought into Rear Entry and subsequently are the principal owners of Rear Entry the original consortium of owners of Rear Entry it’s changed a bit but but the one two two of the owners are the original owners

Russell:

Right

I.ii.03:30 so you were at the opening of The Arcardmy the opening of The Arcardmy or Academy

Albert:

Academy

Russell:

The Academy yeah the opening of Volcano of

Albert:

Rear Entry

Russell:

Rear Entry you were at the opening of Rear Entry

Albert:

Yeah because Mr Rear Entry opened that

Russell:

And you were at the opening of Splash

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

and Squirt

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

That’s five saunas in Melbourne

Albert:

Yeah and they’ve all got that sense of event

I.ii.04:00 they may as well have been launching a book that sense of event because that’s the sense of event that was there you know glasses of champagne and finger food and speeches and lots of smiles and a few pretty boys dotted around to entice you to come back you know

Russell:

I.ii.04:30 Suddenly I feel melancholy (Albert laughs) about about this I um don’t know what it is

Albert:

Well there’s a lot of history there

Russell:

There is there’s I mean it’s a history that hasn’t been written of course and ought to but that’s a separate issue I guess

Albert:

That’s a separate res postgraduate research project for both of us

Russell:

Oh (Albert laughs) yeah but I’m also interested in there’s something about

I.ii.05:00 it isn’t just that there’s a lot of history but that you’ve been an active part of history

Albert:

Yeah oh yeah very much I mean there’s very much the sense that that with some humility I say that Rear Entry has a good reputation because I fuck there a lot (I laugh) um

Russell:

How much humility is in that

Albert:
appendix 13: Albert I

Oh somewhat vain really um

I.ii.05:30
and I suppose unlike making-a-gross-
generalisation the majority of people I'm
actually quite proud of being um known to
be somewhat of a sexual athlete um it's not
something I'm embarrassed about

Russell:
Yeah yeah

Albert:
Um I'm quite happy when people say oh
that's you know so and so over there and

I.ii.06:00
god he's a good root

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
Um it is something I think our our enfleshed
our our carnate nature we we downplay too
much as gay men um but after all you know
we're about same sex desire same sex
attraction call it what you will um it's about
the sweaty bits and there's a sense in which the

I.ii.06:30
identity stuff about the sweaty bits has to do
with making them sweaty um was it Bruce
Parnell's report who quoted somebody else
who's since been misquoted um it because
it's warm moist and intensely human and
I'm rather proud of being warm moist and
intensely human

Russell:
But you're also rather proud of I mean this
this is one of the things that

I.ii.07:00
um tell me do do you mind if we discuss
your work I mean

Albert:
That's fine

Russell:
Right okay

Albert:
I'll discuss it as far as I want to

Russell:
Yeah yeah and and you have no concerns
about the fact that it may be identificatory

Albert:
That doesn't worry me

Russell:
Sure

Albert:
I'm I'm intensely proud of being warm moist
and intensely human (he laughs a little)

Russell:
That's all right one of the things the
interests me then is that you are
professionally a researcher

I.ii.07:30
and you it appears are with your talk of
boundaries an explorer at least in other
levels

I.ii.07:45
(Suddenly Albert's flatmate unlocks the front
door and comes in. I switch off the recorder
even as I hear the key in the lock. Albert
introduces me to his flatmate and then
insists on continuing with the recording
session while his flatmate busies himself
around the flat. I decide to continue, check
the recorder, and switch it on.)

I.iii.00:00
Okay and now we're back on (I gasp
suddenly) oh (a moment of suspense as I
check the minidisc recorder)

Albert:
Did you press the four wrong buttons

Russell:
No I didn't we're fine (Albert laughs a little)
I forgot that's it's more intelligent than I am

Albert:
(laughs, then) Machines are always more
intelligent

Russell:
Um

Albert:
I mean the professional self grew out of the sexual self and that’s a common pattern for me um to intellectualise my experience

i.iii.00:30
in order to make sense of it and each of my degrees has been about intellectualising an assumption or assertion about me that was either right or wrong so that my education degree is very much in reaction to you know initially being told oh you don’t have a brain you shouldn’t go to a university you should be getting [unintelligible] and do that well I think I’ve

i.iii.01:00
proved reverend brother who said that wrong um my theology degree is about you know the experience of being a person with a faith commitment and a gay man worked out on paper my masters degree is written after I retired with HIV infection and in some ways was a reflection back on my experience

i.iii.01:30
of teaching um this is with hindsight because it’s about safe sex education and the needs of gay adolescents in Victorian schools

Russell:
Yeah yeah

Albert:
Um and a sense that as an educator I had been partially successful in that I established networks albeit informal within my student groups where they were free to talk about themselves developing which is you know the guts of my my masters

i.iii.02:00
um my PhD work is that I’ve been going to saunas for forty thirty odd years it must mean something I laugh a little it all hasn’t been waste time and walking in circles um and so it’s very much the articulation of a lifetime um of sauna going ah by looking at what other people have experienced and how they have made sense of their space and their experience

i.iii.02:30
um and because of my familiarity with their space and their experience then it’s made it exceptionally easy in interview to draw out from them what their wer what they were fumbling to say um they’d be fumbling around for words and and to some extent I’d I’d capture what they want with phrase

i.iii.03:00
ah now you could say that I was leading them on and putting words in their mouth but the phrase fits so I talk about you know the group of boys who arrive at the sauna um after a dance party together and the participant’s you know telling me about how they sat in the spa together and they quite deliberately chose who they were going to have sex with for each one you know right you know Russell you will go with him

i.iii.03:30

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
you will go with him and you will go with him I just said to him you’re a bunch of little dogs hunting in packs it he snaps his fingers clicked with him yes that’s what we were doing my metaphor worked now you could say I was putting words into his mouth or I was actually a very accurate vehicle of interpretation of his experience and I prefer to say I was an he laughs a little an accurate vehicle for interpretation of his experience because it fit fitted so well my metaphor fitted the rest of it cos that’s exactly what they

i.iii.04:00
did the pack gathered observed the prey identified which prey was going with whom did the deed did the hunt reassembled as a pack and talked about the spoils fits beautifully and each of my interviews very early in my interviews um there’s a point at which I get on to the wavelength of the participant and once I’m there

i.iii.04:30
um inside his world then it’s just so easy to dir direct him or not to direct him that’s the wrong word to be with him as he explores his experience so that he you know he talks about being fisted five times in one night there’s no sense of shame in that in me because I can understand that because it’s it’s an experience in my space

i.iii.05:00
that I I comprehend it’s not a foreign language um you know I remember talking to a sociologist a priest sociologist in fact about my work and he didn’t know that I was a gay man which in itself was pretty odd but anyway I laugh a little he said he said to me are you gay and I went of course I am but he said there’s no way a gay anyone other than a gay

i.iii.05:30

1037
man could get that sort of data because there’s so much of the insider quality of it so you take you know a female researcher who will remain unnamed one of my criticisms of her work is that she conducts the interviews herself and she is necessarily outsider to the experience

and it’s very hard to explain you know what homosexual experience is homosexual sexual experience is to someone who doesn’t participate in the experience um hence the phenomenology in my my research

Russell:

To what extent do you find that the tuning in that you do in an interview draws on a skill of as it were tuning in in a sauna

Albert:

Oh it’s the same process it’s a human skill of tuning in to another person just applied to different situations um just as in an interview within the first

five minutes I’ve worked out where I can see where this interview is possibly going to go in the cubicle within the first thirty seconds my decision is made almost the the direction of this experience is pretty well set hence the experience with with Paul earlier when we’re not drug fucked is it won’t go where we want let’s not bother even to try um

in other experiences I go into a cubicle with somebody or I’ll establish contact in a corridor or in a room or whatever and quite often I withdraw not because they reject me but you’re not going to go where I want tonight you’re not going to accompany me so let’s not take you where you don’t want to go um now that that’s just a human

a human interaction skill that that I apply to all other areas of my life and why shouldn’t my sexual practice be any different to my social practice um there’s no boundary there need not be any boundary and there isn’t there isn’t for me and it’s curious when you start to discuss certain you know parts of that experience with other people that I did in my interviews that other people actually have it although they haven’t articulated

Russell:

What interests me is the this thing about

there’s a a term you haven’t used that I’m going to introduce so I’m just want to acknowledge you haven’t used it yet and that is the term erotic is there an erotic dimension then to your research given that you’re even though there’s no physical contact between you and your interviewees in your interviews there’s there

Albert:

I think I’d want to
Russell:
You’re drawing on that same kind of
Albert:
Yeah I think I’d want to have a look at the
way I use the word erotic in that I don’t
demarcate
Russell:
Well you haven’t used it
Albert:
No I I but I would use the word erotic in that
I wouldn’t demarcate it off from the rest of
my experience
Russell:
Ah right
Albert:
It’s part of every experience the erotic is
part of all experience
Russell:
Right right
Albert:
Ah it’s a part of watering the garden it’s a
part of laying
in the sun at the pool it’s a part of sucking a
cock it’s a part of having a glass of water
with someone
Russell:
Yeah I completely agree with this (I laugh a
little)
Albert:
The experience the experience is charged
with all those levels of meaning
Russell:
Yes
Albert:
um if we are able to be receptive to that but
so often our socialisation has detuned us to
the potential

I.iii.12:00
erotism of watering the garden you know
of looking at a little shoot coming out of the
ground and thinking god that’s sexy (he
laughs a little)
Russell:
Yeah
Albert:
Because it is it’s about sex it’s it’s a
Russell:
Yeah I think bulbs are very sexy (I laugh a
little)
Albert:
(laughing a little) A Mr Plant and a Mr
Stamen and a Mr Whatever-it-is get together
and (he whistles a little) up comes a plant
and that’s actually sexual that’s actually
erotic um you know Mapple Map
Russell:
Mapplethorpe’s flower photos are photos of
genitals yeah
Albert:
We said it together we said it exactly at the
same
time
Russell:
Yeah
Albert:
Mapplethorpe’s photo photographs are
exactly that that sense I think he was a
man who was deeply aware of the erotics of
everyday life um I think that might be the
name of a book if it isn’t it should be um and
it’s that sense that I’m also deeply aware of
the erotics of everyday the spiritual of
everyday life of the human-ness of
everyday life and all things function at all
times um it’s just
Russell:

I.iii.13:00
at times we tune in to different aspects of
the experience more than others but they’re
always there
Russell:
So well can you tell me then a bit about the ways in which the sauna is spiritual for you?

Albert:

Oh that would be getting a bit too close into my own thesis work (he laughs)

Russell:

Oh would it

Albert:

Um

Russell:

All right then I’m quite happy

Albert:

No well I

Russell:

You know I’m quite happy to let it go if you don’t want to discuss it

Albert:

No no I can talk about it in terms of the you used the phrase the virgin space

Russell:

Well perhaps well

Albert:

In sense of the terms of the the sacral space

Russell:

Right can I ask though instead of and forgive me if the distinction’s inappropriate but if instead of you theorising it you were able to give me some testimony about

Albert:

Oh when

Russell:

a spiritual experience

Albert:

Okay

Russell:

in a sauna

Albert:

Ah when I in my other life go to church

Russell:

Yes

Albert:

I.iii.13:30

I wear a particular set of clothes I walk in a particular way I speak in a particular way I move in a particular way when I go to a sauna I wear a particular form of dress I walk in a particular way I speak in a particular way and I move in a particular way essentially from from from a phenomenological point of view it’s the same experience except one’s called religious

I.iii.14:00

and spiritual and the other is called sexual you know the passing of the amyl bottle is as religious experience

Russell:

For you

Albert:

I.iii.13:30

For well I think essentially when you sort of strip all the extras away from it you watch what people are doing to the passing of a communion cup because there’s the same delicacy the same delicacy you can’t spill what you have um the erotic foreground if you like the Gestalt

I.iii.14:30

metaphor ah the erotics is to the foreground whereas the spirituality is to the background in the amyl bottle whereas in the communion cup the erotics is to the background and spirituality is to the foreground but you’re still dealing with the same process the same action the passing of something that is held to empower ah I’m trying to get the overlap of the two experiences

I.iii.15:00

something that is going to empower or emphasise or solidify um the experience that’s being engaged in to that extent communion and the passing of the amyl bottle in my mind are essentially the same
thing just as wearing a towel and wearing vestments at the church are essentially the same thing

Russell:

So when you put your towel on do you now have um a very particular um practice in

Albert:

It's very structured for me it's as structured as getting ready to go to church

Russell:

Can you now tell me can you narrate that structure for me

Albert:

Well this is part of my stuff where I ask people to tell me about the inside of their locker (we laugh a little)

and again that reflects back on how they can gauge what sort of sexual experience they want I mean my locker is very tidy

Russell:

Right

Albert:

cos it's it's structured spontaneity my towel is very deliberately positioned without looking sleazy I mean I'm not not showing off bits of arse or bits of dick it's it's in fact it's slightly folded probably about an inch and a half to two inches um

Russell:

around the top

Albert:

Around the top

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

so that it and then vees down just below my abdomen to below my belly button

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

and sort of follows the line of my

Russell:

Those muscles

Albert:

Those muscles here

Russell:

Yes

Albert:

and looks gorgeous (I laugh a little) in the same sense that when I put on church drag or even when I put on occasions that I've been to stuff where you've been required to wear academic dress um my academic hood is always sitting just so

Russell:

Yes

Albert:

on my left shoulder because that's how it works

Russell:

What about your key

Albert:

My key is always on my left wrist ah half way up the arm turned under so it doesn't rattle

Russell:

(laughing a little) Ah all right I have to ask you a bit now first of all

Albert:

Because I'm a right handed [sic] and I masturbate with my right hand and I can't do it with my left hand because it rattles and there's nothing worse than hearing raddle raddle raddle raddle raddle raddle
Russell:

Why is there nothing worse than that do you mean hearing your own key rattle

Albert:

Or anybody else's

Russell:

Oh do you

Albert:

It ann

Russell:

Do you get irritated by hearing other people's keys chinkle rattle

Albert:

Yes bec

Russell:

Rattle is the term you've used

Albert:

Yeah rattle um because it introduces something into the space into the that is irrelevant or for me is irrelevant the fact that I'm wearing a key is a structural necessity to keep my goods secure because I don't want to lose my wallet my phone whatever um and as such it's a structural necessity I'd be quite happy and in fact occasionally very rarely if I know the staff who are on I'll leave my key with the staff very rarely do I do that because it's a structural necessity

Russell:

So you see the key then as an something outside it's not like it do you have when when you have church what you call church drag on

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

is there anything that's a structural necessity that has to go with the church drag in the way the key goes

Albert:

Probably my car keys in my in my trousers pocket

Russell:

Right (laughing a little) keys again

Albert:

Yeah well it's a it's a structural necessity

Russell:

Yeah yeah

Albert:

Um it's actually irrelevant to the experience in the sense that the way one dresses to go er a sex club say like The Basement or somewhere like that is very relevant you know wearing an arm band or wearing a body harness or whatever

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

is a very deliberate mode of dress um I don't pretend that my little elastic with my key on it is an arm band because it's not it's a structural necessity um in the best of all possible worlds we wouldn't have them because we could all trust each other and leave our clothes in nice little neat piles

Russell:

Um I remember my first visit to a mosque and they said oh you leave your shoes here and I said oh who's looking after them and I realised I'd just been so insulting in saying it because it was unheard of for a pair of shoes to go

Albert:

To go missing from a mosque

Russell:
This was in Istanbul

Albert:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
But I remember

Albert:
I.iii.20:30
the shock and that I realised I had to make
this enormous leap in thinking like that
that’s suddenly reminded me of that

Albert:
See see I mean there’s the same thing as
as the sexual and the spiritual overlap and
that there are some things that are structural
necessities like it was only in in recent
years say that churches have started to use
burglar alarms because the sense of the
sacred in the community is not as high as it
was and churches are fair game for thieves

Russell:
Right

Albert:
whereas twenty years ago churches were

Russell:
This noise though when it’s somebody
else’s it irritates you if it’s somebody else’s
key the noise irritates you

Albert:
Yeah

Russell:
I.iii.21:30
if I’m in a cubicle and you know that
person’s key is rattling I’ll either take it off
them and put it on their towel and say let’s
get rid of that noise and again at the human
level they realise though not consciously
that it is an irritant and the sex proceeds
quite happily very much

Russell:
I.iii.22:00
I actually find the key to be quite different
from that myself but we don’t need to pursue
that now (Albert laughs a little) we can
always talk about that another time my my
I’m not saying

Albert:
Oh for some of my participants

Russell:
for others I’m just talking about

Albert:
the key was very much this is where I’ve
locked out my old self my outside self this
is the key literally in the Alice in Wonderland
sense this is

Russell:
It

Albert:
Have a look at Alice in Wonderland and the
way Alice in Wonderland uses keys because
it fits

Russell:
Yeah I’m just thinking though of something
even a bit more basic than that but no we’ll
leave that for the moment the um so you
have it on your wrist left wrist

Albert:
Left wrist and turn the key back

Russell:
Ah why not your ankle because many men
do

Albert:
Many men do why not my ankle because
I’ve always put it on my wrist (I laugh a little)
and that’s
Albert:
where I probably first put it on the first visit to Sauna X

Russell:
Do you have any recollection of ever putting it on anything other than your wrist

Albert:
Except for Suburb A where it used to be on a thong around your neck

Russell:
Yes I think it still is from my most recent visit

Albert:
Um and that

Russell:
Like dog tags

Albert:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
And that just gets in the way

Russell:
of

Albert:
sucking a dick it gets in the way you don’t want someone’s key in your face

Russell:
All right YOU don’t

Albert:
Or they don’t

Russell:
Right

Albert:
You don’t want things dangling where things dangling are structurally inconvenient

Russell:
I.iii.23:30

Albert:
I.iii.24:00

Russell:
Right it’s like Sir Robert Helpman’s line about nude ballet

Albert:
Nude ballet it would be fine if everything stopped at the same time

Russell:
(laughing a little) Yeah all right so you don’t um go to Suburb A very often

Albert:
Not these days no

Russell:
And the key would be one of the off putting things about that

Albert:
Um these days it would be if I went to Suburb A at I would probably wind it up a sufficient number of times to put it on my wrist anyway

Russell:
All right what about at Squirt where there’s now am I getting this confused there’s the metal thing the like a little metal number that Squ a little metal tag with the number and the key and they often clink together

Albert:
Yeah that’s why I talked about the dog tag where you just clip them flip them up underneath the elastic so there’s no noise

Russell:
So you’d flip both under the elastic

Albert:
Yeah
Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

There’s no noise

Russell:

Have you ever taught someone else to do that

Albert:

I suspect I have but I can’t recall

Russell:

That’s fine

Albert:

Because it’s sort of one of those little as it were tricks that gets rid of the jangly key

Russell:

Can you remember the last time when you witnessed something in a sauna in Melbourne

Albert:

I was in a gay sauna in the steam room and a woman and I ah and my term was a real woman and he said yes a real woman was in the steam room

Russell:

I think the closest thing I it initially shocked me but then I got very comfortable with it very quickly was a drag queen

Albert:

Um arriving in drag stripping off but still leaving the head the hair and face on

Russell:

Yes

Albert:

That I think

Russell:

Has this only occurred on one occasion for you

Albert:

I’ve seen it happen a couple of times at Rear Entry in fact there’s a young boy who’s a drag queen who um is a furtive drag queen because his parents don’t know and he takes his clothes with him to the sauna and does his make-up and puts his frock on at the sauna and then goes out for the night

Russell:

Right this would be at Rear Entry

Albert:

At Rear Entry yeah

Russell:

So he’s near other gay venues

Albert:

So he’s near other gay venues

Russell:
Yep yep

Albert:

and leaves his clothes there his

Russell:

Have you seen though people um with
make-up and hair like drag make-up and
hair

Albert:
in the spa

Russell:

and towel

Albert:

And towels around here as if they have tits
but they clearly don’t have their tits in

Russell:

Oh right

Albert:

But they’re still sort of you know being being
drag queens at a sauna um I long

Russell:

I saw at Volcano once a man a man it was
a man in a wig a kind of a Barbara
Streisand wig and red satin bra and panties
in lying in a cubicle with the door open
forever just forever

Albert:

To in obviously

Russell:

I’ll go into psychotherapy mode that’ll make
it even better right I’m ready say when

Albert:

Okay we’re back on

Russell:

Okay let’s you know just draw the picture
again

Russell:

Now I would like you to describe for me this
recent incid how recent was it

Albert:

Oh well it’s not that recent it’d be over a
year by now

Russell:

Over a year and which venue did it

Albert:

It was at Rear Entry

Oh yeah can you give me an a specific
eample

Albert:

Well for an exceptionally attractive young
man exceptionally attractive young man will
go off with what I perceive to be the ugliest
of all creatures

Russell:

Can you think of a recent instance

Albert:

I can think of one yeah where

Russell:

Can you describe that

(The minidisc runs out of recording space
and the recorder switches itself off. I load a
fresh disc and we resume. Albert lies back
along the sofa.)

Albert:

I’ll go into psychotherapy mode that’ll make
it even better right I’m ready say when

Russell:

Okay we’re back on

Albert:

Okay let’s you know just draw the picture
again

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Now I would like you to describe for me this
recent incid how recent was it

Albert:

Oh well it’s not that recent it’d be over a
year by now

Russell:

Over a year and which venue did it

Albert:

It was at Rear Entry
Russell:
At Rear Entry and you saw this young man

Albert:
Exceptionally young man under twenty probably probably in fact under eighteen probably but

Russell:
He certainly appeared under eighteen yeah

Albert:
Yeah very boyish features very slim very fair skin very blonde hair beautifully maintained you know the sort of young kid who clearly I can see him in my mind’s eye clearly had spent hours on his personal presentation um and I’d cruised him a bit earlier in the evening and I got very clear indications that I he wasn’t interested in me though I was exceptionally interested in him um and let that be as it may he went into a cubicle with a man who’s is quite tall ah very unkept [sic] hair

Russell:
Was this man taller than you

Albert:
About my height

Russell:
Yep

Albert:
Um very unkept hair ah you know three-day growth on his face exceptionally

Russell:
and that would be probably generally tight

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
on him um you couldn’t tell the front from the back hairy gorilla sort of a monster (he laughs a little)

Russell:
and this slim little callow-faced beautiful boy and he went into a cubicle together and I just sat there and thought ya just fuckin’ never can tell

Russell:
No you can’t can you

Albert:
Um somewhere there was some connection that worked for both of them

Russell:
Can I ask where did you watch that from you saw them go into a cubicle which cubicle was it

Albert:
As

Russell:
Yes so in that more or less open corridor bit

Albert:
Yeah I mean

Russell:
And where were you standing

Albert:
I was just standing at the end of the corridor just

Russell:
Which end of the corridor

Albert:
The the coffee lounge end

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
Um just standing loitering

Liv.03:00
and they came the other way and went into
the room together

Russell:
Right so when you say you were standing
loitering you mean you were um

Albert:
Just standing against the wall

Russell:
Against the wall

Albert:
passing the time of day

Russell:
Right

Albert:
Or time of the night um and I was just
absolutely astounded absolutely astounded
because [unintelligible] just it was A [?] and
so totally not A [?] um a friend of mine was
there and I sought him out and said

Liv.03:30
you know you know that little cute number
that I was chasing yeah you know the
monster yea

Russell:
Guess what

Albert:
They’re in a room doin’ it and he went what
the fuck and he articulated it as I did you
never can tell

Russell:

Albert:

So when you say something like you never
can tell do you mean I never can tell or
people never can tell

Albert:
People never never can tell I mean you
can’t

Russell:
Because you CAN tell sometimes

Albert:
Well but this is one that I would never have
picked

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
Liv.04:00
You know monsters do not get off with
Adonises

Russell:
Well they do (I laugh a little)

Albert:
Well they do I mean I’ve seen it happen but
it’s one of the rarer occasions um usually
you can pick I can pick at least what people
are picking in each other the muscle Marys
Liv.04:30
pick up the muscle Mary in each other the
bimboes pick up the bimbo in each other
short queens pick up the short queens or the
really tall queens because they’re insecure
in each other you know the older men pick
up the younger men because they want a
daddy son type relationship blah blah blah
blah blah blah ah these things are
working at a very primitive level and I don’t
think people can articulate them terribly well
to themselves but coming back to the thing
of being well tuned um

Liv.05:00
I can pick up what’s going on

Russell:
Do you think of yourself in the sauna sorry
do you experience yourself in the sauna as
someone with expertise

Albert:
Yeah oh yes yes and there are other people with expertise who know what's going on who know who by virtue of long experience know what's going on

l.iv.05:30
and the regulars can sort of say when they see two people come in the door half an hour apart he will get off with him

Russell:

Hmm I've certainly had that experience of being at somewhere where it wasn't very heavily populated and there's somebody who seems eminently outstanding and sure enough let's say it would be ten fifteen minutes later someone else will arrive who I think yes

Albert:

He will get off with him

Russell:

that person and the other

l.iv.06:00

person they will join up

Albert:

Now when you get when I get the vibes from someone that they're a younger man looking for an older man and I don't happen to fit quite fit the criteria um I know when I see an older man that that will match up um thinking of a recent example of a young friend of mine who visits me from time to time um from another state visited me and another friend of mine who lives in Melbourne

l.iv.06:30

who's a man of my own age came over and as soon as they lay eyes on each other (he snaps his fingers) it was endgame

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

It was endgame from then on and had I thought about it beforehand I should I would have been aware I would have consciously worked that out because of the human-ness the in-touch-with-the-human-ness experience um

Russell:

Can can I ask you a little bit about identity because you've talked you've used terms like gay man

Albert:

I use them interchangeably

Russell:

Oh right

Albert:

I'm not politically correct

Russell:

Oh that I've no but I'm

Albert:

I mean I

Russell:

Ah let me ask the question

Albert:

Okay I was anticipating the question

Russell:

Um but you the other thing I was interested in was you were also talking earlier

l.iv.07:30

and at first this may seem unrelated about boundaries in activities like you you know that there are boundaries in activities I'm just wondering the extent to which you understand or have any sense of when those boundaries get shifted does your identity shift with them or does your identity get fulfilled in some way

Albert:

No my identity moves to fit the available space

l.iv.08:00

it's still me whether it's in to use the fluid analogy whether it's in ah a five hundred ml jar and only taking a quarter of it because there's only twenty mls in it two hundred mls or whether it's in a two hundred ml jar and completely full it's the same identity it just moves and shifts um to fit the space available so that the me that is in church

l.iv.08:30

is not dissimilar in fact it is exactly the same me that sucks cock and these hands are
the same hands that pull cock and give communion there's no disassociation it's the same me it's the same identity um

Russell:
What about in a situation though now do you adopt identities for the benefit of others in the sauna

Albert:
No

Russell:
Like for instance when you talked about meeting a younger man who's interested in older men and you don't fit the criteria do you ever feel inclined

Albert:
No I can't

Russell:
to exacerbate your age or make yourself

Albert:
No I can't play I can't play daddy

Russell:
Right

Albert:
unless it's a natural feeling I can't I'd as soon as play daddy as I don't know think of something bizarre jump off a mountain to my death because it just can't happen

Russell:
So as you cross the threshold into the sauna

Albert:
To play the daddy you have to be the needy boy

Russell:
So as you cross the threshold into the sauna from the street and vice versa do you experience um an alteration of rhythm um of a sense of who you might be or who you might be

Albert:
I don’t

Russell:
making yourself

Albert:
Yeah I don’t other people do

Russell:
Right right you know other people do because they've told you so

Albert:
Yeah

Russell:
Yes I know other people do because they've told me so too

Albert:
Married men will take off their wedding ring and leave it in their locker or whatever I mean that's an example um

Russell:
Have you seen a married man have you seen a man take a ring off and leave it in a locker

Albert:
I have data on a married man taking a ring a wedding ring off and leaving it in a locker

Russell:
I have data on a married man taking a ring a wedding ring off and leaving it in a locker

Albert:
No I haven't witnessed it

Russell:
Yeah that's fine can I also can I ask um because we've also talked a lot about the relationship between the
sauna and the gay community and historic
links there and your part as a participant in
history with that but I'm also wondering now
about this other world that is less identifiable

Albert:

I went I think what you're hitting hitting at
[sic] is say something like Q&A at the hotel
in Fitzroy I went

Russell:

Oh right did you

Albert:

Yeah because I am not queer or alternative
in that sense

Russell:

Oh right this is interesting

Albert:

I felt totally out of place

Russell:

So how long did you last there

Albert:

Ten minutes

Russell:

Jesus

Albert:

I just had to leave

Russell:

I have to tell you two people I know from
Sydney have each been there on visits to
Melbourne and have are people who are
deeply involved in gay

Albert:

Well see Q&A as an identity or that queer
identity is about in my mind and the boys and

women who go there as I understand
[unintelligible] understand their
deconstruction of queer is or alternative is
it's about an identity in the head not an
identity in the flesh um and I would tie that
identity stuff in with historically with the
emergence of HIV where um having identity
in the flesh became a liability so identity
shifted

Russell:

What I was going to ask you though wasn't
about queer

Albert:

Okay I gave you an interesting bit of
information then

Russell:

No no you did you gave me a fantastic
piece of information I don't know whether
it's of any use to my research (we laugh)

Albert:

Most of my information's fantastic

Russell:

But it was

Albert:

Whether it's useful or not is another question

Russell:

I'm completely fascinated with it

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

But um what

Albert:

I was going to ask about is like it's
more to do with the world of not so much the
married men who are gay and aren't out but
Appendix

Albert I

‘Men where the notion of gay doesn’t really well perhaps if I preface it by asking a question would you agree with me that to describe the way in which men have sex with other men in prison as gay would be inaccurate’

Albert:

Yes that’s that’s not gay that’s homosexual sex

Russell:

Yes I would agree that okay

Albert:

And it’s homosexual sex of necessity

Russell:

Right now what I’m interested in is what er have you witnessed of homosexual sexual encounters in saunas as distinct from gay sexual encounters and how do you tell the difference

Albert:

Well I haven’t witnessed it but in in my own body of data I do have a man who goes there and his words are to suck cock cos my wife doesn’t have one are you a gay man no I’m not are you a heterosexual married man yes I am but I like sucking cock

Russell:

Have you

Albert:

and my wife doesn’t have one (he laughs a little)

Russell:

So in your thirty years of experience well it isn’t quite thirty is it really

Albert:

Oh just about

Russell:

All right

Albert:

Sixteen seventeen

Russell:

Well let’s definitely say a quarter of a century

Albert:

[unintelligible] sounds fuckin’ old love

Russell:

of

Albert:

Anyway in my long experience

Russell:

You’ve not yourself felt you’ve experienced having sex with someone who was not gay but who was engaging in homosexual sex you’ve not been able to detect that

Albert:

No because

Russell:

You’ve not been aware of that

Albert:

Well I’ve not been aware of it because I wouldn’t have done it I would never be just a disembodied phallus um because of the the sense the total human-ness of the situation I mean I just when when I have sex with somebody it’s all of me you may not know all of me but you’re getting all of me um example that young man that I picked up this afternoon and brought home I knew he’d become data (I laugh a little) ah when he was in my bedroom he noticed I have a crucifix on my wall in my bedroom and he said what’s that and I pointed to the crucifix and I said it’s a crucifix oh why I’m a practising Catholic and sucked his cock there was a problem for him and if it continues to be a problem I’ll never see him again and if it continues to be a problem

Albert:

All right

Russell:

I.iv.13:30

I.iv.14:30

I.iv.15:00

I.iv.15:30

I.iv.16:00
I never want to see him again if it's not a problem I may in fact see him again I have no problem with that it's *(he laughs a little)* there's no disembodying of who I am in the experience because you get all of me because I bring all with me

**Russell:**
Yeah but you can't

**Albert:**
I don't leave

**Russell:**
Furnish a cubicle with a crucifix

**Albert:**
No but I bring me

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Albert:**
Who will have no problem with a crucifix will *(l.i.v.16:30)* have no problem with um you wearing a crescent moon if you're a an Islamic person or whatever or if I sometimes wear a crucifix or whatever those things in so far as they don't intrude are irrelevant

**Russell:**
Have you worn a crucifix at a sauna

**Albert:**
I used to wear a cross yeah I used to wear a cross a lot a little one but I don't wear it anymore

**Russell:**
But it didn't dangle around your neck

**Albert:**
No

**Russell:**
As much as the keys at

**Albert:** *(he moves towards me to offer me a closer view of the chain round his neck)* As you notice my chain

**Russell:**
Is oh yes I can see it

**Albert:**
Is appropriately small *(l.i.v.17:00)* *(he tugs at the chain)*

**Russell:**
So it won't interfere was that a conscious choice

**Albert:**
Oh yes

**Russell:**
or a fortuitous one

**Albert:**
No no very conscious choice

**Russell:**
Okay

**Albert:**
Um very conscious the because the jeweller who who made this chain for me is a gay man and ah I said now love I want this so it won't get in the way when I'm givin' head and we literally draped a gold chain around my neck *(he demonstrates how the chain will not fit over his chin and thus obstruct his mouth)* *(unintelligible)*

**Russell:**
Right

**Albert:**
It fits

**Russell:**
Right

**Albert:**
It won't *(l.i.v.17:30)*
get in the way that’s the closest it’ll get in the way in which case you can just let it flop down because there’s nothing more annoying than getting a cock wrapped up in gold chain (he laughs a little) [unintelligible] erotic [unintelligible] but for me it’s not

Russell:
I think I’m getting towards the end of my questions but I want to ask you a bit about boundaries this term boundaries that you’ve used

Albert:
That I used

Russell:
very early on

Albert:
Yeah

Russell:
You talked about um that there are boundaries um of well what what is bounded is it experience or practice that gets bounded and are they bounded in the way you again you used the the image of the Venn diagram

Albert:

Yes to which you add fuzzy logic where things are in-ish

Russell:

Oh yeah so is that if something’s in-ish is that like a threshold

Albert:

Yeah it’s sort of you know is a teacup a teacup or a mug it’s cupsy

Russell:
Right okay

Albert:
Um

Russell:
So do you have a clear sense you have a sense of your boundaries

Albert:

Yes

Russell:

So do you have a clear sense of your boundaries

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

So

Albert:

And it’s also a relational one I mean you know you don’t fuck people that you know um our chances of having sexual [sic] are now probably zero

Russell:

(laughing a little) Yes

Albert:

and they were initially because we’re in the same field

Russell:

So when you said also though you don’t fuck people you know YOU don’t fuck people you know

Albert:

Yeah I don’t fuck with people I know

Russell:

Right and that’s

Albert:

Nothing personal
Russell:

But you spoke of that as though that were a rule

Albert:

It is

Russell:

But it’s a rule for not just

Albert:

For me

Russell:

you personally

Albert:

And for a whole lot of other people

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

Um you know I don’t fuck my flatmate

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

because it would complicate life too much

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

Um I don’t fuck my friends because it would complicate life too much. I don’t fuck my friends’ ex-boyfriends because it would fuck complicate my life too much

Russell:

This is when we bumped into each other at Volcano, yeah, yeah.

Albert:

Yeah, to which you have acquiesced, um. There’s a demarcation. Fine, ah.

Russell:

There are other (he puts on a voice) pillars of the community (returns to his usual voice) who that I’ll meet at saunas and meet in back rooms or whatever. Um, you know in group orgy sessions, and they’ll be doing the nasty, or doing the deed, that’s a bit vague. Having sex with somebody else right next to me, and there are hands going past me to grope them but they won’t touch me and I won’t touch them.

Russell:

This is when we bumped into each other at Volcano, yeah, yeah.

Albert:

Yeah, to which you have acquiesced, um. There’s a demarcation. Fine, ah.

Russell:

There are other (he puts on a voice) pillars of the community (returns to his usual voice) who that I’ll meet at saunas and meet in back rooms or whatever. Um, you know in group orgy sessions, and they’ll be doing the nasty, or doing the deed, that’s a bit vague. Having sex with somebody else right next to me, and there are hands going past me to grope them but they won’t touch me and I won’t touch them.

Russell:

I think that you have an awareness of how those boundaries have been developed.

Albert:

It’s like a kinship system. It’s aping to some degree.

Russell:

And you’re aware of that is what’s happened with you.

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:
Yeah and you know my friends will say well sisters don’t fuck each other it’s it’s you know bad karma to fuck your sisters or your sis or your sister’s husband in that (he laughs a little) sort of network of things um I wouldn’t consciously have sex with your boyfriend now that I know who he

is had I not known I may have but I don’t now I do now I won’t

Russell:
Have you met my boyfriend

Albert:
Yeah I’ve met him with you somewhere along the line

Russell:
Right

Albert:
Um I think we at least I have met him and I can identify him from the rest of the world as it were

Russell:
Oh probably at the pool

Albert:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
I think so yeah he I mean he’s off the list because of boundaries um and that’s does that answer your question about boundaries

Russell:
It

does I’m also though thinking about when but they’re not the boundaries you were talking about when you were talking about having a drink

Albert:
Yeah and the other boundaries are you know the things that you know if I I was walking along the street and a cute boy walked past I’d no sooner go and grab his crutch whereas in a sauna I would um the boy I picked up this afternoon I told you he’d become data the boundary was that you know you don’t actually get an erection in the shower at the pool you get half an erection but with great control (I laugh a little) structured spontaneity

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
You maintain it all ah and you don’t physically touch each other in public view so we went to the little dunny at the back of the pool near the car park made physical contract there and then came home and we were all over all over each other that was the boundary now I’ll see him say tomorrow at the pool and he’ll be with people and they would never know that he and I engaged sexually because we don’t want to share I don’t want to share the boundary with other people unless he wants to as well

you know in the sense that I could have had sex with your boyfriend and you would never know from me and say the the guy who is does have a partner that I do see occasionally I see him and his boyfriend together and his boyfriend has no idea that we do each other regularly you know little things like when I make a sexual innuendo it’s always to you not to the one that I’m doing

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
quite deliberately unless you were exceptionally tuned into my way of doing things you’d never pick it up because I’m structurally spontaneous

Russell:
Can you describe for me the thing I I’m not quite sure whether you want to stand by it now the thing about rimming

on (I laugh a little) weekends only
Albert:

[unintelligible] weekends only um

Russell:

Then what’s that kind of boundary how do you know that boundary *(the flatmate passes through the room again)*

Albert:

It fits with the under the rubric if you like of dirty in so far as not every day you know it’s it’s a practice I don’t do every day it’s a special occasion

_l.iv.25:30_

um for a whole heap of reasons um and I need to make sure that those reasons whatever the practice is are in place you know I’ll I’ll um rim but and be rimmed only when I know that the rimmer and the rimmee are both recently washed now

_l.iv.26:00_

that only can happen at a sauna because we assume that we’ve all had washes recently um I won’t you know rim in a park because god knows where their arse has been um and my own arse for that matter I won’t even offer my own arse um because it’s bad practice to engage in that particular practice

_l.iv.26:30_

without having observed the the necessaries whatever the necessaries may be I’m trying to extrapolate them

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

I said I’d like you to fuck me but not today I haven’t washed it’s not on the agenda um and if those boundaries aren’t accepted then you can fuck off because you’re not having sex with me and most often you can pick that up from the very start

_l.iv.27:30_

which brings up that other point of knowing the sphincter you know um

Russell:

I don’t think I have any more questions today but do you have anything you want to ask me

Albert:

No

Russell:

*(I laugh, then)* Um

Albert:

That was easy no

Russell:

Fine let’s leave it there

Albert:

Okay

_l.iv.28:01_

*(I switch off the minidisc recorder)*

END OF CONVERSATION
appendix 14: Colin I

The transcript documents a conversation with Colin that was recorded at his home, a house in suburban Melbourne. Colin usually lives alone but at the time of the recording he had several members of his family staying with him. He made lunch when I arrived, and then we retired to his room to eat it and to record. His room epitomised the rest of the house in microcosm: spacious, light, lived in. The fact that we were eating affected our talk. The first part of the conversation, in particular, was often slowed down by the need to properly chew food. Accordingly I have rarely noted pauses and silences in this section. Nor have I noted the ongoing clatter of cutlery and crockery as we ate. One of Colin’s younger relations, here known as Sam, roamed around the rest of the house while we worked.

Colin:

\[ \text{i.i.00:00} \]
I've got no problems in that way

Russell:

Well it's on

Colin:

Probably about the only thing in my life I haven't got problems with

Russell:

(I laugh a little) Um so you've been interviewed before (I laugh a little)

Colin:

Oh yeah yeah

Russell:

But not about these matters

Colin:

Well I have I have spoken to a psychiatrist however

Russell:

Oh really

Colin:

\[ \text{i.i.00:30} \]
In a way that's a bit like an interview

Russell:

Yeah I guess it would be um when I spoke when sorry when you spoke to the psychiatrist ah were you was the psychiatrist someone who was ah gay

Colin:

He is yes

Russell:

Yeah was that important for you

Colin:

\[ \text{i.i.01:00} \]
Not entirely basically um someone else had suggested him um I think one of the basic things for me at this well through my life and um well this stage is is that I er you know I'm turning sixty-seven this year and I still in a way have not arrived at a practicable sexual identity I've had two affairs in my life um ah of any length at all and not a great length but um and they were both with women and they were both sexually extremely enjoyable um what I didn't like was and I think probably because of my own very timorous nature in those matters in terms of approaching someone and risking refusal um the women that I had the affairs with in fact had made the running for me and and basically every day it was well what are we going to do today Colin and you know sort of thing and really it was in the end it was kind of unacceptably boring at that level

Russell:

Right

Colin:

\[ \text{i.i.01:30} \]
Um um ah

\[ \text{i.i.02:00} \]
terms of approaching someone and risking refusal um the women that I had the affairs with in fact had made the running for me and and basically every day it was well what are we going to do today Colin and you know sort of thing and really it was in the end it was kind of unacceptably boring at that level

Russell:

Right

Colin:

\[ \text{i.i.02:30} \]
I've fallen madly head over heels in love once I would say and that was with a guy who is who's straight er it we both handled it appallingly and ah I was about thirty at the time and ah he would've been about twenty-five and we are now extremely good friends after a lapse of quite some years

Russell:

Right
um we you know sort of came back together and shared a house and everything very happily

Russell:
Yeah yeah

Colin:
Mm um so my visit to a psychiatrist really I think was um to try and I think the main issue we tried to discuss was my sexual identity and if you want I could um I don't know whether this would be of interest to you or not but I I filled a notebook ah

Russell:
Oh yeah

Colin:
Not entirely about our stuff it was about my what I feel about life and you know what I was thinking at the time

Russell:
Which period was this in relation

Colin:
This was until comparatively recently um it was it was the last couple of years

Russell:
Yeah

Colin:
really mm

and ah I don't think there's anything in that book that I wouldn't want you to see um might um [unintelligible] it was a very strange mix of things so it may or may not be of assistance to you in in what you're thinking about you know and what I have to give to the interview (laughing a little) I wouldn't give it to the psychiatrist because it actually included some comments about him which I thought he might take ill (I laugh) I've actually told him I want to leave and um

and one of the main reasons being that he is gay and I think that that he has a an agenda in determining my in seeing my stuff I'd rather go to funnily enough I'd rather go to I don't mind a person being gay but I see this particular guy as as being um

he loves to know what I'm thinking um etcetera etcetera ah but I don't think he really has any room in his mind or heart for the idea that that one might actually speaking in terms of partners be you know heterosexual enough that a woman partner would be the wise choice or the natural choice

I don't think I'll have a partner anyway now but ah I might have someone who lives in another house who's a partner like my sister has funnily enough

Russell:
The when you talk about a sexual identity

Colin:
Yeah

Russell:
do you imagine that there's I mean what are what are you talking about

Colin:
Ah

Russell:
Ah is is what do you imagine that to be because you're talking about it as though it's something you haven't quite achieved or hadn't quite achieved at the time you were seeing the psychiatrist

Colin:
Well um I suppose it's a lifestyle really um if you like perhaps coming from my generation or something like that and

and ah whether you're as it were a family person or not having children it would be too late now I suppose of course a partner that I would take would most likely would be too old to have children and I love the idea of children um and I it's interesting there was a guy um who I came across in

I suppose university days and a bit and after who was um gay and very happily so you know very pointedly so I suppose and he ah is someone in certain ways I don't like but he he came out with some interesting
stuff a couple of times and one of which was that he saw he didn’t see

1.07:30
people in terms of whether they were gay or straight he saw them in terms of whether they were inclined towards a married or a single life (I laugh a little) and I think that’s quite interesting

Russell:

Hmm

Colin:

Um maybe it doesn’t have an immense amount to do with where I am at the moment because I can’t imagine getting married ah or in either sense you know to either a man or woman ah

1.08:00
I don’t know there’s the one to one relationship thing as opposed to having a small group of friends one relies on um which I think I WOULD like um but I don’t know that I could take it well I’d be very picky anyway in terms of living with

1.08:30
someone you’re actually that you were actually um having sex with um living with someone who’s a good friend I’ve experienced and enjoyed and have handled and would again I think but um I think that the moment you actually live with someone who’s a partner I mean a sexual partner um statuses are taken up in that relationship um

1.09:00
ah and fought for and chosen and etcetera etcetera um but I don’t know that it’s I don’t think I’d be very good at that particular game at the moment

Russell:

Was that some did you live with the two women you had the long affairs with

Colin:

No no I I they weren’t long affairs I mean

1.09:30
I I suppose one of them was more than a year but the other wasn’t even

Russell:

Right

Colin:

I suppose in an on and off way it was

Russell:

Yeah yeah

Colin:

But um

1.10:00
at the moment I’m in a funny time really of reassessing actually what friendship is and what it means and who friends are and um and what relationships are I mean it’s very interesting having these ah two boys and their father and and and ah Sam here because um

1.10:30
they’re ah it’s been an extraordinary time so far for me um having to make allowances to for other people’s um needs and to and to voluntarily lose possession of naturally one’s space both physical and emotional

Russell:

1.11:00
Do you feel you have to be on better behaviour in your own home with them around or

Colin:

Oh

Russell:

Or

Colin:

Um I think that um in terms of respectable behaviour um I’ve felt that too much even with quite close friends I find it embarrassing to

1.11:30
present someone to them that I’m prepared to accept as a sexual partner but not as a friend

Russell:

Right

Colin:

Sometimes I bring some rough trade home or something like that

Russell:

Yeah
Colin:

There’s only a couple of people that um I’d be prepared to do that in front of and even then I’d be worried because they can be pretty rough (I laugh a little) and and actually funny enough I’ve kind of stopped that because

I.i.12:00
because I don’t like um I find too much that if you’ve met someone just sexu and I’ve I’ve got a problem here I think that ah I’ve even met I can think of one lovely guy young guy that I met and we went home to my place and um he’s a sweet fellow and we we you know had a a slept together for the night and had sex and the next

I.i.12:30
morning you know I think he was looking forward to increasing our relationship I was I was sort of saying well if we meet again you know and he was deeply hurt by that and so I did actually happen to meet him again but um he just that was it ah you know a couple of times I’ve experienced um only the last time that I had sex which was a couple

I.i.13:00
a few weeks ago with anyone else I mean um (we laugh a little)

Russell:

Yeah

Colin:
The other is very frequent ah but um um ah he you know wanted to swap numbers and he he he was a nice guy and really affectionate and everything but the idea of a c of a relationship um in a way starting that way

I.i.13:30
I find is a reversal to me I prefer to meet someone and I prefer sex to be connec you know I prefer sex to be part of an orchestration as opposed to

Russell:

A trigger

Colin:

Yeah hmm um I may not be right there

I.i.14:00
I have been known to be wrong about several things (I laugh)

Russell:

Where um

Colin:

Excuse me would you like that (he indicates something on his plate)

Russell:

Mm I’ll have that one but just that one thanks

Colin:

Well (indicating its pair) have that one if you feel like it because this is about all I’ll need

Russell:

Good um so where do do your where do your visits to saunas where have they fitted

I.i.14:30
in with all this

Colin:

Well

Russell:

And I’m aware that from things you’ve intimated that there isn’t necessarily a large number of those visits

Colin:

No I think um I mean I’ve sort of I think that just the desperation for sexual company

I.i.15:00
is um all that’s ever driven me to saunas I don’t go there and think oh whacko I’m really looking forward to a lovely sauna in that place (I laugh) I don’t mean that I’m talking not talking about the steam

Russell:

Yeah

Colin:

baths [unintelligible] that sort of the relish of it is is um it’s not something I relish and it’s not something I do well unfortunately I sort of go along there and

I.i.15:30
I don’t go for older men and um um I’m extremely shy about um approaching younger men and they don’t usually approach me so I’m actually very ignorant about how to handle it I think is probably a very important thing and and in that ignorance fearful of it
Russell:
The way you talk about it it makes it sound as though

\[ \text{i.i.16:00} \]
you see it as being there’s an acquired knowledge there’s a way of visiting the sauna that’s like a skill or something

Colin:
Yes I remember you I remember at [unintelligible] it was something you were saying when we last met of of um of people who think that there is the mode that you go into

Russell:
Yeah

Colin:
if you like and I must say that I suspect if one went often

\[ \text{i.i.16:30} \]
and without in fact you’ve given me ideas (he laughs a little) I think in a way the way to go would be to go quite regularly to some place and perhaps would tend to go on the same nights and and just see what happens and I’ve never done that I’ve never observed other people’s sexual behaviour in never just relaxed and observed it I’ve always felt that I was a participant

Russell:
Yeah

Colin:

\[ \text{i.i.17:00} \]
but not a very good one and um

Russell:
Is that bec you felt you weren’t a good one because what you’d gone for wasn’t what you got

Colin:
Um yeah I suppose so um and also um ah because I was aware of my own it just brought

\[ \text{i.i.17:30} \]
my own fears and timidity up before my face uncomfortably

Russell:
But yet you’d gone

Colin:
Yeah I’d gone

Russell:
And you went more than once

Colin:
Oh yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Colin:
Yes I’ve been to both the the Suburb A one and the um Suburb I one um

Russell:
You’re the only person I’ve spoken with who has been to the Suburb I one

Colin:
I prefer it

Russell:
Right

\[ \text{i.i.18:00} \]
I’ve been there once I one I felt there’s one other one I haven’t been to um which is the Suburb E one

Colin:
Suburb E

Russell:
Mm there’s one at Suburb E it’s the if you like the sister one of the one in Suburb A

Colin:
Right

Russell:
They’re the same business but I’ve not been there and I’ve actually met someone now who has and it’s made me curious about it but um it

\[ \text{i.i.18:30} \]
Colin: Yeah the one in Suburb I I went to just the one occasion but I’m interested that you prefer it so what what what is it that you prefer about it you prefer it to the one in Suburb A.

Russell: Right right yeah

Colin: if that’s a

Russell: No that’s very helpful

Colin: I’m I just it’s more straight up somehow I mean I haven’t been there for years

But um I’ve never I’ve never liked the Suburb A one very much I did get a big surprise one night at Suburb A I arrived there I mean I’ve only been I could number it on one hand I think

Russell: Yeah yeah

Colin: when I’ve been there ah well I was really just leaving um and

Um because the place was kind of there was no nothing happening and um almost with relief I was sort of I had done my duty and it hadn’t worked out [?] I don’t know that sort of feel a bit ah and I’d done my watch on the deck (I laugh a little) and um um as just sort of gone to my locker

Russell: (laughing a little) Yeah

Colin: And if if there was anyone else that kind of took his fancy I suppose but er he came back to me and um there were a couple of other people there not nearly attractive as I am (I laugh a little) but um

I.i.21:00

I have to say that the with men the few sexual encounters that I’ve had that have been enjoyable are so few that I can I can remember them basically

Russell: This was an enjoyable encounter quite apart from the

Colin: It was enjoyable enough yeah

Russell: Yeah yeah

Colin: Mm

Russell: The um
Colin:
And I spent ages trying to find a condom and he got a bit impatient you know I should have been more organised than that
Russell:

\textit{i.i.22:30}
They didn’t have them around

Colin:
Well yes they did but they didn’t I didn’t know how to get hold of it and so I had to go to the desk and

Russell:
Oh right

Colin:
etcetera etcetera etcetera

Russell:
So in a sense you were un

Colin:
Un unskilled

Russell:
Well I was go that wasn’t the term I was going to use

Colin:
Oh okay I was what

Russell:
I was going to say unfamiliar with the venue

Colin:
Oh yeah okay

Russell:
and how it worked at that stage

Colin:
Unfamiliar

Russell:
but your first thought was unskilled

Colin:
I suppose

\textit{i.i.23:00}
it was yes

Russell:
Is

Colin:
But I do think skill comes from knowledge and commitment knowledge through application and commitment

Russell:
Right

Colin:
as well as well as from talent I think I’m pretty talented but I’m unskilled

Russell:
Right right no I understand that yeah the oh can I ask you for a few um forensic details about this

Colin:
Yeah okay

Russell:
Um

\textit{i.i.23:30}
but ah more to do with um location so you’re in the locker area there ah first of all can we can we kind of roughly date this how many years ago are we talking

Colin:
Oh

Russell:
In the nineties

Colin:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Colin:
Yes um

**Russell:**

The first half of the nineties or the second half of the nineties?

**Colin:**

It was when I was living here so it's less than twelve years ago um [i.i.24:00] but I would say I'd say possibly about eight or ten years ago so we're talking early nineties perhaps?

**Russell:**

Now.

**Colin:**

First half of the nineties.

**Russell:**

You've got a fairly vivid recollection of this event?

**Colin:**

Yes.

**Russell:**

Good can what I want to do is I'll ask you some questions and I'd really like you to just give me the answers you feel confident about if you if you're not sure don't deduce the answer [i.i.24:30] even if it seems logical that that must have been what happened.

**Colin:**

Yes.

**Russell:**

don't worry about it.

**Colin:**

No.

**Russell:**

Okay it's just the stuff that you know for sure and even if it's you think oh look I know that's what I'm recall [sic] but it couldn't have happened that way.

**Colin:**

Yeah.

**Russell:**

that doesn't matter either it's the stuff you feel.

**Colin:**

So it's what I recall.

**Russell:**

Yeah.

**Colin:**

Okay.

**Russell:**

But that you feel very confident with that you know.

**Colin:**

Ah so if I if I think that's what I recall but it's possible it mightn't have happened I don't come up with it.

**Russell:**

No if you if you have [i.i.25:00] a very strong sense that that's what happened.

**Colin:**

Yeah.

**Russell:**

you that's what you give me.

**Colin:**

Okay.

**Russell:**

Yeah even if you think logically it doesn't make sense.

**Colin:**

Okay.

**Russell:**


That’s is that all right

Colin:
Yes

Russell:
Great um did you have an upper locker or a lower locker

Colin:
I can’t remember um

Russell:
That’s all right

Colin:
my s my recollection of it the picture is that I had a that say there were there was a high

Russell:
Right and did he have a high one or a low one

Colin:
I don’t know

Russell:
Right

Colin:
He was along from me (he indicates with his right arm) at the lockers but he was quite a few lockers along he kind of

Russell:
To your right

Colin:
Yes

Russell:
You’re gesturing to your right

Colin:
to my right yes
I could be wrong there

Russell:

No no no it might have changed since so that's fine and the is there was he between you and the entrance

Colin:

Yes

Russell:

or were you between him and the entrance

Colin:

No he was between me and the entrance

Russell:

Right so you were deeper into it

Colin:

He had just entered

Russell:

Yeah

Colin:

when I spoke to him

Russell:

Right

Colin:

I initiated the conversation

Russell:

With

Colin:

him

Russell:

Saying it was a bit late

Colin:

Say yeah I wanted to say something to him
It was something that was easy enough to say because I knew that I had a complete exit and um and I didn’t

Russell:
How cons

Colin:
That’s why I got such a shock at at his response

Russell:
It's interesting because you there’s a great deal of complexity in what you’re offering me in terms of your analysis of it now

Colin:
Yeah okay

Russell:
At the time did you have time to think all that

Colin:
I don’t think I had time to to suss all that but I do think that um through life ah you um you find that there are things you’ll opt for which include those thoughts which are being had at some time

Russell:
Right

Colin:
So I don’t think I thought right I can get out there um I wasn’t talking in those terms at all

Russell:
Yeah

Colin:
I was bas all I thought was um I want to say something to him and and yes I want to make contact

Russell:
Yeah

Colin:
Well I’ve got a
Russell:
You’re quite aware of that

Colin:
*(putting on a voice)* Mahn of the thee-arh-tuh
*(I laugh)*

Russell:
The do you think of your voice as being one of your assets

Colin:
*(he laughs, then)* Um oh yes but not in I I must um qualify

Russell:
That remark in that ah um I believe it’s it’s a voice that I can play with

Colin:
*(laughing)* Yeah

Russell:
Right right

Colin:
I don’t believe it’s one of my assets because it’s I have been told it’s a very nice voice people like hearing it on the phone and things like that and that’s nice and I feel settled about that I don’t I don’t disagree with them but I don’t think hello I’m Colin I’ve got this voice

Russell:
*(laughing)* Yeah

Colin:
I I er

Russell:
*(laughing a little)* I I use it a lot I’ll speak to people in accents sometimes and I have a good ear and um

Russell:
Yeah

Colin:
Ah ah so that’s yes that to that ex I suppose my ear and my voice together are are quite an asset

Russell:
Because one of the things I’m thinking of is your decision to just talk to someone as they’re arriving is it’s kind of

Russell:
Yeah okay

Colin:
So ah it strikes me as being um a bold

Russell:
A bold thing to do *(he laughs a little)*

Russell:
Yeah for me it seems

Colin:
Yeah

Russell:
For me I would be feeling bold in that situation I can’t recall

Colin:
Well

Russell:
a situation where I’ve dared speak to someone at the lockers

Russell:
And and for me it would be daring to

Colin:
Oh well I I think I see it in a very opposite way in a way that I think you know um I I see talking to someone as ah if you can talk you don’t have to do you know in other words going up to someone and feeling them up or something like that um I see as very much more difficult thing to do than to

Russell:
Oh right *(I laugh a little)*

Colin:
Unless we're in a completely I mean that um that extraordinary kind of um ah hellhole down in in The Basement um you know

Russell:
Oh yeah

Colin:
in Moor Street ah I quite like that because because it is completely anonymous and actually ah I once went there with a friend

Russell:
Um if were there are there other parts of the sauna where that um that ability to you know initiate a conversation seems more difficult

Colin:
More difficult

Russell:
Yeah or do you I mean the lockers

Colin:
I.i.32:30

That sort of thing

Russell:
Yeah

Colin:
But and I have I have actually um sat in a steam room next
to someone and and started you know touching them up putting my hand on their knee or something like that

Russell:
Rather than talking with them

Colin:
Rather than talking with them um but I haven't found that it's worked there's one time when there was this actually gorgeous guy um again and stunningly beautiful sort of a man in his early thirties I suppose um
and he was sitting there and no one was doing anything I think everyone was scared in a way ah

Russell:

Were you

Colin:

Well yes but I um I can’t remember how I got into position to do it but I I started massage his shoulders you know the way we do very much in theatre the sort of just that fairly simple thing but he had the most gorgeous shoulders and it was a pleasure

I.i.35:30

to massage them and he was getting into it he loved it and he eventually laid back down on the seat and um and I started sucking him off and then everyone else moved in

Russell:

Yeah

Colin:

because of course someone else had made the first step and ah I just went away after that I didn’t like that now what I should have done I saw him later actually walking along the passage and really looking pretty lonely

I.i.36:00

and I should have said just ah this was at Suburb A I should have said come upstairs and get on one of those massage things and I’ll do you you know and ah I think he would have and I think it would have been a nice way to meet

Russell:

But you didn’t

Colin:

But I didn’t again I was um too timid to do that I think and um

I.i.36:30

people don’t know that that’s how you feel I don’t think I mean they’ll they’ll think you don’t want them or

Russell:

Mm it’s interesting that I mean I’ve certainly been in similar situations where part of me has been imagining or trying to imagine what the other person is imagining (I laugh a little) the situation to be

Colin:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

and realising oh they

I.i.37:00

must think I don’t like them you know

Colin:

Yeah

Russell:

I mean and but it yeah breaking through that

Colin:

I suppose I mean for you to be talking like that means you’ve already broken through further than I usually do in that in that you put some analysis into it and you and some empathy of where the other person’s coming from and for me I regress into feeling far too concerned

I.i.37:30

about what people think of me um as opposed to what impression I might be making on them in terms of whether they think I’m like them or not it’s it’s too much at on a level you know I I become a sort of wallflower about it and that’s unfair on the other person (he laughs a little) apart from anything else

Russell:

Oh I know I agree I completely agree with that it is

I.i.38:00

and it’s certainly

Colin:

We could continue this while I make the tea by the way I don’t mind I mean we can be careful how we talk in front of Sam but

Russell:

Um I’d rather turn it off

Colin:

Oh okay

Russell:
while we make the tea and then come back

Colin:
Okay

Colin:
and have it here

Colin:
Okay well just we must remember where we are

Russell:
Yeah that’s all right no that’s all right

Colin:
Upstairs in the Suburb A sauna

Russell:
(laughing a little) Yes

Colin:
That’s one of my favourite places

Russell:
Okay

Colin:
(as he walks out of the room) Okay

Russell:
Just a sec

I.ii.00:00
(I switch off the recorder and join Colin while he makes tea in the kitchen. Once the tea is made, we carry it back into his room, switch on the recorder and resume while he pours.)

Colin:

I.ii.00:00
(the sound of pouring, then) There’s loads more tea and it’s strong enough that we could top it up with hot water I think which will make it hotter okay there’s some bikkies and there’s more more bikkies I mean

Russell:
Oh I used to like these Full-O-Fruit

Colin:
(mumbling with his mouth full of biscuit) Mm what do you mean used to

Russell:
These’re a kid memory these ones

Colin:
Oh

Russell:
I.ii.00:30
Mm I didn’t know they still made them

Colin:
Yep they’re one of the few biscuits that have a low fat content and fairly natural sugar content (we chew) and they also happen to be extremely pleasant

Russell:
Mm they’re great

Colin:
They’re not like thick iced biscuits which I also now and again just glut sort of feelings about but I tend not to touch those now

Russell:
Let’s I.ii.01:00
go back to the lockers

Colin:
Okay

Russell:
with the um shall we call him the blonde builder

Colin:
Oh yeah

Russell:
All right okay um so he said to you well you’re still here and you said that you felt like for a moment you’re heart skipped a beat then what happened

Colin:
I said something like um  
11.01:30  
um no if he [unintelligible] I don't think he said you're still here I think he said and you're leaving are you  

Russell:  
Right  

Colin:  
And um I think that my reply was well I could stick around you know  

Russell:  
Right  

Colin:  
Something like that and um and  
11.02:00  
it appeared he was interested and then then he went I think I'm not sure exactly but I think he went off sort of looking around a little bit and then he and then I and then he went and lay down in one of those little cubicles  

Russell:  
Oh yeah  

Colin:  
with the door open  

Russell:  
Oh really  

Colin:  
Yeah  

Russell:  
Well he was in the process of coming in with the intention of getting undressed yes  

Colin:  
Right so did you  

Russell:  
So did you as it were change direction then  

Colin:  
Yeah  

Russell:  
and proceeded to get undressed again  

Colin:  
Yeah I mean I really can't remember whether I'd just put my underpants on or something you know  

Russell:  
but I think I had started getting dressed um as opposed to still you know ah getting dried or something with the towel maybe just putting the towel on again  

Colin:  
Yeah I think I already had sort of my shirt on or something  

Russell:  
And he was in  
11.03:00  
the process of getting undressed  

Colin:  
Well he was in the process of getting undressed yes  

Russell:  
And were you in the process of getting dressed  

Colin:  
Yes I think I already had sort of my shirt on or something  

Russell:  
And he was in  
11.03:00  
the process of getting undressed  

Colin:  
And he was in  
11.03:00  
the process of getting undressed yes  

Russell:  
Right so did you  

Colin:  
Well I suppose he I think it's possible he'd already started  

Russell:  
So did you as it were change direction then  

Colin:  
Yeah  

Russell:  
and proceeded to get undressed again  

Colin:  
Yeah I mean I really can't remember whether I'd just put my underpants on or something you know  

Russell:  
but I think I had started getting dressed um as opposed to still you know ah getting dried or something with the towel maybe just putting the towel on again  

Russell:  
So did you start getting dressed sorry did you start returning to your towel state after  
11.04:00  
he had left the lockers  

Colin:  
Yeah  

Russell:  

I think I one way or another I made it obvious by the time he left the lockers that I was available.

**Russell:**
Right.

**Colin:**
And that was in response to his quite ah unambiguously showing interest.

**Russell:**
What time of the day is this all happening?

**Colin:**
I don’t know what time they close but it’s sort of late in the evening you know ten eleven something like that.

**Russell:**
And how long had you been there at the premises?

**Colin:**
I don’t know well my memory of it is that I hadn’t been there for terribly long you know maybe half an hour or something like that.

**Russell:**
So

**Colin:**
I hadn’t been there all night and people had gradually left or anything like that.

**Russell:**
Right.

**Colin:**
It was a comparatively short visit.

**Russell:**
Right.

**Colin:**
Not that it ever is a terribly long visit because I really find (softly) I don’t know I don’t think I’d ever be in one of those places unless something happens for any more than an hour um and even when something’s happened um I’ve left afterwards so I they’ve always been fairly short visits I suppose maybe more than an hour but I’d say about an hour

**Russell:**
He headed off and then you discovered that he was in one of these rooms and lying down.

**Colin:**
I think that’s my memory of it.

**Russell:**
With the door open.

**Colin:**
Ah yes very definitely and I think that’s how he played it if you know what I mean.

**Russell:**
Was he lying face down or face up?

**Colin:**
I can’t remember if he had his towel on or not.

**Russell:**
And he looked at you right yeah.

**Colin:**
Um um I can’t remember if he had his towel on or not.

**Russell:**
Fantastic that’s fine no problem what about um back at the lockers when he’d
been talking with you had he been looking
directly at you or had he been indirect

Colin:

I.ii.07:00
Oh no he looked at me to address me

Russell:

Yeah

Colin:

Mm mm

Russell:

Very steady and

Colin:

Just very well at first it appeared to me just
or ordinarily conversationally

Russell:

Yeah you went into the cubicle with him

Colin:

No he was there and I

Russell:

Sorry

Colin:

As I recollect

Russell:

He was in he was in the cubicle and then
you went into it with you joined him

Colin:

He was in the cubicle with the door open
and I went in and joined him

Russell:

Right

Colin:

That is my memory of it

Russell:

Yeah did you shut the door

Colin:

Yeah I s yeah I should think so

Russell:

You think you did but you don’t you don’t
have a vivid

Colin:

I don’t have an important recollection of it
but

Russell:

Yeah it’s more that you deduce

Colin:

I assume I did

Russell:

Yeah

Colin:

I wouldn’t want anyone watching or joining

Russell:

Can you describe the cubicle

Colin:

I think it had ah

Russell:

The things you’re certain about with it

Colin:

Well my I I have an immediate picture
that

I.ii.08:30
um if that's the cubicle the door was there the bed was there and I came in that way but I don't think that's the case I think it was like that but it was ah just an ordinary cubicle sized cubicle about I suppose ah about six foot by

I don't know I can't remember what size they are there's enough room

Big enough to lie down

Oh big enough to to have a sort of you know one of those rather narrow massage table things as I I think ah

At floor level or raised

No up

Yeah and can you walk around all four sides of that

I'm getting mixed up with the two places now because ah but um but um

If you want

I feel with Suburb A that you couldn’t

Yeah

That it was against it was in a corner as it were

Yeah

Not as I remember
Russell:
Right  a rubbish bin

Colin:
I.i.10:30
*he laughs a little, then* I can’t remember one no

Russell:
That’s fine  um a condom dispenser lube dispenser

Colin:
No that you had to go up to the desk to get that or up nearby

Russell:
Right  and thus the excursion you had to make

Colin:
Yes that I had to make  yeah

Russell:
So you you were a little um judgemental a bit judgemental about yourself in that regard you I got the impression

Colin:
Yes well I was I was fussed because I could have done it better and and ah I’m not feeling a a darkly moody judgement of myself

Russell:
Yeah yeah yeah

Colin:
but ah it it it was so avoidable the

Russell:
You could have gone to the desk first and then

Colin:
Of course I could have

Russell:
Yeah

Colin:
Yes and been prepared and

Russell:
Did you have any indications of that’s what other people did

Colin:
I.i.11:30
Not on the night no

Russell:
No

Colin:
I mean now I know but ah I think that was the first time that ah that um I’d fucked at a public place mm

Russell:
Did you think of that as a public place

Colin:
I.i.12:00
I didn’t think one way or the other really about that

Russell:
Well you’ve just called it a public place

Colin:
Yes well it’s

Russell:
Do you think of it as a public place

Colin:
but ah it  it it was so avoidable the

Russell:
You could have gone to the desk first and then

Colin:
Of course I could have

Russell:
You could have gone to the desk first and then

Colin:
Of course I could have

Russell:
Did you think of the Suburb A sauna as a public place
Colin:
A public place oh I see I see it as a venue like um and to that extent public
i.ii.12:30
but also it's a specialist venue so to that extent it's not public

Russell:
Right and within the venue are there public and not public areas

Colin:
Oh yes yes there's a sort of a viewing area with television and um and that's a completely public area um there's of course that the sort of dark walkway that you have in so many places and that i.ii.13:00
has one too

Russell:
Is there one [?]

Colin:
It's funny to funny to think of the description of that to do with whether it's public or not it's ah because um I certainly see it as a very much more intimate that any visual commitment any catching of eyes or anything like that in that space is very very different from catching i.ii.13:30
someone's eye in a television area

Russell:

Right

Colin:
Because the television area you could still be catching eye because you think them attractive but you could be catching their eye just in an ordinary social way

Russell:
YOU could be

Colin:
Well one could be

Russell:
Yeah

Colin:
because you're you know there's something silly on that screen or there's or looking for something or anyone
i.ii.14:00
everyone's there I don't I don't see it as a very what I don't like about the television area is you know I don't like watching people watching telly

Russell:
Um recently I was at a place where um ah a young man started talking to me about how hilarious he thought the pornography was because the scene that was being involved was of a man in bed with his wife who i.ii.14:30
had her face pack on for the night and another man and this the husband were meanwhile surreptitiously engaging in an extremely full on sexual tangle and this um young man who was watching the pornography just thought he his term was oh that's hilarious but it it was more that he wanted to start talking to someone about it because he just couldn't believe someone had i.ii.15:00
made a piece of pornography with this scenario but in order to watch it where we were he had to stand on the threshold of a cubicle and there was something quite strange about um in fact it became clear within seconds that he was being extremely direct he just wanted to chat because he genuinely found the whole thing hilarious

Colin:
Yeah

Russell:
and he wasn't really

Colin:
Well also he

Russell:
setting up anything else

Colin:
No he wanted to I mean I think there's i.ii.15:30
no place more lonely than those places if you're not feeling right for it
Russell:
Right

Colin:
Ah and um the relief of just being able to chat with someone and be a human being

Russell:
Yeah

Colin:
I think is immense

Russell:
Yeah yeah well he was I mean he just couldn’t believe even things like that they’d bother to put a face pack on her and you know that there was all of this going on

Colin:
Oh

Russell:
He thought but it was yeah there was something very loud about him it seemed as a result

I.ii.16:00
because he was on the threshold of a cubicle he seemed loud

Colin:
What a threshold of a cubicle cubicle that you were in or

Russell:
No

Colin:
Or

Russell:
No he was

Colin:
cubicle that someone else might have been in that he been with or

Russell:
A cubic

Colin:
I mean what’s wrong about being on the threshold of a cubicle

Russell:
Nothing’s wrong about it

Colin:
Well what’s special about it

Russell:
It was more like that um probably a short time earlier that had been a completely different kind of

I.ii.16:30
place and a short time later it probably was again with other people it’s like

Colin:
What the cubicle or the room it faced onto I mean the cubicle I assume if you were watching television and he was standing in the doorway of a cubicle there were cubicles around the area where the television was showing

Russell:
Yes the television was up high

Colin:
Oh yeah

Russell:
and actually up high in the cubicle so that if one locked the door of the cubicle you could still see the television’s position

Colin:
I.ii.17:00
[unintelligible] position for a television

Russell:
Yeah it’s one of the newer saunas so that people have the options of being in a cubicle where they can still keep viewing the television set

Colin:
While they get on with whatever they want to get on with
Russell: Yeah yeah

Colin: Gee (he laughs a little)

Russell: And so there was something about this um yeah like a border zone like this is a place that could become private and had been almost certainly earlier and would be again at some stage later

Colin: And you feel this boy had not occupied and was not about to occupy that room

Russell: Yeah in those ways that's correct

Colin: Right

Russell: Yeah but that's what was kind of interesting was he didn't care about that and I quite enjoyed that

Colin: Care or even know

Russell: Oh no he knew I'd seen him (laughing a little) operating earlier

Colin: Oh I see oh right

Russell: He knew exactly what what he was doing ah he was just quite clear that if other people wanted to kind of observe shared understandings

Colin: Mm right

Russell: But it also was I think a way in which he established that somehow or other he was
It's funny I don't need pornography anyway I find that ah um I do like pictures of pretty guys like for instance those one of that model that you were pointing out in the

Russell:

Oh

Colin:

little St Kilda publication

Russell:

Yep yep

Colin:

Ah um ah but I guess my memory and my imagination are are more fun than depending oh except there's one or two some

I.iii.00:30

very nice French pornographic films they're much more about the lead up to it and sort of seeing something you know someone's erection behind their pants and

Russell:

Yeah I think um the Cadinot ones a man called Cadinot a director

Colin:

Oh yeah

Russell:

He's done a whole lot in France

Colin:

Has he

Russell:

Mm

Colin:

There's one lovely one about this farm boy who (he laughs a little) who just can't get any time to do his work well everyone you know the village priest and and the other farm boys (I laugh a little) and etcetera all comes around

I.iii.01:00

for his favours and he's gorgeous you know really lovely and ah and it's not this awful
that awful *(he sings a bit of rhythm)* dum da dum dum sort of music going on behind it

**Russell:**

*(laughing a little)* Yes

**Colin:**

Those American porno yes which are so *(an emphatic groan)* ah depressive depressive

**Russell:**

Well it’s like American television isn’t it really *(I laugh a little)*

**Colin:**

I I guess so except yes it’s like it’s like Days Of Our Lives or The Young And The Restless you know no one cracks a smile and there’s don’t ask

L.iii.01:30

anyone how they are because they’ll tell you you know *(he affects an American accent)* oh I went to my psychiatrist this morning and ah we decided that I have this problem ah *(he reverts to his usual voice)* you know who wants to know do you want some more tea

**Russell:**

Yes please can you tell me can you describe the *Suburb* I sauna for me

**Colin:**

Oh yes um *(he pours a cup of tea)* well um best as *(he pours the other cup of tea)* as honestly it’s a

L.iii.02:00

long time since I’ve been there and um

**Russell:**

What you know

**Colin:**

Okay well there’s a downstairs and an upstairs or there was when I was there I’m pretty sure and um upstairs were cubicles and with little tables in them for you know massage tables narrow ah and um which I suppose would pass muster in a police raid or something as massage tables as opposed to something you get off on um the

L.iii.02:30

um I seem to recollect going along a passage and there’s off to the right there’s a steam room and um and the showers and other stuff beyond it somewhere um I that’s about it really I don’t

**Russell:**

What kind of building is it

**Colin:**

It’s an old building I think

L.iii.03:00

and ah and it has that old sort of you know I mean when I went there anyway it’s sort of not new and spruced up looking at all it’s it was it was clean and okay sort of thing but

**Russell:**

Was it purpose built

**Colin:**

I doubt it my feeling was that it was an old building that had been altered to be a sauna

**Russell:**

L.iii.03:30

You said it was clean

**Colin:**

Well it wasn’t dirty as I recollect

**Russell:**

What do you mean

**Colin:**

Using that word a lot um well it was I mean to me it had a the vision you know the vision that was going through my head as I said clean was scrubbed natural timber seats in the in the sauna part

**Russell:**

Oh yeah

**Colin:**

Um um but not not squeaky clean um

L.iii.04:00

specifically not squeaky clean it was not kind of all tiled and all um

**Russell:**

Like hospital clean
Colin: It wasn’t hospital clean at all it was kind of just kept okay and ah and not swanky not um not dolled up very workman-like sort of quality about it

Russell: And you said that you you preferred that

Colin: Yes

Russell: So what were at the risk of repeating yourself then what what did you prefer what were the qualities you found attractive

Colin: The the casual quality of a of a old building [sic] that’s been fitted into I think um as opposed to I mean I think the Suburb A one’s also a building which has been altered to accommodate that or it was anyway

Russell: Yeah

Colin: Um but to me it’s been altered it’s just more (a silence) more locker roomy or something as opposed to sauna-y more sort of metal and tile and um gloss or something ah than there’s a familiarity about the about the the Suburb I one for me it’s only a feeling

Russell: Oh please (I laugh a little) um

Colin: I guess I’ve lived all my life in in houses that I’ve well after I grew up and you know I’ve owned eight houses

Russell: Wow

Colin: Ah this is the eighth so

Russell: Yeah

Colin: Um because I’ve had you know one wherever I’ve been living

Russell: Yeah

Colin: In Melbourne then in Sydney then at least two overseas then back in Melbourne and I had a little holiday house which I sold ah because I didn’t use it and then another house in I always had one house in one part of Melbourne and I’ve owned three different houses in Melbourne in one very early on which I actually never lived in because I immediately got a job in Sydney um and um and ah these other two and they’ve all been old buildings that I’ve altered myself um and so I have um a jaundiced eye when I see other people’s alterations which have have no grace about them at all (I laugh a little) and I guess that’s if that’s if I’m going to use a word that would show a difference between those two venues that would be the word I could use as it’s you feel I suppose with some buildings that they may be altered to be what they are but they it’s been done with a view to that being what they now are with the Suburb A one my feeling is that it could be altered tomorrow into a gym or an office space or something like that I but it’s only again it’s not a it’s not a feeling backed by any of my um quite recently knowledgeable um architectural and building um observation

Russell: Have can I ask you on a s

Colin: I mean because you have that um rare thing of being like a trained and experienced architect and a trained and experienced
actor have you found similar feelings with stage sets

Colin:

That that I um well funnily enough you see in a way okay interesting area stage set sauna

I.iii.08:30

set um ah I've not I've accepted a stage set as home really I think whenever I've worked on it that I can think of there's only one time when I've actually been unhappy about the stage set and that was because there was a door that I had to use a lot and in a special way and it was an extraordinarily difficult door to use

Russell:

I.iii.09:00

Right

Colin:

and I complained to ah to the world famous set designer and I said (I laugh) I think you've made a magnificent set and ah and um

Russell:

the door's got to go (I laugh)

Colin:

And but this this door is fucking awful (he laughs) and he was deeply offended silly fucker anyway um it was the it was er with a production of a well known musical and um

Russell:

Oh right

Colin:

The guy who designed the sets for that they were wonderful sets I thought for our production

Russell:

Yeah

Colin:

but they um I.iii.09:30 they and this guy is a very top designer in England um as is the director like a top director um but ah god he was touchy I suppose one should be flattered in a way you know (putting on a voice) oh there there dear (he reverts to his usual voice) you know it would be not as good a reply as you know how dare you or whatever he said I can't remember what he said what he said (putting on a voice) what's was well

I.iii.10:00

you're just going to have to use it (he reverts to his usual voice) something like that

Russell:

So when you say you've accepted them as home

Colin:

Yes

Russell:

Without going into that

Colin:

Well that's what they are I mean you've been you've been given your script

Russell:

Yeah

Colin:

and you've been given your environment and your job over four weeks is to to familiarise yourself with and accommodate those

I.iii.10:30

what you've been given

Russell:

Right

Colin:

Um and so you're very anxious to make it work I suppose or very anxious is not necessarily the right word predisposed you know there's not necessarily an anxiety about it and so you say well that's my world you know okay um um I mean I've disagreed with certain sets funnily enough two Shakespearean ones when we did ah Romeo and Jul ah when we did um Midsummer

I.iii.11:00
Night’s Dream **overseas** ah the set for that was pathetically inappropriate ah and when we did another of Shakespeare’s plays ah at university at **MUD** um **MUDC** ah sorry not **MUDC** ah we also did a production at university but um **the production** for MTC

**Russell:**

Oh yeah

**Colin:**

Um

**I.iii.11:30**
ah the set was you know all very clever and interesting but not necessarily a very good set to work on

**Russell:**

I heard about it and

**Colin:**

It was a silly production I thought oh you’d expect to see little bunnies’ ears coming up over the top it was

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Colin:**

What [misheard: well it?] didn’t have the darkness or the anything of great interest about it [unintelligible] I felt it’s a pity because there were some good people in it not a bad playwright either *(I laugh a little)*

**Russell:**

**I.iii.12:00**
Um this process of accepting it

**Colin:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

as home of accommodating it it’s interesting you talk about **YOU** accommodating **IT**

**Colin:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

You know sort of funny little old guy and he

**I.iii.13:30**
um he says ah sort of just leans into everyone’s ear and sort of says *(he speaks rapidly)* do you want a massage no suck no fuck he said *(I laugh a little) *(rapidly again)* just a massage *(he slows down again)* and um and various I heard a couple of the sort of rather cute young guys one of them talking to the other and saying he’s really good you know *(I laugh a little)* but ah anyway so I I said oh yeah okay and I I went went along and I mean I still recollect

**I.iii.14:00**
the quite gorgeous feelings that he gave me with this massage

**Russell:**
Oh wow

Colin:

Ah and and how sweet he was that he he didn’t he didn’t um he m he made no power play for emotional space um and ah and yet he

i.ii.14:30

he did want certain things he he wanted to lie down on the thing with me just for a little while and um then he at the end he asked me whether basically whether I wanted to be finished off or not *(I laugh a little)* and um I said yes and ah and I think both of those things he actually wanted to do um

Russell:

And you did this in a

Colin:

In one of the cubicles

Russell:

In a cubicle yeah

Colin:

i.ii.15:00

He went up there and he started massaging me

Russell:

With the door shut

Colin:

And he knew what he was d um I’m not quite sure

Russell:

Yeah

Colin:

Er um I’m not sure of that funny I I think perhaps it wasn’t

Russell:

Right

Colin:

Um

but there’s not that you know that ah horrible mixture of sort of people being on their on their style being you know um style ponies er and that that um oh looking around

i.ii.16:00

you know the the ah ah somewhat desperate looking about but I mean I even find that in some gay bars you know they’re just there’s all that

Russell:

How how do you know it’s desperate what do they do

Colin:

Well it has a desperate look about it

Russell:

Yeah what is that that looking about

Colin:

It’s I guess it’s slightly covert [pronounced like covered]

i.ii.16:28

*(The minidisc fills and the recorder switches itself off. A fresh disc is inserted and the conversation resumes.)*

Russell:

i.ii.00:00

Okay yep I want to I want to come back to um a word you’ve used a few times in different contexts and just ask you about it um and it’s the word it probably the most obvious word in some ways

Colin:

As I recollect

Russell:

No

Colin:

*(laughing a little)* Oh right okay

Russell:

The word feeling

Colin:


Oh yeah

**Russell:**

When you’ve talked about there’s a feeling about these places can you just tell me what you’re talking about when you say there’s a feeling

**Colin:**

A general definition of the word

**Russell:**

Um um not so much a general definition but unpack what you’re talking about for me when you’re talking about a feeling when YOU’RE talking about feeling what are you talking about a state of mind a physical sensation a mixture

**Colin:**

An awareness of presence

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Colin:**

maybe um ah that’s the off the cuff answer ah um a you know a vibe a feeling of of a receiving of a vibe ah it’s a ah one could say

I.iv.01:30

I suppose that a feeling is either something that you receive or that you promote and I suppose it’s a bit of both you receive impressions and you’re you’re fed with something and um oh I think one’s reactions can be can be very visceral you know I mean that that

I.iv.02:00

um I mean you can immediately be moved to tears or you can you can find you’re feeling tight at the back of the jaw and clenching your teeth or you know so um I suppose the feeling eventually shows as symptoms in your own reactions so

I.iv.02:30

if in other words if it’s a if you react in fear it’s not a feeling of fear that’s put that into you it’s it’s the feeling that something is that the situation is such and such and that you um that you are worried by it or that you love it or whatever

**Russell:**

Has it been the case that there’s a consistent feeling so that when you’ve as you’ve gone back there

**Colin:**

I’ve remembered it

**Russell:**

the feeling is

**Colin:**

back again

**Russell:**

recognised you recognise the feeling

**Colin:**

I’ve in

**Russell:**

Or does it change radically from time to time

**Colin:**

I’ve um when I think of the two places

I.iv.03:30

I my mind has as it were a picture a memory of them both as being different and

**Russell:**

Different in the way they appear or different in the way they feel

**Colin:**
Different in the way they feel

Russell:
Right okay

Colin:
Um and I mean they are different in the way they appeal [sic] although they each have a little door in the middle of nowhere and um they’re very

Russell:  
Yeah

Colin:
ah and kind of hidden in that way ah

Russell:
So there are some qualities they share

Colin:
I guess so ah yeah

Russell:
and then within that there are distinct feelings

Colin:
I mean the main quality that they share is me going in

Russell:  
(laughing a little) Yeah fantastic

Colin:
Um and I go in with all my worries and and preconceptions ah and etcetera and um

Russell:  
When you say should

Colin:
Yes well for my own pleasure and good

Russell:
Yeah

Colin:
ah that

Russell:
When you say should

Colin:
No no no no no I see what you’re saying well I can understand that remark and in a way agree with but I suppose um ah

Russell:
the two things that come to mind is as you say it are one should take leaps from time to time and ah also um our own desperation can drive one to take those leaps and ah desperation can be a great teacher at times

Colin:
Um I know that some some of my best work for instance I wouldn’t say has been

Russell:
Do you find that you’ve had any awareness of drawing on your professional skills when you’ve been at a sauna or have you
Colin:

Yeah

Russell:

Somehow the thought that your professional skills are things that aren’t available or it’s just not occurred to you to draw on them or

Colin:

Funnily enough I think of as my skills as a theatre person um as an actor as a director I think it’s slightly different ah but um as an actor I find that I have um we were talking about talents and skills and I believe I have very real talents but I’ve been um I’ve wasted an immense amount of opportunity and ah opportunity in how I’ve developed those talents those skills (his attention shifts to the door of the room) sorry I’m just having a look here (he goes to the door)

Russell:

In case someone’s at the door

Colin:

I don’t know (he opens the door and there’s no one there) no

Sam:

(suddenly coming along the passage towards Colin’s room) Hey Colin

Colin:

Oh it was you hi

Sam:

I’m just going to see what time the buses are going

Colin:

Okay (he shuts the door of the room) um (we hear the front door shut as Sam heads out) um (the phone rings and Colin answers it) hello oh hello

Russell:

(by walking to the door and opens it) I’ll leave the door open so that I can hear if anyone comes to the front door because there’s a sock on the knocker

Russell:

Oh right

Colin:

because the door sometimes bangs at night and the knocker hits the I suppose I could take the sock off but (I laugh a little) I haven’t done it

Russell:

Um

Colin:

By the way if it’s any help to you I’m certainly prepared to meet you again if we need the time because

Russell:

Oh we’ll have another

Colin:

Yeah

Russell:

follow up session anyway and I’ve found what’s what we’ve covered’s really interesting for me I mean there’s been I’ve noticed I’ve recently been listening to some of the very early interviews I did

Colin:

Mm

Russell:

months ago

Colin:

(offering tea) Want some

Russell:
Yeah just a little bit thanks and I've noticed that um that since then there's been certain patterns or tendencies in the way

I.v.01:00
I've been approaching the interviews

Colin:

[unintelligible]

Russell:

and I've kind of broken a lot of that today which I've really enjoyed doing

Colin:

That's good

Russell:

Sort of getting out of getting out of a mould with it and rummaging around a bit more you know um

Colin:

I think particularly for a f

Russell:

and trusting that something will be there

Colin:

I think the first interview has to be a bit of a bus tour anyway you know what I mean and then

Russell:

Well the first interview was quite

Colin:

And then you see what you want to go back and visit

Russell:

The first interview oh with you oh yeah yeah there's

I.v.01:30
I mean I've yeah it is um

Colin:

You're a very comfortable person to talk to

Russell:

Oh that's good (I laugh a little) I'm pleased

Colin:

Well because you're not only I mean an interviewer could be terribly sort of passive and um you know comforting in that way but I don't see you in that way I see you as an actual conversationalist and um and ah

I.v.02:00
that you allow enough room for issues to come up and although they may not be of direct interest to you in the interview I'm sure they flavour it for you and they and you allow that to happen I've just heard the front gate (we hear the front door open) oh no (moving toward the door) that's Sam back it is it's Sam

Russell:

There's one

Sam:

(in the passageway to Colin) I missed the bus I'll get the next one

Colin:

(returning to the table) Oh well okay

Russell:

One of the things I um notice though (Colin gets up and heads back to shut the door of the room) yeah that'd be good

Colin:

Go on

Russell:

I.v.02:30
Um is the skills I have in these situations are very different from the kind of conversational skills that someone say would employ at a bar or somewhere like that and I find that ah and this is all (laughing a little) I'm quite happy this is being taped (Colin laughs) but I I find that um

Colin:

(putting on a voice as though making a public announcement) And I'm here to say that yes yes go on

Russell:

(laughing a little) Yes no but
I find that and I’ve been thinking about this this week because I’ve had to go to some gay venues and be there to distribute surveys to people

Colin: To pick yes er stuff you were talking about before

Russell: Yes this casual work I’ve been doing which isn’t to do with my own research

Colin: Yeah

Russell: And part of what’s occurred is that I’ve been suddenly involved in these fantastically light and bantery conversations

Colin: Yeah

Russell: with people you know just trying to get them to do the survey

Colin: Cajole them yeah

Russell: Yeah and you know most of them have been quite happy to do it but want a little bit of prompting or something like that and I’ve enjoyed that and I’ve enjoyed the wit and the flair but I’ve also noticed as I’ve been at those places that many of the men I’ve approached are men who’ve arrived by themselves and are so grateful

Colin: that someone wants to talk to them

Russell: that someone someon'e’s wanted to talk to them and that they’ve suddenly got a reason for being there

Colin: Yeah

Russell: rather than waiting for something to happen

Colin: That’s

Russell: That they’re quite happy even though they’ve gone to a gay bar to be (laughing a little) filling in a survey for about ten minutes

Colin: Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah

Russell: um because it gives them it immediately anchors them that they belong that somebody wants them there and I’m also aware that I’m thinking that because that’s what I’m imagining I would be feeling

Colin: (laughing a little) Yes

Russell: That if I’d arrived by myself I wouldn’t be able to just sit down and turn to the person next to me and say oh gee the cricket’s (laughing) going pretty [unintelligible]

Colin: Yeah yeah yeah

Russell: you know because I’ve d no interest in the cricket and um and I find that I’m always pleased when conversations do spring up unusually

Colin: Yeah

Russell:
in a place but I’m not in I need a I need a proper purpose or role and I find that if I respond to something
1.v.05:00
like a role I’m given or somebody begin else begins the conversation

Colin:
Yes
Russell:
then that’s okay

Colin:
Yeah
Russell:
One

Colin:
That’s I mean you see how much can you see that coming out at a sauna
Russell:
Well
Colin:
as opposed to a bar
Russell:
I’m thinking entirely of it but I’m just I’m just curious I’m just wondering about how much I want to disclose
1.v.05:30
on record but (we laugh a little)

Colin:
I see
Russell:
Because but I’m thinking of conversations that have happened in saunas

Colin:
Yeah
Russell:
because I I’m a person who is quite happy to be at a sauna (Sam calls out an unintelligible farewell) for anything up to

Colin:
(to Sam) See ya
Russell:
(to Sam) Bye (returning to Colin) anything up to six or seven hours and utter three or four sentences in that time

Colin:
You’re sorry you’re happy to do that
Russell:
Yeah
Colin:
Yeah
Russell:
I’ve I’ve been in that situation more than once and been quite content and
1.v.06:00
to be in a world of silence

Colin:
Yes
Russell:
for a while and I really really love to love that quality on the other hand I’ve been also on occasions found I’ve found that people have wanted to start talking and I’ve suddenly felt this dreary pall come over me about oh I don’t want to be a conversationalist here

Colin:
All right
Russell:
And then there have been
1.v.06:30
some rare occasions where I’ve had the most extraordinary conversations

Colin:
Well isn’t it possible that there are the ones that the dreary pall has come across with um was when someone’s been making conversation because it’s sort of just this very ordinary reason that they you know it’s
their nearest easiest way of touching up
that they'll start a conversation with
someone and that might lead in some sort of
passive way to them

Russell:
It's
Colin:
getting it off

Russell:
Um my experience has been that it's more
afterwards
Colin:
Oh
Russell:
that the conversation has begun

Colin:
Did you feel the earth move stuff yes
[unintelligible]

Russell:
No not that
Colin:
I'm joking I'm joking I'm joking

Russell:
(laughing a little) Not the not that one but it
was more um it'd be things like oh yeah so
what's your name what do you do

Colin:
(laughing a little) Yeah yeah yeah yeah
Russell:
and um
Colin:
And what's your phone number (he laughs)

Russell:
I haven't been asked my phone number

Colin:
Oh

Russell:
People have offered me theirs and I don't
offer mine um but people have offered
me theirs and no one's I'm just trying to
think I can't recall any time when anyone's
specifically asked me oh no I'm telling a lie
of course there is one person who asked for
my number he didn't ask for my number he
asked if he could contact me

Colin:
And you said no

Russell:
which is the same thing um no in his case I
ultimately gave it to him but ah he was
someone

(laughing a little) Not the not that one but it
was more um it'd be things like oh yeah so
what's your name what do you do

Colin:
(laughing a little) Yeah yeah yeah yeah
Russell:
and um
Colin:
And what's your phone number (he laughs)

Russell:
I haven't been asked my phone number
Oh I think I was quite discouraging because I was really hesitant about giving it to him which is another thing for me that sense that I like the sense that my home

Colin:

Yes

Russell:

is a different world

Colin:

Yes

Russell:

from that world ah it it’s more like it gives me more options

Colin:

I agree it’s it’s one of the really in a way dangerous things I don’t mean necessarily fraught with terrible dangers but um of bringing people home

Russell:

Yeah

Colin:

because they know where your home is and they’ll walk to it that’s happened to me twice they’ll they’ll find it again and they’ll knock on the door

Russell:

Right

Colin:

and ah they they’re inadequate people and been interesting what that um lets you in for

Russell:

But one of the other things that interests me is when you talked about how I mean I I got the impression that one of the things that appealed to you about Suburb I was the ways in which it struck you as being home-like

Colin:

Yes

Russell:

in in your sense

Colin:

A certain familiarity about it yeah

Russell:

In your sense of home

Colin:

Yeah

Russell:

And one of the things that interests me is precisely the opposite

Colin:

That it’s it’s unhome-like

Russell:

Yes

Colin:

It’s completely different

Russell:

Yeah I’m I’m very interested and engaged by the fact that I’m at a place which is

Colin:

In a completely foreign environment

Russell:

Yeah and like travelling it’s like when I’m travelling in a foreign country and I find the same kinds of ah irritations and excitements that go with that the sense of this isn’t the way I want it I have to somehow or other tackle this or

Colin:

Yeah

Russell:
this person doesn’t speak my language

**Colin:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

How do I solve this problem

**Colin:**

Yeah yeah

**Russell:**

and get what I want

*10:30*  
or this place is not to my taste but it’s the only place available at the moment so what do I do about that

**Colin:**

Yes I’ve I it’s funny for me um um I have to force myself to stay quiet

*11:00*  
quite often in in rehearsal and things like that I I for a mixture of reasons ah I’m too inclined to want to be the one that says something and um seven times out of ten that’s not a profitable idea it’s better to say nothing and and people eventually come to you and I’m ah I have to be very conscious about that if it’s going to happen I’ve one or two times I’ve consciously done it

*11:30*  
and it’s paid off um and funny enough I’ve just [unintelligible] recollect as you’re talking um there was a bar at up in in Kings Cross um that’s no longer there ah the what was it some Bums Up or something (*I laugh*) [unintelligible] um damn what was it

**Russell:**

Bums Up

**Colin:**

Something like that

**Russell:**

As distinct from Bottoms Up

*12:00*  

**Colin:**

Bottoms Up Bottoms Up

**Russell:**

Because bottoms up’s the drinking phrase

**Colin:**

Yes of course (*we laugh*) (putting on a voice) interesting psychological trip (*reverts to his usual voice*) um yes I think it was the Bottoms Up but um I think that it did have that double meaning it was a well known haunt and and it doesn’t exist anymore but um I remember sitting there and and as I say not being very adept at picking people up

*12:30*  
in bars um I’d bought this book at a bookshop nearby a very good bookshop up there and it was um it was a very funny book and I just decided to buy myself a beer and sit up against the wall where there’s a place you can put your glass and and read the book and um I’d been reading it and I’d be laughing now and again um you know I’d  

*13:00*  
just suddenly something caught my fancy and I’d be pissing myself laughing just for a moment and after a little while someone came up and talked to me because they just really nice young guy and who ah who said I I just had to come and talk to you because you looked so happy (*we laugh*) and um it was a bit of

*13:30*  
a revelation to me that you looked you know that I I just looked content and happy in myself and he wanted to join in on that (*he laughs a little*)

**Russell:**

One of my interviewees talked about searching um some time ago spending time searching for a gay venue where there would be a normal smiling

*14:00*  
face or a something that was normal which was a genuinely happy smiling face

**Colin:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

Something something words to that effect and that most of the time he saw smiles that were like something that was applied like a mask that concealed some other kind of quality
Colin: I've sometimes find that the I've been thinking this recently um that one could be much better company sometimes if one cared less

Russell: (laughing a little) Yes

Colin: You know

Russell: Well that's one of the things that I realise about this young man laughing at the pornography the other night that another thing that made him seem quite independent was he was just enjoying it he was openly enjoying he was uninhibited about an emotional display

Colin: Yeah

Russell: Ah in a place where people had congregated (laughing a little) to organise to have sex here was this uninhibited laugh and of course the implication being that very few if any of the other people in the building

Colin: Yes ah

Russell: were relaxed and laughing

Colin: Yeah exactly

Russell: or happy in some way

Colin: Yeah

Russell: I mean what's your recollection of people in Suburb I and Suburb A

Colin: I agree that they're unless that it's a couple of friends there laughing about stuff or something like that it's ah always been a bit solemn although funnily enough in in the difference I would make is my memory of of Suburb A is that it's solemn my memory of of ah Suburb I is that it's just people getting about what they're doing you know they're there they're and they're observing and they're receptive

Russell: et cetera et cetera but they're not not doing the big smile or anything like that they're just hanging about hanging out and um um you know it's seems to me to be okay you know a good thing

Colin: So when you talk about the kind of sense of style that you're aware of at Suburb A are you talking about people putting energy into being to offering um a solemn persona

Colin: Ah no um ah

Russell: So that rather there being a feeling of solemnity it's more that they make a show of solemnity

Colin: Well

Russell: Or is that not it

Colin: What's what's that nice that ah beaut line out of ah Company ah it was the song where she the

Russell: um um Here's To The Ladies Who Lunch that wonderful song and ah um oh what's it looking not glum looking single syllable word looking something choosing a hat /

1097
laugh a little) um it’s a lovely lovely line Elaine Strich just does it superbly

I.v.17:30

Um ah but um it’s how I like to be with people

Russell:

Yeah

Colin:

and ah ah yeah I suppose I like to I don’t know I’m not quite sure um I find at times that I like to think that I can ah spin a bit of wit along with the next man um and then at times ah I like to think I’m this nice normal

I.v.19:30

you know sane sort of person you know ah and ah ah

Russell:

I I think I might want to finish up in a minute or two

Colin:

Can I ask you just one um really basic piece of information can you tell me when roughly the first time was you

I.v.20:00

to a sauna and when was the mo the last time the most recent time just to get a sense of the frame of this experience

Colin:

Well I think the first I think I think the first time I went into a sauna was in Suburb A in um sorry

I.v.20:30

in um Suburb I um and it would have been sort of around nineteen eighty or something

Russell:

Right

Colin:

maybe

Russell:

Yep

Colin:

Um I don’t think I I don’t think I’ve ever been into a sauna overseas or in or in ah
I.v.21:00
even in Sydney both of which I’ve lived you know I’ve lived overseas for a total of about eleven years on and off two two years at one stage and then um nine years another stage ah Sydney I lived for four years um at the end of the sixties but I didn’t really start to I didn’t really come to accept my
I.v.21:30
I didn’t come to a stage where I would be accept people labelling me which I see as their need um as it as being gay until um must have been about um nineteen eighty something like that and I I remember the specific occasion
I.v.22:00
when when I was you know someone let out that I saw as being young very normal sexually um person and an important friend um eventually asking me a question that I would either have to lie or shut up or tell him the truth and I chose to tell him the truth and I and and being convinced in myself that
I.v.22:30
that I could be ruining a friendship on the spot that was very important to me so it was I really was my heart was beating like that and ah and of course what I found after I had taken this big step was um the look of relief on his face was memorable that at last you know something that he had been pretty aware of anyway could just be you know
I.v.23:00
joked about or whatever we wanted to do
Russell:
Right
Colin:
It was a great gift on his part
Russell:
The most recent time
Colin:
Mm (a silence) be more than two years ago say three or four years ago
Russell:
Yep yep
Colin:
I.v.23:30
But I must try again actually I must I must go over to (I laugh) to ah Suburb I and um and our conversation this time has been very informative for me I mean a lot more informative in a way than some sort of talk with a psychiatrist (I laugh) in that um in that there’s been a very different agenda and um it’s a very pleasant one it’s very
I.v.24:00
it’s ah it’s good (he laughs)
Russell:
Well I’m glad
Colin:
Yeah yeah
Russell:
Okay
Colin:
So I may have more information by the time
Russell:
(I laugh, then) I’m sure you have more information anyway
Colin:
(he laughs, then) Yeah
Russell:
Well we’ll leave it there for now
Colin:
Okay
Russell:
Okay good ta
Colin:
I’ve got your form
I.v.24:21
(I switch off the minidisc recorder)
END OF CONVERSATION
appendix 15: Mark I

The transcript documents a conversation recorded in Mark’s office late on a Friday afternoon. The office was situated at a university campus in Melbourne and while we talked sounds of end-of-week workplace banter permeated the corridors of the building. Only one such episode is noted in the transcript but they occurred frequently. When I arrived, Mark was ready to begin and with few preliminaries I set up the recorder and switched it on.

Russell:

I.i.00:00
Right that means we’re going um one of things I want to kind of ask you to start with but I’ve asked a few people ah is can you remember the first time you ever went to a sauna

Mark:

Yes I can remember the first time that I went to Volcano
I.i.00:30
and I was with my then American boyfriend so it would have been in nineteen eighty-one or possibly early nineteen eighty-two and
I.i.01:00
it freaked me out a bit

Russell:

When you say it was the first time you went to Volcano are you pretty confident then that that was the first time you’d been to a sauna

Mark:

Yes I think that I’m pretty sure that was yes I’m pretty sure that was my first time yeah

Russell:

Was it his the American boyfriend’s

Mark:

His what

Russell:

Was it his first time

Mark:

No no and so he was

I.i.01:30
behaving in ways that um I found quite strange because er I wasn’t only physically um lost in this strange place I was also not um appraised of the sort of protocols and um
I.i.02:00
and behaviours that that took place in a sauna I had absolutely no idea no idea

Russell:

Was it his idea to go

Mark:

I think it might have been I don’t recall exactly

Russell:

Right okay

Mark:

But I think it might have been

Russell:

Did you go in the daytime or the night-time

Mark:

I think it was the evening I’m not altogether clear though

Russell:

Sure

Mark:

It was a long time away
I.i.02:30

Russell:

That’s fine um during the course of this discussion one of the things that ah I’m really interested in is when you have a very strong ah confidence NOW even if it logically doesn’t add up but you feel quite confident about something yes I know that that’s

Mark:

Yeah

Russell:
that’s what I know um and if you don’t

know then that’s no problem

Mark:

Sure

Russell:

Um was it a weekday or a weekend

Mark:

I have no idea I recall though going back subsequently some years later and bumping into someone who I knew socially not sexually who offered me a guided tour

Russell:

I.i.03:30

Right

Mark:

and ah that completely that experience completely changed the way that um I was able to approach saunas from that point on because I actually knew the lie of the land um I’d had a I’d been taken by the hand and led through each episode in the building and um explained

I.i.04:00

ah had explained to me exactly what went on there and so I knew what the rule well I had a much better idea of what the rules of the game were and so um that was really the the ah transformational experience for me the first experience was um quite brief and and frightening

Russell:

I.i.04:30

When you said you freaked out on the first experience um what lead what leads you now to that conclusion like what happened that makes you think that you freaked out

Mark:

Oh

Russell:

What happened for you

Mark:

Ah what happened for me was that let’s see we were we were um in the steam room and um some guy in there started um

I.i.05:00

handling my boyfriend’s genitalia um and that I took great umbrage at that um at the time and couldn’t understand how he could conceive of allowing it to happen but I’d I had no idea that when you go into a steam room whether you’re with your boyfriend or not you leave yourself open to that kind of um

I.i.05:30

ah ah physical interaction with total strangers so um I did I didn’t realise that um that he’d probably been putting out come and get me vibes anyway and um

Russell:

Had you had you been walking around the building with him

Mark:

Um not that I recall no um

I.i.06:00

er he seemed to take charge and I was like a um an Arab wife following up the rear

Russell:

(I laugh a little) Okay um do you have a clear sense that you went into the steam room with him or you bumped into him there

Mark:

Oh no we were we went into the steam room together

Russell:

Right

Mark:

We

I.i.06:30

spent the whole time in there together

Russell:

Right

Mark:

in in Volcano but I wasn’t um emotionally or in any way prepared for um sexual activity that might have moved outside of the two us

Russell:
So what's your sense of how you came to go then? It was it to get a bit of an insight to have a look at this place find out what it was or to go there to actually use it.

Mark:
I think I went along because he wanted to go there. When I went the second time it was to satisfy my own curiosity.

Russell:
But several years lapsed between the two.

Mark:
Yes yeah.

Russell:
Did several years lapse primarily because the first experience had been so problematic.

Mark:
Not ah not fundamentally no um I'd been overseas.

Russell:
Yeah.

Mark:
I.i.07:30
and um so I just hadn't been around.

Russell:
Um the first time I went to Volcano was only about three or four years ago and I'm aware that it's physically altered over the years so what would have been the notable changes between nineteen eighty-one and say the end of the nineteen nineties.

Mark:
Oh er.

Russell:
I.i.08:00
that you're clear about.

Mark:
The major changes have been the addition of the cyber lounge and the ah ground floor bar area. I don't recall them there previously.

Russell:
I.i.08:30
Yeah.

Mark:
Um but.

Russell:
What about the heavy duty area upstairs?

Mark:
I don't remember clearly.

Russell:
Sure but the facilities in the downstairs area the pool.

Mark:
The pool, the wet saunas, the dry sauna, the maze area.

Russell:
I.i.09:00
that's fundamentally unchanged.

Russell:
Right and showers.

Mark:
Showers fundamentally unchanged and the video lounge on the first floor it's fundamentally as it was.

Russell:
Which video lounge.

Mark:
The um ah the sort of sit around and smoke and watch the big screen.

Russell:
Oh Hollywood.

Mark:
Yeah.

Russell:
Right as distinct from the

Mark:

porn lounge

Russell:

Right okay has the porn lounge altered much

Mark:

Not that I can remember

Russell:

Right

I.i.09:30

um how old were you that first time when you went with your boyfriend

Mark:

I was about twenty or twenty-one

Russell:

And he was older

Mark:

Yes he was about twenty-five or twenty-six

Russell:

And much more experienced

I.i.10:00

about such things

Mark:

Oh yeah he was um ah when I reflect on it I think he was probably considerably more experienced in a whole bunch of different sexual arenas that I had no awareness of

Russell:

Right all right I want to go back before that first visit do you have any sense of when or how you

I.i.10:30

became first aware that such places as saunas may exist

Mark:

I don’t remember how or where or when that happened actually oh I do remember and it was when

I.i.11:00

I was in discussion with someone about Bette Midler (I laugh a little) and they explained to me that her career started in gay bathhouses and I had no idea what they were and so I got them to explain to me what’s a gay bathhouse

Russell:

Right that’s identical

I.i.11:30

with me it was the Bette Midler publicity for me

Mark:

Right

Russell:

and I had this image of some big tiled bathroom with her standing in it and all these men and me thinking it must reverberate a lot (we laugh)

Mark:

Yeah hmm

Russell:

What kind of image did you associate with her singing in or performing in a gay bathhouse

I.i.12:00

plumbing (this is a question)

Mark:

No I think um my vision of it was much more um ah like British public baths

Russell:

Oh yeah

Mark:

Like something out of Steaming

Russell:

Yeah yeah

Mark:

Um but maybe that’s just because in some respects I equate Diana Dors with um

I.i.12:30

er Bette Midler
Russell:
Is that because you’d seen the film Deep End

Mark:
I don’t know the film

Russell:
Diana Dors is in it and it’s set in a swimming pool a bath a bath a swimming pool with a bath complex attached to it in London

Mark:
Oh

Russell:
It’s a Skolimowski film Jane Asher

Mark:
Well no I have seen it I thought that that was Steaming but you might be right it might be Deep End I’ve seen Diana Dors as the matron at a British bathhouse in a film

Russell:
She was she was a customer in this bathhouse

Mark:
Ah right

Russell:
with a soccer fantasy

Mark:
No I don’t that doesn’t ring a bell

Russell:
The film is about a young boy and it’s his first job

Mark:
No

Russell:
and he gets quite sexually confused

Mark:
No don’t know that one no I’m thinking of still the film version of Steaming

Russell:
Steaming right how curious

Mark:
Which has her in kind of um a starched uniform

Russell:
How interesting (laughing a little) that she’s done two baths movies (we laugh) I haven’t seen Steaming

Mark:
Well that was my vision

Russell:
Yeah

Mark:
of of what a gay bathhouse was I imagined um older um ah wrinkly um masseurs um brutalising young chaps with um ah towels wrapped around them by brutalising I mean you know with massage

Russell:
Yeah

Mark:
and sort of you know sweaty vinyl benches and um and the whole thing being much more sort of locker room rah rah um jolly hockey sticks and you know men standing around naked in a in a swimming pool tossing a ball between them and nonsense like that

Russell:
Right but that’s not what you found

Mark:
No no no it was um
Russell: Is it fair to say that everything you've just listed is something that was absent

Mark: No the sweaty vinyl benches were there the locker rooms were there the swimming pool the swimming pool was there there wasn't any ball tossing there well there was but of a different variety

Russell: Yeah

Mark: Um no it all just seemed a lot more um er reduced in scale and suburban and rather tacky than I'd imagined but I suppose also I'd been reared on the um the grandeur of of Roman baths and the the mysteries of the hamam and and I had a romanticised view of what um a an aquatic

Russell: gentlemen's leisure centre might be like

Mark: When you say you'd been reared on those can you just give me a bit more information about that how did those um

Russell: Oh they're osmotic myths I think they sort of percolate through classical literature and um

Mark: Is this stuff you were exposed to at school

Russell: I think so yes and I always thought it had a bit of a sexy edge to it

Mark: Yes

Russell: Okay you went back a few years later and bumped into someone there by chance

Mark: Yeah

Russell: who literally led you by the hand

Mark: Yes

Russell: Okay now can you tell me a bit about um first of all that person who you bumped into was that somebody who you already knew was a person who'd gone to places like Volcano or

Mark: No

Russell: Right okay

Mark: Ah well I knew that um I knew this person was gay but I didn't know that he was er that I was likely to bump into him in Volcano but then again I hadn't thought about it either

Russell: Right
Mark:

It hadn’t occurred to me

Russell:

Right had so it’s probably fair to say that in the two visits apart from bumping into him and arriving with your American boyfriend a few years earlier you hadn’t actually encountered anyone you knew or recognised from outside

Mark:

No

Russell:

Okay so you bumped into this um was this person a friend or an acquaintance

Mark:

Um an acquaintance really

Russell:

Yeah okay and do you recall precisely where you bumped into him or how

Mark:

In the locker room and I think my mouth must have fallen open (I laugh) um and we probably simultaneously asked each other what are you doing here but um ah I must have communicated my um er discomfort to him or lack of familiarity because he offered to take me around

Russell:

Right and you had just arrived when you bumped into him

Mark:

Pretty much yes

Russell:

If he was in the locker area had he just arrived or was he leaving or were you not sure

Mark:

Oh I think he was just perambulating through I’m not sure I think it I got the feeling that he’d been there for a while he seemed pretty relaxed

Russell:

Yeah um so he took you through now can you tell me as best you can can you give me an account of that tour

Mark:

No I can’t exactly because I don’t um I don’t recall exactly where we started and exactly where we finished and what order we did things in and also as you’ve pointed out the ah the architectural assemblage there has changed over the years

Russell:

Right and you had just arrived when you bumped into him

Mark:

Pretty much yes

Russell:

If you can’t give me a kind of um a classical linear narrative account is there anything that is there for you like the sound of his voice um a particular moment of commentary of his part a moment where you had a question that you either did or didn’t answer

Mark:

There was a there was the point at which we entered um a space on the ground floor which was very dark and it has a large um padded circular podium in it um and

Russell:

I recall asking him what this was about and he explained to me that it’s where people could um have public sex and others could
join in um that was a bit like a car accident for me (I laugh a little) um

I.i.21:00
in that um I found it fascinating and compelling and at the same time repellent um that’s the nature of disgust I suppose um we’re fascinated by the things that revolt us um but what really ah made it extraordinary for me was that he pointed out that um

I.i.21:30
on a mezzanine level hovering above this circular podium was um and and he took me up there and showed me it was this strange sort of cantilevered viewing area that was hidden behind a screen where in order to see down you actually had to um get on your hands and knees on this padded surface or

I.i.22:00
or um prostrate yourself it was a bit like the um ah um area where women sit in a um orthodox synagogue you know behind the screen

Russell:
Yeah

Mark:
Um but but from there you could look look down I thought it was um

Russell:
Down to what

Mark:
Down to this

Russell:
Yeah

Mark:
public sex area

Russell:
Yeah

Mark:
This gloomy circular platform and um

I.i.22:30
and it fascinated me and um staggered me that this architectural conceit had been designed around the needs of voyeurs that there that it actually

I.i.23:00
threw you into a cer that the activity of watching threw you into a certain position physically

Russell:
Were you training in architecture at that stage

Mark:
Yeah

Russell:
Had you finished your training or were you in the middle of it

Mark:
No I was in the middle of it

Russell:
Right

Mark:
or the early stages

Russell:
Yeah

Mark:
Or no the middle of it middle of it yeah

Russell:
When your friend talked to you about um you s did your friend use the term public sex I mean that’s the term you used

Mark:
I.i.23:30
No um I don’t recall what term he used

Russell:
Right okay but you’re now bringing that term to whatever it was he described

Mark:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
Okay  if if he needed to explain that to you and indeed if you needed to ask that question was that because that area was empty when you were taken there

Mark:
It was at the time  yes

Russell:
Right  okay

Mark:
I.1.24:00
I’d  if I recall correctly there weren’t many clients when I was taken on that tour

Russell:
Do you remember which hand he held your left or your right

Mark:
I don’t recall

Russell:
Did you hold his hand  I.1.24:30
or did he hold yours

Mark:
It was a bit of that  it was a bit like um the um the disco connection  it was like two or three fingers that were just establishing contact in a sort of slight monkey grip version

Russell:
Right

Mark:
I.1.25:00
It connects physically and removes a lot of insecurity  it provides direction but it also um usefully signifies a kind of ownership

Russell:
On whose part

Mark:
Um on the part of the person who’s leading

Russell:
Right

Mark:
I.1.25:30
It’s prob

Russell:
But it wasn’t a clasp as such

Mark:
No no but it it um it gave me the feeling that some sort of proprietorial air was being cast over the fact that we were doing this tour together and he was in charge

Russell:
Did  is that a way of saying that he’d sent it that you were conscious then of him sending a signal or setting up something which told other people hands off

Mark:
Yes

Russell:
Because his hand was on

Mark:
Yes

Russell:
Okay

Mark:
Yeah

Russell:
And that’s something you associate with a disco culture
Mark:
Yep

Russell:
Is that something I mean now you’re clearly aware of that are you a do you think you were aware of that at the time

Mark:
Ah

Russell:
Did you recognise that clasp at the time from disco experiences

Mark:
No I recognise it now but at the time it just made me feel safe

Russell:
All right okay so you felt unsafe in the building

Mark:
Um before I knew the la before I understood it yes

Russell:
Okay now this tour and this understanding because you’ve you’ve been talking about him taking you on a tour of the building and you’ve talked a bit about the architecture but then when I was asking you initially you talked about how you had no understanding of the protocols so it wasn’t so much an lack of understanding of the architecture initially but of something else

Mark:
Well um I found the building very confusing initially because it it is a complete rabbit warren

Russell:
Right

Mark:
and there were I’m pretty sure that in my first experience of it there are major episodes there that I just um I didn’t experience because I didn’t know that they existed

Russell:
Yeah yeah

Mark:
um and

Russell:
I.i.27:30
That’s true of my first visit

Mark:
Yeah I found the complex spatially very confusing um but also part of his tour was um helping me to understand not only what happened but um how situations might be negotiated there

Russell:
Right and did you was your understanding then I.i.28:00
that there were as it were um behaviours appropriate for particular parts of the building and inappropriate for other parts of the building

Mark:
Um I came out of that tour understanding that but um ah prior to that point no I had no idea I I well I wasn’t sure I didn’t know what to do um or I.i.28:30
what one could do in this part or that part

Russell:
What happened after he had completed the tour

Mark:
I’m pretty sure he then let [sic] me to my own devices and I don’t I.i.29:00
remember exactly but ah

Russell:
Do you have a sense of where you parted

Mark:
Back at the locker room

Russell:
Right so there was a sense of completing something

Mark:
Yes yeah it was quite it was it was thorough and we started where we began

Russell:
So you finished where you began

Mark:
Oh er yeah yeah

Russell:
Yeah okay

Mark:
Well that for me was the start in a way

Russell:
Oh right yeah okay so you set off again

Mark:
Mm

Russell:
Did you set off do you think in exactly the way the tour had set off

Mark:
Ah no I don’t think so I think at the start of the tour we might have gone into the I the um café lounge on the first floor and I wasn’t that keen on heading back there I don’t like it much as a space or you know the as you know the ambience in there doesn’t do a lot for me I’m pretty sure I headed back down to the um maze area and fastened upon some poor victim

Russell:
You said you’ve offered similar kinds of tours

Mark:
Mm

Russell:
On about how many occasions since do you think you would have done that

Mark:
It feels like about four times

Russell:
Can you recall the most recent time

Mark:
Yes um I was with a fellow who was on a trade mission here from Taiwan who was just in Melbourne for three or four days and ah we hooked up via the internet and I met him at his hotel we went out and had a nice dinner um he was very engaging company ah we went to a hotel which was a disaster and then

Russell:
Not his hotel

Mark:

Russell:
No no we went to The Star in Hoddle Street which is chopsticks and walking sticks

Mark:
Oh yes (I laugh a little)

Russell:
And that was very ugly because I was the youngest Caucasian there and he was the um ah the sexiest Asian boy there by a long stretch and um so it was a bit uncomfortable for both of us we stayed for one drink um because we were both getting daggers looks from everyone there um and I was actually heading back to his hotel and he asked if there were any um bathhouses in town so I took him to Volcano gave him the guided tour and um we got about half way through it and he just shoved
me inside a cubicle and I think we didn’t bother completing the tour

**Mark:**

I suspect that there was probably a reason why we couldn’t go back to his hotel to have sex. I think he may have had colleagues there or whatever, he didn’t make that clear.

**Russell:**

Yeah um were you giving him the tour because he’d never been to a bathhouse as he called it a bathhouse or you’re calling it that today?

**Mark:**

I don’t remember what he called it.

**Russell:**

That’s all right.

**Mark:**

Um I gave him a tour because um I think probably that was my paternalistic side coming out and also um it’s um well my own experience was that’s a way of of becoming comfortable there.

**Russell:**

How how long ago was this?

**Mark:**

About July last year.

**Russell:**

And it how how did you choose that as being the one one to take him to given that in July last year there were a choice of six saunas in Melbourne?

**Mark:**

Um it was the closest.

**Russell:**

but also um ah oh cos we were passing through the city at that stage but also I wasn’t familiar with the other city-based sauna because that had opened only recently and I hadn’t been there at that stage.

**Russell:**

Yeah it had only been open two or three months.

**Mark:**

by July.

**Russell:**

I hadn’t ain’t ever been there and so I didn’t want to go somewhere where I was going to be nervous and tentative and unsure and confused.

**Russell:**

Right what makes you think you may have been that

**Mark:**

I would have been in a place where um I didn’t know the layout.

**Russell:**

part of part of um being able to operate successfully in a sauna is is um knowing the territory.

**Russell:**

The physical territory.

**Mark:**

Yeah yes.

**Russell:**

For you that’s the case.

**Mark:**
Yeah that's very important

Russell:
And are you confident
that's the case for other people

Mark:
No I just project that onto them

Russell:
Right so you it was I may be asking you things that seem obvious here but it was important for you to be the confident know knowledgeable person

Mark:
Well I was

Russell:
in taking him around

Mark:
I was playing host

Russell:

Yes

Mark:
so I was taking him to remember he didn’t know anything about Melbourne apart from where his hotel was and where the exhibition was being held and um and so I was taking him in hand so to speak

Russell:
Yeah

Mark:
for the evening and showing him a good time

Russell:
Yeah

Mark:
and so it was important for me to be in places that um

Russell:
where I could be confident and familiar

Mark:

Russell:
But are you a regular at The Star

Mark:
I’ve been there a few times previously

Russell:
Oh right right so were you confident and familiar at The Star

Mark:
Um

Russell:
For instance you sounded a little surprised at the fact that you were the youngest Caucasian and that he was the sexiest Asian as you put it

Mark:
Well um I was ah I wasn’t quite prepared for the sort of um hostility that I observed or felt

Russell:
Right

Mark:
And um and my guest for the evening was plainly uncomfortable

Russell:
So was it is it fair to say that that was a place you thought you knew and then it turned out it surprised you in some way

Mark:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
So then you went to another place that you thought you knew

Mark:
Yes
Russell:
And weren't surprised

Mark:
I wasn't so surprised no

Russell:
Right okay were you surprised when he pushed you into a cubicle

Mark:
No I was kind of relieved actually I was wondering when he'd get around to it

Russell:
Right okay but that was up to him

Mark:
Um oh he made that move at that point but um I was er experiencing a bit of a countdown myself at the time and

_\text{i.i.38:30}_

um (\textit{I laugh a little}) weighing up my options

Russell:
Did you arrive by cab

Mark:
No no I drove

Russell:
Right where did you park

Mark:
In the street outside

Russell:
Directly out in front

Mark:
Um not too far from the front door I'm pretty sure it was on the main street that we parked

Russell:
Are you aware there's a car park behind Volcano a very large one

Mark:
Oh I've

_\text{i.i.39:00}_

um I know that but I never use it um

Russell:
Do you know why you don't use it

Mark:
I recall hearing a customer there complaining about having his car broken into

Russell:
Right

Mark:
in that car park and I think that that's put me off ever using it

Russell:
Yeah

Mark:
But for the most part though when I've um used

_\text{i.i.39:30}_

Volcano I've been on foot I haven't had occasion to park there that often

Russell:
You hadn't been to the new sauna at that stage have you been since

Mark:
Yes yes I have twice

Russell:
Twice do you have a strong sense

_\text{i.i.40:00}_

then because that's going to be fairly recent of what the first visit to that sauna was like

Mark:
Yes yeah I went with my current boyfriend who took me by the hand and showed me around

Russell:
He'd been there

Mark:
Mark: Yeah um it’s the first time since my very very initial visit to Volcano that I’ve ever been back to a sauna with my boyfriend.

Russell: Right

Mark: And it was a very different experience this time.

Russell: Was it his suggestion to go?

Mark: (a silence) I don’t remember.

Russell: Fine how was it different?

Mark: It was different because I know and understand and am familiar with sauna protocols um and I know now also how within that environment to exercise aegis over or a um sense of proprietorship over another person how to express that to other clients and so um I was quite comfortable with it that time.

Russell: Um you’ve just said something that um there

Mark: Might not be much in it but I want to open it up if I can you just talked about how now you’re familiar with sauna protocols but previously you used the term in the singular you talked about protocol now you’re talking about protocols in the plural can you just tell me a little bit about that.

Mark: Um

Russell: I suppose I was using um it singularly to describe a a um er a bunch of um a collection of actions and activities but they are indeed manifold there you know there’s a whole bunch of things from how er you know from collecting your key and towel to how it is that you change at your locker um how you communicate visually with other people when you’re on the prowl how you get someone to um politely take their hand off you if you don’t want it there all of those sorts of things they’re they’re they are protocols but they form they fall under the um sort of generalised protocol of sauna activity.

Russell: So is this something this this kind of protocol it’s something you’ve been explicitly taught is that correct.

Mark: Ah it’s a combination of being taught or having things explained to me and observing things um observing others and observing the people that I’ve been with.

Russell: So can you tell me then how YOU get changed at your locker in terms of the protocol like what do you do or what is it that you ought to do because protocol seems to imply some sort of should and shouldn’t about it is that fair.

Mark: Yeah yes um ah it may the these might be a bizarre set of rituals that I’ve concocted merely for my own consumption.

Russell: Oh I’m if that’s the case.

Mark:
Russell: that's no problem for me

Mark: Yeah yeah

Russell: I just would like to hear them

Mark: Um

Russell: A couple of other if I can just let you know a couple of other interviewees have made um ah quite have specified um to me in detail habitual behaviours they have at their locker

Mark: Yeah um

Russell: And

Mark: okay

Russell: And you've liv and you have

Mark: Yeah um ah there's only one um there's only one coat hanger usually and so um

Russell: And in each case I haven't asked them that I I have asked some other people about it but these couple that I'm thinking of have offered it up and you've now raised it as an area where there is a a protocol

Mark: Yeah um ah there's only one um there's only one coat hanger usually and so um

Russell: and as well peeling the T-shirt off is quite important you take a step away from your locker and and

Mark: Yeah yeah yes and um peel it off quite slowly
Russell: Do you tend to wait for an audience
Mark: No not necessarily but I
Russell: So if there’s no one around at all do you still go through the same procedure
Mark: Yeah because actually
Yeah because actually you never know who might be looking anyway especially when you’ve got a T-shirt over your face
Russell: Right okay so you peel it off slowly does that mean it comes off inside out
Mark: Yeah
Russell: Okay Have you stepped back towards the locker or are you still that step back while you fuss around or is that not important
Mark: It’s not that important
Russell: Okay then what
Mark: Keys and well keys and wallet and um watch go inside the shoes
Russell: Right but this presumably is before the pants have take have been taken off or do you
Mark: Yeah oh I just fart around in getting all of those things organised yeah
Russell: All right okay oh but I mean the reason I ask the question is do you do it while you’re in your underpants or do you do it before you’ve taken the trousers off to reveal your underpants
Mark: Um I tend to empty my pockets take my trousers off but then the activity of of setting up the inside of my locker’s done in my underpants
Russell:  
I.i.50:30  
What about your watch do you take that off at the same time as you empty your pockets

Mark:  
Don’t recall

Russell:  
Right okay so it isn’t so consciously cultivated at that level

Mark:  
No

Russell:  
Right okay there’s a certain amount of um well it’s hard to tell I suppose whether it’s spontaneity or automatic behaviour

Mark:  
It’s more automatic I suspect

Russell:  
Right okay why do you suspect that

Mark:  
Um

I.i.51:00  
because most of my dressing and undressing rituals are highly regularised but automatic

Russell:  
Is that regardless of where you are whether you’re at a sauna or whether you’re at home

Mark:  
That’s right

Russell:  
Right okay but is it fair to say that the format of your undressing rituals at the sauna is different

I.i.51:30  
from your undressing rituals at home

Mark:  
Yes

Russell:  
Sorry I’ve used the word rituals is that a word you use to describe it or have I just introduced that

Mark:  
Oh um if I haven’t if if it’s a word that I haven’t used um ah that doesn’t make it any less relevant it is a ritual or it has aspects of ritualistic behaviour

Russell:  
Okay well we haven’t got beyond the underwear you’re still you’re still in your underwear

Mark:  
I used to

I.i.52:00  
then wrap the towel around me and pull my underpants down but now I don’t care anymore and um and I’ve moved beyond that sort of um ah swimming pool locker room um shyness so now um I just almost defiantly ah drop my drawers and um pick ‘em up

I.i.52:30  
with my big toe and um fling them in the locker wrap the towel around me stick the key around my ankle and head off

Russell:  
Always around your ankle

Mark:  
No I used to put it around my wrist and then I saw some people with it up around their forearm which looked a bit less nancy (I laugh) and um ah and then um

I.i.53:00  
I don’t recall exactly but I was with someone one time who had their key around their key [sic] and that I thought was a very good solution

Russell:  
Okay how do you know it’s a bit less nancy as you put it to have it round the forearm rather than the wrist

Mark:  
Well if you’re wearing nothing at all except for a jingling um bracelet and a towel that strikes
me as being a bit nancy but um but wearing it around the um the upper arm also refers to um that it makes cross reference to the sort of arm bands that um ah leather queens wear

**Russell:**

Ah yeah

**Mark:**

And so it refers to that sort of that um more butch mode of dress

**Russell:**

And what about the ankle then

**Mark:**

Well it’s a it almost disappears there

**Russell:**

What’s um you said that was a good solution um a solution to what

**Mark:**

What to do with your key

**Russell:**

Why you you strike that so that’s a problem

**Mark:**

Um

well the wrist solution has a certain for me has a certain symbolic um ah um set of reference attached to it which are [sic] undesirable the um

**Russell:**

Undesirable

**Mark:**

In that um I don’t want to um portray myself

**Russell:**

You wear a watch on your left wrist

**Mark:**

Mm
Was that the preferred wrist for your key when it was on the wrist

Mark:
Yes

Russell:
And on which ankle do you have a preference for ankle then

Mark:
I'm not that I'm aware of

Russell:
Right

Mark:
But it probably generally goes on the same one I'd have to go through the physical motions to find out which

Russell:
What leads you to think it probably goes on the same one

Mark:
Because I tend to deal with robing and disrobing in an automatic way

Russell:
Right okay yeah

Mark:
An un quite unconscious way

Russell:
(laughing a little) I don't know what that means at this stage

Mark:
(laughing a little) It's an interesting concept but I'd like to know a bit more suggestive modesty

Russell:
Mm in that um when you pass the towel around um and you have the overlap

Mark:
Yes
to tuck in with the overlap of the length of cloth which is the overlap you double that back

Russell:
Yes
Mark:
and you tuck it in so that it actually coincides with your groin

Russell:
Right so it has that vaguely ancient Egyptian look about it

Mark:
Yeah yes
Russell:
Okay
Mark:
Yeah you end up with a box pleat coming right down where your sporran’d be

Russell:
Right
Mark:
So there’s no way
Russell:
So you wear it symmetrically
Mark:

Ah I’ve read somewhere that geishas um in the traditional sense when geishas were involved in offering erotic pleasure to clients um that the geisha would rarely in fact take any clothes off but that those

heavy and elaborate silk constructions are actually designed with a whole series of apertures and access points is is this this is what’s immediately come to mind to me when you’re describing the towel do you recognise that as a similar principle

Mark:
Um it’s easy to get under but I take
Russell:
Even as it offers several layers
Mark:
Yeah yes
Russell:
Yeah
Mark:
But but um but because um it’s been folded back into a box pleat the

actual area the physical area of overlap is not very much so it’s really easy to get your hand in there

Russell:
Right
Mark:
But you can walk around with a boner and no one can tell
Russell:
Now if you were taught this at boarding school were you taught this by someone you had erotic entanglements with
Mark:
No
Russell:
Right okay um if you were taught this at boarding school how swiftly
Mark: I.i.62:30
do you think you adopted it when

Mark: It’s the way that I’ve always worn my towel ever since

Russell: Right whether you’re in [a] sauna or not

Mark: Um it’s the way when I think about wrapping a towel around me it’s what I do

Russell: Right when when you um go into a steam room do you wear your towel

Mark: No

Russell: Is that always the case

Mark: Sometimes I’ll wear it around my neck but I don’t wear it around my body

Russell: That won’t vary from sauna to sauna

Mark: No in in recent years um I’ve tended to leave my towel outside

Russell: L.i.63:30 That first time you went and you saw someone fondling your boyfriend’s genitals were you wearing a towel

Mark: Yes

Russell: Right so some time after that came the time when you took your towel off to be in a steam room

Mark: Yes

Russell: during or after it

Mark:
Before

Russell:

Right okay

Mark:

My boyfriend and I went out dancing at Freakazoid all night was it there we’d been out dancing all night somewhere and we were completely putrid and we wanted to we’d made arrangements to go on the march for reconciliation and there was a four hour window between lurching out of

I.i.65:30

the nightclub and the start of the march for reconciliation oh we’d been at that’s right it was at ah the Redemption party

Russell:

Right

Mark:

Yeah um and so um we went to Squirt and had a nice sauna and shower and spa bath and freshened up and had a

I.i.66:00

snog in one of the cubicles and

Russell:

With each other

Mark:

Mm and then freshened up and went on the march (a silence, then) no that’s not the last time the last time was the night before I left for overseas

I.i.66:30

[...] and um I booked the sling room at Volcano because we’d always been um laughing and joking with each other about sling experiences etcetera and so um as a um

I.i.67:00

as a way of um celebrating a last sexy night before I disappeared over overseas for three weeks we went to Volcano and booked this room and it was a very different experience actually because when you book a room they don’t give you a locker they give you the keys to the room and the room has lockers in it so you walk through um a part of the um

I.i.67:30

ah sauna complex with everyone else wearing towels and you’re fully clothed in this case carrying a bag full of sex toys um and yeah so we had a night sort of in and out of the the sling room

Russell:

You said THE sling room

Mark:

Well I’m assuming that it’s the only one but there I think ah there’re about

I.i.68:00

four six maybe eight um rentable rooms up on the top floor in the heavy duty area which have different kinds of equipment in them

Russell:

Can you describe the interior of this room to me

Mark:

Um yes across um it’s roughly square square in plan and across half of it there’s um an area raised up on

I.i.68:30

a rostrum about half a metre and there’s over that area a um heavy timber frame um rectangular with um a leather sling suspended from it by chains um on one of the adjacent walls was a mirror

I.i.69:00

and there are two lockers and a chair located in the flat floor area of the room

Russell:

This raised area is it possible to walk entirely around it

Mark:

No it [unintelligible]

Russell:

or does it join one of the walls

Mark:

It goes from wall to wall to wall

Russell:

So it’s um

Mark:

Consumes half of the floor space
Mark:

So it engages with three of the walls

Russell:

Right and the sling what's its orientation in terms of the door

Mark:

Um it ah um at the usable end of the sling is back towards the door or the um ah standing area but in fact it's a it's a cow of a design because um ah the sling is positioned too far from the standing area to be able to stand up and fuck the person in the sling

I.i.70:00

Um but the height of the sling and the position of this platform um is such that it's quite awkward and uncomfortable to do it kneeling down so I think that you know the basic ergonomics of the set up need a bit of revisiting

Russell:

That is if they've been designed for fucking

Mark:

Well that's true maybe it was a fist fucking sling room that we were in

I.i.70:30

but I

Russell:

It sounds to me that the ergonomics would be appropriate

Mark:

For fisting

Russell:

for fist fuck

Mark:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

Does that make sense

Mark:

Yes it does now actually that you point that out well maybe there's a a sling in another room which is more appropriately set up for fucking

Russell:

Or or maybe not (I laugh a little)

Mark:

Maybe not

Russell:

Um I some examiners will be reading this material at some stage and it's quite possible that they have no idea what is meant by a sling

I.i.71:00

Mark:

Okay

Russell:

Can you offer what your description is of perhaps not slings generally but what this sling was you said it was suspended by chains and it was leather

Mark:

Yeah um it's a a um rectangular rectangular kind of um ah cross between a hammock and a platform really um it's basically a um suspended surface upon which you recline um in such a

Russell:

Is it pliable

Mark:

It it is

Russell:

or is it rigid

Mark:

It it's it's firm but pliable

Russell:
Yep

Mark:

Um it’s got a head cushion of sorts at one end um and your butt hangs out over

the other end um and the position of the four chains upon which it’s suspended is such so that um you can grip um the chains at one end with your hands and have your legs um ah physically attached to if you want to um the chains at the other end so your legs are up in the air

and your bum’s hanging over the edge

Russell:

And you’re swinging slightly

Mark:

Yeah yes the idea being that that um ah when you are um bottoming or submitting to um sexual penetration um you are um what’s the word supine

Russell:

(laughing a little) Yeah that’ll do

Mark:

Supine and suspended um ah so that um ah

the person who’s sexually penetrating you can um swing you backwards and forwards and um ah control the penetrative act in that manner you’re rendered completely submissive um not inactive but submissive in a sling

Russell:

Did this room have a ceiling

Mark:

No oh

the ceiling floated above it was sus suspended above all of the cubicles in that area

Russell:

So the walls didn’t go up to the ceiling

Mark:

That’s correct

Russell:

All right did um that means sound could come in and go out

Mark:

Yeah

Russell:

Were you conscious of that

Mark:

Um conscious of it but it didn’t bother me I’ve also in recent years gotten over being scared of making noises in a sauna given

that I’ve derived so much pleasure and entertainment from other people’s noises there over the years

Russell:

Right but initially you were scared of making noises in a sauna

Mark:

Oh yeah yes I was a nervous nellie mm yeah

Russell:

So that was more an issue of personal fear rather than of protocol

Mark:

Mm yes

Russell:

Right

Mark:

Not wanting to make waves

Russell:

Um

can we stop there for a moment while I change the

Mark:

Sure yeah
appendix 15: Mark I

Russell:
Yeah ta

I.i.74:38
(The recorder is switched off and a fresh disc is inserted. We resume almost immediately.)

I.i.00:00
Um of the saunas in Melbourne I want to change the topic a bit um of the saunas in Melbourne is there a specific kind of place in one of them that you really enjoy that you're strongly attracted to that if you went to that sauna you know that that would be a major attraction for you

Mark:
I don't know about attraction I have um lingering fondness for

I.i.01:00
a cop er er a couple of spaces

Russell:
Yeah

Mark:
which um er which it probably has to do with um being associated with good experiences um

Russell:
Can you tell me about one of those pl did you say places or spaces

Mark:
It's a particular place in a space

Russell:

I.i.01:30
Yeah

Mark:
Um adjacent to the big flat podium in Volcano is a sort of anteroom where you emerge from one part of a particularly dark part of the maze there

I.i.02:00
and there's a bit of a chamber and it's still extremely dark you actually can't see from one end of it to the other but there's a point at which

Russell:
This is the one that has a slight um involves a right angle turn it

Mark:
Yeah yes

Russell:
Yeah

Mark:
Yeah um so the back end of it which leads back into the maze is very dark

Russell:
Yes

Mark:
but at the end where it gives

I.i.02:30
out onto the big circular platform there's or there has been at times a very small beam of light that physically enters through that opening and it's possible to situate yourself in that doorway so that that beam of light just falls across your body in a certain way

Russell:
What is that certain

I.i.03:00
way

Mark:
Um it just runs across runs across the chest and depending where you put your arm it might catch a bicep or something like that

Russell:
So you've done that

Mark:
Oh yeah I've I've spent many a conscious five minute spell there just arranging myself in that little beam of light I see it as a very sort of um

I.i.03:30
it's very Fassbinder (I laugh a little) it's very Querelle

Russell:
Mark:
If you recall Querelle he used a lot of

Russell:
Yes

Mark:
quite narrow beams of light falling across the face falling across the body and I like that space for the mystery at one end um the nervousness attached to the big podium area and the lingering space in between where you can

Russell:
arrange some fantasy of your own body

Mark:
Have you found that that's been a um place that then you can lead to that has led to some sort of seduction or is when you talk about a fantasy of your own body has it been more like a

Russell:
um an autoerotic behaviour

Mark:
Um I don’t it it hasn’t even been erotic well not sexual no it's been erotic but um and it’s been it’s been consciously deploying myself in a way that

Russell:
was that something you played with when you were playing in the sling room

Mark:
Um a little it wasn’t a big deal

Russell:
Have the mirror rooms at Volcano interested you

Mark:
Um later that evening

Russell:

Oh right

Mark:

The sling evening we ended up fucking in the mirror room um and I found it actually a bit overwhelming um and

Russell:

It didn’t occur to you to turn the lights down in that room

Mark:

No because it wasn’t about that it was about being in the mirror room but I found that the sort of level of stimulus just yeah quite overwhelming it was um also um I didn’t want to see that much of myself (I laugh a little) there’s rather more of me than I anticipated one of the hazards about getting middle aged and fat is you know seeing yourself reflected three hundred fold in the mirror room and um ah so every extra pound gets replicated

Russell:

This is interesting because it seems to contrast with your carefree behaviour at the lockers

Mark:

Yeah

Russell:

where you said now you don’t care

Mark:

But there’s no mirror there and so I can imagine in my own mind that I look sexy you can’t actually escape in the mirror room (I laugh a little) the reality the harsh reality is jiggling all around you

Russell:

(laughing a little) Right all right um

Mark:

And that’s why for instance also that little slither of light falling across the body in that interstitial space can allow you to feel sexy because you can illuminate the parts of yourself that you feel might be desirable and there’s actually no mirror for you to be able to tell whether or not it works it just feels like you’re sexy whereas in the mirror room you can’t escape the fact that um that sex is actually kind of awkward and often ugly and um not necessarily very sexy to look at

Russell:

Right all right um

Mark:

I want to ask you um I want to use a series of terms and just I don’t want a kind of um so much an explanation as just a simple response for them they’d be very easy to theorise and I’d rather more a sense of what your what your gut reaction is about them

Russell:

I want to ask you um I want to use a series of terms and just I don’t want a kind of um so much an explanation as just a simple response for them they’d be very easy to theorise and I’d rather more a sense of what your what your gut reaction is about them

Russell:

Do you tend to think of um the sauna as being a public place or a private place

Mark:

Private

Russell:

Do you tend to think of some parts of the sauna being more public and less private than others

Mark:

Yes

Russell:

Do you tend to think of the sauna as a gay place

Mark:

Um yes and no um

Russell:

Without kind of arguing it
Yeah

**Russell:**
can you just give me a bit of a just a simple kind of chunk

**Mark:**
Um mainly

**Russell:**
Mainly gay but there’s something that isn’t can you tell me what that is

**Mark:**
Ah it’s people who don’t think of themselves as gay but have same but have sex with other men

**Russell:**

I.ii.11:00
Like men in jails say or

**Mark:**
Yeah or men yeah in mainly heterosexual relationships

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Mark:**
who um ah go to the sauna and have a sexual experience and then kind of shower it away and go home

**Russell:**
Do you think of those men as being closeted

**Mark:**
Mm

**Russell:**
Have you met men there who you’ve not thought of as closeted who have sex

I.ii.11:30
with other men but who aren’t gay

**Mark:**
No

**Russell:**

I.ii.11:30
All right

**Mark:**
because I don’t

**Russell:**
That doesn’t make sense

**Mark:**
I don’t know what you mean yeah

**Russell:**
Yeah okay that’s all right do you tend to become more conscious of sexuality or gender when you’re at the sauna

**Mark:**
Sexuality

**Russell:**

I.ii.12:00
So when you talk about people being a nellie queen is that a comment on gender or a comment on sexuality

**Mark:**
Sexuality

**Russell:**
Right

**Mark:**
The expression of one’s sexuality

**Russell:**
Right so they’re all men

**Mark:**
More or less

**Russell:**
(I laugh a little) Can you tell me a bit about the less

**Mark:**
Um ah some some are girlie men and um some are blokey men and

I.ii.12:30
some are try hard men  um

**Russell:**

Can you tell me what a try hard man is

**Mark:**

Ah

**Russell:**

Or how you know a try hard man when you see one or when you encounter one it might not be visual

**Mark:**

Um they tend to  um ah they tend to try and remain aloof  um

**I.i.13:00**

they  they tend towards the statuesque in their deportment um and um they never kiss *(I laugh a little, then sigh once)  (a silence)*

it’s as if they’re  they’re  they’ve got some um

**I.i.13:30**

notion of  of um maleness that is under threat in a male to male sex environment and so they  they um cling on to um vestiges of  or um some kind of imagined manhood in that environment

**Russell:**

**I.i.14:00**

When you go to a sauna which of these men are you

**Mark:**

Ah

**Russell:**

Or are you something different again

**Mark:**

I think I’m something different again because now when I go to a sauna I go with my partner and that’s something that’s simply to do with

**I.i.14:30**

indulgence on our part because we can in a sauna do stuff that we can’t do at home

**Russell:**

**I.i.15:00**

does that apply now when you go with your partner

**Mark:**

No

**Russell:**

No

**Mark:**

No

**Russell:**

That was a previous

**Mark:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

kind of

**Mark:**

When I was going to saunas to find sex or have sex or indeed even sometimes when I wasn’t because there are occasions when I’ve gone to the sauna basically to relax to have a sauna *(I laugh a little)* and a spa and a swim

**Russell:**

**I.i.15:30**

When you say to have sex you mean sex with other people because you and your partner may have sex

**Mark:**

Oh

**Russell:**

or whatever

**Mark:**

Yeah  yes  um yeah  well to find sex
Mark: Previously I used to go to saunas to find sex um but ah but now I go there to have sex with my partner

Russell: Or you just simply go with your partner and whatever happens

Mark: Yeah yeah

Russell: So you do you need to portray anything when you go now

Mark: Now no oh yes actually ah there is I need to portray that I’m with this man and we’re at the sauna together and we’re only interested in each other

Russell: How do you do that

Mark: Um basically by

Russell: If I can ask sorry before we get into the I asked a general question the last time you went with your partner and you were away from the room that you’d booked privately

Mark: Yeah

Russell: how did you can you recall specifically a moment when you are aware of portraying that

Mark: No specific one moment no um but I was aware of the need to portray some sense of proprietorship and so it was done mostly through touching through linking fingers or through being close physically to each other um or indeed um we um we ended up having sex in the steam room um but fended off interference or others joining in basically through I think the connectedness of what was going on between us

Russell: Um which part of the steam room because that steam room has distinct parts to it

Mark: Yeah um the low tiled platform in the er that that’s sort of adjacent to the glass block wall

Russell: Where the light comes through

Mark: Yeah

Russell: Right so you’re in the lit area

Mark: Yeah

Russell: Or the relatively lit area and when you say um did you actually have to physically fend people off

Mark: Um no but um but there were other people in the room at the time

Russell: Was that a private moment or a public one for you and your partner

Mark:
Um

Russell:
from your persp from

Mark:
It was both

Russell:
You can only speak for yourself

Mark:
Yeah it well it was both it was kind of it it was interesting it’s the first time that we’ve had um sex in a public place and we knew that what we were doing was um in the field of vision of other people but it was also private

I.ii.19:00
in that we were what we were doing was um ah very intense and between us two and something that we would take from that experience and and share with one another again and it was something special that we were doing something special that was happening to us um and something

I.ii.19:30
um which as it turns out um we both enjoyed a lot so it was very private in that regard

Russell:
The other men around did they kind of blur into some sort of anonymous audience

Mark:
They were anonymous I don’t know who they are I couldn’t recognise

Russell:
any of them

Mark:
No

Russell:
Were you

I.ii.20:00
were they an an audience

Mark:
Um I think a couple of them were masturbating whilst they were watching well

whilst they were there so I’m assuming they are watching

Russell:
Did did you have a sense that you were performing in part for them or that it just so happened that they were in a position where they could watch

Mark:
I think more well it

Russell:
I.ii.20:30
Perhaps let me put the question another way if they hadn’t been there watching do you have any certainty about how different the experience would have been

Mark:
I think probably we still would have had sex in there because it had that element of that sort of little frisson of danger that anyone might have walked in at any stage

Russell:
Right so that sense of being in a public place was definitely part of it

Mark:
Yes yes

Russell:
But of having a private moment in a public place

Mark:
Mm

I.ii.21:00
my

Russell:
Have you and your partner ever kissed in a public place like um um a city street or a big shop or something like that

Mark:
Yeah and we quite often hold hands

Russell:
Yeah
Mark:

when we’re walking around

Russell:

All right

Mark:

Um and we’re mm

I’m quite relaxed about displays public displays of affection um my boyfriend I suspect a little less so but he likes it so he’s wrapping his head around it

Russell:

Is it more the case that you initiate that then

Mark:

I tend to

Russell:

Yeah did you initiate the incident in the stream room

Mark:

No I didn’t

no my boyfriend whispered to me fuck me I said here he said yeah so we did a silence quite variously and for some time he ["it"] was pretty full on and

only recently he told me that he really liked it so um I was [unintelligible]

Russell:

You hadn’t discussed it at the time then

Mark:

(this is a question) Hmm

Russell:

You hadn’t discussed it at the time

Mark:

No no and I wasn’t sure whether whether he was enjoying it or going along with it but um he ah confessed to me recently

that um he’d shocked himself by really enjoying the fact that it was public

Russell:

I’m near the end (I laugh a little) what’s the most surprising thing you’ve witnessed in a sauna in Melbourne

Mark:

(a silence) I’ve seen a lot of weird things

the weirdest (he sighs) the weirdest thing that ever happened I didn’t actually see but that just had to do with the sort of

Russell:

That’s fine

Mark:

The nature of the experience

Russell:

Well witnessing’s you know all sorts of things

yeah go on

Mark:

Um I was in a cubicle at downstairs in the maze at Volcano and I was with a fellow who really loved eating arse and he I was on all fours and he sort of had my head shoved in a corner of the cubicle and he was munching away on my arsehole whilst I was beating off

and um he really had his tongue buried in me and um I heard him making all these noises as I was cumming and um I sort of fell in a heap after I came

and then swung around to find him with handfuls of um ah paper from out of the dispenser madly wiping the vinyl um mattress

and then the stench hit me and I said to him you filthy bastard you’ve taken a dump while you’ve been eating me out and he said yep and it felt great so he’d um he’d um ah

had his great sexual moment um whilst simultaneously cumming and shitting whilst
he had his tongue buried in my bum and whilst I was cumming which probably made

**Russell:**

(A workplace conversation suddenly begins in the corridor on the other side of the door. I laugh a little.) We won’t worry about that

**Mark:**

Um I mean it probably makes certain kind of sense but um but that was my first um my first encounter with someone for whom the actual um physical activity of taking a dump was sexual and that surprised me

**Russell:**

I.ii.27:00

Yeah I don’t know how I’d respond to that

**Mark:**

Oh I kind of laughed it off at the time and then told as many people as I could (he puts on a voice) you’ll never guess what happened to me

**Russell:**

Did you tell as many people as you could

**Mark:**

I think I told quite a few yes

**Russell:**

When you say as many as you could

**Mark:**

Oh well

**Russell:**

you don’t mean like you stopped people on trams or (I laugh a little)

**Mark:**

No no no

**Russell:**

No so who did you tell

**Mark:**

Um I.ii.28:00

oh friends people that I lived with

**Russell:**

Who didn’t you tell

**Mark:**

Um people on trams (I laugh a little) colleagues at work

**Russell:**

Right

**Mark:**

I just um ah I found it quite shocking in a way probably less so now I.ii.28:30

but this was a couple of years ago

**Russell:**

Yeah yeah (a silence) if if there were something that you could physically alter at a sauna in Melbourne at a particular sauna in Melbourne what would it be

**Mark:**

I.ii.29:00

(a silence) I think I’d do a John I.ii.29:30

Truscott (I laugh a little) and put black glass on the ceiling at Volcano over the cubicles that are on the middle floor adjacent to the bunk room there’s a run of a little corridor with I think three cubicles on one side and four cubicles on the other and there’s usually some quite heavy sex that goes on in there I.ii.30:00

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Mark:**

They’re great cubicles they’re fantastic

**Russell:**

Yeah when you say heavy it do you get that impression because um you’re very conscious of noise coming from them
Mark:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
Yeah so am I that’s quite interesting

Mark:
Yeah

Russell:
Until you said that I hadn’t realised that but I always hear sex there whereas

Mark:
Yeah

Russell:
other other parts of the building doors will be locked but you might not hear anything

Mark:
That’s right no you hear you get good noisy sex there but the trouble is because the walls um ah drop below the ceilings

Russell:
if you actually um stand up on um er your um bench bed thing and peer over the top you get silhouetted out against the ceiling and people know that you’re looking

Russell:
And so the idea of the black glass would be to enable looking

Mark:
You could yeah yes

Russell:
without

Mark:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
All right

Mark:
You’d see a certain amount to go with the acoustic

Russell:
All right

Mark:
entertainment

Russell:
on quite a few occasions previously I’ve actually ended up taking one of those cubicles and getting off just on the sounds coming from around the place

Russell:
Is it a bench or a bed

Mark:
Well it’s neither and both it’s a raised boxed-in podium with a a vinyl covered mattress

Russell:
on top well it’s not even a mattress vinyl covered padding but it’s yeah it’s neither it’s not a bed but it’s not a bench it’s a fucking-surface in a sauna

Russell:
One last thing have you ever consciously broken protocol with a view to provoking some effect or something like that consciously

Mark:
Not that I can recall

Russell:
Do you have a sense of yourself as somebody who has a mastery in regard to protocol with saunas

Mark:
Um I feel competent in that environment

Russell:
I don’t feel like I’m going to do something geeky

Mark:
I don’t think I have anything else I want to ask you at the moment

Mark:
Okay

**Russell:**

Is there anything you want to say or ask me

**Mark:**

Nuh no that’s fine

**Russell:**

Okay we’ll leave it there thanks

**Mark:**

Fine

**I.ii.33:00**

(*I switch off the minidisc recorder*)

END OF CONVERSATION
appendix 16: Lydia I

The transcript documents a conversation with Lydia recorded at her flat in an inner suburb of Melbourne. I arrived a little early to find her not at home. When she returned - she'd been at work - she was laden with shopping. In her kitchen, she unloaded the bags and made a pair of superb gin and tonics. We ferried the drinks and some rice crackers to the living room, set up the recorder, and got underway. From where I sat, I could see tree tops through the window and the fading light of fine weather in the late afternoon. Whenever Lydia cited the writer Pat Califia's name in the conversation, she pronounced it Califa.

Russell:

I.i.00:00
Right we’re on ah I want to start off by asking you about the women’s events at saunas that you’ve ah attended first of all how many are we talking about then one two three

Lydia:

There's a major one I think the first thing we have to do is recap the history of Ladies Night and so there's

I.i.00:30
people like Ms A and Ms B and Ms C and all that kind of stuff so from the mid-eighties Ladies Night started doing these kind of glamour dyke events because before the mid-eighties dyke events were pretty much the Kingston Hotel (I laugh a little) and Miller shirts and all that kind of stuff which wasn’t

Russell:

Where's the Kingston Hotel

Lydia:

Oh many years ago remember the Kingston Hotel is near um South Richmond station um little girl bands like The Right Furniture used to play there and all that kind of stuff it's in a street behind the Epworth Hotel

Russell:

Yep

Lydia:

and they were kind of fairly unglamorous so I didn’t really know those girls at those that time but would go to those kinds of events occasionally when I was with my ex-partner and others and um they actually started then promoting events and they were kind of they might take over a club

I.i.01:30
or whatever so by the time of you know Pat Califia and Macho Sluts and all that kind of stuff coming through they started actually holding more explicit events so in the early nineties I think it’s probably about the one I wanted to talk about was ninety-three ninety-four it was around also the period when the Madonna sex book was happening

Russell:

Oh yeah

Lydia:

and all that kind of stuff

Russell:

Yeah

Lydia:

so

I.i.02:00
there’s this trap first of all there was the thing in the mid-eighties through to the early nineties of becoming more explicit about a sexuality you’ve got this stuff coming out about kind of vanilla sex and all that kind of stuff so what I think’s really interesting is that you’ve got this wave of kind of dykes kind of coming up with concepts like fuck buddies and et cetera et cetera and vanilla sex and all that kind of stuff

Russell:

Sorry can we just

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

pause there for a moment fuck buddies

I.i.02:30
was a term that was used

Lydia:

Yeah yeah
Russell:
within dyke circles

Lydia:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
Is that a term you used

Lydia:
Um n well you know I've always been ambivalent on what the nature of my kind of sexuality is where I've always kind of seen myself for want of a better word to be bisexual because my interest in a sexuality is based in an interest in the person and so I have always been fluid in terms of I'm more interested in having sex

I.i.03:00
with that person and also more curious about what sex would be like with that person

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
so my sexual life has been um immensely fluid but also not prescribed in terms of there's not particular things I like or dislike it's what is the kind of sex you have with that particular person it it's not a kind of fixed thing

Russell:
But was f

Lydia:
Fuck buddies was very

Russell:
As a term

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:

I.i.03:30
rather than as a concept

Lydia:

I.i.04:00
because that was also um not a conscious um militating against but trying to conceive of different sexualities um for girls having sex with one another because it still suffered from the whole thing about Queen Victoria couldn't imagine two chicks having sex together

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
and that all the

I.i.04:30
images of women having sex together were basically romantic paradigms um from a kind of feminist separatist stuff from those seventies on there was that kind of complete um concern about a penetrative sex um ex and you had you know entire kind of generations of women who had sex with one another who never penetrated one another so what was happening out of San Francisco and Pat Califia and On Our Backs and all that kind of stuff was a whole reappraisal of what kind of sex would dykes have first of all and what did dykes look like so there's the militating between butch and femme

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:

I.i.04:30
etcetera etcetera so from about the early nineties you got this explosion going on and really what has always intrigued me was that the model that was picked up was
essentially a gay male model so the whole concept of environments where you could have anonymous sex um environments that looked at the notion of leather men culture um top and bottom who gave who takes etcetera etcetera became a thing that was being kind of flirted with so then it became really apparent that of course Ladies Night would start moving out of a nightclub environment and it wasn’t kind of an odd or illogical step for them to hold events at places like Volcano because then it was like well if you wanted to enact this kind of anonymous sex scenario you would find the environment or the mise en scene that was dedicated to that and the mise en scene that was dedicated to that was the bathhouse and so you got an event at Volcano what I think is really interesting and intriguing though was there was no not and you know the Ms Wicked thing was happening at the same time

I.i.06:00

Russell:

Yes

Lydia:

so there is that lot lot of stuff talking about visibility so the big thing in lesbian stuff was being visible and visible meant as we know from a kind of may gale may gay history [sic] was all that stuff too about the way you formed your visibility was via sexuality by you know trying to sign that you had sex and these were the ways you had sex

I.i.06:30

so you got all the outbreak of the baby dykes and the jeans and the white t shirts the different coloured handkerchiefs in the back pocket and you had the kind of leather outfits going on it was completely and utterly kind of adopted

Russell:

Right so the visible signs crossed over from ah well established

Lydia:

They took a basic repertoire of signing and vocabulary

Russell:

Yeah

Lydia:

from a may gay culture

Russell:

Gay may gay

I.i.07:00

Lydia:

culture

Russell:

What do you mean by may gay

Lydia:

Oh male male

Russell:

Male gay

Lydia:

culture yeah

Russell:

Right okay yeah okay so

Lydia:

And so you even had like little you know and then dicks with chicks exploded

Russell:

Yes

Lydia:

Ah no chicks with dicks exploded and you know having your pocket rocket and all this kind of stuff and this became very bemusing because there was a coterie who kind of led this so there was you know probably no more than thirty and that’s kind of being very generous of inner sanctum

I.i.07:30

dykes who were at the forefront of this so whether it was Ms A or others at the same time too you had the whole kind of F to M stuff going on and all that kind of stuff which you know then would surface with that body of photographs of I can’t remember her name at the moment from the Persona
Lydia: Cognita exhibition of the women with moustaches

Russell: Yes

Lydia: Yeah so so that to me is the final conclusion of that kind of performative you know everyone’s wanting to be performative about sexuality and so what you had within it was not a reimagining of a different kind of sexuality but adopting a set of well established stereotypes or archetypes from another culture and adopting it on top so there was this event at Volcano

Russell: Oh sorry before we now get to Volcano

Lydia: Yeah

Russell: where were you in this you’ve described this

Lydia: Yeah

Russell: at the moment from an anonymous kind of place

Lydia: Yeah

Russell: or an unidentified place

Lydia: Yeah

Russell: so where were you were you one of these thirty women or were you observing them but kind of interested or were you quite happy to participate in taking on um

Lydia: Oh no

Russell: things from gay male culture

Lydia: Yeah no because I’ve always been quite bemused I was doing a lot of reading at that time

Russell: Right

Lydia: A lot of reading and um (a silence) and I started to think a lot about um the whole thing about the notion of the safe word and the whole thing about sex as power and all that kind of stuff remember at the same time um the Hellfire Club

Russell: Yes

Lydia: yes was going on and so you have magazines and I’ll see if I’ve still got them and dig them out for you um where I just kind of became annoyed really because there is this I think when you talk about female sexuality and I don’t want to become gender essentialist but I’ll just talk in general terms at the moment you can’t actually talk about a female sexuality I don’t believe without actually running up against issues of power and issues of abuse so when you’re talking about adopting a paradigm of anonymous sex based on leather men culture and the idea of top and bottoms and masters and slaves you start going oh hold on a minute here and then if you think that the women who have been held up traditionally this century last century the twentieth century as being paradigms of being liberated females such as Anais Nin or um the woman who wrote The Story Of O if you actually dig deep only in the nineties did it start being revealed that they had
incestuous relationships or abused etcetera etcetera so when you talk about a female sexuality it can often be very complex in terms of those things about are there histories of abuse there whether they’re physical or sexual or emotional etcetera etcetera so I being a bit of an old feminist and particularly an old anarchist and all that kind of stuff found it very perplexing when you’d be looking at magazines like On Our Backs and you know there’s a great range of gear there and there’s also things like electronic equipment that you can buy to kind of give shocks to people and all this kind of stuff and you kind of start going and you know and you think about rape and you think about all of this and so on an individual level you kind of become quite challenged because I did a performance um back in ninety-two um where I started a project with a name

Lydia:

Yeah and I become very silent when I talk about my work and so I was taken with the notion of the old notion of the body being a house of the soul and the whole idea of the metaphor of homes and safety and the desire for safe harbour within culture and yet the home is the place where most accidents happen statistically um women are murdered in the kitchen and men are murdered in the bedroom and Daniel Valerio exploded at this time and so there was this huge circulation in me of those kinds of issues of a pre-pube pre-pubescent abuse whether it was a sexual abuse or physical abuse whether there’s a post-pubescent abuse um based in um rape and things like that um and on and on it goes so when you’ve got this pure form of supposedly being safe and enacting then you have to actually start thinking about well enacting and how enacting affects behaviour and what are people performing and all that kind of stuff and in all of this I never was saying that an S&M culture was wrong I was more interested in how

Lydia:

Daniel Valerio was the first famous um toddler murder from a kind of de facto relationship and the photograph of him in the paper is the one that I’ve often referenced of this little knowing boy with the bruised eye

Lydia:

And because of the media publicity of Daniel Valerio so Karmain Chan is the the best example of the stranger danger and that kind of stuff but Daniel Valerio was the symbol in the early nineties of actually this danger is not outside of the home it’s within the home

Lydia:

It’s it’s from
there’s a huge crossover between physical abuse and sexual abuse um and all that kind of stuff I think a way of framing this also is um I grew up with my mother in a bedsit where um I slept in the same bed as my mother until I left home when I was seventeen and my mother had a breakdown when I was four where post post that time she never cleaned the house and so the home that I lived in no one ever came in the home from the time I was growing up in it to when I left home um so the whole kind of Miss Havisham scene from Great Expectations which is a keystone moment for me um because it was the first time I ever had any reflection on the circumstance that I was living in

Russell: Yeah

Lydia:

etcetera so I did a performance where I arranged um a session with Mistress D from the House of Bondage in Nicholson Street where I um met her and gave her a brief and a commission which was to mark my body on the notion of um nails teeth knife belt cane

et cetera etcetera etcetera so I did a performance where I arranged um a session with Mistress D from the House of Bondage in Nicholson Street where I um met her and gave her a brief and a commission which was to mark my body on the notion of um nails teeth knife belt cane

whip um and there’s a level of forensic science which can actually um read in a murder how the person has been murdered and that in a lot um murders that kind of thing about how someone might have been raped or whatever gives indications of those things and I suppose I was interested in that thing about in sexual play you have scratching and biting

and so they’re things of the body the belt is the thing of everyday life which is either you wait till your father gets home you know and that that image parent chastising the child I also went to a school um in primary school I was caned on my left hand for two years by Miss F because it was the sign of the devil because I was left handed and that was only exposed um at the end of grade

two because she split my knuckles I um this is at a state school interstate every teacher had a set of canes there was one teacher who was very famous because they [all] had names and personalities um in my primary school room there was Child G who would always piss her pants at least once a week and would sit in a pool of urine because she wasn’t allowed to clean herself

there was Child H who lived in constant fear and he was one of those boys who always held his dick we actually stripped Child J once and locked him naked in a press so he was discovered and humiliated um Mr K I was considered to be a rebellious girl I was constantly caned by Mr K from the grades five to seven um I took to wearing trousers and never wore dresses

from about ten to eleven onwards unless out of that environment because I was in my favourite yellow terry towelling mini one day and I had to go to Mr K and Mr K’s speciality for caning you as a girl was to get you to bend over his desk and because your dress was short it would ride half way up your um buttocks and he would aim the cane marks directly

under your panty line so that when you sat it would hurt the most and there was a hierarchy of that the boys were caned on their open hands the girls were caned on the back of their legs um Mr L actually threw a blackboard compass at me once and I ducked and the blackboard compass went into the wall and quivered behind my head he would constantly throw dusters at kids and

clock them on the head etcetera etcetera um I used to be beaten by my mother a great deal um both by um her particular thing was if she didn’t like what came out of my mouth she would slap me across the face um she had long nails so I would often get scratched on the face um to move me she would pull my hair

and grab my long hair and actually lift me up and drag me along um she progressed from rulers and at that time rulers actually had metal strips along the top of them which were a bit annoying when the rulers would break she’d move on to the wooden coat hangers um the culmination of that with my mother was an argument when I was about fifteen or sixteen when I was getting ready to go to school and

she beat me across the front of my body with an umbrella and marked my breasts up um at which time I became overtaken with the most extraordinary adrenaline rush I’ve ever had in my entire life where I lifted her up and started bashing her head into the bed-head and pummelled her face shitless
she wore full face make-up for two weeks because she was so

I.1.21:30
bruised and she never talked to me about it but she never laid a hand on me past that point um etcetera etcetera etcetera so that kind of violence of kind of not expressing oneself um and I adopted a thing of playing possum so when she'd start laying

I.1.22:00
into me I would basically fall to the ground offer her beat me until so from about the age of um from about late primary on I used to fantasiase about killing her um etcetera etcetera etcetera so very kind of intense environment to say the least um

I.1.22:30

Russell:
So I mean I find this very sobering all this [unintelligible] to hear [here?]

Lydia:
To get to the point I did this performance where I would go to Mistress D we have our session she doesn't cut me because you can’t do that anymore but she does everything else um I then go to the venue to do the performance where I place people in the hallway of the venue

I.1.23:00
I come down to the top of the stairs I remove the nightie that I've got on um I walk and I pick up a rubber torch and a set of cards which has got on one side of it Love My Memory it's got on the other side of it an Alfred Steiglitz photo of a young toddler naked from the back holding you know a garland over their head underneath it is the legend Nails Teeth Belt Knife Whip I walk along the audience

I.1.23:30
I offer them the torch to examine my wounds I place their hands so that they can feel the welts etcetera etcetera I give them a card and I get to the other end of the hallway um at the end of the stairs after taking my nightie off I put on a pair of um black Greta Garbo pumps when I finally get to the other end of the hallway I put on a dress and I thank them all for coming and apologise for the lack of

I.1.24:00

Russell:

Lydia:

Russell:

Lydia:
because there is always this thing about birching and whipping and S&M in Europe

I.1.25.00
it's called La Vice Anglaise it's seen to be a British thing

Russell:

Lydia:

I.1.25:30
And if you think about British’s the British’s role in terms of the Victorian Empire the power base that Britain had from the late seventeen hundreds because of its navy it has always been seen to be um something that judges and every if you think about the images of S&M politicians we still have it in Britain their Tory politicians

I.1.26:00
they come from class so when one comes to an S&M practice it’s it’s in terms of me well what position are you kind of letting go power of or adopting power or whatever so in all of this I'm still not judgemental about it as a practice what I am saying is I don’t think it’s as simple as that there’s one reason as to why people engage in it and so at somewhere like Volcano

I.1.26:00
you have the cubbyholes downstairs but you still have the back rooms and the private rooms for the supposed heavy trade business so I kind of think within all of that if there was a drive in lesbians to make sexuality kind of visible and adopt different power positions to have a sexuality not
based in romantic love that wasn’t vanilla
that was about pure

Russell:
Were you um because you attended um at least one of these nights at Volcano were you um vocal

Lydia:
Oh no I did a performance and I’ve done it and I’ve also done other performances too at other events so I’ll talk about that so all

Russell:
The per the performance at Volcano

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
That was your way of articulating the question or

Lydia:
No no I’ve I’m not that mean because it’s about having fun because I pose those questions in the art gallery work really

Russell:
Right okay

Lydia:
Yeah and um and you know that had an accompanying installation and there’s you know the little

Russell:
I recall because I was one of the people who was there ah I remember the wardrobe in particular

Lydia:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
And I remember you coming down the stairs and the things you’ve described very clearly

Lydia:
Yeah yeah um I think the other thing too for me the drive of that performance was not so much about I think that I had a bee in my bonnet about yeah okay that’s okay but it’s like it’s real it’s yeah it’s real it’s not kind of and this is your opportunity you know your opportunity to consider the difference between real and fantasy so when you’re fantasising about an S&M scenario or situation is it real or is it play so you know say at events like that there is these young girls for a while who had these cute little private schoolboy outfits where one had you know the little English schoolboy knapsack on and they had the grey uniforms and the short cut hair and the other one would have the whip and I the cane and it’s like I’ve just described my school experience so the other thing that I was also thinking about was that generational difference where you know the who I mean I think that it’s fair to posit that your parents and my parents lived in worlds where you know physical physical abuse was not an uncommon thing and they understood pain and their bodies and what it was to get a good clobbering and all that kind of stuff um you and I have varying ones of that and then you know um generation X or whatever you want to call it don’t have that they you know the whole school system’s really different now parenting’s really different there’s still extreme examples of it but it’s not as common a lived experience as it once was in industrial Western worlds because that’s the other thing that kind of was getting me a bit like in this idea of exploring pain and you know being a victim how then do you match that up against the other ways I mean it’s not saying don’t do it but it’s like understanding that this is a choice that you kind of have and that other people don’t have choices and that I suppose I was very hyper at that stage about was there going to be a loss of an understanding of the experiences of people
who didn’t have choice in those scenarios in this kind of enacting one’s sexuality so back to Volcano, I’m sorry I segued you but I think

*talking*  Similarly when you talk about bathhouse culture and you know the whole The Basement thing where you have the grade you know like the levels of heaven or whatever and then I think it’s also an interesting thing once again to discuss in terms of female sexuality and male sexuality and all that kind of stuff about you know that kind of rough trade sex or whatever so I’ll describe Volcano first um which is

**Russell:**

Well

**Lydia:**

There’s two things I’ll talk about I’ll talk about um (my mobile phone rings) there you go I can have a cracker

**Russell:**

*(reaching for the phone)* I’m sorry

**Lydia:**

*(reaching for a cracker)* Okay

**Russell:**

*Sorry (I switch the phone off)* I should have turned it off

**Lydia:**

That’s okay at Volcano I’ll talk about setting up and then the actual evening so

**Russell:**

Can I can I um perhaps ask a couple of questions

**Lydia:**

Go

**Russell:**

Your the evening was some the setting up occurred on the day of the evening

**Lydia:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

And your

**Lydia:**

Though there’d been a tour beforehand

**Russell:**

Ah the tour was how long previous

**Lydia:**

Oh I can’t remember probably a week or two weeks before

**Russell:**

Right okay now was the tour during opening hours

**Lydia:**

No

**Russell:**

Right okay I guess

**Lydia:**

The stink of phenol just amazed me (she laughs a little) because phenol was the detergent that um the disinfectant it reminded me of my primary school experience

**Russell:**

Oh right that’s very important

**Lydia:**

*(laughing) Yeah*

**Russell:**

Can I I’d like to hear first of all about the tour what you recall about the tour

**Lydia:**

No blokes were there there was only one kind of bloke the rest was left to Ladies Night people to show around so
Russell:
So when you went on the tour it was

Lydia:
I was checking out places to do performance it

Russell:
Was was it just you and a bloke or other women and a bloke

Lydia:
No the bloke was just the door guy

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
and he was loading up the bar it’s the Ladies Night girls

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
working out the logistics

Russell:
Yeah so

Lydia:
And

Russell:
So how many you were with some other women

Lydia:
Oh about four or five

Russell:
And the lighting in the building was it

Lydia:

Russell:
Fine okay can

Lydia:
It’s like the working lights up

Russell:
Work lights

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
Like on stage so what um like can you now tell me what that lighting was for the tour as distinct from

Lydia:
Basically we were allowed to sneak in before opening hours because you don’t want to upset the clientele and turn them off by having fish in the building um (I laugh a little) and you know and it was pretty much it was just like any public facility before opening hours which is all the work lights are on um the areas are being have been washed and are still kind of wet and smelly with phenol and stuff and um the first kind of culture clash was the whole domesticness you know so so the (she puts on a voice) you know the girls are finally getting into Volcano (she reverts to her usual voice) and the first thing is is that sort of bad lounge room area which is you know like

Russell:
Fine can you now when you say culture clash what I’m really interested in at this point is was that a culture clash for you

Lydia:
Nah

Russell:
or for the others

Lydia:

Russell:

Lydia:

Russell:

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Russell:

Lydia:

Russell:

Lydia:
Um

**Russell:**
I’m interested in what were the in very much what happened for you

**Lydia:**
I’m very when okay when I check out venues I’m very pragmatic

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Lydia:**
Okay and I’m also been around long enough to know that usually most things in the world aren’t as glamorous as they appear

**(laughing a little) Yes**

**Russell:**
Right

**Lydia:**
I was actually more surprised by the scale of the building

**Russell:**
How

**Lydia & Russell:**
small

**Lydia:**
it

**Russell:**
or how large

**Lydia:**
How small

**Russell:**
How small right okay

**Lydia:**
Because I kind you know I have an expansive

**(laughing a little) kind of you know**

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Lydia:**
And yeah I have an expansive notion to sex so I wasn’t expecting it to be um aesthetically pleasing but I was expecting it to be I suppose slightly more um generous or expansive than it was so I think the sheer domesticity of the entrance is just fantastic and I must admit I was shocked because it’s so you kind of go up those pokey stairs and you come out and it’s like a fucking lounge room let’s face it and it’s not a very glamorous it’s neither appalling it’s very middle suburbs there’s no doubting about it and I’m kind of going ya got ya gotta be kidding (laughing a little) kind of thing you know because it didn’t it I think after all the debates about

**(laughing a little) Kind of thing you know because it didn’t it I think after all the debates about**

**Russell:**
vanilla and being out there the pick up waiting area or the socialising area is so vanilla you know it’s so nice

**Lydia:**
Oh a man we both know and I always knew knew that it was there

**Russell:**
Right can now you’ve already designated a few things here so I just I want to sort of start getting a little bit forensic with some of that first of all the exterior of the building how much acquaintance had you had of the exterior of the building

**Lydia:**

**(laughing a little) Kind of thing you know because it didn’t it I think after all the debates about**

**Russell:**
Right okay and you’d passed it a number of occasions

**Lydia:**
Yeah always knew it was there

Russell:
Okay all right um and that would have given some indication of the scale of

Lydia:
I didn’t actually really think about it in that terms because I

Russell:
Oh yeah

Lydia:
Yeah because in in one sense I suppose that kind of thing about the facade is like I probably imagine this fan you know like the notion of the hidden garden the walled garden

Russell:
Yes

Lydia:
Yeah because in in one sense I suppose that kind of thing about the facade is like I probably imagine this fan you know like the notion of the hidden garden the walled garden

Russell:
Yes

Lydia:
where you know I su ah yeah I suppose that’s what I had in my mind

Russell: 00
and you know there’s the perfumed garden and all that kind of stuff where you kind of have that you have those architectural spaces which um once you go into them open up into these I suppose I had seen it in terms of a yes a pleasure garden and that and that notion from whether it’s the Mogul garden or or wherever you you don’t put a lot of effort

Russell: 30
into this

Russell:
So you’d been um you had imaginings of what may or may not be

Lydia:
No not I didn’t take any expectation I’m there I’m you know I’m there to do a performance I’m being really pragmatic

Russell:
But surprising though being surprised however would seem to suggest that you

Lydia:
No it actually

Russell:
had conscious imaginings there were definitely

Lydia:
It was more when I got there it was like you go up the pokey stairs you come out into this

Russell: 30
space and you go (she puts on a voice) oh small (she reverts to her usual voice) kind of yeah it’s like I really no hadn’t projected on anything it’s like when I got there it’s like I’m weighing it up and it’s like big small medium it’s

Russell:
Right okay

Lydia:
It’s small and I

Russell:
What made what made the stairs pokey for you

Lydia:
Oh it’s about the rake

Russell:
Yes

Lydia:
Yeah I’m not even sure it’s

Russell: 30
a regulation rake anymore I think what’s interesting I keep talking domestic don’t I in public buildings there’s regulations as to rake and store and stair width

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
and all that kind of stuff and I suppose I might have been endowing it yes with that sense it’s a public building where um the kind of rake of those stairs is pretty much
like a stair that been actually whacked into a brick veneer in you know in Keilor North

**Russell:**
Was there anything that wasn’t beige there

**Lydia:**
Oh there

**Russell:**
were some bad prints you know bad poof prints of

**Lydia:**
Of what

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Lydia:**

**Russell:**
Oh you know the bloody you know California boys from nineteen eighty-two the muscle boy you know the blonde boy photos no heavy trade photos all very much within that kind of you know the blonde boy the what I what I call the playboy [Playboy?]

**Lydia:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
images

**Lydia:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
But you have no definite image of that

**Lydia:**
I probably note I probably noted yeah

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Lydia:**
Yeah yeah
**Russell:**

That's all right

**Lydia:**

They were being responsible proprietors kind of stuff um and yeah in that yes and what I did note well you can buy you can buy your lube and you can buy your rubbers and all that kind of stuff um

**Russell:**

Oh ah how was that organised then you could you saw signage for that

**Lydia:**

Yeah I think yeah I can't remember if it's behind the bar or where you get towels or whatever and I can't even remember if there were things like not to use oil because it's no good with rubbers and all that kind of stuff yeah or just you know all your all your general public health stuff so it's really you know the two predominant images is the suburban swimming pool you know where you know the counter area where you can buy your goggles and

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Lydia:**

Yeah and all that kind of stuff and this kind of slightly well it's not even really much larger than a decent living room let's face it

**Russell:**

We're in your living room at the moment

**Lydia:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

How much larger is it than this

**Lydia:**

Um it's a different it's a different size but it's probably a similar footprint to the entire flat

**Russell:**

Right it's proportioned

**Lydia:**

Yeah yeah that space if you actually kind of

**Russell:**

extrapolate

**Lydia:**

If you extrapolate and have the because you've got the kind of the wall bit you and you come through and there's the lounge and there's the bar there and there might be what I remember to be the towel areas in front of the stairs going down

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Lydia:**

Yeah there's a there's an odd L shape in terms of the public public space there and I suppose the thing that I couldn't imagine was I couldn't imagine it peopled

**Russell:**

Right

**Lydia:**

Yeah be and I think

**Russell:**

By anyone

**Lydia:**

Well I was

**Russell:**

or were you thinking of it peopled by men or were you trying to imagine

**Lydia:**

No by

**Russell:**

forward for the women's event
Lydia:
No for men I was you know a big bloke really sometimes um I think what I was trying to match up was the difference in say the performative space of the bar or a nightclub and if I I probably didn’t think about
I.i.43:00
I just assumed it and so I was probably assuming a bar a bar aesthetic of you know which are much more utilitarian surfaces hard surfaces whatever and you know when you think in anonymous sex you don’t expect to walk into a beige *(I laugh a little)* Keilor North lounge room
Russell:
YOU don’t
Lydia:
No but then I kind of will correct myself and go I have always postulated
I.i.43:30
right from the eighties through is everyone in Fitzroy and St Kilda think they’re being so wild and I’m here to tell ya there’s things goin’ on out there in the suburbs which would just make ya hair curl you know so that’s the other that and and I’ve always I’ve always thought that a much more interesting irony that that there are these obs assigned places that people go to to be wild but if we’re
I.i.44:00
talking kind of aberrant kinky um whatever I reckon there’s a lot goin’ on
Russell:
Now you talked about this area as being a socialising and or pick up area
Lydia:
I was downright perplexed by it what its use is really
Russell:
So but you you described it earlier
Lydia:
Yeah
Russell:
in this conversation as that so I mean is that
Lydia:
I suppose
I.i.44:30
I started then thinking that the place was more like a men’s club actually
Russell:
Yeah
Lydia:
and so once once I’d kind of matched up the kind of thing about I can’t see how you could kind of I can’t I can’t imagine I’m sorry I can’t imagine it kind of thing because you know it’s so ceiling height and it’s all low and there’s not really a lot of space where you can jostle or you know just I think I was perplexed
I.i.45:00
that it wasn’t a very good place to display oneself
Russell:
So that’s interesting because I have displayed myself there so what do you mean when you say display I mean are we
Lydia:
I was working
Russell:
Are we talking about you imagining the men there still
Lydia:
Yeah
Russell:
at this moment yeah okay
Lydia:
and I think where I shifted gear was when I say I couldn’t imagine displaying oneself there
I.i.45:30
what I was applying to it was the bar scenario
Russell:
Yes
Lydia:
So the way one displays oneself at a bar you can’t do yeah

Russell:
Yes

Lydia:
The kinds of body positions you might adopt etcetera etcetera you can’t you can’t do it that way so then I go oh it’s not a bar it’s a club and once I kind of think oh Melbourne Club

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
Blokes sitting around talking

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
Checking one another out (laughing a little) oh yeah I get it so you know so it’s like yeah that’s then how I that’s then how I understood it

Russell:
At at this very early stage before we’ve gone through the rest of the building

Lydia:
Yes

Russell:
were you also starting to entertain thoughts about the women’s event that was coming up as well and

Lydia:
No I already had an agenda as to what I wanted to do there

Russell:
All right

Lydia:
and I was looking for the space in which I could do it

Russell:
Fine okay right now let’s go on about the tour

Lydia:
Okay so isn’t it interesting because I still I think in terms of spaces it’s not a bar it has a bar but it’s not a bar and remember we’re still talking a period where the whole new wave of bar things didn’t happen hadn’t already happened so things like Honky Tonks or um you know Troika or or that kind of culture hadn’t hadn’t hit yet I’ve ki I’ve said it you know it’s a beige domestic

Russell:
I think in terms of spaces it’s not a bar it has a bar but it’s not a bar and remember we’re still talking a period where the whole new wave of bar things didn’t happen hadn’t already happened so things like Honky Tonks or um you know Troika or or that kind of culture hadn’t hadn’t hit yet I’ve ki I’ve said it you know it’s a beige domestic

Lydia:
I still didn’t ascribe the behaviour that might happen in there like um a family social gathering because that’s not formal enough so I’m thinking codes of behaviour so the code of behaviour that I kind of arrive at is the paradigm of the men’s club whether it’s a football club whether it’s the Melbourne Club

Russell:
I still it looks like a lounge room but it’s not it’s not friendly I can’t it’s not it’s not that kind of social relationship I think by talking about it being a men’s club there’s it’s friendlier than a bar but it still has a formality about it where there would be coded behaviours you know so whether it’s how blokes

Lydia:
IBehaviour around the keg at the football club event or um or how one might discuss business

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
Yeah there’s it’s still a I don’t know what it is and I’ve never seen it but I still think that there there would be a consciousness I don’t believe you’d relax there it’s try yeah it’s this it’s like this joke I

Russell:
have um when you’re working with consultants you always have to keep things on a mates level so you while there is a con
there is a contract you have to keep it matey but you are stupid to ever think that they're your friend and I would believe the same thing is functioning in that en in that environment

**Russell:**

*i.i.49:30*

See now this is the hard question I guess what at a level of materiality and organisation what led to that conclusion

**Lydia:**

Because it's the context of what the space is

**Russell:**

Okay

**Lydia:**

That's that's that's that's the assumption and prejudice I'm bringing to it

**Russell:**

Yeah but is it a a a l

*i.i.50:00*

suppose what I'm asking now is is this if you like um a reasoned deduction or was it a kind of like an instantaneous recognition you've described the reasoned deduction what actually happened did you know this place was this

**Lydia:**

It's looking like a lounge room

**Russell:**

or did you think about it

**Lydia:**

No it's looking like a lounge room but it's not

**Russell:**

Okay good

**Lydia:**

Yeah it's

*i.i.50:30*

you know to use that word it's a simulacra

**Russell:**

Yeah okay

**Lydia:**

you know so I go in going bar I go fuck not bar because I I you know I'm bringing that association of you know if if you're looking for anonymous sex the bar environment or parks and rattling bushes is the way to do it so I walk in and it's like oh fuck it's not a bar it's pretending to be a lounge room but it's not a lounge room either

*i.i.51:00*

yeah

**Russell:**

That's all right

**Lydia:**

Yeah yeah

**Russell:**

I have one more question then

**Lydia:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

which is before we move and that is do lounge rooms are lounge rooms simulacra of lounge rooms

**Lydia:**

They can be yes of course I'm not that stupid and they're

**Russell:**

Oh I wasn't meaning

**Lydia:**

Yeah yeah but it but a lounge room is a lounge room in the context of a supposed domestic environment

**Russell:**

Right

**Lydia:**

And so then to go and pace the size of a lounge room

*i.i.51:30*

in a non-domestic environment in fact a commercial business that is actually based
on providing a space where you have sex with people you don’t know yeah but you know something I did know and became sad and it’s probably my fantasy that afterwards I kind of thought that there would be old fellas who no longer consider themselves pretty enough
to cut it downstairs but because they want to be near it they still come and sit in the lounge room

Russell:
Right

Lydia:
That I did think that in this room there would be people who no longer went downstairs and I and I’m quite willing to admit that that could be a fantasy

Russell:
Oh no no of course
but it’s interesting what we’ve got is there’s this place and then there’s down-

Lydia & Russell:
stairs

Russell:
Okay

Lydia:
(she sings a rhythm like suspenseful soundtrack music) Dhum dhum dhum dhum dhum dhum dhum dhum dhum

Russell:
Okay so

Lydia:
And see it’s signing the things of the club because off the lounge room area there’s the massage room

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
Um I don’t know whether I found out whether you know you get offered hand

relief or not and I suppose the hierarchy is actually quite interesting because see
downstairs is the com is the other communal area of the seething mass but upstairs is this fake lounge room there’s the rooms that you can have massage in and then (she sings a rhythm) dhum dhum-dhum dhum there’s the heavy trade room with the sling and all that kind of stuff um

Russell:
What level was the heavy trade room on

Lydia:
The same level

Russell:
Ah right okay

Lydia:
But down the back

Russell:
Right

Lydia:
So you know there’s there’s the lounge room area then there’s stair there’s stairs down here but all right down this bit past the stairs or maybe the stairs are here or whatever

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
there’s a a like a semi-corridor to the massage room which then has a door that leads out onto the other part of the lounge room as I call it but then separated from the massage room further back was the the rough trade room

Russell:
Right okay

the building is physically altered since you were there

Lydia:
Yeah okay

Russell:

But that’s not surprising

Lydia:

And what what was interesting is there’s exclusivity to the rough trade room because it’s like you know that’s like getting promoted you know

Russell:

In what respect

Lydia:

Um

Russell:

How did you experience that

Lydia:

I’ll talk about that on the night

Russell:

Oh okay

Lydia:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

So with so but just to

I.i.54:30

leap ahead to that for a moment when the women were there it functioned in the way you’ve described that is it was like being promoted

Lydia:

Oh no there’s if I talk about the inner sanctum of the thirty who really are

Russell:

Yeah

Lydia:

You know are seen to be the the real kind of macho sluts

Russell:

Yeah

Lydia:

Um th I’ll talk okay we’ll go in basically

Russell:

We don’t have to

Lydia:

No no

I.i.55:00

no no

Russell:

Let’s go with the no let’s let’s

Lydia:

Just stick to the the [unintelligible]

Russell:

Tour

Lydia:

Okay

Russell:

Let’s go back to the tour

Lydia:

So with the girls there’s there’s they’re kind of runnin’ around like kind of crazed schoolgirls giggling and it you know because it it’s like oh what’s in here (she squeals, then) kind of stuff and I’m kind of you know like Sylvester’s son kind of the shame the shame you know like

Russell:

Yes

Lydia:

You know

I.i.55:30

like get a grip for god’s sake (she laughs a little) you know like um

Russell:

But did you say any of that or

Lydia:
No

**Russell:**
So did what form did it take the form of composure on your part or calm or

**Lydia:**
Well it’s more like yes it’s a sling people are strapped into it so you can restrict them and fuck them that’s the idea? (she laughs a little) you know (she squeals, then) you know it’s like

**Russell:**
Had you seen a sling before

**Lydia:**
Um

**Russell:**

*I.i.56:00*
In the flesh as it were

**Lydia:**
No but look I’ve been reading in the area of dark sex

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Lydia:**
since I was twelve basically

**Russell:**
So so the encounter with it as an actual thing rather than a read about or pictured thing was not particularly a big shift

**Lydia:**
Nuh

**Russell:**
All right

**Lydia:**
And I’d already done the Mistress D thing

**Russell:**

*I.i.56:30*
yeah

**Lydia:**
And yeah it’s more like it’s like when I went to New York it’s like my experience of New York was you don’t discover it it’s like you go oh yes I’ve been here yea yeah you know and really

**Russell:**
You recognise it

**Lydia:**
Yes

**Russell:**
Okay

**Lydia:**
It’s like um

*I.i.57:00*
what you’re actually doing is just confirming it you’re not discovering it you know so my kind of experience was not discovering this is like oh yeah yeah kind of stuff

**Russell:**
When you said the other women were running around were they literally running around

**Lydia:**
Yes like yes they were like high school girls

**Russell:**
Right

*I.i.57:30*
is

**Lydia:**
Some not all of them

**Russell:**
Were

**Lydia:**
Because there’s the cool ones who are the heavy dut leather girls leather and rubber girls and the only moment of confidentiality
I’ll have in this thing is I’m going to talk a lot about Ms A and the mystique of Ms A but you won’t be able to refer to her

Russell:
Yes I’m aware of that  yeah

Lydia:
Okay

Russell:
I mean her name will be changed

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
and if there’s identifiers

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
you know

Lydia:
So Ms A

Russell:
This is at this stage

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
Yeah she has the wife she has the mistress she has various girlfriends and everyone wants to have the Ms A everyone wants Ms A to top

Russell:

Lydia:
So she was present during this tour

Lydia:
I can’t remember all I can mainly remember is Ms C and Ms B I think so Ms A is the the goddess of the kind of every possible combo you you can have there um and then you’ve got

Russell:
the kind of um F to M gang um and I can’t remember whether you know she was going through the operation then or not or starting the hormone treatment so you’ve got you know two examples of you know chicks becoming blokes and the rest are pretty much kind of you know then there’s Ms C princess Ms C um super femme kind of stuff

Russell:
and what I suppose I’ve always thought really amusing and then there’s you know a couple of of Ms A acolytes

Lydia:
Right you you’re listing a large number of people

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
You did initially mention there were about four of five women on the tour

Lydia:
Yeah I’m just going through the hierarchy stuff

Russell:
Right

Lydia:
What I’m trying to say is the supposed real thing of people who might actually know how to actually use this environment for its purpose

Russell:
Yes

Lydia:
is
you’d be hard pressed to say it was more than a dozen

Russell:

Right

Lydia:

That’s what I’m trying to say you know so so you’ve got this hierarchy where you know most of the girls would have kind of you know dildos and um the the smaller inner sanctum the the larger Ladies Night inner sanctum which is about the twenty to thirty might know and might have kind of strap on dicks and dildos and yes we have penetrative sex and anal sex and all that kind of stuff

Russell:

You

Lydia:

But in terms of what I would call the ritual S&M stuff it’s very small number and so in terms of the rough trade room you know on the actual night there’s this like purient [sic] kind you know this kind of ho it’s like hoping (she laughs a little) someone might use it kind of thing

Russell:

You know like very sad

Lydia:

But at the tour

Russell:

That’s fine

Lydia:

Then there’s the cubbyholes well the okay no there’s the pool or the wet let’s call it the wet area so the wet area’s here and you can either go that way or you can go that way then you’ve got this way what I call the labyrinth which is not about hiding it’s about creating a labyrinth that you can kind of press against and mingle and all that kind of stuff there’s not um there’s not what you’d call exclusive space it’s space that’s been constructed for milling and all that kind of stuff

Russell:

Oh yeah can you tell me a bit about how the construction facilitates that

Lydia:

Oh cor ba you know a series of

Russell:

Yeah

Lydia:

I I think a labyrinth is the best that

Russell:

Yeah okay

Lydia:

Because um because there’s there’s only the two walls there’s not the third wall or a fourth wall to give closure

Russell:

Right

Lydia:

So the so it’s an enclosed space but you can’t create an enclosure around you to give you privacy yeah that’s that’s not what that space is about then opposite that is the um behind the kind of wet area is the large circular space with the large circular um platform in it which is once again a communal space but that’s the vertical equivalent of the horizontal equivalent of the labyrinth but it seems to me the labyrinth is um about

Russell:
Okay, now you said for some reason you think that let’s first of all is think the most accurate word here.

**Lydia:**

That’s how you use the space isn’t it I’m you know because for me the labyrinth and the corridors is about um groping and gro and there’s not much fun in groping something that’s not covered because it’s about the slipping it’s about hand under cloth it’s about undoing flies it’s about lifting pulling cons you know tigh you know tightening a shirt pulling a shirt over.

**Russell:**

So for you this

**Lydia:**

Par yeah because it’s about it’s about undoing and it’s and I also see it’s about testing trying out sampling.

**Russell:**

Right.

**Lydia:**

Um

When you when

**Lydia:**

Yeah I would have been I’m like that.

**Russell:**

Yeah but you have you have no definite recollection now it’s just that that’s.

**Lydia:**

No I would have been appraising the spaces for what ac what I believed what activities.

**Russell:**

All right.

**Lydia:**

Yeah because I I was of course I was interested in the performativeness of the space.

**Russell:**

Yeah yeah.

**Lydia:**

Yeah um

and wha and even if it’s just towels the m for me the milling is about beginning to sample um where and not as committed so the more enclosed the space is the greater the commitment yeah in a in a sense.

**Russell:**

In what sense *(I laugh a little)*

**Lydia:**

Um well it’s okay but it’s also about different forms of display so say the the round room with the plinth that’s not about viewing that’s about um like bundles of snakes in a in a sense that’s not so much about eye but being in the midst of the potential of being in a heap of fucking in a sense yeah and so that it’s not playing to the eye it’s playing to the it’s about being blinded it’s about lo it’s about losing sight um

**Russell:**

Yeah.

**Lydia:**

Um well it’s okay but it’s also about different forms of display so say the the round room with the plinth that’s not about viewing that’s about um like bundles of snakes in a in a sense that’s not so much about eye but being in the midst of the potential of being in a heap of fucking in a sense yeah and so that it’s not playing to the eye it’s playing to the it’s about being blinded it’s about lo it’s about losing sight um

**Russell:**

Yeah.
and being blind um and I suppose it you know the way I would read it it’s about multiplicity as well um or it or it might yeah yeah that kind of stuff um and it’s about it’s about fluidness of connection as well so I’ll whip through the spaces

I.i.67:30
there’s the labyrinth vertical milling space it’s about sampling and checking it’s also about um either displaying yourself or being viewed while you have sex with others kind of thing the round room is about not it’s not ocular it’s it’s about in a sense blindness um then you have the cubicles which um

I.i.68:00
are the and by cubi and by cubicles they’re cubicles they’re not rooms it’s still standing and still to this day I think it’s amazing that Ms C stood in a Ms C and Ms B stood in a cubicle in nineteen ninety-three and didn’t know what a glory hole was

Russell:
How do you know they didn’t know what a glory hole was

Lydia:
They said what’s this for there’s a hole in the wall

Russell:
To you

Lydia:
Well they were discussing it

Russell:
But did they ah say that to you what’s this for

Lydia:
Yes

Russell:
So they were a seeking information from you about that

Lydia:
And it’s like well what do you think it’s for you stick your dick through it (she laughs a little) don’t you know it’s like you know it’s like (she puts on a voice) duh

Russell:
So what you’re calling the cubicles

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
were these um

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
spaces with glory holes

Lydia:
Yeah which replicate it’s the replication of the public

I.i.69:00
toilet

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
with no doors

Russell:
Now when you talked about cubbyholes before what was that a ref

Lydia:
They’re the longer rooms with the with the bench

Russell:
Ah yeah

Lydia:
and you can close the door

Russell:
Close it

Lydia:
Yeah
Russell:
Can you also lock it

Lydia:
You can

Russell:
Right, okay

Lydia:
And so for me the hierarchy of character relationships the labyrinth is about multiplicity it's about display it's about sampling it's about display to pick up I.i.69:30 it's about display to be picked up it also may be about display of being viewed having sex the round room's about blindness and just not knowing

Russell:
Yep

Lydia:
The standing cubicles are about having sex but not actually being that interested in seeing who you're having sex with so but there's still a visuality to it because I.i.70:00 the whole thing of the glory hole about framing and all that kind of stuff so you it still has an ocular element to it but it also has this element that you're restricting your you're you still are sighted but you're restricting sight it also is about being able to be viewed um in a fourth wall way and that the that the what I call the cubbyholes I.i.70:30 are are about forming a group

Russell:
Of how many

Lydia:
Oh it could be it could be two it could be ten

Russell:
There were there were cubbyholes big enough for ten men

Lydia:
I probably exaggerate but more than more than more than two

Russell:
Right, okay

Lydia:
Half a dozen

Russell:
Yeah, okay

Lydia:
If they wanted to yeah so it's it's a it's it's similar to the round I.i.71:00 room but there's probably more um but there would be roles there would need to be roles not roles but you see the round room has no character

Russell:
What do you mean

Lydia:
Um

Russell:
(I laugh a little, then) I'm curious I

Lydia:
That to be in there you let go of c there is no character to display

Russell:
Oh sorry there's no character for the person in the loun

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
They become characterless

Lydia:
Yes
Okay the are you su now when you say there is no character

Lydia:

Well there’s n you’d for me it’s almost like it’s the most polymorphously perverse of the rooms (we start bingeing on the rice crackers, crunching away audibly and speaking through mouthfuls of food) purely based in sensation

Russell:

Okay now I know what you mean

Lydia:

Yeah that’s yeah

Russell:

Yep

Lydia:

Yeah

so it is very intriguing that within the one environment there are so many spaces that have different performative characteristics to them in a way

Russell:

But it was nevertheless disappointing and sad that that environment was nowhere near as extensive as you’d have hoped I mean what you’ve now described is something that seems large and elaborate and yet earlier in this conversation you described

Lydia:

I.i.72:00

It’s awful to be chewing chipboard

Russell:

So the

Lydia:

I.i.72:30

My generosity is about generosity also of materiality

Russell:

Oh right okay

Lydia:

kind of thing um

Russell:

So is it four by two and chipboard

Lydia:

Oh yeah

Russell:

Right okay

Lydia:

You should have heard the girls complaining about the vinyl

Russell:

I.i.73:00

The vinyl

Lydia:

On the benches and on the round plinth

Russell:

Oh yeah okay yeah yeah yeah

Lydia:

(she puts on a voice) Ooh imagine lying on that (she reverts to her usual voice) kind of thing um (we laugh a little) you know um

Russell:

When you said I should have heard the girls complain about that did you hear the girls complain about that

Lydia:

Oh yeah

Russell:

And now this is I do this kind of thing with a lot of people I’m asking questions I.i.73:30 do you have a specific memory of an instance of a girl complaining about that or is this an impression that is

Lydia:

Ms C
Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
was appalled by the vinyl

Russell:
Now was this during the tour or during the event

Lydia:
During the tour

Russell:
During the tour appalled by the vinyl right and s

Lydia:
She couldn't imagine lying on it

Russell:
Right okay and said so

Lydia:
Mm

Russell:
To you or to the the group at large

Lydia:
Oh I can't remember to the group at large or whatever

Russell:
Yeah yeah okay fine

Lydia:
and was the man wasn’t with you during this tour

Lydia:
Oh no

Russell:
So he just said oh go downstairs and have a look

Lydia:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
Okay fine okay right

Lydia:
Because

Russell:
Now as a result

Lydia:
Because it doesn’t match her her notion of sensuousness kind of thing yeah

Russell:
But for you overall apart from the certain

Lydia:

Russell:
kind of surprise at the um lounge room upstairs overall what you were taking in was information and recognising things that you may or may not have heard about or no recognising things you would have known of

Lydia:

Russell:
(The minidisc fills and the recorder switches itself off. Soon after, we realise that this has happened, I replace the disc, and we resume.)

Lydia:
Okay yeah we're back on

Russell:
So we’ll just leap ahead to the night okay

Lydia:
Yeah so that they what I’ve just listed to you are the spaces

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
that were available so I had predicted that on the night there would be all these girls like Ms C who (she laughs a little) really wanted to have sex in this place because otherwise they wouldn’t fulfil their wickedness
and their desire and their kind of what ever but I also knew that when it comes and I’m talking ten years ago now just about and I think that it might be different because girls are changing they’re socialised in different ways but most certainly back then the whole premise and this is something I used to talk a lot with Mr M about is the whole premise behind being able to have anonymous sex or pick up is the ability to be able to gaze at people and to give gaze and to receive gaze back chicks can’t do that they just it but you know it just perplexes them because they’re used to being subject to gaze so the idea of appraising and you know becoming you know um no got it round the wrong way they are used to being object of gaze so to become subject initiator of gaze um and then to that to kind of give signals or whatever and then that’s there’s that whole thing about once again it without pushing it too far um maybe the whole idea of a male sexuality and I’m not being rude here but the but those things about visualised and externalised and all that kind of stuff I get very tentative about saying that because I am always nervous about gender essentialism and all that kind of stuff but it it can be it can be one factor it’s not the only factor so there will always be perplexities where you know girls will be kind of on the tram with their poof friend and it’s like yeah they go off they they disappear you know and like they’ve had this whole kind of (she laughs a little) checking out scenario with a boy and you know or they may (she laughs a little) get off the tram kind of thing and you go how did that happen (she laughs a little) you know it’s like

Russell:

That the boy has suddenly vanished

Lydia:

Yeah or or that you know or later goes oh yeah you know that you know and it’s like and you’re kind of sitting there going huh (she laughs a little) you know and I’ve always been aware that there’s this whole other thing that goes on with men in gay environments we haven’t got a hope in hell in reading it Russell

Russell:

When you say we

Lydia:

Gir women

Russell:

Women okay

Lydia:

Girls yes

Russell:

Because because when you said chicks

Lydia:

Girl

Russell:

can’t work that way with gaze and that I think you said chicks

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

but let’s just say women

Lydia:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

All right can YOU have YOU

Lydia:

Oh yeah yeah I’ve targeted people and and um but

Russell:

So you do stand by your comment then that it’s not gender essentialist [unreadable]

Lydia:

No but it takes longer I mean you know like you know I’m very sneering I’m not sneering but you know the whole lesbian scene of
and it it may be different now but you know like they all hang around and it comes three o’clock and you know let’s all go back to so and so’s place and you have toasted sandwiches (I laugh a little) and then you have to wait for everyone to go and you’re stuck on this fuckin’ couch and you know round about six a.m.

L.ii.04:00 everyone might be gone and there might be a well what are you do you know and it’s like give me a break you know (she laughs a little) it’s like and then you’re all everyone’s kind of tired and sort of over it and like you know why can’t you just have a fuck about twelve ki you know thing so there’s that there’s a different ritual

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
kind of thing there’s a different ritual um L.ii.04:30 there’s a different ritual and I find it you know because I still think there’s that confusion about love and sex and there’s a you know there’s a different different ritual um which is what I th in you know heterosexual terms what’s really interesting is

L.ii.05:00 that you know the whole phenomenon of you know the the classic thing about women and sailors in port because um it’s like it is this thing where you can’t pretend it’s romantic because they’re in port and they’re goin’ next week and so there’s a license there and I don’t remem I don’t know if you remember like do you remember in the eighties when um I think the Bicentennial stuff was going on and the boats were in um Port Phillip Bay

L.ii.05:30 and there was a trade going on down there that almost rivalled kind of what you would consider to be the libertineness of kind of gay gay male trade of

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
Of you know young heterosexual women kind of cruising Port Melbourne where the boats were in pickin’ up sailors and you know havin’ the time of their life and you know I don’t I don’t actually

L.ii.06:00 and once again there’s also class hierarchies in dykes and so the dykes I’m talking about are pretty much middle-class dykes and there’s a whole difference in terms of the kind of rooting rituals of say the western suburbs dykes or or whatever it’s very different yeah and I can’t give you any in insight into that but it’s a bit more kind of um a bit more direct and a bit more

L.ii.06:30 the line of I don’t know whether you’ve seen those T-shirts that some young girls have now which say go hard or go home (I laugh a little) you know um

Russell:
No I haven’t seen those

Lydia:
Yeah so there is you know there is this new generation which is you’re here for the sex you know and when it’s over go home you know and if you can’t get it up I’m not interested kind of stuff anyway back to the night so I

L.ii.07:00 my while I go okay what’s the positive thing I can do I predict that (she begins a list) one there’ll be couples coming and their big thing is to have a wild moment having sex in this place and you know many of them had planned it many weeks ahead kind of stuff and worked out outfits and all that kind of stuff then there’d be the inner sanctum ones who would be kind of doing it and then there would be

L.ii.07:30 all the other ones who were hoping against hope that they might but nothing would eventuate on the evening

Russell:
And what did you expect the total population to be in terms of numbers

Lydia:
Oh the Ladies Night things were always well attended so a a I don’t know how many you can fit in there but more than three hundred

L.ii.08:00 kind of stuff so what I thought I’d do is I would do a performance that in modelled them being active sexually rather than sitting and hoping so the um the Madonna book had just been released and of course they were all kind of (she puts on a voice) so
excited about that *(I laugh a little, and she returns to her usual voice)* and I’m kind of going yep well you can be

**I.ii.08:30**
you can be Madonna I go you can be Madonna so I’ve got my kind of Victoria outfit and I do my usual schlick stick with that but then the performance involved me getting up individuals from the audience and fetishising them in some way such as putting their hands behind their back and tying it with a black ribbon and then taking a Polaroid of that and then untying them giving them the ribbon

**I.ii.09:00**
and giving them the Polaroid or kind of getting them up and tying ribbon around their neck and taking that part of their body and some would then kind of take their top off and let me photogra and do a Polaroid of their breasts

**Russell:**
Now which part of the building did this occur in

**Lydia:**
In the lounge room

**Russell:**
Upstairs

**Lydia:**
Upstairs

**Russell:**
Yeah okay and was it an ongoing event *(Lydia lights up a cigarette)* throughout the night or was it

**Lydia:**
Did the did that structured that as the performance and then during

**I.ii.09:30**
the night went around and took Polaroids of them and would put people together who hadn’t been together um or couples like there was this great coup um photograph I took of um this couple who I knew where they had had pearls around their neck and so I took them off and put them around their waist and the Polaroid is just of them standing side by side and it’s just a crutch

**I.ii.10:00**
shot of them kind of stuff and that kind of lived on their kind of fridge door for um for you know a year or more

**Russell:**
So all the Polaroids you took you gave to the women

**Lydia:**
Back to them

**Russell:**
Okay the *(Lydia gets up and moves to the far side of the room)* you’re fetching an ashtray are you

**Lydia:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
I’m just saying that for the record *(I laugh a little)*

**Lydia:**
Okay

**Russell:**
Um

**Lydia:**
No you offended me deeply

**Russell:**
No no no the

**Lydia:**
Because it was about them putting themselves in the frame

**I.ii.10:30**
of being sexualised instead of looking at Madonna and sexualising her

**Russell:**
Um what did they do with the Polaroids when you gave them to them I mean the women weren’t were very wearing very many clothes sort of like

**Lydia:**
Upstairs they were
Russell:
Oh right okay

Lydia:
but then they all started encouraging one another and like you know I might tug at their top and they'd look at their girlfriends and they'd go on go on and so everyone was so

11:00
happy at these (she laughs a little) perfect strangers were kind of showin' their tits to them and all this kind of stuff and they just they and and the thing is is they were hot they were raring to go and yet they would all sit there waiting for someone else to

Russell:
In the upstairs lounge area

Lydia:
Yeah and downstairs they bas basically treated it like a sauna not a sexualised sauna so the round room became

11:30
a big gossip circle (she laughs a little)

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
Um there was bits of display happening around the pool but you know Ms N took that over no Ms O became the queen of the pool um

Russell:
How did sh when you say she became the queen of the pool what did she do

Lydia:
Oh do you know Ms O

Russell:
No

Lydia:
Oh

Russell:
But what did she do I'm interested when you say somebody became the queen of the pool

Lydia:

12:00
Um

Russell:
what did they do to earn that

Lydia:
Oh she has enormous norks and loves her cleavage

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
and you know beautiful dyed redhead pale skin red lips

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
Like the the epitome of the lipstick blonde and you know she became the queen of the pool in in a sense because you've got all the kind of suburban dykes with their bad haircuts and

Russell:
But what did she do at the pool to become the queen I mean

12:30
she was there obviously

Lydia:
Developed developed developed her coterie around her

Russell:
Um

Lydia:
So it was displaying that she had more friends and knew more people because the Ladies Night things were quite hierarchical
All right

**Lydia:**
in that way

**Russell:**

Now physically how did she do that though like um there’s a pool was she in the pool with her friends around her or out of the pool

**Lydia:**

Oh but out

**Russell:**

Sitting standing walking *(these are all questions)*

**Lydia:**

You take up residence on the side of pool surely you’ve taken up residence on the side of a pool

**Russell:**

Ah I don’t I don’t want to give away *(I.ii.13:00)*
too many trade secrets initially

**Lydia:**

Um

**Russell:**

I have I certainly have

**Lydia:**

But but basically

**Russell:**

but when you say on the side

**Lydia:**

Look it

**Russell:**

was she sitting with her legs in the water or on the benches

**Lydia:**

Oh probably more forties glamour forty glamour you know you know how you can arrange yourself to your best advantage you have to tilt your s you remove your belly by tilting your pelvis you offer thigh you can offer yourself up so your breasts are available and it’s flattering

**Russell:**

*(I.ii.13:30)*

So she’s doing this at ground level beside the water

**Lydia:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

Okay so this is the th this is the kind of

**Lydia:**

Okay but that’s within the context of there’s a hi there was a hierarchy at the *Ladies Night* stuff

**Russell:**

Right

**Lydia:**

which were there were those who were part of the club and there’re those who weren’t

**Russell:**

Yes

**Lydia:**

and and there were and so upstairs and downstairs etcetera etcetera that would be signed because of outfits and behaviour and *(I.ii.14:00)*

who you knew and

**Russell:**

Would that be signed at another club event which wasn’t at a male sex venue as well

**Lydia:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

So that transferred
Lydia: Yeah

Russell: more or less intact

Lydia: Just about yeah

Russell: Yeah okay now when you say just about were there any were you saying that just to hedge your bets or were you saying that because you were aware of

Lydia: Probably to hedge my bets yeah

Russell: Right okay fair enough

Lydia: Yeah

Russell: Good all right

Lydia: Um and so yes sex happened on the night but it was couples who would kind of go off and kind of be in the cubbyholes

Russell: I.ii.14:30

the wandless aimering [sic] in the corridors so let’s talk about body behaviour you know like the most in so I read the space previously imagining how people would be in it and then the kind of wandless aimeri [sic] wandless strolling [sic] and and like you know it was like you know when people go and check out display homes or homes that are open for a viewing that’s pretty much what it was

I.ii.15:00

so lots of looking in the cubbyholes and lots of sticking into the round room and thinking whether they’d be on the but you know the round room

Russell: So the women were checking out the space more than they were checking out each other

Lydia: Yeah

Russell: Right okay did that did that um get sustained through the evening or as the evening wore on did they stop checking the space less as

Lydia: It was miserable downstairs and much more fun upstairs

Russell: I.ii.15:30

(I laugh) All right

Lydia: Which I would imagine is the other way around um

Russell: Why wha ah well we we won’t

Lydia: Well it had there was no energy downstairs

Russell: Right

Lydia: You know the one thing my projection on

Russell: Social energy

Lydia: Energy

Russell: Energy

Lydia: Yes so my my projection would be that in a performative space downstairs when men are in it there is a frisson in the air because
there is a business to be done and that business was not there that night

Russell:

With the women

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

And what is that business

Lydia:

Wanting to fuck people

Russell:

Right okay and

Lydia:

Or

Russell:

So so for the men

Lydia:

No no signs of it no not okay yeah they wanted to fuck people but they didn’t know how
to do it because the way the space is they can’t perform in that space

Russell:

Well what was it about the way the space was downstairs that did not permit women to perform in that way

Lydia:

They don’t know the codes so their desire is so (she begins a list) one one

Russell:

I don’t I’ve never used a Polaroid so I don’t know how many

Lydia:

Probably about ten

Russell:

Okay
Lydia:
Ten or twelve

Russell:
So and then there'd be like kind of the the staging of each photograph and whatever the aftermath was

Lydia:
And some people came up to ask for their photo to be taken

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
No

Russell:
All right

Lydia:
Of course not

Russell:
So was your camera in a sense like um did it take the form of an accessory for the evening

Lydia:
No I suppose it was a way what's the metaphor

Russell:
they know how to behave they know how to model for a camera by actually getting them to do that and to be able to display for the camera I suppose I was encouraging them to do it without the camera

Lydia:
And upstairs that seems to have been it er from what you said it sounds as though women had

Russell:
an experience of

Lydia:
In the communal

Russell:
giving permission

Lydia:
Yes

Russell:
Yeah okay

Lydia:
They loved it

Russell:
Yeah okay now what I'm now right the next series of questions I remind you that you you know you don't have to answer anything if you don't want to

Lydia:
Mm

Russell:
Did you need the camera that night

Lydia:
Um I needed the camera for the role I gave myself in the night

Russell:
Right okay

Lydia:
Because remember I was there to do the performance

Russell:
Right were you paid for your performance

Lydia:
No

Russell:
No no but I'm just wondering about the interest you might have had in being distinct

Lydia:
Um
Russell: and that being marked as well you said for instance you were in your Victorian gear

Lydia: Oh the Victoria outfit

Russell: Which was

Lydia: That's from the first um that's from an earlier art project um which is the girl one which is the black suede boots the leather cuffs with instead of a chain a blonde plait of hair um it takes the swathe of the bustle so there's just a black piece of crepe that swathes around and comes up into a big bow

Russell: Yeah

Lydia: It has a choker and then between the bow and the neck piece there are three chains that come up the back

Russell: Come up the back

Lydia: Yeah

Russell: Yeah

Lydia: There are um two big clips they're just big hair clips rather than nipple clips because they need to be exaggerated and there's a chain that hangs there there's the head-dress which has um ostrich plumes and the fascinator

Russell: And the ostrich plumes are black

Lydia: Yeah it's all black

Russell: Yeah okay

Lydia: Um

Russell: So it has a funerary dimension to it as well

Lydia: Yeah it's it's from that yeah

Russell: Yeah

Lydia: but it's also um showgirl

Russell: Okay

Lydia: too

Russell: Right okay

Lydia: Yeah yeah

Russell: Right did you go into the steam room wearing this

Lydia: No

Russell: Did you go into the steam room at all that night

Lydia:
No I can only vaguely remember the steam room

Russell:
Right

Lydia:
Well the steam room is very popular

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia: because the role that women gave themselves is they were treating it like a health club

Russell:
Yeah okay

Lydia: I.ii.22:00 Relaxing

Russell:
And for you it so you were

Lydia: So the big step for them was to show themselves naked

Russell:
Right

Lydia: So that's the bit that was that was their risk

Russell:
And although you were wearing a lot of things there was a sense in which you were naked

Lydia:
Mm

Russell: Yeah okay but you had your Polaroid camera as well

Lydia: I may have even got them to touch me

Russell:
So your role was one and

Lydia: I.ii.22:30 your your attire is that what word would you use

Lydia: Um construction um but I probably shed it like I probably I would have done the performance I would have allocated a certain amount of time to do photographs and then I would have got out of it

Russell:
Right but you don't recall that specifically when you say you would've it's as though you're speculating

Lydia: I.ii.23:00 or

Russell:
No I did and I would probably say that there were equal numbers of women who would talk to me when I was in the outfit and when I was out of it

Lydia: Right so does didn't make very much difference

Russell:
Nuh

Lydia: Right okay did you take advantage of when you talk about the codes being inappropriate did you develop

Russell: I.ii.23:30 um behaviours or gestures in the course of the evening whereby you felt you were utilising the possibilities of the space

Lydia:
Nuh

Russell:
No
Lydia:

Nuh my main thing was to be fairly accessible really because the whole thing was to keep them comfortable it was a friendly gesture

Russell:

So were you in a position where you were sexually available in the way other women were sexually available or sexually interested in other women in the way other women there may have been sexually interested

Lydia:

Um

Russell:

Or were you there as it were professionally

Lydia:

Probably professionally

Russell:

Yeah okay

Lydia:

Yeah I'm like that I had a job to do

Russell:

Right

Lydia:

kind of thing yeah but also too most of the women that go to those events don't interest me

Russell:

Yeah yeah

Lydia:

kind of thing um yeah they don't interest me

Russell:

(a silence,

I.ii.25:00

then) The space has been made by men I assume for men um and you've talked about ways in which women um I'll I'll introduce a term were baffled in relationship to it is that a fair term to use I don't mean puzzled so much as they were baffled in the sense that

Lydia:

I don't think they were even baffled you see um one thing I noted to talk about earlier that I think the image that they could draw on was either the health club

Russell:

Yeah

Lydia:

yeah but the other image is the seraglio or the hareem

Russell:

Yes

Lydia:

And that's definitely what they applied so um they weren't baffled they used two images that they had and applied those to them and so it wasn't so much that they were baffled they were in this space they knew it was a space for sex they didn't quite know how to achieve that in a sense um so they predominately stayed within two images that they had which was of either the health club or the seraglio and the seraglio is a kind of depressing one for me because it's about a bunch of women waiting around to be chosen

Russell:

By a man

Lydia:

Yeah so it's still within that kind of um being passive object rather than active subject so intellectually they want to be active subjects but they don't know how to arrive at that but I do keep I have to keep saying I think that is definitely changing and so say when I'm kind of you know I'm at Honky Tonks with Mr P
and you know I’m interested introduced to Mr Q um who knows Honky Tonks well they have kind of um co-ed toilets kind of unisex toilets and apparently it gets very active I.ii.27:30

Russell:

I’ve been to Honky Tonks

Lydia:

in the toilets

Russell:

I’ve been inside I found it interesting that the toilet doors didn’t exist

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

That there’s a view into the women’s toilets but not into the cubicles of the women’s toilets

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

and there’s a view into the men’s toilets but not into directly onto the urinals but this absence of doors I found quite nice apart from all the other detail I.ii.28:00

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

But um yeah I’m not surprised that the toilets become places where people might go into one that’s designated for another gender or but are you talking there at that about those toilets being used for primarily couplings between men and women

Lydia:

He was not explicit on that

Russell:

Right

Lydia:

I tried drawing him on that

Russell:

Yeah okay yeah I’m not I mean the whole place looks like you just go in there and hose it (I laugh) ah that’s the other thing that interested me I mean I’ve actually spoken with a couple of other women um did the thing about um I’m interested because you talked about your first awareness was of the cleaning product involved and you also told me and this immediately struck with stuck with me when you talked to told me that your mother stopped cleaning the house at the age of four what about your awareness of things like hygiene cleanliness I.ii.29:00

Lydia:

Ah but see that’s what I mean by the ungenerosity of the material

Russell:

Yeah

Lydia:

because when I say it’s all four by two in chipboard

Russell:

Yeah

Lydia:

Four by two in chipboard poor building materials will always look grotty it’s not that they’re unclean I.ii.29:30

Russell:

Did you think you were in a clean space

Lydia:
Oh yeah

Russell:
or a cleaned space

Lydia:
Cleaned space

Russell:
A cleaned space

Lydia:
And I also felt that they would be obsessive about that

Russell:
Yeah because of

Lydia:
Because of all the paranoia of AIDS and all that kind of stuff

Russell:
Right

Lydia:
So yes while it looks grotty its baseline though is it would be obsessive

Russell:
about being clean um and that's why I laughed in a sense laughed when kind of um you know Ms C’s complaining about the vinyl because like well yeah it's so you can wipe it down you dork (she laughs a little) you know it's like yes no it's not meant to be nice to lie on it gets covered in kind of cum and you

Lydia:
Know KY and sweat and all this kind of stuff and it's like yep it's meant to be wiped down it's meant to be non-porous it's you know it's

Russell:
Were women barefoot mainly

Lydia:
Um oh yeah downstairs unless they needed heels to kind of project their image

Russell:
Because you had boots

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah yeah

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
Um

Lydia:
For me see no

Russell:
What um then

Lydia:
So for me it's not grotty it's um it's not very glamorous or generous

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
You know there's no abundance in the materials

Russell:
Yeah I hear that word generous and [unintelligible]

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
It's it's interesting you say that because no

Lydia:
One else none of the men none of the women have conceived around that term the idea that a place could be generous you know in the in the variety of ways that
you’ve articulated um is there anything you want to ask me

Lydia: 

Um

Russell: 

that you’re curious about

Lydia: 

I.ii.32:00
I suppose I’m more curious not so much in why you’re asking questions about steam houses but more about for you what’s the interest in in performativeness I suppose or is it a for me I suppose the question to you is is it is it about the person in the space and what they bring to it or is it what the space is

I.ii.32:30
kind of stuff

Russell: 

(I sigh, then) I suppose my question is that same question (we laugh a little) which is is it the place or is it the person or is is somehow are do we make false distinctions you know like I’m interested you’ve got an interest in you’ve explored or examined an interest in what home

I.ii.33:00
is now for me home is interesting because I don’t know how people can distinguish a place and the person in ma in talking about something like home

Lydia: 

Okay

Russell: 

because it seems to me there’s very clear that those things are connected

Lydia: 

Connected yeah

Russell: 

in some fundamental way where to imagine them disconnected you know people say I feel at

Lydia & Russell: 

home now

Russell: 

you know um

I.ii.33:30
and they don’t have to be home to feel at home as well

Lydia: 

See I I will go back that what surprised me about Volcano is not the downstairs space

Russell: 

Yeah

Lydia: 

It was the upstairs space

Russell: 

(I laugh a little) Well I could tell you things that are even more surprising like for instance being in I I’ll this is one I’ve already put on the record but at the risk of boring the examiners um being in that building at

I.ii.34:00
when the music

Lydia: 

Stopped

Russell: 

wa being piped through the building was replaced with the soundtrack of a Julie Andrews movie that was being screened in the upstairs lounge

Lydia: 

room

Russell: 

area but that being piped though the entire building

Lydia: 

Building

Russell: 

Um and whether it’s a heavy duty area which is now upstairs ah another level

Lydia: 

1177
Level

Russell:

up yeah ah or in the basement
I.ii.34:30
you know whe wherever it was

Lydia:

It could be very off putting

Russell:

It

Lydia:

to say the least (she laughs)

Russell:

It was it was very (laughing) focussing

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

It was really interesting

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

But um I guess I’m interested I’m for me I it this my research is about understanding myself

Lydia:

Okay

Russell:

and I’m finding the ways in which I’ve understood that these
I.ii.35:00
places are places that have been involved in a personal transformation now I don’t I’m not claiming they’re a cause at all but they’ve certainly become an occasion in the way that a gym might be a place where people get fit

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

You know um they don’t cause the fitness but they bec

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

Become the occasion for it

Lydia:

I can remember being deeply admiring of
I.ii.35:30
the range of spaces downstairs like that description I gave you of what I imagine to be the the range of possibility of partnerings and performances I was I’ve always been deeply admiring of that I thought that was very sophisticated

Russell:

The other thing is this and that is that
I.ii.36:00
I’m really really interested in the fact that when I first started going which wasn’t really very long ago I I would not claim to be an expert you know either as a practitioner or as a thinker about saunas but what I did know was that every directorial bone in my body was activated in a way that has happened on a few
I.ii.36:30
theatre projects for want of a better word ah and I felt like suddenly I was in the place where even like the distinctions between um director performer

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

audience

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

Such distinctions suddenly became um problematised or there isn’t a word for what I’m trying to say but had were rendered in in new possible ways that I hadn’t
I.ii.37:00
experienced in a theatre

Lydia:

You know the thing that amazed me about the spaces downstairs where I can apply that theory as to what I imagine each of the spaces elicits from the performer

Russell:

Yeah

Lydia:

um is that I think what I knew was that they had that they hadn’t been arrived at from theory they’d been arrived at from practice and that they had been made

I.ii.37:30

because the people who made this space had a lived understanding of what they required from a space and what was also interesting was that there’s so many multiple choices there

Russell:

Yeah

Lydia:

in terms of dynamic of dynamics um so you’ve got to have this because there’s those ones who like that and there’s these ones who like this and and so that also is kind of so while it is not generous in its materials it’s generous in terms of

I.ii.38:00

trying to take on board the needs that the multiple needs of the different peccadilloes of people who will come in

Russell:

But what you witnessed was a group of people who’d arrived raring to have sex

Lydia:

Well curious too

Russell:

Curious a sense of possibility in the air

Lydia:

And wanting to explore that side of themselves

Russell:

Yeah

Lydia:

and blah de blah de blah

Russell:

But then in the course of the

I.ii.38:30

evening effectively what occurred was they ended up socialising in familiar ways and it appeared that that ex personal exploration dimension didn’t occur

Lydia:

But I don’t

Russell:

Is that is that a fair summation

Lydia:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

Yeah

Lydia:

Yeah it was like flat champagne

Russell:

Right (I laugh a little, then) yeah

Lydia:

You know and it because I mean isn’t it interesting

I.ii.39:00

because I was thinking about that only when I was at dinner I I seem to have fallen into this ritual of of dinner with um Ms R and Ms S and Ms T and Ms U and you know all old troopers from you know the early eighties and community arts and stuff and we you know have just in the last year have fall into this ritual of of kind of having dinner about four times a year and the way in which we can burble on and

I.ii.39:30

share and finish sentences and everyone tells stories and just it’s kind of fantastic and you know when you were just talking I was thinking about how women are so good at that and blokes are supposedly not very
good at that and yet in this other space that
same burbling and exchange and all that
kind of stuff can happen in you know the
environment of *Volcano* where there’s all
that fluidity

I.ii.40:00
and give and take and blah de blah de blah
and that you know

**Russell:**

Did that happen with the women that they
were chatty and burbling and

**Lydia:**

Um not in quite the same way as I was just
thinking about it when I was at dinner the
other night just kind of you know I was
thinking like if you were filming this this is
the perfect the perfect example of
supposedly how chicks can communicate
with one another kind of stuff where you can
range from kind of work

I.ii.40:30
and love and future and go right well you
know we’ve got Ms R settled now so we
have to move on to Ms U because you know
her life’s a mess and blah de blah de blah
and Ms T’s been a bit whatever but we’ve
got her on the path now so the
spotlight’s off you you know it’s been it was
on Ms R a lot last year but she’s doing okay
so now Ms U’s getting all the attention yeah
it’s kind of you know um and

I.ii.41:00
I kind yeah so it’s just another I think
observation to make about in that
environment when it’s peopled by men my I
suppose kind of fantasy is that there is
something akin in a nonverbal way to that
kind of fluidity of giving and taking and who’s
in focus and who’s not kind of stuff though
then there are all those other things about
lookism and and are there men who sit in

I.ii.41:30
the lounge room who don’t go downstairs
because they don’t think they could cut it
anymore

**Russell:**

Um if there are I haven’t met anyone who’s
identified them

**Lydia & Russell:**

selves

**Russell:**

as that ah but when you described certain
older men who may not be immediately
physically competitive in some way um my
sense is those

I.ii.42:00
men tend to go straight down

**Lydia & Russell:**

stairs

**Lydia:**

Okay

**Russell:**

But um for what purpose and what they had
in mind

**Lydia:**

To be in it I think I think what I I think what
I noted was that I I was aware that there
might be a range of men who could no
longer be active participants but they still
wanted to be in the hurly burly

I.ii.42:30

**Russell:**

I don’t believe um that distinction

**Lydia & Russell:**

occurs

**Russell:**

Um

**Lydia:**

Well then it’s even more egalitarian than I
think

I wasn’t saying that it was egalitarian but I
don’t believe there are men especially older
men who believe that they’re going to go
there and not be a participant in some way
simply because the upstairs lounge area um
is not an area I associate

I.ii.43:00
with those men those men I associate with
the downstairs wet area

**Lydia:**

Okay
Russell:
and the cubicles

Lydia:
Cubicles

Russell:
Um and that includes men who aren’t necessarily comfortable with having to go up and down stairs

Lydia:
Okay

Russell:
Some of whom are you know I mean yes they can go up and down the stairs but it’s obviously they don’t skitter and trip up and down the stairs they take it carefully um

I.ii.43:30
and I’ve seen men downstairs at Volcano who are elderly that’s the word they’re elderly and they’re clearly there um they seem to have erotic interests and projects and I guess they’re being fulfilled in some way

Lydia:
There’s two Pat Califia stories I’d also like to draw your attention to

I.ii.44:00
um (she moves to the bookcase) [unintelligible] still there um and they’re different in two ways (she begins a list) one because most of it’s pretty schlock but there’s two stories one’s the um the Lily Of Praxis or something [unintelligible] get the right references [unintelligible] (she returns to the sofa with two volumes)

I.ii.44:30
okay

Russell:
So that’s in Macho Sluts

Lydia:
In Macho Sluts it’s the Calyx Of Isis

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
and the Calyx Of Isis is um a scenario where all the tops all the best tops in town get together to basically see how far they can take

I.ii.45:00
this bottom kind of stuff and so it’s it’s an epic cap it’s it’s basically a catalogue of what could be what could be done but it’s it’s the kind of story version of this thing about how tops can only go so far as in a sense the power of the bottom yeah but there’s the the one that profoundly

I.ii.45:30
affects me more and I think it’s The Surprise Party and it um (she checks the table of contents) sixty-three I’m I’m wasting your tape here (she turns pages) sixty-three nuh

I.ii.46:00
oh is it even in this I’ll describe it first and then I’ll find you the story basically um this dyke is picked up by the police um when she’s on the street and is put in the back of this police car and is basically abused while she’s cuffed and stuff but the the powerful and profound thing in it is the

I.ii.46:30
idea that kind of sucking cock or taking cock in the in your mouth is a much more profound experience than taking cock in your fanny or your arse because you are really fucking the the you’re fucking the person because you’re fucking their face

Russell:
Sorry taking the cock

Lydia:
Just the idea of being

Russell:
or giving the cock to the

Lydia:

I.ii.47:00
Taking well but but the idea is that in terms of all the orifices available the most intimate and the least anonymous is the face because that is the site of identity in one sense

Russell:
All right

Lydia:
In term yeah in terms of person or whatever
Russell:

See I always think that one of the things about that um that I always find amazing is teeth *(I laugh a little)*

Lydia:

I.ii.47:30

Yes

Russell:

But I mean and I don’t know whether it’s a thing that occurs to you but every now and again it’s the case that um someone it’s a very sensitive part of me and of I think of other men and every now and again there may be the issue that somebody’s teeth

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

Just kind of cause um a little momentary

I.ii.48:00

Soreness or you know whatever but of course the other option is that if people are forcibly if there’s some forcing the teeth are a potential area of extreme retaliation

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

And so that it becomes the orifice that’s actually an extremely um there there needs to be some bond of trust

Lydia:

Mm and that’s what I think I’m highlighting

Russell:

Right

Lydia:

I.ii.48:30

And so if I was talking about that context earlier of all the background to this I in terms of my kind of stuff in the Califia stuff is that was probably the most powerful idea that I arrived at in any any of that for all the reasons that you’ve just talked about there because that the negotiation of that penetration is

I.ii.49:00

Is much more interesting in one sense than I find it very interesting

Russell:

Shall we stop there

Lydia:

Mm

Russell:

Okay

Lydia:

*(she immediately turns back to the volumes)*

Now is it in this

*(I switch off the minidisc recorder)*

I.ii.49:25

END OF CONVERSATION
appendices 17–24
appendix 17: Urdhvaretu I

The transcript documents a conversation with Urdhvaretu recorded at my flat on a weekday afternoon. Urdhvaretu arrived on time and we immediately began. The transcript fails to reproduce the deadpan and ironic tone that inflected much of what he said. Nor does it effectively evoke the ambiguity of his silences or his moments of impenetrable reserve. On several occasions, unexpectedly and with cartoon-like glee, he would, as it were, slip into character, an activity that I refer to in the transcript as putting on a voice, and produce parodic comedy from the least likely material. We drank water while we talked.

Russell:

I.i.00:00
All right (noises intrude from the building next door) we’ll just ignore they’re renovating out there um many years ago I think you told me that someone we both know took you and your friend off to a sauna and I’m wondering first of all is that the case and sec have I remembered that incorrectly or

I.i.00:30
did you tell that to me incorrectly and secondly it was that the first time you ever visited one

Urdhvaretu:
Ah no I don’t think I told you that

Russell:
(laughing a little) All right

Urdhvaretu:
and I it’s not true anyway

Russell:
Oh right okay

Urdhvaretu:
Ah um um there might be something behind it but if there was it wasn’t a sauna

I.i.01:00
I can’t remember what it is what it was

Russell:

Do you remember the first time then that you went to a sauna in Melbourne

Urdhvaretu:
Ah I don’t remember the first time but I remember the first phase

Russell:
The first phase

Urdhvaretu:
Mm the first kind of period in my life when I went to saunas

Russell:
So the first visit wasn’t isolated it was one of a series of visits

Urdhvaretu:
Well in some sense in the sense that I went back again

I.i.01:30

Russell:
Yeah okay

Urdhvaretu:
Okay so um

Russell:
Um at any stage when I’m asking you these questions um the thing that is most useful for the work I’m doing is the things that you can speak of with confidence or certainty even if they don’t make

I.i.02:00
sense in some cases whereas things that seem to be logically deducible that you more or less have to deduce them on the spot they’re they’re less important for me is that kind of clear
Um maybe

Russell:

(laughing a little) All right okay

Urdhvaretu:

So you can tell me if you think that I’m deducing

Russell:

Um well I might ask you if

Urdhvaretu:

Okay

Russell:

If you have deduced something

Urdhvaretu:

Right

Russell:

All right

Urdhvaretu:

Ah I mean that there was a period and I
couldn’t really say how long it was a couple of years maybe um where I went to saunas and then it stopped

Russell:

Right and that was in Melbourne

Urdhvaretu:

In Melbourne yes

Russell:

And

Urdhvaretu:

Um this is when I was at university so early eighties

Russell:

Yeah okay and there’s no specific memory you attach to the first such visit

Urdhvaretu:

No

Russell:

No okay do you know how you came to start going

Urdhvaretu:

Um I went with my friend um but I don’t remember ah who first learned of it

Russell:

Right

Urdhvaretu:

My guess would be that it would be my friend but

I don’t remember

Russell:

Right that’s fine

Urdhvaretu:

I can I have a vague a memory of the the sensation of trying to navigate an unfamiliar place but it has no particular content in it just

Russell:

Can you tell me what that vague memory though is

Urdhvaretu:

No it’s just the um

no all it is is the standard sense that you know you know that at one point these rooms and corridors were completely unfamiliar um but I don’t remember the shift I mean I don’t remember any particular details about going from not knowing to to knowing the the layout

Russell:
Yeah okay um when you say you were going to saunas

I.i.05:00
was there a s a number of venues you would visit or just one only

Urdhvaretu:
No it was always Volcano

Russell:
Volcano okay um and its layout then was very different from what it is now or very much the same

Urdhvaretu:
Um I think it had one less floor

Russell:
Which floor (I laugh a little)

Urdhvaretu:
The top floor was missing

Russell:
Okay

Urdhvaretu:
If I’m not mistaken

Russell:
Yeah there’s um

Urdhvaretu:
Because I can remember when I went again it had become much bigger

Russell:
In an upward direction

Urdhvaretu:
Yes

Russell:
(laughing a little) Okay do you recall imaginings or awarenesses of saunas or sauna-like places before you actually went to one

Urdhvaretu:

I.i.06:00
I would guess no I don’t remember I don’t think so no

Russell:
Do you have any awareness of how you became aware that such places existed

Urdhvaretu:
No

Russell:
As I’m asking these questions are these kind of um blanks or negatives or do they seem curious to you or

Urdhvaretu:
No no

Russell:
No not at all so you don’t regard them as significant things that you would have bothered to retain

Urdhvaretu:
Um no I don’t know um

I.i.07:00
I mean I think I would have I would be in the same position if you asked me questions about X University when did I first hear of X University did I think about universities before I went to them actually no that’s probably not true because I knew about X University when I was at school so I’d have more information about that but

Russell:

And you

Urdhvaretu:
Um

Russell:
And your teachers wouldn’t have taught you about saunas presumably

Urdhvaretu:
No

Russell:
No

so is so in terms of origins there's a sense now that they always were or

Urdhvaretn}

Do you mean historically or for me

Russell:

For you

Urdhvaretn}

No they weren't no no no because I started going at a certain point and then I stopped at a certain point

Russell:

But that point isn't certain

Urdhvaretn}

It was then (I laugh a little) I mean in terms I don't know when exactly it was

Russell:

Yeah yeah yeah

Urdhvaretn}

but I don't know a date

Russell:

Yeah okay

Urdhvaretn}

Um

Russell:

So you went for a couple of years and then you stopped how did you come to stop

Urdhvaretn}

Um I think I think I rarely enjoyed going there and um the sexual encounters were not successful

Russell:

When you say you found it an unsatisfactory place to go do you mean the actual building

Urdhvaretn}

Layout no no

Russell:

No or do you mean then what by place

Urdhvaretn}

Um

as a venue where you expect good sexual things to happen so a place in that sense

Russell:

When you stopped do you have a clear awareness of of the process of stopping

Urdhvaretn}

No

Russell:

No

Urdhvaretn}

No and I would say that the um I didn’t think I I I didn’t go in a um very regular fashion so the whole series would be intermittent and and so on and so at some point I just didn’t go back again um and then it wouldn’t actually be and then a few days few years later I went to America and there were no saunas they’d been shut down

Russell:

Yes

Urdhvaretn}

Well they were shut down

Russell:

Yes
(putting on a voice) San Francisco (he reverts to his usual voice) oh there was one in another city but I never went to it where I was living studying in that other city

Russell:
So when did you resume

Urdhvaretu:
Um I don’t remember the year um but I’m presume it was um in one of my visits back here and then

Russell:

I.i.10:30
While you were still in North America

Urdhvaretu:
Yes I think so I presume that’s the case more deduction um and then since I’ve been living back here so since I’ve been living back here I’ve gone more regularly than at any time in the past

Russell:
So what has shifted then that’s changed from the first phase this is now the second phase

Urdhvaretu:
Yes

Russell:
Is that the appropriate term (I laugh a little)

Urdhvaretu:
Yes the

I.i.11:00
second phase

Russell:
Okay so since the first phase

Urdhvaretu:
With some transitionalism [sic] before my actual return to Australia

Russell:
Is that significant this transitionalism

Urdhvaretu:
Um no probably not just that it it’s um you know being in Australia is like a kind of special occasion so um it just meant that it wouldn’t take up the kind of regular volume

I.i.11:30
that it might if I had been living here so it just meant that you know that it was something that I sometimes did when I was back in Australia back in Melbourne for relatively brief periods of

Russell:
So what has shifted though like you you seemed um seemed clear in some respects anyway

I.i.12:00
that there was um you were unsatisfied with these as places um as venues to meet people to have sexual experiences and that you stopped did that satisfaction change that degree of satisfaction alter

Urdhvaretu:
Mm yes

Russell:
In what way

Urdhvaretu:
Um

Russell:

I.i.12:30
or ways

Urdhvaretu:
Well it’s a little bit tricky because my memories of phase one are on the vague side

Russell:
Yeah that’s fine

Urdhvaretu:
Um ah I think on a very pragmatic level the um regular provision of lubricant made it a more pleasant place to go um and I suppose there must have just been something about my age or the way I looked on things so that

I.i.13:00
I was more likely to have a um a pleasant encounter there though I I think it’s also not constant because it’s I know there have been periods when ah I’ve gone
successively and the visit hasn’t gone well and if it happens enough then it’s ok I’ve had enough and I stop going for a bit um and then I go back another a later at a later point and um if things go well and then it becomes a readier option to think of going there rather than just a waste of time

Russell:
That seems like a a very obvious series of relations is it as obvious as that like that if things are going well then you feel encouraged to go more frequently and then if things if the visits don’t go well then you’re discouraged and you decrease your visits

Urdhvaretu:
Um well it certainly works on the negative side

Russell:
Right

Urdhvaretu:
Um well I mean I’ve always I’ve always thought of them as I just keep using the word place all the time for your

Russell:
That’s all right you can

Urdhvaretu:
For your benefit

Russell:
No no you don’t have to say that for my benefit at all

Urdhvaretu:
No no no no um

Russell:
But do you think of them as places

Urdhvaretu:
Well they are places

Russell:
Yeah that’s all right okay

Urdhvaretu:
Yeah

Russell:
Well let’s get that out of the way okay
(Urdhvaretu laughs a little)

Urdhvaretu:
Um

Russell:
We don’t we nei

Urdhvaretu:
Yeah I’m just speaking naturally but it’s just there’s a

Russell:
Yeah okay an awareness

Urdhvaretu:
(putting on a voice) Insofar as one does (I laugh a little, he reverts to his usual voice) ah I’ve always thought of them as venues and with um um some serious down sides to them or or some kind of surprising inadequacies

Russell:
Yeah I’m just speaking naturally but it’s just there’s a

Urdhvaretu:
(putting on a voice) Insofar as one does (I laugh a little, he reverts to his usual voice) ah I’ve always thought of them as venues and with um um some serious down sides to them or or some kind of surprising inadequacies

Russell:
It contracts

Urdhvaretu:
Well just figuratively speaking um and also that when you get into that kind of rhythm um and maybe it’s a bit like casinos and
there are no I suppose there are clocks anyway but um

**Russell:**
Suppose ah there are clocks

**Urdhvaretu:**
Yes

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Urdhvaretu:**
[unintelligible] Steve Bracks intervening (*I laugh a little*)

I.i.16:00
and saving us from sauna tedium but just the fact that so much time you can waste so much time there if you you know you can be there for hours and hours and hours um and and not get anywhere and by the end well never mind [unintelligible]

**Russell:**
I always um always if I visit a new sauna find where all the clocks are first first thing  

I.i.16:30
but you have an awareness of the clocks not really being around or

**Urdhvaretu:**
No no no no ah and normally I wear a watch in any case um though

**Russell:**
You keep your watch on

**Urdhvaretu:**
I keep my watch on

**Russell:**
Oh yeah

**Urdhvaretu:**
Well um (*indicating his empty wrist*) I’ve got the little tan line here (*I laugh*) I’ve just lost it

**Russell:**
You’re not wearing it today

**Urdhvaretu:**
It’s lost

**Russell:**
Yeah okay oh sorry

**Urdhvaretu:**
Um well I know where it should be but um though you don’t want to [be?] seen looking at your watch in the sauna

**Russell:**
YOU don’t

**Urdhvaretu:**
I don’t no (*we laugh a little*) because it somehow suggests sort of fatigue and desperation

**Russell:**
To whom

**Urdhvaretu:**
Ah to you know one’s own projection of other viewers of oneself I suppose

**Russell:**
Do you have any

I.i.17:30
is that purely something that you’ve um anticipated or do you have an experience of somebody catching you looking at your watch in such a

**Urdhvaretu:**
No

**Russell:**
No no experience

**Urdhvaretu:**
No experience whatsoever

**Russell:**
It’s purely anticipatory

**Urdhvaretu:**
It’s just anticipatory
Russell:
So if you were to look at your watch you would first of all make sure the coast is clear

Urdhvaretu:
I don’t know how far I go (we laugh)

Russell:
You don’t know how far

I.i.18:00
Can you recall a recent time when you’ve looked at your watch in a sauna

Urdhvaretu:
Yes I think I at some point I always look at my watch

Russell:
Can you recall a specific recent instance

Urdhvaretu:
No

Russell:
Okay

Urdhvaretu:
Not enough to distinguish them from any other

Russell:
Yeah okay

Urdhvaretu:
But say I mean I think you know the my watch has got ah nice little or my other friend’s watch in fact has got a nice little blue glow thing

Russell:
Yeah

Urdhvaretu:
and um I know that if I was in one of the the kind of dark spaces

I.i.18:30
where there are other people present you wouldn’t be kind of flashing the time up (I laugh a little) it would seem like a lapse of manners or something

Russell:
I’ve seen one of those watches though in a dark space

Urdhvaretu:
(he laughs a little, then) Oh yes I suppose

Russell:
I don’t know whether it was you (I laugh a little)

Urdhvaretu:
No I wouldn’t

Russell:
But um I have seen I actually found it very helpful for orientation not for telling the time but just the fact that I was aware well there’s a wrist and it was moving there and there and there

Urdhvaretu:
I.i.19:00
At the sauna I mostly go to there are no dark spaces

Russell:
Which sauna is that

Urdhvaretu:
Squirt there’s been a de-darkening

Russell:
Oh right oh well because I was about to raise that there is a a darker area

Urdhvaretu:
Mm but it’s not as dark as dark places (putting on a voice) used to be in the old days

Russell:
(laughing a little) Um and how dark is that let’s how dark sorry

I.i.19:30
did dark places use to be in the old days

Urdhvaretu:
Um well the dark room the dark the darker portion of the wet sauna at Volcano was certainly black to behold from the outside and um

Russell:
Do you mean the steam room

Urdhvaretu:
Mm

Russell:
That area

Urdhvaretu:
The back part of it

Russell:
Yeah yep

Urdhvaretu:
Um not absolutely dark when you’re in there um

Russell:

I.i.20:00
I agree it is dark to look into

Urdhvaretu:
And there’s a middle bit in the labyrinth at Volcano which is quite dark next to the big couch circular couch or or maybe even that one isn’t as dark as it used to I don’t think it is I think there’s been a de-darkening program

Russell:

I.i.20:30
associate the darkness with the old days or very very dark areas with the old days I mean how tongue in cheek was that phrasing

Urdhvaretu:
Oh that was tongue in tongue in cheek but

Russell:
Yes but how tongue in cheek

Urdhvaretu:
Um

Russell:
A hundred percent (I laugh a little)

Urdhvaretu:
No not in the sense um oh well to strip it back I will just say that um I have an impression

I.i.21:00
that before sometime earlier there was you know saunas were more ready to have areas of virtually full darkness and it’s only it’s quite recent that um Squirt altered the sort of what had been covered window wall

I.i.21:30
to make it distinctly lighter so it’s now murky but it’s nowhere near kind of black space

Russell:
It’s interesting because that area they’ve actually stripped the paint back off that there was a glass wall that was painted black and that’s been scraped off

Urdhvaretu:
They’ve cut shapes in it

Russell:
Cut shapes yeah do you get the sense that was the staff or that it was the clients

Urdhvaretu:
Oh no it’s the staff

Russell:
Right okay

Urdhvaretu:
You don’t see the clients doing renovations

Russell:

I.i.22:00
Well I haven’t seen the clients do the but it seems ra ah like a rather unrefined job

Urdhvaretu:
Is it

Russell:

Oh ah my memory of it at the moment my very recent memory of it at the moment

Urdhvaretu:
 Um I think it’s more in the line of ah you know sort of contemporary art

Russell:
 (I laugh a little) All right um but the other thing that I was really aware of about that is not so much the amount of light it lets into that corner or that that area as the view it affords of the showers

Urdhvaretu:
 Right

Russell:
 and I’m conscious of myself and other men spending time now peering through the glass at the shower area that’s not something you’ve become aware of or

Urdhvaretu:
 Um yes I am aware of that

Russell:
 All right okay (I laugh a little)

Urdhvaretu:
 Um I suppose that just seems the less important element

Russell:
 For you

Urdhvaretu:
 Mm

Russell:
 Can you tell me now a bit more about the more important element

Urdhvaretu:
 Um

well I suppose ah in saunas there’s there’s some kind of fundamental reserve that people um exhibit um and partly to do with I’m sure it’s got to do with more than one thing but it’s it’s got something to do with the kind of hierarchy of attractiveness you have a kind of image that um you know people wish to discriminate who they come into sexual contact with and the that coming into sexual contact um oh well you know the the identity of the other party um is determined by you know information that you have about them predominantly visual and so the more light there is the more you know about the other person and the less light there is the less you know and so um the less present standards of bodily attractiveness are and so a dark place is somewhere where you’re closer to a situation where anybody can have sex with anybody um and an example of that (putting on a voice) if I can recall from my own past (I laugh, and he returns to his usual voice) is um ah someone who was um sort of enthusiastically engaging with me in a dark space in this case ah an upstairs room at the sauna in Melbourne which used to be jet black and no longer is or it’s actually I can’t remember I haven’t been there for a while um ah having sex with this person and then we I think I made the suggestion that we should go somewhere else but then as soon as he saw me he disengaged and left um

Russell:
 You’re absolutely confident that that was the reason for him leaving that he could now see you

Urdhvaretu:
 Um I think so yes I mean my presumption was that um he had the notion that he was having sex with you know a being of a certain kind and that he’d had some kind of um you know imagined sense and that this was disturbed by actually um ah seeing me it’s a supposition but the timing was pretty I mean certainly my impression was that we left the room intending you know we left the room intending to go off somewhere else and then he he changed his mind um so I suppose the an advantage of the dark places is
I.i.27:00
that um it’s easier for um things to cross the line where um reserve is left so um sort of indiscriminate I don’t even know if group sex is exactly the word but sexual activity with you know um a number of people being involved all
I.i.27:30
at once or at least simultaneously um is more likely to occur when it’s dark um and it strikes me that that particular room we were talking about before at Squirt overlooking the showers is now a less frequently active place because the light is different

Russell:
Mm um I’d agree that it’s a less frequently active place
I.i.28:00
yeah or the or or rather that the activity there is different from what it used to be or appears different from what it used to be anyway to what extent do you put effort into consciously thinking of these things I mean you’ve given me some
I.i.28:30
fairly elaborate descriptions now like I’m in this occasion when I’m asking you these questions and there’s a microphone and it’s all being recorded but to what extent are you consciously appraising the situation in the terms that you’ve outlined here now

Urdhvaretu:
Um all the time I think um
I.i.29:00
ah I suppo it’s it’s ah an environment in which um um you know people behave in peculiar ways um [unintelligible]

Russell:
Do you think do you think of that as being a peculiar way for you to behave

Urdhvaretu:
No oh well peculiar in the sense that um well maybe I should just say particular it’s a it’s a an anonymous sexual
I.i.29:30
environment um not always anonymous but um I suppose um um my opportunities to observe people behaving sexually ah are reasonably limited um well oh I suppose I would say in general that people
I.i.30:00
people’s sexual behaviour is a peculiar business in relation to you know the way people think about their lives and the way they sort of ways more or less rational and decorous that people behave and people it’s it’s a regular conceit that for instance you know people who are in love behave in peculiar and extreme ways and you could extrapolate that and say people in a state of desire there are
I.i.30:30
elements of of that um and there’s al-there’s also a wide variety of ah styles of behaviour um of people there and so you can’t help but notice um and in some ways a visit there is kind of fishing for a good style and and a bad visit is a a visit where either nothing happens or you only meet unsatisfactory styles

Russell:
I.i.31:00
of behaviour or

Urdhvaretu:
Mm and it’s to do I suppose with um ah questions of intimacy and um

Russell:
For you

Urdhvaretu:
Well for everyone I think um well for me and the other person um and there’s there’s a kind of particular brand
I.i.31:30
of of sexual activity in I’ve never been a beat person but I presume it’s the the same there although I’ve been to sex beaches so they probably no they’re probably more like a sauna than a beat because a sex beach has got a kind of boundary where it’s not just a kind of public toilet into which you know anyone might wander someone has gone there and um

Russell:
What’s a sex beach

Urdhvaretu:
Um

Russell:
I this is a new term for me

Urdhvaretu:
I.i.32:00
Um well I just made the term up but um sometimes I go to a coastal town um I think it’s in its declining years ah but there’s a stretch of beach that you have to walk along you have to walk along the beach quite a a distance to get there and there’s um ti tree ah ti tree forest behind the beach and there’s a labyrinth of paths and it’s a nudist beach some people come and take their clothes off and they sit in little kind of bays um

in the shade and then people move back into the bush and go wandering around there are condom wrappers everywhere litter um and it’s effectively the same as a sauna I would say except you have to cross the beach to get to the water

So your experience of going to say a sex beach and your experience of going to a sauna are pretty similar

Um pretty similar yes I think maybe um ah it may be the case that there’s more chance of amiableness at the beach so you do see you know groups of people standing um naked in the shallows chatting um more people go there um as a group I think than happens than than tends to happen in saunas um um like it’s a little hard to tell whether when you see a group talking whether they’ve come together or um

To wh just to focus back on saunas um to what extent do you consider your own style or styles of behaviour to be common or unique commonplace or unique

Um well it’s certainly not unique um

Is there anything you do that you think of as being distinct and unique that’s you (I laugh a little)

Oh um nothing comes to mind

But it would be conversely inappropriate to say that you are identical with other people

That you recognise yeah

Um but maybe there are kind of general groups or sort of there are definite styles of behaviour that that I recognise

To wh can you describe a style of behaviour for for me

Give me an instance of

I’ll I’ll give you one of these definite ones

I’ll give you an opposition and it’s probably actually the principal opposition um

Sorry whe oh I’m not sure what you mean by the term opposition here
Urdhvaretu:

Oh I’m going to give you two that are in my mind two ways of interacting with other people um that in my mind are distinctly opposed to each other.

Russell:

Oh yeah okay.

Urdhvaretu:

Um um I suppose it just comes down to in one way it comes down to something like friendliness um I’ve always been even in phase one *(I laugh a little)* I can remember being struck by well actually I’m not sure it was phase one now um I have a very strong impression I don’t know how long it goes back of um overhearing people conversing in cubicles um after having after or before or during whatever having sex with each other and thinking of that um as an admirable thing and there was I’ve always one of the things um I’ve most enjoyed about going to saunas and it’s something that I always ask someone who’s just told me having that they’ve just had sex with someone at the sauna I always ask about the conversation that they had um and it does just this idea of um ah two strangers that are there and they’re not having sex with each other and thinking of that um as an admirable thing and there was I’ve always one of the things um I’ve most enjoyed about going to saunas and it’s something that I always ask someone who’s just told me having that they’ve just had sex with someone at the sauna I always ask about the conversation that they had um and it does just this idea of um ah two strangers that are there and they’re not having sex with each other and thinking of that um as an admirable thing and there was I’ve always one of the things um I’ve most enjoyed about going to saunas and it’s something that I always ask someone who’s just told me having that they’ve just had sex with someone at the sauna I always ask about the conversation that they had um and it does just this idea of um ah two strangers that are there and they’re not having sex with each other and thinking of that um as an admirable thing and there was I’ve always one of the things um I’ve most enjoyed about going to saunas and it’s something that I always ask someone who’s just told me having that they’ve just had sex with someone at the sauna I always ask about the conversation that they had um and it does just this idea of um ah two strangers that are there and they’re not having sex with each other and thinking of that um as an admirable thing and there was I’ve always one of the things um I’ve most enjoyed about going to saunas and it’s something that I always ask someone who’s just told me having that they’ve just had sex with someone at the sauna I always ask about the conversation that they had um and it does just this idea of um ah two strangers that are there and they’re not having sex with each other and thinking of that um as an admirable thing and there was I’ve always one of the things um I’ve most enjoyed about going to saunas and it’s something that I always ask someone who’s just told me having that they’ve just had sex with someone at the sauna I always ask about the conversation that they had um and it does just this idea of um ah two strangers that are there and they’re not having sex with each other and thinking of that um as an admirable thing and there was I’ve always one of the things um I’ve most enjoyed about going to saunas and it’s something that I always ask someone who’s just told me having that they’ve just had sex with someone at the sauna I always ask about the conversation that they had um and it does just this idea of um ah two strangers that are there and they’re not having sex with each other and thinking of that um as an admirable thing and there was I’ve always one of the things um I’ve most enjoyed about going to saunas and it’s something that I always ask someone who’s just told me having that they’ve just had sex with someone at the sauna I always ask about the conversation that they had um and it does just this idea of um ah two strangers that are there and they’re not
go away and er my friend’s take on this is that um these people are expressly um driven by genital size and so they’re touching the genitals just to as if to do a measurement and then they leave

I.i.40:00
I don’t find this completely convincing given that it can happen in conditions where they could see um my take on this particular phenomenon and my friend finds it implausible (I laugh a little) is that um actually people want you to have an erection already um because and they don’t want to have any part in in causing you to have an erection there should be an erection there already

I.i.40:30
so it’s just like as if um sex should be going before they even arrive and that’s the kind of measure of of of hotness and any sense of arousal as something which arises between people is um is outside this way of going about things um so I suppose my my opposition is a divide between

I.i.41:00
um a kind of ah objectified parcelled out um version of sex and something that has a more a wider range of of ah of contact and I’ll give you just a little illustration which comes (putting on a voice) from the beach and not from the sauna (he returns to his usual voice) um (I laugh a little) I was there not long ago and someone walked up to me

I.i.41:30
and I said hello or hi or something and um as soon as I did that he turned his eyes aside and nodded so um and then I said to him he nodded I kind of gave him a little narrative of what he’d just done and after that he just became uncomfortable and left um

Russell:
You referred to him in his presence in the third

I.i.42:00
person

Urdhvaretu:
Yes yes um

Russell:
With a view to doing what with a view to achieving what

Urdhvaretu:
Um with a view to expressing um my opinion on ah on the level of interaction that he was operating at um I mean in a way the the nod was less significant than the aversion of eyes and I suppose um I would have been

I.i.42:30
happy for you know things could have turned the corner at that point but in general I would say if you’re not willing to meet my eye then I’m not interested in um in engaging sexually with you um I suppose ah you know sexual engagement can be more or less narrow um and I’d rather that it be less narrow at some point it becomes a thing of contempt for

I.i.43:00
me

Russell:
Is it I mean um to to the two kind of opposing styles you’ve outlined or the two moments in opposing styles if you like one of them is a moment that would seem to precede some involved sexual engagement and the other one’s a moment that follows it

I.i.43:30
and um in describing them as being opposing it sets up a possibility that for in what I’m hearing is you’re you’re saying that they’re in some respects mutually exclusive is it not the case that an encounter could include both of those episodes

Urdhvaretu:
Um yes I was fumbling

I.i.44:00
with that question before um

Russell:
Well rather than say is it possible is it then your experience that one precludes the other

Urdhvaretu:
Ah

Russell:
That if the second style of coming up and quite

I.i.44:30
er in in an objectifying manner and grabbing you by the genitals or the nipples whatever occurs that you never get to find out whether this is a person who has conversation afterwards and

Urdhvaretu:
Right
Russell:
opens up and speaks in a gentle warm and wide ranging and more forthright way

Urdhvaretu:
Right um well I suppose I mean there doesn’t have to be anything wrong about grabbing genitals but if that marks if the sort of pre-labelled erogenous zones mark the whole limit of um of where the sex occurs um it’s not going to be very good um but whether or not that means

Russell:
For you

Urdhvaretu:
For me

Russell:
Yeah

Urdhvaretu:
Um then it’s for me unlikely to to get anywhere um it’s not likely to continue on that basis um I suppose my presumption is that the people who who operate on that level exclusively are actually um are quite clear that they don’t want contact of another kind that they’re um you know they they want to keep engagement within kind of severely limited routines um you know almost in the style of a pornographic video or something

Russell:
And that’s not what you want

Urdhvaretu:
No

Russell:
(a silence, then) I want to go back to the discussion about dark areas again in relation to this um to what extent do you prefer a range of illumination or lack thereof (I laugh a little) at a venue like you’ve now talked about the dark area being eliminated at Squirt how do you feel about that do you feel oh good or do you feel er that’s limited things a bit

Urdhvaretu:
Um I think I feel it’s limited things

Russell:
All right okay

Urdhvaretu:
Um

Russell:
Then what are the things that it’s limited for you

Urdhvaretu:
Um well I suppose the ah I suppose the darkness is something to do with the suspension of discrimination both that that I practice and that that is practised upon me or past me or whatever um um I suppose I think well as we were saying before the as I said before the darkness um allowed um allowed a kind of density of it allowed a situation where activity was easily triggerable and so it’s somewhere where something is going on something is kind of evidently going on um and I think there there’s a a general rhythm um in say the steam room at um Squirt which is the illumination there varies for some reason from day to day but it’s never very dark um in there you’ll find that a lot of the time it’s just men sitting motionless and silent around the room and then every now and then um some you know combination of ah events has allowed a kind of knot of people to get together and be um groping away at each other or whatever um and there’s something good about ah when the reserve peels away and that happens um I mean in general um people walking around in saunas are very careful um and restrained which is I think I remember (putting on a voice) from
phase one (I laugh a little, then he reverts to his usual voice) the er the paradoxicalness of this and just the sense that this is a place where people go and they take their clothes off and have sex with strangers and you would think that it would be somewhere um you would think that it would be a place of exuberance and it would be like a kind of orgy or something um but in general it's

not. People are are very guarded um and they're very um careful with where they put their eyes and you know breaking the eye contact off before it triggers the attention of ah an undesired person um and that gives a kind of heaviness to the whole place that you've got these you know these certain sort of I don't know if furtive is the word um a not a not openness people kind of people slinking around um being wary and a bit touchy um and when you have a group of people kind of thrashing around together or whatever um it does have some sense of um exuberance and openness um that's nice

Russell:

Do

Urdhvaretu:

And that is um facilitated by low levels of illumination I think

Russell:

So for instance the um your term's wet sauna

Urdhvaretu:

Mm

Russell:

The wet sauna at Squirt contrasts radically with the wet sauna at Volcano in that respect

Urdhvaretu:

Um because there's a dark room you mean at the back of it

Russell:

There's yeah

Urdhvaretu:

Um

Russell:

In which sexual contact seems constantly unreserved in my experience

Urdhvaretu:

There's not always some there's not always people in there

Russell:

True

Urdhvaretu:

Um there's still an element of reserve I think in the that darker place it's just a question of a lower threshold

Russell:

Right okay

Urdhvaretu:

Um

Russell:

But you'd put that down distinctly to illumination rather than for instance the more constricted shape

Urdhvaretu:

Right um

Russell:

that's there for instance in that darker area everyone is within reach simply because the walls are so narrow whereas the steam room at Squirt there are much larger distances involved it's a very big room

Urdhvaretu:

That's true but then the circular couch room at um Volcano is that's a large room um that and it's another space where people get together

Russell:
And it's another dimly lit one

Urdhvaretu:

Though it's not a dark one

Russell:

True

do you try to cultivate styles of behaviour that make you fit in or do you try to be more proactive sometimes

Urdhvaretu:

Proactive (this is a question)

Russell:

Yeah in the sense of um inventive um you've talked about the way in which a quality of heaviness can emerge in the sauna um ah I saw a man at Squirt in the spa um recently who just suddenly called out really loudly (I speak louder) what are you all

Urdhvaretu:

standing around looking glum for (Urdhvaretu laughs) just get in here and have a good time (I stop calling) and it was just like magic everybody just thought it there was this instant agreement in the room something about not just him doing it but the moment was quite right there was this instant agreement in the room and people let go of that heaviness people were laughing and smiling

Urdhvaretu:

Right

Russell:

before they'd even taken a step there was the sense of humour

Urdhvaretu:

Ah

Russell:

or do you try to con fit in

Urdhvaretu:

Oh I wouldn't say I try to fit in

Russell:

Right

Urdhvaretu:

Um ah

Russell:

um probably I would say I'm too shy to be shouting out over the pool um

Urdhvaretu:

Yeah I would be too (I laugh a little)

Urdhvaretu:

Um my friend noticed someone reading in a cubicle which I thought was very nice

Russell:

What were they reading

Urdhvaretu:

Don't know

Russell:

um and there is one man er I think I've only seen him at um Squirt at um Volcano who is very chatty and he's always standing around having conversations in the corridors and um I think it's not with people that he you know knows from any other place and I just you know notice him as a kind of cultural exception

Urdhvaretu:

and there is an amount of there is an amount of conversation there but um my overriding impression is that it's conversation between friends ah and so then it becomes a bit like conversations between friends in the street as distinct from conversation with strangers

Russell:

My question was about your efforts to

Urdhvaretu:

Oh there aren't any as far as I can

Russell:

How do you account for that

Urdhvaretu:
Ah  I.i.58:00
I could just say shyness or um I suppose there’s the I mean we were talking about the the background presentation of the way in which the way the background presentation of how other people appear I.i.58:30 when you’re there and that’s a different level from engaging with people one on one um I suppose really it’s the second one that one goes there for

Russell:
That you go there

Urdhvaretu:
Mm

Russell:
Have you ever gone without any erotic expectations

Urdhvaretu:
Er I.i.59:00 (a silence, then) yes

Russell:
Just to enjoy the facilities

Urdhvaretu:
Um yes I think so I suppose there’ve been times when I’ve gone to Volcano um to get a massage and then stayed afterwards I.i.59:30 that would be the very clearest ones um and then ah there are also times when um I’ve gone to the Squirt principally to go into the steam room and have a shower that kind of thing um I.i.60:00 I would say it’s not easy to determine or to remember the degree of erotic expectation um

Russell:
I mean I I’ve definitely had occasions where I’ve just had a few loose hours up my I.i.60:30 sleeve it felt that way and then just suddenly thought oh no that’s what I’ll do I’ll go there but not really with any big investment or anything but also knowing that it was alwa there’s something kind of there’s always something interesting even if it’s the fact that the place is a bit quiet you know for me and I’ll I.i.61:00 you know enjoy the facilities and just leave with no kind of big deal about that and I’d rather there however than say go um the steam and sauna spa at a public swimming pool

Urdhvaretu:
Right

Russell:
or something because there’s still an a kind of an erotic ambience even if I laugh a little) it doesn’t look like one I.i.61:30 um the other thing you mentioned early on that for want of a better word comes up a lot in the folklore around saunas that is in the way they’re publicly represented and in I guess in some of the interviews I’ve done um and I.i.62:00 that’s the thing about walking around for hours um have you ever tuned into that as an experience that’s kind of interesting in its own right or is it just purely a sign of failure like the sand running out or something

Urdhvaretu:
Ah I.i.62:30 well I suppose it takes a while to know that you’re actually doing it it’s not as if any movement within there is a sign of failure um so I suppose it’s a a gradual shifting to a mentality of fatigue I.i.63:00 um there’s a certain interest in the fact that it occurs but um it’s exhausted pretty rapidly

Russell:
For you

Urdhvaretu:
Mm (he yawns) but one set of traipsing is like another set of traipsing I.i.63:30 [unintelligible] kind of there’s not much diversity of contact to it

Russell:
You’ve mentioned um three of the saunas in Melbourne so far have you been to any of the others that are still in business

Urdhvaretu:
Ah yes I’ve been to one in Suburb A I think it is

Russell:
Yes

Urdhvaretu:
High Street I went there once

Russell:
Once

Urdhvaretu:
Hmm

Russell:
(I laugh, then) And none of the others you haven’t been to any of the other saunas in Melbourne

Urdhvaretu:
I don’t think so

Russell:
Right okay do you have a preferred sauna you’ve said that Squirt is one that you seem to be

Urdhvaretu:
I.i.64:30
going to the most is it your preferred sauna

Russell:
Mm

Urdhvaretu:
I.i.64:30

Russell:
What is it about it as a venue that you that leads to that

Urdhvaretu:
It’s not beige (I laugh a little) it’s got red walls they’ve got green towels so the colour is better um

Russell:
Are you saying this for my benefit or is this a substantial

Urdhvaretu:
No it’s true

Russell:
Yeah no no it’s fine

Urdhvaretu:
I know it’s true I’m

Russell:
I’m just shocked to hear it (I laugh a little)

Urdhvaretu:
No there’s something very (?) when you you know the image that comes to mind of Squirt or of Volcano is just this sort of beige smear (I laugh) I think upstairs it’s maybe the maybe the walls are they have actually been doing it at um at Volcano they have been doing a kind of colourising thing and I presume they’ve they’re doing it to try and keep up with

Squirt that must have which must have taken some of their their custom um there’s also the fact that it’s um newer and um it smells better than Squirt er than Volcano

Russell:
When you say it smells better can you describe can you distinguish between the smells for me

Urdhvaretu:
Mm

Russell:
What is it about it as a venue that you that leads to that

Urdhvaretu:
It’s not beige (I laugh a little) it’s got red walls they’ve got green towels so the colour is better um

Russell:
But of what um what what was it that

Urdhvaretu:
Who knows it’s some (he laughs)
appendix 17: Urdhvaretu I

When you say it smelt revolting I need information

**Urdhvaretu:**

Ah well I don’t really know whether it was um

**i.i.66:30**

I mean I don’t know if it’s the case you know I suppose I’d have to be going again and again to verify I mean I have some kind of impression that it was that it was just you know as you know so much time passes and you know the thing is only superficial or something that you just begin to get some kind of mould

**i.i.67:00**

or something I don’t know or someone committed some kind you know excremental monstrosity or something um so I don’t know if it was just some if the smell that I’m thinking of was you know located on a particular day but I couldn’t actually identify what it is it’s probably a kind of

**Russell:**

But the range you’ve given are associations with decay in some way

**Urdhvaretu:**

Yes

**Russell:**

Okay all right okay

**Urdhvaretu:**

Yeah something like sort of the worst shower you could ever imagine being in (I laugh a little) um and

**i.i.67:30**

so strong I really just couldn’t stay in there it just became just completely off putting um but on that score I have noticed a kind of ripening taking place at um Squirt so um

**Russell:**

A ripening

**Urdhvaretu:**

Yes it’s

**Russell:**

In whereabouts

**Urdhvaretu:**

In the steam room

**Russell:**

In the steam room

**Urdhvaretu:**

Maybe it’s just very hard to keep um places like that clean and I suppose particularly given that Squirt is open twenty-four hours a day and also

**Russell:**

They do clean um I can ah bear witness to this

**Urdhvaretu:**

You’ve been there at six

**Russell:**

I have I’ve been there during the cleaning period in the morning it isn’t strictly a full hour necessarily they don’t necessarily do it by the clock but basically they do the other thing that’s I find amazing at that moment is often they’ll open up the rear door

**Urdhvaretu:**

Oh

**Russell:**

and suddenly there’s a view out

**Urdhvaretu:**

of the city

**Russell:**

of the city and it’s

**i.i.68:30**

quite um it’s like being there when the place is being dismantled or something it’s like it’s open to the world for a while

**Urdhvaretu:**

I’m always struck when I’m there during daylight and you’re suddenly seeing um daylight coming in under a door or through the um louvres

**i.i.69:00**
and grating whatever it is over the spa at Squirt um

Russell:
Over the spa  right

Urdhvaretu:
Over the pool

Russell:
Because there’s also like a  is it a skylight or is it a  an artificial light in the steam room there

Urdhvaretu:
Yes

Russell:
Just inside the door to the left

Urdhvaretu:
Yes

Russell:
which I quite like  I quite like that little patch of light  now I’m trying to think whether it’s there at night or not  

I.i.69:30
and I can’t recall

Urdhvaretu:
It never occurred to me that it might be a skylight  it is irregular

Russell:
So the kind of sense of the newness in itself or the c  the bright colours  the newness

Urdhvaretu:
They’re not actually so much bright as rich

Russell:
(I laugh a little, then) Fine  thank you  

I.i.70:00
um and what goes with the newness is a  a sense of hygiene I suppose  is that fair or

Urdhvaretu:

Russell:
Right yeah  okay

Urdhvaretu:
And um

Russell:
I.i.70:30
Well you talked about things being clean then

Urdhvaretu:
Yes

Russell:
Yeah okay

Urdhvaretu:
Yeah um

Russell:
Hygiene’s not the  your term

Urdhvaretu:
No it’s not my term

Russell:
Great

Urdhvaretu:
It’s a bit  um a bit medical

Russell:
Yeah

Urdhvaretu:
and somehow suggests worlds of microbial paranoia

Russell:
Yeah

Urdhvaretu:

Russell:
Um I’m thinking more in terms of sort of direct sensory  um  

I.i.71:00
whether a smell’s off putting or um well I suppose on the other hand I do have a sense that these are places where copious quantities of semen are shed is shed are shed quantities um and um you know you don’t mind cleanliness is giving you a little bit of distance from

Russell:
You don’t mind it

Urdhvaretu:
No I don’t mind it I mean and I suppose that somehow and maybe it’s like a kind of ghost story or something about the ah the smell of the ah sauna at Volcano on a good day um that suggests just sort of layer after layer of semen that’s been slowly kind of built up (I laugh a little) and is ingrained in the fabric of the and you know sweat and everything

Russell:
Is that something (laughing a little) apart from entertaining me at the moment with that is it something that you’re actually present to when you go

Urdhvaretu:
No

Russell:
No it isn’t

Urdhvaretu:
Not really

Russell:
Okay all right

Urdhvaretu:
No I mean you do think of the people who have to clean the rooms there

Russell:
Can we stop there for a moment

Urdhvaretu:
Mm

(i switch off the recorder, insert a fresh disc, and we resume)

Russell:
Okay um in I asked you um about your preferred sauna and you identified Squirt

but then all the things you’ve given me so far about why you how you prefer it are to do with the building

Urdhvaretu:
Mm

Russell:
Um and yet earlier on when we were talking about um saunas as places one of the things that you were clear to foreground was not so much the building as it being a venue for certain kinds of um events to occur do you want to tell me a bit about the relationship between those two ah stages of our conversation

Urdhvaretu:
Um

I think I’m drifting off into a little bit of confusion um I mean obviously the red walls are not a kind of sufficient enticement on their own um I mean there is the fact that it’s distinctly smaller um which

Russell:
Smaller than Volcano

Urdhvaretu:
Yes smaller than Volcano

um which ought not to be a good thing um on the idea on the notion that um a small circuit leads to early fatigue um I suppose that the apart from issues of what the steam room smells like um

I probably go to um Squirt as against Volcano now um because the people there are more appealing to look at I suppose um there are less spherical men (I laugh a little)
um sometimes at Volcano um there seems a preponderance of um

I.ii.03:00
spherical Caucasian men and Asian youths involved in some kind of interaction ritual (?) but in any case the sphere quotient is much much higher and then I suppose there’s also um something that ah my friend pointed out and it’s completely obvious but I’m not altogether sure if I would’ve thought to bring it up on my own but

I.ii.03:30
um the people who work there have a different style to them so people who work at Volcano um are much more likely to look like they’re at a leather bar they’re they’re likely to be older and more likely to have moustaches more likely to be paunchy

Russell:
It’s interesting I always

I.ii.04:00
thought I’ve always thought that the ambience there is very much like the seventies

Urdhvaretu:

(laughing a little) Right

Russell:
That the staff

Urdhvaretu:
Okay

Russell:
That there’s some conspiracy in the staff to dress as though they were all in San Francisco (Urdhvaretu laughs a little) in the seventies

Urdhvaretu:
Oh okay yes yes

Russell:
Ah whether there is or not I don’t know the other thing I remember about um um the first person I ever encountered

I.ii.04:30
ever at a sauna was the man at the reception booth at um Volcano and you know who was obviously the first you know I went up the stairs and there was this man there and um he was just so nice ah he was very socially awkward but I I just (laughing a little) laid my cards on the table and said look I’ve never been to a place

I.ii.05:00
like this before and so he said oh well you’ve been to beats or something like that and I said well no not really (I laugh a little) and so he was a bit bewildered for a moment because he suddenly realised he had the onus of explaining something to me um and he said a couple of things that were really nice probably the most significant one of which was just remember once you’re inside there you don’t have to do anything you don’t want to which um was

I.ii.05:30
I thought a wonderful thing to say to someone who’d arrived and a very empowering thing and I felt fantastic because he said it I felt like I was being looked after and now I could look after myself but the thing I remember about him was when I went he had to kind of fill out some details for me and as he was doing it he kind of he seemed to be having some problem and then he said oh can you can you do it I

I.ii.06:00
can’t hear you properly and I looked at what he’d written so far and I realised he was almost entirely illiterate and I got really moved by that there was something about him working there and I wondered whether he was just some unskilled person and that was the best he could manage or whether he really liked it there and he happened to be

I.ii.06:30
almost you know illiterate I don’t know but he seemed to have valuable like he was so eloquent in what he said to me that it wasn’t as though he was stupid I didn’t ever think that for a moment so whenever I look at the staff at Volcano I can’t help but remember that very very first occasion and that man who I don’t think I’d recognise if I saw

I.ii.07:00
him now whereas the staff at Squirt are very professional (I laugh a little) in the sense that I find them cheerful and efficient and groomed and trained or that they they give off some aura of skill it seems

Urdhvaretu:

I.ii.07:30
I don’t know they just look like waiters

Russell:
Well I think that of waiters I don’t underestimate waiters I mean there are professional waiters I don’t think they’re as
professional as profess as the most professional waiters are but um they seem incapable of being grumpy even at the end of really long shifts at the wrong time of the day

I.ii.08:00
and they don’t ever seem messy you have nothing to offer about that (Urdhvaretu shakes his head) all right but the staff was a factor the staffing of the two venues distinctly differs

Urdhvaretu:
Um
I.ii.08:30
yes in some small way maybe it makes it more appealing but

Russell:
Sorry who is more appealing

Urdhvaretu:
The staff at Squirt

Russell:
Do they make you feel more welcome

Urdhvaretu:
Um possibly they do occasionally a little
I.ii.09:00
bit flirtatious um whereas with the people at Volcano where I probably wouldn’t notice I don’t think that I can’t imagine that that’s that important because the interaction you have that I have with
I.ii.09:30
ah the staff is fairly minimal it’s coming and going basically and then seeing them walking around with a torch

Russell:
At Volcano

Urdhvaretu:
Both places

Russell:
Oh right I haven’t noticed a torch at Squirt all right

Urdhvaretu:
And that’s always a ah somewhat intrusive

I.ii.10:00
moment this beam of light coming along someone moving around in rubber gloves and a bottle of White King with a bucket or something (I laugh a little) um so you know I don’t warm to that person at that moment so I don’t really care what they

Russell:
I never find that intrusive did for you what it breaks an atmosphere or a spell or something or

Urdhvaretu:

I.ii.10:30
Alters the lighting

Russell:
(I laugh a little, then) All right

Urdhvaretu:
Yes I find it I think I find it I mean yes because you’re just there in such different capacities you know (?) them walking around cleaning up rooms

Russell:
Let’s go back to where this
I.ii.11:00
started um the sauna you least prefer of the ones been to you’ve been contrasting Volcano with Squirt but you’ve also been to Rear Entry presumably more than once and to Suburb A once

Urdhvaretu:
Um and I’ve been to a sauna in Belgium now that I remember it
I.ii.11:30
that was my least favourite

Russell:
Oh that’s interesting you went to it once only

Urdhvaretu:
Mm I think yes

Russell:
Which city in Belgium

Urdhvaretu:
Antwerp

Russell:
I have an article about saunas in Belgium

Urdhvaretu:
Oh do you

Russell:
for you at some stage I'll make a copy for you let's leave the Belgian one aside can we just focus on Melbourne your least preferred one in Melbourne

Urdhvaretu:

I.ii.12:00
Um well I suppose I would narrow it down um having been to High Street only once I can't really include it and there's there is a kind of there's a sort of geographical element to things that the other ones are just more at hand to me

Russell:

Yeah

Urdhvaretu:

Um [I'm?] I.ii.12:30
you know more more likely to be in the vicinity so um it would actually be reasonably reasonably convenient for me to go to the Rear Entry one but I don't

Russell:

You don't drive do you

Urdhvaretu:

No I don't drive

Russell:

Yeah

Urdhvaretu:

Um I.ii.13:00
it's a bit hard to know I mean I've had (putting on a voice) I've had some good times at Rear Entry ah but they they've been doing quite a bit over the years mm exactly sure which years again but they've been doing some renovating it's changed quite a bit um and I think it got worse as they changed it

Russell:

I.ii.13:30
(I laugh a little, then) What do you mean worse

Urdhvaretu:

Ah

Russell:

From the point of view of your use of the building

Urdhvaretu:

Mm

Russell:

or from the point of view of something that would be (laughing a little) in an architecture magazine

Urdhvaretu:

No no no no well it's a form of architecture ah you know it could be in an architecture magazine

Russell:

I agree

Urdhvaretu:

[unintelligible] to talk about it but um I.ii.14:00
no it's a question of the fruitfulness of the arrangement and there are some arrangements which promote ready contact with people and others which don't to me they kind of they sometimes I don't exactly remember what the beginning was what the start what the starting point was and I more more remember um you know this is a new structure and it's not working as well as the last one um

I.ii.14:30
does um they seem to go there more for these sort of pornographic viewing rooms that seems to be more a thing these kind of couches facing the television set um and I find that unappealing it's kind of deadening um

I.ii.15:00
it means people are sitting around looking at the television
Russell:
They're not always sitting

Urdhvaretu:
No that's right actually I don't mind the pornography room at um Volcano the little amphitheatre it's not an amphitheatre it's a theatre um

Russell:
I agree it is

Urdhvaretu:
I.ii.15:30
What

Russell:
A theatre

Urdhvaretu:
A theatre and not an amphitheatre

Russell:
Yes it's um Palladian isn't it

Urdhvaretu:
(this is a question) Mm

Russell:
It's it's like the Teatro Olympico

Urdhvaretu:
Don't know

Russell:
Palladio's theatre in I think it's Vicenza which I think was based on what a Roman theatre was supposed to be but I I don't know anything about Roman theatre stages really  I.ii.16:00
I can show you a picture later um

Urdhvaretu:
It's like a hippodrome with one end cut off

Russell:
Right so which is the least appealing then

Urdhvaretu:
Um Rear Entry

Russell:
And it is because something about the changes over the years make it not work well in some way

Urdhvaretu:
Um I.ii.16:30
well I think I um I noticed changes that were um not for the good

Russell:
Can you describe one of those because um my acquaintance with it is fairly recent and so I'm not aware of changes over time

Urdhvaretu:
Mm

Russell:
I.ii.17:00
I'm thinking of a change that for you has been no that's not as good as it used to be

Urdhvaretu:
Yeah but the trouble is I can't remember exactly what what it changed from um I think again it was the reduction in um what is it dark public space they had some kind of couch paved I.ii.17:30
area a bit like the room at Volcano that's got the circular couch in it

Russell:
Yeah

Urdhvaretu:
and um that was altered in various ways until finally maybe actually there was a maybe there was a yeah there used to be open dark spaces there there was a kind of big room somewhere that was

Russell:
This is upstairs or downstairs

Urdhvaretu:
appendix 17: Urdhvaretu I

No no no it’s downstairs I think

Russell:
Oh right

Urdhvaretu:
Um and they got

I.ii.18:00
rid of it kind of gradually they had a small small kind of a small couched area that had entrances from different doors you you couldn’t go round so you’d come into an area and there’d be like a shore a beach of this couch thing and then over the other side there’d be sort of exit things

Russell:
Yeah

Urdhvaretu:
Um

I.ii.18:30
I don’t think I remember it in sufficient detail to be really cogent but I I think maybe that I never particularly liked it as a place maybe it’s something to do with there was always this decision there about whether to stay downstairs or whether to go upstairs and um

I.ii.19:00
and there’s this stairwell and I suppose stairwells in general are places of a particular kind of traipsieness because no one ever does anything in a stairwell and

Russell:
That’s you’ve never done anything in that stairwell at Rear Entry

Urdhvaretu:
No I’ve never seen anyone I’ve never seen anything occurring on the stairs

Russell:
When you say do anything do you mean um have sex or do you mean a wider range

I.ii.19:30
of interesting events

Urdhvaretu:
No no I mean basically have sex or encounter in some way um so that the stairs are I suppose people look at each other when they go up and down the stairs

Russell:
What I was about to say that that is an area for me whi where some very significant kind of look exchanges of looks

Urdhvaretu:
Right

Russell:
Of lookings have occurred

Urdhvaretu:
Okay

Russell:
And it’s something about passing

I.ii.20:00
people and then the turn back so that um it almost invariably with people going the opposite direction so if I’m going up they’re going down

Urdhvaretu:
(he yawns) Right

Russell:
And then there’ll be this look back over the shoulder and of course because the stair has a landing halfway

Urdhvaretu:
Mm

Russell:
then if the kind of timing’s right then you’re both heading in a similar direction although one’s going up and one’s going down away from you’re both heading away from the landing

Urdhvaretu:
Right

Russell:

I.ii.20:30
And so there’s a sense of moving parallel and of looking down over one’s shoulder or up over one’s shoulder
Urdhvaretu: 
Mm ah yes  
Russell: 
and and it’s almost like people kind of (laughing a little) check in for later on or something um but you’ve not had an experience like that then (Urdhvaretu indicates agreement) right okay  
Urdhvaretu: 
No and I by I th I associate the going up and down the stairs with oh it's  
Russell: 
Traipsing  
Urdhvaretu: 
Traipsing yeah so it’s a part where um the sort of tr sort of trapse awareness trigger area  
Russell: 
Do you start to count the number of times or be aware that you’ve been going up and down the stairs innumerable times  
Urdhvaretu: 
Um yes sometimes I have (he yawns)  
Russell: 
Right okay is it (faintly) Yeah  
Russell: 
So do you have a sense then that there are definitely zones within any given sauna where lots of things are possible and then zones where nothing happens  
Urdhvaretu: 
(he yawns) Well there are there are zones where things are not allowed to happen  
Russell: 
Such as where  
Urdhvaretu: 
Where the lockers are  
Russell: 
Where the lockers are  
Urdhvaretu: 
Mm  
Russell: 
Oh you’re joking  
Urdhvaretu: 
They  
Russell: 
Staff  
Russell: 
Really
Where

Urdhvaretu:

Um

I.ii.22:30

ah Volcano

Russell:

Have you witnessed that occur

Urdhvaretu:

Mm mm

Russell:

Did that happen to you

Urdhvaretu:

No

Russell:

or did you see it happen to someone else

Urdhvaretu:

I I I was watching someone

Russell:

How interesting because recently again I was at Squirt and um something was happening beside the spa and a man

I.ii.23:00

the same man who called out to everyone suddenly kind of stopped and said hey are we allowed to do this here (we laugh) and I was amazed to hear him he who had done all this other stuff suddenly had this sense of oh are we allowed and I'm thinking allowed you know what

Urdhvaretu:

Was he joking

Russell:

No he was he was quite concerned for a moment about about something

Urdhvaretu:

I.ii.23:30

I think the answer is clearly yes as distinct from the lockers (I laugh a little) you're not allowed to do it in the lockers

Russell:

Well I said do you think the police are going (I laugh a little) to come and stop you but um so the lockers are off that's interesting before you'd witnessed this happen with the staff coming in and stopping were

I.ii.24:00

you aware that the lockers were a no go zone

Urdhvaretu:

Ah I don't know

Russell:

Yeah but they weren't a zone that you would have considered doing anything in like did you get a sense it was house rules or personal staff member style

Urdhvaretu:

Um when the intervention occurred do you mean

Russell:

Yes

Urdhvaretu:

Um I think they must

I.ii.23:30

have had a rule um but I don't know why that's why there's the ambiguity between say the shower upstairs at Volcano which is clearly available as an as an erotic um

Russell:

The one

Urdhvaretu:

You know the upstairs where th where it's red

Russell:

Near the heavy duty

I.ii.25:00

area

Urdhvaretu:

Mm

Russell:

Yeah
Urdhvaretu:

That’s clearly a shower where people can have sex with each other but the one downstairs is part of the locker room it’s got a hair dryer next to it and (he yawns) I suppose it’s partly to do with you know [unreadable] don’t like copulating in entrances and cafes and it’s

Russell:

I wonder if it’s got anything to do with carpet

Urdhvaretu:

Mm it might do

Russell:

Whether it’s cleanable

Urdhvaretu:

I.ii.25:30
And I suppose also there would be a thing that people don’t don’t want to get semen on their clothing that you don’t have torch teams regularly searching the um locker area for

Russell:

stains

Urdhvaretu:

Stains and so on

Russell:

I.ii.26:00
Do you find yourself smiling or laughing much at saunas (Urdhvaretu yawns) you talked about the heavy atmosphere that generally pervades do you find that you become part of that atmosphere or that

Urdhvaretu:

Oh I think so yes

Russell:

Yeah you don’t have experiences of some kind of play in relation to it or ironic detachment or

Urdhvaretu:

No not really not effectively

Russell:

I.ii.26:30
When I told you the story about the man calling out your face sort of lit up a bit (laughing a little) had you wished you’d been there or

Urdhvaretu:

Oh no no just a you know it’s kind of a good thing

Russell:

Yeah but not a thing that you feel (Urdhvaretu yawns) that you can really get going yourself

Urdhvaretu:

I.ii.27:00
Um no

Russell:

Yeah

Urdhvaretu:

No um

Russell:

Or that you choose to anyway

Urdhvaretu:

Oh I mean I don’t know that I mean it’s a bit like ah um well it reminds me a little bit of um when people tell me to smile there’s nothing makes me less inclined to smile than

I.ii.27:30
being told to do it so

Russell:

Yeah

Urdhvaretu:

I.ii.28:00
um I suppose I don’t really think that the feel and culture of the place gets changed by rousing exhortation I mean it’s very funny and good when it happens but um I think you’d have to find some other way oh you know

probably I mean maybe it’s the case that um many people have reasons for for
wanting it to be as it is maybe they feel safer that way or

Russell:

You’ve you’ve clearly talked with your friend about um experiences or theories or hypotheses about saunas how often do those kinds of conversations occur for you with him

Urdhvaretu:

Ah it’s hard to say um

Russell:

They’ve occurred

Urdhvaretu:

Oh a lot

Russell:

Yeah

Urdhvaretu:

Just you know whenever

Russell:

Yeah

Urdhvaretu:

seems unusual and interesting or um

Russell:

Is is he the only person you’re involved in an kind of like an ongoing conversation with

Urdhvaretu:

(completing a yawn) Um mm yes I think so

Russell:

I don’t think I’ve got anything else I want to pursue now

Urdhvaretu:

Okay that’s good

Russell:

There’s anything you want to

Urdhvaretu:

No

Russell:

Okay we’ll leave it there thanks

(I switch off the minidisc recorder)

END OF CONVERSATION
The transcript documents a second conversation with Kate recorded in a park near my place. Outside, the sun shone hotly, and we equipped ourselves with hats, water, and digestive biscuits. We found some grass to sit on, set up the recording equipment, and began. The conversation was recorded without interruption.

Russell:

ii.i.00:00
So we’re on now okay

Kate:

We are now

Russell:

Yep

Kate:

Okay

Russell:

Well what I wanted to start with was um what you just talked about before we switched it on which was the photograph that that woman we know took um which you haven’t been able to find

Kate:

No I was looking for it today

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

I’ve just moved house so I can’t find it

Russell:

But

Kate:

Um yeah I just pulled it out the other day actually and looked at it

Russell:

Oh yeah

Kate:

and it was taken it’s a Polaroid taken in the water with my head above the water and my hands up up to my my elbows with um fingerling a pearl necklace ah my face is completely white um I think due to the make-up and the costume that I was wearing which was like a gold sort of a gold knitted old style circus costume

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

Um came across more as sort of like ah a more sort of an ochre brown but with the water it just was really just highly distorted so the body is actually it’s almost like a cardboard cut-out and just with the arms and the face being [unintelligible]

Russell:

In in the photograph is your body floating back in the water or are your feet grounded do you think on the base of the pool

Kate:

Um my feet are actually it’s just the the head is yeah above the water um and the legs are sort tucked underneath behind me so not not completely grounded but not completely floating

Russell:

Right okay the pearl neck is it a string of pearls or a pearl necklace

Kate:

It’s a pearl necklace

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:
And you’re holding it between your fingers now you demonstrated it so your finger your index finger and thumb on each hand

Kate:
Yeah on each hand

Russell:
is just holding it

Kate:
and just holding yep

Russell:
and with the other fingers splayed out

Kate:
Yep

Russell:
Okay

Kate:
Delicate

Russell:
and how high are you holding it

Kate:
In not high enough to obscure my face

Russell:
Right

Kate:
but almost in line with with my neck

Russell:
Right

Kate:
So it’s almost as if I’ve taken it from my neck

Russell:
Right not about to put it on but taken it off as it were

Kate:
Yep

Russell:
Okay now can you tell me about how that got posed and staged that photograph

Kate:
Um the woman we know was there

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
the evening um taking photos of I think just quite a lot of people um so I was given I also had an earlier a later Polaroid shot taken when I was in the shower um so that was again sort of done with the photographer being um quite low um and shooting up towards me

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
Ah but so yeah it was taken yeah just sort of randomly it’s just um she was just going around

Russell:
Whose idea was it to hold the pearls

Kate:
Ah it was my idea I just she sort of just sort of you know turned and I just sort of [unintelligible] and I held them up it would’ve been

Russell:
So you spon you spontaneously went into that

Kate:
Yep

Russell:
little pose

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

Had you been watching her take other photos

Kate:

No I'd ac I had just finished performing

Russell:

Right

Kate:

so I'd had started to clear things up and I was asked to actually go back into the water

Russell:

By

Kate:

By the photographer yeah

Russell:

Okay and had she seen your performance

Kate:

Yes she had

Russell:

\textbf{ll.i.03:30}

Right okay had she taken any photos while you were performing or had she just been one of the spectators

Kate:

Um I don’t know about photos that she had taken she might have taken them during the performance

Russell:

Yeah but you didn’t see any

Kate:

I didn’t see that no I didn’t see those

Russell:

And you weren’t aware of any

Kate:

No I wasn’t aware of any of those so yeah

Russell:

What was she wearing

Kate:

Oh she was she was definitely wearing not actually a robe

\textbf{ll.i.04:00}

but I can’t clearly remember what it was she was wearing

Russell:

Was she was wearing something though

Kate:

Yes

Russell:

She wasn’t naked

Kate:

She wasn’t naked

Russell:

All right was she barefoot

Kate:

Yes

Russell:

Okay

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

Did she have her spectacles on

Kate:

Yes she did (she laughs a little) I had to mention that
Sorry

Kate:

I was just about to say that

Russell:

All right

Kate:

Yeah she was wearing her glasses

Russell:

All right okay

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

Um and the camera she was holding the camera

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

Did she have anything else that she was holding

Kate:

No the camera actually was an older style Polaroid

Russell:

Oh yeah

Kate:

which was a compact one which um would fold down quite flat

Russell:

Like a concertina version

Kate:

Yes a concertina one which would pop up

Russell:

Yep okay so it had that look like a concertina or did it just fold up and flip up a little bit

Kate:

Yeah it sort of had a it was um I know the camera quite well because it belongs to another friend of mine

Russell:

Oh yeah

Kate:

So ah so it comes down to quite a flat piece almost like a folder then yeah you just pull the sides and there's sort of like black rubber with a little um braces on the side

Russell:

And and was the woman we know taking all these photos I mean did you understand that as just being her having mementoes of the evening I mean she gave you the photos she took so sh

Kate:

Yeah she gave me the photo and she was actually doing that for other people too she would take photos of them

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

and then give them the Polaroid

Russell:

Did you watch her taking photos of other people

Kate:

Yeah and hand them over

Russell:

Um and was it similar to what happened with you like that they just spontaneously posed in some way and she'd snap
Kate:
Yeah and she would yeah do them yeah

Russell:
Right okay and you saw that happening in this downstairs pool area

Kate:
Yep

Russell:
Did you see any of that happening upstairs

Kate:

Russell:

Kate:

Russell:

Kate:

Russell:

Kate:

Russell:

Kate:

Russell:

Kate:

Russell:

Kate:

Russell:

Kate:

Russell:

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Kate:

Russell:

Kate:

Russell:

Kate:

Russell:

Kate:

Russell:

Kate:

Russell:

Kate:

Russell:

Kate:

Russell:

Kate:

Russell:

Kate:
Did you see her holding any photos that she’d taken

**Kate:**
She had like um like a little thing that she did I mean I think some people didn’t didn’t want them

**Russell:**
Sorry a little thing

**Kate:**
Like a little I can’t be specific like a little sort of a bag like a over the shoulder thing

**Russell:**
Oh yeah

**Kate:**
Yep

**Russell:**
And so you think there may have been some in there

**Kate:**
There may have been some photographs in there

**Russell:**
I went just to the edge of the pool

**Kate:**
You went to the edge of the pool and reached up

**Russell:**
Up

**Kate:**
There could have yeah could have well been yeah

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Kate:**
And also I think it had it would carry additional um um packets of film

**Russell:**
Okay right

**Kate:**
Then I hopped out pretty quickly so that I could get

**Russell:**
Did you get the towel first or see if you can get the sequence here you looked at the photograph while you were in the water

Kate:
Ah it was taken it was pulled out

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
and then I went over to the edge of the the pool

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
and started to climb out ah so it was passed to me

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
Ah I grabbed the the white sort of corner

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
then just reached over for a towel which

Russell:
I had on the edge of the pool

Kate:

Russell:
Right okay now

Kate:
And wiped my hands and got out

Russell:
when you said you had a towel on the edge of the pool the edge of the pool is at floor level

Kate:
Yeah it was the the section that um where there was a line of benches on one side of the wall with a with an entrance

Russell:
Yes

Kate:
and the pool sort of went around and at the ah so it the photo was taken just at

Russell:
II.i.10:00

Kate:
that section which leads off to the showers

Russell:
Yes

Kate:
So it was that sort of thorough thoroughfare there

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
um and I had a towel lying just on the side because I'd

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
just gotten in back into the water

Russell:
Okay

Kate:
and played round

Russell:
And were the lilies and candles still floating in the water

Kate:
Yes they were but in the partic in my shot they were not in view

Russell:
Oh right okay

Kate:

So they just they were there

Russell:

In another part of the pool

Kate:

Yep

Russell:

Okay um

I've got a technical thing which was how did the candles not extinguish if there was movement in the water like how did they not tip over how were they constructed so that that could happen

Kate:

Um I think they were put in little um again not myself taking much personal notice

Russell:

sort of notice of it but I was assuming they were the little candles that you use for fondue

Kate:

Oh yeah

Russell:

The little flat ones and I think possibly putting in were put into a little floaty sort of thing (I laugh) but with I think with movement in the water they did go out and initially were set up just as a um as a sort of a initial sort of image on still water

Russell:

Right okay

Kate:

So I think yeah they did they got disturbed and um the lilies were a lot more um sort of coping with that

Russell:

Were they real

Kate:

Yeah they were

Russell:

Right like water lily

Kate:

Yeah water lilies

Russell:

And they were just floating on the surface of the water

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

Right yeah I was wondering about the candles after last time I was just wondering how could you do that like because you'd talked about how your performance had involved climbing in and out and you've just talked about climbing

Kate:

We dove into the water yeah as well

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:
And then women being in the pool later and the scene with the candles sounded so nice but then I just thought how do they work (I laugh a little)

Kate:

Yeah I mean there was the occasional thing where I think for a little while it was kept up by a quite a few women where they would go out and I mean people were just you know they would have I don’t know if they were actually smoking in the pool but um I think they would have had to get out but access to lighters so

Russell:

So the women had because we’re a fair distance from the lockers in this pool area

Kate:

Yep

Russell:

so the women actually had with them things like lighters and like you had a towel near you

Kate:

Yep

Russell:

but they had other kinds of

Kate:

Yeah I’m trying to remember that I’m thinking the the section where you just walk in which leads off towards the showers there’s a row of benches um they had set up ashtrays I think there were ashtrays there

Russell:

Oh yeah

Kate:

like so people could you know just sit and smoke

Russell:

II.i.12:00

Had those ashtrays been specially set up for that event or did you get the impression that they were standard

Kate:

Standard smokers please ashtrays which were on the floor so they were those trough ones

Russell:

But my question is

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

had did you get the impression they were there a day earlier when the men were there

Kate:

Don’t know yeah whether it was a general but it was sort of to me it sort of seemed a bit of a an odd place to

Russell:

to have sort of cigarettes though the bench was very much you know a waiting sort of bench

Kate:

Yes

Kate:

I got the impression that um yeah I didn’t think too much about had it been I assumed the ashtrays were always there so yeah

Russell:

Were many women smoking in that pool area

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

(laughing a little) Right

Kate:

It was a bit of bit of a nightclub sort of

Russell:
Yeah you’ve mentioned that

Kate:

a set up it was really

Russell:

And the champagne as well

Kate:

Yeah the champagne was being sort of

Russell:

I think it was being sort of passed around

Kate:

Russell:

Was that in glass glasses or plastic or

Kate:

I think they were yeah just the ah plastic cups

Russell:

Right

Kate:

So not even shaped like a a champagne glass they were just [unintelligible]

Russell:

And was the champagne bottle located or champagne bottles located down at the pool

Kate:

I think there was a little area we had to you had to go not actually right by the water

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

to to you know go and get your champagne topped up

Russell:

Right

Kate:

(softly under my next speech) It was like a bar person

Russell:

Was there somebody doing

Kate:

I think it had a couple of people sort of doing that as [unintelligible]

Russell:

But it was down near the pool area if not right beside it it was in that area not in the lounge area upstairs

Kate:

Oh okay that I can remember just people walking around with with plastic cups of

Russell:

Right

Kate:

So not actually seeing them yeah

Russell:

That’s fine that’s fine did you have any champagne

Kate:

No

Russell:

Right okay because you never drink

Kate:

on the job (I laugh a little)

Kate:

Yeah it was my not drinking on the job more yeah

Russell:

But you weren’t on the job all night

Kate:

No

Russell:

Did the champagne run out
Kate:

Oh I think it yeah I think it it just sort of did run out and um but I chose not to drink

Russell:

Fine

Kate:

Yeah (she laughs a little)

Russell:

Would you drink champagne at a club if you went to one

Kate:

Um not really no I tend to sort of if I go out to nightclubs to dance I tend to just drink water

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

So [unintelligible] or maybe the occasional beer but not

Russell:

But it maintained that club atmosphere then for you

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

in your own conduct as well

Kate:

Yeah yeah and also at that that period of time I was actually um just going through a um macrobiotic stage so

Russell:

Ah right

Kate:

that was more a personal choice of drinking so (she laughs)
sort of you know photos for um MSO and all that sort of thing

Russell:
Oh yeah

Kate:
so they had um a few other sort of photos which I happened to get into as well one those you know in

II.i.17:00
the spa with a group of people so

Russell:
Right

Kate:
Sort of

Russell:
I’m going to come back to that later (Kate laughs) because something’s actually happened […] that um yeah we’ll come back to that ah did the camera have a flash

Kate:
Um yes it did yep it was actually quite dark in the space

Russell:

II.i.17:30
Did you get the sense that it’s usually that dark or had it been turned down because it made the candles more interesting

Kate:
Yeah um I think it would have quite possibly always be quite dark and really steamy that was always my impression that steamy to the point of yeah you could really see

Russell:
And was it steamy

Kate:
Oh only if you went in the in the wet sauna room

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
But (we laugh a little) II.i.18:00
I don’t know I just sort of had this thing that you know there’d be mist all over the pool

Russell:
Before you got there

Kate:
Yeah before I got there I had this whole thing [unintelligible] be set up and they’d

Russell:
Where do you think that came from

Kate:
Um oh I think just from my I think an idea that I always sort of thought that you know like some steam rooms or or saunas were um yeah sort of large you know sort of wet wet areas which were very steamy (she laughs a little)

Russell:
Because I’ve seen um

Kate:

II.i.18:30
imagined pictures of

Russell:
I have a photograph I

II.i.18:30
took at Bath of the Roman bath at Bath

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
in winter and there’s a layer of mist over the pool

Kate:
Oh how beautiful

Russell:
Yeah it is beautiful because the water comes up from underground at a really hot temperature ah still does um and
Kate:

Yeah it was almost the thing of reminiscent of ah you know filling filling the dance floor with smoke to you know sort of make people feel like they could just chill out a bit more or that was my little sort of reasoning to possibly having it fairly steamy and it's a bit daggy really but (she laughs a little)

Russell:

Do you really think it's daggy

Kate:

Oh no I suppose no maybe not maybe the thing of it was always like if you go out to a nightclub they've always oh there was this period of you know they pump the floor full of smoke and then people get on the dance floor so it just makes it a less you know sort of you know scary space to

Russell:

Have you been to Honky Tonks yet

Kate:

No I haven't

Russell:

They pump the bar with smoke

Kate:

(laughing) Okay

Russell:

at about twenty minute intervals the dance floor's not far away but it's the bar that gets wreathed in smoke (Kate laughs again) to quite spectacular effect actually

Kate:

Wow

Russell:

but um but I'm just getting more and more interested in this club thing I mean that you've mentioned because it's like it had a lot to do with your sense of how you wanted to behave or how you felt comfortable behaving was very much like how you would at a club is that correct

Kate:

Yeah oh I'm think I suppose for me personally it's never been in terms of like going out to a club and if there's music going and a few people I never had you know any problem getting out on the dance floor and dancing or just wandering around quite comfortably and often you know going to going to nightclubs on my own with you know with pretty much the thing of like just meeting people there anyway people that I knew but it was never the thing like oh I have to turn up with you know with a few people thing sorry getting back to the specific question being

Russell:

Well just more that it's like that event for you that night I mean I'm just really saying

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

what you've been saying

Kate:

Yeah they had set it up ah I think in that sort of thing of making it more with I think that they were hopefully hoping that it would you know sort of get a really good response and that they could have it quite regularly

Russell:

Right but when you say making it a bit more does that imply that the rest of the time it was a bit less

Kate:

(we laugh a little) Oh right

Russell:

A bit less like a club like that the women's night

Kate:

(II.i.21:30)

was more like a nightclub atmosphere consciously you know cultivated and created that way
Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
and that that was consciously done to make it to make the place different from how it normally was used

Kate:
Yes yep

Russell:
Right because that wouldn’t be appropriate that was less attractive that was less interesting just to

Kate:
have it as a place where you just meet you know I yeah I suppose just meet people have sex (I laugh a little) um I don’t know ah just have a sauna you know um as a and then using it as a as a social club as well um ah sorry I’m I’m

Russell:
Oh my

Kate:
Is that

Russell:
No I mean I guess I’m asking

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
That for you and presumably for other women there the idea of it being like a nightclub or a club atmosphere was much more preferable than what everyone believed it was for the men when the men went

Kate:
Yeah right um because yeah again like I had no again for me having any sort of like oh you know it has to be set up like this or it needs to be like that again being quite open and I suppose having having the opportunity to go to you know a sort of um I suppose a a just a a women only um venue

Russell:
II.i.22:00
being and then it being a sauna um steam room yeah oh just another I suppose place where you can just hang out and but it’s funny because it yeah whether it’s that whole thing of you know again that thing of going back to again what I’ve previously said then talking to women about the thing of just like you know having a space because there was actually you know quite a few women that did get together and say well hey come on let’s

Kate:
II.i.22:30
you know let’s organise a night and and see what happens but yeah to the best of my knowledge in Melbourne it’s you know there’s been there’s been a few attempts but they’ve always you know it’s just always been such a just doesn’t continue

Russell:
II.i.23:00

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
or more of an event

Kate:
It was more of an event I’d say

Russell:
Right

Kate:
with you know the the possibility of it being a venue thingie or a you know let’s do this you know once a month in some ways yeah

Russell:
II.i.24:30
Would it make would it be fair to say no that night was it more of a venue

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
II.i.24:30

Kate:
Right

Russell:
II.i.23:00

Kate:
Yeah
Right an event that could have with time become a venue

Kate:
Yes yeah

Russell:
Ah right

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
That’s that’s really interesting yeah

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
Um when we talked last time I’m I’m going to move on to something else

Kate:
Yep sure

Russell:
When we talked last time you talked about um flirting and you told me a little bit about it then I’m just wondering if you could tell me a bit either

Kate:
Right um

Russell:
It doesn’t matter how brief it was

Kate:

Russell:
Well well we can talk about that

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
given that you’ve brought that up

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
So um if I say okay that piece if you say to me that piece was flirty then my question is how do you know

Kate:
How do I know

Russell:
Yeah what

Kate:
All right maybe I don’t know that’s the (she laughs a little)

Russell:
Oh no no no

Kate:
Yeah yeah yeah

Russell:
You seemed very clear about that

Kate:
Yeah right

Russell:
I would I’m not asking you to define

Kate:
Yeah
Russell: flirty or anything but
Kate: Yeah
Russell: you might not have ever thought of this before so that's okay
Kate: Right
Russell: You know you don't have to apologise or justify
Kate: Yeah
Russell: It's more
Kate: Oh it was it was quite I mean in that the contact between Jodie and I
\[\text{II.i.27:00}\]
\text{um and crawling through a hole in the wall too (she laughs a little) was quite um yeah had you know [unintelligible] firstly coming out you know sort of um just head first and then climbing down and then having to to also then disappear the same way so that the last image is actually just you know sort of your head going through and then just your bum and your legs so you're basically being sucked into a hole so but not that that was necessarily a flirty thing (she laughs a little) but yeah}
Russell: But but
\[\text{II.i.27:30}\]
do you find it do you find that flirty
Kate: Yeah
Russell: Okay
Kate: And then because you yeah I yeah I think it was also the response too from the audience who
Russell: Yeah how did they respond
Kate: Oh they were just cheering (she laughs)
Russell: Afterwards or as you did it
Kate: As you were doing as as we were doing it
Russell: How did they cheer like what did they do did they was it like going whoo whoo whoo that kind
Kate: (she demonstrates, very loudly) Oh yeah go yeah (she laughs, then continues the demonstration, but softly)
\[\text{II.i.28:00}\]
all right
Russell: So they were really loud were they
Kate: Yeah they were the loud and they were just whistling and clapping
Russell: Did they Splash you
Kate: Um no they didn't Splash us no
Russell: Right so that they didn't
Kate: Oh they I think at that point they'd start they'd got back into the water
Russell:
Yeah
Kate:
So sort of into the water [unintelligible] not that I have any memory of being
Russell:
That's that's all right
Kate:
Which yeah yeah
Russell:
That that's no problem
Kate:
Yeah so I suppose of
Russell:
what again and then so after that it's it was just the thing of you know where you go around and just talking to various people and people who do just come up to you and say you know thank you very much for the performance and and then just that sort of you know a few people who were just oh yeah I suppose it's just a genuine sort of whether they you know if they the
Kate:
people that liked it saying yeah why did you do it and
Russell:
Is this still part of the kind of flirty thing for you
Kate:
Yeah a little bit yeah
Russell:
Okay
Kate:
And then it was just you know as sort of the night just sort of went on it was just sort of seeing you know people that were there and
Russell:
Do you remember any moment later on you know (I laugh a little) in
Kate:
Russell:
where you consciously flirted with someone
Kate:
Um no not where I consciously I think that not so conscience consciously flirted
Russell:
Right
Kate:
but again the I don’t know the opportunities I suppose for I don’t know seeing how things could could eventuate with you know a few people
Russell:
and but then I also chose to sort of just be a bit of a watcher too so I didn’t [unintelligible]
Kate:
(laughing) Oh I don’t know
Russell:
No no I’m just
Kate:
Yeah yeah
Russell:
I’m just just I’m just kind of trying to put out there what I’m hearing just to double check like you don’t need to explain or justify it it’s just more to
Kate:
To be clear yeah right
Russell:
To map it out a bit that’s all
Kate:
so a watcher role isn’t flirty
Kate:
A watcher isn’t flirty

Russell:
Doesn’t feel flirty

Kate:
Oh I can’t be yeah can’t be so specific as in no I think yeah [unintelligible] yeah it’s quite possible to also be watching and find moments that you can flirt I think I’m sure you can given you know the right sort of thing you can do that all the time

possibly (she laughs a little)

Russell:
If I ask you if you have any specific memories of flirting on that evening um you can always say for instance yes but I don’t want to talk about it

Kate:
Right

Russell:
or you can say that

Kate:
Yeah cos I

Russell:
That’s perfectly okay

Kate:
Yeah sure

Russell:
you know but then I at least get the information

Kate:
I think I’m trying to yeah I think because what I’m trying to do is to try and really analyse

Russell:
it and try to which I’m probably not quite

Kate:
Yeah I’m

Russell:
Yeah I’m not asking you really to do that

Kate:
Yep

Russell:
but maybe to describe something rather than analyse it

Kate:
Right okay

Russell:
And not feel you have to analyse it like it’s a school exercise where there’s a right answer

Kate:
Right

Russell:
Anything you say as long as you believe it to be true

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
is perfectly fine

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
you know

Kate:
Which it yeah so yeah it’s I I suppose that thing of like

Russell:
But if you’d rather
Kate:

can't [?] find the right words yeah [unintelligible]

Russell:

But the other thing is if you'd rather not say anything at all that's fine too just let me know (I laugh a little)

Kate:

Oh no it's I think my my thing is that I haven't tried to yeah whether I'm avoiding saying anything but it's more that I think I was trying to analyse it

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

Trying to explain it like to get a sense of

Russell:

Let me go back

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

Well I'll backtrack a fair bit if I say to you how do you know it was flirty I'm not asking you to justify it. I'm asking you to tell me how you know that now and you might never have thought about that you might think oh I just know it

Kate:

Yeah that's

Russell:

and that's fine

Kate:

Yep

Russell:

You can just take some time out to just sit there and think before you start putting it into words if you like um one of the things I'm interested in a lot of these conversations with people is trying to locate a place where they get to talk about something they'd maybe not haven't talked about before

Kate:

Right

Russell:

So that they kind of almost on the spot have to find a way of talking about it and that can feel a bit funny but that's okay just take the time you need for it

Kate:

Yeah yeah I I suppose then what I'm trying to say is that um that thing of being I suppose in a in a situation where you know also possibly having done a performance where just feeling just feeling quite high and which is really great you know and also you know you've just sort of put yourself out there as well so which sort of means okay then there's all these sorts of things that you know people who've looked at it and go oh okay this person they've already maybe assumed what you know you are like just from you know sort of seeing that or you know read into that in a particular way so yeah so then you you've sort of a lot more um you know sort of immediately if you if you do hang around you know people do have that thing of like you know wanting to sort of they're interested in finding out more um so and then also you know you can sort of just put yourself in that little situation where you can just sort of you know you can tell people are looking at you (she laughs a little) and it's sort of like you know [unintelligible] nice little one for the ego whatever but it's just that

Russell:

Without without actually seeing the people

Kate:

Yeah without actually seeing them

Russell:
Right

Kate:

That thing of of being looked at

Russell:

Right

Kate:

which is um

Russell:

Now at Volcano was there were there parts of the building where you were you could feel that happening more than in other parts

Kate:

Yeah it were it was sort of like concentrated II.i.35:00 areas like down by the pool and then in the little lounge area

Russell:

Right

Kate:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

But in the steam room for instance you didn’t have a strong sense of oh suddenly everyone’s looking at me

Kate:

No oh absolutely not no

Russell:

Right okay

Kate:

No that was a bit more which is you know yeah and that was good because you know just sort of you know just putting yourself in a just being in a space too where you know ah I suppose you know just being able to switch and you know you can be a person that is you know is watching and

Russell:

II.i.35:30

Kate:

Or being watched

Russell:

Or being watched yeah (we laugh a little) so whether the flirting comes in I don’t yeah

Kate:

Maybe that’s a bit of both

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

When you were mak when you were I know you put the idea for the performance together very quickly

Russell:

in the afternoon we’ve II.i.36:00 covered that before did you know did you and Jodie know that you were going to um make it flirty was that an effect you were hoping to produce

Kate:

Um

Russell:

or

Kate:

no well we had ah again I had done a few Jodie and I had have done a few sort of short pieces before and the process has always been again very II.i.36:30 very short um ah and actually quite quite intense and sort of like oh you know sort of but more with the logistics of what we wanted to try and do so and again using um just really sort of non-theatre places like you know well using foyers like for Theatre A using a foyer there and just having objects like ladders tied to walls and basically using a space II.i.37:00 as much as possible um yeah it it ended up being just that more that when you know it sort of got to the actual performance um I
suppose that that sort of came out more I mean we had talked about I mean just the the sensualness of water um even though we hadn’t actually you know sort of sort of talked about what

\[\text{II.i.37:30}\]
we were going to do and done all that sort of thing but the actual

**Russell:**

Had you done a run though of it

**Kate:**

Ah

**Russell:**

Of climbing down and climbing back up

**Kate:**

Yes we only did one of yeah we did one of those to see if we could physically do it

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Kate:**

So

**Russell:**

And when you did it were you aware then that it had potential to be very flirty

**Kate:**

Um no not at that point because it was more like oh my god this is really fucking hard

**Russell:**

Oh right

**Kate:**

So that was [unintelligible] like but

\[\text{II.i.38:00}\]
again it was that thing of and we were quite pressed for time for our the the technical rehearsals so that was where it was a little bit you know a little bit sort of dodgy and a bit scary going well you know if we had more time of course it would be we could really work this but then actually doing the performance that suddenly the time it was almost like having all this time suddenly ah where ah and it also being filled with an audience where we had all the time to sort of

\[\text{II.i.38:30}\]
you know just to be really you know you could it you know just extend it and make it a performance as opposed to you know someone physically climbing up a

**Russell:**

So it was like a kind of

**Kate:**

rope so it actually

**Russell:**

an open improvisation almost

**Kate:**

Yes almost yeah

**Russell:**

You had a schematic structure

**Kate:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

but anything that happened was potential material that you could develop and work with is that

**Kate:**

Yeah yeah we did um again we gave ourselves a framework

\[\text{II.i.39:00}\]
so within that

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Kate:**

Within this little section you know we knew that you know once this certain point was covered we’d move on to the next thing but we and we knew exactly what that would be but within that little period yeah we actually had a little bit of free range which was which was quite good like so that things between us could be you know sort of played with and then how we also then sort of presented that to an audience so you know a bit trust there and
going okay like going well okay I’ll trust what you’re going to do

Russell:

I’m wondering how much does that kind of making procedure or process how closely does that model relate to say how you were after the performance when you were just wandering around

Russell:

in the building um another customer another one of the women rather than I mean yes you were probably still a star but (I laugh a little)

Kate:

No but yeah it was pretty much like um that thing of going um yeah of just being another one of the women so

Russell:

But did you have little um rules for yourself or little set pieces like oh I’ll do this now and see what happens or was it much more truly impulsive and spontaneous or were you calculating or strategic as you went around

Kate:

Around oh I think a lot I was quite spontaneous like I again moving around the space

Kate:

and I suppose whether I didn’t actually sort of go okay well I’m going to spend x amount of time here and but I did sort of make sure that I sort of covered the whole space I thought well

Russell:

Ah so that

Kate:

I wanted just to look around which I did and and then having the to go to I suppose locker areas I mean for the you know again for the practical reason of getting changed and and doing those sorts of things

Kate:

and I suppose just lingering a little bit to have a look to you know see what’s going down and and again it was also very much because of the way that night was also set up there were a lot of um again having that feeling of it being like a nightclub so a lot of um women that were there were again women that I’d see whenever I went out dancing so you know it was sort of again you know various sort of friendship stages with certain people you know meet new people or

Russell:

Did you meet any new people that night

Kate:

Um not really well no no I didn’t that probably due to the fact that I didn’t you know make that much of an effort to sort of go [unintelligible]

Russell:

Did you get the sense that people tended to stay in their the friendship groups

Kate:

Yes they did

Russell:

that they’d had before

Kate:

No there was it was pretty much like a new groups of friends and and even you know within those you know sort of groups too they would there were always like a couple of women that were the ones that would always just go out or just disappear and you know sort of go off and and sort of meet new people but then they’d always just yeah just

Russell:

Just meet them or have sex with them

Kate:

Meet would have sex with them meet them to yeah

Russell:

Right
Kate:

Yeah but see that's the thing too like cos I'll go into I'm gunna digress because there was another sort of women's night sauna thingie which was at the um the St Kilda Baths which was um set up which was actually quite um this was before they were renovated the salt sea baths

Russell:

Yeah yeah

Kate:

And that that also pulled quite a quite a lot of women actually um

Russell:

A similar crowd

Kate:

A similar crowd but also then it also had like it would have women women with children as well

Russell:

Oh yeah

Kate:

So it was a yep sort of more that sort of communal well I mean not to say that it's you know it's sort of not communal

Russell:

Were they women of ah a variety of sexualities so was it the focus on it being a women's event or was it

Kate:

Yes I think yeah I think more a women's

Russell:

The issue was more gender than sexuality

Kate:

Yes yeah

Russell:

Was that true at the night at Volcano as well that it was more to do with gender rather than sexuality

Kate:

I think with the Volcano one it was more the sexuality

Russell:

Yeah okay

Kate:

Yeah but it's interesting too that whole thing of like I suppose being I don't know like defining you know sort of having sex or being oh how do I try to work this one ooh maybe I don't want to go there um (she laughs) I don't yeah

Russell:

That's all right

Russell:

No I don't want to go there yeah

Russell:

Um you mentioned last time that if you were designing or making your own ideal sort of sauna that you'd have salt water rather than chlorinated water

Kate:

Than chlorinated water

Russell:

Was that a fond memory is that to do with an experience of being at the old St Kilda Sea Baths

Kate:

No more that it's um that just chlorinated water is just horrible

Russell:
Kate: Yeah

Kate: I just find the smell is really horrible. You know it’s trouble for your skin, so it was purely a um, I don’t know. I suppose just a health thing, just because chlorine stinks.

Russell: Yeah

Kate: Um yeah it would be much much better for you I reckon.

Russell: Um I might want to, I want to touch a couple of areas that you might not want to from what you’ve said.

Kate: (laughing a little) Okay.

Russell: Um

Kate: Yeah I would say I would say dykes or [intelligible]

Russell: So that just had something to do with talking with me.

Kate: Yeah that’s all right.

Russell: Fine

Kate: So lesbians yeah.
Is lesbian a term that

Kate:

Ah I don’t use the word that much

Russell:

Right

Kate:

So I suppose gay yeah but then again I
don’t really sort of say gay women either

Russell:

Yeah you just tend to think of women

Kate:

Yeah I’d say women

Russell:

Yeah I suppose or or maybe would say gay
or straight women I suppose

Kate:

So maybe I do use it a little bit yes

Russell:

Right

Kate:

No no it’s

Russell:

Dykes yeah

Kate:

It’s um so it’s a bit like gay or straight men
then for you

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah okay all right um

Kate:

there was another term (I flip through my
notes) ah hang on oh yes of course

Kate:

[unintelligible] yep

Russell:

This um term that keeps coming up all the
time I’d just like to hear a bit from you
about um treat it like it’s like a little parcel
that you unpack so it’s not like you have to
define it you just unpack it as far as you like

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

and that is um the term casual sex

Kate:

Well there see that’s what I don’t

Russell:

Well no

Kate:

Well yeah how do you know

Russell:

When no how do YOU

Kate:

How do I know

Russell:

Yeah when when can you think when what
needs to be there for you to think oh yeah
this is casual sex

Kate:

I suppose it’s for me to say casual is is that
it’s it’s only done once

Russell:

Right okay

Kate:

Yeah that I think is yeah it’s just done once

Russell:

Once with one person
Kate:
Yeah or a couple of people

Russell:
Yeah whatever

Kate:
Might be a few people

Russell:
Yeah okay

Kate:
Yeah just but it's just like a possibly a one off maybe it might be followed up

Russell:
Yeah just like a possibly a one off maybe it might be followed up

Kate:
Yeah just like a possibly a one off maybe it might be followed up

Russell:
So so the other person or people basically are are there for that moment and then they

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
And go off and it's and it's yeah which is the sort of the one to define [unintelligible]

Russell:
So it's like a singular a one off event

Kate:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
All right rather than a venue

Kate:
Yeah (we laugh) yep

Russell:
Okay

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
Um I want to show you something (I reach into my bag and pull out a newspaper) [...] I'd noticed that there was a women's night at the biggest sauna in Sydney

Kate:
Oh wow

Russell:
and guess what there's a whole series of photos

Kate:
Oh fantastic yay

Russell:
Now what I'm wondering

Kate:
There you go that yeah these were the photos of the

Russell:
Well

Kate:
Yeah we had a couple of these

Russell:
Now go on tell me more

Kate:
Oh that um again this particular one here with all their hands up
Russell: Right this is the one of the women in the spa all waving at the camera yeah

Kate: Yeah waving at the camera yeah

Russell: Yeah

Kate: which you know was sort of which was one of the photos that I sort of partook in

Russell: Right okay

Kate: Yeah okay

Russell: So there was one what in the pool or in the spa

Kate: In the spa

Russell: Right okay and you mentioned that were the was the spa as big as that or

Kate: It was smaller

Russell: Smaller

Kate: It was smaller than that one

Russell: Right okay

Kate: It was tiny

Russell: Because I remember you saying that there would be three women or four

Kate: Yeah that would be like max in the little spa

Russell: Four yeah

Kate: Yep (I laugh a little) not like six or eight

Russell: Is it very reminiscent of the night or is it does it do these photographs seem to have a very different quality

Kate: I reckon they’re a lot more more relaxed or there’s a lot more they’re sort of like I mean they look quite set up but they’re actually very reminiscent

Russell: Apparently they have at least um one night a year in Sydney

Kate: Right

Russell: where they try and organise the women’s night taking over a um one of the men’s wet venues

Kate: Right

Russell: But there’s only three

Kate: of those venues in Sydney
Kate:
Yeah and it only ends up being one night there’s not a demand for more

Russell:
I don’t know

Kate:
You don’t know yeah

Russell:
I don’t know and I don’t know who organises it I there was an earlier issue where they [sic] was an advertisement for it and then I was just so surprised and very pleased

Kate:
Absolutely I yeah oh cos I’m just thinking like if this again was to be set up in Melbourne I’m pretty sure

Russell:
II.i.52:00
it would get um a good you know crowd of people going to it and particularly you know I reckon if they were to set it up in winter

Kate:
Absolutely I yeah um

Russell:
II.i.52:30
It’s on the mike (we laugh a little) sorry

Kate:
[unintelligible] yeah

Russell:
(referring to other photos in the newspaper)
These ones of course

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
are from another event

Kate:
Somewhere else yeah but um I think they’re a lot more easy going a little bit if that’s

Russell:
Your impression was that women were a bit more awkward

Kate:
Yeah a little bit yeah

Russell:
at that event

Kate:
Sort of I was talking you know

Russell:
More awkward than you felt

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
Right and that I think we talked about this last time that had to do with the fact that you’d been in there earlier and got to check the place out you’d had done a performance

and then

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
you’d kind of and also you’d got to know the space I think you said earlier

Kate:
Yeah I did yeah having that

Russell:
Even so during the event you then went to make sure you went and checked everything out all those spaces again

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
with the women there

Kate:
Thing thing with people there and [unintelligible]

Russell:
To sort of see how they’d be with women there or

Kate:
Yeah to see how or how

you know how the space would be utilised you know how and again not having I mean I had no sort of preconceived idea of as to how it should be used I mean you know to a certain extent but so

Russell:
Um when you when you were walking around before the before the night in the afternoon I’ve a

I’ve asked you um previously um were you thinking about imagining what it was like with the men there and you said oh yes you’d been trying really hard to do that um you know just wondering I think you said what they get up to (I laugh a little) or something but and if in if that’s different now

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
Like you seem a bit surprised that I say that but um then just you know

Kate:
Surprised surprised yeah at

what I’d what I’d sort of see [unintelligible] um well I suppose oh not I suppose um (softly to herself) trying to say that

Russell:
Let me

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
Let me get onto the next bit though

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
which is what I was really interested in which was I didn’t ask you last time did you spend time trying to imagine what it would be like with women there

Kate:

Russell:
Um I suppose well yeah um what I yeah did imagine was sort of how it it did sort of
pan out to be is that answering is that what you

**Russell:**
Yeah it

**Kate:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
Well

**Kate:**
Yeah that's

**Russell:**
So you did put some thought into that and you more of less accurately predicted

**Kate:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
So did you expect the women would be a bit awkward

**Kate:**

---

**II.i.56:00**
Yeah there I mean there were pockets because then again you know going around to other areas where you know um just actually going into some of the steam rooms but then I didn't then this is where I sort of went well you know do I just sort of sit here and watch or you know see what happens in so yeah there there were complete you know sort of areas where they were quite you know

**II.i.56:30**
unselfconscious about

**Russell:**
Right

**Kate:**

---

sort of what they were doing and they were there you know to have um just to hang out and do

**Russell:**
Have a good time

---

**Kate:**
Absolutely yeah

**Russell:**
whatever form that took

**Kate:**
that took absolutely and and yet

**Russell:**
But there were times then though when you suddenly felt like you had to make a decision

**Kate:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
quite consciously

**Kate:**
Yeah well I sort of thought well you know I did actually at one point have had a moment where I went well do I just sort of *(laughing)* sort of sit here see what happens which I did for a moment

**II.i.57:00**
and then I actually withdrew and went oh

**Russell:**
Where was that

**Kate:**
That was in just one of the steam rooms

**Russell:**
Right where were you

**Kate:**
Where was I

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Kate:**
In the steam room as well

**Russell:**
No were you *(Kate laughs)* for instance were you right next to the door or were you deep into the steam room

**Kate:**

I was inside the steam room yeah

**Russell:**

Right right in and the you were what there were some women who were doing stuff together

**Kate:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

And

**Kate:**

And then there were a few people just chatting as well so that was

**Russell:**

But you distinctly

*ii.i.57:30*

remember this moment though

**Kate:**

Yeah and that that was that was me actually having a moment of well maybe being well going well if I’m here I should be sort of you know engaged in some sort of stuff *(laughing a little)* with somebody that’s what I was yeah getting at

**Russell:**

With the people you were looking at or with someone else

**Kate:**

With well you know either either having a moment do you know do I join in or or

*ii.i.58:00*

do I um yeah with somebody else thinking you know do I you know [unintelligible] come in here with somebody else

**Russell:**

So how do you think it came about that at that moment you were suddenly you had a problem *(we laugh)*

**Kate:**

I don’t know I think I [sic] was probably getting sort of later on in the night I think I was probably getting a bit tired but so

**Russell:**

But you’d had all this time to be so confident

**Kate:**

Yeah yeah yeah yeah

*ii.i.58:30*

so but that again that’s where I probably started to try and I think be a bit too either like premeditate things or or try and sort of set things up which I was trying to sort of come into from what you know sort of the right well I suppose not [unintelligible] right or wrong but just that moment you know that

*ii.i.59:00*

the moment of actually yeah participating

**Russell:**

Yeah because you couldn’t flirt in there could you

**Kate:**

Yeah no that’s that was probably a

**Russell:**

And like one of the things that was clearly something you’re attached to *(Kate mutters something unintelligible while I speak)* that night is the sense of being able to flirt which is kind of light and playful

**Kate:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

and doesn’t involve any full on commitment

**Kate:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

or anything even if

*ii.i.59:30*

it’s just for a one off event

**Kate:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
Whereas it sounds like the steam room isn’t a place for you

**Kate:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
where flirting is possible

**Kate:**
Well that particular night no

**Russell:**
Right

**Kate:**
Whereas I mean I've had another instance in a club

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Kate:**
You know in a mixed gay club where yeah the opportunity sort of presented itself over the night so with two people

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Kate:**
Yeah we don't need to

**Russell:**
Yeah we don't need to go into that but anyway that was you know but that's where sorry that just that just brought back [that?] to mind because I think yeah that thing I suppose what I'm trying to maybe get to is the thing of like like when you try to sort of plan things too much or cos I think cos most of the night I mean apart from the performance which was you know sort of an organised sort of planned thing

**Russell:**
Yeah we don't need to go into that but

**Kate:**
cos that I always find you know really draining and tiring and I may as well not be there so that it did get to that little point where that happened was for me an indication that yes I'm getting tired or no I've just got to not you know like try to

**Russell:**
Was it a situation where were you standing still or sitting still at the moment when this awareness came over you

**Kate:**
Yeah I’d approached I’d came yeah I came into a space

**Russell:**
Yes

**Kate:**
and sat down which could have been quite fine like I’m sure I could have just sort of sat there

**Russell:**
But there was something happening in front of you

**Kate:**
Yeah there was there was you know

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Kate:**
stuff

**Russell:**
And was it the case that you’d reached a point I’m now I’m now going to do the leading questions and so again just say no if you don’t want to talk about it but was it the case that you then realised that your choices were to stay where you were to retreat or to go forward

**Kate:**
Yeah they were my choices and I think I chose the retreat

Russell:
Right and you weren’t aware of any other choices

Kate:
That particular moment no yeah there was actually the stay the stay was the com yeah was the was there but then I opted for retreat

Russell:
Did you get a sense of something moving towards you I don’t mean literally

Kate:
Yeah yeah yeah

Russell:
but II.i.62:30 did it feel like something was coming towards you

Kate:
Um yeah I’d had a I’d had a sort of feeling of that and partly it was I think I just would would have liked to have actually just to have to have walked in there and for it to be just this you know suddenly spontaneous wild sort of okay I’m going to join in

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
sort of moment which was a bit of a fantasy thing that I probably again like I said comparing it to another II.i.63:00 sort of situation that I was in um I could have let happen but I didn’t I chose not to so

Russell:
(a silence, then) Did anybody um make any overt invitation to you (Kate shakes her head) no

Kate:

Russell:
No and that well I mean who knows I mean no they didn’t but I probably didn’t let myself be in a situation long enough for that to oh not long enough no no that it just didn’t no they didn’t

Russell:
Did you feel a bit scared

Kate:
II.i.64:00 Um [unintelligible] I suppose the I was shy

Russell:
Right

Kate:
Maybe that’s being a bit scared [unintelligible]

Russell:
Do you think the figure you were II.i.64:30 portraying (Kate laughs) in your performance earlier in the evening would have been shy

Kate:
No

Russell:
No (we laugh)

Kate:
No

Russell:
One of the things you said last time that I thought just I just thought was beautiful was when you talked about when you’re performing you’re sort of yourself and you’re sort of not yourself

Kate:
(laughs, then) Yep

Russell:
I thought that was beautiful but I’m wondering
yeah just very beautiful

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

but something about

Kate:

Whether it is yeah

Russell:

the the yourself this self that you're talking about which is stable you have a sense of do you have like a story you tell yourself about who you are (I laugh a little) so that you can say oh well this is sort of me and this isn't sort of me

Kate:

Oh sorry that's what you're asking me if I do

Russell:

Yeah do you have a sense of oh no that's not me or

Kate:

Oh

Russell:

Or that is like

Kate:

Oh well part no no and I suppose that yeah they all can be then they all are parts of me it's that thing of whether you know

Russell:

But do you feel it that way I know

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

that that theory makes sense

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

but do you feel it that way that they're all parts of you or or when I said like the figure you (Kate laughs a little)

Kate:

who was in the performance would she have retreated and you were really clear no

[unintelligible]

Russell:

But

Kate:

Well yeah I mean there again I just sort of oh it's too tricky um too

Russell:

Did you feel let me put to you another way did you feel like if you hadn't retreated you would have needed to have been a different person to stay there or to go forward or you would have needed to change in some way

Kate:

Yeah I would have just

Russell:

probably needed to change

Kate:

Right

Russell:

Um ah I suppose change in the way of well not putting you know sort of obviously some sort of blocks to the way I was you know possibly thinking or my interactions

Kate:

yeah it's just it just keeps coming back to this to another incident that happened I didn't

Russell:

The one in the club

Kate:

Yeah a lot later which is

Russell:
You connected the two incidents very strongly together

Kate:

Um only in sort of retrospect as to the way I was [unintelligible]

Russell:

So at the club

Kate:

Yeah

Russell:

you moved forward

Kate:

Yeah yep

Russell:

And that was an incident that was after the incident at Volcano

Kate:

Yeah but this is this is actually many years after it (she laughs a little) if that makes

Russell:

Oh no it makes complete sense

Kate:

Whether it's gunna make any difference to yeah

Russell:

but I'm just wondering if you're connecting them now do you think you connec you were aware of the previous incident that night at the club that you were aware of the previous incident at like had you learnt from

Kate:

Had I learnt well

Russell:

Were you more prepared

Kate:

I suppose being more prepared but at the same time in a way to be more open to situations so yeah

Russell:

Did I mean we're talking about it now and it it's remained as a very specific memory for you but did you reflect on it afterwards is was it some one of the things after that night apart from just the general oh it was you know I had a nice time I had my photo taken and things was it something you reflected on a lot like why did I go back why did I retreat

Kate:

No not really

Russell:

Right okay

Kate:

I'd yeah

Russell:

(a silence, then) How many steps would you have needed to have taken to go forward I mean literally to reach the people

Kate:

Ah I suppose given the situation of the night it would have only just been a few a few steps like

Russell:

Yeah

Kate:

I was just just sort of

Russell:

Could you see their faces clearly

Kate:

No it was quite dark and pretty misty yeah

Russell:
II.i.69:30
(a silence, then) I don’t think I have anything else (we laugh a little)

Kate:
No

Russell:
But again do you have anything else that you wanted to

Kate:
No no it’s funny because it’s just it brought up this other thing but it’s probably you know it’s not really relevant to this thing but

Russell:
But you’ve connected it

Kate:
Yeah I have actually

Russell:
It feels relevant to you

Kate:
Yeah I suppose the relevance is that looking back

II.i.70:00
I suppose in hindsight and talking about the the Volcano night um yeah had it been that particular time the or you know that sort of stage of where I was at the club ah that would have just you know would have been quite a good night (she laughs) I suppose if that makes

II.i.70:30
well in terms of for you know experience and that

Russell:
Do you regret that you retreated

Kate:
Um yeah I suppose a little bit like I just sort of I did sort of go and leave then and go well you know this would have been you know this is an ideal situation to experience that

II.i.71:00
but I suppose in retrospect going well I just probably was not ready to to do that at the time or

Russell:
How did you retreat did you literally kind of back away facing the scene that you were retreating from or did you turn your back and

Kate:
Yeah

Russell:
just walk out without looking back

Kate:
Yeah I stood yeah I stood up and turned

Russell:
Yeah

Kate:
and walked out yeah

Russell:
And you didn’t look back

Kate:
No

Russell:
II.i.71:30
Did it quite swiftly

Kate:
Yeah (she laughs) yes (she laughs) I did

Russell:
Like very quickly or

Kate:
No it was it was enough to sort of just be quite a sort of a measured quickness if that makes any sense (she laughs)

Russell:
Well I’ve the it does but it’s just opened up another question then

Kate:
(still laughing) Oh no
Russell:  
which is  

II.i.72:00
were you were you kind of hoping that someone would prevent you that someone would stop you

Kate:
Yeah I think that's what yeah I would have needed that little yeah I would have yeah

Russell:  
And that's where the measured (Kate laughs) quality comes in

Kate:
[yunintelligible] yep just have to give that enough to sort of because the the the exit well the exit wasn't you know a sort of a panic sort of I have to get out of here

Russell:
Yeah yeah

Kate:

II.i.72:30
It was okay as I'm doing this yeah making it aware that I'm I'm leaving but there could be a split second on it where

Russell:
Were you wanting them to be clearly aware that you were leaving

Kate:
Yes (we laugh)

Russell:
So you were per so in a funny way you were leaving but you were also performing leaving

Kate:
Yeah (she laughs)

Russell:
Is that is that true

Kate:
That is yeah that’s true

Russell:

II.i.73:00
Funny isn't it (we laugh)

Kate:
It is funny oh dear dear

Russell:
I feel like I know all this

Kate:
(she laughs, then) But yeah but it it was it was again it was just such a great night to again you know spend a fair bit of time just being just being you know just watching and seeing how it well you know how does it work

II.i.73:30
and um anyway in a sense so but yeah just the one other thing too that the the moments I suppose of awkwardness that were there were probably you know women who were either you know similar to [unintelligible] having similar moments to what I was having too so that you know I could just be

II.i.74:00
presuming it but yeah it would be great if it um was offered again I’d just be really interested to see what would happen who knows yeah

Russell:
Oh I hope it does

Kate:
[unintelligible] for sure I think so it should be yeah

Russell:
Let’s stop

Kate:

II.i.74:30
Okay

Russell & Kate:
Thanks (Kate laughs a little)

II.i.74:33
(I switch off the minidisc recorder)
appendix 18: Kate II

END OF CONVERSATION
appendix 19: Willow II

The transcript documents a second conversation with Willow recorded at her request in the busy cafeteria of a large, public museum. We met on a weekday early in the afternoon. Willow, pressed for time by business commitments, squeezed our meeting between other appointments. Throughout the conversation we competed with a cacophony of rowdy school kids, chattering customers at tables nearby, and announcements on the public address system.

Russell:

II.i.00:00
Um we’re on now

Willow:
Okay

Russell:

Um the first time we talked (I laugh a little) you talked a bit about um I I didn’t really pick it up at the time but I noticed it when I went through the transcript you were talking about the sorts of things you’d imagined being at a place like Volcano from things you’d heard and you’d talk about kind of what you called Tom of Finland type imagery like

II.i.00:30
a whole lot of rooms and a bit cartoon (?) and that and a couple of times you kept saying oh a motorbike room twice you referred to oh a motorbike room and I just um for various reasons heard that but just kept on going but it’s only recently going over the transcript that I just kind of thought what on earth is a motorbike room so it was like

Russell:

II.i.01:00
So what’s a motorbike room

Willow:
A motorbike room is a room with a mo big big motorbike and I imagine naked people sitting there waiting for someone to come in (laughing a little) so they can ride their bike with someone

Russell:

Right

Willow:

And I guess the whole (a waitress delivers our order) thank you I guess the whole um animation of movement and the relationship of a motorbike and its vibrating engine

II.i.01:30
to sex and speed so it has this connotation of sex so I guess it’s to do a bit with advertising as well where you see you know these huge kind of hunky men sitting on motorbikes so I imagine someone sitting on the motorbike being a seducer or seductress kind of waiting for someone to come in and play with them on a motorbike that it’s an object of desire and so there’s this large element

II.i.02:00
in a room that might be generally lit or brightly lit I don’t know but I don’t see anything else in there but I heard people refer to a motorbike room so it was like

Russell:

A motorbike room at Volcano

Willow:
Yeah

Russell:

or somewhere else (Willow nods) so when you went to Volcano did you find the motorbike room

Willow:
No and I wanted and also they’d spoken about I think a gym room (laughing a little) but I guess maybe that was the locker room I don’t know but I heard

II.i.02:30
about these rooms that I never saw and when I was in there I was kind of conscious of it thinking but where are they but I never saw doors that I could open to find it like there was only one room that I could go into which was a padded room with lots of mirrors in it and also a labyrinthine room which wasn’t much of a labyrinth really

Russell:
Yeah you mentioned that

Willow:

So no I was always a bit stumped to where’s the motorbike room and I never found it and I was a little bit annoyed that I hadn’t

Russell:

So you had heard people talk of a motorbike room

Willow:

Yeah

Russell:

Right okay

Willow:

Or maybe they’d spoken about because the idea was that at the sauna there wasn’t just a sauna and the spa but a series of rooms as playrooms so in a description that was one that came up

Russell:

II.i.03:30

So did you actually look for do you remember looking for the motorbike room when you went exploring both the times you went to the Alice In Wonderland events

Willow:

Yeah I wondered where it was but I didn’t consciously go looking through every door it was like I can’t see it no one’s mentioned it where is it

Russell:

II.i.03:00

None of the women had mentioned it

Willow:

II.i.04:00

No not while I was there I think it was either after or before I can’t really remember but there was was mention about it

Russell:

So you’ve talked about how there’d be a motorbike and maybe lit or dimly lit

Willow:

II.i.04:30

how big would this room then be and can you tell can you start to describe or design if you like this room for me like

Willow:

The room doesn’t have to be big it’s actually the motorbike that’s big

Russell:

(laughing a little) Right

Willow:

(laughing a little) So it can be in a small or a big space

Russell:

If it was in a small space would the motorbike be bigger because it was in a small space

Willow:

It’d probably look bigger like I imagine it black and silver and you know

Russell:

II.i.05:00

you know how you look at motorbikes and they’ve got a lot of detail

Russell:

Yeah

Willow:

You know pipes and bits and bobs on it so I guess cos of the detail and the colour and this person sitting on the bike that would be the central focus so anything outside like I can’t imagine what else would be in there I mean

Russell:

Would the what would the orientation of the motorbike be in relation to an entrance to that room

Willow:

II.i.05:30

would it be facing the entrance would it be in profile to the entrance

Willow:

Partly in it would be in profile with the the handlebars towards the door

Russell:
And would the motorbike be central in the room

**Willow:**
Yeah definitely

**Russell:**
Okay and how many steps from the motorbike to a wall

**Willow:**
Well from my perception as in my vision is 
**II.i.06:00**
that when you walk into the room and I imagine the door being ajar so you don’t have to go searching *(I laugh a little) um* probably about six eight steps

**Russell:**
Right when you say the door’d be ajar it would have a door

**Willow:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
or it would have a doorway

**Willow:**
No it would have a door

**Russell:**
Sliding or hinged

**Willow:**
No hinged see the whole thing

**Russell:**
Opening inwards or outwards

**Willow:**
Inwards the whole thing
**II.i.06:30**
about I guess being at Volcano and I guess working for a gay organisation is that they were always so money conscious and when I went to Volcano or even the baths in St Kilda when I was really young there never seemed to be an affluence so and my for

me they might have something but but it would be in such a simple environment or

**II.i.07:00**
if you’re looking at the pool where everyone’s swimming all there is is tiles like it’s really practical and I might have some nice lighting on the pool but that’s it so everything’s so minimal so they would only be an object in there and maybe because of the steam or whatever it seems to be a lack of extras so I only envisage a bicycle or a motorbike being in there

**II.i.07:30**
and nothing else so it all seems stripped bare because it’s there for an effect but it’s there as an icon in a way

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Willow:**
As a symbol

**Russell:**
Yeah you talked about ah I want to ask you a couple of more things about this you talked about the orientation of the bike being towards the door like the handle bar end towards the door

**Willow:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
What’s that about

**Willow:**
Well so when the person’s sitting on it they can

**II.i.08:00**
see you coming in and you can see the person on the bike

**Russell:**
Oh so they’re sitting on it as if they’re riding it

**Willow:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
Cool all right facing forward on the bike
Willow:

Yeah I mean I think I have that kind of imagery because it’s something you see so much you know the Harley riders and you know

Russell:

Are you thinking of men or women

Willow:

Oh when I envisage it I think of men more or even the women that sit on it or ride motorbikes are quite a bit more masculine in look

Russell:

There was that Telstra ad with a couple of women on a motorbike and a Telstra dish in the background (Willow laughs a little) remember when Telstra did all those gay ads

Willow:

All the gay ones I never saw it

Russell:

Yeah

Willow:

But I mean the only funky girl

Russell:

They were kind of lipstick leather lesbians

Willow:

Yes

Russell:

Very glamorous

Willow:

I think I did see that ad but only in paper

Russell:

And of course the other thing recently is (laughing a little) the Chiko Roll ad

Willow:

Oh I haven’t seen that

Russell:

which is on billboards

Willow:

I think I watch a lot of ah music videos so they were funky girls on bikes

Russell:

Right

Willow:

and Lenny Kravitz

Russell:

Right okay

Willow:

So give me a funky girl on a motorbike like that (we laugh a little)

Russell:

Um

Willow:

I think also ages and ages ago I saw um some Andy Warhol films and there’s this whole kind of sex thing with a motorbike and a sofa and so objects do become sexual icons that you can interact with and my guess was the saunas are quite liberating in that you go in there undressed and there is that avenue and option things do become a lot more charged

Russell:

The other thing is about the door being ajar

Willow:

Mm

Russell:

What’s that about there is a door but it’s ajar

Willow:
Well I guess if the door’s open it’s therefore inviting but a closed door’s a little bit scary to open

Russell:

Does it need to be ajar so that you can see into the room from outside and see the person on the bike or so that you need to actually open it further to see the bike

Willow:

It needs to open

\[\text{II.i.10:30}\]

almost so that you can peer in so I might be able to see a bit of light in there but I might be able to see one of the handle bars so I know I have an identification so when I envisage it I can see a slight amount of the bike and I go ah that’s the motorbike room

Russell:

Right okay

Willow:

And if someone’s in there or not I don’t know

Russell:

If there are a lot of people in there are they

\[\text{II.i.11:00}\]

congregated in the middle around the bike or around the walls or both

Willow:

Um

Russell:

or neither

Willow:

Well I hadn’t thought of a lot of people being in there but um and I think that might be to do with the fact that at the women’s nights they’re not jam packed they are quite small but yeah I imagine them being by the bike if there’s more than you know three people

Russell:

\[\text{II.i.11:30}\]

Tell me about the walls the surfaces of the walls in the motorbike room

Willow:

White and clammy

Russell:

White and clammy

Willow:

Yeah you know steam

Russell:

Oh yeah

Willow:

that’s evaporating

Russell:

So they partake of the wetness of the venue

Willow:

Yeah

Russell:

rather than the dryness so do you see it as being

\[\text{II.i.12:00}\]

located in given that the building’s if you like a suite of rooms and levels do you see it being located near the wet area

Willow:

When I went there there weren’t as far as I remember levels I can’t remember so I guess it is a series of like if you’re looking at it in a floor plan

\[\text{II.i.12:30}\]

there are these central avenues that you walk down and they would be rooms off that you know at the end of the labyrinth before that is the sauna and the shower and I can’t remember the exact location but yeah I’d say it’s all you know a series of rooms

Russell:

A ser a series of rooms right okay

Willow:

\[\text{II.i.13:00}\]

Rather than open spaces that lead onto other spaces yeah

Russell:
If you found the motorbike room and it was empty what would you do

Willow:

(a silence, then) I’d probably go and grab someone to come in with me

Russell:

Right okay

Willow:

Be it friend or lover I don’t know but just to go and and look around

Russell:

Right (a silence) um I only have a few things I want to ask you

Willow:

Okay

Russell:

(referring to the background din in the museum foyer) Because it’s topical here I suppose um do you recall music or sound a threshold of sound at the Alice In Wonderland events you’ve talked about chatter that there was chatter

Willow:

I think where you go through into the main space where there’s the bar there were films playing and I was probably the music [sic] but I don’t remember any of the music at all

Russell:

Do you remember hearing silence anywhere

Willow:

(a silence) I guess um around the the spa and the saunas I mean I don’t remember any music but if I think about it now I kind of remember it as a closeness I don’t know if that’s because it was quite intimate in feel but sometimes when there is silence it can tend to close in on you like silence can be quite loud in a way quite echoey and that’s what it seems like just from thinking back on it that’s what it I seem to remember I don’t know for some reason it did seem quite hushed but maybe there was blaring music I don’t remember

Russell:

Yeah that’s fine do you remember the sound of water

Willow:

Only when people are moving around in the water and you know bits of Splashing as people moving

Russell:

Yeah

Willow:

That’s about it

Russell:

Yeah okay um you talked about the you said something about ah you were curious as to what kind of an event it would be with women because you were aware that when the men were there they had sex and it was quite open

Willow:

Mm

Russell:

Do you is that still something very clear for you that when the men were there they had sex and it was quite open what do you mean by open

Willow:

Public

Russell:

Can you tell me more

Willow:
Well

**Russell:**

Where when public in what sense

**Willow:**

Well you know boys want to have sex in the pool and I just imagine them kind of I imagine a lot more people being there and I imagine it sex being a lot more open so

**Russell:**

But what do you mean open to what open to

**Willow:**

Open as in open space and I guess men feeling more comfortable to have sex in front of other men so it is very public and maybe it’s more acceptable I don’t know but that’s what

**Russell:**

**II.i.18:00**

But you felt that strongly as that was the thing you felt like you knew that

**Willow:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

That was a something you could rely on

**Willow:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

or it was like a dependable base

**Willow:**

Ah I mean having worked at the dance parties and you know just being a lot more aware of you know where sexual acts occur I have a sense that it does occur

**II.i.18:30**

within an all male environment where it is a bit more safe and a bit more acceptable to be like open about having sex and I guess that that’s a reflection on I don’t know my thoughts about gay men and their ability I guess

**II.i.19:00**

to be promiscuous not that the lesbian scene’s not like that but I don’t see it so openly I don’t see it so publicly if I’m at a girl event

**Russell:**

But have you seen men having sex

**Willow:**

**II.i.19:30**

So is it like um

**Willow:**

And having gone to the girls’ back rooms there’s just nowhere near the same level of shown sexual play

**Russell:**

That is what you’ve what you’ve witnessed directly in the back rooms

**Willow:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

in the women’s spaces

**Willow:**

What I

**Russell:**

Sorry the girls’ spaces

**Willow:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

is not doesn’t match to the same

**II.i.20:00**

degree as what you’ve heard about what happens in the back rooms in the men’s spaces
II.i.20:30

Willow:
Absolutely

Russell:
And you’ve been told that by men

Willow:
Yeah and men who have gone into those rooms and would partake in the sex

Russell:
But you

Willow:
and also from the men that I’ve spoken to who have been to saunas and what I’ve heard from them as well

Russell:
But you also you’ve been involved in cleaning up the back rooms as well

Willow:
Not the boys’ bit
no

Russell:
No oh right

Willow:
Uh uh (she laughs a little)

Russell:
Because one of the things I guess I wondered I mean forgive my ignorance but do the women leave much debris (laughing a little) in their back rooms

Willow:
No partly because they don’t need to use as many things as boys because of the same sex issue um no not at all

Russell:
Yeah

Willow:

II.i.21:00

Willow:
Not at all

Russell:
Whereas there’s visible debris with the men like condoms and wrappers for lube and whatever litter like when we’re in the park

Willow:
Yeah

Russell:
I remember we just peered back over the seat at one point when we

Willow:
And there was a condom wrapper

Russell:
Yeah there was a condom wrapper or a lube wrapper on the ground and there’s actually a litter issue in that park because of the men

II.i.21:30

Willow:
Yeah and the interesting thing is that at one party in the back room the girls’ back room there was a car an old fifties car placed in the room

Russell:
Oh yeah

Willow:
and the women would actually go into the car and have sex rather than have sex outside of that so there were all these little environments set up like there was a hospital bed (I laugh a little) there was a teepee

Russell:
Oh really

Willow:
There was the Holden

Russell:
Yeah
Willow:

So there are these little environments set up you know curtained off room with all you know curtains and you know I mean quite baroque but it was actually within the car that you could visibly get a sense looking through the window that you know the girls were getting on with each other so they it’s still quite removed and the rest of the place might be quite desolate but they’d still go into a smaller environment so it wasn’t so

Russell:

And your awareness is that the men didn’t have those kind of interiors inside the back room spaces

Willow:

Yeah and I basically heard that there were bales of hay and shagging left right and centre

Russell:

(I laugh a little) I’ll tell you a story (Willow laughs) but not now oh no just something I saw um but the um in the saunas when you were at Volcano were you aware though that there were interior spaces constructed within the building

Willow:

Yeah

Russell:

that were commensurate with what was in the women’s spaces at the back rooms in the dance parties

Willow:

Well I guess knowing that there were alternative rooms and even little pockets within the labyrinth that they were set up as a little niche or nook where you can go and have sex or

Russell:

(II.i.22:30)

play or go and chat with your friend whatever I mean there are more social areas so you know in the pool bit of the spa you know there was a lot of chatting or in the sauna there was a lot of chatting there upstairs where they were playing films and behind the bar there was a lot more chatting but to go off into these environ environments and to isolate yourself and also I guess it sets up

Russell:

the allowance that you can go off and do that and you can go and close a door and you can do what you want to do and there might be a sense of seeing someone going through the door so you know but it is removed

Russell:

(II.i.24:30)

(a silence) You talked about your second visit to Alice In Wonderland you sat at the bar a long time can you tell me a bit more about that now (a silence, then)

Russell:

II.i.25:00

well first of all did you sit at the bar a long time the second time you went to Alice In Wonderland

Willow:

Yeah I did because I felt slightly anxious about going into the space and also my boss was there so I was kind of hanging out with her and yeah I find it quite confronting to be in an environment with all naked people and previously when I’d gone I’d always worn my bathers and quite enjoyed it and and relished in being partially dressed you know I find that quite provocative so it was quite confronting to reveal

II.i.26:00

myself completely as a you know being naked so I guess I hung out at the bar

Russell:

You talked about just then you mentioned being at the bar because you didn’t want to you felt anxious about going into the space does that mean the bar isn’t into the space

Willow:

Yeah it seems separate it it’s the space between the space between from coming in to the

Russell:

Coming in from

Willow:

The street up the stairs
Russell: Yeah II.i.26:30 so there’s into the building
Willow: Yeah
Russell: and then there’s into the space
Willow: Yeah so it seems like the transition space and so it’s just next to the lockers and where you put all your personal effects so it’s the space you that I could be at before I undressed and also because I was there when they setting up and bought some stuff over it was quite early on so there weren’t that many II.i.27:00 people so it felt a bit funny to undress and kind of be there almost kind of waiting so I’d rather wait in this you know interstitial space
Russell: Okay you were at the bar literally at the bar or in the vicinity of the bar
Willow: No at the bar
Russell: Were you sitting or standing
Willow: I think I was sitting
Russell: On what
Willow: II.i.27:30 Stool [sic]
Russell: Did it have a back
Willow: No
Russell: How long were you sitting there
Willow: Fifteen thirty minutes
Russell: Was the stool fixed to the ground like the ones at Pellegrini’s or was it mobile
Willow: I don’t remember might have been mobile I don’t I don’t know
Russell: Did anyone else sit at the bar or just
Willow: No
Russell: Did anyone come that you can recall and go
Willow: Ah many of the people who were organising II.i.28:00 it
Russell: Yeah was there a bar person
Willow: I think well the people who were organising it were the bar people so they were kind of prepping and getting ready
Russell: Were you kind of chatting with them over the bar
Willow: No
Russell: or were you just sitting there quietly
Willow:
Bits of both

Russell:
Were you physically oriented towards II.i.28:30 the bar or were you turned so that you were physically not completely committed to the bar but as it were you could move between the bar and Willow:
Where I was

Russell:
the area away from the bar Willow:
Where I was sitting I could look into the bar but I could also look at the main space as well

Russell:
The main lounge space up there Willow:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah okay were there movies showing up there Willow:
Yeah

Russell:
Were you watching them Willow:

II.i.29:00 Not really cos there was no sound with it

Russell:
Right did it feel like being at a bar or as one of my interviewees said a bar bar (I laugh a little)

Willow:
No it didn’t feel like a bar bar at all

Russell:
Right but it was actually set up like a bar bar Willow:
It Willow:
Or wasn’t it

Willow:
Well it it wasn’t set up like a like if you go into II.i.29:30 a nightclub bar or a cafe bar and it was partly because of the environment I think because of all the it seemed a bit low key for me but also because of the lights I’m just thinking about the film and partly why I didn’t watch it II.i.30:00 too was because there were a few lights in there I couldn’t really see the film properly which I found really annoying that’s a nightclub issue mm did I answer your question

Russell:
Yeah

Willow:
I’ve forgotten it

Russell:
Sorry

Willow:
I’ve forgotten it

Russell:
You’ve forgotten what the II.i.30:30 question

Willow:
Your bar question yes

Russell:
No you’ve answered it

Willow:
Okay

Russell:

When you said um just then did I answer your question what I actually heard you say was can I ask you a question um

II.i.31:00
I want to change tack oh sorry go on

Willow:

Well I was just going to say it was slightly different that time that I was sitting at the bar as well because I was waiting for my partner to arrive

Russell:

Yeah

Willow:

so it was not only was it you know a waiting space to go into the sauna but kind of a waiting space for me to

II.i.31:30
wait for a partner and it had a really different vibe going there being with someone in a relationship as to going there as a single person

Russell:

(a silence) What is that vibe or what is that difference in the vibe

Willow:

Um

II.i.32:00
wish I hadn’t said that now (she laughs a little)

Russell:

You don’t have to answer if you don’t want to I mean it there’s a first time for everything (we laugh)

Willow:

Yeah no I don’t think I need to

Russell:

Cool that’s all right

Willow:

I think it’s fairly obvious

Russell:

(I laugh a little) And it may be yeah

II.i.32:30
um I want to start getting I want to start checking into another area when you say you think it’s fairly obvious no no no do you think that I’m asking you a question that I already know the answer to or do you think that

II.i.33:00
it’s obvious I don’t you don’t need to explain beyond the terms I’m asking you do you think it’s obvious or it should be obvious to me and that if it isn’t obvious to me well fuck it (I laugh a little)

Willow:

Can you say the beginning of the sentence again

Russell:

II.i.33:30
Yeah when I ask you when you say to me I think it’s fairly obvious do you think that I’ve just asked you a question that I already know the answer to

Willow:

Yes yes I do think you you have a have an idea of what the answer is but it might be different but it could be similar but I think you do have an inkling

II.i.34:00
toward it

Russell:

Um I want to ask you some questions now not about so much any of those times in the saunas but about our last time in the park um did you find

II.i.34:30
that experience to be an experience that was public private personal intimate um what words would you use there’re some terms that open I’m thinking of some words you’ve used in other contexts now that I’m just throwing back at you but asking you to characterise if you like a lot of what happened

Willow:

Well even though it was in a public space I

II.i.35:00
found it quite secluded so I didn’t find it threatening at all and yes I do believe it is
quite intimate because it’s asking well you’re asking for explanations of a micro-section of [or?] what I saw or in the sense some of what

II.i.35:30
you do in a I mean what you do in an environment is who you are so you’re kind of asking well where’s it coming from so yeah it is it’s it is intimate and also it’s a matter of how much I’d like to say but I never felt pushed or uncomfortable I actually

II.i.36:00
had to work quite hard to think about it so I found it kind of an immersive environment in that you know I had to focus on it and it was actually quite interesting talking about the very first time I’d been when I was like nineteen and you know that was quite quite profound for me going back to thinking about that time

Russell:

II.i.36:30
(a silence) After we’d finished that day and I left you what kind of further thoughts or awarenesses did you have I mean you may have already answered that a bit talking about

II.i.37:00
thinking back to that period when you were nineteen but did you were you still immersed in that experience for a while afterwards or did it dissipate very rapidly

Willow:

II.i.37:30
I think it it dissipated quite quickly except for the the first experience because I had to really go back there and think about it and I

II.i.38:00
Even though it’s a lot further back in time

Willow:

II.i.38:30
Yeah

Russell:

II.i.38:30
All right [?]

Willow:

II.i.38:30
And I think during the interview as well it

Russell:

II.i.38:30
Your dog was there

Willow:

II.i.38:30
Yeah

Russell:

II.i.38:30
Yeah

II.i.38:30
Yeah (a silence) she went to sleep for two days after that because she had a good run around it was great (she laughs a little) um I don’t know it was it it was hard to answer the questions without them feeling are the answers feeling a bit bland or it was hard to remember things so it felt a little bit inadequate sometimes

II.i.39:00
or I did with the answers

Russell:

II.i.39:00
But you felt that even though it was clear it wasn’t a memory test though

Willow:

II.i.39:00
Yeah I know you did mention that

Russell:

II.i.39:00
Yeah

Willow:

II.i.39:00
It was like oh okay yeah yeah but I think I had a discussion with you after the interview and you told me about a sauna that a mixed sauna that you’d been to overseas and

II.i.39:30
that was really interesting

Russell:

II.i.39:30
Oh in Dresden

Willow:
Yeah

Russell:

I'd forgotten about telling you about that

Willow:

Well it was ac it was a really I enjoyed that story

Russell:

I can give you the address (Willow laughs) they have women's nights and they have mixed nights

Willow:

It was just interesting talking about [unreadable] talking about all the you know the difference in environments even though you're in the

Russell:

If a night like the Alice In Wonderland nights was on offer again would you go

Willow:

If I went with a gang of people I'd go if it was a group of friends

Russell:

Like going to a club

Willow:

Yeah

Russell:

Is it like going to a club

Willow:

It is a bit yeah

Russell:

Yeah

Willow:

It is a lot (a silence) so your story about Dresden was quite interesting

Russell:

because it was seemed like it was a lot more social

Willow:

Can you tell me back the story I told you what you recall

Russell:

I think I remember you saying that you were amazed about the level of intimacy and chatting between people and that it was a mixed night and how kind of

Russell:

friendly and and not so much down to earth but or mundane but something in between that it was and I think that's a nice thing about the saunas and the way when I went to the Korean baths in Sydney even though it was the women’s baths it was like that like it was quite friendly and relaxed and chatty

Russell:

Did you experience something similar when you went to the Korean baths in Sydney?

Willow:

Yeah in a way and also the way not so much that it was promoted but

Russell:

the whole nature of an evening event with DJs and alcohol and not that I remember the music and the films and just the way that it's set up it's set up more as a one off event that is like an alternative to going out to a nightclub Whereas if you go to the Korean baths it's something that's on every day but I mean you know Volcano and Rear Entry is on every day

Russell:

Um

Willow:

(whispering) I've got to go soon

Russell:
Hmm

Willow:

(softly) I have to go soon

Russell:

Yeah (a silence) II.i.43:30

we can leave it there (Willow says something inaudible) no we'll stop there then

Willow:

Is that okay

Russell:

Yeah

Willow:

Is that enough

Russell:

Oh yeah yeah that's fine okay II.i.43.49 (I switch off the minidisc recorder)

END OF CONVERSATION
appendix 20: Randy II

The transcript documents a second conversation with Randy recorded in a conference room in a library. Randy met me outside the building and walked me inside to the room. We talked as we set up, and the minidisc started recording just as Randy finished a sentence. The conference room had glass windows through which we could view students in other parts of the library working in groups.

Randy:

II.i.00:00
(finishing a sentence) explained it to me

Russell:

Okay when we last met you said that the weekend after we were going to meet you’d organised for someone who was coming down from Sydney to meet up with you

Randy:

Oh god

Russell:

and you were going to videotape the two of you having sex

Randy:

Yes

Russell:

Did you do that

Randy:

Yeah I did actually

Russell:

II.i.00:30
And I’m wondering

Randy:

(he laughs a little) God even I can’t remember that

Russell:

if you can tell me about the outcome of that that is the tape and what the experience of it was like say compared with the mirror rooms

Randy:

Okay

Russell:

at Volcano

Randy:

Okay oh that’s a bit of toughie um I think the actual taping of the sexual experience was interesting

II.i.01:00
because the sex itself was just like having sex there was a slight awareness of the camera but I tended not to worry about that but what was great about it and what’s different to the mirror room is that um when you’re in the mirror room having sex with someone it’s you’re very much in the experience so the visual is very much a part of the physical experience as well but when I watch back the video it’s more I think it’s more of a mirror experience it’s like watching yourself and it doesn’t feel like well it didn’t feel me when I was watching

II.i.01:30
it back I just went is that really me you know

Russell:

Right

Randy:

So that was that’s the difference you don’t really have that chance to to remove yourself from the experience when you’re in the mirror room because you’re sor you’re in the moment you know and you’re watching yourself having sex or you you know whatever

Russell:

So what would be your preference

Randy:

Um that’s I I’d still go the mirror room only because I think ah it’s just a little bit more challenging than watching a flat screen but at the

II.i.02:00
same time I found both experiences enlightening for different reasons I’m like
I’m very much a visual person. I think I probably get off more on the visuals than the physical experience so they both have you know you know a bit of a thing for me but yeah I think. I think just because the mirror room is more about experience. Its physical experience its visual experience are all in the same thing so I’d go for that do you know what I mean but

Russell:

What about the factor of time involved like

one of the things that interests me about the video is that when you’re watching the playback

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

it’s at a different time from the event

Randy:

Okay

Russell:

of having been there with the sexual partner

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

whereas in the mirror room you’re with the person

Randy:

You’re in the moment yeah

Russell:

and you’re with the image at the same time

Randy:

Yeah um so so are you saying how does that like time-wise

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

what does that do um

Russell:

For you do you p

Randy:

I I mean

it would be great if I could just pick and choose the times at which you know I want to be in the mirror room. I mean in a way I can you know by choosing to go down there and that sort of thing whereas with the tape it’s much more accessible when I want it so um I mean just like looking back at the tape it’s very much I remember that like it does draw me back to a time you know for example like you know whenever it was let’s say November [sic] or whatever um when I look at the tape I go oh yeah I remem that’s very much like November because that’s there and you know

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

You know it’s the blue mats

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

You know it’s the blue mats

Russell:

Is is the room always the same

Randy:

Um well in my very few experiences there which were only like a short distance in between yeah they you know it’s always the same it’s like the blue mats on the floor I check technically they could be black as well it depends if they
decide to change it or clean it or whatever and you know ah a little bit of fog on the glass and you know handprints and it’s always the same you know there’s something well the space is obviously going to be more static than a domestic space which is constantly changing well I constantly change my domestic space so um so in that way the one seems to record a moment in time probably a bit more so than the other you know but but you know yeah I guess

Russell:

Do you find um

II.i.04:30

um that when you visit saunas you you’re aware of changes they’ve made since the last time you were there

Randy:

Um yeah I do because you spend so much time well I spend so much time there and because usually when I go I mean it’s not just about a session with one person in particular so it um I notice everything especially also because I work as a designer you know I’m always looking at the way things are structured the flow II.i.05:00 of things I know that sounds really silly but that’s just things I think about and I’ve actually noticed a difference between places where you know the flow isn’t that good and I know what’s wrong with it and why it doesn’t work and so obviously when there’s a new poster up or um you know when they have put new light fittings in or you know they’re the first things I notice about a place when I go in and I guess that’s more important almost than in some ways than the experiences I have there like I check out all the different saunas so I can see what it’s like and you know what I feel most comfortable in and why

Russell:

II.i.05:30

So do you associate um do you have an awareness of vanished spaces or or conditions or aspects of decor or floor plan or architecture that no longer exist

Randy:

Do I notice them when those sorts of things happen

Russell:

Yeah when you go to a sauna do you for instance think oh yes I remember when it used to be like this or

Randy:

Okay um

Russell:

And associate those with periods in the way you talk about

Randy:

Okay okay

Russell:

your domestic space changing

Randy:

Um

II.i.06:00

that’s interesting because I haven’t like I’m fairly new to saunas I’ve only probably been going for about a couple of years now so I can’t imagine anything really drastic there haven’t been many drastic changes in the saunas I’ve been to it’s the same old thing you know they might occasionally wipe it down (he laughs a little) you know [unintelligible] bacteria bath that is but um no well I think I would notice actually I would notice if you know they’d suddenly just sort of taken a wall down or opened up a space I’d just go oh right II.i.06:30 so um I mean I certainly do notice when they have things like theme nights and all that sort of thing and they just make really slight changes you know it might just be um put a new gel on a lamp or they’d you know

Russell:

Stick a couple of balloons on the wall (I laugh a little)

Randy:

Oh yeah yeah and it’s like oh it’s party time (he laughs) [unintelligible] you know um so yeah I do notice things like that structurally I haven’t really been in into a situation where I’ve that I’ve noticed any sort of radical changes I mean um II.i.07:00
um someone was telling me that there’s been a few changes to Squirt but I haven’t been to that for ages I haven’t

Russell:
But what they’ve done is something

Randy:
[unintelligible] grey couches set up in there and all that

Russell:
No

Randy:
No [unintelligible]

Russell:
No that’s what I was thinking

Randy:
Okay

Russell:
but no no no it’s some something much more um

Randy:
Okay

Russell:
um harder

Randy:
Okay

Russell:
and minimal than that

Randy:
Okay I mean it’s interesting with places like that I was just thinking while you were saying that the way they actually put things in there I think which dictate certain amounts of sexual practice do you know what I mean like they I think generally they try to provide a space that is just really plain but then they chuck in things like the slings and they put in the glory holes and stuff and that

Randy:
it almost determines what you do sexually and I was just thinking about this the last
time I was at something and I just went oh yeah you know like because it's there people will use it the way you know use it a certain way right whereas if that wasn't there how would they improvise how would they how would they react sexually you know

Russell:

Well there's just a couple of things you say almost determines you said it almost determines the sexual practice

Randy:

I think it does determine actually I would say yeah I can quite confidently say that having things there determines the way you think and determines the way you practice your sexuality because

Russell:

That happens to you

Randy:

Oh well I for based on like what I've seen of other people's sexual practices there I mean I've actually never got into a sling or I guess but I've been a participant of visually watching someone else and it's um I guess symbolically people would recognise it from seeing it in porn films or other you know sexual stuff and then they'd go this is how you use it and therefore it's like this symbol people see it there and they go okay I'm going to use it this way and it

Russell:

Okay um well I was thinking of the glory holes and um

Randy:

Okay it's the one on the right it's the right entrance

Russell:

That is if you're facing from the pool area

Randy:

Oh no no if you're going into the pool area

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

it's the the entrance that's on the right there's two entrances [unintelligible]

Russell:

Oh yeah yeah yeah yeah go on

Randy:

And if you just just before you go in there's a wall

Russell:

That's in Rear Entry and I really like the way they've done it because it's purely a it looks like a design feature

Russell:

Whereabouts at Rear Entry

Randy:

Okay um

Russell:

Okay you know where that pool sauna area is

Randy:

Now there's two entrances to go into isn't there

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

Uh

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

Um

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

Ok
Yeah

Randy:

and it’s just um actually there’s a couple of walls I don’t know where the other one is and it’s just got holes about that big (he demonstrates)

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

all the way along it

like that they’ve just drilled into it and the good thing about it is it just looks like a design thing and the way you can interpret that to be a series of glory holes that fit exactly according to your height or

Russell:

Oh right

Randy:

I find that [unintelligible]

Russell:

but have you seen people use it that way

Randy:

Yeah I have

Russell:

Oh right

Randy:

So I thought that was quite interesting

Russell:

I’ve always thought of it as being like um that’s interesting I’d I’d never imagined that as being because there’s an open doorway next to it it seemed a bit superfluous

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

for it to be that way I’ve always imagined it being like

Randy:

one of those um um like a form of orientalist

Russell:

screen

Randy:

screen

Russell:

Yeah yeah

Randy:

which permits a certain kind of viewing but also um a certain amount of obscuring so that in the way that um women um in women’s areas say in Islamic mosques would often have a kind of a highly decorative screen which was like wrought iron or something

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

but through which a lot was visible

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

but a lot was obscured

Russell:

Yeah yeah

Randy:

And I’ve thought of it in those terms

Russell:

I think a lot of [unintelligible]

Randy:

I thought it was very female
Russell: so I’m constantly I don’t know what that is in me

Randy:

Russell: Yeah

Randy: I think you’re probably right I know a lot of people do use that to break down people’s gaze because they’ll sit in that little little sort of enclave area just because you know they can become a spectator without being seen too much as well

Russell: Yeah yeah

Randy: And I think the thing with a lot of saunas is that because it’s so visual there’s nowhere to hide do you know what I mean like people are looking at you and it’s so blunt and areas like that make it

Russell: Yeah yeah

Randy: you know just maybe a little bit easier a little bit more personally I don’t like it because I feel very kind of cornered in there but that’s my personal experience um but yeah I have been seeing I have seen it being used that way and um I just think that’s interesting because it just offers something else like the way the way maybe someone who’s straight might see that you know who’s not familiar with homosexual practices might just not think anything of it

Russell: Yeah

Randy: and I just thought yeah

Russell: Um the other thing about glory holes was I mean I remember very distinctly an experience I had um where I find that if something’s feeling very determined my first inclination is to resist it

Randy: Yeah yeah

Randy: you know absolutely

Randy: Yeah
Yeah

**Russell:**

But then I thought now come on am I interested in pursuing this or not and I thought yeah I am so I just kept doing it but he was it was like a cat

**Randy:**

Wow

**Russell:**

just constantly moving and

**Randy:**

Wow

**Russell:**

And he was completely delighted and I have no idea now how we got into that situation but I felt tremendous relief at being in there and something happening other than um the expected narrative

**Randy:**

Yeah yeah I think I I feel very much that way too and it the reason I think why I'm not a big fan of glory holes or slings or shackles or anything that they have there because I just sort of go oh you know I don't want to act out somebody else's fantasy it's not mine so if I'm going to use it like I mean I think it's fantastic what you did because I think a lot of people miss out on a real decent sexual experience because they're so caught up with their genitals do you know what I mean like there's so much the whole body is like a sexual organ so why would you just focus on your penis you know or your arse or any number of you know usual places so I I think that's really interesting that people respond that way because you know your whole body can feel things so um I mean occasionally I I mean personally I've never seen anyone use it in a way use any of those sort of apparatus in a way that's not the usual way but I can j I can imagine ways of using it that's a bit more interesting you know like um

**Russell:**

I've also seen a situation where the doorway of um and I'm sure you probably have seen this where the doorway of one of those booths with the glory holes opened up

**Randy:**

Oh yeah

**Russell:**

and two people have come out

**Randy:**

Oh yeah

**Russell:**

and you know I've thought oh yeah that one's a bit more expected that two people would come out than that they're

**Randy:**

Yeah (he laughs a little)

**Russell:**

Um yeah that's been but even that has the sense of um play about it

**Randy:**

I I don't know if this will count but I recently went along to um it's kind of like this orgy party which is actually quite fascinating um and

**Russell:**

Is this Men's Business

**Randy:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

Right

**Randy:**

Have you been to any of their [unintelligible]

**Russell:**

No no no

**Randy:**
Okay

Russell:
I just know that it exists and there’s a contact number

Randy:
Yeah

Russell:
and things like that

Randy:

II.i.16:00
There’s it’s just basically they hire out this place in a suburb and um it’s basically this gay business but it’s really it’s very saunaesque like it’s black interiors with timber and um and that’s I guess a bit of a cliché I associate with the saunas that I usually go to plus they’ve they’ve also got these beds and stuff and they’re all covered in leopard print which is it’s it’s vile it’s vile but it has all the slings and shackles and stuff and um um

II.i.16:30
yeah I just thought that was an interesting situation because there’s no what I liked about it and what I thought was most different about it to a sauna for example is you there’s no situation where you can really be one on one with someone there’s just no point in that time at all where you’ll find yourself being in a one on one situation whereas with saunas you can you can do that but yet it’s still the similar situation and there’s there are private areas and stuff but um

Russell:
But there is

II.i.17:00
no privacy

Randy:
Yeah

Russell:
at this other venue yeah

Randy:
Yeah yeah I mean there was like three separate rooms and then there’s like an open room where there was like a sling and um and then there’s like this back yard area where they just had you know you could go out sit and have a beer in between you know your rounds of you going for it and (he laughs) and um that was quite interesting just because ah I mean I tried to think about the the reasons I like saunas and things that they offer right and I

II.i.17:30
think just in a for me personally it’s just a space to be able to come into situations like that in a in generally a non-committing kind of way purely for the experience purely for the fantasy purely for you know if you want it to be that way and I think that’s really quite a good thing because um you discover a lot about yourself in a way as long as you’re not restricted to your I don’t know yeah and that was quite a fascinating experience yeah

Russell:
Um I want

II.i.18:00
to ask you about clocks

Randy:
Okay oh yeah okay

Russell:
The clocks at various saunas and where they’re located and what form they take

Randy:
Okay

Russell:
and how you work with the clocks when you’re at a sauna do you wear your watch when you’re at a sauna or do you take it off

Randy:
Depends which watch I have on generally I have a water resistant one which um I haven’t worn for a while but yeah if I’m wearing that I’ll take it with me otherwise I’ll return to my locker at periods when I just sort of

II.i.18:30
feel like I need to to check what time it is and often I’m quite shocked by the amount of time that’s it’s like gambling it really is (I laugh a little) it’s like not that I’m a gambler but you know I’ve heard experiences of people who just go you know I looked at my
watch and next thing I know it’s three in the morning you know and um I can never seem to find clocks at saunas

Randy:

Yeah and maybe I’m not really looking because I think I have my watch so I go it’s reliable you know ah but yeah I never seem to find clocks and generally when I go in I’m not concerned with time anyway

Russell:

So one of the reasons I ask is

Randy:

Okay

Russell:

there were just a couple of passing remarks you made about the passage of time in

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

In the first time we talked

Randy:

Okay

Russell:

and then ah recently I’ve had a situation where someone says where are the clocks around here to me and then I thought well one of the first things that I always do is locate all the clocks in the building

Randy:

Okay

Russell:

I found but I’m wondering you don’t seem then to have a sense of where the clocks are say at Squirt Rear Entry or Volcano

Randy:
I actually wouldn’t be able to tell you

Russell:

At all

Randy:

No for me I the way I look at things um I guess I may do the same thing but I look at different things for so for example it may not be the clocks but there’s certain areas that I go like I distinguish

II.i.20:30

like I go you know there’s the wet area where there’s you know the the spa and all that I I sort of just sort of look at things in terms of blocks of you know areas and functions um so no I guess I never really do look at the clock I

Russell:

It’s interesting because at both Squirt and Volcano

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

the clocks or two of the clocks or a clock in each of those venues

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

is in the wet area

Randy:

Oh okay I’ve never no no I’ve just not noticed

Russell:

But not

II.i.21:00

at Rear Entry

Randy:

Okay yeah I couldn’t tell you it’s it’s funny it’s not something I really think about like I guess occasionally I go in looking for one but I just um I think an area I’m really threatened by

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

in saunas I thought about this too was the area where it’s technically nonsexual activity there’s a TV playing some sort of really corny movie and guys sit around and talk and there’s like a bar and I just go oh I can’t go into that space because that would mean you know

Russell:

Where in particular are you thinking all of them

Randy:

Um

II.i.21:30

I think generally all of them because there’s something about that space that um it’s funny because in a way that’s probably what I want the most is to actually intellectually connect I mean after some sex I mean there’s nothing better than for me than a really good conversation with someone so in a way it’s what I want the most but yeah there’s something about that situation where I just go oh you know the the lights are up and you know I feel really vulnerable there

Russell:

Right

Randy:

And it’s spaces I just if

II.i.22:00

I just step around I tend not to go into it I just can’t and it’s really funny but it’s true

Russell:

Um do you ah well another time measuring device apart from a number of encounters

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

Um I found that one thing I notice is oh that video is now finished
Oh yeah

**Russell:**

therefore I've been here approximately

**Randy:**

Okay

**Russell:**

eighty minutes or so do you

**Randy:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

Do you measure are you aware of

**II.i.22:30**

that like we're on to the next video

**Randy:**

Yes

**Russell:**

rather than the next episode in in a video

**Randy:**

I defin' yeah definitely do I mean I think I even notice when you know the couples in the video have changed

**Russell:**

Right

**Randy:**

So for example from from scene to scene to scene

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Randy:**

I I notice a difference and it's interesting because that's videos are something I look at because um I'm interested in seeing what the different you know studios do and which ones are better

**Russell:**

(laughing a little) Yes

**Randy:**

and why they're better too so I I tend to spend a bit of time doing that so I do notice when the videos change and that just make me think I go

**II.i.23:00**

oh okay you know I wonder what time it is that's probably when I'll go to my watch actually when subtle things like that change or um there's also times when a lot of a lot of saunas have like a little warning like a little bell thing that goes off when new people come in

**Russell:**

(laughing a little) Yes

**Randy:**

Like there's a new fresh meat ding ding ding you know *(we laugh a little)* and usually they tend to be I I tend to find that people come in like every hour or every half hour I think humans are

**II.i.23:30**

really weird in the way that they time themselves you know it's not always people always sporadically come in throughout the night but it's really funny like ah I mean this is not really set in a real time but you know eleven thirty a group will come in twelve thirty a group will come in and they come in you know within ten minutes of each other but a whole group will come in and that's in way a way of telling the time as well and I just go oh you know that that dance party must be finished it must be about four in the morning

**Russell:**

Oh yes yeah and there's that thing too of oh all the waiters are knocking off now

**Randy:**

*(we laugh)* Oh yes exactly

**II.i.24:00**

exactly exactly that's so true isn't it

**Russell:**

The two a.m. shift

**Randy:**

Yeah yeah
Russell:

Yeah I’m yeah I’ve become a little bit aware of that but that also varies for me it depends where I am for instance I’m aware of venues closing nearby and so there’ll be a wave of arrivals at Rear Entry um at somewhere like Squirt I’m aware that there are people who I suspect are service industry people and yeah there is something that starts to happen even on a weekday

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

the blandest weekday

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

between two and three or between say one and three there’ll be arrivals on something like a Tuesday night

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

or something you know

Randy:

Yeah I I think there’s a lot of people out there who the sauna is probably the closest thing that they’ve come to um getting involved in the scene because they may not like going to bars and I know a lot of guys they just you know they might go maybe once every couple of weeks for a drink with their mates but that’s about as far as it’ll they’ll get involved um and for them there’s you know the sauna’s very much about you know just having a bit of a [ unintelligible: shag? show?] because it’s one of the few opportunities that you’re going to come into do you know what I mean aside from you know just cruising someone on the street or something like that um so I can see where that comes from and I think the people who go during early on in the week kind of you know your die hard fans and they’re probably

Randy:

I don’t know

Russell:

Do you prefer it when it’s quiet or when it’s busy or does that vary from time to time

Randy:

Um

Russell:

and from venue to venue

Randy:

Mm okay I’m a visual person so when it’s busy because for me it’s it’s just as interesting for me to watch a whole heap of people

Russell:

Right

Randy:

than like there’s nothing worse for me than when it’s really really quiet because usually when I go in I mean I don’t go into you know I can stay home and sit down and watch TV I don’t have to go there to do it

Russell:

Um when you’re at a place like Squirt where do you like to watch from

Randy:

Ah Squirt Squirt’s a tricky one I’ve only been there once and oh it’s a bit tricky um I’d guess the pool um there’s something really nice about that area because it’s really open

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

and you know there’s there’s something quite nice about it it’s a bit kind of old worldly kind of with the I don’t know if they still have those poles now
Russell:
They absolutely have them

Randy:
I love those things they’re beautiful they’re beautiful

Russell:
Those kind of pillars

Randy:
Yeah

Russell:
yeah that the showers come from

Randy:
It reminds me of the beach and I mean simple things like that so I guess that’s my chosen area there um Rear Entry’s tough um Rear Entry I tend to just walk around um whereas like a place like Volcano I wouldn’t sit in the pool to me that or the spa because that’s kind of just a little bit um again it’s put in such a situation that I

feel like you know I never really feel comfortable in it in terms of you know when there’s too many people in the pool or the spa I feel very kind of looked at especially because that’s when you tend to be naked you know what I mean you’re completely naked um so I guess walking around there as well you know but um

Russell:
Um all right can we move onto another one I wanted to ask you about

Randy:
Yeah

Russell:
Mirrors in saunas

Randy:
Okay

Russell:
We’ve talked about the mirror rooms um on both today and our previous talk mirrors generally though can you just tell me a bit about your awareness of where mirrors are and what you use them for how you work with them

Randy:
Okay

Russell:
What you don’t like doing in relation to them

Randy:
Okay um I do notice mirrors um whether they’re just in situations where you know they’re quite formal like in a toilet so you know if you look at yourself before

you fix your hair before you go out or something as I see so many people do but in sex venues I don’t think they’re used enough and that’s because I’m like I said I’m a really visual person so I really like that whole thing about you know being in the situation and being the spectator as well and so I do notice where they are I know that most sauna situations have a a gym situation where there’s mirrors there and unless it’s a place like Volcano where there’s a mirrored room there generally

tends not to be another situation where there’s like I don’t think Rear Entry has one I don’t think Squirt has one um I’m I’m even thinking about Sydney

Russell:
A mirrored room

Randy:
Yeah a mirrored room

Russell:
Yeah yeah

Randy:
Um and there’s a couple I’ve been to in Sydney I don’t think they have mirrored rooms either so I don’t know I just think it it creates an interesting dimension you know so why not do it
Russell:

Squirt I don’t know um when you went on your one visit to Squirt but um I yeah I
II.i.29:00
don’t think there’s a mirrored room there

Randy:

No

Russell:

however there are now at least two rooms which have mirrors in them

Randy:

Oh right

Russell:

Yeah well quite large mirrors

Randy:

Okay well I mean that’s I think that’s really good I mean just any sort of thing that would kind of give you an image I mean that’s just something that I personally like I like mirrors because um there are certain situations positions for example I mean this is just an example where you know you can’t necessarily see your partner’s expression you know or they can’t see yours and the mirror II.i.29:30
allows you to do that you know

Russell:

(laughing a little) Yes

Randy:

I mean I can I don’t want to go into it but you can just imagine you know what I mean

Russell:

Oh no no no it’s yeah I can remember (I laugh a little)

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

But yeah

Randy:

And there’s something really quite fun about it because um essentially you get to see the role you’re acting out you know if you are acting out roles you know

Russell:

The other thing I’m aware of is at Squirt I don’t know whether you recall this is the locker bays there’s a series of

Randy:

Oh yeah

Russell:

if you like bays in which there are lockers

Randy:

Yes oh yeah yeah that’s

Russell:

going down a long kind of passage

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

and II.i.30:00
then the opposite wall

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

is entirely mirrored

Randy:

Yeah yep I yeah I do I really actually that’s probably one of my favourite locker spaces because it is so locker you know it reminds me of those high school jock porn films you know

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

And I’m actually it wouldn’t surprise me and like I said I’ve only been there once if that is
used as a very much a sexual area because you know you do get this

Russell:

Do you mean for physical contact

Randy:

Yeah because they’re very much distinct little boxes and there’s something kind of quite quite horny about it

II.i.30:30

I don’t know yeah that is one of the spaces that I really do think of whereas the other ones tend to be very much just like yes throw your clothes in here like there’s no real [intelligible]

Russell:

What about um the the mirror

Randy:

[unintelligible] yeah

Russell:

near the locker there are two mirrors the the two locker rooms

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

at Volcano each have a mirror in them

Randy:

Oh

Russell:

and I find that I’m very very aware of using that mirror as a way of looking at other people when I’m in the locker areas and staying in touch with what other people are doing

II.i.31:00

but I also of course find that (laughing a little) most of the other people there are also doing

Randy:

Doing the same thing yeah

Russell:

what I’m doing and working with the mirror a lot there’s the one over the where the hairdryer is

Randy:

Oh no [unintelligible]

Russell:

next to the shower

Randy:

Okay

Russell:

when you go into Volcano

Randy:

Okay oh

Russell:

and then in the deeper locker room there’s a mirror on the wall at the end of it

Randy:

Okay

Russell:

away from the entrance to the gym room

Randy:

Maybe you know maybe the reason I don’t tend to notice those is because it’s in one of those areas that I

II.i.31:30

kind of consider to be the I don’t spend a lot of time in like I don’t generally spend spend a lot of time in those locker areas or like I said the lounge room area there you know um so I guess I probably didn’t notice those but I mean mirrors are this sort of really bizarre thing I don’t think people can look away because I think you know it’s I think it’s just a little you know thing where people are fascinated by themselves and other people so even at cafes I’ve noticed a lot of gay cafes in particular

II.i.32:00

will have that strip of mirror

Russell:

Oh yeah
Randy:
you know along where you know
interestingly enough it’s always near where
there’s single seats you know there’s like
the the bench and then a single seat so that
you know you go in there you you read a
magazine drink your coffee by yourself and
you check out everyone that’s everywhere
from that point of view

Russell:
Right

Randy:
And I think you know well you know it
seems to be the same sort of set up you
know if there’s a mirror because people
want to avoid the direct gaze like they you
know

II.i.32:30
no one wants to be seen directly so they
look through the thing with the holes in it um
yeah

Russell:
And there is of course that mirror in the wet
area at Rear Entry opposite the bench

Randy:
Oh OH YES and I’ve know interesting I
know that mirror’s actually a bit distorted as
well it’s yeah it’s it’s not a plain mirror it’s
or if it is it must be really thin and flimsy
because in some bits it kind of blows out
and it actually makes you wide

Russell:
It has like a ripple

II.i.33:00
in it

Randy:
Yeah

Russell:
Oh right

Randy:
and it actually makes people wider

Russell:
Right

Randy:
Yeah I was having a bit of a test (he laughs)
[unintelligible: don’t ask me?] the things you
do um but yeah um that’s used a lot and I
guess people at again you know it’s it’s
easier to for me to look at your reflection
through there you know in this kind of
sneaky way to cruise you via the reflection

Russell:
Yeah

Randy:
in in the mirror than it is to to look at you
directly I guess

Russell:
So when you say that’s used a lot do you
mean

II.i.33:30
you use it a lot or you’re aware of other men
using it a lot or both

Randy:
Both more so other men I’m not I don’t
think I’m that terrified of looking directly at
someone but I do know a lot of guys who
who just sort of sit there and they do this
really it makes me laugh all the time where
they’re just kind of they look in the mirror at
someone else you know they might the
other guy might just kind of keep staring and
they’ll do this (he starts inching sideways in
his seat) you know they’ll move an inch

Russell:
Oh shift a shift across

Randy:
They’ll shift an inch and they’ll keep they’ll
both do this and they’ll go on forever it’s the
most

II.i.34:00
fascinating little thing I’ve ever seen and
they’ll do that

Russell:
Just inch their way towards each other

Randy:
Yeah yeah which is I just find fascinating
and it’s usually the people who tend to be
you know who I would consider to be the most good looking who are the most paranoid you know and they'll sit there with their big buffed body and you know they'll see someone else and just go and they'll keep shifting along and shifting along it usually takes about five minutes and then eventually they'll you know say oh do you have a cigarette or something really boring like that

**Russell:**

I have a

**Russell:**

It's funny um I have an interest in often just being in the proximity of someone

**Randy:**

Okay

**Russell:**

And I know I used to think I used to feel that there was an obligation to move closer you know or something now I've know now that one thing I like doing and I know that a lot of the men in question must find it frustrating or irritating

**Randy:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

But other times I'm quite content to just move near them then think no that's enough um I don't feel like

**Randy:**

Okay

**Russell:**

I need to inevitably move closer and closer and closer

**Randy:**

Yeah yeah

**Russell:**

Um or just simply reach to them and initiate something

**Randy:**

Okay

**Russell:**

Which I suspect is very different from

**Randy:**

Okay

**Russell:**

Like I enjoy often just that lingering time

**Randy:**

Okay

**Russell:**

And they're waiting for me to make a move and possibly assume there's some sort of paralysis on my part

**Randy:**

Okay

**Russell:**

Or or they might move towards me and then you know I might think oh well we'll see what happens
I almost start telling myself the satisfaction will never be realised

Randy:

Yeah oh that’s interesting I mean there tend

**II.i.36:00**
to be a lot of guys that um I do end up just looking at and I’m quite happy to to be at that level because um I find that equally as fascinating so I can um yeah I mean it there’s there’s been quite a few times where you know I might be sitting across from someone and um or yeah you know in a situation where I’m not far away from someone and we will just look at each other and and do this thing which is all

**II.i.36:30**
very I was actually describing

Russell:

What is this thing

Randy:

The thing is like a it’s different all the time so you can’t really tell but it’s it’s a bit of a mind mind mind sex I guess where you know you’re definitely sexually engaging with them but it’s in a nonphysical level where you know you you you’re being very suggestive you know that the other person might be interested but the distance kind of just because you’re you know two three metres apart doesn’t make it any less sexual like I

**II.i.37:00**
found that experience a few times

Russell:

Right

Randy:

particularly with um and it doesn’t always ended [sic] up in sex a couple of times it has but it hasn’t always but it starts out that way and it’s

Russell:

Particularly with you said particularly with

Randy:

Oh particularly with I just can’t remember where that sentence goes um particularly with

Russell:

You found that happens particularly with

Randy:

Oh okay um

**II.i.37:30**
guys that tend to actually be much better much better sexually because they just um I guess I get turned on by guys who like really you know I think sex is very much a head thing so guys who can stimulate that I really dig [?] so people who kind of I mean it sounds cheesy and corny it is kind of it’s like I guess teasing or um oh I don’t know how to describe it beyond that

**II.i.38:00**
I think the eyes are really important at times like that and really simple gestures like you know just rubbing you know rubbing across your chest or you know adjusting your towel or really simple really simple things like that but the but in in situations like that eyes play everything because they just sort of you can do so much with that and you realise that you know

Russell:

Um do you find that you play mirror games with gestures I don’t mean with literal mirrors

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

but that you as it were mirror a gesture

**II.i.38:30**
that someone else in a room does

Randy:

Oh

Russell:

or even accidentally initially coincidentally initially and then bit by bit what starts playing is well I’ll rub my thigh and he’ll rub his thigh or

Randy:

Oh right

Russell:
I just kind of scratch my shoulder and he scratches his shoulder or vice versa and so on do you pick up on any those

Randy:

Not really for me the moment someone rubs their crutch I just go oh you know do you have to be so blatant about it you know which

II.i.39:00

is like that doesn’t mean I won’t have sex with them but at the same time I’ll just kind of go oh that’s a bit corny

Russell:

What about if someone moves their hand just near their crutch so it might be just resting on the top of their thigh

Randy:

That’s better

Russell:

(we laugh) Now how now why do you say it’s better

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

What’s better about that

Randy:

It’s okay no actually it well okay it’s not better it’s different I guess it’s a bit more subtle and I guess I don’t know I just kind of not not many people I think really

II.i.39:30

have the attitude to get away with grabbing their crutch and going come on let’s do it you know what I mean

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

And I think that’s really important because you get there a lot of it’s like handshakes

Russell:

It’s a bit boring yeah

Randy:

Yeah you know what I mean some people can give you a good strong handshake and the other people are kind of a bit wet fish and there’s nothing worse than someone who’s really nervous grabbing their crutch and you just go oh look just you know say hi to me or something um so it’s no it’s not better it’s just um again I guess it goes down to you know what is that is that is he trying to gesture that he’s being sexual is he

II.i.40:00

trying to you know because the hand is there it’s more ambiguous and I guess am ambiguity a bit nice [sic] because it

Russell:

What’s nice about ambiguity for you

Randy:

Um because it’s more about risk taking do you know what I mean um when someone gives you an obvious signal well there’s no challenge in that and you’re not really pushing your boundaries of you know because you know that they’re already initiating sex with you and that all you have to do is just play along with the game and you’ve got it

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

You know when someone’s ambiguous even even sexually I guess it’s interesting because

II.i.40:30

you confront a lot of fears about yourself because you have to then you know decide whether or not you are going to you know do anything about that and engage with them and you know like maybe respond to them maybe you grab your crutch I don’t know maybe I

Russell:

Can you remember a recent example of that at a sauna

Randy:

Um I just I’m just not like I’m just not the sort of guy who you know kind of just you know gestures much if I like somebody I’ll just
II.i.41:00
you know I'll look at them a lot if I get their
stare and for me if there's enough eye
contact maybe a smile then I'll actually just
walk up to them and just go you know do
you want to find a room it's as simple as
that for me because I just don't believe in all
the other stuff so (I laugh) I just say do you
want to have sex or don't you want to have
sex it's really that simple but occasionally
like I said it's nice when it's a bit bit more
than that when it's you know there's a bit
more you know I'm not sure but generally
that's how it tends to be

Russell:
Yeah

Randy:
And usually I'll just get to a point if
II.i.41:30
I like somebody I'll just walk to them and say
so

Russell:
I guess one of the things that interests me is
like one of the things that's reliable about
say a porn video is that it will culminate in a
sexual activity

Randy:
Okay

Russell:
One of the things that I'm interested in erotic
activity at saunas is having some sense of
um option

Randy:
Why do we have to go to a room

Russell:
Yeah like you know everything up until now
has been fantastic and you've just spoilt it

Randy:
Yeah that's (he laughs a little)

Russell:
and it's because
II.i.42:30
everything's now I know everything else
now as soon as you've said that to me I
know everything else for the next however
period of time and I can just see myself
enacting out some preordained script and
I'm not very interested in it other times that
doesn't feel that way

Randy:
Okay I I tend not to feel that way generally I
don't mind whether it's in a room or whether
what it is but um I think one of the reasons I
really liked the that orgy party was the fact
that um
II.i.43:00
I completely stripped any fear I had of being
sexual in a group situation whereas normally
in a sauna like I would generally not engage
in group sex um where other people just
stand and watch or whatever because it's
just not a position I like to be in you know
whereas I feel at that party which is very
similar to a sauna situation but it's not it it's
very even you know everyone there is in the
same position do you know what I mean
there's like everyone's naked everyone's
doing their thing everyone's you know and
so in as far as that goes ah there's more
freedom because it's not so dictated to and I
think the spaces have a lot to do with that
mean I haven't come across a space that
doesn't look that doesn't fit at least you
know three or four of the clichés of what a
sauna's meant to look like you know and I
just think well what happens if you know you
put them in the put people in the most
bizarre situation you know like
II.i.44:00
would they like how would that determine
their sexual behaviour like um even for
myself like if imagine a set like the
Playschool set you know where it's really
brightly coloured and it's clouds and all
happy things you know like how would
people use that and I do think about stuff
like that because I just sort of go well there
there are times

Russell:
I told you I have seen Bananas In Pyjamas
on the videos at Squirt

Randy:
NO REALLY oh

they’re my favourite I love them *(we laugh)* whatever gets you homy I suppose a big banana that’s not a bad idea um there are times particularly at Rear Entry I spend most of my time there so I’ll be sitting around or I’ll be in some place and I’ll look at at a particular situation and I’ll go it’s like a painting it’s like it’s like a scene out of a film it’s like you know because I think the spaces are created so they

almost frame you know you do get the sense of framed view I know the showers in particular when there’s guys in the showers there’s this really you know ambient red light or orange light shining on them while they shower and it’s really it’s like some sort of erotic painting *(unintelligible)*

Russell:

Except it is quite crummy too

Randy:

Yeah it’s cheese

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

It’s cheesy

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

It’s like really cheesy um same thing with the spa as well you know

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

And the way people sit in the spa and assume positions in the spa it’s very much I always think of like homoerotic art work that you might have got you know

prints from the sixties

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

or something um so I think that’s interesting so I I honestly do firmly believe that the spaces determine behaviour like I’d place

Russell:

So so do you think then that this is the case that the spaces are like life imitating art *(I laugh a little)*

Randy:

Yeah I guess it’s chicken and egg argument there again

Russell:

Right

Randy:

you know because I mean because obviously they have the way we symbolically understand the spaces has to come from somewhere so I guess it probably originates in a certain sort of practice

but yeah it I don’t I don’t think people can I can give you a really good example of this okay I was in my gym yesterday and there’s a particular piece of equipment and I’ve been using it a certain way as I understood it right for a long time and someone came along and used it a different way and suddenly I felt compelled to use it the different way right

Russell:

Right

Randy:

And this is something you could use this machine a million different ways right but I’ve only ever seen being used my

way and the way this other guy did it and I thought well that just alone goes to show you now his his use of space has now changed the way I see the space right and so now when I go in I mean it’s just interesting like there’s just this way that we know how to use things you know whether that’s socially put into our head or not and that doesn’t leave us you know like even outside the sauna situation the mirror is
equally sexual whether you’re looking at someone in the sauna or you know the reflection off a tram stop you know glass

so it’s like there’s this way we know how to use things and when you use those symbols in a space you can’t help but escape because that’s all you know how to use it for so um I mean I just think that’s yeah I mean it’s just interesting um I guess I’m thinking a lot about this sort of stuff too because I’ve been thinking about aircraft interior design and I’m looking at where the design comes from and how that affects

the use of space and the experience of travel right so it’s the same sort of thing as okay like you know how does the design of the sauna affect the way that I see my sexual experience and it really does you know I know it’s going to be dark in there I know it’s going to be um um I mean it’s like every place has some sort of red light or blue light you know and I go where’s that from um it’s just interesting and the thing is

straight people I know I don’t know if I told you about a straight friend of mine who went into a sauna

Russell:
Yes you did yeah
Randy:
And he didn’t recognise from his experience as a straight man of being in saunas he didn’t recognise it as being a place that was even in the slightest sexual because he didn’t associate it with sexual practices

Russell:
Until he discovered
Randy:
Yeah
Russell:
the porn room was that it
Randy:
Um yeah I think he
Russell:
Or the heavy duty area

Randy:
Yeah he discovered the heavy duty area at Volcano and sort of went oh-kay (I laugh a little) and I think he would have seen I mean you would have seen guys walking around too and you know he said he saw guys looking at him really strangely you know like you know like a bit more full on than he’s used to and he went oh all right you know so um yeah I guess you know people what’s might I think porn is probably a gay person’s first experience generally of you know their sexuality

Russell:
Was that for you
Randy:
It was for me I mean people learn different ways you know be it beats or boyfriends or whatever

Russell:
But
Randy:
Um no not really but I’d say in terms of you know I think I definitely started to recognise that I was learning tricks from porn you know um because there’s you can’t help but feel you know like like this piece of gym equipment yesterday I saw someone use it a different way and I thought I have to do that is that the way to use it because I think we all have this great insecurity about you know we don’t really know what we’re doing you know and instead of experiencing sexuality as a free thing where you discover we feel that oh there’s a right and wrong way of doing things

Russell:
Can I ask you just a bit about the man who used the equipment
Randy:
Okay
Russell:
Um (*Randy laughs a little*) was he someone who you were impressed by or attracted to

*Randy:*
Not really. I didn't sort of pay much attention to him. I later on I probably figured he was gay but no, at the time I just sort of thought oh is this like all I could think of was

*Russell:*
So he was incidental

*Randy:*
No, he was incidental

*Russell:*
Okay

*Randy:*
Could have been a woman who used it. Could have been anyone

*Russell:*
Right, okay, fine

*Randy:*
But it was just interesting that someone else used it a different way and I went oh hope I haven't been doing it the wrong way. I've made a complete dick out of myself

*Russell:*
Right

*Randy:*
You know never occurred to me before and I've been using it for months so (*he laughs)*

*Russell:*
Um I want to ask you about another topic

*Randy:*
Okay

*Russell:*
Aboriginal people in saunas

*Randy:*
Okay

*Russell:*
Do you have anything to say about that

*Randy:*
I don't see many. Oh I don't recognise them as being Aboriginal. I mean that's a bit hard to you know because a lot of people would

*Russell:*
Have you recognised someone as being Aboriginal in a sauna

*Randy:*
Yeah, yeah definitely, definitely

*Russell:*
Yeah. In Melbourne

*Randy:*
Yeah, definitely, ah, not in Sydney that I can

*Russell:*
Can you recall an occasion like that specifically

*Randy:*
No, not really, not for a while

*Russell:*
You just have an awareness

*Randy:*
Yeah, ah, there I mean there was one guy that I was kind of quite interested in and I was cruising him for a little while but aside from that no, not really, I tend to notice

*Russell:*
I think I was talking to you about this before, but I tend to notice Asian people more because they tend to get a really strong reaction from people. Um, from white, from you know the rest of the predominantly what I'd associate to be white or even Mediterranean, Greek, Italian that tends to be the majority that I see, so they get, they seem to get a really strong Asian people tend to get a really strong response from
them because it’s like um I don’t think I can quite describe it.

**Russell:**

And when you say Asian do you mean like East Asian or South Asian?

**Randy:**

I don’t think it matters and I don’t think a lot of people.

**Russell:**

So whether they’re Indian or Chinese.

**Randy:**

Oh okay um more I guess more Chinese.

**Russell:**

Right okay so East Asian South East Asian.

**Randy:**

Yeah.

**Russell:**

Right okay.

**Randy:**

Um I think black men are more fetishised by white um by white Caucasian males because it’s a bigger part of that that rhetoric of you know gaydom do you know what I mean? like in Tom of Finland there’s black men and they’re and they’re big studs and blah blah blah um Asian men I somehow I think people just have this attitude of like oh you know I mean I’ve I’ve heard people say on a few occasions and they’ve really marked really strongly in my head you know that oh my god it’s you know this place is full of Asians tonight blah blah blah you know oh I’m sick of Asian guys trying to cruise me.

**Russell:**

Yeah.

**Randy:**

Yeah he looked a bit older um and he and I think I talked to you about him last time.

**Russell:**

And he decided what the kinds were.

**Randy:**

I decided what they were (this is a question).

**Russell:**

No no that’s all right.

**Randy:**

But um I didn’t know it at the time anyway but ah.

**Russell:**

Because he didn’t look sixteen.

**Randy:**

No not really.

**Russell:**

Yeah.

**Randy:**

Yeah he looked a bit older um and he and I think I talked to you about him last time.

**Russell:**

Too he’s he came into the sauna he said he comes maybe once a month and his objective was to try it’s like trying sweets in a lolly shop you know he had to try one of every kind and you know he he told me.

**Russell:**

And he decided what the kinds were.

**Randy:**

I decided what they were (this is a question).

**Russell:**

No no that’s all right.
He had

Randy:

He he had yeah

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

So you know he’s he’d had a couple of white guys and he’d had you know um he’d had an Asian guy and then he’d had me and now he was going to have like he was obviously in for a very big night once a month you know you’ve got to let it out somewhere and

**II.i.54:00**

he ah and he was talking about this black guy to me and he was you know very much talking about it like a type and it’s a case of it’s not what I want but it’s the experience I just want to experience what it’s like you know give everything a go and it’s that sort of thing you know it’s um it’s not necessarily and I guess it’s hard to escape that position too but I mean I those are the sorts of things I really notice very distinctly when I go to a sauna is that um

**II.i.54:30**

um it’s really it’s really interesting the way people very unconsciously the way they think about things and through their comments and the way they you know

Russell:

That I just want to go back to that underage thing cos um I remember one night seeing a young man being very very very sensitively thrown out *(I laugh a little)*

Randy:

Okay

Russell:

of Volcano

Randy:

Okay

Russell:

When I say thrown out I mean that’s the effect but

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

they were actually counselling him a bit like saying look

**II.i.55:00**

you know you come back here when you’re old enough you know you can get people into trouble

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

You know whatever and clearly he’d somehow slipped through and at some point um

Randy:

Someone picked it up

Russell:

it had become clear that he was underage and they had no hesitation in removing him but also not trying to traumatise him or terrorise him

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

but just make it clear that this was not on

Randy:

Yeah

Russell:

But at the same time I’m aware now um at least two of the people I’ve interviewed

**II.i.55:30**

their first visits were when they were underage

Randy:

Okay

Russell:

and in both cases they passed and they were aware they passed
Randy:  
Yeah  

Russell:  
and they knew how they passed  

Randy:  
Right  

Russell:  
And I’m aware that there’s definitely a thing with some younger men who um who take advantage of the fact that they can pass as being older and can’t wait and and move in I’m just wondering you know you’ve mentioned this guy last time you didn’t mention II.i.56:00 to me that he was sixteen  

Randy:  
No no I guess it wasn’t  

Russell:  
But um  

Randy:  
It’s funny I didn’t think about it but yeah um and I can kind of understand that you know I mean like straight kids start out really young you know and so it’s it’s in a way I kind of understand where they’re coming from cos you know firstly you end up feeling very much I mean it’s a very when you’re gay it’s very much you feel like you’re on your own especially when you’re younger II.i.56:30  

Russell:  
Yeah  

Randy:  
you feel like oh nobody understands me and so II.i.56:30  

this searching for the sexual experience at a young age I completely get that and it seems so unfair that they have to wait until they’re eighteen but then I’ve heard so many nightmare stories about you know guys who’ve slept with underage guys and then you know oh just real like awful stories because you know the younger guys fall in love with them he you know it was obviously just a bonk to him and blah blah blah you know and it then it ends up going into you know he raped me and all that sort of stuff and it’s really so that’s I can completely understand the venue’s stance II.i.57:00 on that  

Russell:  
And this I mean I’m very aware for instance of signage at Squirt  

Randy:  
Yeah yeah  

Russell:  
like um when you arrive  

Randy:  
You must be  

Russell:  
at Squirt there’s just absolutely clear signage everywhere  

Randy:  
Yeah  

Russell:  
about that and I’ve I’ve kind of always respected them for that like the one thing the venues really try to work very hard to avoid is that kind of predatory dimension II.i.57:30  

Randy:  
Yeah  

Russell:  
or the sense whatever the personal feelings are of people running them that the venue really has II.i.57:30 to work hard because there’s so much  

Randy:  
You can’t afford that sort of bad press  

Russell:  
But the reason I bring all that up is an awareness that somehow or other the
venues for all of the sense of them being like a playground that there’s a sense of the law permeating through them still

Randy:
Yeah

Russell:
Do you do you have a sense of that when you’re there that ultimately you’re at a place that it isn’t like the law stops at the security door

Randy:
No it’s it’s very much both written and unwritten and um my understanding of it and um a friend of mine who actually ended up going to the straight guy who ended up going to the sauna um was actually has a lot of friends who are police and basically um was telling me that it’s not uncommon for them to send cops in undercover you know to saunas well certainly to Volcano because he he’s very much told me that that they do and so I mean it’s very much a place that is still governed by law and I’ve got to say too that he found it he just

Russell:
(laughing a little) Yeah

Randy:
He just thought it was the worst thing that people were allowed to just have sex in a venue

Russell:
Yeah

Randy:
He just thought it was the most awful thing because straight people don’t get to do that (I laugh a little) [unintelligible] you know we get bashed Jesus Christ you know give us something um so no I’m always very aware that there are if there’s certain unwritten laws too of what I’d call you know a sort of bourgeois decency with within the gay guys who go there as well you know depending on

Russell:
Bourgeois decency

Randy:
Yeah particularly with a place like Rear Entry because you get the the younger pretty boys who are you know they have this certain (putting on a voice) oh I’m not going to cross that line if I do something it’s going to be in the privacy of a room and you know

Russell:
Prudish behaviour

Randy:
Yeah it is

Russell:
At a sauna

Randy:
Yeah yeah and um so it’s again not about sexual freedom unless you meet someone who has that sim same idea

Russell:
Yes

Randy:
So there are all these laws of you know you don’t just pull your towel off and just go come on you know give it to me hot all of you you know

Russell:
there’s things you don’t do you don’t say um and that I think probably has a lot to do with laws outside as well because you get so conditioned to you know you just don’t do this um in that way I mean I still haven’t been to The Basement and I’m still wanting to go but I think a clothed space like that allows for a bit more I don’t know why I just guess um there’s something really formal about everyone wearing a towel that’s

Russell:
a uniform you know it’s a bit more formal when when you come in dressed as you are there’s like it seems like there’s something else you can get away with doing you know you can corner someone
Russell:
You you imagine that

Randy:
I imagine that to be true

Russell:
So the towel in a sense is like a law as well
do you find like a dress code

Randy:
Yeah I I mean in many way I like it because
I think a lot people judge you by the clothes
you wear because it’s all about tribes and
you know you know is he groovy enough
and all that so I I like the people stripped
down to a towel because that’s them that’s
them

in their what they look like um whereas with
when you see someone who’s clothed you
can’t always get an idea of you know what
for example I really like muscley guys so
when they’re clothed you can’t really tell
sometimes a guy might look muscley but
he’s not so um but then you know um and
less of that playing on the fantasy too like
oh he looks like rough trade like if anything
you’re judging him on his body type versus
you know like oh you know he’s wearing a
flannelette shirt so he must be a blue collar
worker and

I guess lots of that would happen I haven’t
experienced it but I mean I can imagine
being clothed and somehow getting away
with more because you know you might just
know you might just take out your penis
or something and the rest of you is clothed
so yeah you can be in a public situation and
yet you’re not completely vulnerable
because people can’t see all of you you
know so you get away with different things in
different situations but that’s something I
haven’t experienced

Russell:
Um there are kind of other

things too like staff only areas and the staff
themselves (Randy laughs) being off limits
off limits while they’re on duty anyway

Randy:
Okay ah yeah yeah um that’s happened to
me a few times where I’ve I’ve been
approached by staff and they go I knock off
at eleven thirty

Russell:
Oh really

Randy:
(laughing) Yeah

Russell:
How sweet

Randy:
Oh yeah it’s really lovely I think oh right
okay um

Russell:
Well do you find the clocks then (I laugh)

Randy:
Do I find oh no I check my watch (we laugh)
no no I mean that’s quite interesting um

yeah that is interesting because they tend to
be really big gossip areas you know oh you
know so and so came in oh really did you
see who they left with really ah ha I’ve
heard conversations like that you know so
oh yeah he’s a slut blah blah all that sort of
stuff because I mean there’s a bit of that
that happens you know what I mean it’s a
it’s a small community and so um that
certainly happens with the guys who go
there because they recognise you know
they recognise Mr Celebrity on all fours
getting fucked you know whatever (I laugh a
little) so it’s really kind of (he laughs)

it’s quite funny so um there’s there’s
something you were talking about before
about underage guys too and the fact that I
think more and more I’ve been using the fact
that I look young you know to to my to a
you know to what I think of as being an
advantage do you know what I mean I’m
beginning to realise

Russell:
So you’ve almost done the reverse like
you’ve been rather than you’ve been trying
to pass as younger

Randy:
Yeah yeah and
II.i.63:00

generally well it sort of came about because lots of people would say oh you look really young you look really young especially when it’s dark and I’ve shaved and you know [unintelligible] like that everyone just goes

Russell:

Like you pull kind of a

Randy:

puppy-eyed

Russell:

Oh puppy face

Randy:

Yeah [unintelligible] (putting on a voice) I’m all vulnerable and alone (I start laughing a little) and anyone can take advantage of me

Russell:

You start playing up to that

Randy:

Um yeah I guess I do

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

sometimes

Russell:

Yeah

Randy:

Sometimes um

Russell:

Subtly or stereotypically

Randy:

Um

Russell:

II.i.63:30

Are we talking about caricature or acting (I laugh a little)

Randy:

Okay um oh probably acting more so I don’t think I could if I did a caricature it just would be I couldn’t keep a straight face so um but I mean there are times where I just you know I guess maybe I know how to look vulnerable and at times where I just sort of go you know it’s just like a switch it goes on and then I’m you know and it sometimes

II.i.64:00

it works sometimes it doesn’t know because I think mostly a lot of guys look for you know big and strong and wanting to be protected

Russell:

How can you tell me how you look vulnerable

Randy:

How

Russell:

Yeah can you tell me can you tell a blind person how you look vulnerable or what do you do or

Randy:

Um

Russell:

can you tell someone who’s never met you and who will never meet you

Randy:

Yeah um I guess the easiest way is I just think of about would I feel

II.i.64:30

if I would this is my first time here and I was you know petrified and you know I wanted to look inexperienced and I thought well first thing I’d do is I wouldn’t really be open and comfortable I’d be maybe trying to look open and comfortable but I’d actually be a bit more shut you know I’d be a kind of bit more you know (he demonstrates)

Russell:

Arms folded bent forward a bit

Randy:
Yeah just a bit and kind of you know ner bit more nervous

Russell:
I’m describing what you’re doing as you’re speaking

Randy:
Yeah I’m just trying to I’m actually just trying to think how I do it you know and um

Russell:
But you have done it though haven’t you

Randy:
Yeah yeah yeah

Russell:
Right that’s interesting

Randy:
Okay so I just sort of go um because that’s one thing I mean I on the other hand I also just go that I’m really comfortable and I’m you know and that’s more to show I’m comfortable I’m sexual I’m here I’m do you know what I mean

Russell:
Do when you do it you say you fall into the pose

Randy:
Yeah

Russell:
Do you know you’re in the right pose because in a sense you feel a bit like

Randy:
Vulnerable yeah

Russell:
And do you adjust your pose according to the feeling

Randy:
Yeah I guess so I guess maybe I

Russell:
So you imagine the feeling and then

Randy:
Maybe I imagine the feeling first and then let my body take take over because you you know body language tends to respond to you

Russell:
There’s there’s actually been some research about that kind of work

Randy:
Okay

Russell:
Yeah mm

Randy:
Okay it comes from I studied acting for three years and that was very much the way we were

Russell:
I didn’t know that

Randy:
Yeah at the School For Actors (he laughs) so that was kind of very much the way that well one of the methods we were taught taught to act was you know think about how you feel and let your body follow it you know what I mean just go with it

Russell:
Right
Randy:
So that’s sort of what I do. I think how do I feel and that’s very much what I do when I go into presentations for work you know and I do that that old exercise of you know what shoes am I going to wear when I do my presentation and what do they mean? I laugh a little and what sort of you know it sounds really dorky but it’s just it’s all layers of you know thing you put on.

Russell:
But a lot of that now has become so deeply absorbed you don’t do it consciously.

Randy:
No when I do stuff like that I tend to do it consciously I’m very I tend to be really aware when I’m wearing the mask about something.

Russell:
Right okay.

Randy:
because I kind of can’t not be it’s not me so you know or it’s [unintelligible]

Russell:
But the process you might not be too conscious of like you said before that.

Randy:
Like how my body might position itself.

Russell:
Yeah.

Randy:
I could I couldn’t quite tell you but how I

Russell:
The fact that you’d know you’re positioning it.

Randy:
Yeah exactly.

Russell:
to have cause and effect you you are aware of.

Randy:
Yeah.

Russell:
Yeah okay.

Randy:
So I know this is what I’m going to be so on goes the mask you know it’s like that and it’s just it’s just a really like I think sometimes to attract a certain person like when I kind of have an idea of what their mindset is I play up to that because it’s just an easy way to do it you know I want to sleep with them I don’t want to you know spend the whole night trying to you know you know I want to make my night as easy as possible you know but um yeah.

Russell:
I don’t think I have anything else to ask.

Randy:
Okay well I hope I’ve been helpful.

Russell:
No I think you have been.

Randy:
Okay.

Russell:
Thank you.

Randy:
No that’s cool that’s cool I had more time to think about it so.

Russell:
(I switch off the minidisc recorder)

END OF CONVERSATION.
appendix 21: Joe II

The transcript documents a second conversation with Joe recorded at his flat in suburban Melbourne. When I arrived, Joe made me a cup of tea, opened a window, and lit a cigarette. And then we began.

Russell:

II.i.00:00
Okay ah I want to go over a few things

Joe:

Yep

Russell:

Some of the things are things we went over last time and some of the things aren’t

Joe:

Great

Russell:

So um and some of them there are things that we talked about last time

II.i.00:30
and I feel like oh I’d like to know a bit more about that and maybe there’s nothing more to know about it which is fine but maybe there is so ah and the other thing is again if you just don’t want to answer anything just say at some stage so

Joe:

(he laughs a little) I’m pretty much an open book [unintelligible]

Russell:

Yeah I think you said that last time (I laugh)

Joe:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

The fantasy rooms at Splash we didn’t talk about them last time

Joe:

All right

Russell:

Do you remember those rooms

Joe:

Yes

Russell:

II.i.01:00
that people could book into

Joe:

I do remember them yeah yeah

Russell:

Did you ever because remember you said you had access because you worked across the road you had access to some things often that

Joe:

Yeah well we’d often often get in for free and um ah and we’d get access to like the solarium and stuff like that

Russell:

Yeah you mentioned that did you ever book into one of those rooms

Joe:

No no I wish I had have it was actually a bit of a thing a friend and I and I had a um particularly when we found out it was going to close and everyone knew it was going to close such a long time before it actually did that it was a little bit of a

II.i.01:30
goal that we’d actually get to be in one but I never for some reason it was never the sort of sort of thing that I would actually you know ask for one of the rooms myself maybe I thought oh that would be a bit presumptuous because they were I don’t know too expensive or something but I think so I guess my plan was you know hopefully to meet someone or someones to get taken in there but I never did um I think they worked though I actually saw one open once and I walked in just to have a look

Russell:

Oh yeah

Joe:
Yeah

Russell:

Which one was that

Joe:

Um it was one of the ones on the long corridor I think it

II.i.02:00

was a country ah it was a sort of a cowboy sort of theme thing going on or something

Russell:

A cowboy did you say

Joe:

Was there was there some cowboy hats or something in it honestly I just walked in briefly and had a look and and whatever and that was about it but

Russell:

I called them fantasy rooms what did you used to call them

Joe:

Um I think we called them honeymoon suites

Russell:

(laughing) Honeymoon suites

Joe:

Which is what we also called the the upstairs room at Rear Entry with the double thing

II.i.02:30

there’s the row of

Russell:

Oh yes

Joe:

We call [called?] that the honeymoon suite so the name sort of went across

Russell:

It’s a very different room

Joe:

Hmm

Russell:

from those rooms

Joe:

Yeah

Russell:

Do do you remember well what do you actually recall about those rooms at Splash

Joe:

Um

Russell:

Do you remember what themes or what names they had because they had names

Joe:

Oh I wasn’t I was never aware of that I remember only walking past occasionally you there’d be like you could get a glimpse of them or something I remember that there were videos in them I seem

II.i.03:00

to remember one seemed to have a cowboy hats or was there some sort of country and western theme in one of them or something I don’t know

Russell:

I recall one that had a saddle in the corner

Joe:

Maybe that’s what I’m remembering yeah

Russell:

But that wasn’t when you say the long corridor do you mean the one with the water

Joe:

No that was that was no that wasn’t in the long corridor that was the because there was some sort of around on a corner and then there was some off the long corridor

Russell:

Yeah between the lockers and the gym
Joe:
Yeah
Russell:
Yep
Joe:
Yeah no um I think I hang I used to hang around them and if I saw someone was in there I'd be over trying to get a glimpse of the door opening but never did actually never really got close unfortunately
Russell:
Yeah
Joe:
No
Russell:
The ones I'm gunna sort of list what I remember
Joe:
Sure
Russell:
To see if that triggers anything for you there was one that I could never see into that was called Bamboo they had names on the door and that was the one closest to the reception area end so it didn't have a glass wall
Joe:
Oh right
Russell:
like all the others did
Joe:
Right wow [?]
Russell:
Um there was another one in the long corridor where the water was
Joe:
called I think The Ring or Ringside or something like that and it had a pair of boxing gloves
Russell:
neatly lying on top of the coverlet
Joe:
Oh isn't that funny yeah no I had I mean that rings a bell of having seen it but I was never actually even aware that they had names were there were the names
Russell:
The names I kind of I'm pretty sure they were above the door or on the door into the room there was one called Pucka which (I spell it) P U C K A
Joe:
Oh as in
Russell:
As in Puckapunyal which had camouflage netting suspended over the bed and a bomb a fake bomb hanging in the air above the bed
Joe:
Oh my god
Russell:
Um there was that kind of western one with the saddle but I that was always very difficult to look into because it was in that short corridor and there was some kind of heavy duty dungeoney type one um with a I think a big sling or something near that which I don't remember the name of um the other thing that I recall is how nice it often was to sit where the water was on on the edge of the water on that sort of stonework or whatever it was and just look at different porn things happening
Joe:
Yeah
Russell:
on the TV sets

Joe:
Yeah

Russell:
in those rooms did you ever find yourself doing that

Joe:
Yeah I did do that actually sometimes if yeah there were you could get

Russell:
a view of one of the TV sets in the rooms I don’t know how the blinds must have been back or something and yeah I would could sit there and there was actually a seat there was like um a row of rooms the water and then there was a seat on the other side and you could there was a seat you could sit on where you could smoke actually because you couldn’t smoke sort of in the wet area and I used to sit there and watch the porn sometimes yeah

Russell:
And smoke

Joe:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Joe:
Yeah um

Russell:
yeah yeah I do remember doing that and also yeah I guess also I sort of or often had that expectation of you know that if you (he laughs a little) did sort of sit there you might meet someone that had the rooms but I don’t know I can’t remember them getting a lot of use you know they just didn’t seem they seemed to be sitting empty most of the time I was there

Russell:
Yeah the curtains closed seemed to be an indication that [unintelligible]

Joe:
Yeah but I didn’t even seem to see much coming and going you know yeah

Russell:
I saw near the end I saw these two

Joe:

Russell:
young guys slipping in and out of the Bamboo room through the doorway but I don’t remember being able to see inside but I remember them coming in and out of that on a on a day when there was hardly anyone there and they were in that room and they looked like they’d been in there a week

Joe:

Russell:
You know like there was ah I mean obviously hadn’t but um yeah apart from that no

Joe:
No

Russell:

Joe:
Oh yeah I prob yeah I mean I didn’t I also knew knew the guys behind the thing I guess there was also though um whilst it would have been a fun one-off thing to do um I tended to generally at the saunas kind of um enjoy kind of roaming around spending a little bit of time in the sauna

Joe:

Russell:
you know [unintelligible] the spa for a bit having a coffee moving around maybe seeing if there was an orgy going on or something like that I tended to do that sort of thing and then maybe eventually um you know either get off with with a guy or something like that having made a pretty quick decision whereas going into one of those rooms it’s a bit of a it’s a sort of different thing it’s more making a commitment (he laughs a little) to someone for maybe a prolonged you know session or something like that

Joe:
um which I probably would have done if I’d got the opportunity but um yeah that was the sort of thing that I would go into if I was invited into but I wouldn’t actually have it you know want to be in possession of it myself

Russell:

Would it be I’m just trying to kind of imagine it would it be like it it would defeat the purpose of being at the sauna

Joe:

Yeah it kind of does a bit I think that was it yeah that was it for me that’s not kind of what I

ii.08:30

went to saunas for I mean they had these things that just look like beds I mean um you know if I was going to do that I’d just bring someone home I suppose if I just wanted to have sex in a bed but um although they all looked very attractive and sort of comfortable and stuff but yeah generally speaking um my sauna activities involve lots of kind of roaming around and you know that part of it

Russell:

They were beds too with sheets and things like that yeah

Joe:

Yeah yeah yeah

Russell:

Yeah

Joe:

Um and I guess there’s also sort of

ii.09:00

an ego thing as well it’s like you know taking possession of one of those rooms tends to be what you know perhaps someone older that someone older does and I don’t know um to do that would look a little bit overtly predatory or something um yeah

Russell:

But you wouldn’t have minded being predated (I laugh)

Joe:

Oh I wouldn’t have minded oh I wouldn’t have minded being predated I wouldn’t want to be a predator yes you know it’s that weird thing of you know we all

ii.09:30

chase people as long as you don’t look like you’re chasing you know we all prefer to be the fly than the spider I think

Russell:

What’s that about for you

Joe:

Ah I guess ego really um and it’s also the position of power it’s also um ah if you’re the one that’s chased then you’ve got the power to put a stop to it pretty much every time whereas if you’ve done the chasing it’s kind of you’ve pretty much made

ii.10:00

a commitment to go through with this to the end um yeah power I guess

Russell:

(checking the recorder) Just gunna no it’s good I just thought I should check it to make sure it isn’t switching itself off that’s all um you used last time we talked you used the term orgy a few times and you’ve used it again today and it was only

ii.10:30

that seemed to me a particularly straightforward term to use then I realised I’ve now um interviewed seventeen people you’re the only person who’s ever used that term

Joe:

(animated) There you go

Russell:

(I laugh a little) And I’m not quite sure whether this is the question I should be asking everyone else rather than you or whatever but um can you tell me what an orgy is

Joe:

God

Russell:

for you what does what

ii.11:00

is this thing an orgy you know you talked about oh an orgy going on or you’ve talked
Joe: About um starting an orgy or joining an orgy or looking for an orgy what is it

Russell: How do you know oh that's an orgy when you encounter it

Joe: Um

Russell: How do you know oh that's an orgy when you encounter it

Joe: Um Russell: How do you know oh that's an orgy when you encounter it

Joe: Oh look I'd probably probably very crudely I'd define it as you know um sex with more than two people going on but it could mean a number of things I mean in

II.i.11:30 The sauna there um the wet area there down the back as you'd imagine you know there was always sort of group things going on there so I would call that an orgy the group action at the end of the wet area um there was also that area with the sort of the glory holes and stuff that looked in on sort of one particular thing and um yeah quite often group things would happen in there um yeah I

II.i.12:00 Would s yeah define it pretty much as as sex with just more than two um

Russell: And would that always be an orgy then

Joe: Um you might have oh look if you know there was a couple and they picked you up or you were in a couple and you picked them up I might just call that a threesome but um you know generally speaking at a sauna you know I'd be up for the more the merrier

II.i.12:30

Russell: So

Joe: Sure

Russell: How how would you tell the difference let's say there are three people you and two other people how would you tell the difference between that being a threesome and that being an orgy how would you know it's not so much like what the definition is but how would you know like what would be the things that would be happening for you to make you think oh no this is a threesome oh no this is an orgy

Joe: Mm I

II.i.13:00 Guess I mean I mean I guess on one level you know I would define a threesome as an orgy on another level I wouldn't and that level would be um an orgy tends to be in a maybe in a more open space with not really necessarily any closed doors that people sort of come in and out of

Russell: Right

Joe: So that's probably my definition although there would be exceptions to it so like yeah what would go on at the end of the wet area with different people coming in and

II.i.13:30 Out of it at different times um there was also that television room down the back with that strange

Russell: Yes

Joe: Wooden thing there and quite often things would start there and you'd see two guys'd start it and then you know or maybe I'd come into it and then someone else would come in and just different people would leave at different times so there's that

Russell: So there's a kind of a dynamic that just is unpredictable

Joe: Yeah

Russell: About it yep
Joe:

Yeah and that it comes and goes I mean sometimes you’ll get like a group of ah you know maybe more than three will get behind closed doors but um even then I would always feel yeah I’d probably would always feel more comfortable if the door was open for more people to come in or people to leave including myself so yeah yeah yeah and for me it’s one of the things I probably would enjoy the most about saunas is just that um yeah just that sort of group dynamic of people sort of coming in and you know sort of leaving and yeah it’s interesting

Russell:

Um when we last talked you hadn’t been to a sauna for about four months have you been since we last talked

Joe:

I’ve only been once to my memory I’ve been thinking about this since you called um and I can’t even remember the occasion all I remember is that I went to Rear Entry and didn’t actually stay long I’d actually been where had I been I don’t think it was after a nightclub I think I was just ah it was early in an evening a Sunday evening or something like that and I actually just went caught the train to go because I was feeling a bit horny and went ah to Rear Entry and got there and only stayed about twenty minutes and just wasn’t into it which was kind of interesting because you know I mean over the years I’ve spent so much time there it just didn’t um yeah it just didn’t kind of excite me it just seemed a bit um um yeah it just didn’t and I actually ended up leaving and I th I’d there was another occasion when I did go out after um going to a nightclub where I did sort of get involved in it and yeah and spent a lot of time (he laughs a little) organising really participating in orgies

Russell:

At Rear Entry again yep

Joe:

Yeah yeah um and that was I had drugs before that so and very much um was involved in the group stuff going on god this is coming back to me now yes it has been two so there’s once I went and twenty minutes stayed just thought oh this is kind of stupid or something was yeah and left

Russell:

Was that the more recent one

Joe:

Ah I can’t remember actually they were around the same time

Russell:

Right

Joe:

Not neither of them this year um one was just before Christmas and I think one was sometime before that but yeah there was one time where I just thought no I just I think I was actually like told stone cold sober in terms of you know not having had any alcohol or drugs or anything and just couldn’t get into it it just seemed cold and and kind of um not very exciting

Russell:

Can I’d like to ask you a lot more about that visit the one where you left very quickly

Joe:

Yep

Russell:

Was it after dark when you arrived

Joe:

Ah look I mean I’ve been trying to

Russell:

Because if it was around about Christmas time the sun sets quite late

Joe:
Mm (a silence)  

look you know I can’t actually remember too much about it which is quite odd

Russell:  
That’s all right

Joe:  
Yeah I yeah I mean all

Russell:  
You arrived

Joe:  
I walked

Russell:  
Did you actually get changed

Joe:  
I did get changed into a towel and it just seemed the place seemed actually physically cold um

Russell:  
Like you felt

Joe:  
Yeah

Russell:  
cold

Joe:  
Yeah

Russell:  
Yeah I tend to sit there actually I prefer to sort of

Joe:  
Did you talk with people the staff there

Joe:  
Um no I don’t think I did actually

Russell:  
Do you know any of them

Joe:  
Oh probably vaguely

Russell:  

II.i.18:00

Yeah it’s not right I hadn’t come from home I had been somewhere but but yeah um yeah I had been somewhere but yeah it for some reason it just yeah I just don’t know whether it just seemed really cold it just seemed uncomfortable there were men there but I just couldn’t sort of get into it and um just sat there and had a coffee and thought oh this is just kind of

II.i.18:30

stupid and just went home so yeah

Russell:  
Had a coffee at the little snack bar

Joe:  
Yeah

Russell:  
Did you actually sit on the stool at the snack bar

Joe:  
Yeah

Russell:  
or in one of the sofas

Joe:  
Ah at the at the stool

Russell:  
Right

Joe:  
Yeah I tend to sit there actually I prefer to sort of

Russell:  
Did you talk with people the staff there

Joe:  
Um no I don’t think I did actually

Russell:  
Do you know any of them

Joe:  
Oh probably vaguely

Russell:  

II.i.17:30

Yeah I yeah I mean all
Um although I don’t think I did because I hadn’t been for so long

**Russell:**

Just because you’d been around there

**Joe:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

on other occasions you might know them

**Joe:**

Might know them yeah I don’t think on that occasion I did

**Russell:**

Do you recall on that visit whether or not you even went as far as going upstairs

**Joe:**

Um yes I did

**Russell:**

You did go

**Joe:**

Yeah I actually felt especially cold up there

**Russell:**

Did you use any of the facilities near the wet area like the spa the dry sauna the showers

**Joe:**

Didn’t have a spa

**Russell:**

The wet sauna

**Joe:**

Um I might have gone into the dry sauna just to get a bit warmer

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Joe:**

I think and then sat down and then I’d love to [unintelligible] but I do remember sitting there having coffee thinking this is kind of stupid I’m just going to go home and I remember thinking yeah if I get home now I can get home at a reasonable hour so I think it was about nine thirty or something so it might have just been getting dark

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Joe:**

um and I was home by ten o’clock I remember that um but yeah it was a strange sort of thing it was just like I think it would have been one of the few times in my life when I didn’t get off you know normally I would think oh well I’m here I may as well go through and do the biz you know but um

**Russell:**

How did can you describe how you felt as you were leaving

**Joe:**

Um

**Russell:**

Like you got dressed was there any sense of achievement or of

**Joe:**

Mm yeah there was oh there was a bit of a sense of annoyance that I’d wasted seventeen dollars

**Russell:**

um [...] I’m making it up is it seventeen

**Russell:**

Um I don’t know but it’s more than what I pay

**Joe:**

Yeah there’s a bit of a sense of that um but yeah also a sense of you know sort of good on you you’re making a sensible decision whereas in other times I would have you
know stayed there to the bitter end you know but yeah it was it was quite marked I remember I actually remember more telling my friends about it than actually what happened I remember I just went there it was boring and I left

II.i.21:00
um but I was saying hey guess what I did went to the sauna and didn’t have sex you know and they were pretty amazed that I’d been to the sauna because I hadn’t been for so long but um hmm

Russell:
Did you consciously make a point of telling them that

Joe:
Mm mm

Russell:
With a view to what

Joe:
Um maybe amusing them or whatever because you know they know me and they know how much time I’d spent at saunas in the past um yeah

Russell:
Might you have been trying to impress them in some way

Joe:
Um maybe

II.i.21:30
a little bit with my self-control yeah yeah my uncharacteristic self-control yeah

Russell:
Did you feel good about that self-control

Joe:
Yeah I did yeah I did kind of curious too because it’s been it’s quite a been quite a big change for me in terms of which I’ve never really fully fathomed and we talked about it last time is the amount of time I spent at saunas for ten years and then to not going I’m still not exactly sure what that’s about um

II.i.22:00
and then to go this time and you know when I was obviously horny and then not get off there was kind of pretty pretty amazing

Russell:
Do you remember whether you slept well that night

Joe:
Pretty much always sleep well

Russell:
All right

Joe:
Yeah pretty much always sleep well but I can’t remember especially much [unintelligible]

Russell:
II.i.22:30
Two more things do you remember what was screening in the kind of bar relaxation area

Joe:
God

Russell:
on the screen

Joe:
No no I don’t

Russell:
And do you remember anything about the porn that was screening on that occasion

Joe:
No

II.i.23:00

Russell:
Good

Joe:
No I don’t I don’t think I actually even took much a huge amount of notice of it I mean I’m not actually strangely I’m not heavily into porn anyway I don’t I mean I don’t
have my own collection and I don’t really watch it at home um I would go to where the porn is playing in the sauna just because that’s where the guys are um

II.I.23:30
but not because I particularly want to watch it myself

Russell:

Last time when we talked you said something about you kind of liked um you liked the light levels to be up a certain amount so that you could make an informed choice (I laugh a little) and one of the things II.I.24:00
what I’ll do now is I’ll tell you something and then I’ll come back to the question I want to ask in relation to that and that is I’m doing some teaching at the moment and last week there’s an exercise I’ve been doing for several years with the students ah and we did it again you know this year it’s always with first year students and they’re they bring along to class a pillowcase and in the pillowcase they have a thing of some sort II.I.24:30

that they’ve brought from home in the pillowcase and then we lay the pillowcases around the room and people go to pillowcases and reach in and feel what this thing is handle it and they’re not allowed to look at it and then they’re to draw they’ve got to draw it and they spend about ten or fifteen minutes at each pillowcase drawing it and after they’ve done about three or four drawings we stop we look at all the drawings and then we have a bit of a discussion II.I.25:00

and one of the things that comes up is that people talk about how they find it extremely difficult that there’s a point where they suddenly recognise they believe what the thing is and then what they find they’re doing is not drawing the thing in their hand anymore they’re drawing this image they have from memory or whatever and that II.I.25:30

that seem that ends up being what the drawing is then we spend the rest of the class trying to then develop some strategies for trying to do something else so my question is about the relationship between seeing and touching for you like you talk about making an informed choice which is based and II.I.26:00

the light level’s been the thing that helped you do that but what is likely to happen in an encounter if you start having sex with someone is that you actually lose the sense of looking my experience is and now I don’t know what kind of sex you have maybe you have the sex which your eyes become really actively involved in but my sense is that the other person’s often just far too close II.I.26:30
to start still working with my eyes and I’m wondering then do you ever think of using touch as have you ever thought of using touch as the way of making the informed choice or is there a thing where someone looks a certain way but then when touch takes over and other senses it doesn’t feel right

Joe:

Um yeah definitely I mean I would certainly always II.I.27:00
there would always probably be a you know there’d be some visual thing and then I would always probably look for an opportunity to get that person somewhere where I could touch like um say they go into a dark maze or a sauna or something and then um you do touching first almost invariably you’d sort of put their hand on their chest you know there’s that sort of a thing and then there might be you know some tit play or something II.I.27:30

like that so the touch does come into it then um um I can’t think an example but I mean I’m sure it’s happened where there’d be some touching sort of sort of tactile exploration going on um I mean if I like even within that II.I.28:00

context if we started playing with each other’s dicks and I guess maybe um if I found you know some huge disfiguring growth on it or something like that that I may um you know may not continue I can’t think of that having happened but I guess there’s as much as the touch that time which is about sort of excitement and stuff there’s also about checking out the stock kind of thing um

Russell:

II.I.28:30
The visual would come first for you

Joe:

Yeah and even within that the visual’s still going on because there’s something still exciting about watching you yourself touch someone else
Russell:
Yeah yeah

Joe:
and watching someone else touch you

Russell:
Yeah I agree

Joe:
Um um and that touch section’s not always about just checking out too sometimes that’s an end in itself sometimes I would just sort of do the touching with someone who I you know would have no intention

II.i.29:00
of getting off with just because you know they might just have a particularly nice chest or you know um

Russell:
Have you found that the reverse can happen where the visual you know you look at someone and you you’ve if you like decided no that’s not someone I’m attracted to the way they look and then at some point

II.i.29:30
some other thing like they’ve they’ve approached you and touched you in a certain way and you’ve found oh hang on this person might be interesting after all that somehow or other your initial image of them has gone and you’ve changed your mind or changed your attitude or your response to them

Joe:
Um I think rarely rarely is the short answer to that but

II.i.30:00
um I have met guys in saunas that maybe not physically attracted to but they’ve um offered to give me a massage and the massage is kind of so good that then that develops into sex and stuff that’s actually happened on more than one occasion but not frequently generally speaking it’s a you know

II.i.30:30
um it would be a visual things first but yeah

Russell:
The reason I ask it is that there was a whole there was a lot of what you had to talk about where ah the visual was very important and yet we’ve just had this conversation you talked about how unimportant porn was for you and I just it kind of triggered that for me that distinction [unintelligible]

Joe:
Yeah it’s interesting isn’t it I don’t um

II.i.31:00
porn just doesn’t work for me and it never has just because of it’s just so contrived and I think you know having been an actor as well I just cannot (I laugh) I cannot ignore how bad the acting is it’s just unforgivable I just can’t ignore it people go oh turn the sound down and I’m going it just doesn’t help it just they’re just really bad and they sh

Russell:
I prefer the sound up

Joe:
Ah I don’t know and so there’s that sort of thing I mean there’s there’s there’s one level about that

II.i.31:30
in in a fairly snobby way but there is also something about it it just doesn’t kind of quite do it for me I don’t know why um yeah but but then but yeah oh um in the real li in the real world then I am quite a visual person

Russell:
Here’s another one then and that is you also talked about the appearance of the place and you talked about how um you wan

Joe:

II.i.32:00
(suddenly getting up) Can you hold that I just want to whack the kettle on again

Russell:
Yeah sure do you want

Joe:
(as he heads into the kitchen) No no

Russell:
No I can just turn it off for a second

Joe:
Okay ta

Russell:
Okay

II.32:06
(the recorder is turned off while Joe makes some more tea and is turned back on again soon afterwards)

Russell:
Okay

II.i.00:00
Right okay well still on the same theme but in a different way um you said you were talking a little bit about an experience of being at Sauna Y but then you made a general statement about

II.i.00:30
if you’ve gone into a cubicle you know if you think about it that lots of people have been there before you and probably had lots of sex but you don’t want it to look like it

Joe:
That’s right

Russell:
as being that way all right and then that was part of um a thing about the appearance of cleanliness and hygiene at the sauna I’m just wondering if you can tell me a bit more about that like

II.i.01:00
if what the relationship is between how things look and or how things appear at a sauna in terms of hygiene or cleanliness and then what you believe about that or what you know

Joe:
I mean it’s a silly thing I guess it’s like that um silly thing you see in hotel rooms they put that sort of paper strip across the toilet

II.i.01:30
and you automatically you know believe that that means it’s been cleaned or something like that where really someone just could have put the strip across so it’s really just on appearances um I mean I’m pretty um I’m actually kind of pretty tolerant and ah maybe look at the way I live (I laugh a little) of sort of mess and stuff um I guess for me

II.i.02:00
you know just say looking at a cubicle if I was going to choose between two I would go for the one that um if the vinyl was obviously wet you know if there was like cum on it or something like that but even then if it was the only cubicle available available I would just wipe it down with my towel that wouldn’t worry me um

Russell:
Your own towel

Joe:
Oh yeah I would yeah I would um um

II.i.02:30
yeah or if there were used condoms and stuff sort of on the floor and stuff like that um that may affect my decision to choose that cubicle [unintelligible] another one and stuff like that but I’m not sort of not too precious about it but yeah I did um and even and with myself too would always make some sort of gesture to clean a cubicle before I left even to the extent of you know putting condom wrappers in the bin or you know something like that

II.i.03:00
so yeah

Russell:
What can what’s that about that is that um something you do regardless of what the other person’s doing or

Joe:
Mm yeah pretty much I mean that’s about that’s about just out of consideration for the other people that are there you know um while (?) I was never a boy scout there was always that thing about you know you leave (we laugh a little) you leave the landscape as you found it and you take all your stuff with it so yeah I don’t know yeah there’s something about consideration

II.i.03:30
for other users and stuff

Russell:
Um can you tell me a little bit more I mean it might be obvious but can you tell me a little bit more about what’s important about the um place looking clean the sauna looking clean

Joe:
I guess it’s for me it’s no different to anywhere else that I went um looking clean I mean I guess it’s got to do

II.i.04:00
with got to do with I guess hygiene it’s got to do with comfort and of course it’s um a bit irrational because you just the way a place looks isn’t necessarily indicative of how actually clean it is but um

Russell:

I’m aware it might be unreasonable but that’s the connection I’m interested in like if it isn’t based on reason then what is it based on

Joe:

I mean for me it would be no different to to somewhere else I mean I occasionally go and get solariums

and it’s actually interesting because it’s similar in some ways it’s you go into this cubicle and you lock the door and you take your clothes off so there’s always triggers the memories

Russell:

Right okay

Joe:

whenever I go and have a solarium and stuff like that um and I do want to see that um the place is the the solarium has been you know wiped down that you know things have been folded that no one else’s stuff is still around and all that sort of stuff um if it was it wouldn’t freak me I don’t think and I’d still probably have the solarium

but it’s just that it’s just that idea of that no one obviously has been in there before even though you know it has um (a silence) yeah I mean yeah I would just this sort of a sense of just a

a sense of maybe you know hiding the extent of the stuff that’s gone on before I guess you know

Russell:

Um the thing about showering do you have um kind of rules you apply to yourself about showering or I mean I’m talking in the present tense but that’s probably not very meaningful did you have rules that you applied

Joe:

Yeah yep pretty much I mean I had um I would I would say ninety percent of the time I would always have a shower afterwards um I mean two things you know you want to wash you know cum off yourself and stuff like that um but also there’s the sense of just you know feeling a bit refreshed after whatever because if I’ve been to if I’ve gone to the sauna

I’ve probably had you know a joint or alcohol or something beforehand too so there’s that sense of leaving feeling a bit fresher but also yeah washing sweat and cum off so yeah normally I would do that before I before I left

Russell:

Would you have a shower as soon as you arrived

Joe:

Nuh the only other time I would have a shower is if um I spent a lot of time in the wet sauna where I got very very sweaty

Russell:

Yeah

Joe:

Um and I tend to be a bit conscious of that because as I said I get have got quite bad skin so I remember once when I was very very young when I went to a sauna um and I also think I had a girlfriend at the time and I used to go after and and I was in the solarium and a guy said to me um you know when you

Russell:

In the solarium

Joe:

No I was in the not solarium the ah dry sauna this is at Suburb A and this older guy started a conversation with me and said you know you’ve got quite bad skin whenever you um leave the ah the spa or whatever you should have a shower afterwards and I said oh right and it’s kind of a little sort of habit I would always sort of stuck to not always but yeah
Russell:

What do you mean by bad skin

Joe:

Oh I just get sort of acne and stuff like that and whatever and just this guy I don’t even if it’s true but this guy sort of asserted that if you’re sort of sweating and all that sort of stuff and you know and not washing it off it’s probably not good for your skin

Russell:

And so you’ve done that ever since

Joe:

Yeah pretty much pretty much I mean there are times as I said the only other time I’d use it would have a shower is just part of tactics is if you’re following someone in there

Russell:

Yes

Joe:

and you wanted to get a closer look there would be that as well and sometimes if someone quickly leaves you know you know the sauna or something really quickly and doesn’t go have a shower I might skip the shower if I wanted to follow them but yeah generally speaking that’s the rule I’ve sort of got into

Russell:

Um after you’ve had a shower would you go into the dry sauna to dry yourself

Joe:

Yes yeah um I would

probably always feel at most places you’re a little bit exposed while you’re drying yourself um well that might be a good thing and you might make the most of it but generally speaking I would just sort of shake myself a little bit and quite dripping actually go into the dry sauna

Russell:

And then do the rest of the towelling

Joe:

Yeah yeah and always really conscious of not leaving too much water on the ground but yeah tend to do that

Russell:

(almost inaudibly) Right

Joe:

Probably the only time I’d actually go into the dry sauna don’t tend to frequent them very much only really go in them when I was be drying myself

Russell:

(a silence) Um I want to go now back to something else you talked about you talked about the story about the policeman (I laugh a little)

Joe:

Oh god I’d forgotten this yep

Russell:

You haven’t forgotten the story

Joe:

Oh no no no

Russell:

You’d just forgotten you’d told me

Joe:

Yeah I’ve actually forgotten most of what I told you so I’ve been quite excited to to find out what I we did talk about so

Russell:

That’s that’s oh I’m going to give you a transcript

Joe:

Oh fantastic

Russell:

at the end of the session yeah um and you there’s there’s first of all there’s one
question I want to ask you which is a pretty straightforward one was he physically larger than you

Joe:

Um yes

Russell:

In the sense of height or in the sense of bulk

Joe:

Bulk but not hugely

Russell:

Right

Joe:

But yeah

Russell:

II.ii.10:00
Yeah but not much higher taller than you

Joe:

No

Russell:

Okay um you talked about a very specific recollection you have of him walking towards you and there were other details you told me about what occurred before and after that including him offering you a lift home but what I’m wondering about now is when you talked about him walking towards you can you tell me about who you were

II.ii.10:30
at that point you told me a lot about like who he was because what he was was you said he was the policeman you know and although there was nothing about him that

(laughing a little) he had no uniform on or anything there was just this knowledge you had which he didn’t know that you knew is that correct

Joe:

Um it depend [sic] if

II.ii.11:00
he remembered me or not because he told me and then when I’d seen him again at subsequent times I would think of him as a policeman I doubt whether he actually remembered me

Russell:

Right okay

Joe:

Um I did eventually say to him in the car you’re in the force aren’t you and he said oh yeah you remember

Russell:

Right okay

Joe:

So he probably he actually I think he did remember me yeah because he did say I think I told you that line about the kissing and stuff like that oh [unintelligible] in the when he did drive me home

II.ii.11:30
I said you’re in the force and he said oh yeah you remember and I said yeah and he goes now I remember you because you’re the best kisser at Rear Entry (I laugh a little) and I’d had always had this joke with my friends that I’d had the Victorian Police award for kissing

Russell:

Yes yes now I remember that yes

Joe:

Right so the particular instance I’m thinking of him walking towards me which actually was in an orgy um

Russell:

I remember

Joe:

Um yeah it would depend if you I don’t actually think he remembered who I was at that stage so yeah but who was I um

Russell:

Yeah who were you at

II.ii.12:00
that point like what sen for instance we can talk in really basic terms like were you smaller than him or did you feel very large

Joe:
Ah I was actually I think I was lying on a slab

**Russell:**

Yes

**Joe:**

So you know in that sense he was sort of a bigger presence coming towards me um I reckon it was me I mean I wasn’t in this whole I wasn’t in a fantasy of you know that I was a prisoner or criminal or anything like that

**Russell:**

Good if if you were YOU though can you start telling me about the particular um state of being you were in for instance you know before we sort of talked before we started recording today you talked about ah different kinds of experiences you’d been in generally over periods of time and how they’ve been changing like a sense of you might feel a certain way for an extended period of time in your life and then start to shift and whatever or to see yourself if you like in certain ways now what I’m trying to now do is bring this down to a rather than a more general overview to a sense of a specific moment like did you have a sense of you’ve talked about excitement at that point but can you tell me well what kind of excitement or were did you feel younger or did you feel more ah vulnerable did you feel a sense of a future opening up or did you get a sense of something coming to fulfilment or did you what

**Joe:**

I think there’s a sense of in those situations there’s a sense of um I don’t know how to explain it in any other way but it’s like I’m in a film

**Russell:**

Right

**Joe:**

It’s like it’s exciting and it’s this is going to be great this is really memorable and obviously it is memorable in that this picture has stayed in my head

**Russell:**

And if it’s like it’s a movie does that have a sense that the narrative in some respects will follow a pattern that it starts a certain way and therefore it will take a certain form

**Joe:**

Ah no not especially

**Russell:**

Right

**Joe:**

No I’m pretty much in my sauna activities generally pretty much just in the moment and there’s a very much sense of you know sort of pleasure of the now um I don’t really have much don’t think maybe too much about stuff that’s gone on before or afterwards you know and whilst I remember things that have gone on in there pretty vividly there’s no real greater sense of (he coughs) um yeah than just pursuing pleasure I think um mm

**Russell:**

(a silence)

**Joe:**

Does that extend as far as bearing in mind safe sex practices

**Russell:**

Um oh I mean I would always have safe sex yeah I had it kind of drummed into me pretty early so yeah

**Russell:**

So that so you’d be in the moment but there’s or somehow or other that would you’d always stay in touch with that

**Joe:**
II.ii.16:00
Yeah that's like a just a given yeah

Joe:
Even in quite extraordinary I mean I remember times after you know dance parties and stuff and I would have been you know pretty drug affected still at the height of you know some crazy fantastic orgy still would just be that would just be a given that it would be safe sex or not

Russell:
Yeah

Joe:
Actually I'm pretty pleased with myself over the years the way that I've actually managed to keep that sort of up

Russell:
Right

Joe:
No no I'm wondering now that kind of given is there are there other kinds of givens like that because like that's got to do with a sense of a future and the world outside the sauna as well as much as anything so are there other ones like that that occur so when you talk about oh I'm in the moment you're not there are one I mean you've you've now identified there is something though that you hang on to which isn't just to do with that moment are there other things do you think

Joe:
Yeah there might be restraints on who I would sleep with perhaps or have sex with I mean um for example if there was a particularly young person whom I was actually physically attracted to um I might stop myself because I might be embarrassed to see them again or particularly if they were maybe a young person who I'd had some involvement with through you know you know youth theatre or something like that I would find that inappropriate um so yeah there'd be that sort of thing maybe someone who

II.ii.16:30
I knew was the boyfriend of someone I knew who I knew was probably there behind his boyfriend's back I probably wouldn't you know um and I'm sure there's times when I have but yeah there might be a few of those sort of kind of personal moral things that might go on about choices not too many but you know um and I can't think of even a specific example when I've not done something I wanted to do

Russell:

II.ii.18:00
So there's a sense then that when you shut when when that door especially at Rear Entry clunks behind you and you walk into the sauna that the world still comes with you a bit

Joe:
Mm mm

Russell:
You haven't left it entirely behind

Joe:
No you try to and I guess probably when I was young and first started going there was a sense of particularly when I was had going behind my girlfriend's back and stuff there would have been a definite sense of leaving the world behind but as you get older and stuff like that I mean it's nigh on impossible because there's always someone there you know

Russell:
Yeah

Joe:
I mean I've lived in this city all my life you know it's like it would be impossible for me to go to a sauna and not see someone there I knew I think um so you know there's just the greetings of you know hello or even you know conversations and stuff like that

Russell:
Right

Joe:
which bring you back into the reality so but um I mean as much as possible I try and keep it as a kind of a you know an outside the world sort of experience but yeah I'm more or less conscious

of those sort of things like safe sex and who you're rooting and stuff

Russell:

All right now I want to ask you about the other police um officers the first time you went to Volcano you weren't able to get in

Joe:

Ah yes

Russell:

because (I laugh a little) the people were asking a lot of

questions at reception and you were with your friend and then you said two policemen came up the stairs can you describe those policemen to me

Joe:

Um

Russell:

Were they in uniform to start with

Joe:

Yeah they were in uniform um

Russell:

Did they have their hats on

Joe:

Yes I'm just trying to think was one female no I just I can remember because what happened is they came

up they started coming up the stairs and pretty much as soon as they appeared behind us my friend and I left um there was definitely two

Russell:

Were they carrying anything or were their hands empty

Joe:

Um don't know no I think their hands were empty and there was two they were both male both youngish both with hats on um those kind of

sort of coats sort of weather coats that police wear that sort of thing

Russell:

Yeah like when they're doing traffic

Joe:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah so what luminous coats

Joe:

Oh yeah no not not no not that sort of luminous ones sort of dark the dark blue sort of zip up

Russell:

Oh yes yes yes like bomber jackets

Joe:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

Yeah

Joe:

Um

Russell:

Did they have guns

Joe:

Can't remember

Russell:

Right okay but you can remember the zip up [unintelligible: bomber?] jackets yeah

Joe:

Mm and I remember them one of them looking
at us as we left and I thought oh god we’re going to be stopped but we weren’t

Russell:
And did they speak to the people at reception before you left or did you

Joe:
Um they did [unintelligible] there’s

Russell:
Or did you start leaving before they got to the top of the stairs

Joe:
Ah we left because they got there and I do remember crossing them um half way up the stairs I don’t know how we knew they were there

II.ii.21:30
though whether or not I think it was ac I don’t look to be honest I can’t remember if we saw them and then left I actually think what happened is is that we were couldn’t get in the guys at reception were quite uptight about something and it was understandable what um and then as we started to move down the police came up and we were like oh my god thank god we left

Russell:
Even though you didn’t know what their business was there

Joe:
Um

II.ii.22:00
well we did have a sense because the guys at the this has been the discussion at the counter whereas um the guys were very reluctant to let us in or there seemed to be a lot more questions than I’ve ever had since and um and I my friend my friend was trying to talk sort of our sway [sic] into it and my friend ah who’s a who’s actually now ah he’s always been pretty political I should say

II.ii.22:30
and he ah was sort of went in to questioning the guys behind the counter about what actually had been going on in terms of police harassment and stuff like that and I remember the guy saying behind the counter saying we’ll just get harassed by the police because they think we’re faggots and they think we’re nothing something like that and then it was quite bizarre that that that then there they were the police were right behind us so

Russell:
When when he said do do you

II.ii.23:00
specifically recall him saying something like that

Joe:
Mm mm

Russell:
When he said that what what did you hear what did YOU hear like did you think when he said we’re faggots or something did you think that included you or did you think oh he meant the business there

Joe:
I think he meant the business

Russell:
Right did you feel that that applied to you

Joe:
Um no I don’t think I did he very much meant the business

Russell:
Right

Joe:
because at that time we

II.ii.23:30
got a real sense of the fact that we weren’t allowed in that we weren’t one of them

Russell:
Now what was it that you specifically feared about the police

Joe:
Um

Russell:
What what

Joe:
Oh I don’t know that they’d be taking names or you know um they’d be asking questions and stuff like that

Russell:

And that what would that do

Joe:

Oh I don’t know that perhaps there’d be some I don’t know um permanent record of that I was at a sauna or you know um

Russell:

And at that stage

Joe:

And I didn’t have and and I was quite young I didn’t fully understand that these places were fully legal or something I mean I I in in some in my ignorance I didn’t know if whether I was committing a crime by even being there so yeah so yeah I was pretty scared of you know not knowing what they’d do

Russell:

Cos by that stage homosexuality was no longer illegal in Victoria

Joe:

No no no

Russell:

I don’t know if

Joe:

Only just I think yeah it had only been pretty soon

Russell:

Yeah it had only been in a couple of years but I don’t know about I mean I know that it was raided after the legalisation I know so little of the history it’s an area

Joe:

Mm and Rear Entry got raided too after you know years after that I believe

Russell:

Oh yeah

Joe:

But you know I mean like you hear these things sort of at saunas and stuff like that I don’t know how much of it’s actually true but I was certainly there the day that day when two police came up because there’s the whole thing I can remember reading in the papers at the time about about whether saunas were in fact brothels

Russell:

Right

Joe:

you know and this is I think what you know certain sections of the community were trying to maintain they were actually there was actually prostitution going on there which it wasn’t but I think they just had a hard trouble you know getting their head around what these places were as we all did really

Russell:

I met a man once who’d um driven to a sauna from the outer suburbs in the middle of the night ah who thought he was going to a male brothel and thought that that would be interesting for a change and when he arrived it they had to basically he had no concept of what the place really was and the staff more or less had to show him around and explain everything to him and his great line was (laughing a little) that he’d saved himself a hundred bucks

Joe:

Right yeah and I’ve seen staff doing that with guys you know saying have you been or but even asking me you know when I was younger oh have you been to a place like this do you know what a place like this is and um and then you’ve seen them with some guy

Russell:

going this is down here and this is down here it’s quite I wonder what they say
Have you ever shown anyone around a sauna

Joe:

Um

Russell:

who’s new to it

Joe:

(two women outside Joe’s flat start talking loudly and with great animation) Ah you know it’s interesting two things come up there. the short answer to that is no um

II.ii.26:30

(the talk outside escalates and Joe laughs a little) god um (he shuts the window)

Russell:

Are they drag queens (we laugh a little)

Joe:

They may as well be Jesus Christ those voices um (recovering) no is the short answer but I do remember two two things (he begins a list) one I had a friend who had never been and I did run into him at the sauna and I always felt awful about it because I was in the midst

II.ii.27:00

of a chase or something and we were about to go into a cubicle together and this guy was saying to me oh god can you what what do you do here like he had no idea he’s in the towel looking totally lost and I didn’t help him

Russell:

Right

Joe:

Um I actually went off with you know and he’d he’d gone with a friend who’d just left him there and he was just sitting in the lounge room not knowing what to do and didn’t even seem to know where to start or whatever and I didn’t help him I always felt really bad about that um and the other thing is that I’ve had a friend recently who

II.ii.27:30

has been in a relationship for many many many many years he’s only just come out of it and he’d never been to a sauna and wanted me to take him and he’d been with some friends once um and got in his towel but then left straight away and um has only recently I think as recently as last night went for the second or third time and has been at me to take him you know um cos he feels quite confronted about going but um I

II.ii.28:00

just sort of feel a little bit for me I guess my reluctance to and maybe why I didn’t help the first person is there is a sense of for me of oh I don’t know it’s um oh very selfishly it’s kind of like a really private time in some way it’s when I’m sort of there as an individual um and when I’m not I probably have gone with

II.ii.28:30

friends in the past rarely but yeah generally speaking I just want to be by myself and do my own thing and not get into a great social thing even if I run into people I know I don’t sort of chat for very long and stuff like that I’m kind of there down to business sort of thing so um so no I would probably’ve avoided ever having to do that show someone round mm

Russell:

II.ii.29:00

(a silence) Yeah I’ve got I think only one more thing I want to ask you about

Joe:

Sure

Russell:

which strangely is related to something you’ve just said you talked about the very early period when you used to go and you felt a bit shy and

II.ii.29:30

you’d sit around in a towel and do nothing do you remember that

Joe:

Mm mm

Russell:

Okay when you’re doing that what are you doing when you’re doing nothing sitting around in a towel doing nothing what specifically were you doing for instance where were you sitting how for how long what was going on for you as time passed

Joe:

Mm um watching television invariably um
Russell:
The non-porn television

Joe:

II.ii.30:00
Yeah in the lounge room um

Russell:
Yeah no matter what sauna this was

Joe:

Oh pretty in those very early days I really only went to Suburb A

Russell:
Right okay

Joe:

Um um they used to have these strange sort of ledges at the end of the lounge room where you could sort of um sit up but you like the your legs would be like this sort of thing you know what I mean

Russell:
Sticking out in front of you

Joe:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Joe:
And and you see you’d almost be lying down you know

Russell:
Right

Joe:

II.ii.30:30
and watching television but also being very conscious of who was coming into the lounge room and watching them as well

Russell:
Yeah

Joe:

II.ii.30:00
Um I might flick through the magazines but as I said not heavily into porn I might flick through the newspapers but no generally watch TV

Russell:
The magazines were all porn magazines

Joe:

Yeah

Russell:
Okay and you’d be watching television would you be watching the television

Joe:

Um

Russell:
or would you be appearing to watch the television but

Joe:
I think I probably would be watching the television

Russell:
Right

Joe:
cos I love telly but but also yeah still being conscious of

II.ii.31:00
what else is going on

Russell:
And what kinds of periods of time would be involved when you say sitting around in a towel doing nothing

Joe:

II.ii.30:30
Um a couple of hours

Russell:
(I laugh a little, then) And would your your state of mind your feelings how you
were in with yourself would that change over that time

Joe:

Um

Russell:

Would it be different at the end of a couple of hours from when it was at the beginning

Joe:

I think I was fairly I mean this is very early days

Russell:

Yeah

Joe:

so I would be fairly nervous uptight excited um yeah depending on who was there and stuff I guess at the end of the two hours I would get bored and you know go home although I guess what eventually happened is that’s when I got a bit braver and then things did happen um towards the end of it but um [unintelligible: I mean?] it was exciting even doing that I mean it was a sense of just you know all these male bodies just being around even though they had towels on that was pretty

Russell:

So just them being near

Joe:

Mm

Russell:

Yeah

Joe:

Mm and there’s a certain you know exciting unreality about [unintelligible] saunas anyway I don’t know you just feel like they’re just such unusual places that there’s a sort of level of excitement that goes with it I probably wouldn’t feel that now

Russell:

What do you mean unreality

Joe:

Oh just because it’s you know it’s it’s you know you can’t see daylight there’s only men there they haven’t got clothes on (I laugh a little) it’s they’re quite unusual places so yeah um you know very difficult to explain to people what they are you know yeah there’s something quite odd about them even odd too in terms of you know nightclubs and stuff like that I mean you see men at saunas you don’t see anywhere else you know um mm so it was possible to go there and not be bored and not do anything yeah

Russell:

I don’t think I’ve got anything else

Joe:

[unintelligible]

Russell:

Is there anything any kind of last things

Joe:

Um I don’t know I suppose I suppose a bit also I mean for me it’s you know I’m kind of interested in why I don’t go anymore it’s interesting now because and since we’ve spoken I think the new one’s opened up or maybe it had just opened

Russell:

It had opened when we spoke last time and I asked you if you’d heard about it

Joe:

Yeah and um

Russell:

and you said you’d heard things

Joe:

I’d heard I mean friends of mine have gone but I must admit I haven’t heard much about it and haven’t asked much you know um
Russell:
They've already started modifying it

Joe:
Really isn't that interesting

Russell:
It's only been open I think about a year [...] and the first modification has occurred where there was a dark area near some small I'm always reluctant to introduce terms because I know that different people have different names for

Joe:
For things yeah

Russell:
things and I feel like I'm starting to pre-empt the name of something but those kind of stand up cubicles with glory holes there was an area of those and behind it um you could walk around behind it and there was a dark area there all of that has been completely removed

Joe:
And yeah I mean that renovation thing is always amazing I mean we'd always um when I was going to the sauna regularly we would ring one another if the maze had been changed you know because I think there were two things there's you know (he begins a list) one it was particularly exciting and there was new ways to get lost but the other thing was is you had to tell people to prepare them because you could spend a lot of time you know (he claps his hands together once) running into walls you know (I laugh a little) um

Russell:
Yeah

Joe:
Ah

Russell:
I've done that (I laugh a little)

Joe:
Yeah though though I think you know with experience I've got a pretty good sense of working out you know where mazes are particularly if they're in you know a place you've been before like this these two times I went in the last six months um the mazes hadn't changed since when I'd been there beforehand

Joe:
Yeah and it was amazing just yeah it was funny how just easily I went back into the kind of the behaviour and stuff like that I mean it

Russell:
You knew that maze straight away

Joe:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Joe:
Um and I think there might have been a subtle difference but I worked it out you know oh that's going that way then that's gunna have to go that way and yeah um

Russell:
Did you find it like you wouldn't even have to think about it
Joe:
Mm

Russell:
Yeah it just it just happened for you (*this is a question*)

Joe:
It just happened yeah

Russell:
Right

Joe:
Yeah

Russell:
II.ii.36:30 classical conditioning or something yeah

Joe:
II.ii.36:30

Russell:
The new sauna has no maze

Joe:
Mm

Russell:
Nothing yeah nothing that I would call a maze at all just

Joe:
I mean the the only other interesting thing for me I mean is is my kind of sex life seems to have changed a lot over the last few years and that not only am I not going to saunas as much I'm actually not having as much sex um which is um yeah which is

Russell:
II.ii.37:00

Joe:
II.ii.37:00 kind of interesting just you know maybe not needing it as regularly as I used to which actually feels like a good space for me um um I mean my therapist yeah my therapist and I talk about that a lot and I've gone through some very excessive periods in my life you know when I've gone to saunas a lot and then after that I actually I don't know if I just told you I got into phone sex

Russell:
No you didn't

Joe:
Yeah and that actually was kind of what I think replaced it um

Russell:
II.ii.37:30 and probably um probably started the year before last a bit of last year still occasionally get on the lines and stuff like that but that's kind of what had placed [sic] it but now I'm actually at a stage where you know I'm just not having much sex at all and um thinking what I used to get from sex I'm actually getting from different parts of my life so it actually kind of feels I've actually been a little bit happy that that's kind of resolved because there tended to be a little bit um you know tend to

Russell:
II.ii.38:00 be a little bit excessive sometimes in terms of yeah yeah

Joe:
II.ii.38:00

Russell:
How would you know they were excessive

Joe:
II.ii.38:30

Russell:
And then going to work

Joe:
II.ii.38:30

Russell:
Yeah

Joe:
II.ii.38:30

Russell:
so I'm sort of happy about that um and also too that thing of going and you know because I kind of paid the money I was there I would pretty much always get off
before I left and sometimes that involved having you know having experiences

II.i.39:00
which actually weren’t that great and I was thinking oh I probably would have preferred not to have done that but yeah so yeah

Russell:
Will we leave it there

Joe:
Yeah I think so

Russell:
Okay

II.i.39:23
(I switch off the minidisc recorder)

END OF CONVERSATION
appendix 22: Yianis II

The transcript documents a second conversation with Yianis, this one recorded at his workplace. He met me outside and then led me in through various work areas to a windowless room proportioned like a shoebox. It was brightly lit by fluorescent tubes in the ceiling and furnished with dilapidated office equipment. The chair Yianis sat in creaked loudly and frequently as he moved around in it searching for comfort. We set up the recording equipment and began.

Russell:

II.i.00:00
Okay I’ll start with something pretty easy then (Yianis laughs) um at Splash there used to be I’ve become obsessed by this this week there used to be a long corridor with water down the middle you remember that corridor

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

Do you remember the rooms that were alongside that corridor

Yianis:

Yeah like the executive rooms almost

Russell:

Right okay okay the executive rooms

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

almost

Yianis:

(laughing) Yeah

Russell:

II.i.00:30
How come well let’s start off with the almost (I laugh a little) what makes them almost executive rooms

Yianis:

Um you know like well it’s it’s a thing overseas but certainly not in Australia where saunas you actually pay for a room

Russell:

Yeah

Yianis:

and oh well I didn’t know that but when I went to Splash because I went to overseas after Splash closed um but

II.i.01:00
um you know because I didn’t know about it you had to pay to get in I just thought how you know weird and the rooms are just like there’s an it’s an office room there’s a key and you know they get control of the TV and the porn in the room

Russell:

So when you say THEY get the person with the key

Yianis:

The person with the key

Russell:

Yes

Yianis:

who’s hired the room out

Russell:

Yes

Yianis:

Um and it’s so I always infer that these rooms are specifically

II.i.01:30
you know like I don’t know there’s this thing of like maybe you know me men bringing prostitutes back to that (he laughs a little) to those rooms and I don’t see the sense of picking up someone and why wouldn’t you use a free room but I mean the best thing about these rooms is that you’ve got control of the porn so if I had a bit of money I’d probably use them (laughing) so I was always jealous because they’re and there’s a gla I can’t remember if there was

II.i.02:00
glass windows

**Russell:**
The ones

**Yianis:**
There was glass somewhere in that room

**Russell:**
Sorry is this the ones at Splash now

**Yianis:**
Yeah I don’t. I can't remember if there were glass but no I remember being able to see in somehow so maybe there were blinds. I can’t remember. I remember being able to look in somehow

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Yianis:**
So I don’t know if there was window. a window with blinds or

**Russell:**
My recollection is that most of them but not all had walls of glass because they were converted offices

**Yianis:**
Right. oh wow (he laughs)

**Russell:**
Yeah I think they were basically converted offices along a corridor

**Yianis:**
Yeah and it was almost like these offices were you know like in a promenade because there was a water feature

**Russell:**
Yes

**Yianis:**
you know (he laughs) so it was like um the up sc you know like um the gentrified area

**Russell:**
So did you think of them as the executive rooms before you went overseas and found out about rooms being booked

**Yianis:**
No I thought they were executive rooms before ah when I went overseas it’s run of the mill everyone

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Yianis:**
You go to a sauna and you buy a key

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Yianis:**
or whatever

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Yianis:**
So it’s a lot more it’s people with rooms have have paid for the rooms overseas

**Russell:**
Fine okay

**Yianis:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
And the these rooms here were they like the rooms that people paid for overseas

**Yianis:**
No they seemed more special (he laughs) because of the TV

**Russell:**
Yes
Yianis:
in the rooms

Russell:
Each room had a TV in it yeah

Yianis:
Yeah and they weren't you know you paid for rooms with just a basic mattress like a um a gym mat

Russell:
Here

Yianis:
No overseas

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
But I think there was linen

Russell:
Yes

Yianis:
in those executive rooms

Russell:
On beds

Yianis:
Yeah on beds

Russell:
Yeah okay

Yianis:
So it was very different

Russell:
Do you remember anything about the thematic um thing that went through

Yianis:
No no I can't remember

Russell:
Okay you never went into one of those rooms

Yianis:
No

Russell:
You never met anyone who'd been in one of those rooms

Yianis:
No

Russell:
that you know of

Yianis:
I've always been trying to look inside those rooms

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
a lot

Russell:
Because the porn's playing on the television sets

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah yeah did you used to sit and watch the porn in those rooms

Yianis:
Mm yeah

Russell:
Where did you sit
Yianis:
I'd stand around or I think I'm pretty sure I've sat on if there was a ledge on the water thing feature. I think it was a bit raised I think I've sat on that.

Russell:
Yeah otherwise you'd stand against the glass

Yianis:
Yeah or walk around kind of loiter around that area

Russell:
Right okay all right did you know that they have

II.i.05:00
rooms at Volcano that you can pay money for private rooms upstairs near the heavy duty area

Yianis:
In the heavy duty area yeah

Russell:
Did you know that before you went overseas

Yianis:
No I kind of differentiate between (laughing a little) I always think I always thought of those rooms at Volcano as as the heavy duty rooms I didn't s

Russell:
Have you ever peered into one of them

Yianis:
No I've never looked in there

Russell:
So you don't know what's in them

Yianis:
I just presume that just because they're upstairs

II.i.05:30
in that area because there's very different vibe in that you know

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
I just um presumed yeah they were heavy duty rooms like you know I don't know enema places [?] enemas [?] but no they don't have enemas somewhere else in another room another part no see there's a there's a gap in my thinking there so but I just presume they're different

Russell:

II.i.06:00
That thing about

Yianis:
And I never used to go down there actually

Russell:
Right

Yianis:
[unintelligible] it's such a dead area but at Splash it's a thoroughfare that area but for me the ones at Volcano yeah that was a dead end or something or place where you didn't bother with yeah

Russell:

II.i.06:30
Have you been um have you been to a sauna since we last talked

Yianis:
No (he laughs) I didn't know whether that was a proviso of the interviews actually

Russell:

II.i.07:00
No it's not at all not at all
I was just I just suddenly realised that I didn't know whether you had been or not I suspected it was possibly something that hadn't happened but

Yianis:
Well no I've been meaning to go bec with Salvatore oh someone (he laughs) and

Russell:
It's all right it gets changed

Yianis:
(laughing) And we want to go together but we haven’t gotten around to it we were going to go not this weekend but

Russell:
Easter

Yianis:
No (he laughs)

Russell:
Oh II.i.07:30 last weekend

Yianis:
Yeah but my money didn’t come through so (he laughs) we were we were going Easter weekend but um yeah I think um so yeah no I haven’t been had entanglements for the whole period though (he laughs) in yeah last time I saw you and Easter between II.i.08:00 that period it was a bit you know had various entanglements so yeah haven’t had a chance to go really

Russell:
Right um I’m going to ask you a series of questions and if you don’t wanna answer them that’s fine you know um because you might not want to just tell me let alone you know be anonymous going along with Salvatore what’s that about

Yianis:
(laughing, then almost inaudibly) Oh god

Russell:
I mean you’ve told me that you’re II.i.08:30 sort of seeing him you know

Yianis:
Yeah um

Russell:
But what’s that about what does that mean to you

Yianis:
What does that mean to me um okay probable it’s probably a bit muddled

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
Our process of getting there of thinking of how we can but um (he begins a list) A um we II.i.09:00 don’t want to be married yet and he he’s just finished from a long term relationship and the one before that was me again um so while I don’t have a REAL need well I never I thought I did have a need to go to the you know have sex with other people II.i.09:30 I kind of do so I feel like I want to I want to involve him and and we want someone anonymous but Salvatore wants the safety of a sauna rather than a beat and although I’m a bit reluctant because II.i.10:00 well he doesn’t understand the difference between a beat and a sauna he just thinks one’s outdoors and one’s kind of legal and indoors

Russell:
Is that because he hasn’t ever been to a sauna

Yianis:
Yeah no

Russell:
Sorry are you confirming what I’ve just said

Yianis:
Yeah no he hasn’t been to a sauna

Russell:
Yeah okay

Yianis:
and he’s only come walked through a beat with me

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:

So um I’m a bit reluctant to go to a sauna II.i.10:30 because I think that what we’d rather just fool around and not have this expectation of hard core sex with another person and Salvatore and a beat will you’ve got more I feel like you’ve got more negotiating skills I feel like I I do

Russell:

You feel you do in a beat

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

than in a sauna

Yianis:

Yeah I feel a lot more comfortable in a beat going this is what we’re going to do this is what I want to do I don’t want to do that and I want to do this and if you don’t want it II.i.11:00 then that’s fine but at a sauna it doesn’t quite work like that it’s just

Russell:

For you

Yianis:

Yeah you know like yeah

Russell:

That’s interesting because this I mean that’s very timely you say that because this morning I was reading a study from Scotland (I laugh a little) which was specifically about how um a number of men were interviewed and they had specifically talked II.i.11:30 about um most of them about how at a beat what we would call a beat anyway um they had less room to negotiate things than they would at um they didn’t mention saunas but they mentioned bars um as ah saunas didn’t come into it they only were looking at beats of various kinds either outdoor ones or indoor ones II.i.12:00

Yianis:

or bars and they talked about that absence of negotiation so I’m really suddenly struck by that I mean the people

Russell:

No I’m totally opposite

Yianis:

Yeah so I’m curious what is it that’s happened in saunas that has led you in the past to believe that that’s the case

Russell:

I think it’s because you get caught up II.i.12:30 with the whole sex thing at

Yianis:

That you have been

Russell:

Mm at saunas and you get caught up with it and it becomes sex and sex is about losing control and kind of inhibitions and stuff I mean good sex for me anyway or you know like not knowing that okay we’re going to give each other a head job or (he laughs a little) you know

Russell:

Right

Yianis:

Um and I like um II.i.13:00 I would like to be in total control we are you know like if me and Salvatore are going in there we’re totally object you know we’re not interested in meeting interesting personalities (he laughs a little) we’re interested in you know a person like we would a kind of a moving sex toy almost

Russell:

Yeah I understand

Yianis:

And oh well (he laughs a little) and I feel like at a beat you can just you know I have no problems at a beat just walking out of any situation
But you do at the sauna

**Yianis:**  

**ii.i.13:30**  
Yeah because there just seems to be this faux um passion thing *he laughs* this faux

**Russell:**  
Is that faux F A U X

**Yianis:**  
Yeah *he laughs*

**Russell:**  
You ARE sophisticated *we laugh a little*

**Yianis:**  
Where you kind of you know because you know you’re in an envir and it’s also like the beat there’s this thing of being caught there’s this thing of being in public even if it’s the most private location there’s it’s a you’re

**ii.i.14:00**  
in public

**Russell:**  
Right

**Yianis:**  
and no matter how secretive the area is it’s some kind of public ground um and that’s probably the reason why you can kind of be a bit more detached and impersonal there’s no reason not to enga I mean apart from yeah I mean it’s it’s I’m [?] caught up in being polite I guess as well polite and but at beats I don’t feel like I have to be polite

**Russell:**  

**ii.i.14:30**  
Um the first time I ever went to a sauna the man at reception I said I spoke to him and I said this is my first time at a place like this what should I know and he just looked at me like he had this onerous task um and he was baffled and and then he said a couple of basic bits of information to me but one then he said something that

**ii.i.15:00**  
made me think I’d come to the right place he said don’t forget above all else you don’t have to do anything you don’t want to and I just felt instantly happy long before I *Yianis laughs* you know I mean I wasn’t even through the door in you know I had no idea what was going on inside but suddenly I felt like I was in control and I had control and I’ve never forgotten that ever since but I’m wondering do you feel that you

**ii.i.15:30**  
have to do things you don’t want to

**Yianis:**  
No no historically I gue it’s I’m informed by incidents that have happened to me in the past there

**Russell:**  
Yeah

**Yianis:**  
where I’d go in there going I don’t want to finger this you know like I I because I’m I’ll well I’m gradually moving out of this stage of my life hopefully but where I was so HIV obsessed

**Russell:**  
Yes

**Yianis:**  
that I I’d go in there going okay no I’m not going to finger a person with this finger *the laughs* because I’ve got a little cut on it or something

**Russell:**  

**ii.i.16:00**  
Yeah

**Yianis:**  
and you know I I’d know my limitations before going in there but for some reason when I went in there those things would escape me and they usually don’t at a beat

**Russell:**  
Now when you say go in there I’m going to be a bit pedantic for a moment where do you draw that line of being either in or out do you

**ii.i.16:30**  
mean past the past the lockers or just past the security door or past

**Yianis:**
No when I’m in the cubicle with someone

Russell:
In the cubicle

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
So it’s once you’re in a cubicle

Yianis:
With someone yeah

Russell:
Right okay

Yianis:
It’s the room

Russell:
Right okay with the door locked in the cubicle

Yianis:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
But the other parts of the sauna that is

Yianis:
That’s more cruisey I can I can handle control I’m in total control of cruising or play

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
But it’s it won’t be just play if you’re in a cubicle

Yianis:

No

Russell:
And the events that can unfold in a cubicle can’t unfold anywhere else for you in a sauna or haven’t so far

Yianis:
No they they’re different yeah they they I mean I’m not any yeah I kind of like doing it in view but I haven’t that much actually at saunas no at saunas I haven’t

Russell:
Right (a silence) so

Yianis:
Although I have overseas actually yeah

Russell:
Well I can catch up with that another time (we laugh a little) but

Yianis:
In a sauna overseas

Russell:
Oh right okay

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
Well maybe I should catch up with that now then

Yianis:
It was yeah that’s because overseas we didn’t have money for a room (he laughs a little) and so we had no choice but to be in an exposed or open area of some sort an area that other people could access

Yianis:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
Right okay

Yianis:
So we had to use it

Russell:
Right okay

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:

II.i.18:30
(a silence, then) Someone um else I've interviewed talked about how one of the things for him about you know having sex when he was really enjoying it was that he was completely in the moment and then I asked him about um

II.i.19:00
ah about HIV issues in relation to that you know in other words being aware of safe sex practices I think it's the only time in the whole all of these interviews and conversations that I've done that and he said oh no he said I never lose sight of that he said that's like a given you know that's like a second nature and that was interesting because then what we started to tease out were a little bit a sense of well what did he stay in touch with even when he was in the you know the

Yianis:
In the moment

Russell:
The heat of something and felt he was in the moment there was still nevertheless some sense of the rest of the world he still had um ah some connection with it and was in touch with it at almost an unconscious level but enough for it to be almost automatic for him to be still making discriminating choices

II.i.20:00
is it the case that for you when that cubicle door shuts that becomes difficult

Yianis:
Um nuh oh no not when the cubicle door shuts when we're actually kissing and you know having sex um but I don't lose sight of I mean this is me

II.i.20:30
being very rigid about my um rigid about the safe sex rules that I use

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
in those spaces so I wouldn't let something like someone cum in my mouth or fucking [fuck me?] without a condom

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
It's silly but (he laughs a little)

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
But it's just little things

Russell:
Little things that you would pay attention to

II.i.21:00
outside the cubicle

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
Right okay

Yianis:
I mean it's not a hard and fast rule I mean sometimes you know I do you know I'm fine inside the cubicle but other times I'm not

Russell:
When you say sometimes you're fine do you have you any ability to identify what differentiates those times from others how it
is that sometimes you’ll be fine and you’ll be able to exercise that control

Yianis:

It’s usually when

**II.i.21:30**
I’m um just i’m fine if i’m more detached *(he laughs a little)* from the whole situation where I see each sexual move as a as a procedure

Russell:

Yeah

Yianis:

Ah i’m fine then i’ll follow all my rules but instantly when i’m beginning to let go i let go of a few things but not enough for me to be at risk of any kind of disease

**II.i.22:00**
as such

Russell:

Yeah

Yianis:

but just all but just i i’ve [sic] be more comfortable i’m sure

Russell:

I understand is it the isolation with one other person that does it the sense of isolation because the cubicle door is latched

Yianis:

Yeah it’s the isolation and and the passion

Russell:

**II.i.22:30**
And that that display of sorry display isn’t probably the right word that um triggering of passion is something you won’t permit to the same degree in other areas of the sauna

Yianis:

Yeah yes

Russell:

Right

Yianis:

I wouldn’t let yeah i wouldn’t

Russell:

**II.i.23:00**
*(a silence) Um (a silence)* does the nature of the cubicle itself

**II.i.23:30**
the physical nature of the cubicle itself affect the degree to which you might see what you’re doing as a series of procedures or is it the other person and your relationship with the other person for instance if the light in the other cub in the cubicle was really bright

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

you know for instance would that

**II.i.24:00**
aff you seemed to instantly respond when i mentioned that it would that affect something

Yianis:

I like the lights to be turned up

Russell:

Right in in order to what unleash passion or to

Yianis:

To control things

Russell:

To control things all right okay

Yianis:

To control things and to kind of ah not lose sight of say cuts on my body or something

Russell:

Right okay so you your you actually like your body to be visible to yourself while you’re that’s

**II.i.24:30**
right that’s very interesting what about um then if the room has mirrors would that heighten that awareness of visibility or

Yianis:

*(laughing a little)* Yeah um
Russell:
Or not

Yianis:
Mirrors make it more kind of posey more kind of performative really

Russell:
So it's not the same thing

Yianis:
No it's different if there's mirrors all around you

Russell:
Okay

Yianis:
which yeah you just it's like it becomes like you know you are the porn star or something not that (he laughs)

Russell:
You YOU are

Yianis:
Yeah (we laugh)

Russell:
Yeah all right okay

Yianis:
Well you know yeah because you see yourself you know

Russell:
I'm

Yianis:
[unintelligible]

Russell:
I'm trying very much to find out what's happening for you in this rather than so I mean do you you are talking about yourself

Yianis:
Yeah I mean I'm not imagining I'm the porn star I'm the porn star

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
but it's like I it's like I am

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
Well you know yeah

Russell:
Yeah I do

Yianis:
I see

Russell:
But I need to hear what happens for you

Yianis:
I see I see myself having sex so

Russell:
Right okay

Yianis:
I kind of become

Russell:
But that's different from the other quality of the light being up and just being aware of of having you know the surface I'm looking at my hands as I'm talking to you about this are you right so that like I can see them we're in a really well lit room and I can see them that's a different thing from the from say if there were a mirror there and I was looking at my hands in the mirror

Yianis:
No yeah that's totally diff
Russell: Right okay

Yianis: Different like the mirrors would um create a um kind of um broader picture a a broader awareness of what’s happening you know the moves rather than the particular surfaces of your hands and

Russell: Right

Yianis: The

Russell: Can I I just need to check this before we go any further you have been in a room with mirrors at some stage

Yianis: Yes

Russell: Okay so so you’re talking from experiential knowledge yeah

Yianis: Yes

Russell: Yeah okay now my next question is then do you if it’s a room with mirrors does that then although it’s a different quality from the light being being quite bright does it is it different in the sense that it affects the degree of being in control

Yianis: Oh I

Russell: For instance

Yianis: I phased out for a sec

Russell: All right okay

Yianis: So [sorry?] (he laughs)

Russell: If it’s a room with bright lights you’ve got more control you can exercise more control

Yianis: Yeah

Russell: Sets of procedures

Yianis: Yeah

Russell: That’s what happens for you if it’s a room with mirrors does the same effect occur even though it feels different like you talked about it being more performative and posey does that lend itself towards exercising more control or it is more like that’s likely to unleash some passion that’s

Yianis: No you have more awareness then because you you’re going hey this is the move I’m going to do (he laughs a little) so you’re thinking about that move you’re not just doing the move

Russell: Right

Yianis: because you can see the move you know as your reflection doing it as well so you’ve got another reminder as well so you can still be posey but be careful at the same time

Russell: Right
Okay, all right, are there any other features of the room that are likely to be there that are likely to have some effect on the degree of control for you?

Yianis:
The single bed factor

Russell:
Sorry

Yianis:
The single bed factor

Russell:
Yeah can you tell me more

Yianis:
The beds aren’t a double bed, they’re a single bed

Russell:
Right

Yianis:
So it means that the bodies are close together

Russell:

Yianis:

Russell:

Yianis:

Russell:

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Yianis:

Russell:
you know me and that other person are on the beds together bed bed together um we’d um yeah our bodies would be pushed close I mean it’s just a sign you know our bodies would be pushed

Russell:

Sorry I understood you to say that beats were more intimate though

Yianis:

No less

Russell:

Right okay

Yianis:

Less

Russell:

Right okay

Yianis:

because you’re not on a bed together

Russell:

Sure

Yianis:

Beds just push the body together

Russell:

Okay

Yianis:

Well single beds

Russell:

All right

Yianis:

Or beds in general you don’t have as much mobility when you’re horizontal

Russell:

So when you’ve gone into a cubicle with someone and latched the door or one of you has latched the door has there been a kind of um an moment of anxiety even mild anxiety about that is that like a big

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Russell:

So when you’ve gone into a cubicle with someone and latched the door or one of you has latched the door has there been a kind of um an moment of anxiety even mild anxiety about that is that like a big
you know I’m I wouldn’t say I’m sorry but um

Russell:
Would you say I’m sorry have you said I’m sorry

Yianis:
Yeah I probably have

Russell:
Yeah okay

Yianis:
And I’d probably have said I know it’s retarded but just work with me something like that

Russell:
All right okay

Yianis:
So I kind of

Russell:
Some sort of

Yianis:
I acknowledge the absurdity

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
and then I go but you know that’s the way it is

Russell:
But once you’re inside you find it’s a bit harder to take it or leave it

Yianis:
Yeah it’s harder to kind of

Russell:
Because there’s some kind of

Yianis:
It’s a commitment (he laughs a little)

Russell:
Right okay

Yianis:
It’s like you’ve made a commitment

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
to the room (he laughs a little)

Russell:
Yeah now when when you talk about going to it do you say do you say things like oh do you want to go to a room or do you say do you want to go to a cubicle

Russell:
Yeah when you talk about going to it do you say do you say things like oh do you want to go to a room or do you say do you want to go to a cubicle

Russell:
or or do other people always make say that to you and you’ve never said it or what actually

Yianis:
Well to tell you the truth I mean I haven’t been in cubicles that often

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
(he begins a list) A because the people that I want don’t want me so it never really happens never really goes that gets that far or I just haven’t wanted to and have just been

Russell:
Right

Yianis:
(he begins a list) A because the people that I want don’t want me so it never really happens never really goes that gets that far or I just haven’t wanted to and have just been

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
You know what I mean I’m more likely to go in the cubicle myself (he laughs a little) to be able to see what’s happening next door really
Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
which I've done

Russell:
You mentioned something along those lines last time (Yianis laughs) yeah yeah um when you go in to see what's happening in the next cubicle

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
do you lock the door behind you

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
Right (laughing a little) okay why why is that

Yianis:
(laughing a little) Because it's a bit desperate well you could interpret it as desperate but you know

Russell:
And that's a concern for you

Yianis:
Yes weirdly I mean I don't care about I mean yeah I guess it is yeah

Russell:
Okay

Yianis:
Even though I don't care necessarily about anyone in that space

Russell:
Um

Yianis:
It's all about you know I mean these places are so superficial in not like in they're oh they're superficial they're crap I'm saying they're superficial in the sense of it's impressions are the thing that count (he laughs a little) or something in those spaces

Russell:
For you

Yianis:
Yeah that's I mean yeah I guess and that's what I I'm I'm I mean I guess I'm placing that I mean that's what I think other people are feeling you know like it's what they think about you in a split moment

Russell:
Right

Yianis:
because you know they're showing me their good sides during that three period and at the end I go oh wow they're great (he laughs)

Russell:
And and do you think that because if you saw someone doing that (Yianis laughs) you'd think that

Yianis:
I'd think it's (he laughs) it's very immature like I'd probably think the person is

Russell:
No you don't have to look you don't have to apologise or justify
Yianis:  
No no I'm not apologising I'm just saying that I'd probably think they were young

Russell:  
**II.i.36:00**  
If they were looking

Yianis:  
Because I'm I think I can spot some times in my life where I've seen people do it in other like in toilets or something and they've always been young *(he laughs a little)*

Russell:
Yeah okay so it reminds you of the scene in a toilet

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
where someone will look over the top of another cubicle

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
Okay all right um when you you talked a bit about um  
**II.i.36:30**  
the it's often been the case that the people you want don't want you

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
how do you know that they don't want you and it I'd like you in answering to just think of maybe a specific example you don't have to go into the example but can you give me your answer as much as possible from an example without you don't you don't have to describe it but someone where you felt  
**II.i.37:00**  
very confident no that person doesn't want me I want him but he doesn't want me how did I know that

Yianis:

They explicitly when you're following them try to dodge you and um when they're standing still and you're standing still near them they walk away um what else

Russell:
Well can I take those first  
**II.i.37:30**  
two instances you say when you're following them that they dodge you okay so you've got a recollection of that happening

Yianis:
Yeah lots of times

Russell:
Okay right okay now when you say you're following them that is you're walking behind them on the same pathway they're walking on in the same direction

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
About you know five metres behind

Yianis:
Okay

Yianis:
About ten I don't know  
**II.i.38:00**  
ten

Russell:
Okay all right now what kind of over what kind of time period are we talking like a couple of minutes of following them

Yianis:
Five minutes

Russell:
Okay all right now how do they know that you're there if you're behind them
Yianis:
You know who’s following you I mean
people always look back you always you
know got peripheral vision

Russell:
Behind

Yianis:
Yeah *(he laughs)* no

Russell:
No no I I I please this is a spatial question
and it it’s and this isn’t the first time I’ve
asked about the following thing so

Yianis:
No it’s because people look behind them
and stuff you sense who is following you

Russell:
Right

Yianis:
Actually it’s probably less is this five metres
this room yeah it’s probably five metres

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
Yeah it’s probably five metres

Russell:
Yeah the length of this room

Yianis:
Yeah and when you’re turning corners you
kind of see [unintelligible]

Russell:
Okay all right now if you’re following them
are you gazing at the person you’ve been
following

Yianis:
Mm

Russell:
Right

Yianis:
And trying to do a good walk *(he laughs a little)*

Russell:
and so what they see pardon

Yianis:
And trying to do a good walk or something
or *(he laughs)*

Russell:
I think I know what that means do you mean
like you’re you’re acting as if you’re walking

Yianis:
Yeah no I don’t know

Russell:
What’s a good walk

Yianis:
Oh well a good walk’s different for each
person obviously

Russell:
but um

Yianis:
You introduced the term

Russell:
*(laughing)* A good walk like I’d probably put
my shoulders back

Yianis:
Yes

Russell:
because I slouch probably and um

Yianis:
And you think slouching might not be
particularly attractive
Russell: Okay (I laugh a little)

Yianis: (he laughs, then) No not a and um not for myself [unintelligible] um and I probably oh no it's got nothing to do with a good walk but you know I'm concerned that my hair is big so (he laughs)

Russell: Your hair is big

Yianis: (laughing) Yeah

Russell: (I laugh a little) Okay all right

Yianis: [unintelligible] cos it's big hair and um and where I place my towel [unintelligible] you know and I'm I'm walking you know pretty straight (he laughs a little)

Russell: So did you say where you place your towel is important

Yianis: Yeah

Russell: Yeah okay

Yianis: In proportion to my stomach

Russell: Right okay what how high or low

Yianis: How high or low yeah how short

Russell: Sure okay right all right now so there's this constructed performance of walking and you're looking

Yianis: I'm looking

Russell: directly at the person

Yianis: I don't yeah don't not look at them ever you know during this period I'll probably you know just look at them

Russell: So you won't just

Yianis: (laughing a little) idly

Russell: as though survi yeah idly

Yianis: No I'm not

Russell: Right okay no it's intent and you'll do that for about five minutes if the person slows down what do you do

Yianis: I slow down

Russell: You don't approach them

Yianis: Oh no I will approach them it depends how cool they look how detached they look usually I I might just stand next to them to see if they stop

Russell:
Right

Yianis:
I’ll stop and I’ll stand next to them and then you know whether they want you or not

Russell:
Because they might just walk off again

Yianis:
You might yeah and if they walk off again then that means or you might brush your hand against them and you feel a flinch it might not be a very big flinch but it’s a

Russell:
So you’ll stand close enough to be able to brush your hand

Yianis:
Yeah or something yeah or kind of feel them

Russell:
You’ve done that

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
Okay I guess that’s the important thing for me at the moment I’m interested in what you’ve done that you can kind of if you like

Yianis:
Yeah like I feel for their crotch or something

Russell:
Right okay

Yianis:
And you know then if they (laughing a little) want you or not

Russell:
YOU know then

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah okay the

Yianis:
And I’m not interested in I mean I have in the past and you know kind of work with someone until they want you or something but I’m not into that I see that as bullshit and I don’t like I think it’s a waste of time now I don’t have the patience for it

Russell:
Mm mm the have you have you taken on the role of the person who’s been pursued and has not wanted the attention

Yianis:
Yeah yes yes

Russell:
And have you what you’ve been describing the other person as doing are they things that you’ve done in this other role now of the pursued (I laugh a little)

Yianis:
Yeah I just don’t make eye contact

Russell:
It doesn’t seem to happen that often really where I’m pursued

Yianis:
That you’re aware of

Russell:
Yeah really at a sauna it always feels like I’m pursuing people (he laughs a little) which could be a problem um just um no it doesn’t feel like yeah I mean I am I oh um
I just avide [sic] avoid eye contact and usually when people are pursuing me I might be near the um the videos or just ha quite happy to masturbate or something so it doesn’t feel like I’m just going oh hey I’m here for the porn not anyway but obviously I’m lying really but I’m not I just feel like I’m lying because at that stage that’s all I want to do (he laughs a little) but um but I’m sure if someone I liked (laughing a little) approached me during my sol periods of solitude then I’d I’d probably you know reconsider

Russell:

The thing about finding out whether another person wants you the terms in which you’ve described are you’ve described it in terms of you initiating something and then reading their response so you have to wait to find out

Yianis:

Mm you almost you come uninvited and then you wait for their response and that’s a lot of the time when I’m want wanting to join in with couples where you intrude somehow and you wait for their response to see if you can join in or you can watch

Russell:

Right

Yianis:

And in those circumstances I’d probably ask them you know I’m

Russell:

You’ll actually speak

Yianis:

I’d say yeah I just want to watch is that okay knowing on the odd occasion they don’t mind

Russell:

Would you say it or would you whisper it

Yianis:

No I’d say it as much volume as I’m using right now

Russell:

Right okay so you have a distinct again you know from experience you’ve done that

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

And would that be say on the threshold of um um an open cubicle or would it be in the

Yianis:

If it’s a cubicle I’d ask if it’s an open space I wouldn’t ask

Russell:

Right

Yianis:

And if they were tell if they told me to go away if it’s in a quite open space I probably I’d be reluctant to move

Russell:

Yeah I understand that but can you tell me how that’s the case for you

Yianis:

Well I I don’t see the the point of having these public spaces where they can have sex and th and then pri you know more private spaces where they can have sex and they choose to have it sex in a um in a pub a more public s place where you come [can’t?] you know but I but I want to you know the whole

Russell:

Yeah where is there to go away to

Yianis:

Yeah they w

Russell:

Lock yourself in a cubicle (I laugh)
Yianis:
Yeah you know they want the whole shower to themselves

Russell:
Oh really

Yianis:
or something or the whole sauna

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
area and stuff and it’s just like well no

Russell:
But you wouldn’t ask in you haven’t asked in those more public areas

Yianis:
No no I wouldn’t ask in those areas

Russell:
And do you have any recollection of ever asking in one of those more public arenas

Yianis:
Not that public but if they were in kind of a dead

II.i.48:00
end zone um and they’d ask me you know no I um no I don’t think I have asked in that

Russell:
All right but you would a you have asked

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
on the threshold of a of a cubicle

Yianis:
I have yeah

Russell:
Now can you tell me just a little bit I mean you don’t have to kind of be on top of this you can just explore it if you like what’s the difference between a cubicle with the door wide open and some people in it doing something

II.i.48:30
and an open space how is a cubicle with the door open not an open space

Yianis:
Well it gets closed

Russell:
How do you experience it though

Yianis:
It is an invitation yeah people are dumb really um (he laughs) no just in terms of

Russell:
I’m not I’m not asking for the reasoning behind it I’m just wanting to know a bit more about the experience of it whether that’s

II.i.49:00
reasonable or not it’s more you seem to be in tune with the idea regardless of what their intentions are you seem in tune with the idea and you know I’m quite happy to say I recognise this immediately but a cubicle door open with two people in it doing whatever is it a different thing from the same two people doing whatever in a corridor

II.i.49:30
or in the middle of the steam room or

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
Or something now what is that difference

Yianis:
It’s usually [unintelligible]

Russell:
How do how do you know that difference

Yianis:
Because I always feel that with a room they’re waiting for something else or something or they’re open to things but
when they're having sex in say a sauna and they don't want anyone around them and then

**II.i.50:00**

and they feel annoyed I just feel like well have you ever thought about where you're having sex really

**Russell:**

But you feel the need to approach them though when they're in the room

**Yianis:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

and speak even though the door's open

**Yianis:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

or it could be ajar or I could open it myself

**Yianis:**

No no the the scenario I'm thinking about is I think I there was one of the doors at **Volcano** and they it wasn't closing properly

**Russell:**

Ah all right so has there been a specific instance where the door was just open it hadn't been closed over

**Yianis:**

No no the the scenario I'm thinking about is I think I there was one of the doors at **Volcano** and they it wasn't closing properly

**Russell:**

**II.i.50:30**

Right okay

**Yianis:**

And I heard that maybe something interesting was happening

**Russell:**

Right

**Yianis:**

there well I didn't hear well I probably heard yeah I heard and just wanted to join in so I opened the door (he laughs a little) and asked they said okay

**Russell:**

Fine no that's good

**II.i.51:00**

gee we've covered a lot (a silence) um you talked a bit earlier about the towel um

**II.i.51:30**

does that become a preoccupation for you

**Yianis:**

Not a very big one but it's something I think about

**Russell:**

All right when do you think about it

**Yianis:**

When I'm getting changed or when I'm putting it on if I've been naked

**Russell:**

Okay and once you've made those decisions do you then forget about it

**Yianis:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

Okay what about your key

**Yianis:**

Yeah well key kind of it's more kind of it changes really

**Russell:**

Go on

**Yianis:**

Sometimes it's been on my foot

**Russell:**

Yes

**Yianis:**

Sometimes on my hand
Russell:

II.i.52:00

Yes

Yianis:

Sometimes on my top arm

Russell:

Yes

Yianis:

Depends how good I feel about myself if it's on my arm I'm probably feeling a good about myself (he laughs) um and if it's on my arm I just feel normal and on my leg it's probably I'm trying to don't know what the leg means so much

Russell:

And you're very conscious of this though

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

That if it's on your upper II.i.52:30
arm you feel good about yourself

Yianis:

Yeah I'm feeling good about my body because a tight band around your arm is kind of doing something to your arm and making you know kind of

Russell:

What does it do to your arm

Yianis:

Um peo it's an attention grabber there's a line that's coming acr straight across your arm

Russell:

When you see other people with those things on their upper arm that grabs your attention

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

Okay and when you see it on their wrists what does it do

Yianis:

Nothing

Russell:

And when you see it on II.i.53:00
their ankles

Yianis:

I kind of (he laughs a little)

Russell:

what does it

Yianis:

I kind of think they're kind of um just more laid back really there's something about the ankle ring just in general that's kind of not hippyish I mean I guess hippyish kind of (I laugh) that's you know studenty it's (he laughs) it's I don't know

Russell:

II.i.53:30

Do you have any sense of how this evolved for you this awareness

Yianis:

No I mean I just know that on the arm that if you put a stripe on an arm or a bracelet on bracelet or something moving or

Russell:

Yeah

Yianis:

a body adornment pay you know draws attention to that area of the body

Russell:

But I'm more interested in is if it's on an ankle

Yianis:

Yeah
Russell:

that it's they're

laid back (Yianis laughs) or something

Yianis:

I know know that sounds absurd but like it's kind of it's almost it's it's

Russell:

I have an investment in this question (I laugh a little)

Yianis:

No it's it's it's different people I mean it would look different on different people

Russell:

Right

Yianis:

But on you know it's studenty it's surferish it's

Russell:

So when you make

Yianis:

It's got a lot of connotations depending [sic] on depending on what kind of body it's on

Russell:

When you make a

Yianis:

It's not a bad thing

Russell:

Sure when you make a decision about where

to put it is it about how it looks then or about how it feels

Yianis:

Yeah looks and feels although all those areas

Russell:

Which predominates for you if it looks good but doesn't feel good are you more likely to shift it or keep it where it is

Yianis:

No I'd keep it

Russell:

You'd rather it didn't feel good but looked good

Yianis:

Yeah it won't feel that bad those three options aren't

none of them are

Russell:

Right

Yianis:

You know

Russell:

Well there are some places have tighter little key rings ah the elastic

Yianis:

Right

Russell:

than others

Yianis:

Yeah um no I mean if it irritated me that much I'd probably I'd probably like an hour later play with it take it off and yeah

Russell:

Now you you were indicating your right arm is it always your right arm

Yianis:

Mm

Russell:

II.i.55:30
So it would be the right upper arm or the right wrist

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
Are you left handed

Yianis:
No

Russell:
But you indicated your left ankle *(I laugh a little)*

Yianis:
Yeah it would be my left ankle

Russell:
But your right upper arm

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
Now that I’ve drawn your attention to that were you aware of that beforehand

Yianis:
No

Russell:
So that just happens somehow

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
It wouldn’t be your right ankle

Yianis:
Um no it could be my right ankle but I’d I’d say it’d be my left

Russell:

Have have there been you’ve you’ve worn the key on all three of the places you’ve identified

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
Okay all right could it be your left arm that you’d put the key on then

Yianis:
No

Russell:

II.i.56:30
No it would be your right arm and you’re right handed

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
Now if you’ve got your key on your right wrist does it matter to you if it kind of is slightly loose or does it need to be tight on your wrist

Yianis:
I can’t remember that

Russell:
What I’m thinking of is for instance does it *(laughing a little)* interfere in procedures at different times if it’s a bit loose

Yianis:
I would just pull it up

Russell:

II.i.56:00
You’d pull it up

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:

II.i.57:00
Okay so you’ve no compunction at those moments of making necessary adjustments
Yianis:
Yeah
Russell:
Do you ever take your key off
Yianis:
In rooms
Russell:
Yeah you do
Yianis:
Always
Russell:
Yes
Yianis:
Getting comfortable I suppose (he laughs a little) no no um you take your towel off and you take your thing off
Russell:
What's that about
Yianis:
Getting comfortable I suppose (he laughs a little) no no um you take your towel off and you take your thing off
Russell:
Does the other person has the other person always taken their key off
Yianis:
I think so yeah because I always I always remember looking for our towels but I can't remember both of us looking for our keys I can't remember that moment but I remember we always get our towels mixed up and kind of I remember times where not knowing where your keys are which one's your key
Russell:
You don't keep track of your towel when you take it off
Yianis:
I try to I try to but the person it'd be a bit pedantic to kind of go to control where the other person throws their towel as well
Russell:
You could always wait until they've put theirs down (Yianis laughs) and then throw yours somewhere else
Yianis:
[unintelligible]
Russell:
Sorry
Yianis:
I don't know
Russell:
Or you could control where their towel is by taking their towel off for them (Yianis laughs) and putting it somewhere
Yianis:
No I wouldn't do that
Russell:
You wouldn't do that
Yianis:
No
Russell:
You haven't done that
Yianis:
No
Russell:
Right is that because that hasn't ever occurred to you to do that or
Yianis:
No it hasn't it probably hasn't occurred to me but no it always comes to me at the end
rather where I’m going oh god I should have done that at the end

Russell:

II.i.59:00
When you went to the sauna the first time you basically went by yourself and all you had to go on was the kind of listings you’d read in Outrage as I recall

Yianis:

Yeah

Russell:

and you never had anyone to show you did you

Yianis:

No

Russell:

Has anyone ever since that first occasion taken some teaching role with you in regard to saunas

Yianis:

No

Russell:

Have you with other people

Yianis:

No I guess I’m about to

Russell:

Yeah

Yianis:

Not teaching but some kind of introductory exercise (he laughs a little)

Russell:

Yeah yeah a pedagogue (we laugh a little)

II.i.60:00
um (a silence) have you decided if you still go ahead sorry have you discussed which sauna it will be if you go to one

Yianis:

Um probably wouldn’t be discussing it with Salvatore because he wouldn’t be able to and he would give me that choice if um we went so I would choose because I know that he would give me that choice definitely and I would probably either Volcano or Rear Entry [unintelligible] you know it’s not many but I mean but um

Russell:

Not Squirt

Yianis:

No definitely not

II.i.61:00
I just don’t enjoy it (he laughs a little) well maybe Squirt I do want to revisit it

Russell:

I’m curious when you s so you don’t enjoy it so therefore you’d decide that if the two of you were going to go you wouldn’t go there I mean I’m just wondering you that was a very strong choice I was half expecting to hear that Squirt would be the one you’d go to in some ways

Yianis:

Why I mean I’m I’m out of touch with what’s you know in and what’s out and what’s busier and what’s you know what days and

Russell:

Well well to begin with to begin with I would have thought the fact that it doesn’t matter when you go because it’s always open so there’s one thing um and then finances were

II.i.62:00
a concern for you and it’s cheaper so there’s a second thing and then the third thing I thought that

Yianis:

How much cheaper

Russell:

Um

Yianis:

It’s probably student rates really
Russell:
Well it's two dollars cheaper than um I'm speaking about student rates

Yianis:
Ah huh

Russell:
I am a student *we laugh a little* um yeah it's

Yianis:
And it's are there student nights

Russell:
two dollars and twenty cents um they I don't know if they have

Yianis:
They used to

Russell:
student nights but um *II.i.62:30*
they do have um a buddies night a two for one you know two not two for one

Yianis:
For one and a half or something

Russell:
Well no two two for um less than two students

Yianis:
Right I think we'd go on one of those nights *he laughs*

Russell:
So finances is an issue

Yianis:
Not that much of an issue but we don't want to be you know

Russell:
Yeah but the other thing I would have thought about it is that there's something that's um

---

II.i.63:00
maybe this is the reason to not go I would have thought there's something very um ah user friendly about it in the sense that it's compact and doesn't have so many dark in fact I can tell you now it has no dark areas um anymore

II.i.63:30
and so that there's something about a kind of um clarity

Yianis:
Well what I want if I go with Salvatore is to find I mean to walk around for a bit *(he laughs a little)*

Russell:
Yeah no go on

Yianis:
Talking about things you know because you know just going out together

Russell:
Yeah

Yianis:
Um *II.i.64:00*
ah I actually haven't thought about it after that no and just finding the person quickly *(he laughs a little)* don't know I'll have to work with how Salvatore behaves in that in those circumstances and I don't know

Russell:
No you don't know

Yianis:
And also the whole idea of um you know them wanting Salvatore and not me you know *(he laughs)*

II.i.64:30
and and the discussions and we've already started discussions of what type of person we'd want and that's just becomes it becomes silly and that's why we might not do it because it just becomes silly like someone I might think is really hot Salvatore doesn't like at all and like you know say *(he laughs a little)* vice versa um so it

II.i.65:00
probably would be easier not to do it but I kind of want to but not I mean I don't want to make it a habit I just want to do it once
and see what it’s like and I want to give Salvatore some experience outside of sex within a relationship well even though that’s strict (he laughs) the kind of relationships he’s had and the kind of sex he’s had within it

II.i.65:30
and it’s not about sowing oats or anything like that it’s just got to do with you know experiences and stuff and doing interesting things together and you know just as we would you know (he laughs a little) I don’t know go camping we’d go to the sauna (he laughs a little)

II.i.66:00
or something

Russell:
But you won’t mind if it doesn’t happen

Yianis:
Ah mm I don’t know I’m in the middle of the thinking

Russell:

II.i.66:30
Right that’s all right

Yianis:
at the moment so I don’t know

Russell:

Fine the other thing that occurred to me was at a place like Squirt it’s easy not to lose each other it’s easy to keep track of where the other person is

Yianis:
Yeah

Russell:
Easier

Yianis:
Yeah

II.i.67:00
yeah I don’t know it won’t be for a couple of months though anyway

Russell:
Whatever

Yianis:
So yeah

Russell:
I’d be really happy to stop there but is there anything you want to say or ask

Yianis:

II.i.67:30
No oh just a sec (a silence) oh that the me and Salvatore thing isn’t my instigation it’s what I want it to be is both of our (he laughs a little) instigation and probably the reason why it hasn’t

II.i.68:00
happened so far is that I’ve sensed some kind of reluctance and although I probably have some probably influence it to happen you know maybe tomorrow I don’t want it to happen unless he wants it for his own reasons that’s it

Russell:
Okay

Yianis:

II.i.68:30
Yes

Russell:

We’ll stop it there then thanks

II.i.68.36
(I switch off the minidisc recorder)

END OF CONVERSATION
The transcript documents a second conversation with Edward recorded on a Sunday morning at my bedsit in inner Melbourne. When he arrived, I offered Edward some tea. He declined and asked for water instead. We then began recording.

Russell:

II.i.00:00
(we laugh a little) All right so
Edward:
Mm
Russell:
When we talked last time I asked you to describe something that happened in a cubicle on a recent visit and you did and you told me about um what I think was for you as well as for me ah this um kind of unusual and strange encounter with this young man who asked you to hit him
Edward:
Mm hmm
Russell:
Do you remember that
Edward:
Yep
Russell:
Then you said you should ask me about the other one
Edward:
Oh
Russell:
And I said I would so now I’m going to (we laugh a little)
Edward:
Well this
Russell:
Well first of all do you want to tell me about it
Edward:
Yeah
Russell:
Yeah okay
Edward:
Yeah I’ll tell you he was just um he was just incredibly weird more than than anything else he was just really weird he was a a a big Samoan man
Russell:
(laughing a little) Right
Edward:
and like he was big not fat but just a really big man
Russell:
Yeah
Edward:
He was huge and it was probably more out of oh I don’t know a combination of desperation and interest really because there was only I think it was at um Volcano
Edward:
and it was the it was late at night again I think I’d finished work not far away and gone down and there were not many people there and we kind of met in the spa there that they now have on a temperature that could cook you
Russell:
It is very hot isn’t it
Edward:
It you cannot sit in it I don’t know I mean it certainly would kill
Russell:
I can
Edward: any bacterias it nearly killed me I thought about taking some eggs you could cook (we laugh) you could cook them when you were there 

Russell: How big was he because the spa’s quite small isn’t it
Edward: Yeah
Russell: So
Edward: Like he would have been well over six foot and if you can imagine a Samoan filling out that height he was big
Russell: Can you um what’s your sense of how big that spa is cos it’s
Edward: I don’t think it’s a big spa what you can probably fit six uncomfortably in there with roving hands and and pressing feet I think
Russell: How many people could you fit in there without any of them touching one another at any point
Edward: Four
Russell: Four okay right yeah and how far across from one in diameter because it’s circular isn’t it
Edward: Yeah I can’t I
Russell: Yeah this enormous man who um invited me out um
Edward: Out of the spa (I laugh)
Out of the spa so as he was getting out I went (instead of speaking he demonstrates reaching out) as I was getting out after him and he just like kind of grabbed my arm and my shoulder and just hoicked me out of the spa it was like it was seriously like my dad getting me out of the bath when I was really little

Russell:
Again he did that from where
Edward:
[unintelligible] he got out of the spa first
Russell:
Yeah
Edward:
and then I was um it was when the old rail when the rail was still there
Russell:
Yeah
Edward:
and I was climbing up the rail and he was standing at the top and he leant down and just put his arm around under my arm and pulled me out
Russell:
For the benefit of someone who doesn’t know the spa at Volcano it’s it’s different from its relationship with the rest of the room it’s in
Edward:
Okay [?]
Russell:
is different from the way other spas are set up at other
Edward:
Yeah I only know one other sauna which is um pardon me Squirt
Russell:
Yeah
Edward:
Yeah that one
Russell:
Yeah
Edward:
So
Russell:
And that’s a very different kind of spa and a very different arrangement
Edward:
Yeah it’s more like an Olympic swimming pool yeah
Russell:
Yeah well (I laugh a little, then) by comparison
Edward:
Sporting activities yeah um yeah but the one the one at
Russell:
Volcano
Edward:
At Volcano
Russell:
Well for instance when he’s out his feet are actually not on an elevated place they’re actually at floor level aren’t they
Edward:
Yeah they’re at
Russell:
they’re at floor level
Edward:
So the spa is sunken
It’s sunken down

**Russell:** whereas the one at um Squirt

**Edward:** is actually risen

**Russell:** you have to step up

**Edward:** Yes

**Russell:** and then go down

**Edward:** But it’s yeah it’s still down but it’s not it’s not on floor level

**Russell:** Yeah yeah it’s above floor level

**Edward:** Yeah

**Russell:** Right so he’s at floor level but a way above you

**Edward:** Yes

**Russell:** Yes and he hoists you up to floor level

**Edward:** Yes which seemed to have been great ease for him obviously I was

**II.i.05:30** lighter or whatever just being lifted up so I’m I suppose at that point I grabbed my towel he was standing at that point too close to me for my comfort it was just too close and I grabbed my towel I think he grabbed his towel and then

**Russell:**

**Edward:** From there those there’s a rack on the side on the wall inside the spa where they hang their towels

**II.i.06:00** and um

**Russell:** And you knew whose towel was whose

**Edward:** Yes I always make an absolute effort of knowing exactly where I put my towel

**Russell:** Right

**Edward:** because I can’t stand the thought of grabbing someone else’s and I also make sure it’s in total um view of me at all times because people just nick other people’s towels when they’re drier

**Russell:** Right I’ve had that happen

**Edward:** [unintelligible] stench [unintelligible] I don’t know

**II.i.06:30** um so yeah we actually went upstairs

**Russell:**

**Edward:** Oh yeah

**Russell:**

**Edward:** So we walked past the sunken pool past up the stairs to the top um around the corner in the change rooms up another three or two steps in the same area that the the videos are being shown

**Russell:**

**Edward:** The porn videos
Yeah the porn videos so down past there into one of the little cubicles

**II.i.07:00**

there which at that point I'd never been in one of those cubicles before

**Russell:**

Is it the sit

**Edward:**

They seemed to be quite luxurious compared to downstairs

**Russell:**

In what respect

**Edward:**

It wasn't total black there was um light and I know the other ones do have some light as well but they're just the um the mat or beds or whatever they are seem to be larger the rooms seem to be somewhat larger as well

**Russell:**

Is this one of the ones if I'm facing those cubicles

**II.i.07:30**

**Edward:**

Yeah it's one of you walk

**Russell:**

to the left there's a set of cubicles which are if you like

**Edward:**

So you go

**Russell:**

more in line with the video room or to the right there's a set which are opposite the stairs that go up to the heavy duty area

**Edward:**

Yeah there's those ones there

**Russell:**

Right okay

**Edward:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

and they're the ones at the which are quite light

**Edward:**

Yes

**Russell:**

Yes

**Edward:**

Yeah and those and yeah a lightly light grey painted light grey

**Russell:**

Okay

**Edward:**

as opposed to I think black downstairs

**Russell:**

And how many cubicles are there

**Edward:**

**II.i.08:00**

I th I don't know I only I know there's well where I was at one which is the second from the end and then there's some more up a little further but it's a little bit too dark for my liking to venture up there as in for what is ever there I don't know

**Russell:**

Yeah okay so you went into one of those

**Edward:**

Yep and um he was fascinated by my tatt my

**II.i.08:30**

and

**Russell:**

Where's that on you

**Edward:**

It's on um ah ah left hand ah groi um groin like this bit *(indicating)* where's that top of my leg
Edward:

so you could see quite clear and um yeah he was very interested in in staring at my tattoo

II.i.09:30
for some reason it obviously got his rocks off whatever it was but then he he had um he had me virtually hanging from the weird thing the really weird thing about him was I had to almost mount him from the front and like wrap my legs around his waist hang on to both his nipples with my hands (*I laugh a little*) and lean back with all

II.i.10:00
my weight while he was holding me up pulling on his nipples that I’m sorry is weird (*I laugh a little*) that is really weird

Russell:

And did he how did you know that that was what

Edward:

He told me

Russell:

He he

Edward:

He said I want you to do this and it was like he held like you know con climbing onto like playing a horse games or whatever I don’t know

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

Climbing onto his front and and and ah keeping my balance

II.i.10:30
by wrapping my legs around him and and pulling on his nipples while he wanked himself

Russell:

So he would need to wank himself as it were underneath you

Edward:

Yes

Russell:

Edward:

There’s I think

II.i.09:00
it spills in from outside but I think there’s a s I think there are small um those little illuminous [sic] inset lights little round ones I think and what thi I think this particular cubicle is actually positioned where one of the lights is not directly but just about directly over it

Russell:

Yeah
Yeah okay

Edward:
I was high enough on his his dick was so small it wouldn’t have taken much I’m sure

Russell:
I’m just thinking about the um he told you now like at what point

Edward:
It was like he

Russell:
Like he looked at your tatt

Edward:
Yeah he said like I was standing with the tatt and he said to me I want you something like I want you to pull on my nipple. I mean this is a long time ago he said I want you to

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
pull on my nipples or so I started doing that and he he in amongst his oohs and ahhhs it was like oh harder can you you know pull pull them harder or something like that

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:

I was doing that and I have to say I was just thinking what the fuck (we laugh a little) are you on anyway

Russell:
About him

Edward:
Yeah

Russell:

(laughing a little) Yeah

Edward:
It was like this is really weird this is just too and he had I mean maybe it’s my

Russell:
Did it occur to

Edward:
country upbringing but he had nipples like cow udders they were huge

Russell:
Right

Edward:
They were disgusting they were just like protruding from his body and I was thinking I’m not the first one to have done this

Russell:
(we laugh a little) Right

Edward:

II.i.12:00

they weren’t pierced or anything

Edward:
No not pierced just huge

Russell:
Did um was there any sense of mutual negotiation what I’m kind of interested in

Edward:
No that

Russell:

II.i.11:30

Thing about this

Edward:
It was not

Russell:
So you it was clear that you needed to follow his directions

Edward:
Yeah it was like I didn’t make any demands either it was like for me
II.i.12:30
I was just interested to see virtually what this big guy wanted

Russell:
And he seemed to be uncurious about any interests you might have

Edward:
Yeah no totally self satisfying which is what most men are interested in in their own needs more so than anyone else’s

Russell:
That’s been your experience (we laugh) has it

Edward:
II.i.13:00
Well yeah I mean I suppose it’s not everyone but definitely the majority have um that I have found men that I have met at a sauna

Russell:
Yes

Edward:
II.i.13:30
latish at night is definitely about getting your own rocks off and then going to do I think I know that it’s determined by time but I think if you pick up earlier in the night in a sauna then you are more out to meet someone

Russell:
Logistically yeah okay um I’m just wondering about this cos you know you’re saying this and I’m kind of thinking oh yeah what happens for me but um to what extent does that

Edward:
II.i.14:00
become like a governing expectation for you that if you arrive late at a sauna that you’re expecting are [sic] people are guilty until proven innocent about whether you know to use just to coin a phrase because it’s I don’t think there’s anything in [unintelligible]

Russell:
Like are they are they

Edward:
that with him halfway up the stairs I was thinking get out of this don’t you don’t want to do this why are you doing it then it was like the more interest

II.i.14:30
I was then kind of taken on by an interest of knowing of wanting to know either what he was like or what he wanted or so I mean obviously it’s going to be a portrayal of myself as well you know you place yourself in these situations that and I mean if I’d um supposedly said oh no let’s do this or I want to do that or whatever I don’t know but I didn’t go I didn’t head in that direction I just followed like a lamb so you know there’s

II.i.15:00
people pick up on that and realise you’re not going to be forceful and not going to be ah you’re not wanting to negotiate anything so

Russell:
No I know the situation you’re describing I think from own experience did I’m curious about um your sense of safety

II.i.15:30
um ah I once I had to ah about a year ago less than a year give a talk about my research at uni and it ended up being very much an information session

Edward:
(laughing a little) Yeah I can well imagine

Russell:
rather than really about my research just there was just a lot of um people um mainly women mainly young

Edward:
Yeah

Russell:
But you know ah oh

II.i.16:00
very large number of the undergraduates turned up and it was a great experience for me

Edward:
Yeah

Russell:

because they had such fantastic questions and um I think everybody got a lot out of the session but one young woman asked me a question that completely floored me and she asked me the about the issue of safety and um you know are people kind of at risk or safe in these places

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

and she was and she also made it clear I don’t remember the exact way she did it I think she more or less made it clear are they at first I said well the places have been raided she wasn’t talking about um disease or epidemic epidemiology um and ah it was like physical safety of a different kind

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

from assault or something so I talked about the places having security doors and whatever but then she said

No INSIDE the building like do people get raped do people get attacked like if people are in there and I was completely stumped because the concept had never occurred to me and one of the things that’s interesting is that one of the um people I’ve interviewed has since told me a story about um an incident at a at a sauna

where he was present where everyone around believed that there was a man being violently assaulted inside a cubicle and people um didn’t know what to do or how to do there was just no agreed sense of what to do about this

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

because no one could ultimately tell whether they were supposed to

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

the concept had never occurred to me and one of the things that’s interesting is that one of the um people I’ve interviewed has since told me a story about um an incident at a at a sauna

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

scenario so you’re in a room with a man who’s twice your size who’s capable of hoisting you up by one shoulder (I laugh a little)

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

and you have no idea who this is and it seems that your concerns and interests aren’t his concern or interest at all how safe do you feel

Edward:

Um

Russell:

How safe did you feel

Edward:

Fine I felt fine I didn’t feel

threatened at all I have done I have um felt threatened in one you know in situation in in saunas but that particular time no there was no I didn’t feel threatened at all by him

Russell:

Was there something about the location of the cubicle within the building that contributed to that

Edward:

Um yeah I think because there was a lot of light in there

Russell:

That was more reassuring

Edward:
Yeah ah I think it as um I don’t know I mean you know

Russell:

I’m wondering for instance if it had been a cubicle not there but um in one of the remote areas of the ground floor

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

Especially on a night when it’s not very busy and there’s not many people around

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

II.i.19:30
I had an experience of being in Volcano once when it was alarmingly near empty and the entire ground floor was empty and I walked around it and I felt terrified it was like childhood fears crept over me again like

Edward:

Seeking yeah

Russell:

a haunted house

Edward:

Looking [walking?] through those rooms

Russell:

or something and it was actually more brightly lit than normal

Edward:

Mm okay

Russell:

and I had to get out of there I just felt suddenly scared

Edward:

Okay I mean I I have walked down there when it’s been quiet and thought

II.i.20:00

it’d be a great place for a gruesome murder (I laugh a little) because it’s just you know you wouldn’t know the someone could easily do something to someone lock a door and then climb over the top that’s so I mean there are a couple of places well er um the end of that little corridor upstairs where the um cubicle was where it’s a little bit too dark

Russell:

Yes

Edward:

for my liking

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

II.i.20:30
There’s um in the steam room there’s I know there’s another room that I have not been and will not go into I don’t know what it is but there’s something in me that just says don’t go there do not go in there

Russell:

When you say that you mean if you move to the right rather than to the left

Edward:

Yeah where the door opens up

Russell:

Yes

Edward:

I have not ever

Russell:

So there’s the door into the steam room

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

from the corridor
Yeah

Russell:

and

Edward:

You can either go ahead

walk I think walk straight ahead or you can

II.i.21:00
go into what I call what is the steam room

which is

Russell:

Lit (I laugh a little)

Edward:

Yeah lit as opposed to

Russell:

As opposed to the unlit

Edward:

Yeah well I wouldn’t know if it’s a dark

entrance and it’s lit inside or what I don’t

know

Russell:

Right

Edward:

And there’s the other area of um

Russell:

I have been in

Edward:

Have you

Russell:

to the right

Edward:

Oh good you can tell me what’s in there um

when you go around if you walk the

corridors of

II.i.21:30

ah the cubicles downstairs

Russell:

Yes

Edward:

you can actually cut through them

Russell:

Yes

Edward:

as well there’s I’ve not been in there

Russell:

The kind of short cut

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

Where you vanish into a small what

aperture doorway

Edward:

I don’t know it looks dark I don’t I’ve not

been in there [un intelligible]

Russell:

Yeah I’ve been through there

Edward:

So

Russell:

It took a while (I laugh)

Edward:

Yeah there’s they’re the they’re the two

spots that I won’t go into and there’s also

that

Russell:

At all

Edward:

At all

II.i.22:00

there’s one thing I’ve learnt is that is to

trust my instincts through experiences so

I’ve not trusted them and paid the price so
now I just if it [sic] something inside of me goes don’t go there I don’t go there

**Russell:**

Um has it ever occurred to you like seeing someone come out of there to say what’s in there *(I laugh a little)*

**Edward:**

Yeah I’d like to know what’s in there

**Russell:**

But you haven’t

**Edward:**

but I’m not willing to jeopardise myself by going in there

**Russell:**

True but have you asked anyone

**Edward:**

II.i.22:30

Nn nn no

**Russell:**

So what’s stopped you from asking anyone

**Edward:**

I don’t know cos there are definitely um people I could ask but I don’t know I think I suppose if it was that interesting

**Russell:**

Would you

**Edward:**

If I was that interested I’d go in

**Russell:**

So like for instance you you said a moment ago oh good you can tell me about it but do you actually want me to

**Edward:**

Mm no it doesn’t really worry me that much

**Russell:**

Yeah yeah I had

II.i.23:00

I wondered about that

**Edward:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

Those kinds of um areas that your instincts tell you not to go into can you tell me about what this instinct is

**Edward:**

It’s

**Russell:**

Like how how do you know your instincts are telling you that

**Edward:**

fear of not being in control fear of I think I don’t know because I have been raped and

II.i.23:30

I’ve

**Russell:**

Yes

**Edward:**

been hurt

**Russell:**

Yes

**Edward:**

so there is that whe the f um I don’t it’s the f it’s not being in control being totally it’s being a rag doll in someone else’s hands

**Russell:**

Yeah okay yeah

**Edward:**

that and that’s the the feeling that I don’t want to ever get back into again so to go into if I was with someone who I could see

**Russell:**

And who you trusted
Edward:

and then

II.i.24:00

would go in yeah that would be erotic and and fun and good but I know that you know like I mean once I was picked up and carried into a dark room at a venue which was fun and

Russell:

Sorry do you mean literally hoisted up

Edward:

Literally picked up

Russell:

Yeah yeah yeah

Edward:

Yeah picked up and carried in and um the then to feel ten other pairs of hands on me freaked me out

II.i.24:30

I didn’t know who they were I didn’t choose to be in that spot with them I didn’t like when if I’d prepared myself consciously to go in there to experience that then yes that would be in a different but I hadn’t and that’s I think what going into these rooms where I cannot see what’s going on and I am at the hands of someone else who I don’t see who I don’t know and have have not

II.i.25:00

initially built up one skerrick of trust for them then I just won’t I won’t go there

Russell:

No

Edward:

And I know how easily it is to lose to be lost to someone else’s control where we feel we always have a choice we actually don’t always have a choice so that’s I’m not I won’t put myself in that situation

Russell:

I understand

Edward:

Though it’s interesting

II.i.25:30

I mean it’s always interesting to push those boundaries within yourself as well to know what you can experience and to overcome and to enjoy there’s a room at S at um what’s the one a few streets away called Volcano no no

Russell:

Squirt

Edward:

Squirt (He claps his hands. Edward now wittily selects and repeats an unlikely word that will help him remember the sauna’s name in future.) mnemonic think mnemonic (I laugh) yeah um mm (laughing a little, and acknowledging a lewd pun he has just made) in more ways than one there’s a little area that that goes around I don’t go down there either it’s just too dark

Russell:

II.i.26:00

That area no longer exists

Edward:

Okay I missed out on nothing yeah

Russell:

Oh it’s it’s interesting because it came up um um a conversation with someone else that’s part of this research project um only a few weeks ago and ah there was a discussion between us about specifically about that area about how it wasn’t dark in the way that dark areas are that there was always

II.i.26:30

certain amount of light in there and um subsequently I went back just to check it out because he and I had different perceptions about how it had been constructed

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

For instance the light coming into it was that management’s um doing

Edward:

Was that where like paint was scratched off

Russell:
Edward:

See I always thought that that was a black painted wall I mean when I very first went there

Russell:

It's black painted glass

Edward:

Yeah which I didn’t realise then and then um it was actually really well lit the very first time I went there there was like a bright light in there and I was thinking eehooh that's even worse you know so but then the next time I went there it was just dark the corridor was too dark and then from outside where the showers are looking in you can actually see that it's paint scratched off and then I started thinking that it was maybe a double sided window that where you could watch people showering but you couldn't so I wasn’t sure

Russell:

All of it’s changed and there is now no dark area of any kind

Edward:

Okay

Russell:

at Squirt and that is a very brightly lit video lounge now they’ve reconstructed it moved the um areas that had the glory holes

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

to another location and they now have a video lounge there which is with a very large screen

Edward:

My god

Russell:

Not not a remote projection screen so it’s like a very big TV set

Edward:

Yeah and is it showing the same stuff that’s on the monitors

Russell:

Yes it is and now the monitors all show one

Edward:

Yes

Russell:

program only

Edward:

I noticed that last time I went there there was only one

Russell:

Right right

Edward:

Obviously the costs of um copyright

Russell:

Yeah I wonder whether they have to pay copyright

Edward:

They would have to I mean being such a registered area

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

they would have to pay something

Russell:

And they’ve um talked about how their videos are linked with a specific distributor as well

Edward:
Volcano: Thank god they’re better than II.i.28:30

Edward:

Russell: That’s just under six months

Edward: Because um and I ran into a guy who works II.i.29:30 there who I was seeing for five minutes and decided I didn’t actually want to be there because I didn’t want to see him he actually yeah he works there he still works there um and it was someone said to me we were talking about saunas and he said oh I hate the smell of shit in the steam room and I then just thought brrrh okay (laughing a little) I just can’t go in there again I just can’t go in

Edward: Oh

Russell: Because he kept of going oh there’s shit everywhere like you know you want to see it when they turn the lights on and clean it out and I just thought oh okay foul foul and this is someone who used to work there used to so that that has actually really put me off going there and and the fact that you know to be a lobster is a life threatening II.i.30:00 thing to go in there because of the the spa is so hot

Russell: Three minute spa

Edward: Three minute spa bing (he laughs) soft hard boiled yeah

Russell: Um can you finish the narrative of what happened with this man you were

Edward: II.i.31:00

Yeah

Russell: there with your legs around his waist leaning backwards

Edward: Legs around his waist yep leaning back I was hanging onto his nipples stretching them and I I mean I have to say that I thought right you want them stretched
appendix 23: Edward II

Russell: Sorry was he standing on the floor
Edward: He was standing on the floor yeah
Russell: Had you stepped from standing on the
Edward: To yes
Russell: On the
Edward: On the bed thing
Russell: Yeah
Edward: The mat
Russell: To putting your
Edward: Yeah
Russell: legs around his waist okay right
Edward: Yeah and I mean he’d obviously like he instructed me what to do so he’d
II.i.31:30 obviously this was some tried and true method for him so yeah I just leant back and pulled on them and the harder I pulled on them the the better he enjoyed it
Russell: So what period of time
Edward: Not long about three minute maximum
Russell: Yeah
Edward: Yeah yeah he just wanked himself off
Russell: And then you both left
Edward: Yep he thanked me and wanted my phone number
Russell: Really
Edward: Yeah I
Russell: Did you give it to him
Edward: No
II.i.32:00 there are very few times that at saunas where someone hasn’t asked for my phone number which I find that amazing considering it’s supposed to be anonymous
Russell: Supposed by whom
Edward: Well I thought that’s what the idea of going to saunas were that it was supposedly anonymous sex it wasn’t
Russell: So you suppose [supposed?] that
Edward: Yeah I supposed
Russell: So where do you think
II.i.32:30 that came from
Edward:
Probably from something that I was told by someone else

Russell:
And do you

Edward:
And I think people don’t talk there apart from me *(I laugh a little)* so that’s you know pretty that’s a very

Russell:
You’re not the only person who talks there

Edward:
Apart from ? there’s one Chinese guy who yelled out you Joe Blow liar cheat *(he laughs)*

Russell:
Yeah I remember that

Edward:
Yeah you know that’s like

Russell:
Can just I also want to let you know like again yet again at the risk of being boring if you don’t want to answer anything at any stage that’s completely okay

Edward:
Yeah no that’s fine

Russell:
Just say so okay um the you talked about your instinct is there

Edward:
Apart from there something you’re conscious of that enables you to stay in touch with those priorities even though you may be in a situation where there’s um an enormous number of sensations and pleasures is there a way in which you actually hold on to an awareness of your

Edward:
Yeah it’s the moment when your heart and your head actually meet at the same point that’s that’s instinct other things are want and need and lust and interest and everything else but it’s when it’s when what’s ever happening in your body and your head meet at the same point

Russell:
For you

Edward:
Yeah for me

Russell:
Okay

Edward:
And that’s that’s instinct

Russell:
How can you tell

Edward:
There’s an absolute feeling of right righteousness in you there’s don’t go there
there’s a little alarm that says something don’t do that

**Russell:**

All right okay

**Edward:**

And it’s it’s always with fear as opposed to something that’s right you know I don’t have an instinctual feeling about getting things right it’s a protective thing

**Russell:**

That’s interesting I I

II.i.36:00

I would be inclined to say that’s true for me too and I but I didn’t realise it until you just said it then that I don’t recognise an instinct about oh yeah this is right go with this

**Edward:**

Because I think I mean I think instinct has to do with basic survival

**Russell:**

Oh yeah

**Edward:**

and I don’t ever see how obtaining something that’s good for us is a basic survival basic survival is is finding food water and and living

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Edward:**

Not being killed or eaten so

**Russell:**

At the risk of perhaps repeating yourself can you describe for me features of the physical environment you’re in at a sauna or at any particular sauna or in saunas generally I don’t mind which to start with just anything that comes up for you the features of the physical environment

II.i.37:00

that support you in that in that work anything that is there that helps cultivate those instincts for you or if you like anything there that starts to um

**Edward:**

Trigger it off or

**Russell:**

No well trigger it off um or perhaps even better still things that blunt your instincts so they’re in is there anything that tends to blunt your instincts so that you’re less in touch with them

II.i.37:30

**Edward:**

Um um I do know I do know that attraction blunts your instincts blunts my instincts I know I know that I know that I cannot um ah trust my heart on attraction I know I can’t trust that

**Russell:**

Now when you say attraction are you talking about attraction with

**Edward:**

Physical attraction to someone

**Russell:**

Right and if it’s physical attraction are you talking about a visual apprehension of that person

**Edward:**

Yes a visual

**Russell:**

So you need to be able to see them

**Edward:**

Yes yeah

**Russell:**

and sometimes so therefore visibility can actually blunt your instincts at work

**Edward:**

Yeah if I I mean if I see someone who I’m attracted to I don’t know if it’s

II.i.38:30
even instinctual I know I know that they can be not the person that I first you know well want them to be basically more so than that I know but what triggers it is would def is an instigator of it would be darkened surrounds darkness

**Russell:**

So that would trigger the instincts

**Edward:**

Yeah not definitely not being able to see the person

**Russell:**

**II.i.39:00**

So that would be a place where your protective mechanisms would actually for you

**Edward:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

would start to increase

**Edward:**

Yes

**Russell:**

You’d be aware this is a place that’s potentially dangerous for me

**Edward:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

and you’d be much more wary and indeed not even set foot into some places

**Edward:**

Yeah at all

**Russell:**

as you’ve already mentioned however something that would potentially blunt your instincts and get you to override them would be something where

**II.i.39:30**

there’s

**Edward:**

I’m

**Russell:**

ironically enough light so you can see someone

**Edward:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

who you are attracted to because of their appearance but you know nothing else about them

**Edward:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

I’m I’m am I summarising that accurately

**Edward:**

Yeah no that’s good

**Russell:**

or am I actually

**Edward:**

No that’s

**Russell:**

filling it out and changing it

**Edward:**

No no no that’s no that’s good that would I think [be] quite a good summary I would follow that person into a darkened area and yet on life’s

**II.i.40:00**

experience you know you you know you’ve got to know that you’re just you’re putting yourself at as much risk doing that as you are just going in by yourself and meeting them in there you know I mean really

**Russell:**

Now the thing that interests me about this scenario is you’ve described two darkened areas that you’ve never set foot into at
Edward: I'm saying this is what I think that I would do

Russell: Or could

Edward: II.i.41:30

Russell: Yeah

Edward: No it's not tested and it and it probably wouldn't be but I have no idea on that that's

Russell: Well what I'm interested in about this is that is something that is almost incidental that's arisen from this and that is men to whom you've been physically attracted have never in your experience set foot into those darkened areas

Edward: Yeah

Russell: with you witnessing them doing it II.i.42:00 do do you have any where do they go

Edward: Um

Russell: Where have they gone

Edward: Walked around the corridor I've not seen them go through

Russell: Of course they may

Edward: They may

Volcano so does that mean you've never seen someone who you are physically attracted to who's walked into one of those areas when you were following them

Edward:Yep

Russell: That's the case then okay but you have seen men who you've been physically attracted to at Volcano who

Edward: If they took me into those places then yes I would probably go with them

Russell: Right

Edward: I say that

Russell: but they but they themselves have not gone in there

Edward: Yeah not that yes they haven't gone in there

Russell: Right

Edward: II.i.41:00 So I say that but it hasn't happened so I don't know you know you don't know you get to that doorway or that threshold and then whatever the the instinctual behaviour you have will take control it I can say yes I will follow them in there but if something says no I won't go I would pull away and walk away so I don't know it's only

Russell: Yeah

Edward:
Edward:

Yes exactly

Russell:

but you

Edward:

I haven't yes

Russell:

we're just talking about your level

Edward:

I haven't actually seen them

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

physically do it

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

And in the steam room [unintelligible] steam my eyesight's not that great um II.i.42:30

mm they would just be darkened figures in and out unless I was like sitting right at the doorway and see them come and go I don't know

Russell:

When you say men that you're physically attracted to this is this gets tricky now but would you say that these are men who II.i.43:00

um would have other men finding them physically attractive as well

Edward:

Some yes

Russell:

Like are they

Edward:

Some no

Russell:

photo material for a mag

Edward:

No I don't like photo material but wog boys which I don't know seem to be popular at the moment or have been Latino boys so um yeah I'd say so

Russell:

II.i.43:30

This is I mean the hard the hard thing about this um like I'm thinking all sorts of things but I've got a funny feeling that the things I'm thinking about aren't things I can resolve in this conversation it's more that thing of what is it that's happening for them

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

that doesn't II.i.44:00

take them into the dark areas is it because for instance they're aware of a certain appearance they have and are interested therefore in being visible

Edward:

More show and tell as opposed to

Russell:

Yeah whatever whatever their practices

Edward:

I don't

Russell:

that they're actually interested in being visible

Edward:

Yeah I don't know like um a friend of mine who goes to saunas is am amazingly handsome beautiful beautiful man II.i.44:30
but he gets his rocks off out of lurking in
dark corners  that's what he likes  he loves
that that the element of um watching
them being unseen  I mean he could have
anyone he wanted at any time and he’s very
confident in his looks but he loves that that
I don’t know  I mean predator is a wrong
word to use for that kind of standing back
II.i.45:00
I suppose not being watched but watching
and but he’s not  he’s also  like he’s not
ashamed of his looks  he’ll  he'll show
himself off if he wants to

Russell:

There are nevertheless in my experience
men who seem to be extremely handsome
who seem to be anxious about their
appearance
Edward:

Mm

Russell:

Um

Edward:

II.i.45:30
As in lack of confidence or

Russell:

Yeah I’m thinking about  ah I’ve often  I’ve
never had a situation where I’ve had a
conversation with one  such a person so  but
I’m thinking about things like the narratives
that I spin for myself are things along the
lines of does this person think oh no  I look
unapproachable  or does this person think
um I’ve got to find
II.i.46:00
someone who’s my match

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

or and I’ll never find such a person

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

Or does this person think oh my beauty's
only skin deep (Edward laughs a little) and
basically they’re filled with lack of self
esteem  do you know what I mean  like  and
I just wonder often because these are
people who seem terribly tense  I see a
physical tension  have you seen such
people  like people who seem to be
extremely good
II.i.46:30
looking but there seems to be a great deal of
physical tension  like visible physical tension
Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

in them as they walk around
Edward:

Yeah I must admit I often think they either
think (he begins making a list) one they’re
just  they’re too good for anyone around
there which is that finding their match

Russell:

That they think that

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

Yeah and  yeah I mean  yeah they’re usually
the ones that dart around  you know they’re
up and down those stairs and constantly
looking for
II.i.47:00
the  um yeah their equal  someone who they
consider is as good looking as what they are

Russell:

But is this a story you’re telling yourself or is
this something

Edward:

Well it’s gotta be a s

Russell:

that you’ve had from a  like I’ve
Edward:
Oh yeah

Russell:
I’ve this is a story I’ve told myself

Edward:
Yeah no this is a story I’ve told myself it’s the scenario that I set up

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
in watching them

Russell:
Yeah but likewise like your handsome friend

Edward:
Oh no he goes with some real dogs

Russell:
Yeah but were they did he give you his description of what he prefers and why he prefers

Edward:
No it’s my observation

Russell:
Right

Edward:
of of watching him

Russell:
Right so you hadn’t had that kind of conversation either

Edward:
No

Russell:
with such a person mm

Edward:
one of the reasons I haven’t had such a conversation is that when I’ve had encounters with such people conversation’s been out of the question (Edward laughs a little) then my experience has been they have not been conversational types

Edward:
Yeah

Russell:
They’ve been very wary of having anything beyond

Edward:
There’s um it am um ah it amazes me like mm you’ll have to rub this name Mr Celebrity

Russell:
Yeah

Edward:
right um at the dance party the other night he just would not get out of my way and I mean I know him from a long time ago but I’m not interested in him at all I’m busy dancing with my friend

Edward:
and he’s like continually standing between us and doing that old kind of

Russell:
Old kind of what

Edward:
You know the movement of you know ooh I don’t look seductive ooh I’ve got my eye on you and now he’s incredibly good looking supposedly not for me maybe I don’t have a great self body image anyway and I just look at him and go what do you want

Edward:
what do you want (he begins making a list) one what [sic] do you want anything to do with me you’ve got all these amazing muscle boys all around you that would that you could go home with at any time and two I don’t like you (we laugh a little) you know go away so that’s I I wonder why with um people who are like him who I you know he
you can put on the you know the higher echelon of gay boys what it is that they actually look for in someone whether it is their equal or what I don't understand what they're looking for and whether they actually you know actually do envisage on hoping because I mean yeah the boys that you see walking around the sauna who are good looking and and that and sometimes when you've seen them end up with someone I think oh you're kidding you know you are actually so much better looking than that and yet you've chosen him I find that very interesting just needing I suppose I want to know what other people's criteria are

Russell:

But also let let let's shift this theatrically for a moment

Edward:

[unintelligible] yeah

Russell:

and get a bit technical what kind of scene are they in or into (I laugh a little)

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

We talk about people being into scenes but

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

let's now reduce that rather than being a scene they're into what's the scene they're in you know um I'm thinking about what people are there for and what do they think about why they're there or so on like I'm aware that there are differences about what my interest in being at a venue is from what yours are and there are areas where they are very similar

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

and coincide from our conversation anyway and and I'm also aware that those things are liable to change like that first time I bumped into you

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

and we started chatting away for all that time was the first time I'd ever had that kind of socialising experience ah at a sauna and it completely opened although I'd witnessed other people

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

doing that kind of thing experiencing it suddenly opened that up as a possibility for me so suddenly I became aware oh I could actually converse with people I could be here to chat or I could become the chatty person rather than a predator

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

or a sex object or what you know I could be

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

a socialiser friendly or you know or even bump into another friend

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

or so on the notion of staging things at some level I mean not thinking of it as staging things

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:
but so are we talking about people (*I laugh a little*) being in if you like different plays

**Edward:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

at the one place are they and everyone assuming that everybody else is in Hamlet (*I laugh a little*) with them but or or whatever it is but in fact everybody’s in different

**Edward:**

I think so I mean I think yeah I mean I think everyone thinks that everyone else is looking at them whether they’re they’re admiring

**Russell:**

II.i.53:00

them or judging them I don’t know but then you know often you walk around with a shroud over your head anyway thinking you know I could pass through here without being looked at I can go up there without being looked at I don’t know

**Russell:**

You think that

**Edward:**

Mm

**Russell:**

Mm for instance your your inex your

**II.i.53:30**

puzzlement at the motives of other people or what’s happening for them is because you find them inscrutable at some level like you you simply is that another way of saying I don’t know what scene you’re in

**Edward:**

Um

**Russell:**

I don’t know what

**Edward:**

I suppose yeah like I think if you know pull the reasoning all apart and look for something yeah

**Russell:**

II.i.54:00

Let’s go back to something completely different have you ever had that situation where someone says to you let’s go here and as you’re heading there you think oh no I don’t want to go there and you make a counter suggestion say let’s go here instead and then you suddenly discover that there’s an incompatibility based on

**Edward:**

No

**Russell:**

That hasn’t happened

**Edward:**

No

**Russell:**

Right

**Edward:**

II.i.54:30

I might think it but I don’t act on it I’ll go along with the flow and just see what happens and if it’s interesting or not interesting or um

**Russell:**

Have you ever had a situation where you start having some kind of physical encounter with someone and they say to you oh do you want to go to a room and you say no

**Edward:**

II.i.55:00

No

**Russell:**

You’ve always said yes if that happens

**Edward:**

I’m trying to think I usually avoid um you know there’s the difference between um chatting to someone when you know that they want to fuck with you as opposed to chatting with someone just because you’re chatting with them so if someone starts talking to me with the intent of a sexual encounter there’s the a whole
II.i.55:30

different way of speaking so you can pick up on that immediately so I either don’t engage in the conversation or if I’m attracted I engage in the conversation so it never gets to that point it never gets to the point of someone saying do you want to and me having to say no

Edward:

I realise it’s a long time ago but

II.i.56:00

For me there is always conversation

Edward:

Yeah I can’t I honestly can’t remember ah

Russell:

But what about if there hasn’t been conversation

Edward:

Ah well no that’s really interesting for me because that would rarely happen for me

Russell:

Edward:

For me there is always conversation

Russell:

Ah well no that’s really interesting for me because that would rarely happen for me

Edward:

[unintelligible] see I couldn’t there’s even even when twice I’ve um walked past cubicles with guys in them and made eye contact with them and I’ve actually stopped probably on the second time around and stood in the doorway but there’s always been verbal interaction before I actually step into the cubicle

Russell:

Edward:

What about with the Samoan man

Russell:

Edward:

The Samoan man was chat in the spa

Russell:

You chatted

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

Edward:

So what did you chat about

Russell:

Edward:

Ah

Russell:

Edward:

I must try it without now (he laughs) see what happens

Russell:

I don’t know well why would you want to do that
Edward:

Well see what it’s like (he play acts at being gagged but trying to communicate) mm mm mm (we laugh) I am not going to talk

ah I don’t know I think I mean maybe I need to hear the sound of their voice or there’s obviously something in there it’s not obviously because I love to chat maybe I think I can tell something about someone by the way they phrase what they’re saying or

Russell:

Of course because one of the things then that you haven’t experienced and that I have is that moment when

um you m I’m I actually asked you a bit about this with the last time when you were talking to me about the other young man who wanted you to hit him

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

and I asked you did he say it or did he whisper it I kept on saying that to you and one of the things I’m aware now that I wasn’t aware then is that you haven’t had the experience of not hearing a person’s voice until after the

encounter has kind of concluded and maybe never hearing it maybe just only ever hearing noth no vocalisation at all or just a whisper which of course does everybody when they whisper more or less sounds the identical but it’s when there’s a voice in there and it can be such a surprise I remember in Sydney once having an encounter with someone and

it was all terribly enjoyable and then as he was leaving he spoke and he had a Russian accent and I was completely devastated because I felt like I’d missed out on something (we laugh) I felt oh I’ve been with a Russian all this time and I didn’t know oh I mean why why is your accent so thick have you just arrived you know and it was too it was all gone you know

Edward:

Yeah well maybe that’s why people don’t want to talk maybe it’s that thing about

Russell:

I’m envious

Edward:

But I

Russell:

I’m quite happy to admit it I’m envious

Edward:

But I usually we talk about where they come from what they do

Russell:

Mm

because you’re interested

Edward:

Yeah or a nosy parker (he laughs) I don’t know yeah I suppose

Russell:

Yeah I mean I’ve become much more conversational since that night (Edward laughs) I you know I can’t tell you what an impact that had on me because I I found it so refreshing

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

to simply be somewhere bump into a friend and
II.i.62:00
we could just sit around and chat and laugh and everything seemed to change like the the venue for instance seemed less heavy

Edward:
Yeah

Russell:
or less oppressive

Edward:
There’s there’s a boy on on the scene from what I still at my age have not worked have not been able to work out what the word scene means (I laugh a little) but anyway um I very handsome man by god finds it very difficult to maintain a boyfriend not to find one but to to maintain one

II.i.62:30
and he’s [sic] always seems to be at a sauna when I go to Volcano and a couple of times I’ve said hello to him but he he refuses now to speak and now when I see him out at at dance venues or whatever he does no recognition no conversation at all not even to say hello he will

II.i.63:00
avoid and go around me as opposed to coming and saying hello which I find very interesting and it it has to be the encounters at the saunas that have

Russell:
Which had only been conversational or attempted conversation

Edward:
Yeah attempted

Russell:
Yeah mm

Edward:
And before that we would talk quite readily at dance venues before the saunas before I saw him in saunas

Russell:
II.i.63:30
Are there parts of a a sauna that um and I’m thinking again are there of the saunas you know can you name specific places where you don’t feel free to speak or converse

Edward:
Oh yeah where the cubicles are walking around where the cubicles are that seems to be all relying totally on eye action really the places

II.i.64:00
that are more relaxing not in the sauna because everyone seems to be deep in meditation and perving at each other

Russell:
In in the dry sauna

Edward:
Yeah in the dry sauna no one seems to talk there although I have done

Russell:
I’ve witnessed um elderly men having

Edward:
Chatting

Russell:
really really free conversation

Edward:
Oh that’s good

Russell:
at Volcano yeah I’m thinking of one particular occasion

Edward:
And in

II.i.64:30
spas people talk I talk spas sitting down on the benches

Russell:
Ah is that when the spa is bubbling

Edward:
Well I can’t see the sense of sitting in a spa when it’s not so (I laugh a little) um
Some people do

Edward:

Yes that’s true I must admit I have pondered over that maybe you can see someone’s cock through the water clearer than you can than when there’s bubbles going on I don’t know but um

Russell:

Or you don’t know how to switch the bubbles on

Edward:

That’s true *(we laugh)*

II.i.65:00

pick the new boy um um not in the steam room definitely never in the steam room [unintelligible: although?] I have had a very short bout of words in the steam room but not a conversation

Russell:

*(laughing a little)* Not conversation

Edward:

Not conversation

Russell:

Right so where we talked was on that bench

Edward:

Yeah on the bench

Russell:

overlooking the pool yeah

Edward:

Yeah [inaudible] the pool

Russell:

II.i.65:30

So the benches are like there’s a bench at Squirt as well overlooking the showers

Edward:

Yes yeah

Russell:

That’s a place I’ve had conversations as well

Edward:

Yeah yeah I’ve had yeah I’ve had quite a few conversations there an interesting one [unintelligible] there once with a guy who was also in my line of work and we were chatting about workplaces and work and stuff like that *(he laughs)* which was quite interesting because I thought if I’m here I don’t want to think about work

II.i.66:00

but that was good that was fun and in in the spa is always

Russell:

This might seem an odd question or an obvious one but when you’re talking with another person about what they do and where they’re from and things like that there’s a sense in what you’re really talking about is the rest of the world other than the sauna is where where’s your attention at that point like do you find yourself trying to imagine the places that are elsewhere

II.i.66:30

or do you feel

Edward:

No I don’t think I go that in depth into it I just

Russell:

Is it like being on the telephone

Edward:

Yeah it’s like just having a chat just talking about in you know um accepting on this very small processing level the information that they’re giving you um but not necessarily going in depth to ah

Russell:

Have you ever lost a sense of being where you actually

II.i.67:00

are in such a like being involved in the conversation

Edward:

Um

Russell:

So that it transforms you
Edward:

Probably not but I don’t put that much emphasis in where I am you know I don’t actually I would I would shed more barriers going into the into a sauna than I would have walking down the street shopping you know you’re wrapped in a towel there’s not much left

you know anything you have to hide has to be something psychological and um so I’m probably freer and easier so to speak in a sauna than I would be at a dance club I would say

Russell:

So for you it’s a very different atmosphere from a dance club

Edward:

Yeah it’s much more relaxing

Russell:

We’ve only got a small amount of time left so I want to show you something here (I take a copy of the Bruno Gmunder ‘Sauna Guide And Gay Bathhouses International’ from my shelf and hand it to Edward)

Edward:

(he looks at and through the book, yawns, then) See if you had been earlier you could have got this published (we laugh a little) this is cute

Russell:

They used to have ah a publication called The

Saunas Of Europe

Edward:

Uh huh

Russell:

It’s based in Berlin this company and I saw that for sale when I was in Amsterdam saw that it was based in Berlin and assumed because I was going on to Berlin I’ll pick one up there

Edward:

Yeah

Russell:

and it will be cheaper got to Berlin nowhere to be found went back to Australia Hares & Hyenas had sold out of it

Edward:

Oh

Russell:

and they said they’d put one on order for me and of course it’s now not just Europe they’ve bought out a completely new format thing [?] which is

Edward:

Fantastic

Russell:

international

Edward:

I think it’s great

Russell:

So what do you think is great about it

Edward:

Well it saves you having to look at at that um the the ah what’s that travel the gay travel guide Spargo not the restaurant um oh whatever it’s called

Russell:

Spartacus

Edward:

That’s it

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

Bloody hell that thing is so fucking utter crap with its wrong directions different map localities this is good it’s like I think anything that like accommodation hostels restaurants
whatever when I just travelled with my (suddenly louder) mum (I laugh a little) through (loud again) Europe (he returns to his usual volume level) um you know the it was because we went to a lot of gay cafes and restaurants and and I went to clubs and to have a guide is great and I like going to saunas (referring to an entry in the book) I mean you know even in Portugal

Russell:

Oh there’s it’s it’s quite extensive but do you want to look up um Australia and look up Volcano

Edward:

and I’m just wondering what you think about what it has to

Edward:

(turning to the Australian entry) These are always so [unintelligible]

Russell:

say about it

Edward:

Look I didn’t realise there were so many Steamee I’ve got to get out more

Russell:

Um there’s a coding system which is (indicating)

Edward:

Okay

Russell:

explained there to what extent does

Edward:

(referring to the book) Is there a leather and fetish night on the first what do you wear a leather towel (I laugh a little) what would you wear

Russell:

So you haven’t been there when ah there’s been a

Edward:

II.i.70:30

leather or fetish event

Edward:

No

Russell:

No

Russell:

Right no

Edward:

(looking closely) Symbols are interesting the gym’s good I’ve used the gym there a few times

Russell:

Yeah

Edward:

but people come in like I mean I use the gym I really use the gym so when people come in it’s they’re usually just coming in for a look and then they disappear but I tell you you’ve got to be very careful when you do bench press your towel (he laughs) strategic placing eating yeah I didn’t realise that actually there was like eating facilities there

Edward:

Okay

Russell:

Yeah I

Edward:

I hear the fish and chips are really good

Russell:

That was downstairs but I don’t know whether that’s running at the moment

Edward:

Oh really

Russell:

I’ve [sic] really think they’re fallen on hard times and but so again you haven’t eaten there

Edward:

No
Russell:
And you it hadn’t occurred to you to think of doing that
Edward:
No (noticing something else in the book) okay I hope they just mean shower oh it’s the German one I’m looking at no wonder
II.i.71:30
I’m looking don’t worry
Russell:
One of the things I notice is they’ve not got spa listed as a facility even though there’s
Edward:
There’s poacher under here (we laugh)
Russell:
There is not
Edward:
Maybe it’s in the kitchen guide (we laugh)
The Cheap
Russell:
But it’s interesting there’s no spa listed
Edward:
Cheap Eats of Melbourne
Russell:
There’s no spa listed
Edward:
It’ll be a printing mistake for sure (noticing another entry) what’s Rear Entry like the my trouble with Rear Entry is that there are too many
II.i.72:00
people I know go there like too many people friends
Russell:
Oh yeah
Edward:
that I know go there so that would I would find that incred very incred I couldn’t do it
(he laughs a little) I would find it very difficult
Russell:
You need to have a lot more anonymity
Edward:
Anonymity
Russell:
Oh yeah
Edward:
Love that word
Russell:
Well you were talking about anonymous (laughing a little) sex earlier
Edward:
Yes that’s true
Russell:
Well
Edward:
(reading from the book) Saunas on five floors with free condoms so maybe grammatically I don’t know but free condoms glory holes and dark maze do you have to pay for those at anywhere else
Russell:
II.i.72:30
Um condom provision is um
Edward:
Compulsory
Russell:
In Australia it’s expected
Edward:
Yeah but no no no this is
Russell:
But overseas that’s an issue in some places
Edward:
Oh really yeah no it’s just grammatically they shouldn’t have the word

Russell:
For instance in

Edward:
free before all of that

Russell:
In New York City penetrative sex is illegal in public venues and condoms are understood to be evidence of ah a felony in that reca in that case

Edward:

II.i.73:00
Oh my god really

Russell:
And so places don’t have condoms precisely because it’s proof that they’ve been breaking the law and their licence could be revoked

Edward:

II.i.73:00
Oh god (noticing another entry) have you ever been to High Street

Russell:
Ah I have been to one of them yeah

Edward:
My god how many are there

Russell:
Two

Edward:
Mm what are they like

Russell:
The one I’ve been to um well I’m I’m not interested in telling you what they’re like

Edward:
Oh I’m sorry (he laughs a little)

Russell:
Oh what I’m interested in is what do you think they’re like from what you read there like you said what about Rear Entry

II.i.73:30
and you’ve got a

Edward:

(reading from the book) Optional sundeck now that’s interesting nudist breakfast that’s pretty comical (he laughs) I’ll have the sausages thanks (I laugh)

Russell:
Parboiled

Edward:
Yeah parboiled (reading from the guide in a louder voice) jack off parties (quieter again) okay

Russell:
So when you look at the Rear Entry entry because you said oh what’s Rear Entry like

Edward:
Yep

Russell:
Were you asking me or were you asking the book what’s Rear Entry

Edward:
No I was actually asking you

Russell:
All right

Edward:
Capable of doing two things

II.i.74:00
at one time reading and talking (reading from the guide) bathhouse on two levels with a large cruise maze and four glory holes glory holes really scare me I’m sorry

Russell:
Yeah tell me more

Edward:
Oh oh um not physically I need that the visual

Russell:

Is it like one of those unsafe scenarios

Edward:

Yeah I mean you know you don’t poke your finger in a hole you don’t know if it’s going to get it cut off on the other side you know no it just doesn’t doesn’t

II.i.74:30
interest me whatsoever

Russell:

Is it that it doesn’t interest you or your instinct gets switched on

Edward:

I just couldn’t see no it just doesn’t interest me

Russell:

Right okay

Edward:

It's just like you know could be your grandmother sucking you off around on the other side no no thanks

Russell:

Sorry you said your grandmother sucking you off is that because you assume there's a certain usage

Edward:

No no no it could be anyone

Russell:

No a certain usage that occurs for the glory hole does that

II.i.74:59
(The minidisc fills and the recorder switches itself off automatically. The conversation continues for a few minutes longer but no record of it is made.)

END OF CONVERSATION
appendix 24: James II

James and I met to record a second conversation at Melbourne’s chief war memorial, the Shrine of Remembrance. We talked for almost ninety minutes and then found that the recorder had switched itself off after thirty seconds. James needed to attend his next appointment and our meeting ended awkwardly with the situation unresolved. A few days later, I proposed a third recording session that would not revisit any of the material that we’d dealt with at the Shrine. James agreed and the matters discussed in our second unrecorded conversation consequently play no part in this research project. For the third conversation, we again met at James’ flat on a weekday afternoon (the blind again rattling lightly in the breeze) and recorded the following exchange.

Russell:

II.i.00:00
All right so this might not take very long

James:

No that’s fine yeah

Russell:

So

James:

No worries

Russell:

Mm whatever I’ve got a list of words and um some of them are words that ah came up um when we talked the first time and I don’t know whether any of them came up last time and they’ve come up in other contexts in other with other interviewees

James:

Right

Russell:

And what I thought I might do is just um go through them say one word at a

II.i.00:30
time and I’d just like you to just get a freely associate with them in relationship to your experience of saunas in Melbourne preferably

James:

Yep

Russell:

And it might be that there’s um an idea you have or a story or um a personal opinion (I laugh a little) or it might be about um something you’ve seen to do with

II.i.01:00
someone else or it might be something to do with um a general phenomenon that occurs um a piece of furniture it might be something you’ve felt you know okay so the first word’s clean

James:

(he laughs, then) Clean

II.i.01:30
well the first thing that springs to mind now I suppose is that well a few things there seem to be a few things happening in my head then but um the whole question of are saunas clean and if you really think about it no they they’re not and the mattresses I suppose the sense of um walking into a room and checking the what kind of state they’re in

II.i.02:00
um also that situation of when you’re walking along a corridor (he laughs a little) or one of the rooms sometimes you’ll step in something and it you it could be water or it could be semen or it could be anything you know you’re never quite sure at that first moment when you step in it what is this I’m stepping in

Russell:

Like a pool of something

James:

Yeah just some kind yeah on the wall on the floor

Russell:

What hap what happens when you do that

II.i.02:30
when you step in it

James:

Well there’s a slight sense of um I remember childhood games of that where
you’d put be blindfolded and they’d lead you around into different things and ah so there’s just that sense of not knowing exactly what it is you’re stepping in so there’s just this sense of I don’t know slight revulsion maybe

Russell:
Do you try to check it out

James:
How do you mean

Russell:
Do you try to work out what it is

James:
No no no I usually just wipe my foot and run (he laughs a little)

Russell:
Wipe your foot on what

James:
Well the floor around it I suppose (we laugh) enlarge enlarge the area

Russell:
If people are watching does that change how you respond

James:
Mm I don’t I’m think trying to remember if there’s been a time where I’ve in that situation when people have if in terms of stepping no I can’t think of anything that where I’ve been seen but in terms of walking into a room if you’re going into a room with someone and the mattress is half the time the other person is with you going yeah let’s look for another room if it’s in a state

Russell:
What about the other half of the time

James:
The other half of the time when it’s when it’s not in a state

Russell:
No when it’s in a state you said half the time the pers

James:
Oh okay

Russell:
The other person says let’s look for another room

James:
Well no I guess usually most if if it looks pretty like you know there’s condoms everywhere and there’s you know the mattress looks sort of well whatever covered in fluid in whatever nature that is usually the other person is I can’t imagine anyone going yeah let’s go in here (we laugh a little) so um

Russell:
Who tends to say things first or how does that get negotiated

James:
Oh I think it’s been I think it’s been a mutual thing you know if the person is in front of me then they will say move on and I will agree or I think it’s a kind of fairly mutual thing

Russell:
It’s interesting because I’ve asked you to talk about in response to the word clean and

James:
I’ve given not clean

Russell:
your whole thing is about how an awareness or an experience of saunas not being clean

James:
Yeah I guess that’s the thing I have with it that they’re not really and that’s why the lights are so low there if the lights were up
But you turn the lights down

James:

*(he laughs a little, then)* Yeah but I’m talking about real light like natural light

Russell:

II.i.05:00

Oh right

James:

If you had natural light or very strong lights in those places in the rooms and stuff like that I’m sure they’d be pretty plain

Russell:

Without naming them do you have a belief that some saunas are cleaner than others

James:

Um yeah

Russell:

I mean do you experience them that way

James:

Yeah I think one of the newer ones um there there’s often people going around there cleaning each room they seem to do that fairly regularly like II.i.05:30 on a half hour basis and I’ve never seen that happen with the other the other ones

Russell:

Right

James:

Or very rarely

Russell:

So that’s reassuring then having a person visible moving around

James:

Yeah

Russell:

cleaning

James:

I think so

Russell:

Yeah um well then I suppose another word then I want to throw up then is dirty

James:

II.i.06:00

I feel like we’ve covered that *(he laughs)*

Russell:

Entirely *(this is a question)*

James:

Um well when you say dirty I guess I think of shit and although we weren’t necessarily talking about it before it seemed to be more fluid but I think like saunas and shit um you know the the amount of times say perhaps in a situation in a room where you know say in in fucking you know shit II.i.06:30 becomes kind of obvious and so if that’s happened in say the situations I’m in then it would be an ongoing experience for people so these rooms are going to have kind of um the potential of basically being covered in shit

Russell:

What do you mean covered in shit

James:

Well from like condoms from people’s hands if they’re fisting um on

Russell:

I’m I’m not my question wasn’t about the II.i.07:00 source

James:

No no I know it’s just

Russell:

It was about the effect

James:

I thought you said dirty though
Russell:
Yeah but when you said COVERED in shit

James:
Oh

Russell:
what do you mean covered not where is it coming from but

James:
Oh well that that it would be on the mattress that the potential for it to be there

Russell:
Yeah

James:
is strong and I what the interesting thing is that it’s not it’s not something it’s something that that is cut out of awareness but if you really kind of analysed II.i.07:30 what the potential was for this place to be covered in in that kind of um microbial kind of life form

Russell:
Yeah

James:
then it would be quite overwhelming I think if you really looked at it scientifically

Russell:
But you don’t

James:
I don’t well I don’t think you could if you did you well one you’d either have to be really into that or um I don’t I think if it was a really conscious thing you wouldn’t do it’s like um anything that might be a health risk to you I think II.i.08:00 generally if it’s really clear in your mind that it’s going to have an impact you have a really strong knowledge of what that that if you do this you might become sick or blah blah blah you wouldn’t engage in in half the things you do you know

Russell:
Um it’s interesting that when I brought up clean you talked about how things weren’t clean but when I brought II.i.08:30 up dirty you brought up a whole new dimension so is dirty a different thing from not clean

James:
*he laughs, then*

Russell:
Right

James:
And generally that’s not something that’s strong except there’s one particular sauna that has that sense in a way or it seems to have that vision of it more than the others

Russell:
Which is

James:
The sauna *this is a question*

Russell:
Yeah

James:
Name it *this is a question*

Russell:
Yeah yeah name that one

James:
Um what is it *Squirt*

Russell:
Right okay is that II.i.09:00 because there are pale surfaces there

James:
Yeah because the the rooms are in that the walling and all that kind of stuff has got kind of a light colour to it
Russell:
Right okay as distinct from other saunas where the colour is

James:
Darker

Russell:
Right okay so what that shows marks

James:
What shows marks

Russell:
The wa the pale surface

James:
No just that when you said the word clean that’s what my mind went to I went to that sauna first

Russell:
Right okay

James:
and that’s also the one that has more people going around cleaning

Russell:
so in terms of clean and yeah the whole kind of image of sexuality being being kind of ah playing with that whole idea of ah purity and and ah non-purity how the you know and sex will tends to be it’s about the dark side or about the kind of primal urges s and I guess so when you say clean it’s not something that I really put towards sex

Russell:
I don’t see sex as a clean thing as a clean pristine surface so when you say clean I go into the the areas of the because this is a sex venue so we’re talking about something that’s not clean it’s not a clean place it’s not a clean surface it’s not about that dirty is about that it’s about shit it’s about urges it’s about instinctive [unintelligible: side?]

Russell:
Does that then render a place like Squirt for you

James:
Um no because it generally for me it has to do with the clientele who go yeah because I don’t think oh hang on I have to think about this

Russell:
That’s all right take your time it’s a curly one obviously but

James:
Mm because

Russell:
then I thought of like more venues like dr um dry venues The Basement kind of thing as being a place that can be sexy through fantasy I’m not quite sure why that is maybe it’s a bit more theatrical I suppose than saunas saunas are a bit more stripped bare because people are walking around naked generally or with the towels on ah but you or you could relate that to sort of ancient saunas I suppose too but mm

Russell:
I don’t know I mean obviously there is something sexy about saunas there is something about but it’s yeah perhaps maybe maybe maybe it is maybe um

Russell:
Can I ask a a question that might help if it doesn’t just say you want to ignore it

Russell:
let’s talk about saunas generally for a minute do you find saunas sexy or is it that you feel sexy in saunas

James:
Um as opposed to dry venues

Russell:
Um yeah you’ve raised dry venues but just generally I mean saunas are places that you have sex in I’m wondering

Russell:
if that’s the case is there some and you’ve talked about some ideas you have at least of sexuality um and its nature as you understand it um I’m wondering are saunas places that you think are sexy or do you feel sexy in them

Russell:
or both or neither (I laugh a little) and if you want to compare it with something else as a way of starting fine
James:
Mm that's a hard question too I don't know do I think saunas are sexy mm I don't know if they feel sexy as that I think we talked about this once before as being more a
kind of um a safety zone in some way even though within that context there's often things that are confronting and scary and cold and alienating the feeling of going in there is about escape it's about going into this other world um and I don't know if that's sexy (he laughs a little)
I think it's oh I don't know I think some of the situations that can happen say in the steam room um no I don't think they are um I'm not sure why I'm saying that today but I don't think they are

Russell:
That's all right

James:
inherently sexy mm

Russell:
(a silence) Let's leave thinking aside for a moment do you experience them as being sexy in some way

James:
Yeah

Russell:
Sexual

James:
Yeah I guess sexual I mean yeah you have to though in some way I don’t necessarily feel sexual there though often often it’s out of habit or just boredom or whatever it's kind of rare I think that I go there with a very strong sexual urge

Russell:
Before you arrive

James:
Yeah yeah yeah

Russell:
You've mentioned that the clientele will be a key factor for you are the clientele completely separate from your experience of the the environment in which they are or are they um are they like part of that environment so that it’s like some sort of um ecosystem you know like being in a swamp or in a jungle (James laughs a little) or a forest or um a prairie (I laugh a little)

James:
Right so the kind of animals that congregate in those areas would be different

Russell:
Yeah like the living forms and the other forms and various degrees of living forms whether they're plants or animals or big or large or numerous or one I mean do do you get a sense of it being like um have you ever been in a sauna that’s empty of people

James:
Right yes oh nearly not I mean I've oh no I've flipped to another place other than Melbourne then but in Melbourne

Russell:
No that's all right

James:
um yeah there's been situations where you’d call it nearly empty you know maybe one or two other people

Russell:
I had an experience um I don’t know whether I’ve mentioned this to you um ah this year I had an experience of being at Volcano at the

James:
Oh yes

Russell:
ground floor the wet area and I mentioned and I said and it was empty and I realised
as I realised it was empty um there were two things the first was everything seemed very brightly lit whether it was or not

II.I.17:00
I can’t really say for sure but it felt more brightly lit and the second thing was I actually felt scared

James:
Right
Russell:
It reminded me of childhood fears
James:
Right
Russell:
about people leaping out from somewhere
James:
Right you had to leave the whole venue
Russell:
No
James:
or just downstairs [unintelligible]
Russell:
No I just left downstairs
James:
Yeah yeah mm
Russell:
So it was a very different kind of experience of it

II.I.17:30
for me
James:
I know the questions just seem to be confounding me today I don’t know

Russell:
That’s all right
James:
what I think about that because um you know there’s obviously s there are connotations with the kind of people that go there before you go you have an idea before you go in there so for example the one in the city there’s always I guess for me especially if I go like late afternoon you know four or five o’clock there’s going to be a whole bunch of suits turn up after their work so there’s that kind of

II.I.18:00
fantasy thing going in um with Volcano there’s that but there’s also the knowledge that there’s a lot of Asian guys go there and a lot of older guys go there so that’s what you bring when you go there the expectation of that Rear Entry is always um the more kind of South Yarra crowd the there’s always the potential for you know the body beautiful and the good looking South Yarra guys yadda yadda yadda ah the one up the road um kind of like a mixture a lot of older guys but

II.I.18:30
also that strange occurrence of people that seem to fall through the net they don’t have particularly have a particular genre and that’s where they end up somehow

Russell:
The exceptions
James:
Yeah
Russell:
Yeah
James:
Well people that don’t seem to fit into certain moulds that’s my been my experience that that there that’s where I’ve met people like that that have slipped through the net that that sort of confound the experience of what it is to be you know have sex with another man and who they are

II.I.19:00
in terms of their other lives outside that so yeah those preconceived ideas and then I think when you go there depending on the day and who’s there and I guess those preconceived ideas still kind of bubble around it in some way

**Russell:**

In making a decision is it a major factor for you rather than concepts of clean or dirty or do you associate the clientele with concepts of clean or dirty?

**James:**

Mm no I don’t think I match people to being clean or dirty in that that would be on the individual basis I guess

**Russell:**

I think when I think of say Rear Entry that um because of the what what seems to be the amount of of um people that go through there that that’s probably the most potentially dirty place but that doesn’t stop me from going because before I go I have an idea of what Rear Entry might offer me and ah you know I often think of like the reddish tones of Rear Entry I suppose that that kind of very strong reddish tone quality of Rear Entry whereas those other places have different things to offer and of course the people that go there

**Russell:**

We might be covering things you’ve talked about

**James:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

Or that I’m

**James:**

Hmm oh yeah I do I’m that’s why like I think I said in the last one about saunas because I like the showers um I hate it when the towels get mixed up (I laugh a little)

**Russell:**

I had an experience recently I’m a bit paranoid about it actually especially if you’ve just arrived and your towel I hate it when your towel gets wet like just that wet and you’ve come with this dry towel and perhaps you have a shower before you start and someone picks up your towel I hate that it’s like just remember where you put your towels boys *(he laughs a little)* they should have like a sign when you walk in remember where you put your towel

**Russell:**

Do you always remember where you put your towel

**James:**

Nearly there has been one or two occasions where I’ve gone oh my god I’m not quite sure

**Russell:**

Do you have strategies that you pursue

**James:**

Yes

**Russell:**

Oh what are they

**James:**

Yes well I would remember exactly where I what clothes peg I like what peg I put it on so close to the door or down the door or sometimes I know in the past I have wrapped it in a certain way but now I just kind of I really make a reference like okay fourth peg along that’s where my towel is

**Russell:**

Is there a standard formula for that

**James:**

No

**Russell:**

I choose number five
James:
Oh do you *(we laugh)* I’ll remember that

Russell:
Don’t you dare yeah I often choose number five

James:
Right

Russell:
Not always often number five’s sometimes occupied

James:
Right right

Russell:
So then I have a fallback

James:
Right yeah

Russell:
Um I want to move on to some other words

James:
Yeah

Russell:
Oh and also it’s okay um I know we’ve got the thing kind of running but *(I check the minidisc recorder)* it is running it’s okay

James:
Good *(he laughs a little)*

Russell:
Not like last time but um it’s okay to not talk

James:
Oh okay

Russell:
You know you don’t need to entertain it

James:
Right

Russell:
if or me

James:
Right

Russell:
if it takes time to just if you need to think silently or just let something settle that’s fine I’m not expecting you to be *(II.I.23:30)* um it’s not like we’re on a talk show

James:
No

Russell:
where you you need to keep talking

James:
Right okay

Russell:
just

James:
Well like I said today the thinking process seems to be confounded by the questions

Russell:
That’s all right the questions are curly

James:
Oh no I’m not putting blame on the question I’m just going like just today I don’t seem to be thinking clearly or

Russell:
Okay um
II.i.24:00
private

James:

(a silence) Mm

(a silence) I think the first thing that flashed in my mind was just the rooms I suppose and maybe that sense of um what really is private in those places what kind of what kind of um

II.i.25:00
you know in terms of personal space how far people can go into that what is regarded as this is as far as we go you don’t go any further than that

Russell:

What do you mean personal space this is as far as you go

James:

In terms of

Russell:

Are you talking about like we’re both sitting on a couch at the moment and there’s a distance between us are you talking about personal space in that sense

II.i.25:30
like something I can measure with a like a ruler

James:

Ah yes partly partly to do with that sense of um how much and this is being actually influenced by something someone said to me recently a young guy said he was just being followed by this guy and continually touched and in the end he told him to take his hands off him and he said if you do it again I’ll hit you and the guy did it again and he slapped him and ah so I guess it’s that thing of like how far is that hunting principle

II.i.26:00
taken you know when when is the the line drawn um that’s one aspect of it I the you know there’s nothing very strong I mean the whole sense of it being private is the sauna environment a private situation or is it a very kind of ah expressive kind of

II.i.26:30
mm mm yeah see I feel like I’m repeating myself from before

Russell:

That’s all right

James:

because we talked about people’s how their personas might appear you know because like I said in some ways it’s very expressive because you’re there going here I am for sex and yet there’s all this kind of um persona stuff that goes on these coverings that go on in that place and how far people would exchange

II.i.27:00
information or not so there’s a privacy to that as well what goes on there is private to the outside world that that the relationships or the contact that are formed in these places are not extenuated outside extended sorry to outside

Russell:

Mm um when you talk about kind of putting on personas do you put on personas

II.i.27:30
do you adopt a persona or a range of personae

James:

Ah I don’t know about put no I don’t put on a persona but I’m very measured I think that’s you know the major thing I’m careful I suppose

Russell:

About what

James:

About what what I would present how how I would present to the world um you know either not being too interested

II.i.28:00
or not being uninterested it’s that kind of watchful waiting kind of thing that goes on

Russell:

One one of the things that interests me about a lot of the things you’ve been talking about is that there’s a a kind of a language running through it (I sigh) which is a language of space

II.i.28:30
a a language to do with space so you talked about people going too far crossing a line there are limits or being measured (I laugh a little) and when you think of your experiences that you associate with a term like private
II.i.29:00
what kind of um I guess what form does your imagining take or that sense of your experiences take like is it a do you have a sense that that’s all spatial in some way that privacy for instance you were quite concerned in the previous interview that we recorded anyway um that when we were discussing the other man whose encounter you had described you were concerned and clearly careful about um not disclosing too much information in some way about him or or the release of information was something that you were considerate you were
II.i.29:30
there was something considerate about him however do you also think or feel about that in some way in spatial terms like not to go too far or not to expose him put him take him from one place put him in another place or something you know it how does your imagination work around that
II.i.30:00
(a silence) or I’ll ask the question in a completely different way
James:
Right okay
Russell:
How do you know what’s the mechanisms by which you know that something is private or not (James laughs a little) as an experience
James:
Right
II.i.31:00
mm god I don’t know
Russell:
I’ll put it to you another way you must know because you do know that some things are private and some things aren’t so it might be that you don’t know about it so all I guess I’m interested in is that you just allow yourself to get a bit exploratory here
II.i.31:30
maybe
James:
Well privacy for me I guess particularly in terms of the sexual um there’s a there has been I think in the past a very strong sense for me to actually um be quite open and almost um announcing that other part of life which people might regard as as that should be private
II.i.32:00
that’s not necessarily to be spoken of in a public way and I’ve done that in like performances and things actually utilising that kind of you know sex beat behaviour and gone well you know I’m writing this in character form but obviously oh well ah no other pieces they were they were simply it was just me talking about it so yes so I in a situation where I’m announcing a very kind of private public
II.i.32:30
I mean private sort of domain to the public and yet in the gay world or what I would regard as the gay world that kind of talk is fairly strong anyway people know about it this is part of the culture so I think I’m not that clear about what’s private and what’s public in myself and I think I think as I’ve gotten older that I’m probably a bit more careful about that a bit more
II.i.33:00
um aware that um you know sex is not a comfortable thing for people and I don’t know if it should be [unintelligible] well not should be but I don’t know if that will change it’s not something that as we get more you know as consciousness grows or as the world changes and becomes more moderne [sic] that that’s going to change I think sex is a very primal place so
II.i.33:30
I think maybe with the saunas that’s the thing that becomes private something has to remain private and if you’re having sex which is a very kind of powerful thing with people who you don’t necessarily know you don’t trust them I wonder if the um yeah all the kind of peripheral things that that are involved in saunas the make up the building the the
II.i.34:00
etiquette whatever are um kind of rituals that um that allow some sense of privacy to main to remain within that whereas if you’re having sex I imagine with a you know partner or with someone who you have a bit trust with then it would be a different way of negotiating a sexual behaviour I wonder if these places have that they build up this stuff to
II.i.34:30
maintain some sense of privacy within it so there are rituals that hold that tight you know the whole thing about passing information and stuff yes people do chat people do meet form relationships and stuff like that but the majority of times it’s not
about that so it's like entering into that very kind of eruptive world of sex but maintaining this kind of formal surface

Russell:

II.i.35:00
(a silence) Is it like the rest of the world becomes private (I laugh a little) in a sauna the rest you know people walking around and each person has kind of is part of the world outside the sauna

II.i.35:30
but suddenly what that is is private in a way

James:

Yes yes their outside life is private from the sexual

Russell:

Unless they choose to disclose

James:

That's right and there is a very there's often a very careful way of manoeuvring in the conversations after there it's never really taken for granted that that you are going to expose yourself to people

II.i.36:00
people are quite wary I I think of for whatever reason of exposing too much so yeah yeah the kinds of things that one regards as private in in the outside world are different to the the kind of privateness that's held in the sauna and that that's what I was going back to the whole thing about sex cos sex is a dangerous thing I don't just mean HIV I think that psychically it's a dangerous thing and so they're kind of

II.i.36:30
things that built up get built up in there the kind of playland kind of thing that's that's involved with that I wonder if that's a kind of de a device of um a safety device kind of thing the playground aspect of it that kind of

Russell:

Like how a playground has a kind of boundary around it or um

James:

Yes and well it's that kind of thing of negotiating intimacy and

II.i.37:00
it's it's odd because the kind of thing the intimacy that's gets [sic] that that physically occurs in those places as opposed to the emotional intimacy that doesn't generally um is interesting whereas the outside world perhaps you know there's obviously very strong boundaries in terms of personal space and and you know what you can do and what you can't do

II.i.37:30
yeah I mean in a way it's surprising that it doesn't become an absolute you know anarchy in there in a way considering but there it isn't generally like I said the only time I've seen one sort of really kind of violent situation considering what's at stake in terms of the the sexual nature

II.i.38:00
of the place a whole bunch of men together with all that stuff going around how how kind of linear it is and how spacious it is and how kind of ah

Russell:
I remember early on I was at a conference you've just reminded me of this and ah a two day conference and um it was it was like a workshop actually where we were being trained in stuff to do with thesis preparation

II.i.39:00
and so everybody had to disclose what their research topic was and I was asked first of all in the room of you know

James:
Right

Russell:
almost thirty people

James:
All right

Russell:
So I'm the person who comes up with the one which isn't about kind of um changes in wrist tension as a result of therapeutic massage (we laugh) you know or um language practices in Thai email

II.i.39:30
you know it was um everybody was very civilised which was fine and I felt it was good to just simply say what I was doing and of course everybody during snack breaks was crowding (we start laughing) around me afterwards saying oh your topic's intere you know sort of I'm not sure whether it was with envy or a strange perverse curiosity

James:
All right

Russell:
But there was this woman who was um just so bright

II.i.40:00
and energised and full of vitality and um extremely attractive too and ah she talked with me that day and then the following day she talked to me um about a conversation she'd had in the intervening night with her husband about what I was studying and she had told me that she had said to her husband that

II.i.40:30
something that she had said to me the previous day which was that she didn't see why they just didn't throw a lot of men in a room switch the light off and let them go for it (James laughs a little) and her husband had said you can't tell him that because then he's got (I laugh a little) nothing to research (James laughs) but what I felt was that she'd actually said something really interesting when she'd said that to me and her husband had been in a strange way on to it as

II.i.41:00
well and that is people don't just have a room and turn the light off and throw everyone into it they create these elaborate places and it's something about the room with the light off you know throwing everyone shut the door turn the light off is the kind of anarchy that you were talking about that doesn't happen in the sauna overall

James:
Mm

II.i.41:30
yeah then there's places obviously within it

Russell:
Yeah yeah but it's something about the elaborate um in varying degrees the elaboration of I mean I keep meeting people who still think oh it's not just a hot room (I laugh a little)

James:
Right yes

Russell:
One hot room

James:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
Like when you explain well it's actually

James:
All right

Russell:
It can be up to five stories high

James:
Yes yes
Russell: and it’s you know
James: Yes
Russell: Um (a silence) I guess I’m just sort of recording that
James: Yeah
Russell: because you’ve made me think about it again for the first time in a long time
James: Yeah well it although it would be interesting to trace the history of these pl I mean are you doing that as part of this research too
Russell: No but I’m aware that um the history of gay saunas or the history of
James: Oh not necessarily of saunas I’m thinking
Russell: There’s a history of Roman bathhouses that’s been written there’s been a lot of incidental observations about
II.i.42:30 behaviour in um bathhouses over the centuries and a really detailed history which is brief but beautifully researched has been written about the development of a clandestine gay sauna culture in New York between eighteen eighty and World War Two and as a result of the fact that New York City had huge tenements without proper plumbing and so
II.i.43:00 an enormous number of bathhouses were built
James: Right
Russell: and many of them catering for very specific interests like for instance Jewish ritual cleansing
James: Right
Russell: um and so on and then after a certain point certainly by nineteen hundred and five or nineteen hundred and six there were definitely some places where it was known that if you went there that would be a place where you could meet other men
James: Right
Russell: and either have sex there or go away somewhere to have it
James: Right
Russell: and that those places were screening people at the door and the first raid is recorded in about nineteen o six
James: Oh really right
Russell: And we’ve got all the court transcripts of that and everything yeah
James: Oh okay so you’ve looked into that
Russell: Yeah but not as it’s not a serious thing
James: No no but it’s just adding information to it
Russell:
Yeah

James:

But I mean it’s that whole thing about men and sex though in terms of clandestine or sex in public places you know

II.i.44:00

or you know why is there sex in public places still when there’s you know in public toilets and when there’s places like saunas and sex clubs you know what’s the difference what is or is it just wherever there’s people there’s going to be like sex with men anyway

Russell:

Yeah there is money’s one thing and knowledge information about them is another

II.i.44:30

I keep meeting people who have no idea that the places exist

James:

Heterosexual people

Russell:

Um people of limited sexual experience who are interested in sex with men and who um haven’t who are not aware

II.i.45:00

Right

Russell:

of saunas existing um I can think of one recent case of a man who came to Australia from a country where such places aren’t legally operating and where homosexuality is suppressed by the government and who had stumbled on a back room in Melbourne and somehow believed that was

James:

it (he laughs a little)

Russell:

the only place or certainly was the place he knew of

II.i.45:30

Right

Russell:

about such other places so his sense of Melbourne as um a huge civic space within which there might be possibilities of same sex activity that could be sought out was all focussed on this one not very pleasant place (I laugh a little)

James:

Right

Russell:

Um people of limited sexual experience who are interested in sex with men and who um haven’t who are not aware

Russell:

Where is it what is it

Russell:

(we laugh a little, then) Oh um it was um The Attic in the city II.i.46:00

James:

What’s that

Russell:

Mm see it’s another world

James:

Oh is that that’s above a dirty um a dirty bookstore

Russell:

Yeah dirty

James:

Yeah (he laughs)
It’s that word again

James:
Yeah

Russell:
Um yes it is yeah and it’s interesting because it seems to have no connections really with a gay community

James:
Yeah no and and that that’s in a particular location isn’t it yeah

Russell:
Yes mm mm

James:
I think I’ve seen it like ads or something sometimes in the past and I was kind of ooh I was a bit curious it seemed to be a curiosity

Russell:
It’s like something out of a serial killer movie (we laugh a little)

James:
Oh is it have you been there

Russell:
Yeah I have

James:
And and where is it like it’s

Russell:
It’s above um it’s above that um bookshop which is above ah what appears to be a fairly straightforward CD shop but the other thing about it is that it’s open twenty-four hours

James:
Oh my god

Russell:
Which um I really found out about it on the net

James:
Right

Russell:
where it’s written up on there’s a global website for public sex called Cruising For Sex Dot Com ah which you can zoom in on your continent and then country of your choice (James laughs a little) and then city and then there’s just listings for both commercial venues and um for um yeah cruising spaces what we’d call beats and with ah people emailing in evaluations and updates and alternative opinions they also have ah police and bashing reports

James:
Right

Russell:
and it gets upgraded every two weeks

James:
My goodness

Russell:
So um places that you’re familiar with (I laugh a little) are listed

James:
Right

Russell:
um and it’ll even get down to which pathway (James laughs a little) and what not to

James:
Right

Russell:
You know like they’re very very specific but it’s maintained in some mid-west American state and your emails aren’t automatically you email them and then they decide what to select to add but it’s um and it’s also a
site that’s blocked by some servers I can’t access it at VUT

James:  

Right

Russell:  

my university

James:  

Right

Russell:  

It it somehow doesn’t get through the filter that they’ve got

James:  

Probably because it’s got sex in it

Russell:  

Well no some things do but not that but I found it elsewhere and of course saunas ah not all but ah most of them are listed it’s very much dependent on people providing it with information  

That’s a completely different kind of world in there very different move on to some other words oh can I just ask do you think then that words like private and public the kind of stable reliable senses that we associate with the meanings we you know connect with them in the world  

outside the sauna that those meanings become unstable inside the sauna or less meaningful

James:  

From my experience today yes

Russell:  

From your experience today

James:  

Mm from talking with you today yes I think I’m really keyed into that that the I’m not understanding something when you’re saying it and I not because I’m stupid today but I really think that those kind of questions that you’re asking in in connection with those places don’t have the same kind of meaning  

I’m trying to bring a social meaning to what goes on there and I don’t think you can

Russell:  

Right

James:  

And I think that’s I really think that’s what’s happening today

Russell:  

But there is another connection though you do have a knowledge you do have like you do feel I mean intruding for instance this is private I’m intruding

James:  

Yep

Russell:  

Whether it’s information or oh you two don’t want me to walk into this room with you

James:  

Yeah there’s negotiation but I mean there’s negotiation in the outside world as well

Russell:  

Yeah

James:  

But  

yeah it’s that etiquette thing we talked about in the first meeting but it it becomes bizarre when you talk about that in terms of what goes on in these places what trying to bring those words which have a familiarity with outside experience into that I think that’s part of it

Russell:  

Is that to go back a bit further then is that somehow or other true of words like clean and dirty then in some respects or are they more stable

James:
I think that’s more to do with my blocks with that or that that thing has got to do with my own personal kind of very strongly er psyche my own kind of take on the world and my phobias

Russell:

Well I’m that’s all I’m asking you about though

James:

In terms of the other ones

Russell:

I’m

James:

I know but

Russell:

Well I’m also asking you just about you

James:

But but when yeah but I took the words like private that one in particular I found very kind of tricky in terms of what is private I don’t

II.i.51:30

know and particularly when you’re relating it to the saunas considering what happens the kind of physical intimacies that go on there so what is private

Russell:

Is it that you don’t know it or you don’t know about it because I get a sense from you that you have a sense of pri privacy other people’s privacy for instance that I get a sense you respect that that you’re clear for instance that that would be part of the etiquette would be that one recognises that it’s important for you to recognise

II.i.52:00

what other people’s privacy is and then ah make a decision about whether or not to respect that when you told me the story about the young man who’d been pursued you recognised in that that his privacy something private in him had been violated and it didn’t seem to you unreasonable that he did hit that man

James:

II.i.52:30

Oh I don’t know if I felt it was unreasonable or reasonable

I was just giving that story

Russell:

Right

James:

as as an example of I don’t know whether he should have slapped that person but what I I can I can relate to what he said about that sense of being intruded on

Russell:

Right

James:

I guess what I’m after is is there is it something you know even though you might not know about it

James:

II.i.53:00

Is it something I know in inherently

Russell:

Yeah that

James:

But I may not know about it

Russell:

Yeah you might not be able to put it into words

James:

Yes

Russell:

but you feel like you can navigate that

James:

Yeah yeah
Deploy it

James:
That’s right

Russell:
Use it

James:
Yes

Russell:
Work with it

James:
Yeah absolutely

Russell:
Recognise it

James:
Yeah

Russell:
Deal with it

James:
Yeah absolutely

Russell:
Okay but the terms are definitely they don’t translate meaningfully

James:
No

Russell:
Stably from II.i.53:30 outside the sauna to inside the sauna

James:
I think so I think there’s a different structure

Russell:
Yeah

James:
involved it’s so you can’t you can’t use the words loosely I think that’s what I mean you can’t necessarily assume that those words may cross over

Russell:
Yeah

James:
and have the same meaning well I mean you know that’s assuming any word has a direct meaning anyway

Russell:
Well I want to now bring up two words that you’ve you’ve kind of used one earlier II.i.54:00 in this conversation but the other one you’ve used a version of it and they are dangerous and safe and you can choose them one at a time you don’t have to pair them I’ve paired them but you don’t have to there’s no reason why they need to be paired

James:
Well I guess the whole sense of saunas in II.i.54:30 particular are that kind of safe environment that you can walk in off the street and suddenly this playland exists and it’s warm and it’s you know steamy and towels and soft lounges and television and you know all the comforts of home (we laugh a little) and then the dan the danger I guess for me is the sense of ah rejection I suppose II.i.55:00 and also the ah I guess the issues around health yeah and the ugliness of sex sometimes too I think there’s a danger there sometimes the it’s like the ritual of it or the the aspects of it you just kind of go what am I here what am I doing what is this about because there’s no real sexual drive there at that II.i.55:30 particular point there’s just this kind of body or bodies and ah and also I guess the danger is about what is it within you that what do you want from this what do I want from this situation what am I getting what am I giving

Russell:
Are they questions you consciously ask yourself

James:
Yeah

Russell:
in those situations

James:
Yeah absolutely

Russell:
So you have as it were space to ask those questions

James:
I’m constantly referencing in those places  
constantly going what am I doing here what is this about what is this what is what is my action here about what is that person’s action about what are they what are we doing here yeah no it’s a constant referencing for me

Russell:
Is that like a kind of ongoing inner monologue

James:
Yes and that becomes particularly lit in those places it has a particular kind of flavour in those places

Russell:
Which is different from when you’re not in those places

James:
Mm  
it becomes a little bit rawer in some sen more raw in some way to the outside world

Russell:
If you’re wandering around a supermarket do you ask yourself I mean obviously with a different sort of quality but are you having an inner monologue of well what do I want do I need that this week or or do you tend to just drift and have a list in your hand

James:
No no no I’m in a fairly permanent state of that (he laughs a little) but um yeah but in the sauna it takes on that particular stuff about what is sex what what is this about you know

Russell:
When you say it’s a fairly permanent state is that in the whole process of moving through the sauna and through its various spaces does it extend as far as when you are finally with someone and are coupling with them in some way

James:
Oh yeah definitely

Russell:
You always have space to reflect on that

James:
Definitely yeah

Russell:
How do you know when something is dangerous

James:
I don’t

Russell:
What alerts you

James:
I don’t think you know in the moment I think it’s a before and after thing in that in that sense oh I don’t know god these are hard questions um

Russell:
You know when things are dangerous though don’t you

James:
I’m just trying to relate it to the sauna though what what what is dangerous I guess it’s
that it’s not so much a sense of being put in physical dan oh is it because there’s sometimes that sense of health I guess
II.i.58:30
the health dangers mm (a silence) I I you know it’s funny I’m the it becomes very
II.i.59:00
little or very kind of un-scary but I mean it’s that thing of the danger is that you are going to be with the wrong person (laughing a little) that’s the kind of danger that no this is not going to work but I mean you know whe when I say that it just sounds so pathetic it doesn’t sound scary at all but I you know I can’t I can’t think necessarily

Russell:
I know that feeling

James:
of what the danger is though when you say danger
II.i.59:30
but the danger I guess you know you say you know that feeling is of going ah there are maybe a couple of potentials maybe not but am I doing is this the right one is this (he laughs a little) the right choice yeah it’s funny isn’t it the danger disappears when you talk about it like that but I know it can be very dangerous
II.i.60:00
on some level but I don’t know what that is when we talk about it now what is that

Russell:
So that’s to do with selection

James:
Mm oh and being selected too

Russell:
Right

James:
Yeah so there’s that constant appraisal
II.i.60:30
reappraisal self-appraisal you know is this person going to walk out of the room on me in ten seconds are they going to go no this is not working or am I going you know or all that stuff

Russell:
Can we just go

II.i.61:00
back to something you said right at the beginning of this sequence you talked about saunas having all the comforts of home

James:

(he laughs, then) It was a little wry

Russell:
Okay how wry to what extent is it truthful and to what extent is it

James:
Well I mean you know they

Russell:
an entertainment

James:
All of them have all of them have coffee bars um TVs most of them have
II.i.61:30
some kind of lounge set up um a few of them have got gyms so you know they’re they are kind of set up in a kind of comfortable way computers they have internet access they’ve got saunas they’ve got spas and in one they’ve got a swimming pool

Russell:
To what extent do those things remind you of home

James:
Well home

Russell:
or bring the quality of home

James:
Home in in terms of
II.i.62:00
I mean that really was a wry kind of comment about

Russell:
Yeah okay

James:
you know just a place of comfort a place of
Russell:

All right okay

James:

You know I don’t have a sauna here but um (he laughs a little)

Russell:

But you have a very good shower (I laugh a little)

James:

I’ve got a good shower yeah and the TV’s always on (he laughs a little) yeah so a place of yeah a place of that you can sort of feed a whole range of desires I guess

Russell:

Like you were II.i.62:30

very resentful about the showers at um (James laughs a little) Suburb A um and the grounds for that were clearly that something about the showers are supposed to do something for you

James:

Yeah

Russell:

You have an expectation and they weren’t doing it

James:

That’s right

Russell:

and very strong sense of my shower is you know and that there are other showers in Melbourne which are um I had a conversation with someone recently who’d been to Rear Entry II.i.63:00

for the first time and he was instantly his face lit up when he mentioned the showers (James laughs a little) that cascade of water that pours out of those showerheads

James:

Yes

Russell:

strange as they look

James:

Yes yes abundance and I guess the those places do have that sense of abundance that and that’s when they work when it’s physically abundant and when it yeah there’s a nice sense of abundance and richness you know and that’s why for everyone that went Squirt was so magnificent because it was just abundant II.i.63:30

it was

Russell:

Oh Splash

James:

Splash sorry

Russell:

Yes

James:

There was a sense of abundance so when the water trickles out there’s a sense of poorness to it wretchedness you know

Russell:

Do you experience your home as being abundant (James laughs) no I mean that seriously

James:

I experi... I ex

Russell:

I mean we’re sitting in your we’re sitting in your flat

James:

Yeah

Russell:
II.i.64:00

but that’s a different thing from what I’m talking about

James:

All right I experience my home as a place of refuge that’s how I my instinct is to come home to get in that door and shut the world out and I think that is a recognisable thing of the saunas as well I go there and I shut the world out even though there’s a whole other world that goes on in there it’s very it can be very abstract sometimes you know it can be a very abstract place and that’s why those words like private and stuff are very odd because they don’t kind of work in the same reference and yeah so yeah so that’s what I would the similarities I guess are the sense of refuge but you know the difference with here is I don’t have to put up with other people I don’t have to deal with people walking around me or you know either avoiding me or um making demands I um yeah it’s different in that sense

Russell:

You have to put up with that in saunas

James:

Yeah

Russell:

What what form does that take when you say put up with something

James:

Well I guess you have to negotiate that thing ah in particular of

II.i.65:30

of people that um you would rather not see when you’re in there you don’t want to see them

Russell:

Do you look somewhere else or

James:

Sometimes yeah

Russell:

Take another corner

James:

Mm move to a different part mm

Russell:

II.i.66:00

(a silence) Do you ever experience yourself as a danger to yourself in a sauna

James:

Ah yeah I think

II.i.66:30

so in terms of those those times when you really go overboard and um you know have so many people and put yourself in so many different situations where you know the danger is the health thing again kind of going not necessarily HIV but all the other kind of things that are potentially possible so yeah and and you know a sense of of psychic danger too of just kind of going what what kind of self respect one has and how far you go in terms of that

II.i.67:00

um you know how you view yourself as a you know a valuable attractive person and how you play that out obviously you know or often in a very negative way I think

Russell:

Um the self respect thing

II.i.67:30

is that connected with um a form of moderation or regulation or discipline

James:

Yeah moderation I think

Russell:

Moderation

James:

Yeah and often the these places don’t um create moderation

Russell:

But you’ve said that they in a strange way don’t create total anarchy and chaos

James:

No but

II.i.68:00
(laughing a little) close to it I guess sometimes I suppose on a personal level the amount of people that you might have sex with

Russell:
Yeah

James:
which can be anything you know from one to twenty or more

Russell:
Yeah

James:
you know so there’s something kind of not much restraint there really

Russell:
I suppose it depends on whether you stay more than half an hour doesn’t it really (I laugh a little)

James:
(laughing) I never stay half an hour

Russell:
I stayed twenty-five minutes recently

James:
Oh did you

Russell:
Yeah

James:
Oh god what was what was wrong with it

Russell:
No nothing was wrong (II.i.68:30) with it um (a silence) when you say you’re constantly asking yourself questions (II.i.69:00) like in the sauna but also in the rest of the world are there times when that stops in the sauna at all

James:
Yeah I think so I think well there must be times when it it you know I think perhaps that’s why maybe you know the sauna does work on that level because you know you can focus I suppose on sex you can focus on that even if it is the pornography you know there’s something that helps block out the kind of you know you well there’s a place it’s a place where you can sort of let go of some responsibility and that’s perhaps what leads into the lack of moderation in other areas [unintelligible] there’s a you know you don’t actually have to do any work or anything in that time while you’re there you don’t have to

Russell:
You don’t have to but you do though (we laugh a little)

James:
Yeah well I just naturally think like that but it is a place where you know you don’t have to work (II.i.70:00)

Russell:
Yeah I find that sometimes I I think that’s completely true and I haven’t thought about it in those terms but sometimes I know I go and I decide to work very hard

James:
Uh-huh

Russell:
and there are other times where I don’t give a fuck (I laugh a little)

James:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
(laughing) literally

James:
Yeah right

Russell:
But you know I I yeah I don’t care
James:
Yeah

Russell:
I guess or things are effortless
no effort will be made

James:
Right

Russell:
(a silence) Well I think I might leave it there then

James:
(softly) No problems

Russell:
Is there anything
else you want to ask or say

James:
No no

Russell:
Okay thanks

James:
Okay (he laughs a little)

(I switch off the minidisc recorder)

END OF CONVERSATION
appendices 25–32
The transcript documents a second conversation with Apollo, again recorded in his kitchen but on a weekday afternoon. Before we began, Apollo took a phone call from a friend who wanted to drop by to pick something up. I expected this friend to merely come to the front door but when he arrived Apollo invited him in. The friend’s visit, which fell between the first and second parts of the transcript, is noted below but was not recorded.

Russell:

II.i.00:00
So now we’re on (Apollo grooms as if for a camera and I laugh) no need to groom yourself um so what I want to do this time is something quite different from what we did last time and I just want to um um go through a list of words and what I want to some of them are words you used last time and some of them aren’t

II.i.00:30
and what I want you to do is just think about saunas in relationship to each word as I give it to you and just let me know any associations that come to mind it might be a story it might be or stories it might be it makes you think of um one thing that seems to keep happening or it might be

Apollo:

You mean in a sauna context

II.i.01:00
I have to think of it

Russell:

Yeah yeah yeah

Apollo:

Right okay

Russell:

Yeah in other words to kind of what do you associate that word with in terms of your experience of saunas okay and it might be that it’s to do with an event or it might be something you’ve seen or it might be something that you notice or have noticed on several occasions it might be a piece of furniture it might be who knows okay

Apollo:

Sure

Russell:

Okay so the first word is

II.i.01:30

Clean

Apollo:

Clean mm mm when I think when you say that I immediately think of the pool area in the sauna and I’m drawn to that area more than any other part of the ah establishment and um

II.i.02:00

yeah that’s some some saunas are much cleaner than others and that’s also an issue f has been an issue for me when I’ve gone to them i I prefer the ones that are cleaner to the ones that aren’t but I when I it’s interesting when you say clean I immediately think of the pool area I don’t know why

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

but I just do the whole pool around the whole pool area and if that’s clean

II.i.02:30

well then to me that’s kind of important (he laughs a little)

Russell:

So so that’s like the way you’d measure a sauna’s cleanliness in some ways like if the pool area were clean then that would tend to be a way of telling whether the sauna was clean in some way

Apollo:

Well yes and no I mean yes in that it’s the first thing that comes to mind

Russell:

Yes

Apollo:

when you say clean

Russell:

Yeah
Apollo: but obviously it's not just about the pool area.

Russell: Yeah.

Apollo: even though that's important to me.

Russell: Yeah.

Apollo: and I would use that mainly to assess you know whether or not it's clean of course there are other other things when I think about it that come into clean but um that area around the pool (putting on a voice) the pool (he laughs a little, then reverts to his usual voice) is very important.

Russell: Now when you say the pool given that there's only really one sauna in Melbourne that has what I would call a pool.

Apollo: Absolutely yeah.

Russell: Right okay all right and you think of that as a pool.

Apollo: Yeah sorry.

Russell: No no no on the contrary.

Apollo: Yeah no.

Russell: It's a.

Apollo: Yeah because none of them are you're right none of them there are no pools that I know of but there's obviously there's an area where there's water.

Russell: Yeah that you can immerse yourself in.

Apollo: Yeah.

Russell: Like the big spa.

Apollo: Yeah.

Russell: that you can immerse yourself in.
Yeah  okay

Apollo:
I love

Russell:
With the bubbles or without (*I laugh a little*)

Apollo:
With oh with the bubbles

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
I just love water

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
you know and I'll go into a place even if there's no bubbles but I just something to do with clean cleaning and

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
You know like cleaning your body as well

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
and um preparing yourself it's hygiene and maybe that's why I associate

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
the idea of being clean with that area

Russell:

Apollo:
Somehow I feel that if it's clean I'll be clean know what I mean (*he moves from the table to attend to making coffee*)

Russell:

Apollo:
Well that's a really hard one you know because um I mean (*still at the sink*) well it's all superficial really (*he laughs a little*) when you think about it I mean obviously things you know that the floor's really around the area

Russell:
What do you mean what do you mean by shit

Apollo:
Like just um you know that it's clean like the floor that u which is usually tiles

Russell:
Yeah
Apollo: around an area like that

Russell: Yeah

Apollo: is not mouldy or dark or

Russell: Right

Apollo: kind of looking it's been mopped and it's clean

Russell: Yeah

Apollo: Very clean looking

Russell: Yeah

Apollo: You know that's that's a big thing for me um now as for the water the water's a really hard one like I mean how the hell do you know I mean the water's blue and it's got chlorine in it and I mean you know you can't I mean I can't there's no way of telling for me whether the water's clean or not it's got to do more with the area or around in and around the water that it's clean

Russell: Right

Apollo: You know some of them you know they've got to be clean I mean you know just not grimy usually and um

Russell: Do you do you have any recollection of an occasion where you've looked for grime or do you wait for it to be to leap up as it were and

Apollo: Oh no there is one time I remember now as for the water the water's a really hard one like I didn't go oh looking for it but I remember there's a section I don't know I haven't been there in so long now but in Volcano near the steam room

Russell: Yeah

Apollo: where there's um a f there's a few showers there and they're quite small and sort of awkward you have to kind of step up to get to them and um there's one area there that's I remember always when I've I'm you know going there that it's always been a bit grotty and on the times I have gone there I've I haven't gone to look for it but as I've passed it I've thought oh right yeah yeah it's grotty it's still grotty you know (he laughs a little)

Russell: Now if you've been passing it let's say how you how come you've been passing it what have you been doing

Apollo: Well on the way to the steam room

Russell: Right okay

Apollo: That's how you pass it
So you're on your way to the steam room

Apollo:

You're looking around and checking everyone out

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

and you walk past and you go oh right there's that dirty corner

Russell:

(laughing a little) Right

Apollo:

and that dirty fucking shower (I laugh)

Russell:

II.i.08:00

you know that's still the same

Apollo:

And and that and that's and you think it's still the same even without checking you assume it's still the same

Russell:

Yeah I do

Apollo:

Yeah right okay um what about smells do smells affect your sense of things being clean

Russell:

Yes yeah

Apollo:

Can you tell me more

Russell:

Okay right well chlorine bleach

Apollo:

is clean smelling for me offensive to other people but I smell it and I smell even though I don't like the smell

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

It's not a really beautiful delicious sweet fragrant smell I still associate that with clean

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

because of childhood memories

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

of bleach my mother using bleach to clean the bathroom and you know a whole clothes and all that sort of stuff so I do associate that with clean

Russell:

II.i.09:00

clean

Apollo:

And those places definitely I know High Street I remember that whole area stinks of bleach

Russell:

Right so that's very reassuring for you

Apollo:

Well I guess subconsciously yeah I mean I don't think about it as I'm you know you know I don't think oh wow I smell bleach jeez this is so reassuring (I laugh) you know it's so good it must be so clean that

Russell:

Well then what does happen
Well

**Russell:**

You’ve noticed that it smells of bleach

**Apollo:**

Yeah I think more when you go to a place the first time because the first impressions you get usually stay with you

**Russell:**

Right

**Apollo:**

and um you know when you visit revisit a place like at least I can speak for myself it’s those first impressions that stay with you and um you know on the times that I’ve been back to High Street I haven’t you know oh no no there is a couple of times I remember around the area where the lockers

**Russell:**

II.i.09:30

That’s fine okay yeah um

**Apollo:**

*moving around the kitchen preparing the coffee* What about you have you ever do you have do you ever have have you ever had those grotty corners oh you know like kind of leap at you or or when you visit a place you’ve thought oh yes I know that corner or that section or that cubicle or you know

**Russell:**

Um

**Apollo:**

Oh I’ve got a good one to tell

**Russell:**

II.i.10:00

Yeah go on

**Apollo:**

*he laughs, then* Um I remember this one I know it’s disgusting but I remember there was this one wall that I used to not look forward to seeing but I well it was always always cum-stained right

**Russell:**

Right

**Apollo:**

And it was as if they never ever fucking cleaned it ever

**Russell:**

Which venue was this in

**Apollo:**

This was at um it was it’s probably not even relevant it’s not even a sauna it was at ah The Basement

**Russell:**

Oh yeah

**Apollo:**

II.i.11:00

I don’t remember

**Russell:**

Fine that’s okay

**Apollo:**

to be honest

**Russell:**

II.i.11:30

Yeah go on

**Apollo:**

*he laughs, then* Um I remember this one I know it’s disgusting but I remember there was this one wall that I used to not look forward to seeing but I well it was always always cum-stained right

**Russell:**

Right

**Apollo:**

And it was as if they never ever fucking cleaned it ever

**Russell:**

Which venue was this in

**Apollo:**

This was at um it was it’s probably not even relevant it’s not even a sauna it was at ah The Basement

**Russell:**

Oh yeah

**Apollo:**

II.i.12:00

yeah

**Apollo:**
And um it was always and maybe it was because how the light shone on it or whatever but it was always just absolutely revolting and thick full of like you know thousands of people cummin’ all over the bloody thing

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
Really

Russell:
Gosh

Apollo:
Yeah yeah I I remember that and I’d probably go there and it’s probably still there (I laugh a little) actually but anyway

Russell:
When was the last time you saw that

Apollo:
Oh god

Russell:
Um well here’s the next word then

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:
Dirty

Apollo:
(by laughs, then) Dirty mm hmmm

Russell:
What do I think of what’s the what comes to mind in that context okay what comes to mind is (he laughs) I’ll be honest is dirty guys right I’ve got a real thing and that’s part of the reason why I I prefer to go to saunas rather than places like The Basement about hygiene

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
Simply because you can wash and have a shower before during and after

Russell:
Yes

Apollo:
Whereas at those other places you can’t

Russell:
Yes

Apollo:
or it’s not promoted as part of those you know those venues and when I think of dirty I when you say dirty I just immediately I can’t help but think of um guys that are really dirty that don’t clean themselves that really stink

Russell:
At saunas

Apollo:
Yeah because there are those guys and it doesn’t take you long to actually find them

Russell:
And what do they smell of

Apollo:
Oh just B.O.

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
(laughing) lovely smells
Russell:
That was your doorbell I'll just
Apollo:
Excuse me won't you
Russell:
Yeah I'll just turn this off for a moment
Apollo:
(leaving the room to answer the door) Yes indeed

II.i.14:21
(Apollo’s friend arrives and joins us for coffee. Apollo introduces us and tells his friend what I’m doing there. The friend immediately offers candid information, unrequested by either Apollo or me, about his sauna experiences and practice. It’s information he delivers with humour and wit. Throughout the friend’s visit I neither confirm nor deny any of Apollo’s statements about the nature of my business. Nor do I draw attention to the fact that this is what I am doing. I find myself, effectively, participating in a casual chat but ‘en guard’. And I find the situation, which is otherwise extremely pleasant, tricky, and am relieved when the friend departs. When Apollo returns to the kitchen, I switch the recorder back on.)

Russell:

II.ii.00:00
Um yes okay
Apollo:
He’s a real character isn’t he
Russell:
Yep that should be yep that’s right you were telling me about the word dirty
Apollo:
Dirty oh yeah
Russell:
as it relates to men
Apollo:
As it relates to men okay yeah there’s I I think of two things there’s that dirty yuck dirty about body odour and all that sort of stuff but there’s also

II.ii.00:30
an um dirty as in I think of like dirty sex
Russell:
Oh yeah what do you mean by that
Apollo:
As a positive thing like having dirty what do I mean by that you know just having raunchy you know uninhibited filthy (he laughs) um yeah that’s what I you know sex
Russell:
So uninhibited sex is dirty sex
Apollo:
Well it can yeah that’s what I associate it

II.ii.01:00
that’s what I what it can be yeah
Russell:
Right um the thing that comes to mind is that when I asked you about the word clean you thought about the place when I asked you about the word dirty even though and even though you talked about things that may be not clean when we talked about clean um when I asked you about the

II.ii.01:30
word dirty it was no longer about the place it was about
Apollo & Russell:
(simultaneously) people
Apollo:
Mm yeah I don’t know why
Russell:
Mm but that’s
Apollo:
It’s just the first thing that’s come into my I
Russell:
Yeah
Apollo:
I basically rather than I mean I'm happy I am thinking about it but it's the first thing that comes to mind that's what I've been trying to um do

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
in the responses
No

Apollo: without thinking too much

Russell:
That's fine I'm

Apollo: You know

Russell:
No I'm pleased about that

Apollo:
But I don't know why that is but oh you're right

Russell:
So is but is smell

Apollo: The one I just talked to you about

Russell: Yeah yeah between body smell and the smell that's dirty

Apollo: I think there's a huge distinction

Russell: But how do you make that distinction

Apollo: Well

Russell: You may you may

Apollo: There's a difference between okay a pleasant body smell of someone who's clean you know um as opposed to a body smell that comes from a guy who hasn't washed himself cleaned himself I mean I just think it's as simple as that I mean how else can you how I mean how much more of a distinction do you want me to make other than

Russell: Well more how do you see you keep telling me that that's the distinction

Apollo: Mm

Russell: What I'm asking though is how you make that distinction

Apollo: How do I do it
Russell:
Yes

Apollo:
Okay

II.ii.04:00
just by smell when when you potentially meet someone I have very acute smell very acute everyone’s told me that and it’s and I think that’s true and I can tell usually very quickly after meeting somebody and I I can just smell

II.ii.04:30
make that distinction after meeting somebody by being close to them and (he sniffs rapidly) um not doing that

Russell:
Yes not sniffing

Apollo:
But not not consciously but I can just tell if you know someone’s cleaned themselves or not and most people do clean themselves but there are some that don’t and that to me is a real turn off and dirty and I just don’t want it

II.ii.05:00
I don’t proceed basically

Russell:
You’ll remove like if you’re in a room with someone by that stage you’ll walk out of the room at that point

Apollo:
Mm hmm

Russell:
Yeah with any explanation or

Apollo:
I won’t be honest (he laughs) I couldn’t I couldn’t be it’s a bit rude I think I just

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
I don’t know I’ll make up some excuse or or just say that I’ve had enough or

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
You know it’s it’s not going to work or whatever

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
But I won’t ever say it’s because I don’t like the s

II.ii.05:30
your smell or that you’re dirty

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
Never

Russell:
Right okay

Apollo:
And it has happened on the odd occasion

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
Mm hmm

Russell:
Okay um now can you just tell me a little bit more about dirty sex please

Apollo:
Ah dirty sex well

Russell:
Yeah like I’m interested in this because this has come up elsewhere

Apollo:
Dirty sex
Russell:
Yeah so what I’m curious about here is 
again how how you know oh yes this is dirty sex this isn’t just sex this is dirty sex how do you know

Apollo:
Well when I say dirty sex I mean uninhibited um you know totally totally uninhibited guys who just who have got no hang ups who are willing to explore every nook and cranny crevice of your body

Russell:
Right so it’s organised in terms of what the other guy is interested in doing

Apollo:
Yes and no well yes but it’s but it’s a two way thing

Russell:
Yeah oh yeah yeah

Apollo:
It’s not just about you know what they want I mean

Russell:
It’s it’s just that you described the other person

Apollo:
The other person yeah

Russell:
Yeah yeah

Apollo:
Yeah well it yeah but of course and you know if they’re into it and I’m into it and the whole experience is you know raunchy dirty filthy (he laughs, then) great you know I mean I think that’s what everybody kind of well I can’t generalise but I was going to say well that’s what everybody kind of is looking for that kind of you know (he growls) rrraaa you know a totally wild um you know uninhibited you know

Russell:
Is it is it the case that you’ve ever had dirty sex with a dirty man

Apollo:
(he laughs, then) Um is it the case that I’ve ever had dirty sex with a dirty man

Russell:
In a sauna that you can recall

Apollo:
Mm mm hmm

Russell:
You have

Apollo:
Mm hmm

Russell:
Right so does that mean that your inhibitions about his dirtiness were let go

Apollo:
Well I only had it because ah I was it sounds hypocritical because even though I said to you I’ve got a pretty good sense of smell and stuff I remember this one occasion proceeding with this guy that I thought we were going to have a great time with together and it was all kind of hunky dory and it was it was on and um but it didn’t take long

Russell:
ah before I um thought oh oh (he laughs a little, then sniffs) mm mm and it stopped

Apollo:
Right

Apollo:
So we didn’t really go the whole way I mean it it began that way like it was began really
well but once I the smell it you know the dirty smell happened I just thought no

Russell:

Okay

Apollo:

Stopped so I haven’t really had a a full exper full on II.ii.09:00 experience like the whole way

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

with someone who’s dirty

Russell:

All right okay

Apollo:

You know

Russell:

And would if one other thing if if you’ve had um have you ever had an experience in a sauna

Apollo:

Yep

Russell:

of having dirty sex with someone in a part of the sauna that was not clean

Apollo:

Yep I have

Russell:

Right and would it be fair II.ii.09:30 to say that when you talk about being uninhibited that your inhibitions about hygiene were let go of

Apollo:

Yep

Russell:

Right okay

Apollo:

Because the most important thing

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

is in order of priority it’s it’s not oh how oh clean the place is (I laugh) I’m I’m only going to go to that place because it’s looks spotless you know that place II.ii.10:00 I’m not going to go it’s not like that is it

Russell:

No

Apollo:

It’s more to do with you know obviously you know the experience the sexual experience is the first thing

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

you know but and for me like you know I mean I wouldn’t not go I mean if a place doesn’t look that clean it doesn’t mean that I’m not going to enjoy myself there or or not have sex there you know it’s it’s nice if it is clean you know but because it’s II.ii.10:30 not clean doesn’t mean that I’ll you know I’m not going to go there or ever go there or ever have sex there you know so um yeah I mean I have had dirty sex with someone in a dirty part of a sauna or what I thought was a dirty part of the sauna

Russell:

Yeah can I just

Apollo:

Cos it’s so dark a lot of the time you know

Russell:

Well that was
Apollo:
You know

Russell:
what I was going to say

Apollo:
How do you know half the time anyway

Russell:
Well how did YOU know that this part of the sauna on this occasion was dirty like

Apollo:
Yeah all right

Russell:
you don’t need to name the sauna

Apollo:
No

Russell:
but can you tell me what the part was or describe the place where you had the dirty sex

Apollo:
Okay sure the thing what I what I um I I immediately think of this one experience a long time ago when you when in relation to this question and I immediately think of being in a place that had cum stains (he laughs a little) a lot of them on the floor

Russell:
On the floor

Apollo:
Mm and on the bed

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
Those mattressy type

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
skinny beds and that was pretty fucking dirty filthy and you know stain stain you know stains I mean they sticky stains they’d been there obviously for a while and they had just wasn’t clean

Russell:
When you say a while do you mean like more than a day

Apollo:
Well

Russell:
or a couple of hours

Apollo:
A couple of hours

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
Not not no it wouldn’t be more than a day not even

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
Just a couple of hours at the most

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
And you know like bits of um paper like er towel like just everywhere condoms

Russell:
Yes
Apollo:  
on the ground  

Russell:  
Yes  

Apollo:  
I mean you know that's pretty yucky yeah that's what I think of when I say dirty  

Russell:  
Okay and that was in a cubicle  

Apollo:  
Yep  

Russell:  
Yeah okay  

Apollo:  
Mm hmm  

Russell:  
Can I give you another word  

Apollo:  
Mm  

Russell:  
Um before I do you’ve left the gas on  

Apollo:  
Oh dear  

Russell:  
That’s all right  

Apollo:  
(moving to the stove) No worries thanks for that [unintelligible]  

Russell:  
II.ii.12:30  
Okay um another word  

Apollo:  
Yes  

Russell:  
Private  

Apollo:  
Very important very important mm what do I think of  

Russell:  
Your whole face has suddenly changed in the way you’re talking to me you’ve suddenly straightened your neck  

Apollo:  
Have I  

Russell:  
and there’s this kind of smile (Apollo laughs) that’s you  

Apollo:  
Well  

Russell:  
It’s like suddenly you’re proud or something  

Apollo:  
II.ii.13:00  
Well I don’t know about proud  

Russell:  
No but  

Apollo:  
but it’s it’s very important  

Russell:  
It’s something like a very positive energy all of a sudden in the way you’re telling me that  

Apollo:  
Well I I like to look for that when I go to a it’s very important on my list like I don’t like and even though it’s happened before going into a place where into a into a more specifically into a cubicle  

Russell:  
Yes
Apollo:

where there are hands *(he laughs)* coming from all directions you know and

**II.ii.13:30**
you’re shooing everyone off being in a completely private enclosed space

Russell:

Yes

Apollo:

Just you and one other person um is is what I look for I’m not into and I can’t handle even though they’re really dark and you know you can’t see a lot of people those maze type rooms that are big where everybody there’s lots of people going through like you know they’re not they’re not little enclosed spaces they’re big rooms that are dark

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

and

**II.ii.14:00**
a lot of people go through there I just can’t handle that and to me ah that privacy is it’s it’s what it’s about and it’s great when when you can get that and the whole you know with someone you’re having a good time with and the whole package and experience and it’s all fantastic it’s partly fantastic because it’s um you know private in a way

**II.ii.14:30**
but is it like you know I mean you walk past I mean the other side to that is it might be in the moment private but as an outsider often I used to think it was very funny going past cubicles you could hear everything *(he laughs)* and you know it might have been private in there but it really wasn’t because you the sound effects were just outrageous it you know it walking around the place

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

the things you would hear um you know would suggest that you know it’s

**II.ii.15:00**
not really a very private place at all you know

Russell:

But when

Apollo:

judging from the sound effects

Russell:

When you’ve been inside the cubicle

Apollo:

Yep yep

Russell:

you’ve experienced it

Apollo:

That’s the most important thing yeah

Russell:

You’ve experienced it as private even though you if you stopped and thought you would know that any sounds you make could be heard outside

Apollo:

Well you know that

Russell:

because most cubicles don’t have a ceiling

Apollo:

That’s right

Russell:

do they right yeah yeah

Apollo:

Yeah but but yeah I know that but still it just

**II.ii.15:30**
meant basically that there were no other hands or you know even people

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:
looking through those doors or you know

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
perv perving on you

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
It was really important because I can’t stand that

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
I just can’t stand it and it’s really interesting um because you know here you are in this kind of enclosed sorry open space where everyone’s walking around and checking everyone out and you know looking for that way of being private with somebody um you know like I mean

II.ii.16:00
I couldn’t and I have it’s happened before you know being asked to say partake in a a threesome or a you know a group activity it’s not really my scene so I’d always decline in that situation and um you know I just it’s not me but ah privacy’s a very important

Russell:
Your own privacy

Apollo:
Well

Russell:
For instance if you were in

II.ii.16:30
something like if you were in a steam room or another area that wasn’t enclosed in the sense that it could be secured and locked in the way a cubicle can be so if you were in such an area and some sort of group activity was happening in another part of that area would you feel inclined to leave

Apollo:
Mm well maybe not leave I wouldn’t

II.ii.17:00
no maybe not leave

Russell:
Even though you don’t want to join in

Apollo:
I wouldn’t join in

Russell:
Yeah yeah but it wouldn’t be an issue for you to feel oh well they can do that if they like

Apollo:
Like it doesn’t bother me

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
No I mean I wouldn’t feel put off or disgusted or in any way threatened by people because I know it goes on and I see it all the time when you go to a sauna but I wouldn’t be a part of a um

II.ii.17:30
a a situation in an open area

Russell:
When you go into cubicles do you check that the door has been secured

Apollo:
Always (he laughs, then) always and the first thing I do I’m one of these people who puts on the light (he laughs a little)

Russell:
Yes

Apollo:
Full on like as high as it’ll go you know just

II.ii.18:00
just check everything out (he laughs a little) and ah

Russell:
When you say everything

Apollo:
Well

Russell:
do you mean the person or do you mean the the cubicle

Apollo:
Everything I mean the person

Russell:
The person and the cubicle

Apollo:
and the cubicle ah cum stains seeing where I’m at STDs all that stuff I just do it now I don’t care if people if the other person’s not into it if they’re not into it well then bad luck I just do it and I’ve

II.ii.18:30
actually learnt through experience that it’s the best thing to do because I have come across in the past ages ago but you know some very strange looking things down there (he laughs a little) that I’ve just gone sorry you know so it pays to to do that I think I mean you know if if people are too embarrassed or can’t handle it I mean you know bad luck I mean you know and in a way it does you know

II.ii.19:00
go against being private in a way because you know like oh no no it doesn’t I because I was equating privacy with darkness

Russell:
Oh yeah

Apollo:
But um and I do like that feeling of you know like it’s like a cocoon feeling the feeling of sort of um I don’t know warmth you know an intimacy that dark environment brings on but

II.ii.19:30
you know I mean I I usually turn down the light

Russell:
After turning it up

Apollo:
Yep

Russell:
What if the other person wants to handle the light to adjust it

Apollo:
That’s fine during like at any time that’s fine but initially I’m I always always ah would turn the light on when I go in in

Russell:
Now if if the other person

II.ii.20:00
instantly you turned it up they turned it down how do you then negotiate what happens next or do you not negotiate it

Apollo:
How do I well usu

Russell:
Have you had an experience where that has happened

Apollo:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
Yes right okay

Apollo:
Yeah yeah absolutely usually um I would um I would ah you know like I would do everything except um I wouldn’t go anywhere near someone’s

II.ii.20:30
dick unless I’ve checked it out so I could perhaps do other things

Russell:
Checked it out visually

Apollo:
Yeah with the lights on

Russell:
Yeah yeah
Apollo:

Um I would do other things but if they're not willing to you know um face the music with the lights on well then and they've got every right to not want to do that I know I understand that

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

But if they're not into it and just get a bit weird on me and say uh-uh

lights staying off or whatever or they don't want it up I'm just not interested cos you know

Russell:

And you'll unlock the door and go

Apollo:

Yeah eventually I mean I won't flee

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

but you know I'll finish what we're doing and it's always I'm always nice about it I mean I haven't had you know most of my experiences have been okay

Russell:

Yeah yeah

Apollo:

you know and they've been you know not good there haven't been you know any issues of violence

Russell:

Private

Apollo:

Public

Russell:

Public but in this context in the sauna context public yeah public I associate when I think about I think of like the public areas they've got there where you sit down and watch TV or grab a coffee the you know the bits you know the areas where people socialise in that way

Russell:

In what way grabbing a coffee or watching TV

Apollo:

Yeah like you know

Russell:

So they're they're forms of socialising

Apollo:

Well yeah they are

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

I mean you know I mean not in the same they are whether you like it or not I mean people talk and you meet people you know in that part of the complex as well

Russell:

So are public areas then for you nonsexual areas

Apollo:

Yes
Right

Apollo:
Yep yeah I'd say that's true like you know the areas where they show the films

Russell:
Yes

Apollo:
The areas

Russell:
You

**Il.ii.23:00**
mean films that aren’t pornographic films

Apollo:
Ah

Russell:
Or do you mean pornographic films

Apollo:
Both

Russell:
Right yeah

Apollo:
Both yeah no both because I remember that there's a part in the that upper the place I was telling you about in a particular location the small joint where they've got um you know that small room where they play porno

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
That's like a public area for me and there's also the bit out the front where they used to have I don't know if they still do but a ah video area where they play **Il.ii.23:30** you know current release non-porno films

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
That's a public area as well as the whole area around the bar as tacky as it is um that's a public area um

Russell:
They've renovated that in the last couple of months

Apollo:
Have they

Russell:
Yeah they've changed that

Apollo:
They needed to I think it was a bit

Russell:
Somebody told me and I they told me that it had been changed and then I went and checked it

Apollo:
The bar area

Russell:
Yes

Apollo:
Right oh yeah

Russell:
That area's been remodelled

Apollo:
Okay but um public **Il.ii.24:00** ah and similarly too I mean I haven't been there in so long maybe that's changed too but certainly in Volcano where the um the sit down chill out area is where you can buy buy yeah a coffee food um books read that's what I would call a public area whereas you know the all all the other areas I would call oh well I mean it's all public but I don't know I mean the other areas are about sort of **Il.ii.24:30**
private kind of sexual kind of they’re they’re public too I guess but when I think

Russell:
But that’s not how you experience them

Apollo:
That’s right

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
When I think when I think of public I think of those particular areas in those places

Russell:
The ones you’ve been talking about

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:
Yes okay

Apollo:
In in that context

Russell:
Yeah okay have you have you ever witnessed people having what you have decided

II.ii.25:00
was sex in a public area

Apollo:
Mm hmm

Russell:
And how did you respond to that

Apollo:
(he laughs a little) Um well I’ve got two very different experiences (he laughs a little) um I remember one sitting in that little room where they’ve got porno sort of videos on and this guy I remember this old fella was really like just um

II.ii.25:30

going going for it with this other guy like maybe they were quite close to me

Russell:
Yes

Apollo:
and I actually found that quite offensive and a bit rude actually

Russell:
This is at High Street

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:
Yes in

Apollo:
and ah ages ago

Russell:
In the area where they show the pornos

Apollo:
Yeah that little room

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
You know and I guess you know I mean it’s a room where they show pornos so obviously guys are going to get excited you know and shit happens but I got really jacked off when that happened um

II.ii.26:00
so that was one time so I just

Russell:
Did you stay or go

Apollo:
No I left

Russell:
You left
Apollo: Yeah I just thought it was just really rude

Russell: Roughly how close were they to you like were they within reach or further

Apollo: Arm's length

Russell: Arm's length okay and for over what period of time would it have taken before you decided to go

Apollo: Oh it was pretty quickly

Russell: Yeah

Apollo: actually when I real when I saw and you know that that they weren’t going to stop

Russell: Yeah

Apollo: and I just didn’t want to be in their space and a part of it so I just got up and left

Russell: Right okay was it because oh sorry not because was that related to the fact that the room’s status had changed in some way

Apollo: Mm pos yeah the status quo was definitely broken

Russell: Yes

Apollo: All right that’s true the status had changed but it also I mean it’s interesting I also

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Russell: Yes

Apollo: All right that’s true the status had changed but it also I mean it’s interesting I also
And what was the other experience

Apollo:

The other experience which was pretty funny and I was amused by it. I didn’t um I didn’t get up and left. In fact I was quite titillated by it. It was in the front area you know where the video is.

Russell:

Yes

Apollo:

You said the whole area that’s been remodelled. I remember sitting there and seeing these two guys.

Russell:

(laughing a little) Ah yes

Apollo:

Right um having oral sex. Right

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

Just not giving a shit about anyone. Just in front of everyone. Everybody.

Russell:

How many people is everybody.

Apollo:

Oh there weren’t many people. It was a pretty quiet night. I don’t know. Maybe four or five people.

Russell:

Was the staff member.

Apollo:

around

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

Ah well he. Well he of course I mean he might not have been sitting there but

Russell:

II.ii.28:30

I mean you know it’s a small place and um I don’t remember to be honest whether or not he was in that room but I’m sure he would have seen what was going on.

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

because there was only one guy um

Russell:

II.ii.29:00

on duty

Apollo:

Yeah doing and it was pretty quiet and um he was floating around from memory just doing what he was doing but I don’t remember looking at him to see if he was looking but he would have probably seen what was going on. Ah but they weren’t it wasn’t full on sex like anal.

Russell:

II.ii.29:30

sex or anything. It was just um it was um oral sex and it was very even. Ah it but it wasn’t how can I say full on oral sex either. It was very um relaxed casual.

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

you know sex and maybe that’s why no one did anything or kind of you know I mean it was different because you know I think if they if they were really raunchy and really getting into it and stuff I think that would have changed it maybe.

Russell:

II.ii.29:30

So in this case

Apollo:

It was just very relaxed sort of
Did you leave or did you just

Apollo:

Nuh I stayed *(he laughs)*

Russell:

You stayed and watched the movie or watched them

Apollo:

Watched them *(we laugh)* mm I think maybe because I might have liked one of them

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

So there might have been a bit of um sort of voyeur voyeurism happening there you know but it didn’t go for very long either I remember but they but it went for long enough to sort of think wow hey what’s going on here you know because I certainly wouldn’t do anything like that

**II.ii.30:00**

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

I couldn’t I just couldn’t do it in front of everybody because privacy for me is a big thing

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

and I I should imagine for most people I mean you know like I wonder if the s if the same two guys would have done the same thing if it was a really busy night and there were lots of people there maybe maybe not I don’t know because they do have I heard even though I’ve never been there on one of those nights they have a jack off night

Russell:

Yes I believe

Apollo:

In that area

Russell:

Oh in that

**II.ii.30:30**

Apollo:

Yeah you know it’s pub it’s in that big area

Russell:

Oh that’s interesting because I never

Apollo:

So I was thinking

Russell:

I’ve always wondered what

Apollo:

how does that work and it’s full nudity

Russell:

Yes yes

Apollo:

So

Russell:

I’ve read about that event but I’ve never been

Apollo:

And it’s quite popular from what I’ve at least you know maybe I was getting a biased view from the guy who works there I remember him telling me about how popular it was so you know um so they’re the two *(he deals with wind)* excuse me occasions

**II.ii.31:00**

I remember of seeing guys have sex in a public area but um yeah I mean I think that the the two older guys who have who were having sex in that area where they were showing porno was I guess it makes more sense seeing guys possibly have sex there because they they were showing porno film you know whereas the other guys it was there was nothing
Russell:
There’s Eddy Murphy *(I laugh a little)*

Apollo:
Yeah but it was you know it was

Russell:
II.ii.31:30
Yeah

Apollo:
It was a straight kind of environment there was no you know titillation or kind of stimulus you know

Russell:
Sorry when you say it’s a straight environment do you mean a nonsexual environment

Apollo:
Mm

Russell:
or do you mean a straight sexual environment

Apollo:
No no no a nonsexual environment that they were in

Russell:
Right okay fine

Apollo:
Yeah yep

Russell:
Um ah I’ll move onto another word

Apollo:
Yeah cool II.ii.32:00 whatever

Russell:
Safe

Apollo:
Oh *(he laughs)* safe a huge one huge it’s a real issue for me like it’s the most out of all the words that you’ve talked about it’s the one word that when I hear I just um II.ii.32:30
freak out about and I’m always freaking out about when I go to those venues you know and it has to do you know that’s why I put the light on in a lot of ways I’m always conscious of condoms breaking um of having safe sex um it’s a yeah it’s a really really really forever at the front of everything I do II.ii.33:00
there

Russell:
So are you telling me that the word safe is associated for you with what

Apollo:
Well it’s associated primarily with having safe sex

Russell:
Right okay

Apollo:
Right it’s about safe sex

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
Um but it can even though it’s associated with having safe sex ah what I’m trying to say is that sometimes it can I can become II.ii.33:30
so obsessed with it with the issue of having safe sex that it can really colour my experience there in a negative or bad way because I get so freaked out

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
about about having safe sex about as I’ve said condoms breaking um about you know unprotected oral sex um you know um about II.ii.34:00
you know what is safe sex you know like it's always contentious about what is it's always in the you know in the forefront of my mind and especially you know like um having or no all times when I think about it like even during unprotected oral sex I'm always conscious about you know like getting cum in your mouth or you know there's all of those issues

II.i.34:30
basically but it's it's it's a big one (he laughs a little) and it's out of all the words that you've talked about it's the most it's the biggest one like in terms of um oh just you know the you know when you say it vroom it's it has the biggest ripple impact on on me um more than clean dirty you know raunchy dirty sex whatever um safe it's like

Russell:

II.i.35:00
You've what you've done

Apollo:
It's all about

Russell:

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:

Apollo:
and kind of flinch back a bit suddenly

Yeah because it I've never felt easy and I think I mentioned this to you in the la in the first interview you got a sense of how um maybe I can't remember whether it was whether or not I was talking about um safe sex in or in what in what context I was in

II.i.35:30
the first interview we had but I certainly remember being uptight um or talking to you about being tense or depressed or going through a period of my life where I was going to a lot of pla a lot of saunas

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:

all the time

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
and um you know like the whole safe sex thing was at the forefront of of my think my my concern at that period of time I mean it always is

II.i.36:00
and it always will be (he laughs a little) and um I don't know I mean you know even though I mean I I have gone on some occasions and like it it how can I say on some occasions it's not so much of an issue even though it's always an issue on some sometimes when I go there even though I'm I'm quite vigilant about having safe sex it's not

II.i.36:30
you know I mean sometimes and I don't know why depending on what mood I'm in when I go it's not I'm not so freaked out about it

Russell:

Apollo:
Right

Apollo:

Russell:
Other times I am

Russell:

Apollo:
When you say freaked out what form does that take for you

Apollo:

Russell:

Apollo:
What form

Russell:

I mean I can think oh yes freaked out

Apollo:

Russell:

Apollo:

Russell:

Apollo:
I know what that means for me what does it mean for you
It means for me okay it means like you know I’ve been I’ve had question mark questionable

sexual experiences at at saunas and it means things like getting cum in your eye you know condom breaking having experiences that freak me out afterwards and I’ve had those kinds of experiences there and and they freak me out and because there’s nothing I know that you can do that you know that you can do you know you can get tested and and you know and

you know I mean there’s nothing else you can do but I have had as as I’m saying experiences that have freaked me out because for one reason or another I’ve had rea you know I’ve had what I’ve thought was a very close call with um you know getting you know cum (he laughs a little)

Russell:
in you

Apollo:
In me in a way that was

unsafe so

Russell:
Can I just ask incidentally

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:
does the term PEP mean anything to you

Apollo:
Pep

Russell:
Yeah (I spell it) P E P

Apollo:
No

Russell:
Okay I might have a chat with you about that when we finish

Apollo:
Mm hmm

Russell:
Okay um are these experiences experiences that

Apollo:
Which experiences

Russell:
The experiences that you’ve talked about as being experiences that could freak

you out are they experiences that you’ve also had in places other than saunas for instance your own home

Apollo:
Yes

Russell:
or other kinds of venues

Apollo:
No

Russell:
Right okay but they don’t go away when you go into a sauna any more or less than they are in your own home

Apollo:
No they become even more um ah

those concerns become amplified even more so in a sauna because the possibility exists for you to have sex more than once and you’re always for me well you’re always I’m always you know be you know looking out whereas I mean even though those concerns never leave me when I’m at home and I’m having a sexual experience it’s usually just one sexual experience you know it’s not multiple sexual experiences
Russell: Do you mean multiple partners?

Apollo: Yes.

Russell: or multiple occasions of sex

Apollo: Yeah.

Russell: Right

Apollo: Multiple partners in a space of a night or you know

Russell: Yeah

Apollo: whatever so I mean it it does become more I mean it’s always an issue but it does you know the up or the the stakes (he laughs a little) are raised

Russell: Right

Apollo: when I go into a sauna when it you know you know when it when I’m thinking of safe sex you know

Russell: All right um

Apollo: What about you

Russell: With that word

Apollo:
high risk

Russell:
unsafe sex

Apollo:
Right

Russell:
you know like where there's a chance of sero-conversion

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:
you know with HE A HIV but

Apollo:
But how do you know that I mean that's that's

Russell:
But well

Apollo:
You don't know that because it you can't say that or you can’t I mean even though I understand what you're saying um you know there's no activity that's no risk even

II.ii.41:30
unprotected oral sex sex carries with it a very very low risk

Russell:
Oh I'm aware of that but I wasn't being asked about

Apollo:
But you know

Russell:
whether situations were sterile or whether they were perfect

Apollo:
Right

Russell:
or a hundred percent absolute what I was being asked was my experience of whether they were safe or not

Apollo:
Right

Russell:
Like I can look at a footbridge over a chasm

Apollo:
Yep I'm with you yep yep yep yep yep okay

Russell:
and think

Apollo:
Okay

Russell:
no I feel safe with this even though I know that a

II.ii.42:00
bolt of lightning could come out (laughing a little) and

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:
wreck the footbridge or an unexpected landslide or you know any number of things um so um so when you ask me about um safe I'm aware of that but I'm also aware that my idea of safe and someone else's idea of safe are different and that

Apollo:
I mean

Russell:
um

II.ii.42:30
I've been with people who've ah wanted to do things where I've had to turn it into a game that we won't do this

Apollo:
In fact my last sexual experience in a sauna I went to Rear Entry and I started mucking
around with this guy in this cubicle and I was it wasn’t for long because I was horrified he was into unprotected anal sex and that’s what he wanted

**II.ii.43:00**

like really badly and I’m like no way and he just couldn’t understand like you know why why why aren’t you why aren’t you interested

**Apollo:**

No he didn’t say that

**Russell:**

So what

**Apollo:**

but I could tell

**Russell:**

How did oh right how did

**Apollo:**

by his actions

**Russell:**

What did he ac what were the actions he did

**Apollo:**

Well I was turning away right like I was um I was ah

*II.ii.43:30*

ah

**Russell:**

Was he inviting you to penetrate him

**Apollo:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

Right

**Apollo:**

And I did right with the condom on

**Russell:**

Yes

**Apollo:**

and um and then I don’t know I think we um ah did that for a little while not long and then somehow afterwards in the course of having fun together and moving on to the next activity he I’d I’d taken off the condom by that stage

*II.ii.44:00*

right and I think it was I don’t know the second or third activity I can’t remember exactly like and then he got back into the same position and said come on you know I want you to you know whatever fuck me and you know and he was sort of pushing me onto him and I said oh I asked him have you got a condom he said don’t worry about it and I just said no way and he kept pushing me onto him and I just it was absolute turn off and I just got up and I just walked out

*II.ii.44:30*

and it really worried me because I started thinking oh god you know

**Russell:**

You didn’t discuss it further with him

**Apollo:**

Nuh

**Russell:**

Right okay

**Apollo:**

Nuh and I just um

**Russell:**

Did you see him again

**Apollo:**

I was horrified

**Russell:**

Did you see him again after you’d left the room

**Apollo:**
Yeah

Russell:
In the distance

Apollo:
Oh he ignored me totally just walked right past me didn’t even look at me make eye contact

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
Um he was obviously pissed off you know and um I didn’t care

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
Just didn’t care I mean I was just horrified

yeah percentage increase

Apollo:
Yeah that’s what I mean

Russell:
In fact the number of people involved is about thirty or forty people

Apollo:
Yeah but still

Russell:
that’s thirty or forty people

Apollo:
You know

Russell:
Yes

Apollo:
And I don’t know look all these things started going through my head and um I just can’t imagine why someone would just do that

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
you know and in fact it freaked me out so much (he laughs a little) I left soon after that

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
It was just a turn off I thought it just I just couldn’t get into it

Russell:
Can I ask you have you between that event

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:
and talking to me about it now have you discussed that event with

Apollo:
No one

Russell:
No one all right

Apollo:
Who I mean

Russell:
Well I'm just wondering I mean because when your visitor was here a few minutes ago

Apollo:
Oh my visitor

Russell:
we we chat

Apollo:
Chatted yeah

Russell:
Chatted about a few odds and ends

Apollo:
No no

Russell:
No but I don't mean him but

Apollo:
No one

Russell:
Yeah so it isn't the kind of incident that would come up in a conversation with a friend in the way you were quite happy to discuss other things while he
About why

Russell:

Yeah about what’s going on for these other people who may

Apollo:

No

Russell:

Right okay

Apollo:

But I just presume I mean you know it’s such a serious thing that you know for I just don’t understand why someone would just be so irresponsible because it’s it’s irresponsible I mean for yourself before anyone else before you know and other people but it’s you know your own self

Russell:

My next question is well just take your time with it if you need to but if you don’t need to that’s no problem what’s the relationship for you between safe sex and dirty sex

Apollo:

The relationship between safe sex

Russell:

Yeah for instance

Apollo:

and dirty sex

Russell:

is dirty sex it sounds from what you’ve said

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

that dirty sex for you has always been safe sex

Apollo:

Yeah well reasonably yeah sure

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

So I mean the relationship

Russell:

So when you say dirty sex has no inhibitions it’s uninhibited

Apollo:

Yeah but it can be uninhibited safe sex

Russell:

Right okay

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

So there’s always a kind of um the thing that is more important of the two will be the safe sex

Apollo:

Safe sex always

Russell:

Always so you never lose touch of with that

Apollo:

Ever

Russell:

Right that’s import can I ask now is there anything at the sauna that about the place now when I say the place I don’t necessarily mean just the materiality it might be the event or the practices or something is there anything at the

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

about the place and being there that’s inclined to lower your awareness of safe sex or to distract your attention from safe sex is there a part of the sauna where you’re less likely to have safe sex than another part (Apollo shakes his head) no you’re shaking your head with a definite no
Apollo:

Mm

Russell:

Right okay

that's all I need to hear

Apollo:

Yeah it's an no it doesn't matter where
where I am you know there's no part of the
sauna that that I think I would have you
know that that would make me have unsafe
sex um doesn't matter where I am

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

you know

Russell:

Fine okay and can we move onto the last
word then

Apollo:

Yeah I've got to go to the toilet can you

Russell:

Yeah do that

Apollo:

(stop but I won't be long I've just got to have
a leak [inaudible: my foot's?] gone to sleep

I switch off the recorder till Apollo returns.
We chat briefly, then I switch it back on.)

Russell:

Final word

dangerous

Apollo:

Danger

Russell:

Either of those words will do

Apollo:

Yeah danger and unsafe and safety unsafe
sex go hand in hand when when I think of
the word danger I think of um um that's
what I think of when I think danger

I think of

Russell:

In relation to saunas

Apollo:

Yeah I don't think danger as in scared of
being attacked or in a physical way or
threatened by anybody um who's going to
attack me in that way I don't feel you know
that they're dangerous places for being
attacked but I do see yeah the danger being
there in in relation to having or directly
related to

safe sex that's how I see it

Russell:

It's interesting because you've seen safe
and danger as being hand in hand

Apollo:

Uh uh

Russell:

and about the same issue when I bought up

clean and dirty

Apollo:

Yeah

Russell:

they didn't go hand in hand they were about

very different things but safe and danger do

go hand in hand

Apollo:

Yeah they do yeah I don't yeah
I don’t um look I don’t think you know danger when I go to a place obviously

Russell:
Like the robot on Lost in Space (I put on a voice) danger danger

Apollo:
(he laughs a little, then) No but I mean if you ask me you know what I associate when I think about it

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
Danger in in a sauna context I could only associate that with having unsafe sex

Russell:
Right okay

Apollo:
And nothing else

Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
I mean I’ve never felt as I’ve said physically threatened there

Russell:
II.iii.02:00
or most of my experiences have been pretty okay like that you know and yeah and I think that they’re pretty safe places generally I have never felt like you know ever I don’t think in any of the places I’ve gone to I’ve ever felt um that it’s a dangerous place I mean I wouldn’t go otherwise or feel threatened or you know in any way nuh

Russell:
That’s curious because when you say

Apollo:
II.iii.02:30
you’ve never felt physical physically threatened that’s a different feeling from saying that someone’s wanting to engage in unsafe sex with you isn’t that a physical threat or do you don’t experience it that way

Apollo:
I don’t experience it that way

Russell:
Right okay so when you say physically threatened you’re thinking about something like somebody

Apollo:
attacking me

Russell:
II.iii.03:00
with their arms or legs or something

Apollo:
Yeah

Russell:
Right

Apollo:
Or getting you know mugged or or beaten or bashed up or you know um being attacked in that way

Russell:
In other words something that’s visible in that sense

Apollo:
Mm

Russell:
But unsafe sex isn’t like being physically threatened in a visible way

Apollo:
(he sighs, then) Well when I stop and think really meditate and think on think about it it is

Russell:

Apollo:
II.iii.03:30
Yes

Apollo:
But I don’t
but I’m asking more about how you experience it

Apollo:

Yeah I don’t experience it that way though at the time

Russell:

Right okay but you nevertheless have a stronger what’s it like then if it isn’t like being physically threatened what’s it like what’s it connected with as an experience it can be as crazy as whatever I don’t mind (Apollo laughs a little)

II.iii.04:00

as long as it’s if you can try

Apollo:

What’s it connected well it’s connected you’re right it’s connected with fear

Russell:

With fear

Apollo:

Mm

Russell:

But not fear of being beaten up or

Apollo:

No it’s connected with death

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

and infection

Russell:

But infection doesn’t isn’t something you feel experience as a physical threat

Apollo:

No when II.iii.04:30 I think about it no I mean when I oh no when I think about it yes

Russell:

Right yeah

Apollo:

Really think about it

Russell:

When you don’t think about it

Apollo:

but at the time

Russell:

Yeah

Apollo:

you know I just think of you know like I don’t feel if someone you know is wants to have unsafe sex with me like that guy did I don’t feel that I don’t feel threatened by him

Russell:

Yes

Apollo:

Physically threatened

Russell:

Right

Apollo:

I do I fear

Russell:

What is it

Apollo:

I’ve told you I fear getting infected and death comes up for me because I don’t know I know it’s not a death sentence any more but I have so many friends that died
Russell:
Yeah

Apollo:
and I still I still have very much that kind of connection with HIV/AIDS

Russell:
Yeah it’s different to the last to the first talk this one

Apollo:
Yeah it’s different to the last to the first talk this one

Russell:
Yes

Apollo:
It’s not as um I don’t know why not as probing I think maybe or it doesn’t

Russell:
Right okay

Apollo:
Right

Russell:
Okay

Apollo:
I felt quite sort of um I don’t know um oh just ah emotional the first incident you know and when I think about it the first interview I should say

Russell:
(laughing a little) No thanks but I will turn it off

Apollo:
(laughing) Okay
Russell:

Okay

\[ I.iii.08.45 \]
\( (I\ switch\ off\ the\ minidisc\ recorder) \)

END OF CONVERSATION
The transcript documents a second conversation with Frosty, recorded at my flat on a weekday afternoon. Throughout the conversation we were accompanied by the noise of schoolgirls squealing in the playground of the school next door. We began recording soon after Frosty arrived.

Russell:

II.i.00:00
(I fiddle with the recording equipment)
[unintelligible] okay um during the last interview there was a bit where you talked to me about um things you knew about the interior of the sauna

II.i.00:30
knew about the interior of the sauna

Russell:

II.i.01:00
and that was really interesting for me to hear and it seemed like you were pretty engaged with kind of talking about that before near the end of the initial stage of that you started to tell me about other things but you pointed out that they were things you’d been told about

Russell:

II.i.01:30
(men laughter)

Frosty:

Mmm hmm

Russell:

II.i.02:00
um and he told me of his experiences of Volcano or his experience of Volcano. I don’t think it was um ah I don’t think he went back more than once actually ah and it was when he went to Volcano with his brother who was I suppose I could I’ll use the word initiated

Russell:

II.i.02:30
in the sense that he he had been there quite often and he took his younger brother who’s my hairdresser along with him so he told me of his experience of going to Volcano and getting lost in there like a kind of a labyrinth um and being really frightened um and going into kind of dark rooms

Russell:

II.i.03:00
um where he yeah assumed that um men were there having sex um and that freaked him freaked him out (a silence) that’s sort of about it I suppose of yeah that at at yeah but he I remember him alway he constantly saying that you know he was yeah pretty

Russell:

II.i.03:30
frightened of the place and he sort of wanted to get out of there and he felt this sort of feeling of being lost and yeah in a in a kind of labyrinth I suppose

Russell:

Um was this one conversation you had with this man
Frosty:
About this or
Russell:
Yes
Frosty:
Yeah about this subject um yeah yeah once in that sort of detail um
Russell:
Did it happen while he was doing your hair II.i.03:30
Frosty:
Yeah yes yes I was
Russell:
Were there other people around
Frosty:
No
Russell:
Okay
Frosty:
No
Russell:
How did it come up
Frosty:
Mm my hairdresser has a habit or has a has inclination [sic] of telling me all his yeah his sort of his sexual experiences or just the things that he kind of gets up to um it's not an uncommon thing for him to talk about (he coughs) but um yeah I don't I don't exactly know I don't know whether we were specifically talking about Volcano well I wasn't living around there at the time so I don't think we were II.i.04:00
talking specifically about Volcano
Russell:
Was it after you'd
Frosty:
Um it was before I'd moved before I'd
Russell:
moved near there
Frosty:
moved near there um I think um yeah not really sure he might have just sort of started off telling about what he got up to on the weekend kind of thing um and led to this kind of st you know telling of this story you know this account
Russell:
And was it Volcano specifically that he'd been to
Frosty:
Yeah
Russell:
Did he did he say the name
Frosty:
II.i.05:00
Yeah yeah yep it is that specifically that one um yeah I'm sure um yeah I can't kind of remember whether I sort of was asking about those sorts of environments or not um or whether he you know initiated or started this started the um conversation off
Russell:
Was it a monologue or a dialogue
Frosty:
II.i.05:30
Dialogue well dialogue in the sense that I was yes dialogue yeah I was um yeah I suppose I asked him a few questions and things like that I was quite um curious about you know what he was talking about oh I think I remember now how it actually came about it was when I was doing a project a few years ago about um male kind of strip or you know II.i.06:00
places where men go to watch women strip those sorts of clubs and I think it got it got brought up in that kind of context

Russell:
Right

Frosty:
um because he yeah he I suppose I was telling him about my project that I was sort of researching at the time yeah I remember now

Russell:
Okay and the conversation lasted the duration of the haircut

Frosty:
Um yeah

II.i.06:30
well yeah we went on to other things but yeah that was that was certainly something that I remembered about that day you know getting my hair because I suppose it was a it was a new kind of um domain to for me or new terrain

Russell:
You don’t recall any of the other topics that were discussed that day

Frosty:
Oh yeah he probably would have discussed um at that time some other work I was making and and

II.i.07:00
um its relationship with um or its relationship with and to pornography

Russell:
Right

Frosty:
Um yeah so yeah so we were talking about that as well

Russell:
All right um you you know you were talking about that or you think you would have been talking about that

Frosty:
No we yeah we were talking about that yeah

Russell:
Right okay and he went with his older brother

Frosty:

II.i.07:30
Mm

Russell:
That’s interesting

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
This is my first experience of a sibling thing (I laugh a little)

Frosty:
Yeah [unintelligible]

Russell:
How what’s the age difference do you think between them that you know of

Frosty:
Um I th he’s about twenty-um-seven it’s it’s probably around six to seven years

Russell:
Right

Frosty:
I suppose not not a huge one but

Russell:
Do you get the sense they’re the only siblings in that family

II.i.08:00
or there are others

Frosty:
No I believe there’s only two two boys yeah yeah

Russell:
Jackpot um and when he told you that it happened within the last few days or was he resurrecting an old story in relationship to um you mentioning other kinds of sex venues.

Frosty:
I th yeah I think it was um not within the first what not within the last couple of days but certainly within you know some months.

Russell:
Right okay

Frosty:
um that that was his um experience of this place

Russell:
And it was his only experience.

Frosty:
Um to that point I believe yes

Russell:
Yeah

Frosty:
Yeah I believe so

Russell:
Did he stress that or was that an assumption you made.

Frosty:
Um well he certainly said that that was his first anyway.

Russell:
Yeah

Frosty:
Um and I yeah maybe I’m assuming that that’s his last as well in that.

Russell:
Yeah

Frosty:
you know kind of couple of months between it happening and him speaking to me

Russell:
Um as he told you that he was um frightened did you get the impression that he was um excited at some level for instance excited at able to tell you he was frightened in the way someone might tell a horror story or something like that.

Frosty:
Um

Russell:
o no he w he was genuinely frightened in in yeah knowing his or seemingly knowing his character I would say that he’s ah he was yeah frightened and not kind of um ah blowing it up or you know exaggerating the incident yeah.

Frosty:
Was he exhibiting what for you were signs of fear in telling you about it?

Russell:
Tell me um no well probably not actually no not that much ah and I suppose he what what what was indicated was that he he was feeling quite comfortable comfortable in my company because we’d probably talked a lot about these a lot of sorts of issues so yeah he he wasn’t um he certainly was confident in the sense of you know being able to tell me what went on and reveal things about it um yeah does that answer [unintelligible]?

Russell:
Sort of has he ever told you any other stories about being afraid.

Frosty:
No no not that I no not that I recall.

Russell:
no
Now did he use the term labyrinth

Frosty:

Um now you say that he probably wouldn’t of wouldn’t have used that. It’s not a type of word that he probably would use actually when I think about it. Um he probably wouldn now I’m assuming again but it’d be more like maze-like I suppose yeah

Russell:

All right now what I’d like you to do is

**II.i.11:30**

unpack for me

Frosty:

Yeah

Russell:

what those two different words

Frosty:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

are for you

Frosty:

For me

Russell:

Yeah what’s I mean you talk about a maze and talk about a labyrinth

Frosty:

Yeah

Russell:

as being different kinds of words and that a person like him would be more inclined to use a word like maze and that you are probably the source of the term labyrinth I would assume

Frosty:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

**II.i.12:00**

So what is it about those two words for you now

Frosty:

Yeah

Russell:

that distinguishes them

Frosty:

Something that comes to mind for me it’s it’s labyrinths of [sic] being an idea of being in a kind of circle and maze is more sort of structurally squarer and what did come to mind when I said maze was something that I remember him talking about rooms

Russell:

Yes

Frosty:

Um and that’s probably why maze seemed to be the

**II.i.12:30**

the more appropriate than labyrinth um he he

Russell:

So how is it then that labyrinth is the term that you've latched onto

Frosty:

Mm yeah

Russell:

because you latched onto that in what you had to tell me about what you knew about the interior as well and I was very aware of that

Frosty:

Yeah um probably because of there’s all there for me anyway a labyrinth is the sense of being lost

**II.i.13:00**

that’s that’s what I feel about labyrinth um and it being kind of deep

Russell:

Deep in what respect

Frosty:
Um or the sense of being lost is a kind of deep lostness *(he laughs a little)*

*Russell:*
Deep in or deep under

*Frosty:*
Deep in yeah

*Russell:*
So it's a kind of horizontal

*Frosty:*
Yeah yeah yeah

*Russell:*
plane that we're talking about

*Frosty:*
Yeah perhaps yeah

*ii.13:30*
um but more kind of circle like a a a a spiral

*Russell:*
Yeah

*Frosty:*
That's that's how I see

*Russell:*
Yeah

*Frosty:*
the labyrinth

*Russell:*
Now how was it do you think that you associate you have that association with the term labyrinth this notion of spiralling or circling

*Frosty:*
Mm don't know *(a silence)*

*ii.14:00*

dunno

*Russell:*
At all

*Frosty:*
No I'm not sure that I can answer it where where it comes from I'll have to go home and think about that one perhaps it's a a childhood childhood thing

*Russell:*
Well it may be but *(we laugh)* but um what about a maze the thing about the association with things square

*Frosty:*
Yeah

*Russell:*
or at right angles

*Frosty:*

*ii.14:30*
A maze I think ah there's more I feel more comfortable with the term maze in the sense that I I there's there's always an end to it or something like there's a you can go into it but you can discover the end

*Russell:*
Yes

*Frosty:*
Whereas the labyrinth I think there's there's an endless of being there or there possibly no end to it

*Russell:*
Right okay

*Frosty:*
In the sense that you may not come out of it

*Russell:*

*ii.15:00*
Is that where the circular thing comes in that circles unlike squares I mean a square has end points in the sense that you reach a corner and you have to turn I guess but

*Frosty:*
Yeah yeah
Russell:
Is it something like that

Frosty:
Yeah yeah possibly because it's sort of a I suppose spiral spiralling

Russell:
Yeah

Frosty:
I guess down

Russell:
Um  

II.i.15:30
do you know the story of THE labyrinth

Frosty:
Er very vaguely

Russell:
What do you vaguely know of it

Frosty:
Of um what do I know of it that it is a spiral I think but that's probably all perhaps I must

Russell:
Where does that story of the labyrinth come from what culture when

Frosty:

II.i.16:00
Ah don't know

Russell:
Right okay

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
All right

Frosty:
Can't remember

Russell:
That's that's fine

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
Um were there other people who told you about Volcano before we had our conversation or was that man the hairdresser the only man

Frosty:
I think um

II.i.16:30
I had a discussion with you about Volcano

Russell:
About Volcano or about saunas

Frosty:
Um both

Russell:
Yeah

Frosty:
I think um our first conversation we probably had was just in a kind of general talk about saunas

Russell:
Yeah

Frosty:
and probably the your project or

Russell:
Yeah

Frosty:
your proposal um it might have been after which I think yeah it was after a talk you gave

Russell:
Yeah
Frosty:

that I think I indicated to you

that I'd lived near Volcano um and that's sort

of about all the conversation right that's as

far as it kind of went I think

Russell:

Right okay

Frosty:

I don’t think we talked specifically about

what was in inside Volcano or

Russell:

My recollection is that when you approached

me you volunteered yourself as

someone to be interviewed

Frosty:

Mm yeah I remember that yeah I did do

that actually I was

Russell:

Can you tell me a bit about that

Frosty:

Yeah

Russell:

Given that I'd made it clear it was a project

where I'd be interviewing people who'd been

to these places

Frosty:

Mm yes

Russell:

you volunteered yourself as someone

Frosty:

Yeah

Russell:

So where did that come from do you think

Frosty:

I think um after um I'm sure it was after you

gave your talk that I did come to you and I

were kind of you know I was curious to to

know about um I suppose your perspective

on it and perhaps others but I um I

guess I was also interested in offering my

perspective and and interest in that place

just because I lived quite close to it um and I

had kind of um quite common interactions

with people going there and leaving there

and I suppose

it's my kind of personal interest with

doorways and um and kind of perhaps

public private thing of people entering or

entering doorways and then kind of going

into buildings and you kind of notice that and

assume or I notice that and assume perhaps

make assumptions or imagine what's

happening in there or what they're actually

doing in there so I suppose my personal

interest

um encouraged me to make that offering

but also I think um my I I guess um I was

interested in also offer [sic] you a

perspective that perhaps I don't know but

perhaps you may not have thought about or

um you may have thought about but it

seemed to be very kind of ah or in

in my understanding of what you were doing

very focussed on kind of um people that

actually enter there and either become

initiated to what happens in there or go there

for one time and that's it um it seemed to be

focussed on that so I guess I thought that I

could offer you perhaps some other

information about that particular space from

a person that hasn't actually entered there

Russell:

Why did you want to

Frosty:

Why did I want to

Russell:

The reason I ask that is for all that you've

said about having an interest

Frosty:

Yeah

Russell:
and also being interested in maybe extracting more from me when I asked you at that time if you had anything you wanted to ask me you said no

Frosty:
Mm

Russell:
So it became all about you telling me things

II.i.20:30

Frosty:
Mm yeah

Russell:
and not even curious about whether there was anything to be confirmed or corrected or about

Frosty:
The at the the last interview

Russell:
Yeah at the last interview

Frosty:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
there was no sense in which

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
for instance about the perspective you offered how it might meet my perspective what might be the point at which they meet and what might be

II.i.21:00

um that kind of enga engagement

Frosty:
Mm yeah

Russell:
and is there some exchange there and that didn't happen so I'm curious now then about what lead you to come forward and tell me like your hairdresser told you something now you've wanted to come forward and tell me something and I'm interested in that

Frosty:
Yeah yeah yeah yeah I can’t I’m not sure why why or fuck I don’t think I can find a reason

II.i.21:30

why I um didn’t ask of your [sic] perspective and and perhaps to draw I don’t know want for [sic] a better word but parallels to with what I’m doing I don’t know why I wouldn’t have asked that I wonder whether it’s kind of me wanting to ah um still ah ah retain

II.i.22:00

a kind of sense of mystery about this particular site and building um or whether it’s just I (he laughs a little) it never occurred to or don’t just didn’t ask that question I don’t know but perhaps it is that

Russell:
That you want to retain some mystery

Frosty:
Some sort of mystery of of the place rather than having kind of I guess factual um whatever factual is information about it

Russell:
When you say retain a mystery do you mean

II.i.22:30

the things that you have strong feeling you know would then remain intact or still vital because they haven’t been those that those imaginings which are quite specific in some way would then not have to be modified or

Frosty:
Mm yeah

Russell:
They could retain their very particular intensity or something

Frosty:
Yeah yeah poss

II.i.23:00

possibly I’m say I’m saying that this is a a I’m searching for something ah I’m not I’m
not in the sense that I’m I’ve just kind of plucked something out for the sake of it but

Russell:

Yeah

Frosty:

that could be a possibility yes

Russell:

But it may be something else that’s not that

Frosty:

Yeah yeah maybe

Russell:

Cool that’s all right near the end of that discussion I asked you a question um and you gave me a very straightforward answer and then something happened so the question was I said to you have you ever held another man’s penis and you said no then you said hang on wait a moment and there was a pause and then you said no

Frosty:

Yeah

Russell:

Can you just tell me about that moment when you said hang on wait a moment please

Frosty:

I think I projecting my mind back there ah I think I was in that moment I probably was reassessing um my time on um or my experiences of ah football trips

Russell:

Right

Frosty:

and um thinking that that could have been whether I held a man’s penis or not or perhaps a man held my penis

Russell:

I assume so what’s being washed

Frosty:

Washing
Washing body I a body I suppose

Russell:
One’s own

Frosty:
Um possibly yeah well yes but I guess now that I say that I also think of washing somebody else’s body as well

Russell:
Do you think try and resist me being leading you have been but I just

II.i.26:30
mark that just try and resist anything where I’m leading too much okay but do you have an imagining of YOU washing whatever in the context of that running water when you think of that running water is it like you don’t think of you actually washing but that that could be a thing you do that you wash or is it other people washing

Frosty:

II.i.27:00
(a silence) It’s both

Russell:
Right

Frosty:
Um when I think about it it’s washing my own my own body

Russell:
Yes

Frosty:
um and perhaps observing other people washing their body rather than washing each other’s body

Russell:
All right are they washing at the same time you’re washing

Frosty:

II.i.27:30
Mm yes

Russell:
Okay right okay

Frosty:
Mm yeah

Russell:
Are they at what kind of are they all around you or just in front of you where you can see

Frosty:
A around like ah mm well there’s two types of around perha showers or or washing kind of

II.i.28:00
yeah I suppose running water on a square wall and perhaps something in the centre that that makes water come out of like a showerhead or you know

Russell:
Yeah

Frosty:

II.i.27:00
(a silence) It’s both

Russell:
But the other people who are washing are they around you or are they in front of you or to one side

Frosty:
Around

Russell:

II.i.28:30
They’re around

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
Okay are they within reach

Frosty:
Um mm yes yeah

Russell:
So if you reach your arm out you would touch
Frosty:
Yeah
Russell:
another person
Frosty:
Yeah you could yeah
Russell:
You could
Frosty:
Yeah that's what I
Russell:
it
Frosty:
imagine right okay
Russell:
So they're actu so you don't have a full view then of the other person you would need to scan the other person
because they're within reach
Frosty:
Mm hmm yes yeah
Russell:
Is that correct
Frosty:
[unintelligible: Did?] that yeah yeah yep it it
Russell:
Is that how you experience it or is that just logically correct
Frosty:
(he sighs a laugh) Ha bo both both I think
Russell:
All right okay
But it is different from the football changing room showers or does it sort of if you like iconographically borrow from it but actually it's a different experience.

**Frosty:**

It's a different experience I think.

**Russell:**

Can you try and describe for me what that difference is?

**Frosty:**

(Frosty laughs, then) Mm probably one of the well my experience of a football changing room is one more of of being a kind of um I was going to use the word tactile I suppose or tactile or physical because I've been in in those places quite often so perhaps that's a difference whereas the other kind of to use your word scene or um vision is one of ah less kind of um experience on a kind of a a um physical physical level I suppose.

**Russell:**

Okay what are you washing you said you were washing your own body what are you washing.

**Frosty:**

Your skin um mm

**Russell:**

Just a general experience of washing skin.

**Frosty:**

Yeah just a general kind of ofah showering or wash.

**Russell:**

But do is do you think of say washing your hands or washing your feet?

**Frosty:**

(a silence) No I don't think

**Russell:**

What about your head.

**Frosty:**

I think of yes yeah.

**Russell:**

Your scalp.

**Frosty:**

Yes your whole body.

**Russell:**

But not your hands or feet.

**Frosty:**

Well they're there but not specifically targeting hands or feet I think when I say general water is on you and um.

**Russell:**

And what are you washing with just the water.

**Frosty:**

Um

**Russell:**

(no I think some form of face washer or or a washer like that)

**Frosty:**

Yeah okay.

**Russell:**

Okay. Um (laughing a little) white comes to mind I don't know why don't ask me why that just did.

**Russell:**

Okay.

**Frosty:**

What's that material um flannel flannel.

**Russell:**

Flannel.
Frosty:
Flannel yeah

Russell:
Is the environment pale or dark in colour or tone

Frosty:
Um pale or dark brighter bright well brighter than dark

Russell:
Right

Frosty:
Um I don't know pale but

Russell:
But bright

Frosty:
bright

Russell:
Okay and brightly lit

Frosty:
Um not not that not so and I'm not really sure natural or I would say no natural actually when I think about it [?] no natural lighting

Russell:
Okay (a silence) um the men in the dark area when I asked you about the dark area if you could describe it and you said (laughing a little) you couldn't cos it was dark and then I said well could you tell me anything about what's in it like you know and then you said no and then suddenly you just said men (we laugh a little) and then men men um which men

Frosty:
Which men

Russell:

II.i.35:00
Men like at the football club (this is a question) footballers

Frosty:
I'm sure (we laugh a little)

Russell:
Just

Frosty:
Quite general perhaps

Russell:
There's no specific sense for you of what these men are

Frosty:
Um other than the the at that are we talking about this location like of Volcano or

Russell:
I think I'm talking about what we we've really skipped a number of layers here I asked you initially about what you knew about the interior and to work very freely with that just a sense of look this is something I know

Frosty:
Right

Russell:
Until proven otherwise I know this you know that kind of

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
gut impulse or reaction or whatever and you mentioned water you mentioned labyrinth and you mentioned dark darkness dark areas

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
Dark places  and then when I asked you about the interior of the dark places there was nothing that was visible but you knew that there were men in there and that this was not a place that you would go into and now what I'm asking is what is it about these men who are they

**Frosty:**

I don't think in terms of physicality I don't think that there are any thing that comes to mind

**Russell:**

Cool

**Frosty:**

other than it being just kind of general men

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Frosty:**

Um I suppose homosexuality is *(these are statements)* is it is it is it

**Russell:**

So what is it that you know about them then if their physicality’s not what’s important what is it

**Frosty:**

Um I suppose homosexuality is *(these are statements)* is it is it is it

**Russell:**

Right how is that manifest then how do you experience that

**Frosty:**

Hmmm through being told about this environment that we’re talking about um that homosexual men go to this place um and also having experience of walking past this place and men ah I suppose you could say picki attempting to pick me up um that experience as well

**Russell:**

But I’m thinking in terms of your imagining

**Frosty:**

Right
Russell:

because it I mean for instance if he's not included

Frosty:

Yeah

Russell:

in your imagining of it then there's a sense that it's not all homosexual men

Frosty:

So I'm selecting yeah I

Russell:

But if the men who have tried to pick you up outside Volcano are included then we're now starting to look at particular kind of practices

Frosty:

Mm hmm

Russell:

so

Frosty:

Yeah yeah um they could be the the ones that I've experienced on that street level

they could be anything from ah a man I suppose in his mid-forties or ranging sort of thirties to mid-forties in terms of a a um a verbal interaction um a man in a car um other men that look like their occupations

would be of a kind of a a sort of a labourer or or you know on the construction kind of area and then men in suits as well um and men with bags

Russell:

And these are the men who would be in the dark area

Frosty:

Yes

Russell:

Okay that range of men

Frosty:

Yeah that that range of men well and and I suppose I could include men like my hairdresser in in terms of their their look or or what they would be wearing and that would be somebody that's probably casually dressed um and perhaps would be interested in ah more kind of designer

Russell:

Yeah

Frosty:

kind of aesthetic

Russell:

Are the men in the dark area dressed are they in their suits or in their casual dress with the design aesthetic

Frosty:

(he laughs a little) I don't believe so

Russell:

Right okay

Frosty:

Towels come to mind

Russell:

Do their other do

Frosty:

Um not not really it's it's kind of funny not really because soon soon as they seem to walk into the door they no longer exist

as that man in a suit or man with a builder's hat on or
Right they they become some sort of other presence

Frosty:
They become another presence I’m not do you mean other as in other or as in another

Russell:
No just a something different from the person who was approaching the door

Frosty:
Yes

Russell:
Okay

Frosty:
Yes yeah

Russell:
That’s fine

II.i.42:00
I don’t think I have anything else to ask you (we laugh) and again now I ask you is there anything you want to ask me

Frosty:
Yeah I’ll ask you about your um perception of the place

Russell:
What do you want to know

Frosty:
What do I want to know what does it look like in there (we laugh a little)

Russell:
Um what does it look like can you get more specific because

II.i.42:30
we’re talking it’s a bit like saying to me what does Myers look like

Frosty:
Right

Russell:
inside

Frosty:
So I’d assume

Russell:
or what does Victoria University

Frosty:
And I suppose in that I’ve assumed that you’ve gone in there

Russell:
Yes I have been inside there

Frosty:
Yes right yeah

Russell:
Yes

Frosty:
Um are there are there group showers

Russell:
Um there are three areas where there are showers and they’re on three different levels in the building

Frosty:
Uh huh

Russell:
and in each case

II.i.43:00
there’s one of them that I’ve never had a shower in at the topmost level and I think there is basically space there for two people to have showers there are two shower heads in that

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
And then there’s um another one which looks like it’s big enough for two people but it has three showerheads on three different walls two on opposite walls which are narrower
and then on the long wall there’s one in the middle if you can follow that

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
And then on the ground floor which is rarely experienced as a ground floor it always feels like a basement because I enter the building at like most other people I think at the first floor going upstairs to reception

Frosty:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
So upstairs that’s at first floor level so that once inside the building the first floor is experienced in a sense as the ground floor

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
and so the ground floor becomes like a basement

Frosty:
Oh okay right s

Russell:
It has that kind of quality

Frosty:
And is that on s so that there’s something below street level is that

Russell:
No

Frosty:
No

Russell:
No it’s at street level

Frosty:
Oh right it’s yeah okay

Russell:
So to go back down to street level inside the building is experienced by me as being like going into a basement

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
and there’s a particular set of reasons for that

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
But the showers are on the in the in that ground floor area are near the wet area and there are three of them ah all on the long wall of the set of you know of of an open shower [unintelligible]

Frosty:
Okay yeah

Russell:
which is partially enclosed at one end so um one person is completely exposed the next person is partially exposed and the third person I would need to be angled to peer through the opening to be able to see the third person in there

Frosty:
Mm okay mm and I’ve always been kind of curious about the the I suppose something that you could call the reception area or

Russell:
Yeah

Frosty:
as you walk up the stairs I thi ass think you turn left and go up more stairs
Russell:
Yes that's right there's a kind of a little landing and it does a U turn

Frosty:
U turn

Russell:
up to the left yes

Frosty:
Up yep and then there's I'm what's like there is there

Russell:
(this is a question) The reception

Frosty:
a reception desk

Russell:
Yes there is it's what there is is like um ah ah a window ah with a small counter so it's like um the model for it would be like something like um a window you'd buy a train ticket at um that is it's ah the window begins at about waist level with a counter and there's a kind of a barrier of some sort between me and the person on the other side I don't remember whether it's bars or not and it's taller the rectangle of that window is taller than it is wider

Frosty:
Mm hmm yeah

Russell:
Um and um the wall in which it is embedded is panelled with unpainted wood and the wall immediately to the left is also panelled in wood

Frosty:
Uh huh

Russell:
and to the right is panelled in wood and to the to the left is a door which is staff only that leads if you like into the um office and behind the counter area

Frosty:

Russell:
The door to the right is the door into Volcano for me and other clients

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
and that door is electronically operated so they have to push a kind of buzzer so that it can open and you just shove it

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
Push it

Frosty:
Push it yeah

Russell:
open inwards and it will um open

Frosty:
And is that black

Russell:
No it is panelled in wood

Frosty:
It's oh right

Russell:
as I as I recall

Frosty:
Yeah and you
There's the emphasis on wood panelling is something I associate with a number of um saunas

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
That kind of boardroom or hunting lodge decor (we laugh a little)

Frosty:
Ha oh lovely and you pay I am assuming you pay

Russell:
At reception

Frosty:
money at that reception

Russell:
Yes or you can do it on credit or EFTPOS (I laugh a little)

Frosty:
How much is it

Russell:
Um student rate at Volcano at the moment

Frosty:
They have student rates (this is a question)

Russell:
They have st they ALL have student rates (I laugh a little)

Frosty:
Gee oh that's good

Russell:
They all have student rates

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
Um they all have student rates they do not all have pensioner rates

Frosty:
All right yeah

Russell:
And that says something

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
about attracting

Frosty:
a certain type of clientele

Russell:
Yeah ah Volcano has pensioner rates as well

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
um but not all saunas do

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
Ah student rates are at Volcano is thirteen dollars twenty at today as we speak

Frosty:
Yeah includes GST

Russell:
Including GST and it is GST

Frosty:
And it is

Russell:
That's specifically stated yeah

**Frosty:**
Right yeah so there’s a GST attached to

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Frosty:**
Yes because it’s a service well yeah

**Russell:**
So presumably it’s twelve dollars plus one dollar twenty GST

**Frosty:**
Yeah okay

**Russell:**
But um yeah sauna entry is governed by GST

**Frosty:**
Yeah that’s interesting

**Russell:**
So I’d be interested in seeing that area of the

*II.i.48:30*

Tax *(I laugh a little)*

**Frosty:**
Yeah yeah

**Russell:**
Legislation some time

**Frosty:**
Absolutely

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Frosty:**
Um and another thing that

**Russell:**
By the way that’s the most expensive

**Frosty:**
Is it

**Russell:**
Sauna for in my experience for a student rate in Melbourne

**Frosty:**
Yeah yeah and what about the this music that I used used to hear when I lived near there

**Russell:**
The music downstairs that you used to hear on Sunday mornings um there is ah

*II.i.49:00*

An area that only opened up in the last few years downstairs behind the sliding door on the street okay

**Frosty:**
Right as you walk [unintelligible]

**Russell:**
Yeah you talked about the sliding door

**Frosty:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
And that area is known by a specific name and it is um a kind of bar lounge entertainment area so um there is a bar there is then between the bar and what I’ll call the entertainment area

*II.i.49:30*

A lounge so there’s a mixture of um kind of like café type tables and chairs there are bar stools at the bar then there’s café type tables and chairs then there are lounge chairs which tend to be oriented towards the entertainment area then at the entertainment area there’s an array of possibilities because that’s a polished wooden floor with then a slightly elevated one step up stage and there’s a screen there and sometimes

*II.i.50:00*

They’ve projected mainstream Hollywood movies there sometimes there has been um live entertainment somebody singing accompanied at the piano and sometimes
there have been recovery parties there and sometimes there’ve been other special boutique events there (we laugh a little) ah I inadvertently

II.i.50:30
walked in late one Friday night on a boutique event which was a kind of a um I suppose for want of a better word some sort of S&M or fetish probably better to say fetish event and there was extremely loud and f to for me very interesting dance music coming from there and I wasn’t aware that this event was on

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
and I went in and this is a fairly large area we’re talking

II.i.51:00
about um and um there would have been about six people occupying it not including the man behind the bar one man was lying on a hospital trolley to which he was glad-wrap wrapped (we laugh a little) completely so the

Frosty:
Facing up

Russell:
Facing up so that the glad just parked in not in anywhere particular

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
Quite casually parked

II.i.51:30
um not parallel with any walls or anything

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
Just

Frosty:
Just there

Russell:
in the kind of middle of the near where the cafe tables and the lounge chairs are ah with glad-wrap wrapped over him and under the trolley I have never seen anything (Frosty laughs a little) um live like this before or since a kind of a mummification thing but really not so much it was around his body as it was his body was sealed to the thing

Frosty:
Clinging to it

Russell:
And then a blindfold was

II.i.52:00
included under ah a layer and there was a kind of a um he could breathe freely um and no one was paying him any attention and um there was something like um a torture rack apparatus that was up and somebody was casually being attached to that and there were a couple of other men sort of walking around and a couple of people dancing

Frosty:

II.i.52:30
Uh interesting

Russell:
But I’ve never been there were recoveries and I have no idea who went to them and I never went to one and that area has become um less used now it wasn’t al it wasn’t open all of the time when the building was open

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
and um it seems now to be open far less frequently and that’s partly because at the moment um Volcano is experiencing a decline because there is another sauna near

II.i.53:00
it which has proven very popular

Frosty:
Oh okay

Russell:
Um I don’t know that it’s stolen the clientele from Volcano, there obviously would have been some because it’s much smaller

Frosty:
Right yeah

Russell:
but it’s very popular

Frosty:
Right okay two more questions members (this is a question) you can become a member there

Russell:
II.i.53:30
(I take my membership card from my wallet and hand it to Frosty) You pay money

Frosty:
(looking at the card) Oh okay

Russell:
to be a member for a year and they give you a card

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
That card in my case and then when I go along I’m supposed to hand that card over

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
um and I think I pay something like three or four dollars to be a member for a year

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
and that card I’m not quite sure the significance of it um

II.i.54:00

ah the little hole in it is so that it can be put on a hook and when they give me a key for my locker the card goes on that hole

Frosty:

Oh okay

Russell:
and when I leave I return the key to them and then I get the card back

Frosty:
Mm yeah and do women go

Russell:
No women have been there on women only nights

Frosty:
Right so they have women only

Russell:
Ah there have been ah no I’m telling you a lie there have been women there on occasions which aren’t women only um II.i.54:30
and I can tell you of two of those one of those is um they had a ah a twenty-first twentieth or twenty-first birthday party within the last couple of years which tells you something about how old it is

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
um and a woman who is um a kind of a well known a former rock singer who’s become I suppose a cabaret artist II.i.55:00
and I would is well reasonably well known around Australia was one of the women was one of the people providing entertainment

Frosty:
Yeah

Russell:
Right

Russell:
and was photographed on the premises advertised as singing
Frosty: Yeah

Russell: and photographed and so that’s one the other is that um there was a woman who’s been heavily involved in a lot of charitable work for HIV organisations

Frosty: Uh huh

Russell: and she organised a Christmas lunch ah a couple of years ago for a lot of men um who were HIV positive and who probably I the the impression I got was a lot of people who are HIV positive are people who’ve experienced economic difficulties because of financial loss and Volcano has um been ah notably involved in offering support on a number of occasions for different sorts of things

Frosty: Yeah

Russell: and on this occasion that area specifically named area

Frosty: Yeah

Russell: was given over to a big Christmas lunch

Frosty: Yeah

Russell: A free Christmas lunch and this woman had organised and was one of the hostesses

Frosty: Oh okay

Russell: for that

Frosty: Yeah

Russell: Um so they’re the only two times I know of a woman who is a woman (we laugh a little)

Frosty: Yeah

Russell: being on the premises there is an entertainer who has sung there called Minnie Mouse who as far as I can see passes and she definitely passes but I’ve got a pretty strong feeling that her birth certificate doesn’t say female

Frosty: Yeah

Russell: But um she definitely passes

Frosty: Yeah yeah hmm curious

Russell: She’s not like a drag queen

Frosty: Yeah

Russell: She’s not like a drag queen

Frosty: Yeah yeah yeah

Russell: That was your second last question

Frosty: That’s it
Russell:
That's it is it

Frosty:
No I ah no two women and ah members

Russell:
Yeah

Frosty:
were the last last two I could go on forever (he laughs)

Russell:
That's all right

Frosty:

II.i.57:00
No that's that's enough information for me it's good curious

Russell:
But a lot of my interviewees have different kinds of answers from the answers I've given you

Frosty:
Right

Russell:
because people experience things

Frosty:
differently yeah

Russell:
differently

Frosty:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
It's definitely the case I've found that

Frosty:
Mm yeah mm okay

Russell:

We'll leave it there

Frosty:
Okay thanks very much

Russell:
No worries

Frosty:
(in a sing-song manner) I hope I've been a help once again

II.i.57:31
(I switch off the minidisc recorder)

END OF CONVERSATION
appendix 27: Albert II

The transcript documents a second conversation with Albert recorded at his flat on a weekday. A day earlier, Albert had returned from an extended business trip interstate. His dog, Doggy, remained frail and unwell and again sat close to us whining and whimpering while we conversed.

Russell:

II.i.00:00
Right so what I want to do this time is pick up on some terms that um have come up in the conversation we had last time either terms you introduced or terms I introduced or they’ve come up in other conversations I’ve had with other people and there’s about half a dozen of them

Albert:

Okay

Russell:

and I’m going to give them to you one at a time and what I would like you to do is to more or less swiftly tune into how you see those particular um terms relating to your

Albert:

To my experiences

Russell:

experiences of saunas okay

Albert:

Okay so you want to use other people’s lexicon [sic] on me

Russell:

Ah yeah but some of it’s yours

Albert:

And so and then get me to reinterpret my own lexicon

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

The first one’s clean

Russell:

Clean clean physically clean as in a clean space not dirty not shitty

II.i.01:00
not smelling of shit particularly I find that a particularly off-putting smell in sex-on-premises places although sometimes a necessary by-product ah clean as in person as in I can rim anywhere I like on the body and not run the risk of having to take Flagyl for a week um they’re the only things I put to clean

Russell:

What’s Flagyl I don’t know

Albert:

Oh it’s an anti-fungicide

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

If you rim arses that haven’t been washed properly you can get some very nasty anaerobic bacteria

Russell:

Right I hadn’t heard about that fungicide

Albert:

[unintelligible] it’s just one that you pick up one of the bugs you pick up from rimming

Russell:

Yeah but is the um is that a prescription item or

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah
appendix 27: Albert II

Albert:
Yeah

Russell:
Right okay so there’s a doctor visit involved

Albert:
There’s a doctor visit involved and if I’m not (Doggy whines loudly near the microphone) [unintelligible] with my doctor I’d just say you know Fred I’ve been ah licking some arses I don’t think I should have been and he’d say oh you need some Flagyl

Russell:
Right

Albert:
as opposed to I think a person who wasn’t comfortable with their doctor would have to explain how they got an anaerobic bacteria ah and that may cause some embarrassment because not all people are happy with the idea that they are people who like rimming

Russell:
So when we talked last time you talked about um a certain kind of ah regulation of rimming practice that ah you engaged in for instance you that you wouldn’t usually just rim during the week

Albert:
Oh yeah that’s because it’s a it’s a um a special thing I mean it’s it’s one hasn’t had a wash beforehand um but in a sauna it tends to be a fairly acceptable fairly doable practice because ah people have showered if they haven’t or it doesn’t [unintelligible] smell right you can say if you want me to do this you’ll need to do that

Russell:
And you’ve said that

Albert:
I’ve said that I’ve got no as you know I’ve got no hesitation in coming forward about my requests with people

Russell:
When when was the um last time that you said that to someone that you can recall

Albert:
That I said go and have a shower and then we’ll continue

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
Ah in Sydney three weeks ago

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
And he did came back and we continued

Russell:
Sure the the if we can go back to when you initially started responding to that use of the term clean you talked about smells is that

Albert:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
Sometimes saunas can have sex-on-premises venues generally can have that sort of um post-fuck shitty smell

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

um which is a smell I’d rather not have around me um

ii.i.04:30

it’s is nonetheless a very human smell but it’s one I prefer not to have around me much the same way as BO is an unpresent pleasant smell to be around

Russell:

Right and that would be the principal means by which you would detect a sense of um the sauna not being cleaned

Albert:

Yes

Russell:

Would be a sense of odour

Albert:

Odour um and you know that would come from obviously from things like used condoms

Russell:

ii.i.05:00

Yeah

Albert:

that’ve got a bit of shit on them um from that to the extreme of they did have at one stage at one of the saunas a phantom shitter who would come and shit on the cubicles

Russell:

Right

Albert:

Pretty bizarre behaviour whether it was a part of his ah bizarre behaviour of taking it it out on the rest of the world in some sort of crazy sort of psychosexual way that he’d shit on a cubicle and someone would come and

lay down on it accidentally

Russell:

ii.i.05:30

The person would lay down on it accidentally

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

Yes yeah okay um how recent was that that you became aware of that and was that something that you just heard talked about

Albert:

No it was actually part of my own research

Russell:

Right

Albert:

Um there’s an incident there where the phantom shitter strikes that night and the sauna proprietor vented somewhat vocally and loudly his ah disgust at the practice ii.i.06:00

and his thoughts about who the person was which I thought was quite inappropriate because he didn’t didn’t have any evidence

Russell:

Right

Albert:

The venting I can understand because someone’s got to clean up the pile of shit

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

and and ah calm a customer down who has gone into a cubicle to have a root and has got a back full of shit

Russell:

Do you when you go into a cubicle um check it
Albert:

Even though the light
**II.i.06:30**
is dim there is sufficient light because of a
reflection on the vinyl to be able to see
whether it’s been wiped down um so you
can see whether it’s inverted commas is
[as?] clean as clean can be which is not
terribly clean

Russell:

Is that a yes *(I laugh a little)*

Albert:

That’s a sort of yes it’s a sort of a yes

Russell:

What you

Albert:

I don’t physically touch it but I do scan it

Russell:

You scan it

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

And you’ll give conscious attention to
scanning it

Albert:

Yeah I mean I’ve I’ve when I go in
**II.i.07:00**
I was thinking quite consciously I do a
quick once over of the bed that’s fine and
then I because I tend to be more of a
bottom than a top check to make sure there
are condoms there because there’s nothing
worse than getting to the excited moment
and and saying excuse me ha ha we just
need to go and do something

Russell:

Right

Albert:

Ah so yeah I scan I clean

Russell:

So an initial thing will be
**II.i.07:30**
a smell in the venue

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

or a smell in a area of the venue

Albert:

or in the room

Russell:

and then a scan *(Albert’s phone starts
ringing)* of yep okay

Albert:

And then a scan of a particular space

Russell:

Sure

**II.i.07:43**
*(I switch off the recorder while Albert takes
the call, then switch it back on when he’s
finished)*

**II.ii.00:00**
We’re on now

Albert:

Okay yeah so I mean I am very aware and
if it’s a cubicle that’s just been used if I
know I’ve seen somebody come out then I
will prefer not to use that cubicle um for two
reasons the chance of it being grubby are
fairly obvious and ah this sounds rather
strange but it’s still got them in it
emotionally

**II.ii.00:30**
it’s still being their site there’s some sense
of ownership of it of the cubicle um

Russell:

Can you can you tell me a little bit more
about that *(laughing a little)* I don’t mind if
you’re kind of making it up a bit as you go
along

Albert:
Yeah I'm just thinking how it works um it works two ways if there've been two very attractive men that I've seen coming out of the cubicle I'll go in and I'll have a look around and try and work out what they've done

_II.ii.01:00_

Russell:

Really in a in a cubicle

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

with its minimal

Albert:

Minimal darkness you'll see shining on the surfaces on the vinyl so oh they only jerked each other off they're two fools they've cum they only jerked each other off

Russell:

Right

Albert:

Or there's a used condom you know freshly dropped as opposed to flat and crumpled on the floor

Russell:

Yes

Albert:

Someone got fucked I wonder which one

Russell:

Right

Albert:

You know then I go off into a little erotic fantasy about what happened in this _II.ii.01:30_ cubicle

Russell:

Will you go in there with another person

Albert:

Ah no that's by myself

Russell:

You'll do that by yourself

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

Right okay

Albert:

Um but if I'm in the process of cruising and I'm about to go into a cubicle with somebody and someone just comes out of one then it won't be that cubicle I go into

Russell:

Right

Albert:

because um it's got to be my space with this person for these activities

Russell:

Now that will be your decision

Albert:

Yes

Russell:

Not a decision you make with the other person

Albert:

Oh no _II.ii.02:00_ it's my decision

Russell:

Now how do you um how do you produce a situation with that other person where you're in charge in that respect

Albert:

Well if he beckons to come into the cubicle that I don't want to go into I'll say oh no this one's just been used this one hasn't been cleaned or you know alternatively that one down there's got more light in it
Russell:
Will you say that in the way you’ve just spoken to me or will you whisper it?

Albert:
Um

**Il.ii.02:30**
well loud enough for the exchange to be heard between the two people so well you know we’re at less than thirty centimetres from each other so it’s fairly softly

Russell:
Right

Albert:
Certainly not audible to a third party

Russell:
Right

Albert:
The audience is only two people myself and the other person

Russell:
Right

**Il.ii.03:00**
just going back to now the use of the term clean in relation to a person there again the main detector is a sense of smell is that correct

Albert:
Um smell yes

Russell:
Is that the principal one

Albert:
That’s the principal detector I mean I in the course of foreplay I mean needless to say I feel around you know you can tell when somebody’s got anal warts

**Il.ii.03:30**
pretty quickly with a fairly sensitive finger

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
Um you can tell if there’s penile warts certainly you can taste if they’re uncircumcised and they need to wash and I’ll tell them so um but it’s it’s more in the sense of personal hygiene than about personal hygiene than about health

Russell:
Yes

Albert:
I know some people when you say clean means

**Il.ii.04:00**
no STIs but [unintelligible]

Russell:
Yeah ah but I’m not I’m not concerned about other people I’m concerned about you

Albert:
For me clean means a personal hygiene

Russell:
Yeah that’s that’s that’s what I’m interested in

Albert:
um and then personal health but hygiene’s first

Russell:
Yeah cool can I now move to a second word

Albert:
Yeah if you wish

Russell:
Dirty

Albert:
Two connotations

**Il.ii.04:30**
one is physical dirt dirty floor and the other is dirty sex dirty sex is more unrestrained um more deliberately transgressing more free flowing and uncensored um more animal than
I was going to say spiritual but I think I mean human

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
Um more basic it’s it’s not a very good use of words more basic but yeah more human
more sweaty

Russell:
Tell me about a dirty floor

Albert:
A dirty floor is just physical dirt

Russell:
What’s I don’t know what you mean do you mean dust

Albert:
No I mean used condoms I mean condom packets I mean cum spills on the floor

Russell:
Right okay

Albert:
Ah

I mean paper towelling on the floor

Russell:
Yes

Albert:
I mean it needs a cleaner

Russell:
Yes

Albert:
It needs a man called a cleaner to come in and clean it

Russell:
Is one condom on the floor a dirty floor

Albert:
No provided it’s not where I want to put my foot

Russell:
Right even if it’s visible

Albert:
Yeah if it’s been thrown in the corner in the bin or whatever that’s fine my foot is not going there

Russell:

Albert:
Um but if it’s left on a on a a bench or what I call inconsiderately discarded

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
Um that’s dirty

Russell:
I want to just ask you about now something else to do with where you’re going to put your foot do you when you look at the floor and there’s a condom on it do you already have a sense as you look at the floor of where your feet are likely to go during the time you’re in that room

Albert:
Well I know that that square foot as it were is out

Russell:
Right um but if it were in the corner you said oh then it you probably wouldn’t pay attention does that mean you know in advance that your foot will not be going into the corner or that that’s an extremely unlikely

Albert:
Well in terms of the space that I occupy inside a cubicle it tends to be the middle third where I’m standing.  

Russell:  
Right right right  

Albert:  
I don’t do things against walls because they’re cold.  

Russell:  
Yes  

Albert:  
or the wall rattles  

Russell:  
(we laugh a little) Yes  

Albert:  
depending which wall it is um so the middle third  

Russell:  
Yeah the walls that don’t rattle are the colder ones  

Albert:  
Are the cold ones  

Russell:  
Yeah cos they’re concrete or brick  

Albert:  
Cos they’re concrete brick or chipboard or whatever  

Russell:  
Whatever yeah  

Albert:  
They’re they’re cold  

Russell:  
And the ones that do rattle what are they  

Albert:  
Um when I hear walls rattling in saunas I get the giggles  

Russell:  
Right  

Albert:  
Whether it be me making the rattle or it be a rattle from someone else I just I suppose if I think about it now I think it as poor sexual choreography (we laugh a little)  

Russell:  
Oh yeah why poor or poor in what way rather  

Albert:  
Um in well my sexual functioning in a sauna shouldn’t be impeding yours  

Russell:  
Right  

Albert:  
but if my rattling of the walls is disturbing then it’s ruining your space  

Russell:  
Right  

Albert:  
which is part of my little theory of why saunas are such quiet places if you turn the music off  

Russell:  
And the spa  

Albert:  
And the spa but they’re necessary noises to mask the grunts and groans and rattling walls  

Russell:  
What about then um how does
something like dirty sex with its lack of restraint and its transgressions as you call them  how does that then relate to walls

Albert:
Oh you can still be very dirty without making much noise

Russell:
Right  I'm wondering

Albert:
Dirty ah probably in some ways is more a state of mind than a physical dirty sex is more a state of mind than a state of action

Russell:
Can you tell me more about that

Albert:
Yeah um let's say

Russell:
For you I'm thinking

Albert:
Yeah for me um oral sex without amyl is just sucking a cock

Russell:
Yes

Albert:
Oral sex with amyl is dirty because it's more uninhibited  more restrained  unrestrained rather ah more phallocentric  more um base but not in a bad

Russell:
Yes she’s moaning away there  (to Doggy) come here

Albert:
Oh it's just because she needs a pat

Russell:
Oh come on have a pat (I pat Doggy) she's pretty sore too

Albert:
Yeah

Russell:
Um when you talked about transgressions transgressing what

Albert:
The vanilla you know sort of ah um kissey kissey touchie touchie little wanking um very contained penetration  very contained oral sex  ah so it's about those things  ah very naive almost

Russell:
So is it is that transgression then so what I'm interested in is you've just said there's a distinction between a state of mind and a state of action but what you've just described is a series of actions

Albert:
Yes and it's the way one thinks about it

Russell:
Right

Albert:
um and the dirtiness is usually associated with

Russell:
Finally that word dirty you then after a moment you said two connotations is it like dirty is two words

Albert:
Yes depending on the context
Appendix 27: Albert II

Right so it’s entirely to do with context

Albert:

So I could come in and say this place is dirty today and that would be a transcript this place is dirty today

Russell:

Yes

Albert:

The interpretation of that could mean (he begins a list) A the cleaner hasn’t been through

Russell:

Yes

Albert:

or B there are a lot of people here who are shit-faced and the sex is really intense but there are two words two meanings for the same word depending on context

Russell:

II.ii.12:00
And how important is it for you to always distinguish between those two meanings ah when you hear someone speak

Albert:

Context usually describes it

Russell:

Yeah if the context isn’t clear do you always make an effort to

Albert:

Oh if the context is not clear you say I had a really dirty night last night ah or better still you say I went to the sauna and it was dirty I’ll and I’m not clear how you mean I’ll say Russell do you mean dirty or DIRTY

Russell:

II.ii.12:30
Ah thank you right okay so you will seek clarification

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

If the context is not clear

Russell:

All right another word then

Albert:

Okay

Russell:

Private

Albert:

(Doggy moans) Doggy’s answering all the questions for me (we laugh a little) um private for me is not open to public show and

II.ii.13:00
or excluding the public excluding a third person so that if I’m um in a corner not in a cubicle having an intense pash and someone wants to join in then I say you know this is actually private

Russell:

(laughing a little) Right yeah go on

Albert:

Even though it’s not

Russell:

Even though it’s not

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

Well tell me about that then

Albert:

Private

II.ii.13:30
mean means it’s only for it’s only to be shared with this person
Russell:

Yes

Albert:

You could watch because I can't stop you because it's a public space

Russell:

Right

Albert:

but you can't join in

Russell:

Right

Albert:

So that if I'm having sex say in a beat um I can't stop someone from being within six foot of me because it's a public park

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

and I can't do that um but they attempt to join in I can tell them to go away because it's private

Russell:

Let's go back to the sauna

Albert:

Okay

Russell:

Are

Il.ii.14:00

there parts of the sauna then is the is the privacy something you generate with another person

Albert:

Yes

Russell:

or are there places that are private

Albert:

No no no there are there it's something you generate with the person and to a certain extent when an action starts taking place so it's generated with the person it's also a function of space um for example in parts of the maze little dead end corridors and that sort of thing

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

They're private

Russell:

Il.ii.14:30

Yeah

Albert:

um unless you're invited into them but there may as well be a door there because um emotionally there is

Russell:

So if you walked towards one of those dead ends turned um we're talking about Rear Entry

Albert:

Well that would yes good example

Russell:

That would be a classic example

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

cos that little maze there does have a couple

Albert:

Does have a couple of private

Russell:

of dead ends yeah

Albert:

Dead ends
Russell:
Now if you walk in and you see two people there you experience that as though there is a door there.

Albert:
There may as well be a door there unless I’m invited in.

Russell:
Right.

Albert:
and people can invite you in by various subtle gestures.

Russell:
Yes such as what have you experienced as one.

Albert:
Such as um.

Russell:
One that has been made.

Albert:
a look.

Russell:
to you.

Albert:
Yeah.

Russell:
rather than one you’ve made.

Albert:
A look at you that says come hither.

Russell:
Yeah well how does that look work.

Albert:
Oh it’s a lustful look.

Russell:
Right.

Albert:
The eyes have it um or a gesture with a hand you know a sort of cock shaking *(he demonstrates)* cock [sic].

Russell:
Your hand is reaching out with the palm up and the fingers curved yeah.

Albert:
Yeah ready to grab a cock.

Russell:
Right okay.

Albert:
Um you know sort of give me your cock and balls type gesture out the side of a twosome comes this hand saying here’s something to be filled please fill it.

Russell:
In your direction.

Albert:
In my direction.

Russell:
And would that hand be at about waist height.

Albert:
Yeah.

Russell:
Yeah okay it wouldn’t if it was shoulder height.

Albert:
It’s a go away.

Russell:
Right right okay.
Albert:
And it’s like that (he demonstrates)

it’s you know

Russell:
Ah now you’ve

Albert:
Stop stopping gesture

Russell:
Now you’ve got the policeman’s gesture

Albert:
Yeah it’s go away

Russell:
Yes yes

Albert:
If it’s at crutch height open then it’s a come hither

Russell:
Right okay

Albert:
Um and that can be quite it can become even more direct with a straight out shove if you’re too close

Russell:
Okay

Albert:
Although I never get to the shove stage because I’m far too astute at reading the body language

Russell:
When we were talking a moment ago you surprised me because you said pri private excludes the public a third person

Albert:
or persons

Russell:
and yeah well I was I was a bit surprised because when you said the public I was thinking oh you’re you’re talking about the entire sauna and the public is excluded and then you said a third person and suddenly my imagining had to shift and change it do you understand what I’m saying I

Albert:
Yeah public is anything other than the people engaging

Russell:
Right

Albert:
Whether if that be a threesome then it’s a fourth person or a forty-fifth

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
person

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
um in the sense that say in orgy rooms there can be an orgy going on with fifteen people in it and somebody standing on the side watching and that can thoroughly disconcert me they either join in or piss off and if I don’t see them enjoying as a voyeur a sexual voyeur then I’ll leave but if I see them enjoying as a sexual being they’re finding the sight sexual or interesting um confronting whatever then they can leave

Russell:
Have you experienced that an or an orgy on that scale with that many people and a person as you’ve just described or is that a
situ a scenario you’re hypothesising

Albert:

I’ve experienced it no I’ve experienced that recently when I was at the Blokes’ Business orgy so there you know there’d be a group of men having sex with each other in various combinations and at various times um and I left a couple of rooms because I had this sense that I was curious intrigued rather than sexual and the space is sexual

II.ii.18:30

it’s not about curiosity and intrigue it’s sexual um but if a person is there independent of their age their looks and all those other fascist terms and they’re sexually engaging in the threesome make making it a foursome though not physically contacting well they can stay

Russell:

Sure

Albert:

um because they’re part of it they’re part of the sex and the voyeurism of the performance

II.ii.19:00

um whereas say in in the beat across the road ah if somebody’s watching and they know they can’t be involved and they watch almost with anger then they’re not welcome

Russell:

I want to move to another term

Albert:

Go on

Russell:

Public (Albert pulls a face) why are you making a face at me

Albert:

I just [unintelligible]

Russell:

You’ve just made a face at me

Albert:

II.ii.19:30

(laughing a little) The corollary of private

Russell:

Is it

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

You didn’t say that though when I said dirty

Albert:

No I didn’t did I

Russell:

No

Albert:

Um

Russell:

So now public is the corollary of private for you

Albert:

Yeah public sex although not necessarily public sex is where I’m open to all comers I don’t care who’s there

Russell:

I’m thinking again public in relationship to the sauna so does that statement still apply

Albert:

Yep if I’m having public sex

II.ii.20:00

Russell:

Yes

Albert:

for example in a sling

Russell:

Yes

Albert:

In an open public sling
Russell:
Yes

Albert:
that's open to all comers

Russell:
Right

Albert:
I lose any rights well I don't lose I forgo any rights to privacy to when I'm in a public sling

Russell:
When you say any rights to privacy last time we talked you talked about um being able to regulate

Albert:
Oh yeah you can regulate them

Russell:
Yeah but is that sort of still retaining certain rights

Albert:
Um you're pushing me to a

Russell:
to a certain kind of privacy

Albert:
Yeah you're pushing me to a to answer yes because the public slings that I engage in um I'm thinking of the one in Sauna Y in Sydney in particular there almost in a good session there there almost becomes a gatekeeper

Russell:
Oh yeah

Albert:
who is a voyeur participant and the sling is inside a sort of a caged section so anyone can stand outside the cage and watch in but the voyeur participant is the one who gatekeeps on who can actually come in and participate directly and when I think the sexual energies are working well between the participants then that happens and it requires a certain commonality of sexual communication between the participants to determine that this is how this group will work there's nothing worse than trying to choreograph a threesome that won't let itself won't won't function of its own accord

Russell:
Right

Albert:
And that sort of induces introduces the concept of public where there you're there as a third fourth or fifth person who needs to be choreographed um sex is largely about nonverbal communication and and for me and the picking up of other people's cues and respecting those cues whether they be piss off or come closer

Russell:
So so public is a corollary of private for you it is

Albert:
I don't necessarily know whether I'd put them in binary opposition

Russell:
That's fine I don't know no that that's

Albert:
Um

Russell:
I've got no problem about that

Albert:
I think they can they can fuzz in the middle and they fuzz in the middle a lot

Russell:
How useful are they for you as um or rather how stable are they for you as terms or as
concepts when you’re in the sauna are they stable

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

is that what

Albert:

I think most often

Russell:

I understand as unstable

Albert:

Yeah yeah most often they’re fuzzing

Russell:

Right

Albert:

um until such time as they need to be articulated one way or the other because of these circumstances in this particular act of sex

Russell:

Yes like saying to someone this is private

Albert:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah okay

Albert:

There’s a point where I now say to myself this is public and therefore that man over there can stay here or this is private and therefore that man over there needs to go

Russell:

Last time we talked there were a number of occasions when you brought up the term boundaries how does a term like boundaries then relate to when you say to yourself something are you identifying boundaries or marking boundaries or experiencing producing them

Albert:

All of the above and it’s part of the fuzziness of when you’re on one side and when you’re on the other

Russell:

Right

Albert:

of private public

Russell:

Right okay

Albert:

Um and the boundaries are never so neat are never so neat sort of like Abolig Aboriginal loun boundaries land boundaries

Russell:

Yes

Albert:

My land finishes over there

Russell:

Yeah

Albert:

and your land starts over there but we don’t get out the the tripods and and mark it out with fine line decision definition as we do in Western cultures and fences and boundaries

Russell:

That’s interesting I was in um an Aboriginal community in Arnhem Land where um there was a waterway and the land on one side belonged to one moiety and or was linked with one moiety and the land on the other side was linked with this other moiety and a bridge had been built in the last twenty years
and I asked someone what the status of the bridge was in relation to the two moiety. Like did was there a boundary now?

**Il.ii.25:00**

and I was told very clearly that the question made no sense

**Albert:**

Which is what I'm saying.

**Russell:**

Yeah yeah yeah it made no sense.

**Albert:**

The other version of the same question is who owns the river.

**Russell:**

Ah yes I agree yeah.

**Albert:**

Um so it's it's a it's a fuzzy.

**Russell:**

Yeah um *(I shift around in my seat)* sorry just adjusting my trousers there um I'll move on to another word safe.

**Albert:**

*(a silence, the clock chimes)* Um physically safe in that I will not be hurt physically safe in terms of transmission of infections safe as in emotionally safe that I can do here without you judging um *(mumbling)* I think that's that's about those three [unintelligible].

**Russell:**

Can you tell me a little bit about the third.

**Albert:**

Doing it here without you judging.

**Russell:**

Yes this thing about without you judging.

**Albert:**

Well if I'm rimming somebody I don't particularly want a third person thinking and even worse articulating oh that's disgusting I don't need that dis don't need that distinction.

**Russell:**

Has that occurred that someone has spoken that in your presence.

**Albert:**

In back rooms at dance parties yeah.

**Russell:**

All right what about now back again to um saunas have you experienced that in saunas.

**Albert:**

Someone actually saying that's disgusting I've had it said to me about something else going on between two people.

**Russell:**

Yeah.

**Albert:**

Say for example a a nontypical encounter say between a very fat man and a very skinny attractive young man.

**Russell:**

Yes.

**Albert:**

Someone will say oh that's disgusting um whereas I would argue that if that's the relationship that's the sexual relationship they want to happen at that time they need to feel safe enough to do it without my judgement um.

**Russell:**

So for you that thing about other people passing judgement do you again do you need to hear that.

**Il.ii.27:30**

or are there other signs of that.

**Albert:**

Oh there're lots lots of nonverbal signs.
Russell:
Can you think of some recent examples that you’ve experienced

Albert:
Well say take the younger man scenario um and an older man a much older man than me

**II.i.28:00**
participates then there’s a sense in which I need to be able it’s going back to boundaries I need to be able to say you’re not welcome this close or if I’m engaging with a younger man as I tend to enjoy younger men ah not be judged with labels that one would normally associate with men who have sex with younger men *(putting on a voice)* of legal age I might add

Russell:
Yeah yeah

Albert:
Um

**II.i.28:30**
although personally I must admit I don’t think the age thing is important at all there may be other things happening power relations going on a you know a sixty year old man has sex with a thirteen year old boy it’s not necessarily pederacity *sic* it’s it’s ah a power relation often where the thirteen year old boy actually has the power

Russell:
I understand that

Albert:

**II.i.29:00**
because he has the commodity the beauty that the older man seeks so that’s about safety

Russell:
*(a silence)* How do you is it possible to for you to take steps

**II.i.29:30**
to ensure that that safety is there for you that emotional safety what can you do towards that in a sauna

Albert:
Most often it’s to have sex within a cubicle

Russell:
Right

Albert:
Um in another city last week I noticed curiously the walls were low enough for people to be able to look over the top

Russell:
Right

Albert:
and I felt quite violated when I was down rimming somebody and looked up and saw a

**II.i.30:00**
a much older pair of eyes because you could tell from the hair um perving on what we were doing

Russell:
This was in a sauna in this other city

Albert:
In a sauna

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
in this other city where the walls are not high enough so you can’t perve over the top of them um

Russell:
So choosing cubicles in Melbourne you opt for cubicles where that isn’t the case where the walls are high enough

Albert:
Well you can’t see you can’t see over the walls in Melbourne
Right

**Albert:**

Unless you’re over six foot tall

**Russell:**

Right

**Albert:**

Six foot six

**Russell:**

Right

**Albert:**

Whereas at this sauna in this other city I don’t know about the intentional design but the way that it’s built is that voyeurism of that sort was not possible

**Russell:**

And then what happened

**Albert:**

He left he disappeared

**Russell:**

And you continued okay can we go back to the first two associations you had with safe

**Albert:**

Yes that was physical safety that I won’t get hurt

**Russell:**

Yes can you tell me a bit about that

**Albert:**

Um

**Russell:**

When you say that you won’t get hurt because the second one was about infection
(he coughs) Excuse me

II.ii.32:30

yes hurt in one of two ways um physical and emotional physical that you won’t thump me

Russell:

Right

Albert:

Um that the sling won’t break and I’ll break my back

Russell:

Right

Albert:

That the walls won’t fall down around me emotionally to take the example of a former lover who would deliberately

II.ii.33:00

stalk me with no intention of having sex with me in a sauna other than to disconcert me he is prohibited by an intervention order from going to Rear Entry

Russell:

Does

Albert:

though it caused the magistrate some concern to explain why (I laugh a little) I needed that place to be a place of safety

Russell:

Yes

Albert:

You know I told somewhat of a white lie by saying it was well not a white lie it was true

II.ii.33:30

it’s a principal research site and his presence there interfered with my research

Russell:

Yes sorry but when you’re now talking about a certain kind of emotional safety now are you bringing the third thing on your list back in relationship to the first one you you listed three things initially

Albert:

Physically hurt

Oh yes I see what you’re saying yes um

Russell:

You talked about being hurt in the sense of

II.ii.34:00

physically hurt you talked about infection then you talked about an emotional safety

Albert:

Voyeuristic safety

Russell:

So

Albert:

Non [?] voyeuristic safety

Russell:

Right so the third one’s to do with a kind of voyeurism

Albert:

Yeah it’s public private distinction

Russell:

Right okay

Albert:

Ah the first the physical emotional stuff is that I can have sex without being physically hurt or emotionally abused

Russell:

Right okay now

Albert:

by a particular person individ who we’ve talked about

Russell:

Yeah okay

II.ii.34:30

now the distinction I’m now going to ask you about is what’s the distinction between being physically hurt and an infection

Albert:

Physically hurt
Russell:
For you for you

Albert:
Yes okay physically hurt is I have a bruise

Russell:

Albert:
Right

Russell:

Albert:
and you can see it

Russell:

Albert:
Infection is I get a new illness that you may not see

Russell:

Albert:
No no physical has to do with the exterior of my body

Russell:

Albert:
Right so the other one is to do with the an infection is to do with the interior

Albert:
Yeah

Russell:

Albert:
Yes

Russell:

Albert:
um

Russell:

Albert:
I’m not hurt I’m actually infected

Russell:

Albert:
Yes and the unwellness that comes with that is that a hurt is that a physical injury

Albert:
Not as I perceive it because there’s nothing there to be seen much like the mental health thing you know if I’m depressed nobody has any concern because there’s nothing to see if I had a broken leg everyone’s oh how dreadful you’ve got a broken leg

Russell:

Albert:
Right okay

Russell:

Albert:
Yeah

Albert:
(laughing a little) That’s enough for today

Russell:

Albert:
Okay

Russell:

Albert:
Um I have one more word

Russell:

Albert:
Dangerous or danger

Albert:
Danger anything that puts me at risk in the broader sense physically emotionally spiritually sexually um all those things danger [unintelligible] tied up with risk

Russell:

Albert:
Right and in a sauna specifically

Albert:
Um people not respecting my distinctions of clean and dirty public and private (I laugh a little) those sort of things

Russell:
So a lack of respect

Albert:
A lack of respect

Russell:
is a sign of danger

Albert:
Is danger whether that be whether you perve at me punch me um have a dirty arse and I can’t rim it um I have a dirty arse and you can’t rim it conversely um undesirable

Russell:
But do you experience that as danger though

Albert:
Yes it’s a danger to you

Russell:
So you experience that as danger

Albert:
Yeah

Russell:
at that point okay yeah

Albert:
If you let me fuck you unprotectedly that’s danger

Russell:
Yes

Albert:

to you as an individual and to us as a community um so I suppose there’s a personal and a communal dimension of danger and its corollary safe um that saunas can engender and they should not be places of danger

Russell:
I understand the should not (I laugh a little) but

Albert:
When they are

Russell:
your experience is what I’m interested in

Albert:
Yeah and when they are is when those boundaries are not precise enough clear enough to those involved um

Russell:
How does that then relate to when you talked about how with something like public and private there’s always a fuzziness in the middle

Albert:
Well I think Blokes’ Business have got it down to a one liner very well and they say say yes enthusiastically and no politely which is a good reduction of a whole lot of words down to a small phrase

Russell:
Yes as a tactic

Albert:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Albert:
And so [Also?] danger is where someone says um yes regrettably and no with anger

Russell:
Right right
Albert:
It's actually a very well crafted phrase

Russell:
How was that phrase introduced to you

Albert:
It's simply on their literature

Russell:
Right okay this is like um

Albert:
And it's in terms of safe sex

Russell:
Is this um ah like a a roving organisation that isn't based at ah one particular

Albert:
Yeah it operates in people's homes

Russell:
Yes that's that's all I need to know about that

Albert:
People's large homes *(he laughs a little)*

Russell:
Yeah *(laughing a little)* I don’t need to know anymore about that while we’re recording um is there anything you want to say to me I don’t want to um go through any more words is there anything you want to say to me or ask me about what we’ve just
talked about

Albert:
No I think we’ve covered we’ve covered all we need to talk about all we all that was on your agenda

Russell:
Yeah
Um for example in their dry sex-on-premises

**II.ii.41:00**

venue like The Basement type thing they have large animal cages with beds in them which nobody uses because that form of public sex in *this other city* just doesn’t work whereas they would go off like a bomb in Sydney

**Russell:**

Yes

**Albert:**

Perhaps in Melbourne they would go off like a bomb in Sydney cos that’s the way their culture works

**II.ii.41:30**

they don’t work in this other city because they don’t have that um sexual culture that supports that sort of extraversion perversion deviancy relishing in all that sort of stuff and that’s a function of where they are at as a gay community um that’s about all

**Russell:**

Good

**Albert:**

Which was a pity that they didn’t go off *(we laugh a little)* I’m investing in a large a very large animal cage soon *(he laughs)*

**Russell:**

For you and *Doggy* *(I laugh a little)*

**Albert:**

**II.ii.42:00**

For me and *Doggy* yes

**Russell:**

Okay I’ll leave it there

**Albert:**

Okay

**II.ii.42:05**

*(I switch off the minidisc recorder)*

**END OF CONVERSATION**
The transcript documents a second conversation with Colin, again recorded at his house over lunch. This time we sat at the table in the large open living area. No one else was home. Before we could eat, Colin had to clear a heap of documents from the table; the project of significantly reorganising his financial affairs is referred to in the transcript below. Also before we began, he played me some pieces of recorded music, and this is referred to in the conversation, too.

Russell:

II.i.00:00
Now we’re talking

Colin:

Righto (indicating wine) you wouldn’t like rest of that would you

Russell:

No thanks

Colin:

Okay well there’s some water on the table if you want it (he walks from the table to the bench)

Russell:

Thanks

Colin:

Yeah

Russell:

Okay (Colin returns to the table) um when we talked last time

II.i.00:30
right near the end of the interview you said that um ah just coming out of the conversation you said something like that having the conversation started to make you think that maybe you should go and follow up some of the things

Colin:

(laughing a little) Oh yeah

Russell:

that were brought up in it (laughing a little) and so I’m I’m dying of it’s complete curiosity on my part um have you gone back

Colin:

It’s

Russell:

to the sauna since

II.i.01:00
we talked

Colin:

No it’s terrible I haven’t I actu I sort of you know should have but I

Russell:

Shou

Colin:

Well you know what I mean I don’t like saying I’m going to I have a contractual nature in a way I prefer to if I say I’m going to do something to do it um and of course the other that the um the um downside of that is that ah one then avoids contractual statements

Russell:

(we laugh a little) All right

Colin:

um or a contract indeed like

II.i.01:30
love um

Russell:

Because you take them so seriously

Colin:

(he sighs, then) I would love to say that that was the reason I think possibly it’s just as much because one’s frightened of of um possible outcomes hmm and ah frightened of commitment although interestingly I mean I think for other reasons I guess I I don’t know about change since our interview but

II.i.02:00
um ah because other aspects of my life that I’ve we’ve talked about and we can mention
again if you like ah seem to be at a state of change as I turn sixty-seven on Tuesday tomorrow

Russell:
Oh really

Colin:
Mm um it ah

II.i.02:30
yes bec because I’m at the state of change in various ways and I believe that IS happening I believe it’s real ah I guess that the the love and attached areas are changing too or my views towards them I was at a party um ah the night before last and ah and met someone I know ah who

II.i.03:00
and I enjoy who’s an outrageous character who manages to pull in the most adorable young men (*I laugh a little*) while he is um a very good characterisation of this guy you know the it seems almost as though the person who made the characterisation’s met him ah is the caterpillar in *The Ant Story* an amazing sort of floating caterpillar that ah is extremely

II.i.03:30
camp and and ah almost balletic in his movements and very sort of

Russell:
Sorry in *The Ant Story*

Colin:
The *Ant Story* there’s I don’t know if you remember the well I don’t know if you saw it

Russell:
No

Colin:
but it’s an animation film about ah you know the ant who chose to be different

Russell:
Oh yeah yeah

Colin:
and of course being an American film of course he wins through so um that’s the story and his and his supporters are this really um raggle taggle mob that include this

II.i.04:00
it’s a sort of a travelling circus who end up being his his supporters and they and the circus includes this big fat blue (*I laugh*) um with gold legs um caterpillar that eventually turns into a (*putting on a voice*) butterfly

Russell:
(*laughing*) Oh right

Colin:
and ah (*he laughs*) and he’s just so thrilled that that’s happened and that’s the way this guy goes on all the time and he gets these gorgeous young sort of very straight young guys

II.i.04:30
falling over themselves for him anyway there was one such with him at the party and I just I it goes back to a problem in a way that I’ve had I think um since school days of when you feel that someone is attached to someone else you feel that you can’t interfere

Russell:
Yeah

Colin:
with that it’s just not right you know it’s not it’s a it’s a it’s um unethical

II.i.05:00
and um I don’t think it’s just an escape you know that one I really I found it again with this young guy who I’ll be meeting again on Wednesday night actually the opening night of of that unnamed Shakespearean play that we’ve talked about before

Russell:
Oh yes yes

Colin:
which is just about to open again ah and um ah

II.i.05:30
this young guy’ll be there at the party and I think we’ll both be looking forward to meeting one another I just don’t know how to play that sort of stuff I find it extremely difficult to just walk up to him and say look are you two really partners because I understand he um you know has several people that he that he well you know you just know that he doesn’t he’s not an
exclusive partner to anyone  anyway I don’t know what I’ll do

**II.i.06:00**

I know it doesn’t have much to do with what we’ve been talking about but maybe it does give a clue as to the sort of person who’s talking and I’d  I’m very caught up in those sort of things and I still don’t know

**Russell:**

Do you feel

**Colin:**

what’s right and wrong about them

**Russell:**

Do you feel that there are contractual that there are contracts that are made in saunas that you’ve entered into contracts in saunas of varying kinds with people

**Colin:**

**II.i.06:30**

Not any lasting contract  the  ah um no I have never sort of gone home with anyone from one or anything  I’ve  if one were going to put contract into the mind and see what it meant I suppose with the  with this older  old old guy that

**II.i.07:00**

I mentioned the last time I think who massaged

**Russell:**

Oh yes

**Colin:**

Said

**Russell:**

Yes

**Colin:**

you know no suck no fuck

**Russell:**

Yes

**Colin:**

Ah and went around and got [unintelligible]

**Russell:**

They’re like subordinate clauses aren’t they really

**Colin:**

*(laughing)*  Yes  yes it was  I was an absolute contractual thing and he was  he was not a pretty person  you know he was  he was a funny scrappy old guy um but he was going around he had no bones about whispering in everyone’s ear mine included and  and I took him up on it and I still dream of that sometimes when I masturbate  I mean he was just so

**II.i.07:30**

it was so visceral his his you know feeling as the thing happened and yet it was completely lovingly non-intrusive just that he just thought it was terrific to be able to do what he was doing to me and I thought it was terrific what he was doing um but we you know we agreed and I sort of  you know I went upstairs and lay down on a  on one of the little bench things and

**II.i.08:00**

um almost like saying all right start the interview it was  it was okay get going yeah okay just hello and  um so I suppose there’s a contractual element in that um and funny enough when he had got me to a state of close to orgasm he asked me you know um would you like me to finish you off

**II.i.08:30**

and I said yes  ah and I think that’s  I think that’s  he seemed to me a tiny bit like you giving your interviews  that you say well these are the conditions  you’re  um I’m there’ll be a  um a written copy of it and the names won’t be  everything will be changed to  um so as not to affect anyone that’s mentioned and all of that and that’s what he seemed to me to do  he  he prepared the ground before he

**II.i.09:00**

I hadn’t thought of it in those terms before this very conversation but it’s  it’s  it’s quite it’s quite good  I’m  um  I’m  I’m not quite sure what it did for him and what it did for me  for me it allowed me to relax very much I think and also to feel that I was making no I think what was good about it was that there was no  um there was no doing favours

**II.i.09:30**

in it at all except that you know I suppose I or if there was it was favours being very definitely returned  I was doing him a favour by taking him on and he was doing me a favour by doing something nice to me and um

**Russell:**
Did it have a professional feel to it

Colin:

Well not really and a a a rather sort of
II.i.10:00
sweet thing that happened was that he
asked me if sort of in the middle of it um
when it was very obvious that I was enjoying
it he asked me if I’d mind if he lay down
beside me for a while on the on the couch
thing and and and I said yeah no that’s fine
you know and so he did that and I ah and I
ruffled his hair and um
II.i.10:30
and I think it was after that that he then got
up and said would would you know in other
words that could have been the finish of it
but he then said would you like me to finish
you off because a lot of people just wanted
to have this really sexy massage and then
go off and find some other young spunk to
actually get off with which was not what I
was doing ah um so there was
II.i.11:00
there was that and he and at at the end of
it all after when we were actually separating
he he thanked for letting him lie next to me
it was extraordinary really he was like some
old guy you’d find I don’t know around the
Flemington you know in the boxing out the
horses or something you know sort of ama
lovely
II.i.11:30
straight old (laughing a little) not straight
[unintelligible] quality about him somehow
no there was nothing creepy about him it
was he was just (putting on a voice) well
that’s what I want [unintelligible] you know
I’ve got this for you

Russell:

But there was a series of kind of clear terms
under which you were

Colin:

Very clear terms

Russell:

Yeah

Colin:

with him

Russell:

So they were explicitly stated in words

Colin:

Yeah and you see and I’m making some
little parallels I suppose but um you
II.i.12:00
know in negotiations with friends so often or
with even with ah I’m just trying to think
there’s something that’s happened not all
that long ago which um yes that’s right ah
um (taps his hand on the table) no not that
one ah there’s the um
II.i.12:30
you either have a very straightforward
contract with one another in one way or
another that you’re going to do a friend a
favour or something like that but that you’re
going to that that’s how you’re going to do
it somehow that’s terribly cut and dried and
clear the moment you get into financial
negotiations with friends and I’ve
experienced this twice with selling houses
and I wouldn’t now let the thing happen
again even if I really thought oh well with this
person you know but no ah
II.i.13:00
um to get into financial situations with
friends ah you you either just have to be
making a gift um and it’s without any terms
at all or um you have to be um it has to
be very cut and dried and very obvious
what’s happening if the moment you get
into doing favours for one another and then
someone expecting oh look I did that
II.i.13:30
favour for you and you should be doing this
for me um well that to me is getting into real
ape shit territory and and so much of that
happens I think in the as it were the games
around sex that or sexual partnering that
that people feel that they have earned the
right to do this or that by some by a sexual
union of some kind and they haven’t in my
view necessarily earned it at all

Russell:

So in this
II.i.14:00

Colin:

I mean I never feel I’ve earned rights
because of some sexual thing because I
suppose I can’t bear to do something sexual
that I don’t want to do and so I never put
myself in a position um of feeling that
someone owes me for what I’ve done you
know I never feel that very often I owe
someone you know isn’t it just wonderful
that they’ve allowed me into their company I
never feel it the other
II.i.14:30
way around strangely I I although this is
not anything directly to do with um well I
guess yes it does have a direct application
as far saunas are concerned in that at that
that moment where people are sort of
looking and sussing one another out and
everything I just find so full of shit (he laughs
a little) and a lot of that’s coming
II.i.15:00
from my end I mean the one time when I’ve
actually picked someone up I think might
have mentioned this the last time this
gorgeous young guy that I picked up at a
public loo I mean really a a prince ah and um I think he was standing there went out
of the loo everyone was seemed to leaving
at much the same time and ah he was
standing there and I just gave him a big
smile I just looked at him and and was able
to show him that
II.i.15:30
god I think you’re terrific you know and um
and that worked he then sort of I don’t
know it became obvious when he went or
walked over to somewhere else um and was
saw if I was going to follow him and I
absolutely had no compunction about that I
just went and followed him and we and
someone else came up and he said (putting
on a voice) piss off (he reverts to his usual
voice) to them ah and ah
II.i.16:00
so ah you know some people can do that all
the time but then again
Russell:
Some people can do what you did that is
smile
Colin:
Yeah
Russell:
Yeah
Colin:
And can feel I don’t know at ease I didn’t I
think it may be because I was exiting that I
wasn’t standing there and turning around
and smiling at him ah and then hanging
around to see what he did it was a passing
situation so in a way we were contractually
free
Russell:

II.i.16:30
Mm that’s interesting because the other
story you told me about um ah the man who
we ended up referring to as the builder (I
laugh a little) at Suburb A
Colin:
Mm
Russell:
You were exiting there as well you were at
the lockers getting ready to leave
Colin:
That’s true
Russell:
You told me that
Colin:
Yes yes that’s true yes
Russell:
Is it something about there’s there seems to
be less at stake so why not
Colin:
Well that wasn’t the thought that entered my
mind when you were just
II.i.17:00
about to ask the question what entered my
mind was that that it was an exit so it was a
situation that I could um in a way I could
make a commitment without making a
contract or something I wasn’t still sitting
there once I’d made something evident
Russell:
Yes
Colin:
I could just leave
Russell:
Yeah
Colin:
Ah um and yes II.i.17:30
I think when you’re just about to leave um
and particularly if nothing’s happened that
um you’ve got nothing to lose in a way ah but I think the exact feeling for me is that is that is more a geographical thing that you’re actually about to leave that space and you don’t have to be there to accept a refusal or whatever

II.i.18:00
it may or may not be the case but that’s my feeling as we speak

Russell:
No that’s important yeah the

Colin:
And yet I feel um with this boy that I’ll be seeing again on Wednesday young man I’ll be seeing again on Wednesday ah I feel I do need to be very straight up with him somehow and and unless it becomes obvious that

II.i.18:30
he doesn’t want to talk sort of thing but if he still does um I think I probably will ask him the situation sort of say um I’ll have to think how to say it but basically that the content of the question will be are you exclusively on with your partner or or are you or you’re not

Russell:
You could always ask him if he’s married (we laugh a little)

Colin:
Well

Russell:
Maybe that’s not the question

Colin:
I don’t think he

II.i.19:00
not with this one they’re not Muslims (I laugh) if he’s married he’s one of several wives

Russell:
(laughing a little) Yes all right

Colin:
But he’s a darling young guy and very just so just um you know intelligent and unaffected and very pleasant and ah just

very slightly slightly carpentry (we laugh a little)

Russell:
Um

Colin:

II.i.19:30
Lovely man

Russell:
I guess when you say that it’s not much relevance or it may be of not much relevance I mean one of the things I’m aware of is that even though the conversations I’ve had with people have tended to be fairly open one of the things that’s um still nevertheless been the case is that those conversations have tended to focus on saunas

Colin:
Ah yes

Russell:
and their

II.i.20:00
experiences with them but of course people have whole lives of which the sauna is a part but not necessarily

Colin:
Big part

Russell:
a big part it might be from time to time and certainly if people’s experiences if your own experiences are like mine then maybe when you’re in the sauna suddenly it’s an enormous part the actual moment of being in there

Colin:
Yeah

Russell:
Um but it’s kind of important that people

II.i.20:30
people have other aspects to their existence

Colin:
Yes
Russell: That are there also

Colin: Yeah do you mean there when they’re at the sauna or there in a conversation

Russell: Well I’m wondering about the degree to which they are there at the sauna because I think the sauna can be an environment often that requires um attention a good deal of attention

Colin: **II.i.21:00** Yeah well it’s also it’s another world it’s not the world that you’re in it’s like walking into a dream isn’t it

Russell: It is for you *(this is a question)*

Colin: Well I mean I’m using that more as a parable as a

Russell: Yeah

Colin: As a ah as a um um parable or whatever a ah a way of putting it

Russell: Right

Colin: But it’s it is walking into another world and it’s a world which you I guess **II.i.21:30** when you’re exiting that world you may or may not have been affected by the dream ah and you may take *(laughing a little)* some of the dream with you but um ah when you go in there you have the opportunity it’s like going to another country at least and I’ve experienced nothing to do with sex at all but when I when I went to *this place overseas* for the seventies and started this community project there the reason I was able to do it was because I was a visitor there

Russell: Yes

Colin: and I could get **II.i.22:00** out whenever I wanted to and if I made a fool of myself it didn’t matter which relaxed my mind into just observing without thought of consequences to me what was happening in the town and um and so I was able to be um much more entrepreneurial because of that and ah so because **II.i.22:30** it was another world with nothing to do with being at home or ah you know [unintelligible] family knowing what you’re like they think um

Russell: I had a I was told a story recently by someone who talked about an older brother taking a younger brother to a sauna um

Colin: How sweet

Russell: both of whom were gay **II.i.23:00** but the younger brother had never been and the older brother he was into his early twenties and the older brother um ah volunteered to take him along and look after him

Colin: Show him the ropes *(he laughs a little)*

Russell: Yeah and I would imagine that that would be

Colin: That would be won

Russell: a strange experience there where the rest of your world like family suddenly is there with you
Colin:
Yeah

Russell:
I often wonder what would happen if I bumped into a relation of mine at a sauna because I know there are one or two of my relations who you know

Colin:
Yes I think what that would be I think if I bumped into I have actually bumped into someone I knew

Russell:
Oh yes yes

Colin:
at a sauna but only once that I can think of off the cuff

Russell:
Yeah

Colin:
I also went with a friend to The Basement once

Russell:
Yes

Colin:
and regretted it because actually the friend just wouldn’t leave me and so the person that I actually did meet down in that grope room um um

Russell:
you know this other friend was just sitting there watching us when we came out and wanted to talk pathetic I at last managed to tell this friend about that remind him (putting on a voice) oh what I wouldn’t have done that (I laugh a little) um yeah I’ve ah I suppose with with ah I would think the same thing of friends I mean there’s only I suppose with this friend that I did meet ah in the sauna was his

Colin:
our friendship had included a whole sort of not that we were attracted to one another even let but ah it was you know gay joshing about a lot

Russell:
Yes

Colin:
You know he was he made no absolutely no I mean part of his stock in trade was to bash himself as a as a poof (I laugh a little) um but um

Russell:
So what did you experience when you bumped into him

Colin:
Oh [unreadable: finally?] I just thought oh he’s got an immense cock (I laugh) I thought and ah

Russell:
So you saw him without his towel when you bumped into him

Colin:
Yes see we were both in the um yes he did a lot I mean he I think he was very happy to show it around because it was a prize possession and um while a very characterful looking person he was not a pretty looking person

Russell:
Yes

Colin:
and he just looked so at ease and everything and he he seems to me to manage to to get a an entourage of rather tough young guys that like him a lot um but no it it meant nothing um um terrible to me I but there are some other friends that that I know one or two of whom I know are gay and one or two of whom I’ve or one particularly a very important old friend who ah a gay friend was saying well he um he goes around the ah um the

Russell:

Colin:
saunas and I said oh bet he doesn’t because he’s too intelligent to risk doing that
and being it getting around um but to see him in one I would  would although he’s a very old friend ah ha I don’t know well we’d have to really deal with it cos he’s [unintelligible] got married and had children and um led a career that um

such information about him would be extremely damaging he’s a very recognisable person and ah that’s why I don’t think he’s done it I’d be I can imagine some little fucker trying to spread the news that he has but you know to sort of get back at him but ah no

Russell:

I mean I’ve seen public figures people whose picture has appeared in the newspaper you know to to simply put it within that frame people with that level of publicity

Colin:

Yeah

Russell:

who I’ve recognised um in saunas

Colin:

It’s my [why?]

Russell:

They seem unconcerned in each case

Colin:

Well I guess they may already you know they may not need to you know they ah they may be in such a situation that they don’t need to keep it secret anyway

Russell:

I do find it interesting um I remember once I was asked if um ah I gave a talk about my research um to a group of people associated with the Performance Studies Program at VUT

Colin:

Yes they all came to see me the next day

(Russell) Did they

Colin:

No no no no I’m only joking yes yes yes

Russell:

This is long no this is long before I spoke with you (Colin laughs) ah long before

Colin:

Yes yes yes

Russell:

But um and there was a very large number and of them and they were staff and postgraduate students but also a very large number of undergraduate students and in a funny way um very little of what transpired was about my research most of it became an introductory information session on saunas

Colin:

Right

Russell:

And amazing questions coming from these young undergraduate women most of whom had been at high school a year or two earlier

Colin:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

and they were fantastic like they were just great and

Colin:

Dying to know about it

Russell:

Well it wasn’t even that it was they they had a a very they may have been but they didn’t

show that it was more that they showed ah a probing curiosity rather than it wasn’t as though it was just

Colin:
Not swap the goss

Russell:
Yes

Colin:
It was they genuinely were had a succinct

Russell:
For instance the question that impressed me the most that day was somebody asked me about um are these places where people are safe and I said what do you mean I said for instance people often have told me they’ve felt safe

II.i.29:00
because there’s a security door locking outside the rest of the world and once they’re inside it’s this contained environment and she said no no for instance do people get raped in there or something like that

Colin:
Oh

Russell:
And the idea had never

Colin:
ocurred

Russell:
ocurred to me and I’ve actually found out in subsequent conversations that at least one of my informants was present once when someone was screaming for assistance from inside a

II.i.29:30
locked room at a venue and that was

Colin:
Jesus

Russell:
very interesting you know that that was a um a really interesting thing to come from it but that wasn’t what I was going to raise what I was going to raise was about the questions someone said to me um have you ever been at one they said to me and and said and bumped into someone you know

Colin:

Russell:
And they were wondering about that experience of what it is and of and my answer was well yes yes yes but and then I dismissed it and moved on and said what’s really interesting is when you bump into someone you don’t know but you know of

Colin:

Russell:
you know and I said and that can be kind of um quite startling as an experience for me but what I realised was I took for granted something in that first part of the question um and that because I took it for granted

II.i.30:00
I was wondering the degree to which other people did for instance you’ve mentioned that you only bumped into someone you knew once now I’ve done that many times but you’ve only done it once so I’m curious about what that experience was then because I can’t remember the first time I bumped into someone I knew and what that felt like

Colin:

Russell:
Well truly it was it was a companionable feeling

Russell:
Yeah

Colin:
It was a it was just because we knew about each other ah um

II.i.31:00
I’ve I don’t know we might just as well have been dressed in suits and holding tea you know tea cups

Russell:

(laughing a little) Yes

Colin:
as far as I'm concerned um it was no no less or more formal than or um concerning than an ordinary social meeting with him

Russell:

Then then I I would love to ask you now a bit of the circumstances of that if I can so which sauna are we talking about Suburb A or Suburb I

Colin:

**II.i.31:30**

Um I I’m not sure actually but I I my bet would be I’m jus I can I can remember the the feel of it

Russell:

Yes can you tell me about that then

Colin:

Well I seem to recollect a a you know one of those bubble bath things

**II.i.32:00**

at a you know I suppose I was standing and he was in the bubble bath

Russell:

Yes *(I describe what Colin is doing as we speak)* you’re looking down to your left

Colin:

Yes I’m looking down

Russell:

Yeah yeah

Colin:

Something like that and um and I think was that was what happened

Russell:

So he was in the bath

Colin:

It was many years ago so he was in the bath yes and so he didn’t have his towel on

Russell:

Right

Colin:

Ah um ah

**II.i.32:30**

and I think I got in and had a bath too you know I mean it was no we didn’t um we made no sexual overtures to one another at all

Russell:

Did you have any wondering about that

Colin:

No not really

Russell:

No um was it bubbling at the ti

Colin:

I can’t remember

Russell:

Right do you remember whether there were other people present

Colin:

I have a feeling there were one or two people around yeah yeah

Russell:

And did you

Colin:

Whether there was anyone else in the bath or not I can’t remember

Russell:

**II.i.33:00**

Did you talk out loud to each other

Colin:

Yes yes yeah

Russell:

And if there were other people around do you have any recollection of them speaking

Colin:

No

Russell:
You weren’t introduced to anyone else by your friend.

Colin:

No no no he was just trawling (? I think.

Russell:

(I laugh a little) Trolling or trawling

Colin:

(he laughs a little) He looks a bit like a troll

(Russell laughs a little)

Russell:

II.i.33:30

Um

Colin:

Um yeah ah the only other time as I say was when I went along with a friend and I found it extremely embarrassing.

Russell:

Yeah

Colin:

funnily enough because I just felt completely constrained when he was around and and I felt that he had a curiosity about what I was going to do and wanted to see what I was going to do and that made me feel even more constrained and and I still feel it was completely inappropriate the way he behaved ah

II.i.34:00

but I’ve learned more about it [him?] since and he’s a reasonably important friend but but I I’m he’s a predatory person sexually once he gets fixed on someone he it’s you know he I don’t think he ever gives up he can’t just there’s no contract there you can’t sort of say ah you know no just don’t sort of thing and the only time someone’s ever really

II.i.34:30

heavily done that with him um he refused to speak to this person for a couple of years this was despite the fact they used to meet at my agency quite often and there’d be parties here and stuff like that and he was completely um the other guy the younger guy was completely in his rights this guy got him got him very very drunk which is not difficult to do with a younger guy this younger guy loves his drink unfortunately

II.i.35:00

too much um and and ah he ended up you know rimming him you know which and then he sort of woke up in the middle of this and was horrified genuinely and and hated having been you know it’s it’s it’s statutory rape what was happening he feels now he’s he still blames the younger guy sort of saying oh he liked it anyway so but he quite happily will get people drunk ah

II.i.35:30

younger people he’s attracted to and um and most of them you know ah apparently this guy’s the only one who’s who’s made a really big fuss about it he was a very gorgeous young man and

Russell:

But in this case you’re relying on what each of them has told you you weren’t a personal direct witness to the event in question

Colin:

No I wasn’t a personal direct witness but um

Russell:

But you

Colin:

like eventually one of them

Russell:

II.i.36:00

You’ve been told

Colin:

I’ve been told ah and I’ve checked it out with the other

Russell:

Yeah yeah yeah

Colin:

basically

Russell:

Yeah

Colin:
Or gave the other a heavy look when he felt he had to explain himself

Russell:
Yeah

Colin:
and the stories match it's just the view of the stories that doesn't match and that doesn't surprise me I couldn't bear to do that ah

Russell:
II.i.36:30
Because you couldn't bear for it to be done to you

Colin:
Well I don't suppose that's necessarily why I couldn't bear to do it but I certainly couldn't bear it to be done to me and it and it puts a wall between me and this other friend because I know that he would have no compunction of you know

Russell:
Yeah

Colin:
trying to do it with me but I think my distaste for any union with him is so complete that even if I was very very drunk I would just ah
II.i.37:00
I don't know I would have to be comatose literally I would have to be out to it because I just don't like the idea of him expert though he might be whereas that funny old guy who was certainly no more physically attractive than ah than the friend I'm talking about um he wasn't that predatory I think
II.i.37:30
it wasn't that thing where someone's going to win off you and yet one of my sort of um masturbatory dreams is being of someone very attractive very much taking over and and ah and ah sort of um
II.i.38:00
sort of tricking me and and then chucking it back in my face and and still tricking me and um putting me into a situation that that ah ah it sort of has a sort of shameful aspect that that of I've fought against it but allowed it to happen

Russell:
Right

Colin:
II.i.38:30
Ah it's the same it's roughly the same as it were you know fantasy each time I I could do that more explicitly if you like if you find you're not explaining understanding what I've said but ah

Russell:
No I think I have enough of an understanding of it for for what it I'm concerned about I'm just wondering though shifting that again to the environment of the sauna what your experience
II.i.39:00
is there of constraints and permission licence

Colin:
Yeah

Russell:
Again I'm thinking of another conversation I've had with someone where they talked about their surprise at how everything doesn't descend into complete chaos

Colin:
Yeah

Russell:
II.i.39:30
inside the sauna

Colin:
It sometimes does I mean I have been in on a a sort of a you know in the in the deep fog of the s of the steam

Russell:
(I laugh a little) Yes

Colin:
in the in the steam room sort of thing when it it just rather suddenly it takes on a bit of a free for all

Russell:
Yes
Colin:

I mean everyone is getting into [?] everyone else and they don’t care who’s they don’t feel there’s any personal status involved and as who they allow to do this or that I think a lot with a lot of them

Russell:

But you’re also aware that there are constraints other people are experiencing in saunas and then s

Colin:

The moment someone t you know the moment it goes into a group grope all the timid people will just move in and do it

Russell:

Yeah

Colin:

you know sort of thing and um you know you feel I mean with that

Russell:

But you didn’t feel you could signal that in any way to anyone or

Colin:

Well he was allowing them to come in and I and I was just I don’t know I you know I didn’t (a silence) I should have taken his acceptance more personally than I did I think perhaps

Russell:

And I think what I should have done later on when I saw him in the passageway wandering around again was to just actually say you know you know to do what the dear old guy had sort of you know no suck no fuck oh would you like a massage sort of thing but do you know just say would you like to come upstairs because I’d love to massage your back again um and see what happens you know I’m very timid about those sort of statements

Russell:

So you’re very aware of if you like your timidity

Colin:

See I’m [?]
you’ve once you’re there ah the way that continues is that you or

I um cease to fully express myself I sep
maybe I separate the sex out from from the person that I have to express it’s not always the case but (a silence) very often

Russell:

I remember

um a a conversation I had with my um counsellor once where for the first time in my life and you knew yeah I was in my forties when I had this conversation it occurred to me that um through something he’d said that I had grown up um believing there was um an emotional

canon as it were with happiness at the top (I laugh a little) and misery at

Colin:

Oh canon (he begins spelling) C A  yes so it’s

Russell:

Yeah (I spell it) C A N O N

Colin:

Yes

Russell:

And misery at the bottom and that obviously then what one did was not so much aspire to happiness but work to ensure such a thing would you know be above them

Colin:

So it didn’t did you had happiness at the top and misery at the bottom as opposed for instance to

Russell:

Well

I didn’t

Colin:

expression and lack of expression as the top and the bottom

Russell:

Or or no more that

Colin:

Or commitment and lack of commitment or

Russell:

No it’s just that I’d never actually questioned that I’d never asked myself

Colin:

Oh right

Russell:

what I valued most

Colin:

Right mm

Russell:

Now I was ready to make little jokes about somebody being a misery guts and she’s never happy except because she’s miserable or something but it didn’t act actually never occurred to me as a real experience in my own existence that

I might have emotions I have much more intense attachments to um that in a way such that some standard orthodoxy in that canon would became really a bit Sunday school (I laugh a little) or something so that for instance I’m wondering you know there’s a public discourse which is about erotic excitement being like one

of the pinnacles of human experience well what if it isn’t (I laugh) you know what if

Colin:

I think we over specialise in practically everything we talk about

Russell:

Yeah

Colin:

I think that’s one of the problems with doctors you know

Russell:

Yeah
Colin:

They’re looking for THE situation as opposed to there’s probably twenty situations and the keyboard changes all the time with different people.

Russell:

Yeah.

Colin:

um and so when you’re I was watching a TV thing about um about ah this guy who’s who’s got onto ecstasy and it’s and he has um Parkinson’s Disease and it’s and it’s causing wonderful things to happen to his it’s it’s it’s liberating him his body greatly ah and putting it back into an organised form.

Russell:

Oh right.

Colin:

as opposed to him being you know they when they get onto the to the drug that that stops them from being completely still unable to sort of virtually paralysed ah that drug after a few years apparently kicks in too.

Russell:

Yeah.

Colin:

much and and they lose they’re still very mobile but they’re just you know to try and pour a jug of coffee into a cup or something is half of it goes onto the floor because you suddenly your arm just moves without you willing it to ah whereas when he took the ecstasy as well um suddenly everything is beautifully in control and um the doctors ah the the thing that well the medication that he was taking was in order to deal with one particular um can’t remember the name of the of the the chemical in the it comes from a particular little very small part of the brain ah um which affects movement ah and that’s what this they dose you they give that because your brain’s not producing it sort of thing.

Russell:

Yes.

Colin:

Okay ah the serotonin that the ah ecstasy produces the sort of joy drug um comes from a an area just right next to this other little piece of the brain.

Russell:

Yeah.

Colin:

and ah but they they’re trying to see what part of you know preferably undamaging part of the chemical makeup of ecstasy um has this effect this good effect but they still just looking on the basis of the um existing tradition of cures that they that are um very symptomatically based because for instance if he were to take um a um placebo would that have the same effect and in which case what would the brain be putting out to achieve that effect and anyway I mean the over specification of our thinking is going to be laughable within not many years I think and I see that in terms of our um sexual thinking and and our thinking about relationships you know when it was a mystery and ah put forward in in rather more fabulous terms ah literally fabulous I mean um well it worked people could relax and the rest of their mind could and their body could work together and find out their feelings at a more intuitive level which is more accurate than the more specific level I think the more specific something is the danger is that it’s less accurate than the more general ah awareness that or sub-awareness that’s available um and lateral thinking that’s available.

Russell:

Yeah.

Colin:

through um sensation and but you asked me a particular question which led to that.

Russell:

Well let’s leave that question aside whatever it was (I laugh a little) for the moment ah because I
Colin:

(indicating the things on the table) Are we okay with the mike here by the way I’ve got a jug between me and the mike it’s not anything

Russell:

It’s I’m sure it’s absolutely no problem

Colin:

Good okay that’s fine

Russell:

Um

II.i.51:30

the thing that I guess I’m wondering that emerges from that is are there has the sauna or have THE sauna makes it sound a bit like THE doctor but um

Colin:

Le guillotine yes

Russell:

Yeah

Colin:

Has the sauna

Russell:

Has the event of you going to saunas

II.i.52:00

been a place where you can learn about yourself or be aware

Colin:

I think the main thing that I’ve learned about myself by going to saunas is that I’m a person who um has gone to a sauna (I laugh) if you know what I mean I think that’s the big that’s the big shift and ah and would go again you know

Russell:

Yeah

Colin:

But ah

II.i.52:30

um so far I have been so few times I suppose

Russell:

Yes

Colin:

that um I don’t think I’ve I certainly I haven’t learnt any social lessons that I can think of by going to saunas and ah

II.i.53:00

I th it’s a tiny bit like I’ve been to a health farm once to sort of try and um turn a corner in terms of diet

Russell:

Yeah

Colin:

and that the the main thing I noticed about the health farm was that there is absolutely no cultural content whatsoever you go there and there’s some TV and there’s some old detective novels that people have left over and that’s it (I laugh a little) apart

II.i.53:30

from these stupid little pseudo doctors that hang around and make smart little Pioneer Tour jokes at the old ladies and get them you know giggling and ah and consider themselves to be little authorities some of them are awful they ought to be running parking or something (I laugh) and ah and that place had just no cultural content whatsoever so I feel

II.i.54:00

I get the same feel off particularly the Suburb A sauna that it’s that’s it’s got you know I it’s got some magazines you can pick up and look at the sort of person you’d like to see across the room but isn’t there ah ah and there’s the telly with some damn thing on you know some erotic nonsense um and and there’s ah the steam rooms and showers and stuff like that

II.i.54:30

and I think what I like about the Suburb I one is that it I dare say it has that stuff but it doesn’t come to mind it’s not what the place is about it’s much more it’s much more about the work (he laughs a little) ah it’s you go in there and there’s um because it has absolutely no cultural input somehow

II.i.55:00

it frees YOU culturally you actually meet the people there or something I don’t know because you’re going to the same well you’re washing at the same laundromat you’re you’re doing something like that whereas this other place is trying to pretend
that you’re somehow going to some sort of venue ah and and it is a a culturally so bland as to be um barren
II.i.55:30
venue
Russell:
I um that rems that reminds me however of like two particular things I can recall one is um um a very large sauna in Melbourne which has a room where they screen movies you know like videos basically not not pornos
Colin:
Just movies yeah
Russell:
That’s elsewhere in the building yeah ah like a lounge area a bit like that front area at um Suburb A where
II.i.56:00
they screen television
Colin:
Yeah
Russell:
but (?) movies and one the things that I always remember was when Titanic first came out on video and of course it’s over three hours long and the corridors in the rest of the building would be empty (Colin laughs) like because there’s all these blokes sitting around intently in towels you know watching yet again the Titanic sink and and then when the credits came on suddenly there was this flood of activity through the building like
II.i.56:30
it was an exodus
Colin:
Yeah yeah
Russell:
You know
Colin:
Lovely
Russell:
So there was that and the other thing which was more recently um at um ah a smart but smaller sauna which is newer and I was there and ah there was a movie on in their video lounge area which has very comfortable like cheap but very comfortable sofas it’s scattered with sofas everywhere and it was late enough for that room to for the population there to be enough so that most of the people there were actually in that room and there were two young men who’d arrived who’d obviously told the staff they’d never been there before and weren’t and possibly had never been to a sauna before and a staff member was very courteously showing them around the building and I’d
II.i.57:30
gotten a glimpse of this on my way into this room and I was in this room
Colin:
Yes
Russell:
and I remember distinctly the moment when they were brought into the room by the staff member who said oh here we’re screening movies but what I saw instantly was these young men their faces the look on their faces in the doorway because they’d assumed the place was nearly empty and what they couldn’t believe was that here they were at what was essentially a sex venue and here was a room full of
II.i.58:00
people watching a disaster film on television (we laugh) and they’d been wandering through the rest of the venue wondering where everybody was or maybe they’d come at the wrong time (Colin laughs) and there would have been about thirty men in the room
Colin:
Yeah
Russell:
all intently kind of watching the fate of this it wasn’t Titanic but
Colin:
It was another
Russell:
another shipwreck type

Colin:
Yes yeah yeah

Russell:
film you know intently watching

Colin:
Yeah

Russell:
and gripping onto the fate of this poor vessel in terrible waters um and they were obviously completely bewildered

*ii.i.58:30*

you know they had to make an adjustment oh you can watch movies too

Colin:
Yes yes

Russell:
And that in fact that can become a major preoccupation that I I wonder sometimes if they had copies of Proust (*I laugh a little*) on a shelf on the wall

Colin:
Yeah

Russell:
would there be people casually leafing though them you know

Colin:
Oh I see you could you could have one that yeah that had that yeah and people could pick your books off the wall

*ii.i.59:00*

as I told you the last time I think that one of the nicer times when I did pick up someone in a bar I was not feeling all that good and I I'd bought this book

Russell:
Yes yes yes

Colin:
and I really liked it and I was sitting there leafing through this book and laughing myself silly because of the book and someone just wanted to share the he was just relieved to see someone sitting there having a drink and laughing you know

Russell:
Yes he said you look so happy as I recall

Colin:
Yeah something like that

Russell:
Yeah yeah yeah

Colin:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Colin:

and

Russell:
Yeah and someone actually told me that they'd seen someone reading in a cubicle once at a sauna (*we laugh a little*) in a cubicle with a book reading they couldn't tell me what the book was but they were impressed (*we laugh*) there was a sauna which has closed which um a number of people I've interviewed um remember very fondly a very large and opulent one that ah operated in Melbourne for a short time and one of the things I've just

*ii.i.60:00*

recalled which none of them have recalled but this conversation has brought to mind for me is there was a long writing desk there

Colin:
Oh what a lovely idea

Russell:
Yes

Colin:
So you could sit down yeah

Russell:
You could sit there and write or having reading lamps I mean there were places where people could just read magazines generally but there was something that my understanding was it was a writing desk
there were actually office chairs against it and desk lamps and

Colin:

I could write down say dear so and so I’m in

Russell:

(laughing a little) Yes you could write a letter um or read you know things under a s under like a private light a bit like being at the State Library in the main reading room but

Colin:

Mm lovely that sounds nice actually I mean I think that that business of being able to be alone in company is appealing because you can look at someone and and you haven’t made a commitment by doing that you and they are not feeling under threat

Russell:

That oh god no I don’t want him you know sort of thing but the you can it’s just very those ordinary really [unintelligible] really quite complicated reasons behind just taking one another in somehow I guess with saunas and with gay bars I find too much of unless it’s a very crowded gay bar which in which case you know you have to shuffle past one another and say excuse me and things like that and that it helps

Russell:

Yeah

Colin:

or and I was sitting next to someone listening to the Mahler yesterday and that’s a a a to me a much more productively companionable way to meet and for me sexier way to meet because you can look at one another about it and you can you can share you know and um

Russell:

Ah I suppose the person is going to because of what you’re sharing the person’s going to know more about you than just see this this pelt (I laugh) which might have anything in it um coming up to them and presenting itself

Russell:

Yeah yeah it’s that’s a new piece of vocabulary no one’s used pelt yet (I laugh a little)

Colin:

It’s yours it’s yours

Russell:

(laughing) Thank you

Colin:

Yeah

Russell:

which I quite like frankly
Colin:
Yes

Russell:
because it's so straightforward

Colin:
Yeah but it's it's um a very confident position to come from

Russell:
Yes

Colin:
I mean if you're appraising the stock you're there you know you can just get your card out and say

Russell:
yes I'll have one of those and one of those and charge it

Colin:
This was a very experienced man much more experienced than me

Russell:
You know much more

Colin:
Well you see that you see that's um I think experience and well in a a a generally experienced socio-sexual life um equips anyone better for any of those venues

Russell:
I so I it's interesting I mean I would have thought that one scale of one type of graph representation of what you're talking about is ah you know one side of the graph being ah that socio-sexual experience scale and then the other one a scale of being at ease in saunas or in bars

Russell:
What's your preferred type

Colin:
Well I think my preferred type is is either work or a concert or listening to music or walking together or something I mean an ordinary everyday activity where you can look at one another sideways um about those issues that you can that you can gradually that you feel that you can observe the other person better and ah they can observe you better I think is that I suspect that it leads to better sex although at school of course ah I suppose one was too immature at that stage to to enjoy it for what it was you know if I'd met someone more experienced at that stage um I could have had a ball because ah there were plenty of people around that one knew and and liked and um

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II.i.69:00
happened instantly for me when I went to a sauna the first time

Colin:
Right

Russell:
Like that instantly I was there by myself but it became possible very swiftly I felt to um well do what I thought was an enormous amount of negotiation at that stage and enjoy myself um so I wonder about that whether I'm sure practice the practice

II.i.69:30
that develops through experience is definitely part of it but I often wonder in my own case anyway about how much that is how important that is overall and yeah the other thing that you mentioned about other ways of meeting people I often don't think of saunas as places to meet people

Colin:
No

Russell:
That's that's not what I'm

Colin:
No it's a place to get off get your rocks off basically

Russell:
Right

Colin:
Would would that be

Russell:

II.i.70:00
Um for me

Colin:
I'm sorry

Russell:
No no on the contrary I'm no it's not necessarily that for me but it's not necessarily a place I go to meet people

Colin:
Oh so you might just there to

Russell:
I feel like I can meet people

Colin:
yeah see if it happens but you can happily go there just to just to sit in the steam room or whatever

Russell:
Or watch a movie (I laugh)

Colin:
Yeah watch a movie yeah yeah yeah

Russell:
But as a friend of mine once said when he realised that um they showed

II.i.70:30
movies oh no was it no no I'll leave that I got I just got mixed up with something else I've just got mixed up

Colin:
I guess that I mean that's quite a point I think about saunas to just go along there for the steam as it were and the film and um and have no expectations just go there and that would be one way of looking completely at ease and I guess if you became more regular at certain saunas say

II.i.71:00
at ah Suburb I you would know what night they had the film on or whatever

Russell:
Yeah

Colin:
I don't know if they have it every night or you'd go along at the time

Russell:
There's one sauna that has a film screening list and the time and the starting times

Colin:
Is there
Russell:
Usually covering a couple of days ahead yeah they’ve got it up on the wall what films are showing [unintelligible]

Colin:
I assume I’d suspect that they must regular times week in week out

Russell:
I don’t think they have um like repeated screenings I think they just tend to show a variety of things

Colin:

II.i.71:30
Yes but but um what I’m getting at is that if they are going to show a film they would tend to start it at the same time each time you know that they would have Tuesday nights at eight or whatever it is I would have thought

Russell:
Oh right oh that’s interesting because they tend to just keep showing them from when they open till when they close

Colin:
Oh I see the film just stops and then starts again

Russell:
Yeah there’ll be one film then there’ll be the next one then the next one

Colin:
Oh I see right

Russell:
I’ve never seen anything with subtitles at the sauna

Colin:
Oh no (he laughs a little)

Russell:

II.i.72:00
Um no I’ve never seen anything with subtitles

Colin:
All right okay

Russell:
They tend to be not on the list

Colin:
Oh look I don’t mind just a good old film you know I’ve just I’m dying to see there’s about four or five I want to see at the moment

Russell:
Yeah

Colin:
and um

Russell:
Yeah I know the feeling but I also I also though I actually feel a bit funny though sometimes I it’s definitely the case that I’ve gone once or twice to saunas and all I’ve done

II.i.72:30
is um is watch watch a film but um and left feeling very happy but I think there’d be something a bit strange if that was the reason I went was to see the film I think I’d feel a bit funny about that because I think I’d rather go to a cinema where the screening conditions are proper or something

Colin:
Yes yes

Russell:
Um ah also

II.i.73:00
I’m wondering whether what we’ve been working towards and this is extremely leading on my part

Colin:
Yes that’s okay

Russell:
I acknowledge but what we’re talking about is a kind of gentlemen’s club (I laugh a little) in some way a variant on the idea of some sort of gentlemen’s club
Colin:

What do you mean the the the the sauna is or can be

Russell:

Um yeah can be and in a way that some of the things we've been talking about about um other possibilities that might be interesting that we've been fleshing out a program for some form of gentlemen's club

Colin:

Oh yeah

Russell:

A place where there's a kind of um ah a certain sociality ah what you talked about being alone but in company that image of you know a room full of arm chairs of men reading the paper

Colin:

Yes yes

Russell:

but not talking to one another

Colin:

Yes yes

Russell:

has that kind of quality for me

Colin:

(laughing a little) That's rather lovely yeah

Russell:

Um and I'm wondering that kind of tone is a tone that I think I've actually experienced in parts of the sauna at certain times that people whether that's what they've been feeling is another matter but there's been this sense that people are alone in company and that what you've called companiona companionable presences

Colin:

Mm

Russell:

is something that um without people being chatty necessarily

Colin:

Yeah

Russell:

That that's there yeah I'm not quite sure where that's leading though it's just something that's come to mind I guess I just want to note it

Colin:

It's funny I've got this picture going through my mind as you speak of you know the real old gentlemen's club with the people reading their papers and coming to lunch and (I laugh a little) [unintelligible]

Russell:

(the minidisc fills and switches itself off)
Appendix 29: Mark II

The transcript documents a second conversation with Mark which, like the first, was recorded at his office on a university campus in Melbourne. We met early morning in the middle of the week.

Russell:

II.i.00:00
Right it's on now so what I do want to do is follow up on some concepts some of which you touched on and or I introduced and you touched on and some of which you didn't necessarily but um I've been doing this with a few of the people I've been talking with the second

II.i.00:30
time I've talked with them and it's just to go through a list of words and ask you to as I give you each word to let me know what kinds of associations come to mind when you relate that word to your experience of being in saunas it can be

Mark:
Okay

Russell:

II.i.00:45
It can be an incident it can be um an experience

II.i.01:00
you generally have it could be a piece of furniture it could be a person whatever okay

Mark:
Fine

Russell:

II.i.01:15
So the first word is clean

Mark:

Clean that's something that I associate with the showers at Volcano

II.i.01:30
um and that has to do with the kind of superficial purging that goes on after you catch up with someone and have a bit of a sess in a cubicle by the end of a um decent bout you're covered in all kinds of body fluids and god knows what else and um

II.i.02:00
and clean is what you scurry off to the showers to become it's the downstairs ones

Russell:
The downstairs showers

Mark:
Yeah

Russell:
I was going to ask you which showers

Mark:
Yeah they've also um I also associate those showers with sort of um pendulous semitumescant penises swinging because ah people are getting clean whilst they're still thinking about what's just happened to them so there's that

II.i.02:30
it's quite a sexy shower at times um and there's quite a bit of sort of um ah non-coy um ah abluting that goes on there it's not about that sort of um locker room um open shower of um standing in a corner and

II.i.03:00
making sure that no one sees anything it's much more brazen than that and um it's sort of celebratory it's where you get clean and where you let everyone know that you just got lucky

Russell:

(I laugh a little) You got lucky

Mark:
Mm

Russell:

Is that a term you use

Mark:

Um yeah from time to time

Russell:

Right

Mark:

Although luck has nothing to do with it (he laughs)

Russell:
Yeah yeah I've heard that term used I always find it strange bumping into people and they say oh you been lucky

Mark:  
Mm

Russell:  
And I think oh have I got my Tattslotto ticket with me or something

Mark:  
Mm I prefer the American swing on it that you got lucky

Russell:  
You GOT lucky

Mark:  
Mm it's like getting a disease

Russell:  
(I laugh a little) Oh right okay um well let's go back for a moment you said um covered in all kinds of bodily fluids and god knows what else

Mark:  
Mm

Russell:  
What do you mean god knows what else

Mark:  
Oh lube shit

Russell:  
Right

Mark:  
Um bad aftershave

Russell:  
Right

Mark:  
Whatever whatever it else that's arisen in the course of the the session

Russell:  
Right are you conscious of um contracting other people's aftershave from them

Mark:  
Um there've been a couple of occasions where I've been quite happy to scrub it off

Russell:  
Yeah

Mark:  
Yeah um you know when you ah pounce on someone because of um the sort of silhouette that they cut in the gloom of a maze um you don't necessarily have a good sniff first

Russell:  
YOU don't

Mark:  
Well I don't you know

Russell:  
(laughing a little) Fine okay I'm surprised to hear you say that because I always imagine you as being someone who's very interested in sniffing and tasting

Mark:  
Ah yeah yes and I don't mind if it's sort of um B.O.-ish or um you know if there's traces of a bit of hard labour gone on um but ah you know there're some nancy boys who really smother themselves in Avon sweet smelling crap and um ah the snob in me gets exercised quite the wrong way by that kind of thing

Russell:  
Right secondly why the downstairs showers there are three sets of showers at Volcano

Mark:  

Mm

**Russell:**

How is it that it's the downstairs showers

**Mark:**

Um generally I'I seem to have had more sex in the downstairs cubicles and not in the cubicles on the middle floor but also um the locker room showers I categorise as those used by people who've been

**II.i.06:00**
pacing the place all night and haven't got lucky and they're having a quick rinse off to get rid of the smell of chlorine before they go home to their wife or boyfriend and um I don't associate those showers with sex the upstairs showers near the heavy duty area um I've had a couple of showers in there but um I haven't done a whole lot of workouts up on that level so I haven't really had any

**II.i.06:30**
reason to be up there having a shower it's not like the client base of the upstairs showers is one that I'd seek out to have showers with

**Russell:**

I've never used the upstairs showers um the locker level showers what you say intrigues me because last time we talked you talked about how the cubicles near the bunk room area

**Mark:**

Yes

**Russell:**

are places where first of all there's a lot of good

**II.i.07:00**
noisy sex I think

**Mark:**

Yes

**Russell:**

was your phrase

**Mark:**

Mm

and then secondly you talked about how you yourself have become ah quite interested in that sex

**Mark:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

from time to times and got off there

**Mark:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

In such a case would you then go downstairs to shower rather than be seen to use the locker room showers

**Mark:**

Um I think I've used the locker room showers on a couple of occasions but um (a silence) I'm pretty sure that

**II.i.07:30**
for the most part I've tended to take my showers downstairs

**Russell:**

So you'd rather go downstairs

**Mark:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

And is it to do with a perception of that's got something to do with how YOU have described the use of the locker showers

**Mark:**

Yeah I think I know it's an architectural inversion (I laugh a little) but um ah I equate going down to those showers to climbing onto the parapet and beating your chest

**Russell:**

**II.i.08:00**
Right

**Mark:**
It's got that sort of um post-coital testosterone charged environment or feeling to it for me

Russell:
Right

Mark:
whereas the middle level showers do not

Russell:
and that is it entirely to do with what you've described already that is that there are people with a kind of a semi-tumescence who are in those showers or is it also to do with structures for instance like the proximity to the lockers

Mark:
Ah the proximity to the lockers is a problem with um the middle level showers because there's also the great distraction if you're having a shower there which is sort of summarising your sexual event you know you're getting clean to go home you look out through the plastic curtains and you see some um delicious new thing arrive it can be a little bit deflating um and frustrating um also the the arrangement of shower heads in the middle level shower is not conducive to um bonhomie really

Mark:
if my memory serves me correctly there are two shower heads on um each of two opposing walls

Russell:
Yes

Mark:
and so you shower with your butt to people that you'd rather be checking out

Russell:
Right whereas in the downstairs ones

Mark:
That they're all in a row along a single wall

Russell:
Right
okay

Mark:

Mm so I'm projecting it madly onto everyone else there

Russell:

Um if I offered a counter narrative which is it just indicates that they've left the cubicle pretty quickly and gone straight to the showers after cumming how would you respond to that as an alternative narrative

Mark:

Well that's all right I mean the fact is that you know they've just had sex and they're getting clean

Russell:

Right okay but they haven't hung around after

II.i.11:30

having sex

Mark:

Um my experience suggests that um that doesn't seem to happen a whole lot

Russell:

Right okay um can you describe the downstairs showers for me you've already given one or two indications

Mark:

Okay um they are tiled on all walls with

II.i.12:00

um small ceramic glazed mosaic tiles occasionally there are a couple missing on the floor there's also plastic matting on the floor so you don't slip over there are four shower heads one of which has usually got a nozzle broken off or a couple of taps broken off (I laugh a little)

II.i.12:30

there are soap dispensers two of them placed between the first and second and the third and fourth showers the toa soap is has a sort of medicinal smell to it as if its purpose is to kill germs um the shower head heads um produce

II.i.13:00

quite a um a hard um closely contained set of needle-like sprays and the pressure is very difficult to control as is the um degree of hot and cold and so most customers find themselves dancing in and out of the showers for a little while which adds to the entertainment thing too

Russell:

(laughing a little) Yes

Mark:

Um there are no divisions in the shower it's a single um

II.i.13:30

unpartitioned space um and the ceiling in there is quite high it's about ah um feels like about two point seven metres um it's a strangely angled space it's I think trapezoidal or it's not quite rectangular ah one of the walls is strangely angled um and the floor is all dished to the central drainage central (this is a question)

II.i.14:00

or to a single drainage point and it's dished quite heavily so that when you're standing there you're aware that the floor beneath your feet is on an angle ah and there's a single door opening because of the space of the room it is possible to dry off within the shower area but there's nowhere internally for you to hang a towel

II.i.14:30

whereas on the f opposite wall outside in the corridor there's a row of pegs so regardless of how shy you might be if you want to retrieve your towel you have to address the entry to the shower space which also overlooks the swimming pool area and boldly head out into the corridor to retrieve your towel

Russell:

If all four showers are empty

II.i.15:00

which one do you choose usually

Mark:

Usually the second or third one the fourth one is hidden away in the bowels of the room and the first one is just a little bit in your face and the second and third ones have um the aura of being um coy and polite it also means that if someone else comes in they're not too far away because you position yourself more or less in the middle

Russell:

II.i.15:30

And you'll hang your towel
Mark:
Out in the corridor on a peg

Russell:
The peg closest to the showers if it's free

Mark:
Um towards that end of things because the pegs towards the other end are where patrons hang their towels when they head into the steam room.

Russell:
Right

Mark:
and um so there's generally quite a few towels at the other end not to be mistaken for

Russell:
(softly while laughing a little) Yes

Mark:
II.i.16:00 towels of those showering

Russell:
If I step out of the showers immediately to my right is a small ah folding wooden door which covers a cleaning cupboard entrance I believe it's like a little slat

Mark:
II.i.16:00 Concertina

Russell:
They're like slats concertina you know

Mark:
Yes concertina sliding door yeah

Russell:
That's where I will tend to hang my towel if I'm showering have you ever considered

Mark:
No

Russell:
using that

Mark:
No I haven't

Russell:
You've not seen other men put their towels there

Mark:
II.i.16:30

Russell:
Ah it hasn't registered

Mark:
Right

Russell:
I think I'd be worried that if someone wanted to use the cleaner's door that my towel might hit the very wet floor in that area

Mark:
II.i.16:30 Right okay are you do you have any no all right I'll leave it at that okay good second word dirty

Russell:
II.i.17:00 (a silence) It's another space and it's the inside of the steam sauna

Mark:
II.i.17:00 At

Russell:
At Volcano but the but it's also um redolent of other places that I've encountered um I went once to a sex venue in

Mark:
II.i.17:30 Suburb O on a specific street which was just gross in every respect

Russell:
A sauna

Mark:
Ah it had a spa in it a couple of spas and a hideous little maze upstairs I think it may have closed now was it Playboy or something like that

Russell:
It's still open

Mark:
Mm

Russell:
The Playpen

Mark:

II.i.18:00
The Playpen appalling eugh um dirty yeah I find um getting drips of condensation from the ceiling falling onto me just to be a bit on the gross side

II.i.18:30
um and in the steam room at Volcano it just feels foetid not as in um ball and chain but foetid as in smell and dank dampness and sort of um centre for um disease propagation (I laugh a little)

II.i.19:00
I can almost feel the fungi growing out of it and it's dirty not in respect of um shit or um or um grime or filth but more dirty in terms of um fungus and athlete's foot and crutch rot and um ah

II.i.19:30
crabs and scabies and things that flourish in warm moist environments

Russell:
Having said that have you ever seen any hard evidence of any of those things there

Mark:
No it just smells and feels that way it's ah

Russell:
It's an imagining

Mark:
Um yes but it's triggered by um ah

II.i.20:00
by a sensual response

Russell:
Right

Mark:
Mind you I've had outrageous um in your face unprotected sex in the steam room there and it was just sensational um and I'd do it again but um but part of the fun of that was because

II.i.20:30
the whole experience was completely filthy so um

Russell:
Can you elaborate on that for me

Mark:
It was like doing something dirty in a dirty place one of one of my um quite early sexual experiences was being fucked at the tip on a piece of um rusty um iron roofing (there is a knock at Mark's office door)

II.i.21:00
next to a dead animal excuse me (he moves to the door)

II.i.21:03
(I switch off the recorder while he attends briefly to the visitor. It's a small business matter that gets swiftly resolved. The visitor leaves and we return to recording our conversation.)

Russell:

II.ii.00:00
Okay um we were at the tip (I laugh a little)

Mark:
Yeah yeah and there was a dead animal a dead possum or a dead cat or something beside us and that really stank and um and that was wild it was um a well it it expanded my parameters a little as a sort of um tender eighteen year old

II.ii.00:30
and um since then um on occasion I've really enjoyed um sex that's um had an edge of the filthy or dirty about it in the sort of conventionalised terms

Russell:
Can you outline what those conventionalised terms are for me what's your understanding of that convention

Mark:
Oh that um that sex is something that is

II.ii.01:00

um sort of ah well firstly between a man and a woman that happens discreetly in a bed um in quiet suburbia and then you know you um ah you know conception’s brought about etcetera etcetera um for a start our culture um
dee ms or religion and then um Judeo Christian culture deems homosexual activity as fundamentally dirty but then when you take it outside of the um conventional confines of clean sheets and um suburban bedrooms um it becomes more dirty and when you associate it with um for instance um stuff that people throw away and um rotting corpses

II.ii.02:00

that’s another level of filth altogether so um that’s what I mean by dirty um and there are aspects of all that that I find really quite stimulating um not that I want to go and fuck corpses

Russell:

[unintelligible]

Mark:

Au contraire but um but the idea of um of a place which um I associate with um mould and dirt and disease and which has got

II.ii.02:30

sort of cold drips coming off the ceiling and um a musky sort of foetid smell about it is reminiscent of um ah caves and an and quite literally an underworld and in this um dark and steamy space to do something which you know is um immensely transgressive not only culturally but also in terms of um ah

II.ii.03:00

the norms that attach to um ah healthy sexual activity um to have unprotected sex in this cave-like this um artificial cave-like environment um is fabulously transgressive and I find really very exciting so I suppose here I am associating dirty with also um transgressive

Russell:

II.ii.03:30

(a silence) Is transgression something you think of sorry that you how spatial is transgression

Mark:

Ah

Russell:

Like is it about boundaries and limits and things like that do you experience it as spatial or is it just conceptually intellectually spatial

II.ii.04:00

(a silence) crossing a line going too far (I laugh a little) I could kind of keep on going but

Mark:

Um

Russell:

the important thing is how do you experience it

Mark:

No I I find it that it’s more behavioural

Russell:

Right

Mark:

Um and I know that I’m um

II.ii.04:30

and and linguistic actually as well um if I’m having a really good time with a sex partner I’ll call him filthy

Russell:

The steam room at Volcano which part of that are you likely if you enter it what’s your likely

Mark:

perch

Russell:

Perch but also do you immediately

II.ii.05:00

go to a perch or do you

Mark:

Yeah I do

Russell:

move around first yeah
I tend to either leave my towel outside or just drape it around my neck and I like to sit on the tall podium. Um I tend to either leave my towel outside or just drape it around my neck and I like to sit on the tall podium. Oh do you (laughing a little) that’s where I sit (Mark laughs) well I know I’ve never been there when you’ve been there. Mm. I’ve never had to fight for that. But I do sit up there um. No one’s ever up there. And well it’s it’s quite a good vantage point because you can see everything. I find the locker areas public I find the lounge areas public and this applies not just to Volcano but also um Squirt and Rear Entry. How do you know they’re public you say you FIND them public it’s as though they are already public that you’re not creating them that way how do you know then that they’re public I’m after. I think that. It’s something that if again preferably just it doesn’t have to be too it doesn’t have to be a marvellously constructed argument. Yeah because you’re in a position of um empowerment being placed above people. Yeah because you’re in a position of um empowerment being placed above people.
Russell:

Right

Mark:

Um but ah it’s not so much traffic because there are more private areas that have traffic through them but I think it’s to do with the degree of openness and visibility and the population that um that traffics those areas

Russell:

Population

Mark:

II.ii.08:30
Well in the numbers the turnover

Russell:

Right

Mark:

Um it’s not like an intimate space where one person at a time squeezes through there’s enough room there to get your clothes off and on and there are people coming and going quite constantly um and also there are people at very different stages of the evening there some packing up and going home some just arriving um and so

II.ii.09:00
there’s not a kind of singularity of of um of purpose in those spaces some people are cruising in there some people are um bashfully trying to disrobe others ah are preparing for home

Russell:

Are they places are they areas places

II.ii.09:30
whatever that you associate with sexual activity

Mark:

Nuh no

Russell:

Have you ever witnessed any sexual activity in those parts

Mark:

No no I’ve cruised guys in there um especially new arrivals (I laugh a little) but um

Russell:

Sorry you just had a look on your face as soon as you said that

Mark:

Yeah I’ve got um there’s always something that I enjoy

II.ii.10:00
there’s something quite delicious about seeing someone arrive and they’re fully clothed and you think that they’re hot and um you see them get their clothes off and they’re still hot and then you um make a move for them as soon as they hit the space outside of the locker room

Russell:

You’ve done that

Mark:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

II.ii.10:30
And it sounds like you’ve done that more than once

Mark:

Ah yes

Russell:

Mm

Mark:

Yep

Russell:

Mm

Mark:

But um I’ve never made a move on anyone within the locker room because it’s just it’s not a sexy space at all

Russell:

What do you mean a sexy space
Mark:
Um

Russell:
You've just established that it's a public space

Mark:
Yeah yes

Russell:
as is a tip *(I laugh a little)* or is a tip not a public space

Mark:
It's not so much of a public space at one o'clock in the morning

Russell:
Ah well then sorry I wasn't aware of that

Mark:
Mm

Russell:
Okay

Mark:

II.ii.11:00
Um it's not sexy because the lighting isn’t sexy the spatial disposition of the objects um the lockers and changing benches and things in there isn’t sexy um and generally speaking what's going on in there isn’t sexy

Russell:
Can you give me an example of sexy lighting

Mark:
I think I did last time we spoke about a sort of um Fassbinderesque shaft of light that falls um into a particular hovering area where you can get a view out into the room with the circular um

II.ii.12:00

dais in it

Russell:

II.ii.11:30

(a silence) There’s a very particular sound that I associate with private which is the rattle of the little latches closing off the doors of the cubicle

Russell:
Closing off the doors

Mark:
Mm

Russell:
Not opening them

Mark:

II.ii.13:00
No not opening closing and that doesn’t matter which side of the door you’re on

Russell:
Right

Mark:
But it’s that sort of quite satisfying noise of closure which um creates a private zone albeit fleetingly yes that noise

Russell:
You said it’s satisfying for you

Mark:
Yeah

Russell:
What does it satisfy

Yes
Mark:

II.ii.13:30
Um it means that this space isn’t full of desperate lonely horny guys um wandering around beating a pathway through the carpet um going home frustrated and um not having found what they came there for it means at least two people

II.ii.14:00
are getting lucky when you hear that (he performs the sound) clunk the rattle the the the clack and yeah I do find it satisfying it it it um gladdens my heart

Russell:

Doesn’t matter which side of the door you’re on yourself

Mark:

No doesn’t matter

Russell:

Where do you hear that noise where’s the place that you associate hearing that noise most with

Mark:

Downstairs II.ii.14:30
in the maze at Volcano

Russell:

Yes

Mark:

or um

Russell:

By maze what are you referring to

Mark:

Ah there’s a um a construction of cubicles with traffic contorted traffic areas between them

Russell:

Yes

Mark:

downstairs

Russell:

Yes

Mark:

Um and II.ii.15:00
it’s whilst walking around in that environment that you hear amongst other things the rattle of cubicles opening and closing but also on the middle level at Volcano towards the north end of the building um where there’s half a dozen cubicles um you often hear that

II.ii.15:30
satisfying rattle up that end too

Russell:

Um sorry you just said the north end

Mark:

Mm

Russell:

Do you always have a sense of cardinal points when you’re at Volcano for instance

Mark:

Um

Russell:

North south east and west

Mark:

I’m um I’m very aware of the architectural orient or layout of the spaces and to II.ii.16:00
orientate YOU I just identified where those cubicles are

Russell:

Mm but you didn’t have to think about that

Mark:

No

Russell:

Right

Mark:

No not a lot
Russell: Yeah

Mark: But I don’t feel like I carry a compass around with me

Russell: No

Mark: when I’m there

Russell: but that’s readily available to you as information

Mark: Yeah yeah

Russell: Okay likewise when you go downstairs you’re aware that that’s where in relation to the street

Mark: Well um

Russell: Okay that actually comes about more through the entry of the um of a bone chilling draft (I laugh quietly) um at the corner door

Mark: Yeah I know that

Russell: Mm and you doesn’t matter what kind of reverie you’re in if you pause for a moment at that point in the corridor suddenly you remember what the outside of the building looks like and that

Mark: you’re standing ah

Russell: YOU do

Mark: Well yeah

Russell: Yeah

Mark: I remember that I’m standing an inch away from the outside world and that there’s a five millimetre gap under the door through which this wintry gale is blowing and that just on the other side of that door my nakedness would be exposed to the full glare of street lights and um to that specific street

Russell: You say street lights again is the association always with the evening and night-time

Mark: Yeah I think I’ve tended to go there in twilight or evenings I haven’t whiled away many useful afternoons at Volcano

Russell: Right

Mark: Um I’m too busy during the daytime and um ah thoughts of sex tend to come in ah into consideration around nightfall and after nightfall which is

Russell: Um years ago when I first started going I used to really enjoy Saturday afternoons in winter

Mark: Oh okay

Russell: Mm um that’s just offered without any further comment at the moment but ah the other thing then let’s go back to that rattling sound it’s interesting you I mean I think I’m I share this experience with you but I’m interested in getting more from you it’s not an image it’s a sound
Mark:
Yes

Russell:
Yeah absolutely I agree

Mark:
Mm and there’s a certain rattley quality both to the locks but also the melomead clad chipboard doors that they’re on tend to resonate and amplify the noise

Russell:
What’s the cladding

Mark:
It’s that plastic coat melomead

Russell:
Right okay

Mark:
It’s black matt pebbletex melomead (he scratches the desk top) very similar to the surface of this desk

Russell:
Desk okay yeah um do you know which are the cubicles that don’t shut properly

Mark:
Ah

Russell:
Do you keep a kind of a record of that

Mark:
No I don’t because I’m there sufficiently infrequently that those facts have changed

Russell:
Right you are aware that that occurs from time to time

Mark:
Yeah yes um and it has been historically a point of some frustration on a couple of occasions dragging a hot number into a cubicle and then going to shut the door only to find that it doesn’t shut and so you’ve got to try and find another cubicle and

Russell:
How

Mark:
it’s a bit tedious

Russell:
How long will you spend trying to shut it before you give up on it

Mark:
If I can’t get it to work I’ll generally turn up the light to establish what’s wrong and if there’s a um a bit which is fundamentally important to the functioning of the lock which is missing then you know we’re out of there ah sometimes it’s just a matter of putting a shoulder to the door or um using a bit of force but if you know a couple of attempts of that prove fruitless I’m not going to nancy around with the lock any more I’ll go somewhere else

Russell:
The light level in the cubicle you said you’d turn it up are you presuming that it will always be low

Mark:
Um generally speaking yeah that’s the way that you find them because er if they’ve been used previously then generally the the lights have been turned down a bit or that’s what I’ve experienced

Russell:
Right okay fifth word safe

Mark:
(a silence) I find
the entire environment of the sauna safe
   um it’s um it’s not an environment where
you’re going to get assaulted or mobbed or
even called names

**Russell:**

None of those things have happened to you

**Mark:**

No

**Russell:**

You’ve not witnessed those things
happening

**Mark:**

No

**Russell:**

All right

**Mark:**

Um

**II.ii.22:00**

they feel for me like somewhere safe I I
feel like I can go to a sauna and completely
relax there um completely cast aside
inhibitions and indeed in some respects
even adopt um quite a different persona and
I can do it safely I’m not going to come
under any form of physical or psychological
threat there apart

**II.ii.22:30**

from um the threat of catching some kind of
STD which is a pretty constant threat and
I’ve picked up just about every just about
every variety probably through saunas but
they still

**Russell:**

When you say through saunas do you mean
at a sauna

**Mark:**

Yeah yeah

**Russell:**

Yeah

**Mark:**

Yeah as a result of having sex with people
at the sauna

**Russell:**

How do you know it was at the sauna and
not somewhere else

**Mark:**

**II.ii.23:00**

It’s not rocket science um there’s been
periods in my life where um the sex that I’ve
been having has been sex at a sauna and I
contracted um ah STDs as a result of that

**Russell:**

Mm hmm okay

**Mark:**

(a silence) At the same

**II.ii.23:30**

time that they’re safe they’re also excitingly
dangerous but that’s part of the safety that
they offer I mean it it’s part of the thrill that
they offer it’s um it’s a safe place to do
dangerous things

**Russell:**

(a silence) To do dangerous things without
endangering yourself

**Mark:**

**II.ii.24:00**

No no it’s a safe um it’s a safe place in that
the um ah heterosexual hegemony is locked
out of there

**Russell:**

Right

**Mark:**

Um it’s an unsafe place in terms of activity
because um ah there’s any number of
medical problems you could walk out of
there with

**Russell:**

Right can we just go back for a

**II.ii.24:30**

second you said the heterosexual
hegemony is locked out of there

**Mark:**

Mm
Russell:  
At what point do you think do you experience yourself as being in the sauna? Can we take a specific example Volcano? When are you in Volcano?  
Mark:  
Um when I turn the corner at II.ii.25:00 the first landing of stairs and my eyes travel past the rather crude um wall painting (I laugh a little) derived from Tom of Finland and I figure no I don’t figure I just feel that um that beyond that point heterosexual culture has been left behind because no straight guy could walk II.ii.25:30 in there believing he was going to get a sort of après football massage and sit in a um ah a sauna without getting um sexually harassed I feel like it’s my space from that landing upwards.  
Russell:  
That’s interesting Um what about at Squirt then II.ii.26:00 Where are you in the sauna?  
Mark:  
Um once past the security door  
Russell:  
So you have to actually be through the security door  
Mark:  
Yes  
Russell:  
With it shut behind you or with it open  
Mark:  
No the instant it opens and I pass through there II.ii.27:30  
Russell:  
probably just pump myself up a bit and feel like um mm it’s a bit like entering the bullring or the gladiatorial ring  
Mark:  
Yeah okay and um is it worth listing other saunas in Melbourne  
Russell:  
No because I um I haven’t been to any of them II.ii.26:30 sufficiently recently for me to be able to reflect accurately.  
Mark:  
Russell:  
Fine okay all right now you might feel you’ve already addressed the final word but um I’ll give it to you anyway dangerous or danger  
Mark:  
Russell:  
Either danger or dangerous will do  
Mark:  
Russell:  
Yeah dangerous is II.ii.27:00 Walking down the stairs at Volcano into the pool area in the bottom level and I find that my pulse will start to race a little and um  
Mark:  
Russell:  
Always  
Mark:  
Russell:  
No but when I’m there on my own  
Mark:  
Russell:  
Right  
Mark:  
Russell:  
Um and I’ll II.ii.27:30 probably just pump myself up a bit and feel like um mm it’s a bit like entering the bullring or the gladiatorial ring  
Mark:  
Russell:  
So when you say you pump yourself up a bit you mean you (laughing a little) have an image of a matador that kind of  
Mark:  
Russell:  
Yeah yeah  
Mark:  
Russell:  
Yeah
Mark:
I will adjust my posture

Russell:
Oh yeah so can you now I’ve tossed

Mark:
Um I’ll suck in me gut and stand up a bit more straightly

Russell:
Yes

Mark:
more vertically and um maybe flex my upper torso a bit just to make sure it’s still operating and um I might

chew my lips a bit to get a bit of blood circulation in there

Russell:
Really

Mark:
Mm

Russell:
Do you mean visible blood circulation or blood circulation that you can feel

Mark:
To get some colour back into them

Russell:
Right so to make them colourful for other people

Mark:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Mark:
Yeah so I’m walking around with um ah my cunt on display

Russell:
Right

Mark:
All that kind of stuff

Russell:
Where did that come from when when did you first do that lip chewing

Mark:
Where did that come from when when did you first do that lip chewing that is with the view of another person in mind

Mark:
Oh I have no idea (a silence) I always I was always fascinated as a child by the fact that my mother decade after decade used a particular lipstick colour which was coral red

and then I think probably it was in a Cleo or one of those early sort of new woman magazines where I would have read about um the um psychological parallels made between the mouth and the sexual organs and that kind of thing

which made me look at my mother strangely from that point onwards

Russell:
(laughing) Okay you have such a benign look on your face when you tell me that um but the chewing of your lips

Mark:
Oh that’s um ah

Russell:
Like when you were an eighteen year old were you doing that then

Mark:
No because I was more into a kind of Goth look where pasty lips were the go

Russell:

Mark:

Russell:
Right
Mark:
but um ah I think I learnt it actually from a
girlfriend who before walking out the door
would sort of slap herself um on the cheeks
a few times and um bite her lips and then
suddenly you know she had red glowing
cheeks and um a full flushed mouth
II.ii.31:00
and um I thought oh that’s effective good
party trick does does the trick
Russell:
But you don’t slap your cheeks
Mark:
No no ah my face is quite vivid enough (I
laugh a little) without needing red cheeks to
go with it so yeah I think I learnt it from a
chick I think it’s the only thing I learnt from
her that one
Russell:
II.ii.31:30
(a silence) I don’t think I have anything else I
want to ask you urgently is there anything
you want to ask me or tell me
Mark:
(a silence) Has anyone talked
II.ii.32:00
about smells in relation to those sorts of um
associative questions
Russell:
In relation to those questions not much but
people have talked about um bad smells
Mark:
Mm
Russell:
They’ve not talked about or that is smells
that register
II.ii.32:30
unpleasantly for them what’s interesting is
um has been the associations for instance
the smell of chlorine
Mark:
Mm
Russell:
II.ii.33:00
is something that regis has registered say
for one person as a smell of oh this is a
clean place but for another person it’s been
an actual indication that this is not a clean
place because there’s chlorine
smell um so that the same stimulus
produces quite marked ah differences in
terms of response
Mark:
Mm
Russell:
Um very people might talk about um an
offensive body odour on other people which
I th correct me if I’m wrong is not what you
were talking about when you were talking
about body odour on men
II.ii.33:30
about that being offensive is that correct
Mark:
No no that I don’t find body odour offensive
Russell:
Yes nor do I um I scandalised my students
weeks ago mentioning (laughing a little) that
I don’t like licking deodorant and that apart
from the fact that they said they’d bear it in
mind ah (we laugh) um there were some
Mark:
Oh it’s an appalling sensation
Russell:
II.ii.34:00
Yes I agree
Mark:
It’s like chewing on on um
Russell:
Oh please don’t even try to compare it but
the thing about odour though being
brought up yes there’s been offensive body
odour chlorine and then um odours to do
with um the steam rooms
Mark:
Yeah I was just wondering
II.ii.34:30
whether um whether different venues had different signature smells because my strongest recollection of Sauna W in Sydney

Russell:

Oh yes

Mark:

was that about a hundred and fifty metres downwind of it you knew that you weren’t far from the sauna because this wall of chlorine stench hit you

Russell:

Oh that’s interesting um

Mark:

II.ii.35:00
You could smell it in the taxi approaching

Russell:

(I laugh) Might be the driver um (a silence) that question did what why the curiosity about that do you think where’s that coming from

Mark:

Um I probab um I suspect

II.ii.35:30
that different venues do have different signature smells and it’s probably due to the different cleaning products that they use or the um different hygiene protocols and arrangements that they adhere to but um for many people smell is the strongest associative memory and

II.ii.36:00
(a silence) and my suspicion is I I can’t remember a whole lot about Rear Entry but I think that if I smelt the right cleaning product suddenly (he snaps his fingers) a lot of memories would be triggered

II.ii.36:30
and I find personally that smell has that capability in me to bring back not only um events but quite palpable spatial memories

Russell:

Um one of the women I interviewed talked about walking into Volcano and instantly recognising the smell of a cleaning product that

II.ii.37:00
she associated with her schooling

Mark:

Right

Russell:

That she it was she believed the cleaning product that was used at the s the primary school she went to

Mark:

Right okay

Russell:

and that was there for her very vividly and instantly um and someone else talked about bleach and a a link with um his mother

Mark:

Right

Russell:

cleaning things with bleach

Mark:

Yes

Russell:

I may I may have that

II.ii.37:30
incorrect though I’m now I’m just wondering whether I’m blurring that with something but um but the woman talked about phenol phenyl [sic]

Mark:

Oh yeah

Russell:

and a very distinct connection now whether they actually use that or not at Volcano I don’t know but

Mark:

Okay no well that’s that’s my question

Russell:

Okay

Mark:

The spatial qualities of smell
Russell:

It’s kind of uncontrollable though smell

Mark:

Mm

II.i.38:00

oh it comes my boyfriend appeared the other day with a bar of Pears Soap

Russell:

Yes

Mark:

and the instant I got a whiff of that suddenly I was three years old looking at the underside of the basin in my grandparents’ bathroom

Russell:

Yes

Mark:

um working out how it is that I could get from that point to the toilet by only stepping on the grey squares of lino in their multicoloured lino squared floor

II.i.38:30

and just that one smell threw me back almost bodily forty oh thirty-eight years

Russell:

I’d be interesting if they actually had different kinds of cake soap at saunas rather than those I mean I understand why they don’t and there is cake soap available at Rear Entry

II.i.39:00

but it’s so anonymous and odourless but it’d be interesting to s you know if they had (I laugh a little) Pears Soap what it would do well to conversation apart from anything else

Mark:

Um a group of my mates are contemplating putting together a very exclusive club I don’t think it will be a gentlemen’s

II.i.39:30

crub (I laugh a little) um

Russell:

You’ve got that look on your face again as you say that but keep going

Mark:

Um but it will be a ah a leisure club probably more urban based than country club um and there’s been speculation about giving hookers free membership um

II.i.40:00

just to keep the place lively but um I’ve been toying with what to make of the ah ablation areas because there’ll probably also be a small gymnasium and a sauna and things of that sort definitely a hot tub um and there’ll be quite a

II.i.40:30

lot of emphasis on there being a visible and tactile ah sense of luxury in the place and you talking about soap is a reminded me that there are ways of of providing the sense of luxury that don’t necessarily have to do with the fluffiness of the towels or the acreage of marble or the fact that the mirrors might have a bevel

II.i.41:00

on them but you can address the senses much more completely by giving someone a nice cake of soap to handle mm I think there are possibilities there

Russell:

Let’s leave it at that

Mark:

Okay

Russell:

Okay

II.i.41:24

(I switch off the minidisc recorder)

END OF CONVERSATION
appendix 30: Max II

The transcript documents a second conversation with Max recorded at short notice after I fortuitously encountered him in a city street. He’d been out of town and out of contact for several months and had returned to Melbourne merely for the day. When I noticed him from my passing tram, I disembarked and hailed him. We arranged to meet a few hours later at a restaurant to record a conversation. At the restaurant, which was near empty, we secured a corner table and set about our task. Almost immediately customers started arriving, including a large table of women who sat literally within our reach. I found their presence distracting and inhibiting but when I checked with Max he indicated that he wished to continue. The conversation was the only one in the entire series to last less than forty minutes.

Russell:

II.i.00:00
Okay so what I want to do is just go over a list of six words and um I just want you to just tell me what your as best you can your immediate or strongest associations are of in relation to your experience at saunas and preferably in Melbourne but it doesn’t have to be um in relationship to these words and it might be that it’s something

II.i.00:30
like a a story or a figure you’ve encountered or it might be um something you’re always aware of um a piece of furniture you know whatever you know up to you so the first word is clean

Max:

(a silence) That’s interesting um

II.i.01:00
I immediately think of wet rooms of the wet saunas um and I have an I have an image of different wet saunas and one that’s kind of my image of it is that it’s kind of um immaculate it’s sort of smooth white surfaces um that are um that I endow with with being kind of incredibly pure and clean and sharp

II.i.01:30
and another place that always feels like there’s probably things breeding in there (he laughs a little) um that the that the surfaces are kind of fuzzy and like when when wood gets very wet and it’s not been surfaced it gets that kind of fuzzy feeling

Russell:

Yeah

Max:

and [unintelligible] I have thoughts of European saunas where men wear th always wear some kind of footwear and I at moments like that I think I should yes I can understand the sensibleness of

II.i.02:00
wearing things on your feet and then I think of actually a a thing a kind of a fungus or it’s a bacterial thing that I had on my that I got on my back that discoloured the skin and I think that I’m sure I got it from being in one of these wet saunas ah that’s that’s my the thing is I’ve somehow picked it up in there so so clean has has connotations of that for me it’s something about I do like those kind of areas to be not to be

II.i.02:30
visibly um clean (he laughs a little)

Russell:

Visibly clean

Max:

Visibly clean yes whether or not they are doesn’t really worry me but I the the that I like that the image of them the image is one of something that’s very smooth and yes and polished and clean (laughing a little) the other thing clean does for me is thinking of of cleaning (?) of of the

II.i.03:00
the that wonderful thing that happens in saunas where you can you know something can happen and suddenly there’s a flash light you know being sort of flashed into the room and I I always think that’s so you know funny because it seems to destroy some kind of moment you know it destroys some kind of um notion that you’re in this kind of world that’s that’s limit that’s got no no kind of boundaries and isn’t kind of um subject to you know any other in kind of intervention

Russell:

Are you talking about

II.i.03:30
the sauna staff cleaning

Max:
The staff who come around yeah with

**Russell:**
To clean yeah

**Max:**
their buckets and their and sort of invade in that way you know

**Russell:**
Yeah so with their flashlights are they invading spaces that are dark or dim

**Max:**
Mm

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Max:**
Yes in such a kind of routine way too that that it’s got something to do with the kind of the kind of intricacy and care with you with which you might actually arrive in a room with someone and then the fact that the flashlight suddenly that completely

**II.i.04:00**
can sort of (he laughs) I always find it sort of sobering or something that you know it grounds you or it’s like yes well you know it just

**Russell:**
Grounds you

**Max:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
Okay

**Max:**
And it’s also something about that actually sparks a memory it’s not a Melbourne sauna it’s a sauna in another city that has this rather wonderful um dark room that you you get to via quite a frightening passageway that that you really don’t know where you’re going because it’s like a it’s kind of like concrete it’s like a tunnel

**Russell:**
Yeah

**Max:**
and it’s a bit scary because it gets

**II.i.04:30**
very narrow and you you think I you start to get claustrophobic I wouldn’t want to be trapped in here and then suddenly you come into this room that’s kind of got stars in it and it’s just little lights and and you can never quite work out what are the parameters of that room I can never been able to work out what are the what shape it is

**Russell:**
Right

**Max:**
and then once then same thing the cleaner came and turned the lights on and suddenly I was quite shocked that we were almost in what could have been a broom cupboard (we laugh a little) it was quite incredibly sort of ordinary

**II.i.05:00**
So the cleaner in that case turned the lights on

**Max:**
Yeah turned the lights on

**Russell:**
as distinct from

**Max:**
No actually the lights came on in the room momentarily

**Russell:**
So what kind of lights were they

**Max:**
They were fluorescent lights

**Russell:**
Right

**Max:**
but even they were slightly concealed

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
so it wasn’t like we were suddenly in blinding light

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
but that it was light it was light and so suddenly the dimensions and the shape of the room and and the um what was in the room were entirely visible

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
Mm

II.i.05:30
I think that’s I think that’s probably mostly what

Russell:
Mm hmm

Max:
I don’t think there’s much else there really

Russell:
The um

Max:
Clean

Russell:
white immaculate wet sauna do you have a specific one in mind or is the image

Max:
There’s a mixture but there’s one I particularly like the um which is the sauna in ah High Street in ah in Suburb E

Russell:
Right

Max:
It’s very simple it’s just a corridor a sort of corridor but it has these white the the seating is just white and white tiles

Russell:
Right

Max:
Mm

Russell:

II.i.06:00
Yeah okay I’ll give you the second word

Max:
Mm

Russell:
Dirty

Max:
(he laughs a little) The first thing I think is shit I think sometimes the actual the actual appearance of shit you know when you’ve been fingering someone’s arse or something but sometimes just shit I can I can think momentarily you know it I still yes I still find that I kind of deal with it quite automatically and functionally but I think somewhere I still think ooh dirty or you know like yes I think that there’s something like

Russell:
Like what

Max:
Like something that that’s in the wrong place you know like it’s somehow shits goes into the toilet and so sometimes you suddenly have shit on sheets or shit in the room or on your hands or whatever can sometimes well that’s the associat you say dirty I think shit and so there’s something about that um

Russell:
II.i.07:00
Is that a frequent awareness or a frequent phenomenon or in saunas for you

Max:

Um I don’t say it’s a frequent one but I suppose I I was always quite shocked the first time I I kind of fingered anyone to actually realise that you know you have to actually have to

II.i.07:30
sometimes deal (laughing a little) deal quite frequently

Russell:

Yeah

Max:

with the fact that you’re finger ing shit you know and so um (a group of women sit down at a table near us, near enough for their conversation to be recorded clearly on the minidisc) I I think it’s more having learnt to deal like having somehow worked out how to deal with it or got used to it rather than actually without without having really ever resolved it in some way so it’s something like that I think mm

Russell:

(referring to the table of women adjoining us) Do you feel uncomfortable

II.i.08:00
about the proximity here

Max:

Um not not no I don’t think so

Russell:

Are you sure

Max:

Mm

Russell:

If you change your mind just let me know

Max:

Sure um no because I it’s interesting with dirty because I ah it it probably evokes more um memories or associations not without strictly to do with sauna um but in

II.i.08:30
terms of sauna itself um no I don’t think that’s the only thing actually that’s the only thing it kind of evokes mm

Russell:

Next word

Max:

Mm

Russell:

Public

Max:

II.i.09:00
(a silence) The only time I feel public what public suggests to me really is being in the television room and I think of the um particularly at Rear Entry um and I think I I sort of avoid that I find that that large viewing that large room where that with the bar and the and the lounges and the television I actually feel in public when I’m in there where in a way that I never feel in public in the rest

II.i.09:30
of the sauna and what I remember there was I it’s sort of because it’s a sort of a um sort of an interim zone or something you know I mean because you could easily be in that area in clothes and that would not seem odd to be sitting in in your clothes and some men do and they get dressed and they come and sit down and watch television and so there’s something about that is it liminal there’s something about that the kind of the you know the fact that it seems half way I find sometimes it feels a bit discomf ting to me in that area and I always think

II.i.10:00
that I always think that I’m more I’m more um exposed or more under the gaze of someone of someone in the sauna in that place than I ever feel in the sauna itself I mean gaze in the sense of someone seeing me as as who I am seeing me as someone in public life (he laughs a little)

Russell:

Right

Max:

in that space

Russell:
Recognising you

Max:

Yes maybe where I can be recognised in the space but I

II.i.10:30

don’t I don’t experience it as recognition of me I’m just someone who’s at the sauna

Russell:

Right how how do you account for that change in experience

Max:

I think it’s probably um I think it’s partly ah to do with my own the the place of my own sexuality in society in terms of the degree to which I may think that people

II.i.11:00
don’t know that I’m necessarily that I’m gay the extent to which maybe my homosexuality is not is not necessarily publicly known or yeah so I think it it I know that there’s a residue there of something hidden or something you know ah where I I’m s I could still be exposed or yes not that I I say that but I it’s more a kind of fantasy about it than than

Russell:

Yeah

Max:

something I

II.i.11:30

actually you know feel I think mm (a silence) I mean you know public I think public toilet you know and well that’s significant because I mean I I think I do like it

II.i.12:00

for that I do like the sauna for that reason that it’s something about the the kind of performance of something the performance of the kind of the public situation which is the beat or the toilet um there’s still kind of sense of the of various rituals that one enacts in the sauna that are not aren’t you know aren’t different to the rituals you might enact on the beat or whatever that get transposed over into the sauna but are now because it’s in a safe

II.i.12:30

place sort of take on a must take on yeah perform that more a sense of performance or something because there’s not the necessity to be careful (he laughs a little) or wary or any of those things and I think I’m yes I think so so when you say public I think there’s something fascinates me as even as I talk about it about how much the activity within the sauna is chicken and egg it

II.i.13:00

maybe is influenced by those kind of rituals and how much they get carried over into the sauna why because that’s what we’re is it because we enjoy them and that’s what we turns us on so we we we reproduce them inside this space I don’t know or there’s kind of there’s some interplay

Russell:

You don’t know what happen you don’t know generally or you don’t know for you

Max:

Well I think I do know for me I think that yes I would say that probably I’m I’m

II.i.13:30

I’m I’m very I mean (almost unintelligible) it’s really it’s interesting it relates the public (intelligible again) because I must say I am quite I don’t really want to meet someone at the sauna that I know actually that that comes down I’m not really interested in meeting someone I know I can’t I don’t see the sauna as a place that if I met someone I’d [sic] know and say come let’s go to the bar and sit down and have a cup of coffee I feel that I’m wasting the time there I’d do that with them out there I that’s not what I’ve come to the sauna for

Russell:

Yeah

Max:

So I I find that I think you know I’ve paid sixteen dollars to get in here I’m

II.i.14:00

not (laughing) right you know so I’m not going to sit down and do that I mean I say that as we speak but I think that’s also a a changing thing you know like having met this guy recently in a sauna who I’m sort of yeah having this thing with I I don’t know that could in itself change my relationship the very fact that the sauna has now become somewhere where I’ve actually met someone that I feel comfortable with actually in public I could easily see

II.i.14:30

how that will now alter and change it will change my relationship within the sauna I
think I've always felt that in the sauna I think there's something about the public too - it's about permission - I think I've often felt not the permission to behave in the sauna the way I would behave outside i.e. that you see someone and you smile at them and say oh hello - that there's this game that I have to keep playing of

Russell:

Of what

Max:

Oh well I can only do it (he gestures) see I'm making a gesture of sort of - you know like of something furtive or not -

Russell: II.i.15:00

not furtive but something

Max:

deflective (this is a question) -

Russell:

deflective (this is a question)

Max:

Yeah deflective probably - I mean you know this is - this is to do very much with me for a long time never taking the initiative - always wanting to be the desired object - so you know waiting for someone to make the initiative to me so I could play games of evasion or whatever and maybe kid myself that - that things are happening when they weren't really happening -

Russell:

Yeah

Max:

And it was very interesting in relation to this guy because when it finally came down to it I took the initiative and - which was quite a step for me -

Russell: II.i.15:30

and I took it very quickly - you know like I would probably have have played around more or - or you know um I've suddenly forgotten the word - you know tracked (he laughs) followed for longer played the game of - of pursuit longer

Max:

And I didn't I just went bhoom you know and so that was kind of reassuring - I suppose you know mm - so there's quite a lot in public actually when I think about it -

Russell:

II.i.16:00

Safe - which is a word that you've used

Max:

Yes yeah yeah -

Russell:

in your discussion of public -

Max:

Yeah um (a silence) mm well there's something about - I kind of equate safe with comfortable with -

Russell: II.i.16:30

with um warm - with secure - with um familiar safe familiar and I must say something about walking into the sauna that almost sometimes just the moment of arriving at the sauna is the most satisfying moment for me because it's like ah I'm at the sauna - ah I know where I am - I know you know everything here you know feels yes in a sense safe or - there's something about that moment of entry that - that ah is very um pleasurable -

Russell:

II.i.17:00

Does that only apply to saunas you're visiting for the second or some subsequent visit or -

Max:

Oh no it's even heightened by going to a sauna that I've never been to -

Russell:

Right I was wondering -

Max:

[unintelligible] in a foreign enviro - yes that's quite interesting that - like I don't there's [sic] a sauna I haven't been (he laughs) been into in Australia but - but I but I haven't been to the one in a city interstate for many many years - in fact I couldn't even remember whether I'd ever been to it and then as soon as I arrived I real I recognised
it and thought oh I do so again yes so there was

**II.i.17:30**
great almost kind of excitement about being at this sauna because I know it’s a place I feel I’ll feel safe and comfortable in but also the added thing is but I it’s it’s slightly unknown to me so there’s there’s something kind of about you know the the possibilities that that haven’t been because sometimes ah that’s interesting I suppose that comes down to the nature of particular saunas I I must say that a sauna like Volcano I never go to Volcano with any great sense of expectation

**II.i.18:00**
it it feels to me that somehow it’s too known whereas I must say um Rear Entry always I always think it’s kind of an interesting sauna because I feel that there’s it always seems to have potential for me whereas I think somehow Volcano has lost some of its (he laughs) potential

Russell:

I’m just curious um can we take say Rear Entry

Max:

Mm

Russell:

Now you say it’s the moment of arrival

Max:

Mm

Russell:

**II.i.18:30**
What moment is that when have you arrived at Rear Entry

Max:

*(he laughs a little)* Yes that’s a good question well yes it’s a good question because I I I think it actually is probably starting to happen from the moment I hop in even have the thought to go there

Russell:

Right

Max:

Yeah this thing it’s the like I always think it’s like the little um you know um Java when the little wheel starts going on the computer

Russell:

Yeah

Max:

You know when you go into Java you know is it Java

**II.i.19:00**
yeah you know what I mean

Russell:

I don’t know

Max:

Oh when you

Russell:

I I know the kind of idea where an icon starts being active to let

Max:

Yes

Russell:

To reassure you that something’s underway

Max:

Well it’s not that but this is specific when it’s about to take you into video or

Russell:

Oh yeah

Max:

stream what’s called streaming video the little Java wheel starts and it feels like that ooh this little Java wheel’d started you know activate (?) and I always know we’re going now it’s going somewhere and and I suppose that just just ah accumulates or as I get you know as I get closer to it

**II.i.19:30**
yes and so it’s that kind of continues right through the moment of [unintelligible: I don’t know?] paying the money going through the door getting to the locker taking your you know like it’s just a
Russell:
So when does it start to wear off

Max:

(he laughs a little) Oh well that’s that’s um that’s quite specific to each occasion that I would go to a sauna. I mean I would say that there’s always almost without exception there’s always a kind of there’s probably a period of about a half an hour an hour.

II.i.20:00
I think where it sustains on any occasion I go to a sauna it would start to wear off possibly through. I think if within a hour there’s not some sense of you know possibility or I don’t see you know there’s not a potential you know um meeting I keep wanting to say conquest at the moment (he laughs)

Russell:
I thought you were going to just just say meat rather than meeting (I laugh a little)

Max:

(laughing) Meat yes oh meat ah yes I suppose if that doesn’t happen within

II.i.20:30
the first half hour or an hour it starts to wear off a bit you know hmm

Russell:
Um I’m just curious though

Max:
Yeah

Russell:
You said conquest

Max:

Mm

Russell:
was a word that you keep going to say but you never did

Max:
Yes

Russell:
What’s that about (I laugh a little)

Max:

Yeah well what is it about I don’t know I um (a silence, then) oh I sort of do know what that’s about I think um

II.i.21:00
yes I think there’s been a a number of experiences lately of seeing men at the sauna who I would never imagine that I would end up having sex with who I’ve had sex with and they’ve you know I’m talking kind of I suppose I’m talking young men very beautiful young men and that that’s kind of and I so yes I suppose I use the word conquest it’s like wow that’s kind of amazing mm mm and probably specifically because I you know in some way because if

II.i.21:30
I took the initiative in relation to this guy who’s you know this particular guy

Russell:
Yeah

Max:

And I not that I felt any sense of conquest in that but you know

Russell:
Is that it for safe

Max:
Yeah

Russell:
Private

Max:

Private that’s very interesting private

II.i.22:00
I suppose when I think private I think of a few a few times in saunas where I’ve felt an incredible um sort sense of intimacy or or closeness to the person I’ve been with and in those on those occasions time has any sense of time has kind of vanished i.e. on both occasions it was always a shock to us to discover that we’d been in the room for as long as we’d been where

II.i.22:30
I lose a sense of actually where I am like yeah a sense that I’m of anyone else
around. I mean I’m just with this person in this space. (a silence)

II.i.23:00

oh that’s interesting I I I kind of um challenge anyone’s I I sometimes think I challenge people’s a little bit people’s own privacy I I sometimes think that saunas are open game or something that I I never used to do this but I’ve found myself kind of being a bit of a quite interested in being a voyeur and so it sort of challenged something in me about people’s right to have privacy in the sauna so that if two people were in a room I couldn’t. I could start to think well yes that I I was not adverse to maybe if the you know looking through a crack in the door or something like that and so yes not not not sure about what role privacy has within a sauna or what you can expect of privacy.

II.i.23:30

within a sauna I’m not someone who I mean I quite like group sex so that privacy seems something that e that excludes me and I can kind of um I can feel not resentful but like whatever the word is put out or something that someone should expect to be able to be (laughing a little) private.

Russell:

II.i.24:00

But it’s an experience you’ve had nevertheless

Max:

Yes yeah mm mm yes and I can be quite I know that I I’m I’m quite intolerant (laughing a little) I can be quite intolerant of someone disturbing that privacy.

Russell:

II.i.24:30

And that

Max:

But that but that fluctuates I mean there’s been times when I’ve been with someone and the door’s suddenly maybe wasn’t closed properly and someone else has come in and I’m quite open to that if if it’s you know someone who

II.i.25:00

feels you know that there’s some you know that there’s potential for something else to happen or whatever so mm like random acts of privacy or something

Russell:

But that’ll be in some enclosed space

Max:

Yes

Russell:

within the sauna

Max:

Yes yes

Russell:

And normally a space that would be where you could secure it

Max:

Yes

Russell:

That closure

Max:

Yes that’s right yes yes yes

Russell:

Is that something you tend to do like to secure that closure or

Max:

No no not really

Russell:

You leave it up to the other person

Max:

Or I do it kind of um perfunct you know like (he demonstrates) like sort of

Russell:

Yeah

Max:

just functionally but I I I

Russell:
You just made a gesture like bolting the door

Max:
Of bolting the door

Russell:
Yeah yeah yeah

Max:
Yes I I’m not kind of um but it’s not a huge thing for me particularly no

Russell:
Right

Max:
No no I mean that kind of relates to the public I suppose that I oh well that’s well I think I I think I I went through a period of of finding it quite confronting oh not [unintelligible] confronting but I the thing of people not you know like if someone say in a corridor someone giving someone a blow job in a corridor you know not going into a room I I I may have I don’t think I think I I I would sometimes I don’t think I was fascinated by that but fascinated because it was it was something that was well it’s interesting isn’t it defining notions within a sauna of what’s public and what’s private it seems to do with what is interior and what is exterior so in that context the ex the corridor would seem to be an exterior space it’s outdoors it’s out of the rooms

Russell:
Right

Max:
So it was for people to engage in in any kind sexual activity in the corridors seemed a different another order of experience a different order of experience and I used to find I couldn’t imagine myself doing that and then something happened where I was doing that and that was yeah that was interesting because I I sort of realised that it seemed to break that taboo down or make me think not so much about there being any differentiation between going into a room and closing a door and being in a corridor or it made me fascinated but what is it we’re doing when we want to go into the room you know what are we is it are we concealing ourselves or is it in order to be more intimate is it not to be interrupted I’m not sure

Russell:
Are these questions you ask yourself on those occasions

Max:
Well they’re questions I’m asking myself as I talk to you now (he laughs a little)

Russell:
Right

Max:
In the way that this (laughing a little) we [unintelligible] it has me reflect on things I might otherwise not reflect on

Russell:
Right so you you don’t

Max:
I probably never thought about that before

Russell:
Right okay

Max:
but as I talk with you I don’t [?] think probably it is something I I think about you know that’s there

Russell:
I mean I know that someone might say to me oh do you want to go to a room

Max:
Mm

Russell:
And I often just because that hasn’t been an intention

Max:
Yes

Russell:
that's arisen in my mind will often now say no

Max:
No no

Russell:
And not because I'm against the idea but because at that moment it hasn't been something I've been wanting it's not that I want to [unintelligible]

Max:
Mm no I understand that well it's for me it's often that

Russell:
And that

Max:
I suppose often it indicates to me that that maybe what I thought was happening wasn't happening or or

Russell:
Well we're in two different places

Max:
Yeah we're in two different places because I know what you're saying it's like oh well I'm actually quite enjoying

Russell: 
II.i.28:30
THIS (he laughs a little) you know

Russell:
Yeah yeah

Max:
This is it

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
What is happening now is it

Russell:
Yeah yeah

Max:
This is what's turning me on why would I go to a room

Russell:
Yeah

Max:
That would alter it you know

Russell:
Well that's the other thing people often say what do you like doing and I

Max:
(groaning) Oh

Russell:
I almost invariably say THIS (I laugh)

Max:
This yes what we're doing now yes

Russell:
Apart from the questions

Max:
I know what do you how do you answer that question oh everything

Russell:
Well that's what I do sometimes I've said I'm here to find out

Max:
Yeah (he laughs)

Russell:
Ooh

Max:
Yes

Russell:
It's like when I go to my counselling
II.i.29:00
session the person at reception often says how are you today and I say I'm here to find out
Max:
(he laughs) Yes
Russell:
Um
Max:
So that's probably unless there's anything else that what was that one safe
Russell:
Yeah
Max:
Yeah safe was that safe
Russell:
No that was private
Max:
No it was private mm mm
Russell:
Well we'll go onto the other one then
Max:
Yeah
Russell:
The last one's two it's actually one one concept but there are two words you can pick up on either of them and they are either danger or dangerous
Max:
Danger or dangerous
II.i.29:30
Russell:
Yeah
Max:
Yeah
Russell:
Either of them
Max:
Right well you know I mean yeah I immediately go I immediately go to unsafe sex I suppose is my first thought when you say danger but it's funny that as I say it it because it it's like it's like it's not of my own making it's not it's
II.i.30:00
it's it's sort of not it's a danger that's kind of been put on me I mean I you know it's
Russell:
Do you mean that
Max:
Well it's
Russell:
it's your duty or you're obliged to say that
Max:
Yes I su (he laughs a little) no because I I think it's something I'm in in a great deal of um kind of
II.i.30:30
I want to say conflict or dilemma but it's not quite as strong as that but I it's something I'm very um I'm sort of tussling with at the moment I think because because of late I I have slightly experimented with with breaking down the strict boundary of of strictly safe sex and
II.i.31:00
and so therefore it it well it's complex because it's so it's so it just makes kind of simple equations really kind of difficult because am I wanting to do it because it is dangerous like am I and you know dangerous and so that in itself is very seductive is is very appealing and and and can actually heighten you know heighten the situation if I think I'm
II.i.31:30
playing with that um it's an interesting word dan dangerous (a silence) I mean I think what I'm trying to say is that I suppose prior to HIV to AIDS
II.i.32:00
if you said to someone what is dangerous well it would have been an open question I mean like it would have had more to do with the imagination or something and it seems
that one can’t avoid I mean I can’t help my mind going a you know yes you know unsafe sex but it’s I kind of resent that at the same time I think is what I’m trying to say

Russell:

Right

Max:

I kind of resent the fact that it takes me directly to that what so what is it actually short circuiting

II.i.32:30
you know those notions of danger but then again you know danger if I equate danger with risk then risk is to do with challenging um comfortable you know comfort zones I think for me and that so that can start to seem like something like it’s dangerous and I think that you know as with any anything the more one I go to saunas

II.i.33:00
you start to become aware or one can start to become aware of certain behaviour I come become aware of certain behaviour that I have that like it or not there’s a certain pattern of behaviour that I manifest within a sauna and you know it’s like so so that happens but what if you step out you know so what is stepping outside of that and you know for a moment and like how locked am I how how conditioned am I by all those things I mean what’s the you know and so

II.i.33:30
I’m quite fascinated when something happens that (a silence) that would that kind of challenges those patterns

Russell:

When you say stepping outside it

Max:

Mm ah I suppose all I mean is that I have no doubt that there are certain that I have found a way of being in a sauna that is familiar and comfortable to me

II.i.34:00
and I know in life that things often happen when when the thing that’s familiar or comfortable gets you know tipped for a moment and you go oh you know and so it’s something about what’s the trigger or what’s the what’s the what’s the equivalent of being tripped in the sauna by something else you know

II.i.34:30
I don’t even know as I say that I’m trying to trying to think of an example of something like that happening I mean I suppose that the other thing about the sauna is that in some ways because of being you know because it’s it’s why we have saunas I suppose it’s like by by almost it seems to me by definition they’re places where we don’t experience danger like if you talk about danger in that way that you know because because danger is a is such a potent thing

II.i.35:00
for us in any kind of public um beha you know like any public um exploration of sexuality i.e. in the beat the toilets or whatever is fraught with a kind of danger either the danger of discovery or the danger of you know of being bashed or whatever that that by by virtue of that a sauna is so seems so much a place where one

II.i.35:30
doesn’t have to think about danger

Russell:

Where you don’t

Max:

Where I don’t have to think about danger yeah

Russell:

When you say us who do you mean you and me (this is a question)

Max:

Yeah I well I’m probably saying gay men

Russell:

Right

Max:

Yeah

Russell:

Gay men

Max:

Yeah

Russell:

Uh huh (a silence)
Max:

What (*he laughs a little*)

Russell:

No no just wondering

Max:

Well I I suppose it’s I don’t I can’t conceive

you know it’s also I mean because it’s

obviously got to do with how with how one

construes danger you know and as I say as

soon as I take it into risk it becomes the it

becomes part of play and I you know and

so what I’m saying there I suppose about

unsafe sex there’s something about about

yeah being able to play with that that that

I know is dangerous but even within that I I

think I have enough I think I have enough

understanding of how it operates to know

that there is there is a boundary that says

you mustn’t have unsafe sex it seems to me

that there’s another boundary (*he laughs a

little*) or there’s some area in between you

know

Russell:

What when you s when you use the term

somes [?] sorry unsafe sex

Max:

Yes I’m simply talking about I’m really

talking anal penetration

Russell:

Right

Max:

without a condom

Russell:

Right okay so is that ide is unsafe

sex identical at all times with unprotected

sex

Max:

Um (*a silence*) but what do you mean by

unprotected sex

Russell:

Sex which doesn’t involve a prophylactic

layer like a condom in place

Max:

But are we talking but but within that are

we talking

are we talking about fucking or are we

talking about any kind of sexual play like

Russell:

Well well well let’s let’s talk about anal

penetrative sex

Max:

Yes right yes

Russell:

Would you regard all unprotected anal

penetrative sex as unsafe sex

Max:

Well I don’t know that’s the thing I I I I

Russell:

I’m I’m no I’m asking

Max:

Yeah do I

Russell:

did you find that those two terms

Max:

Yes

Russell:

interchangeable

Max:

I don’t think

Russell:

I’m not asking

Max:

No no

Russell:
Max: what the clinical

Max: No no no

Russell: definition is

Max: Yeah

Russell: or what your knowledge (?) is

Max: Well I used to think so but I think I’ve changed

II.i.38:00 I’m sure I’ve changed my thinking about that I no longer necessarily think those two things are

Russell: interchangeable

Max: interchangeable mm

Russell: So that there would be times when you could use you could be aware of having unprotected sex

Max: Mm

Russell: but at the same time not believe that that would be unsafe sex

Max: Yes yes yeah mm

Russell: And that’s a recent development for you

Max: Mm

Russell: Right

Max: Mm mm

Russell: Born of experience or born of

Max: Experience

Russell: having information and coming to [unintelligible]

Max: No no no of experience

Russell: Of experience

Max: Mm mm mm

Russell: Experience in saunas or experience elsewhere

Max: Um in saunas

Russell: And elsewhere or just saunas

Max: Just saunas

Russell: Just saunas

Max: Mm mm

Russell:
II.1.39:00
(a silence) I'm happy to leave it there

Max:
Yeah okay

II.1.39:21
(I switch off the minidisc recorder)

END OF CONVERSATION
appendix 31: Lydia II

The transcript documents a second conversation with Lydia recorded again at her flat and again at the end of her working day. She made drinks (again) and we set about our work.

Russell:

II.i.00:00

Right so what I want to do this time is just go over um a handful of things that um really only two things that are emerging from the previous one and and then I want to go through a list of words with you and just ask for you to talk about those words in relationship to um your experiences

II.i.00:30

of either um the particular night we discussed

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

last time or any other night um the first thing I want to ask you about is um I was a bit ah ah what can I say a bit overwhelmed with um a lot of the information you provided me with because although I’ve known you a long time a lot of the information

II.i.01:00

you gave me was new information for me and um I understood immediately what the pertinence of it was um except that when I was preparing the transcript of the first interview I realised when you talked about the evening

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

the whole phenomenon of the heavy
duty area never was mentioned it WAS when you discussed touring through the building

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

and it was clear that that was something you were very aware of very present in the sense that you were considering things about human experience your own or other’s in relationship to furnishings

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

in the building

II.i.02:00

but then when you told me about the night there was it didn't exist any more we had the lounge area

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

we had the pool and adjoining areas near the pool your um costume

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

ah which I don’t think was the term you used but um and the Polaroids

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

II.i.02:30

and the continuing performance that was offered can you tell me a bit about the heavy duty area

Lydia:

Okay

Russell:

which we will I will call the heavy duty area

Lydia:

Okay

Russell:

on the night
appendix 31: Lydia II

Lydia:

What you’ve made me just remember (I laugh a little) is yes I don’t participate I’d [unintelligible: never? didn’t?] participate in that area and in one sense

in those scenes I’ve not participated in that stuff. I gave you mm that background information to place in context for you what might be the drives that people have within their actions in terms of the dyke scene um I talk about kind of I don’t I’m going to feel awkward about saying

this I’m a natural bottom

Russell:

(laughing a little) Okay by the way you don’t have to tell me anything that

Lydia:

No no but

Russell:

you don’t feel like but

Lydia:

No but this is interesting because it’s like um there is a lot of theory about S&M practice and culture and I believe in the fact that basically tops are secondary it’s only it’s bottoms who actually shape the scene it’s bottoms who um allow the possibility

and the thing is is in those scenes I’ve not run across anyone I’d be willing to submit myself to because like without sounding arrogant I’d eat them for breakfast in terms of I’m going to tell you another story at a dance party down at the wharves a long time ago

I had this experience with this woman who was such a natural top because she could get your mind and hold it in your hand and she scared the pants off me mainly because the power of the top is not their physical power it’s their intellectual power to get your number and to play you she’s the only

person within dyke scene [sic] that I have ever met that actually I kind of went oh you’re the real thing and most of the stuff about the heavy duty scenes or whatever um I do I feel awkward about saying it most of it I think is kind of costume play and that a lot of my frustrations

at that time was based in that you know it’s about like natural Marxists and intellectual Marxists (I laugh a little) or you know or you know

Russell:

Or Marx as a a phase you’re going through

Lydia:

Through yeah

Russell:

Yeah

Lydia:

Or or how that you arrive at things and once again I’m awkward about saying it um that you arrive at things from your experience rather than your learning

and so no on the night at Volcano I can’t tell you about the heavy room because I have no entrée into the heavy room because I wasn’t interested um it’s quite interesting though in terms of you know the supposed heavy duty room how at that time that was um

a very very very discreet [discrete?] club and that there were power figures in that such as Ms A or whatever um

Russell:

Can I ask you

Lydia:

The other thing can I also say the other thing on this the whole problem with the dyke stuff is it’s impossible to have actual anonymity you know there is no you know the other thing about

the potential of anonymous sex is something that isn’t a province in one sense as as not it isn’t as strong a province kind of thing um

Russell:

Is that because it’s organised much more in terms of a scene and a community

Lydia:
And social net yeah you’ve got yeah yeah

**Russell:**

Whereas say with men

**II.07:30**

if I or someone else were to go to a park there could be anyone turning up there

**Lydia:**

That’s right

**Russell:**

There could be you know some bloke who’s driven in

**Lydia:**

That’s right

**Russell:**

from the suburbs

**Lydia:**

That’s right

**Russell:**

You know

**Lydia:**

And it’s it’s also and that’s where I also go that I you know I think that I’ve always said that I think there’s wilder things happening out at Deer Park (she laughs a little) than we’ll ever know about in terms of those kinds of scenes every now and then you

**II.08:00**

get those little glitches you know like the latest story of the couple from Melton the heterosexual couple who would kind of have sex with girls under sixteen and

**Russell:**

Yeah yeah I

**Lydia:**

all that kind of stuff and those kinds of power plays and things and I personally believe that’s going on all the time it’s just that it’s not recorded it’s not captured within these known means of circulation and documentation um in terms of with

**II.08:30**

females where I think the anonymous sex thing um has occurred is the whole phenomenon of um navy ships coming in to town

**Russell:**

So that the men are anonymous

**Lydia:**

That’s right and you can do anything you want because you know that boat’s going to go and I can I don’t remem I can’t remember if it was like nineteen eighty-eight or whatever when there was a [that?] shit-load of boats in um down at Station

**II.09:00**

Pier and it was it became this phenomenon that I can remember I and some other people drove down to watch the carloads of women picking up sailors and it was it was just incredible it was incredible it was and all of a sudden you kind of understood the Albert Tucker victory girl paintings and all that kind of stuff um

**II.09:30**

yeah so it’s have I gone too far off the track

**Russell:**

No no um there is no track other than the one we leave

**Lydia:**

So yeah yeah

**Russell:**

But um I’m wondering though when you said you weren’t interested on the e in the evening does that mean that you were indifferent to that space or that you avoided that space

**Lydia:**

Indifferent

**Russell:**

Right

**Lydia:**

because I felt indifferent about the people who were using it

**Russell:**
appendix 31: Lydia II

Did you notice who was going in and out or how many people were going in and out did you have an awar

Lydia:

It was all [unintelligible: again um?] there’s a very it’s a very strata-ed society in one sense from that time I believe it’s probably shifted quite a bit now

Russell:

Yeah

Lydia:

um but it yes II.i.10:30 it it was who was downstairs were essentially the serfs and peasants and there was one or two queens and there was very much kind of an inner court and the inner court was those who might have entrée into (she lowers her voice an octave) the heavy duty room you know (she reverts to her usual voice) and it’s almost like there’s an awareness amongst the serfs and peasants II.i.11:00 as to which members of the inner court are doing that and there’s always serfs and peasants who are aspirational to getting into the inner court

Russell:

But was there something like a door bitch on duty

Lydia:

Oh no

Russell:

No

Lydia:

No no because that you know that was all shaped either by Ms Y or Ms A or whoever yeah

Russell:

II.i.11:30 So if that was an area you were uninterested in then it’s at the risk of reiterating things you may have said previously you WERE interested then in this um suburban lounge room that wasn’t a suburban lounge room upstairs and in the pool area the wet area

Lydia:

I was really interested to see how the serfs and peasants would use the space II.i.12:00 with you know without being derogatory but but those who weren’t part of the in-crowd I was much more interested [sic] and that was the drive behind my performance and the Polaroids or whatever was in a sense to encourage them to imagine themselves as active participants rather than wallflowers

Russell:

II.i.12:30 Did where were you in all that were you like a bridging person like where were you observing THEM from

Lydia:

Um I was probably like the bunny girl at a Hefner club

Russell:

That doesn’t help me too much because I’ve (laughing a little) never been a bunny girl

Lydia:

But

Russell:

at a Hefner club

Lydia:

Oh okay

Russell:

I mean were you a person who did have II.i.13:00 easy entrée if you had wished

Lydia:

Mm

Russell:

into that inner core area

Lydia:

Mm

Russell:
Right so was there a kind of um a grounding in that area even if you never set foot in it for you that helped give you some foundation in the way you moved through the rest of the building

Lydia:

Um

Russell:

**II.i.13:30**
Do do you understand my question

Lydia:

Yeah yeah no I don’t think it’s not about that it’s *(she sighs) (a silence, then)* of course I had a privilege I’d been invited to do a performance I decided to exercise my privilege in a particular way which was one about being inclusive to those who weren’t part of the in-crowd so in a sense they might go and form their own in-crowd

Russell:

But the fact that you

**II.i.14:00**
were so distinct in your appearance also then I mean were you like some fairy godmother around the place *(I laugh a little)*

Lydia:

Kind of yeah

Russell:

Right so that in a way all of the spaces were available to you

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

And then you chose

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

which ones you were going to be interested in in inhabiting

**II.i.15:00**
Yeah because I was in I was interested I’ve been tired you know if I’m tired of museum people always being about objects I was tired of all um I was tired of women going to these events which were supposedly highly sexualised and them being like wallflowers you know being passive objects of desire rather than active desires

**II.i.15:30**
so you know in posing people for um Polariods I’d move their body around I’d touch their body etcetera etcetera I just remembered um in talking to you like one couple did the hold the nipple

Russell:

Oh yeah

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

That French painting

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah

Lydia:

you know because someone had pointed a camera at them and yeah

Russell:

So they performed

Lydia:

So they could pub

**II.i.16:00**
you know they could publicly display

Russell:

So um at the risk again of being obvious does that mean then that if the camera is like your magic wand if you’re a fairy godmother does that mean it was only going
to be working in places where there was sufficient illumination

**Lydia:**

Mm um **II.i.16:30**
yes probably yeah

**Russell:**

And places where there would be sufficient physical distance so that the lens could encompass a scene that was offered or staged

**Lydia:**

But hopefully it created a mood by doing the performance at the beginning by getting members of the audience up to publicly flaunt themselves

**Russell:**

Right

**Lydia:**

Yeah so it yeah I so

**Russell:**

So that that could leak into other parts

**Lydia:**

Yes

**Russell:**

of the building

**Lydia:**

Yeah

**Russell:**

Right okay yeah

**Lydia:**

**II.i.17:00**

Yeah

**Russell:**

No that’s

**Lydia:**

So it it creates the possibility of what’s allowable

**Russell:**

Did I ask you last time if you went into the steam room at any point

**Lydia:**

Probably didn’t. I find steam rooms very boring I probably opened it and looked in

**Russell:**

Yeah cos I’m aware you had the ostrich plumes and your spectacles on

**Lydia:**

Probably **II.i.17:30**
yes never without the spectacles

**Russell:**

So there would be things about and were you wearing black velvet

**Lydia:**

Um no no there’s just the choker and then there’s just the black crepe ribbon

**Russell:**

Oh it’s crepe right okay would you have second thoughts about going into a moist environment

**Lydia:**

Oh no

**Russell:**

No okay right

**Lydia:**

**II.i.18:00**

I’m not a prissy princess

**Russell:**

I mean with those clothes on though

**Lydia:**

No

**Russell:**
Right fine and your boots

Lydia:

Mm

Russell:

Right okay um then I think that's all I have to ask about that

Lydia:

The other thing

Russell:

Oh right

Lydia:

I'll point out though

Russell:

Okay

Lydia:

of course is the sauna is the retreat for the shy fat girls

Russell:

The wet sauna

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

Yes

Lydia:

Yeah or it's it's because it's an enclosed space it's a retreat for those who are wanting to participate but it's more enclosed and comforting so they're still on view but they're not as much on view

Russell:

Um

Lydia:

And then of course there's always the sauna princesses

Russell:

Do you know that because people told you that or because you've deduced that from

Lydia:

That would be my um projection

Russell:

Right okay

Lydia:

And that was like the mood of it

Russell:

Ah sorry now I need to know a bit more about that

Lydia:

Um

Russell:

The mood of it (a silence) what did you witness that conveyed that quality of mood

Lydia:

Isn't it interesting I've just kind of snapped to um the Korean bathhouse in Sydney and I was just thinking how much more lively (she laughs) that is because it's um isn't that interesting

Russell:

Is it partly because it's not a place

Lydia:

It's not sexualised

Russell:

which is framed as

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:
With heavy erotic expectation

Lydia:
That’s right and the way the girls muck up in there is

\[ II.i.20:00 \]
just they’re loud and rambunctious and and there’s a greater ease in there it’s yeah there’s a greater ease in their body and you know like you know like you don’t go on certain times because it’s kind of these packs of chicks in gangs of five like some fucking hens night you know like it’s it’s and a lo much more animated and because it’s

\[ II.i.20:30 \]
um it yeah it’s about enjoying yourself and and it’s it’s framed in a different way

Russell:
So the mood in the steam room at Volcano was unanimated is

Lydia:
An awkwardness

Russell:
As distinct from being unanimated or an awkwardness

\[ II.i.21:00 \]
as a form of unanimated

Lydia:
Oh I think I want to say I can’t you know like you know there’s Ms Q being queen of the pool um because see in that in the community of people going to Volcano at that night is about what we were saying before about there isn’t a possibility of anonymity yeah they know what the pecking order is because it’s part of the scene yeah they yeah so that

\[ II.i.21:30 \]
peck that pecking order or layering is there it’s it’s whereas say at the Korean bathhouse in Sydney they haven’t got a fucking clue (laughing a little) who anyone is but you know like so the you know the gang from Erskinville and the gang from whatever and you know

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
They don’t have to worry about what those other people think about them because they’re not within any community or

\[ II.i.22:00 \]
social grouping what they’re worried about is who their gang is

Russell:
Like I find it interesting that you’ve been able to list a whole lot of names of people who were present on that evening and I couldn’t list

Lydia:
That’s right

Russell:
that many people I think who I know from having seen to be present in all the Sauna Visits I’ve um attended

Lydia:

\[ II.i.22:30 \]
That’s right (a silence)

Russell:
But I don’t believe that would hold for many other men I think there are other men

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
for whom who could easily

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
you know do that

Lydia:
But isn’t there always that thing about it’s a bit of a bummer in boy world if you actually run across someone (laughing a little) you do know kind of I’ve you know had um

Russell:
Oh why do you ask that
Lydia:
I
Russell:
or are you asking it or are you
Lydia:
No but I
Russell:
Is that a rhetorical one
Lydia:
No that's a rhetorical one because I've talked to boys about when that's been a bummer like
Russell:
What bumping into people
Lydia:
Yeah
Russell:
they know
Lydia:
Yeah
Russell:
That's interesting how have they reported that to you
Lydia:
Oh that I suppose in a sense that it it took away the anonymity
Russell:
Yeah it's funny cos I've not um I've often bumped into people and um ah all it means for me is um you yeah it means there's a no go zone a mobile no go zone
Lydia:
Go zone yeah
Russell:
Um but I don't find it a bummer as a word (I laugh)
Lydia:
Well but yeah but but yes
Russell:
Yeah
Lydia:
What what it does is it does have an influence on how you how you circulate in a space
Russell:
It
Lydia:
That's all
Russell:
Yes that that is true
Lydia:
That's what I mean by bummer
Russell:
Yeah
Lydia:
Yeah
Russell:
Things like places where it's very hard to work out who's actually there suddenly become more loaded with awkward possibilities
Lydia:
Yeah
Russell:
(reaching for the newspaper in my bag) Um I want to show you some photographs
Lydia:
Oh okay
Russell:

*(showing the images to Lydia)* Um these are from Sydney and as part of the Mardi Gras thing there was a um a women’s night advertised

**II.i.24:30**

ah which I think is an annual event in Sydney and recently these photographs were published and I’m just wondering if there’s anything about these images that *(Lydia starts peering at the images)* do you want me to turn another light on *(Lydia gets up to alter the lighting)* if there’s anything about the images that um

**II.i.25:00**

contrast significantly or compare significantly with things you recall from your night

Lydia:

*(returning to her seat)* Well remember Sydney has had a stronger history of the kind of um oh you know there used to be the controversies of the Miss Wicked ones with actual fist fucking on stage and all that kind of stuff

Russell:

Right

Lydia:

Yeah so there’s always

**II.i.25:30**

been that but these these combos um yeah are very different from say that night in Volcano all that time ago

Russell:

So these combos here are how would you describe what we’re looking at here

Lydia:

Oh well basically it’s not one on one um

Russell:

There appear to be trios in each image

Lydia:

Yeah though that’s the same group

Russell:

Mm

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah

Lydia:

And I would predict that they probably already

**II.i.26:00**

knew one another

Russell:

All right and probably knew they were being photographed

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

I would tend to that point yeah

Lydia:

Yeah yeah so my ongoing gripe is no one’s touching any muff

Russell:

*(I laugh a little, then)* Well do you think that might be a bit of censorship on the part of the camera and on the part of the editor

Lydia:

If they had’ve got a muff touch shot they would have published it

Russell:

Okay

Lydia:

Okay

**II.i.26:30**

*(indicating a new image)* This is classic

Russell:

Oh this

Lydia:

Just kind of

Russell:
Yeah what's classic about that image

Lydia:
We're just happy because we're so kind of together and naked

Russell:
So

Lydia:
and we're unashamed yeah

Russell:
So foreheads touching each other

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
Yeah that's a shot of affection

Russell:
Yeah yeah

Lydia:
You see

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
I find the playing pool with no bra on very amusing

Russell:  
\text{II.i.27:00}
Yeah

Lydia:

See I these just make me giggle \textit{(laughing a little)} I just think you know and you know these two the kind of glamour queens well you don't you can't muss them up can you

Russell:  

Because they're dressed up and made up

Lydia:
That's right

Russell:
Yeah yeah

Lydia:
Yeah you can't kind of ruffle them

Russell:
Whereas in some of the other images though the women look very messy in the sense that they've got their hair wet

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
and they've really let go

Lydia:
Yeah I think

\text{II.i.27:30}
I like these two the best

Russell:
Yeah the towel thing's interesting

Lydia:
Mm

Russell:
I mean she is wearing a towel in that image am I correct

Lydia:
Yeah she is

Russell:
Yeah yeah that just it just seems such a weird thing um when with women wearing them because the women are wearing them around their

Lydia:
There's nothing dangling yeah
Russell:
Well the women are wearing them around their waists in the way the men do and it’s hard to know what that’s all about because what is dangling of course are their breasts

Lydia:
See they’re a bit uncertain but they’ve got it together for this one

Russell:
Right this is the spa shot

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
Yeah okay

Lydia:
And this is a classic these are my two classics

Russell:
Right friendly friendly affection

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
Just happy to be posed

Lydia:
Yeah yeah so you’ve always got you know you

Russell:
Yeah you’ve got the glamour dykes you’ve kind of got what I call you know the serfs and peasants the happy dykes the happy Northcote suburban dykes um you’ve got your Westie chicks

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
Yeah um and then they’re probably maybe semi inner circle um a lot of it’s to do about the gaze as well in one sense

Russell:
Were you um as someone who was walking around with a camera were you very engaged by the ways in which the building was constructed so as to afford views

Lydia:
No no

Russell:
Did you feel it was underdeveloped in that respect

Lydia:
Well mixing the view mixing the two words view the view of the camera the invitation to them was to tell me what kind of photo they wanted how how how did they want to kind of shape the photo and if they were being a bit shy or whatever um I still think the nicest photo I took all evening was just um a pelvic shot of a couple because they’d had pearls around their waists and so there’s just these two hairy muffys with these pearls dangling and they were as happy as Larry to get that photo

Russell:
Mm

Lydia:
Yeah and you knew that was going to be on the fridge for ever and a day kind of thing um

Russell:
Did you take any photos that were full length where

Lydia:
Um

Russell:
The person’s entire form from their feet through to the top of their head was included
Lydia:
Can’t I couldn’t remember

Russell:
So getting the impression that a

Lot of them were if there was a negotiation
that was conversational initially that then
what followed up was that you weren’t very
far much more than say

Lydia:
Oh it was very close

Russell:
Arm’s length yeah

Lydia:
Yes but yeah I was eroticising their body

Russell:
Yeah yeah

Lydia:
and drawing attention to bits of their body so
it might be their neck or um

Russell:
Did decor play a part in any way

Lydia:
No it was completely

Russell:
The actual facilities in any

Lydia:
No

Russell:
way no

Lydia:
No

Russell:
II.i.31:00
the it was really centred on them

Lydia:
Right and what about lighting then

Russell:

Lydia:
Um

Russell:
Did you have a flash

Lydia:
Flash

Russell:
You had a flash so you provided your own
light

Lydia:
Absolut

Russell:
For ev the flash operated for every shot

Lydia:
Just about yeah

Russell:
Yeah yeah okay

Lydia:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
All right can we talk about um something
else now

Lydia:
Yes

Russell:
Okay

Lydia:
There you go

Russell:
And this is the last kind of sequence

Lydia:
I've used intemperate language because I don't like using words like natural and serf and peasant but it just kind of just shapes it quicker that's all

Russell:

I understand um and respect it um can I just run through a half a dozen words with you

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

and just any associations you have with these words and your um experiences um either on that particular night or at any other um similar nights you've been to the first word is clean

Lydia:

Oh I thought of the floors (she laughs a little) um

Russell:

Which floor

Lydia:

Oh I just started thinking about all the water

Russell:

Right

Lydia:

That's all

Russell:

So in the wet area floors in the wet area

Lydia:

Yes that and and and you know and water moving through the darker areas and all that kind of stuff um I remember the s as I said you know when we checked it out that day like the smell of disinfectant and that wiped down natural vinyl (I laugh a little) um the lounge I wouldn't call clean and stuff I'm sure that carpet could do with a good steam

but it's not like it was dirty it was just well worn yeah yeah mm

Russell:

But um as you say it may not have been dirty but you couldn't call it clean

Lydia:

No just

Russell:

Yeah

Lydia:

lived in

Russell:

Fine

Lydia:

But the beiges and stuff well why do you have beige it's a good colour to kind of look good kind of stuff

Russell:

Look good in

Lydia:

(indicating the floor) It's like this carpet

it's like you can wear you can it can have a lot of wear

Russell:

Yeah

Lydia:

without looking dirty

Russell:

Right mm hm

Lydia:

But no there's no sense that it was unclean if you know what I mean

Russell:

Yeah
Lydia:
Yeah though I do remember in the day of checking it out I did feel like you know always the joke about the hygiene queens kind of going through every morning and doing all the surfaces and swabbing it out and phenol everywhere you know kind of you knew that happened every day yeah

Russell:
Did you um

Lydia:
A bit like a pub really

Russell:
Ah right um did you clean yourself while you were there

Lydia:
Um

Russell:
Did you have a shower for instance

Lydia:

Russell:
Ah it just suddenly occurred to me I was wondering about that

Lydia:
No

Russell:

Lydia:
All right but women were using the showers

Lydia:
Mmmmmmm yeah yeah isn’t that interesting the showers aren’t very present for me

Russell:
Oh that mm hm

Lydia:
Not very present at all

Russell:

Lydia:

Russell:
Can you describe where they were

Lydia:
No

Russell:
Right that’s that’s fine you is is it the case when you say they’re not very present that you can intellectually deduce that there must have been showers somewhere

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
but you actually have no

Lydia:
They’re gone I’ve got yeah

Russell:

Lydia:

Russell:
Right that’s that’s very useful for me thanks all right um the second word is dirty

Lydia:
Oh okay

Russell:

Lydia:
The sex products the the cubbyhole

Lydia:
Oh yeah

Lydia:
because the sex products were so inappropriate um for the girls’ night

Russell:

Lydia:
What sex products were there
Lydia:
Oh like all the condoms and KY jelly and all that kind of stuff

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
And of course all the giggles about butt plugs and all that kind of stuff

Russell:
Were there butt plugs present

Lydia:
(she squeals) Aaaaaaaaaaa kind of what’s that

Russell:
Were there butt plugs present

Lydia:
Um I seem to remember there was a display board. I could be making this up

Russell:
All right but was that like for things for sale

Lydia:
Things

Russell:
or things that were available for within reach in the way the condoms and KY

Lydia:
No for s for sale

Russell:
Were the condoms available in reach or were they for sale

Lydia:
No I think they were for sale

Russell:
Right okay

Lydia:
back then

Russell:
Yeah

Lydia:
Cos it was if if I remember it’s like it was off it was quite off to one side

Russell:
In the upstairs lounge area

Lydia:
Yeah yeah

Russell:
I mean those things are now the lubricants and the condoms are distributed throughout the whole building

Lydia:
Through the space yeah

Russell:
There are little dispensers everywhere

Lydia:
Okay

Russell:
for that yeah which are quite widespread

Lydia:
Yeah it wasn’t back then

Russell:
Right

Lydia:
And I can just remember like it was like dirty in terms of Benny Hill or
kind of seaside postcards dirty because it's like that was the biggest sign that sex was meant to happen in the place (she laughs a little) kind of which I thought was kind of pretty amusing

Russell:

So these condoms and lubricant were in display cases or on display boards of some kind

Lydia:

Oh display boards or on shelves or something

Russell:

Yeah yeah

Lydia:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

And they were attracting attention

Lydia:

Well it yeah or I can just remember thinking it was pretty funny

Russell:

II.i.37:30

Were there any um toys or um technological aids out for the women

Lydia:

There migh oh no no no no no no no no no no no no no no

Russell:

That's a no I take it (I laugh)

Lydia:

No no no [unintelligible] um remember you know that was at the time where is [sic] it was very wild to you know carry a pair of handcuffs around

Russell:

Right

Lydia:

II.i.38:00

and if you were a caring dyke then you know (lisping) have lambskin on the inside

Russell:

(I laugh) And now how many did you actually know who had lambskin on the inside of their handcuffs I have to pin you down on this

Lydia:

Well probably not at the night but Ms Z at one of her birthday parties very proudly showed off her kind of

Russell:

Okay

Lydia:

Yes

Russell:

Okay

II.i.38:30

all right um

Lydia:

A frightening concept

Russell:

So dirty is actually to do with

Lydia:

It's very schoolboy humour response I'm sorry

Russell:

No no no it's just whatever the response is yeah so it had to do with things to do with sexual activity

Lydia:

Um

Russell:

In summary

II.i.39:00

or

Lydia:
No I think I’m doing that like nudge nudge wink wink dirty because it’s like it was the evidence of the condoms and the KY which you know and the pictures of rippling kind of boys you know San Francisco blondes or whatever which was your only indicator that sex was meant to happen here

Russell:

Right

Lydia:

Yeah so that’s you know in terms of it no there is no sense of it

physically being dirty or anything like that so when you say dirty to me it’s and I think it’s about the awkwardness of of the occupation anyway and I’m so aware that this is like really changed I was keep think I keep thinking how much dance party culture and E and all that kind of stuff has just busted all that kind of awkwardness of touching you know the couch

phenomenon you know who needs a steam bath (I laugh a little) when um

Russell:

(laughing a little) there’s a couch

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

I’ll go onto another word private

Lydia:

Isn’t it interesting because it’s like I don’t think of any of the I don’t think of any of the spaces being private

and I don’t think of any of the activity being private because it’s all about displaying that one is being active so I don’t see it as being private and we’ve just talked about that kind of thing about with it it being within a community and a and a scene of semi knowing yeah my sense of it’s not private in the way that you can

go overseas and be private no one knows you or

Russell:

So are you talking in the sense of private there in the sense that it’s like um um something secretive or something unknown

Lydia:

No I think I’m talking about it in a sense that everyone wanted to talk about what they were doing

Russell:

Right

Lydia:

Or wanted it to be known so you know it’s like these announcements about yes I’ve had sex with my girlfriend (emphatically) see I’ve been sexual in a public space ah

Russell:

But with my girlfriend (Lydia laughs a little) right

Lydia:

Um

Russell:

Do you recall someone making a statement like that

Lydia:

Oh yeah

Russell:

Do you was their girlfriend standing beside them when they

Lydia:

Oh possibly yeah

Russell:

But you’re not

II.i.42:00

so sure about that

Lydia:

I’m sure Ms C kind of took a bottle of champagne and you know and well we’re off to the cubicle now you know like it’s there’s nothing kind of priv you know
Russell:
But they went off to a cubicle all the same

Lydia:
Yes mm

Russell:
So the cubicle in a sense wasn’t private because it was being its um contents or its interior was being disclosed in speech

Lydia:
Yeah it was like pe you know like

Russell:
As were you would you say then that in a funny way you felt that you knew all there was to know about what occurred that evening

Lydia:
No because I’m I once again there’s that thing about the inner circle and the court and I’m sure that there were lots of people I didn’t know who took hopes and aspirations and had been probably hoping that some girl would turn up and all of that. That kind of stuff would have been there um

Russell:
So there were private realms for individuals

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
But but as far as the building was concerned privacy really wasn’t the case

Lydia:
No I don’t yes the way it was used that night

Russell:
Right

Lydia:
Yeah see it’s not it’s not the it’s not the problem of the form of the building it’s the way in which the people used that space

Russell:
Did the building feel private in relation to the street

Lydia:
Oh yes always always

Russell:
Were you did you have a consciousness of

Lydia:
With the world within itself it [sic]

Russell:
people are working out walking up and down the street outside there and they have no idea what’s going on in here or

Lydia:
No it probably didn’t occur to me

Russell:
Right right

Lydia:
Yeah

Russell:
Is that because you had no idea of the street

Lydia:
No that wa

Russell:
no that no it’s it’s about the enclosure of that space that once you’re in it that is the world

Lydia:
Right mm hm
Lydia: Like casinos

Russell: Mm hm (I laugh a little)

Lydia: There is no other world yeah

Russell: Yeah I understand that um the word public is another word

Lydia: II.i.45:00 Mm public mm Ladies Night events were like a public service and stuff so that the instinct behind them was in a sense to make visible lesbians

Russell: Right

Lydia: So the event was public II.i.45:30 yeah in terms of the space no I’m (a silence) because see all the spaces were used to apart from (she lowers her voice) the heavy duty room (she reverts to her usual voice) yeah which was like the hypothalamus of the event um II.i.46:00 but even then there’s like there’s a prurient curiosity to know who’s gone down that corridor who’s coming back from that corridor yeah yeah this great hope that it’s being used kind of (she gasps, then puts on a voice) we’re in a place where someone’s in the heavy duty room woohoo (she reverts to her usual voice) kind of thing mm (a silence)

Russell: II.i.46:30 Second last word safe

Lydia: The physical surrounds are very safe at the building and I’m sure the women in it felt physically safe whether they felt emotionally safe or II.i.47:00 status safe is another question

Russell: What about you did you feel physically safe emotionally safe status safe

Lydia: Oh yeah I’d [?] go into jobby mode

Russell: Because you were

Lydia: I ascribed [ascibe?] myself a role I was thinking more when you were asking you know when you said what was the Hugh Hefner bunny it’s like it’s a form of maitre de II.i.47:30

Russell: Yep so there’s a controlling dimension to it

Lydia: Um no isn’t a maitre de about ensuring you have the best experience possible that’s what good maitre de-s should do II.i.47:50

Russell: But in but that’s ensured in respects by exercising certain powers

Lydia: Yes yeah

Russell: Even if it’s a very light hand on the rudder

Lydia: Yeah yeah

Russell: II.i.48:00 it’s nevertheless a hand on the rudder

Lydia: Yeah though I was actually hoping that they’d get their hands on one another
Russell:

(laughing a little) Well it doesn’t sound like there were any rudders provided for the evening so um

Lydia:

Oh there was probably you know a couple of adventurous ones who had their strap-ons

Russell:

Did you see any

Lydia:

Um oh not worn publicly

Russell:

Oh that word public (laughing a little) comes up again

Lydia:

II.i.48:30
Yeah (laughing a little) you know no no not at not at that time

Russell:

Fine

Lydia:

would there be any walking around with a strap-on on

Russell:

By strap-on just to be absolutely clear we’re talking about a strap-on dildo

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

Yeah okay yeah

Lydia:

No there were no fantastic dick with chicks chicks with dicks moment [sic]

Russell:

Um

Lydia:

II.i.49:00
Oh there might have been in bags and rummaging and (she squeals) ahhhhhhhh kind of stuff but not on I’m sure you know there were some packing as the phrase goes

Russell:

You said the building was safe and I’m aware that you’ve already talked about an indifference regarding the heavy duty room II.i.49:30 and also um a belief that um there wasn’t any person there who you expected would be able to top you was the heavy duty room a safe place in the building given that you’ve still made all those comments

Lydia:

II.i.50:00
Yeah um

it’s probably safe once you got in it it was probably the danger was getting to and from

Russell:

What was that pathway that to and from pathway you you a few moment ago you said that corridor

Lydia:

II.i.50:30
Oh the stairs downs [sic] the lounge room the stairs down the at the top of near the top of the stairs

Russell:

Yeah

Lydia:

is the corr was the corri I corr the corridor

Russell:

Yeah

Lydia:

to the heavy duty room

Russell:

Right okay and how long was this corridor
Lydia:

Oh

Russell:

And the I ask this by the way as a real question because the

Lydia:

Probably no longer than from here to the kitchen wall

Russell:

The building has changed okay from there to the kitchen wall which is about what four or five metres

Lydia:

But and and once you were in it but it it's the entry it was see

Russell:

Yeah the room nothing wrong with the room

Lydia:

The real the real risk would have been going into the corridor

Russell:

Because of

Lydia:

Um

Russell:

What what was the risk involved

Lydia:

There was a prurient interest to see who was going there and who wasn't

Russell:

Right

Lydia:

Well no a prurient interest into who was going there

Russell:

So were you watching people watching the corridor or were you watching the corridor

Lydia:

It was an awareness it was an awareness in the lounge room but

Russell:

Right right

Lydia:

you see

Russell:

So it would the choice would not necessarily be one about concealing one's entry into the corridor it could be about wanting to make sure that one's entry into the corridor was noted

Lydia:

Yeah or yeah and I mean I may have it wrong but my sense would be that it was only inner sanctum that used it

Russell:

Right okay

Lydia:

No serfs and peasants would have used it

Russell:

Okay

Lydia:

What I what I kind of started thinking about when we were just talking then is that see the whole whole thing about people using the space is still within a in a s within a social network because there's too many social relationships

Russell:

Okay

Lydia:

going on in terms of known social relationships there's too much there's too many known people
Russell:
So do you recall anyone from that evening who was someone you didn’t know do you recall now years later
Lydia:
Oh yes
Russell:
Yeah
Lydia:
there were plenty in the room but they’re all buddied
Russell:
Right
Lydia:
So they’re still always in the I would doubt I’m going to go out on a limb here
I could tell you stories (I laugh a little) but um of ah people arriving in groups let me think I can vividly describe a group of five arriving on one occasion and it I’ve got
Lydia:
Does that then change the dynamic
Russell:
Of what occurs at the venue (this is a question)
Lydia:
Yeah
Russell:
Um in this case it did because it was a smaller venue it wasn’t at Volcano it was another venue which was smaller and having five people arrive um there would have been rough estimate um if I was told there were fifty people in the building I’d be surprised that that would sound to be um that would seem to be a large number so having five arrive in a group
Lydia:
Yeah
Russell:
They were all youthful and all um very animated and very um very they paid attention to grooming and that was evident in their clothes as they arrived as much as anything else but it was pretty clear that some of them were using skin care products I would say um that changed
Lydia:
Yeah
Russell:
Well that’s an interesting question because in fact it does happen and it happens significantly
Lydia:
Yeah
Russell:
It particularly while they were in a pack and then at a certain point they made decisions about splitting up I don’t know how they made those decisions but it was clear that those decisions were made and once they made those decisions it was on
Lydia:
Okay
Russell:
Like there was um a feeding frenzy
Frenzy:
Lydia:
Russell:
However it wasn’t *(laughing a little)* necessarily of the type I mean they were the feeders
Lydia:
Yeah
Russell:
It was it was um like one of those vampire scenarios
Lydia:
Okay
Russell:
where everybody thinks they’ve found innocent victims or something
Lydia:
Yeah
Russell:
and then they turn out to be the monsters
Lydia:
Was they [sic] but was that their strength was that because they were in the pack they had that power
Russell:
Um one of the things they brought into the building was chatter and noise and which wasn’t there and it marked

*Il.56:00*

it changed the energy it created a dynamic around them because wherever they went there was this noise they were talking constantly from the moment they arrived until such times as they split up but whenever they bumped into each other they would immediately chat ah again but there was a cacophony with them
Lydia:
Okay
Russell:
There was a sense without seeing them that an event was underway of some sort
Lydia:
Okay okay
Russell:
But having described um in de in part one such incident yes I can tell you that um people do often clearly arrive ah with a friend or otherwise and indeed some saunas advertise what they call buddies nights
Lydia:
Yes I yeah
Russell:
where it is cheaper for people to arrive with someone although whether or not they’re just *(laughing a little)* waiting for someone out the front
Lydia:
Yeah yeah
Russell:
I don’t

*Il.57:00*

know but
Lydia:
Yeah
Russell:
that does happen
Lydia:
Was it happening about ten years ago
Russell:
Um I have spoken with people who have reported that um

**Lydia:**
I’m well mm

**Russell:**
Now I the after party thing like a recovery

**Lydia:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
as an option and that a sauna um as being an option either after a recovery or indeed as a recovery

**Lydia:**

### II.i.57:30
Recovery

**Russell:**
So that in the days before recoveries took off

**Lydia:**
Off yeah

**Russell:**
I would presume saunas were places that people went to and I have um er in interview in at least one interview a person who was extremely experienced in sauna going a career going back into the eighties

**Lydia:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
Um talked about how it would be quite common for he and friends

### II.i.58:00
to meet up at um saunas after parties or after an um just you know specific nights at clubs

**Lydia:**
Yeah

**Russell:**
How widespread that was I don’t know

**Lydia:**
No okay

**Russell:**
It was definitely something in his circle that occurred

**Lydia:**
Yeah yeah so it’s an it’s yeah

**Russell:**
That is a very different kind of testimony from testimony I’ve got from other people

**Lydia:**

### II.i.58:30
still think that I’ll go out on a limb and say that I would assume that very few women went by themselves

**Russell:**
Mm no I mean that from what you’ve been telling me it sounds like it would be um a big thing for that to occur

**Lydia:**

### II.i.59:00
Mm mm and these of course because they were one off events were really planned and outfits would have been considered and all kinds of stuff yeah

**Russell:**
My last word is dangerous

**Lydia:**
Yeah I was waiting for that one um (she laughs a little) and I want to say water on the floor (she laughs) in terms of you know accidents um

**Russell:**
Now are you saying that because you saw people

### II.i.59:30
slip

**Lydia:**
No I'm just I'm just being naughty because see I didn't

Russell:
You didn't what

Lydia:
I didn't think it was dangerous

Russell:
Mm you did say a moment ago that you felt the building was safe

Lydia:
Mm

Russell:
But then you instantly talk about water on the floor

Lydia:
Mm maybe because it's like I'm kind of having to hunt really um

Russell:
Well

Lydia:
I think it was probably dangerous

Russell:
Right

Lydia:
That yeah think yeah I think some would have felt very liberated

Russell:
Mm

Lydia:
Mm um even by appearing naked or or whatever that would have been so

Russell:
I do kind of think that all the people there in some way were at a potential risk that the b that it wasn't dangerous but they were at a risk of some kind of acceptance or desirability or lusting for someone or going and trying something and yeah yeah

Russell:
You said all of the people there were at some kind of risk at some degree is that correct

Lydia:
Yeah I did

Russell:
Does that include you

Lydia:
Um (a silence) yes probably because of my denial of the kind of heavy stuff in terms of (she blows an exhalation) phhhhh because in one sense (a silence) what do I think about that (a silence) at that time I (a

Russell:
(a silence) mm the risk was always the risk was (a silence)

Lydia:
I keep remembering the woman at the dance party

Russell:
Right

Lydia:
and the risk you know outside of those environments I've created some kind of interesting things for myself (a silence)

Russell:
Can I ask did the dance party incident precede or follow

Lydia:
I can't remember
Russell:

But it was so is that because they were probably around about the same period

Lydia:

They were probably when I was still within those interests

Russell:

Yeah okay

Lydia:

Mm (a silence)

Russell:

II.i.64:00

So when you talk about that talent now as that night began you didn’t know whether someone would emerge

Lydia:

Um

II.i.64:30

oh one’s always got an eye out for talent

Russell:

(I laugh) Well one may have but I (we laugh) but um my question still stands like that if you’re not going into the heavy duty area was it the case that you were

II.i.65:00

insofar whatever that small degree was that you felt the possibility of risk was it the case that the heavy duty area could come to you

Lydia:

Open that up more

Russell:

Was it the case when you talk about a sense of talent out there that before the evening began

Lydia:

Oh but

Russell:

that you were you did not know whether

II.i.65:30

in one of the other parts of the building you would encounter a woman um of the order of the woman at the dance party

Lydia:

Yeah

Russell:

I’m sorry was that yeah an affirmation that you understood the question

Lydia:

No

Russell:

or an answer to the question

Lydia:

No the risk wasn’t on that level

II.i.66:00

the risk was possibly the the working with the suburban dykes in the way I chose to you know which is what a lot of my kind of performance stuff is is like or you know installations where if no one (laughing a little) kind of feels sort of well whoops there’s no work um so the risk was probably more on the the task I had

II.i.66:30

set myself with that that’s where I was really risking myself there was no kind of desiring or sexual risk really yeah yeah and I wouldn’t have actually taken an expectation see the woman the woman at the dance party was because it she was completely unknown and she targeted me you know she was like Star Trek kind of tractor beam (I laugh a little)

II.i.67:00

yeah yeah where you know where you’re stalked and they get your number and that’s very rare kind of thing because it’s not about physical risk it’s about intellectual and emotional risk bodies are bodies really and that they are they’re just

II.i.67:30

a sack of fluid it’s the risk of one’s consciousness and identity which is what is the powerful thing

Russell:

(a silence) Did you have any thought about ways in which the venue could be rendered more interesting

Lydia:
II.i.68:00
I immediately think of the exploratorium they've got this dome which disorients it's a kind of non-Euclidean space and

Russell:
This you've experienced in another location

Lydia:
No I've read about it and I've talked to people who've been in it I think the removal of other senses or I was also just thinking of

for (a silence) there's nothing generous about the surfaces I think I talked about the the materials are all kind of utilitarian and we all know that's to do with kind of maintenance and operations but it's a bit there's nothing kind of decadent about the space um

Russell:
In the sense of opulent

Lydia:
Yeah it's kind well no

Russell:
Or in the sense of decay

Lydia:
Or in the sense of plushness or

Russell:
Right

Lydia:
I'll tell you a like you know this it's about sort of the range of props or something and props aren't always sex toys so um recently going to Queenscliff with

my current partner staying in the Ozone Hotel and it's got a classic fucking crappy um cast iron bed but because it's a bed head with bars there's a whole other set of possibility which the modern bed doesn't provide one and so all of a sudden you the the prop of the bed and

there's a whole set of kind of whatever that goes with that is all of that infuses one in etcetera etcetera whereas you know the modern bed um and bed heads and all that kind of stuff you know the it has the yeah just kind of leverage and pulling and all kinds of things is just not there so that's

in terms of making the space interesting um it doesn't you see isn't that why you go to parks because the space is actually dangerous so that in terms of danger I don't believe because

you know there's danger of discovery and doing something in a place that's not ascribed for the doing so I'm not sure that a constructed space can ever have the same kind of danger it's a it's a false it's a false it's a false public space um so therefore I think you know okay so it's a false public

so what kind of interior mise en scenes could be kind of created or something because in one sense I always feel that the steam house stuff is trying to kind of replicate the back alley um and there's a whole range of odours and all kinds of grubbiness that yeah you know so it's trying to replicate dirty and danger but it's not really dirty and dangerous and that's also why I get the giggles about it on

one level because you're sort of not really being dirty and dangerous I think it's probably more dangerous to pick up sailors down at Station Pier

Russell:
(laughing a little) Yes

Lydia:
kind of thing so it's a it's interesting because people think of them as wild spaces but they're not quite as wild as

Russell:
Did you think of them as wild spaces before you first went

Lydia:
Um oh yeah I think I probably did yeah

Russell:
And the experience of
Lydia:

But only from a Bette Midler kind of

Russell:

(laughing a little) Right (Lydia laughs) right okay

Lydia:

Yeah you know wild in the sense of a bit more (putting on a voice) where's the show (she laughs a little) kind of or or whatever not

II.i.73:00

only wild in terms of licentiousness but you know as I said (laughing a little) I walked into a suburban lounge room I've never quite recovered from that Russell (she laughs and I laugh a little) then I kind of think oh well it's it's poofs what else am I to expect you know (we laugh) everyone thinks they're wild and yeah no they're just all somebody's son (we laugh) yep

II.i.73:30

just want those terriers you know

Russell:

Yeah

Lydia:

Yeah yeah

Russell:

Let's leave it there

Lydia:

Yeah it's kind of funny (I laugh a little) it's funny

Russell:

Okay thanks

Lydia:

Yeah

II.i.73:46

(I switch off the minidisc recorder)

END OF CONVERSATION
appendix 32: Urdhvaretu II

The transcript documents a second conversation with Urdhvaretu recorded at my flat on a weekday afternoon. It was the last recording made for this project.

Russell:

II.i.00:00
Okay we’re recording (I settle into my seat) um the bulk of what I want to do is go over um a series of terms um not necessarily terms that you’ve used but terms that ah other people have used and maybe you touched on them as well and what I’m [sic] really like you to do

II.i.00:30
is just very um simply if you can associate them or let me know what your associations are with those terms and ah your experience of saunas so it might be something to do with ah a general

II.i.01:00
phenomenon that you’re aware of or it might be a particular ah sight or item of furniture it might be an an event you witnessed that happened on one occasion a story of some form whatever okay all right so the first word is clean

Urdhvaretu:

I think I did speak a little bit

II.i.01:30
about this the first time ah there I recall I had a thing about declining standards and the fact that the new sauna started out very clean and is less so now particularly in the ah the ah steam room some sense of a twenty-four hour steam room

II.i.02:00
with sweat and semen and things rotting quietly together over the months the years

Russell:

So you’re aware of that because of odour

Urdhvaretu:

I suppose it’s odour yes but it comes to the senses more as a kind of miasma I suppose the fact that the atmosphere in there is so thick and wet and heavy but odour basically yes

Russell:

II.i.02:30
Could that be just the frequency with which you’ve gone in there and sensations being dulled in some way

Urdhvaretu:

No because it works the in the other direction it gets worse with time

Russell:

Right (a silence) how long is it since you’ve been there

II.i.03:00
in that steam room

Urdhvaretu:

In the new one

Russell:

Mm

Urdhvaretu:

Er about a month I suppose

Russell:

And the last time you went did you spend much time in there

Urdhvaretu:

Um yes

Russell:

And when

Urdhvaretu:

I mean I don’t I don’t think that one has become filthy or anything

Russell:

Right

Urdhvaretu:

The one at the the one at um um Volcano

II.i.03:30
that seems to have crossed a line so that now whenever I’ve been in there which is not frequently it really stinks whereas the one at Squirt has just gone down a notch or two
Russell:
When you first went in there do you have any recollection of there being a kind of um transparency like was there a way in which it had no it was a completely pleasurable experience to stand in that space and so that in a sense you weren’t aware of anything like you talk about it going down a notch or two from what

Urdhvaretu:
Just from being new and not smelling bad at all

Russell:
Did it smell at all

Urdhvaretu:
Don’t remember I mean I suppose it must have smelt of something

Russell:
So was it an awareness of something noticeable emerging that distracted your attention or was it that there was a new smell (laughing a little) that then became an old smell

Urdhvaretu:
Yes I suppose

Russell:
The latter

Urdhvaretu:
Mm

Russell:
And was the new smell something you were conscious of

Urdhvaretu:
Mm

Russell:


Right can you try and describe something about that to me

Urdhvaretu:
About the smell

Russell:
The new smell

Urdhvaretu:
Mm oh some kind of human mildewy smell

Russell:
The new one

Urdhvaretu:
Mm

Russell:
And the old one then is

Urdhvaretu:
Well the old one isn’t is more an absence of a smell in a particular you know it’s using the word smell in the way we use it basically as a negative term to say that something smells um which is not the same the opposite of that is not to say that that somewhere is completely odourless it’s just that it doesn’t have an odour that impinges in a more or less unpleasant way

Russell:


As time has passed do you feel any change in the contact you have with surfaces in that room

Urdhvaretu:
No

Russell:
Right okay

Urdhvaretu:
Do you mean do I take plastic sheeting in or something

Russell:
No although I have seen people wear thongs not there but somewhere else no but the the surfaces seem unchanged

Urdhvaretu:
Mm

Russell:
Okay (a silence) I’ll ask you about the other word another word um dirty

Urdhvaretu:
(a silence) I suppose there’s the whole cleaning round that goes on

there with the person with the torch going around cleaning stains off the couches in the rooms um and the habit I suppose most people have when they go into a cubicle of just taking a moment to see whether the bench is clean or not

Russell:
When you say the couches in the rooms what are you referring to

Urdhvaretu:
The beds whatever you want to call them

Russell:
What do you call them

you’ve just used the term couch and the term bench within a short period of time of each other

Urdhvaretu:
Ah I suppose I don’t have a habit of naming them in general

Russell:
Right

Urdhvaretu:
Um

Russell:
Because you don’t often speak of them (this is a question)

Urdhvaretu:
Yes presumably and they’re more or less upholstered like a couch but arranged as a bed but fixed like a bench so that they have various attributes that could call forth a whole series of names

Russell:
In a sense are they unique in your experience these fixtures at saunas in the sense that they partake

of resemblances with other things but there’s no other thing in the rest of the world that’s precisely like them

Urdhvaretu:
I suppose so

Russell:
Pardon

Urdhvaretu:
I suppose so

Russell:
Yeah

Urdhvaretu:
And it doesn’t it’s a fairly trivial uniqueness I would think you know they don’t strike you as being unique things

Russell:
They don’t strike you as being unique things

Urdhvaretu:
No

Russell:

Mm

okay the um people moving around with torches you you specifically associate that with Squirt

Urdhvaretu:
Ah I presume everywhere has that
Russell:
But what’s your specific association that comes to mind

Urdhvaretu:
Um no everywhere that I’ve been

Russell:
Yeah

Urdhvaretu:
it’s been like that

Russell:
Do those people seem to vary from venue to venue in the way they move around with their torches doing their cleaning

Urdhvaretu:
Not that I’ve noticed

Russell:
Right okay does the effect they have on whatever’s happening around them vary from venue to venue

Urdhvaretu:
Not that I’ve noticed

Russell:
Does it have an effect on you when they come past

Urdhvaretu:
Mm yes I suppose I find it intrusive somewhat I would say

Russell:
What does it intrude on

Urdhvaretu:
(a silence) Er well I suppose the fact you’ve got someone there who’s clothed and is going about this business of this functional mechanical business of cleaning and you’re in a a separate world of activity from people who are slinking around in towels looking for sex

Russell:

(a silence)

II.i.11:00
So what’s intruded on then is that separate world of people slinking around in towels looking for sex (I laugh a little)

Urdhvaretu:
Mm

Russell:
Okay (a silence) um

Urdhvaretu:
And they’re fairly they have a discretion to them so they tend not to make eye contact with people I think they the torch is kept low

Russell:
When you say they tend not to make eye contact ah is that are you using that term because there are occasions where you’re aware they have made eye contact

Urdhvaretu:
No but presumably it happens sometimes

Russell:
Ah how do you come to presume that

Urdhvaretu:
II.i.12:00
By human inevitability

Russell:
That because they’re passing other people they will make contact inevitably on some occasion

Urdhvaretu:
I presume

Russell:
Yeah okay
Urdhvaretu:

Or if you actually got in their way in some way

Russell:

But your overriding awareness is of the reverse

Urdhvaretu:

Mm

Russell:

That they don’t make that contact

Urdhvaretu:

Mm

Russell:

What about um physical contact

Urdhvaretu:

Ah the same I suppose even less likely I would imagine

Russell:

Do do you find that if you’re in a constricted area and one of those people is coming by that you tend to move out of the way or do you expect that that person will move around you

II.i.13:00

or have you not been in a constricted area when such a person has come through

Urdhvaretu:

I suppose I’ve been in some degree of constriction (a silence) hard to say I don’t think it’s it’s not that different from passing another person in a towel in the corridor

II.i.13:30

ah I suppose on the one hand if they’re somewhere and they’re starting to clean in the cubicle I’m not going to be standing around outside the door of the cubicle I would tend to move away from the light

Russell:

(a silence) The light of the torch

Urdhvaretu:

(a silence) I suppose there’s a divide between

II.i.14:00

um er people who want to ah come in contact with someone go into a cubicle shut the door and have sex and then um the situation where people want to be watched having sex by leaving the door open um perhaps in a situation of full lighting and then a kind of intermediate thing where you’ve got

II.i.14:30

ah people in a semi-dark space having sex with each other where there’s a degree of visibility ah and a degree of publicness

Russell:

(a silence) What’s your association with private at an experiential level you’ve talked about an array

II.i.15:00

of behaviours there

Urdhvaretu:

(a silence) Mmmm I suppose I tend towards the private end of it

Russell:

Shutting the door

Urdhvaretu:

Mm

Russell:

Does that mean that the rest of the time forgive it if it’s too obvious that it’s less
private

Urdhvaretu:
The rest of the time

Russell:
Yeah when the door once you’re in inside one of those um are we talking about cubicles here

Urdhvaretu:
Mm

Russell:
Yeah okay with the door locked or just shut

Urdhvaretu:
It’s more or less the same thing

Russell:
Okay that the rest of the time other than that is less private

Urdhvaretu:
Yes I suppose

Russell:
Okay

Urdhvaretu:
I mean you’re in a you’re in a space with a group of other people visible to them as you move around

Russell:
You’re in a space with another person inside a locked cubicle too

Urdhvaretu:
Mm

Russell:
mostly

Urdhvaretu:
Mm sometimes by myself

Russell:
Yes sometimes

Urdhvaretu:
Sort of a rest

Russell:
You do that

Urdhvaretu:
Mm

Russell:
Okay

Urdhvaretu:
Lie down I would say

Russell:
Do you change the lighting when you go into a cubicle to rest

Urdhvaretu:
(a silence)

Russell:
Ah the tendency I think would be to turn it off

Urdhvaretu:
Do you keep your towel on or do you lie lay it down on the surface that you’re lying on

Urdhvaretu:
That would depend I might use it as a pillow if it’s cold I might use it as a miserable little blanket um I don’t think I would tend to lie on it

Russell:
Is it often cold

Urdhvaretu:
It varies

Russell:
From sauna to sauna or within saunas

**Urdhvaretu:**

*Ah within saunas from day to day I suppose it it must to some extent be dependent on my metabolism of the moment*

**Russell:**

*How*

**Urdhvaretu:**

*I might even say it tends to be cold there I think it's for me it's not quite warm enough*

**Russell:**

*(a silence)*

**II.i.18:30**

How long is it since your most recent visit to any sauna

**Urdhvaretu:**

*Mm *(a silence) ah it's been a while I think a month or something*

**Russell:**

*And when would on that occasion did you have a rest*

**Urdhvaretu:**

*Oh I don't know [unintelligible]*

**Russell:**

*Pardon*

**Urdhvaretu:**

**II.i.19:00**

*I have no idea*

**Russell:**

*You have no idea*

**Urdhvaretu:**

*I don’t retain knowledge like that*

**Russell:**

*So having a rest isn’t particularly special in visits it’s just something that would happen and it wouldn’t be particularly memorable to do that*

**Urdhvaretu:**

*(a silence)* 

**II.i.19:30**

Rests occur out of fatigue with being there

**Russell:**

*(a silence)* 

Would you be inclined to actually doze or sleep if you

**Urdhvaretu:**

*Don’t think I’ve ever done that*

**Russell:**

*You just lie down and rest*

**Urdhvaretu:**

*Mm mm*

**Russell:**

*What what do you do when you rest then you just lie there and stare at the ceiling or do you curl up in another position or*

**Urdhvaretu:**

*Ahhhhhhhh*

**II.i.20:00**

*hard to say I think that varies lying and curling seem two feasible options*

**Russell:**

*(a silence)*

*Do you think*

**Urdhvaretu:**

*Of course I always think*

**Russell:**

*(I laugh a little)*

**II.i.20:30**

*Um what I was thinking was do you slip into um a meditative practice of some sort or do you do you actually have a a practice you employ to rest or do you just basically keep yourself still for a while but are very active mentally*

**Urdhvaretu:**

*It’s more likely to be the latter I think I’m I’m going in there to remove myself temporarily from the environment of the sauna which has which can have a fatiguing quality to it*
II.i.21:00
so um you know I’m most likely to go to do that if I’ve been there for some while and I’m not getting anywhere so it’s it’s it’s a rest from a kind of traipsing basically around

Russell:
And you’d rather do that than say sit in a snack bar area or

Urdhvaretu:
Oh I never sit in the snack bar area

Russell:
Or that’s interesting you were very sure II.i.21:30 about that (I laugh a little) that’s a never that’s not a tend to

Urdhvaretu:
No no I never do that except in Squirt I’ve eaten there

Russell:
Oh yeah

Urdhvaretu:
Um

Russell:
What did you eat

Urdhvaretu:
Ah toasted sandwiches (putting on a voice) and a glass of red wine

Russell:
Oh wow

Urdhvaretu:
Um but that’s different because the ah bar area there is a cul-de-sac ah and it’s removed II.i.22:00 whereas at Squirt it’s too open

Russell:
Sorry you said Squirt was

Urdhvaretu:
Oh did I

Russell:
Yeah

Urdhvaretu:
No no I meant Volcano really

Russell:
Volcano

Urdhvaretu:
At Volcano it’s the subterranean cul-de-sac um

Russell:
Oh I know you mean the downstairs

Urdhvaretu:
Mm

Russell:
bar area

Urdhvaretu:
Oh that one yes

Russell:
The new one

Urdhvaretu:
Yes

Russell:
Yeah okay

Urdhvaretu:
Oh yeah no the upstairs area never sit there

Russell:
(I laugh a little) This is the one I think last time you referred to it in terms of its colour

Urdhvaretu:
Did I

II.i.22:30
Russell: Yeah I think you referred to a beige smear *(I laugh a little)*

Urdhvaretu: Well the whole thing is beige yeah the whole place is beige well

Russell: Okay but that downstairs area isn’t beige

Urdhvaretu: No no it’s dark anyway no it’s not it’s not um yes no that’s where I go

Russell: Yeah

Urdhvaretu: There’s something um I don’t like the that upstairs foyer bar area at *Volcano* and I don’t like the cafe area at

**II.i.23:00**

*Squirt* it’s too open and there’s just something about people sitting around in a cafe setting wearing towels *(we laugh a little)* that I don’t quite want to join

Russell: Um one of my other ah interviewees talked about ah a restaurant in a sauna he went to overseas which had waiter service *(Urdhvaretu laughs)* and in which people sat around in

**II.i.23:30**
towels in fact um there’s been a few of those somebody else told me about one in Canada and ah I went myself to one in Amsterdam which had a restaurant which men sat in in towels but it didn’t have waiter service *(a silence, then I laugh a little)* I suppose spilling food isn’t too much of a problem um

**II.i.24:00**
you never go to them but the cul-de-sac what makes the cul-de-sac more I mean you said that the other ones you don’t you don’t want like sitting around in them because it’s people sitting around in towels in some way

Urdhvaretu: Mm

Russell: But that still happens in the area that you have been to but you talked about it being a cul-de-sac as being an advantage

Urdhvaretu: Yes

Russell: Can you elaborate on that for me

Urdhvaretu: *(a silence)* Everyone who’s gone there has gone there for the same purpose that I have they’ve gone there to sit down and eat something or drink something and in the other places the non-cul-de-sac parts there are people passing by and there are often there people who are coming and going from the

**II.i.24:30**

*(a silence)* Everyone who’s gone there has gone there for the same purpose that I have they’ve gone there to sit down and eat something or drink something and in the other places the non-cul-de-sac parts there are people passing by and there are often there people who are coming and going from the

**II.i.25:00**
sauna they’re clothed *(a silence)* mm there’s something about that I don’t like it’s I suppose it’s also well it’s like *(a silence)* I’ve never liked take away food restaurants with

**II.i.25:30**
glass walls everywhere I don’t like to feel on display when I’m eating I loathe it in fact *(I laugh a little)* cos there are some restaurants that are arranged that have windows that are somehow arranged to give you a view out and there are other ones where it’s the reverse somehow

**II.i.26:00**
the restaurant is designed to show you to people outside as a kind of advertisement

Russell: Um in this downstairs eating area at Volcano there’s no windows

Urdhvaretu: No

Russell: Where are you inclined where do you tend to sit when you eat there on however many occasions you’ve eaten

**II.i.26:30**
there
Ah

Russell:
At the bar

Urdhvaretu:
No

Russell:
At one of the little tables

Urdhvaretu:
Preferably not

Russell:
In one of the lounge seats

Urdhvaretu:
That's more likely or against there's a little bench bar strip along the wall as you come in and I might go down the far end of that

Russell:
Far end away from the entrance

Urdhvaretu:
Mm

Russell:
Mm hm

Urdhvaretu:
Mm I think I would sit on a barstool

Russell:
Right okay

Urdhvaretu:
But I can tell from particular particularness with which I choose where I sit that I'm not entirely happy to be there (a silence) like I would feel exposed

Russell: (a silence) Another word I want to ask you about is the word public

Urdhvaretu:
(a silence)

II.i.28:00
Mm I don’t quite know what to say now

Russell:
(a silence) I can wait (we laugh a little)

Urdhvaretu:
Well I mean (a silence) I can’t think of anything that particularly interests me about that word in relation to saunas

Russell:
Any associations you have between that word and saunas or is it for you just another way of saying talking about private

Urdhvaretu:
(a silence) Yes I suppose

Russell:
(a silence)

II.i.29:00
All right I'll go on to another word safe

Urdhvaretu:
(a silence) I've always felt safe in saunas I think ah my friend always has a fantasy about someone running around with a knife

II.i.29:30
and there was actually someone there is some psychopathic person who goes to ah Squirt and has been hitting people or something and ah cos [of course?] my friend went there the other day and he arrived and there are alarm bells going and this man had got in again I think there was some new staff member that didn’t know him and he’d been beating people up in some way and they’d called the police in there and they were just waiting for the police to come

Russell:
And were there

II.i.30:00
literally alarm bells going

Urdhvaretu:
Mm mm which is curious to think about I don’t quite why [sic] the alarm bells are doing they’re just warning everyone there or are they to intimidate the person

Russell:

Did your friend still go into the building

Urdhvaretu:

No (he laughs)

Russell:

He reversed and left

Urdhvaretu:

Yes

Russell:

That’s interesting so they called the

Urdhvaretu:

The police were on the way

Russell:

The police were on the way

Urdhvaretu:

Yeah and this the man had been there had done this before

Russell:

but I don’t have any sense of ah um how serious the injuries were or what actually what happened or where

Russell:

Do you find that reassuring that the police would be called in such a circumstance

Urdhvaretu:

(a silence) I suppose so ah

Russell:

I mean a question about that sort of thing would be I mean by the time the police are called you know they’re not it’s going to take them some length of time to come so it’s in a way it’s more crucial what happens before the police are called rather than whether whether or not they’re not they’re called and you know it might just be I can imagine that it would be the

Russell:

By the staff or by

Urdhvaretu:

By or

Russell:

everyone

Urdhvaretu:

By everyone I suppose I don’t know

Russell:

One I mean

II.i.32:00 cos one of the things that I think about when I think about Squirt is that there’s a kind of a ah a performance of professionalism that’s a I know it’s a bit daggy to say but that’s how I guess I fundamentally understand it a performance of professionalism

Urdhvaretu:

By the staff (this is a question)

Russell:

that the staff offer a certain kind of um ah service

II.i.32:30 industry familiarity but also a certain display of competence and of distance as well of um like there are a whole number of staff there who never seem to smile but who are polite um and one of the ah things when you say that they called the police is instantly one of the things that comes to

Russell:

mind for me about that is oh they’re very professional there so when I was asking you if you found it reassuring I guess I was fishing to find out whether your feelings about it were similar to mine because I would find it reassuring that they called the police the other thing is I’m aware because I’ve done service industry work

II.i.33:30
that when police are connected to an alarm um they usually have minimum guaranteed times of arriving and that amount of time is actually usually less than five minutes

Urdhvaretu:
Right
Russell:
if it’s um if it’s a particular kind of an alarm

Urdhvaretu:
Right
Russell:
Um where I’ve worked there’ve been silent alarms but that’s been you know completely different kind of situation like cinemas a few cinemas I’ve been in which have had silent alarms like that

Urdhvaretu:
For situations of violence by a patron or
Russell:
Yeah real like substantial violence uncontrollable um a threat of robbery is one obvious one

Urdhvaretu:
Right
Russell:
A threat of

II.i.34:30 robbery with violence but um a violent situation out of control um mm that’s interesting too because recently somebody I met someone ah at Squirt at a very odd hour of the day who’d just left Volcano because their fire alarm had gone off and they couldn’t switch it off it was

II.i.35:00 very wet weather and the they were unable to switch it off and what they did was they decided under those circumstances to ask everyone to leave and give them a free re-entry pass-out thing for some other occasion um but they found that having the bell going meant that the sauna became intolerable for people to be in (a silence)

II.i.35:30 let’s go back to the nonexistent psychopath with the knife though (I laugh a little) um

Urdhvaretu:
There is a a conventional opposition between saunas and beats in the sense that
Russell:
Is that conventional for you

II.i.34:00

Urdhvaretu:
What does that mean conventional to me
Russell:
Well con a convention would seem to suggest some

II.i.36:00 social phenomenon

Urdhvaretu:
Yes or I mean it a general awareness something that is easily cited by people
Russell:
And that opposition is to do with

Urdhvaretu:
A notion that gay bashing is more likely to occur at a beat and not in a sauna
Russell:
II.i.36:30 Is that um given that that’s a convention an announced belief is that a is that what the convention is like people saying such things
Urdhvaretu:
Yes it’s an idea you meet

Russell:
Okay so given that

Urdhvaretu:
(a silence) I’ve never been a beat person and I don’t think

Russell:
That doesn’t change the question in some way because for instance is it possible that you’ve never been a beat person partly because

Urdhvaretu:

Because I’m afraid of being beaten up and everything

Russell:
Yeah

Urdhvaretu:
Ah I don’t think that would be the primary explanation

Russell:
Fine

Urdhvaretu:
for it so it’s hard to know how whether that figures or not

Russell:
Um the psychopath with the knife I know it was an offhand remark

Urdhvaretu:
but it wasn’t like a psychopath with a gun (I laugh a little) or something like that I mean where where did you get that image from

Urdhvaretu:
It’s my friend’s image

Russell:
It’s your friend’s image you don’t have one

Urdhvaretu:
I don’t I suppose if he said it to me then I have the image so

Russell:
Okay no that’s fine um I was I was at Volcano once

Urdhvaretu:
ah on a very quiet occasion and I went downstairs to the area where the wet area and then that circuit is around by all the cubicles and I realised within a few minutes that I was the only person in the whole area um there was not a single other person there every door was open and it suddenly seemed very brightly lit and I got very scared and left (I laugh a little)

Russell:
I felt quite frightened and I don’t know exactly why mm um another word is dangerous

Urdhvaretu:
(a silence) I don’t think of them as dangerous places I don’t recall ever feeling in danger there

Russell:
There’s no dangerous features of them or dangerous experiences

Urdhvaretu:
I suppose the one thing is I sometimes ah when I’m leaving have a I often have a kind of momentary imagination that I’ll be attacked as I’m leaving the building

Russell:
Is that any sauna in particular or just generally

Urdhvaretu:
(a silence)

Russell:
Ah it applies to both I think

Urdhvaretu:
Both of the saunas in the city
Both of the saunas that I go to and so I'm I think I'm quite aware of the kind of ah the transition from being inside and going out and the other way too I think but less so or something

Russell:
Is that based on any II.i.40:30
experience

Urdhvaretu:
No

Russell:
of any kind

Urdhvaretu:
No

Russell:
Okay it's just a watchfulness

Urdhvaretu:
(a silence) Yeah I suppose yes

Russell:
Does it vary according to the time of day

Urdhvaretu:
Not so far as I know

Russell:
II.i.41:00
(a silence) How o when you go through the door can you recall any specific occasion of actually moving through the door of either of those back onto the street

Urdhvaretu:
Any specific occasion

Russell:
Yeah

Urdhvaretu:
II.i.41:30
(a silence) The word specific is a little tricky because it's the same thing every time virtually

Russell:
It is it

Urdhvaretu:
More or less yes

Russell:
Yeah so what is it then that happens

Urdhvaretu:
What is it that happens

Russell:
Yeah what do you do when you leave the sauna and go back onto the street

Urdhvaretu:
I cr I cross the threshold and as I cross the threshold I have a II.i.42:00
( a little game I think it's not a real fear and that's why I hesitated and about your use of the word watchfulness

Russell:
Right it's more like a little game

Urdhvaretu:
I think it's like a little game

Russell:
Okay um when you say crossing the threshold II.i.42:30
at Squirt that would seem to be relatively clear there's a door and one side you're on in the building and on the other side you're literally on the street that's correct I think am I correct in my recollection does that or does it match yours

Urdhvaretu:
Yes except that in both for both saunas there are of course two doors there's the inner door and the outer door

Russell:
Yeah I before we get on II.i.43:00
to that though but at Volcano there’s those swing doors and then there’s a small covered vestibule as I recall it’s not immediately on the street on the other side of the swing door it’s like there’s about another metre or so is that

Urdhvaretu:
Are you talking about Volcano

Russell:
Volcano yeah that if I’m on the street I step up

Urdhvaretu:
Oh okay I see yes

Russell:
Then I think two steps and there’s like a small space of maybe a metre no more

Urdhvaretu:
Yes yes I see okay

Russell:
And then the doors

Urdhvaretu:
Yes

Russell:
So which threshold are you talk

Urdhvaretu:
One door

Russell:
Sure okay one door when you talk about the threshold at Volcano do you mean actually passing through the door or stepping onto the street

Urdhvaretu:
Um I was talking about Squirt um

Russell:

Urdhvaretu:
Yes I think it does ah (a silence) well if someone were to attack you in that situation they’d be hiding around the corner and so the crucial thing would be as you stepped into the street

Russell:
Right okay

Urdhvaretu:
So it’s only when you’re fully out that you become aware of you know the situation that that lies outside so it’s

Russell:
(a silence) Can you um you were going to tell me something about the in between area between the two doors

Urdhvaretu:
Ah yes because I could imagine being attacked there too or it’s like I think once you’re in front of the window then you’re safe you’re you’re kind of in the hands of the institution and then when you’re through the the inner door then you’re then you’re inside

Russell:
So you

Urdhvaretu:
Well it’s kind of it’s a it seems like a a gradual progression of being embraced by the institution and received by it

Russell:
The

Urdhvaretu:
are you aware of the presence of the video camera on the outer door at Squirt

Russell:
No is it outside

Urdhvaretu:
Yes there’s an exterior video camera aimed at the door
Urdhvaretu:
No I wasn’t aware of that

Russell:
That’s interesting it’s the first thing I noticed before they even opened when they were doing the renovations I was quite aware of that there um II.i.46:00
so you need to be in front of the window not where you can see the window even if it’s at an angle but actually in front of it to

Urdhvaretu:
When you say need

Russell:
Well in order to feel yes now I’m safer

Urdhvaretu:
Yes II.i.46:30
I suppose

Russell:
Okay what

Urdhvaretu:
I mean it does it does feel a bit like you know ah a child’s game and going to bed or something it’s like you know you’re safe when you’re under the sheets or something

Russell:
Did you did you play such games with yourself when you were a child

Urdhvaretu:
Not exact not exactly like that but II.i.47:00
it’s a very familiar way of thinking so there must be some things that came about

Russell:
Do you have other areas of your life where you think in those terms

Urdhvaretu:
I’m sure there are I can’t exactly bring them immediately to mind

Russell:
Um have you arrived II.i.47:30
at a venue and you’ve been in that in between area and there’s been a queue of people

Urdhvaretu:
Mm

Russell:
Does how does that affect you how is that different from when there’s no one waiting

Urdhvaretu:
II.i.48:00
(a silence) A different pattern takes over I think

Russell:
Different pattern of

Urdhvaretu:
You’re doing a different thing you’re waiting in a queue

Russell:
Do you have any interaction with the other men in the queue

Urdhvaretu:
Usually not [unintelligible]

Russell:
II.i.48:30
(a silence) Have you ever had to be in a queue to leave

Urdhvaretu:
(a silence) Yes queue doesn’t quite ah I suppose more familiar is the situation of there’s there’s an incoming queue II.i.49:00
and so you have to wait to get the attention of the man to receive your your key you’re not what so much aware of that at Squirt because the incomers are on the other side of the door but you are aware of it at Volcano

Russell:
Right because of the way

Urdhvaretu:

Mm

Russell:

Okay II.i.49:30

have you ever had a situation where you have been on your way out and changed your mind and gone back in

Urdhvaretu:

To the point of being fully dressed

Russell:

Yeah

Urdhvaretu:

No

Russell:

Have you ever made use of a pass-out

Urdhvaretu:

No

Russell:

You’re very clear II.i.50:00

about those answers other things you might say I suppose so or I tend to those answers they’re nos is that right

Urdhvaretu:

Mm

Russell:

Okay can you tell me a bit about that the clarity there

Urdhvaretu:

Ah well I suppose when the thing is done it’s done in some way and it’s often ah you know sometimes I will have been there for a long period of time and I’ve had enough of it um II.i.50:30

if I’d ever re-use one of those pass-out slips I’d remember so I mean that’s a kind of fact that I know in concrete terms and the idea of getting dressed and then deciding oh no I’m going to go back and get undressed again that also just seems highly unlikely normally by the time you know I suppose I feel I’ve committed myself by II.i.51:00

getting dressed there’s only so much dressing and undressing you can take in a single day

Russell:

How long is long time

Urdhvaretu:

A long time would be about five or six hours and I think that that’s that would be rare for me now II.i.51:30

I think

Russell:

What would a short time be

Urdhvaretu:

A

Russell:

As a short time

Urdhvaretu:

A short time would be

Russell:

That you’ve a that you can recall that you’ve been there a short time

Urdhvaretu:

Two hours I don’t in fact know that I’ve ever been there that short a time two and a half three hours

Russell:

II.i.52:00

And you seem you seem to be fairly clear that it’s very rare now for you to be at a place five or six hours um can you tell me a bit more about that that again that clarity

Urdhvaretu:

That would be determined by various external factors um the fact that I’m currently not
II.i.52:30
riding a bicycle so I’m travelling by tram um general need at the moment to get a lot of sleep so um I’m not in these past months going to be arriving at ten thirty and staying till four in the morning so I’m likely now to leave before midnight but I haven’t really been going

II.i.53:00
very much

Russell:
Mm no I’ve noted that

Urdhvaretu:
Um partly for the same reasons that I just my time has just been caught up with things um (a silence) and there’s something about staying there for five or six five or six hours which is costly you know it

II.i.53:30
almost invariably means that you know it seems like a waste of time on some level or at least unsatisfactory time

Russell:
Would six hours be the longest time you’ve ever stayed can you recall any occasion of staying longer

Urdhvaretu:
No not to say that I haven’t but it’s just

Russell:
You just don’t recall it

Urdhvaretu:
No I’m giving six hours as a general figure and

Russell:
II.i.54:00
Um

Urdhvaretu:
I’m sure I’ve never been I’ve never been there for eight hours [unintelligible] probably been there for six

Russell:
(a silence) I want to ask you about two other words which are paired um just paired in terms of me asking them but they may not

II.i.54:30
be in terms of you responding so um inside and outside but I’d prefer if you did deal with them one at a time

Urdhvaretu:
It seems to me we’ve we’ve covered this in some way already and I’m not sure what direction to take it which hasn’t already been dealt with

Russell:
II.i.55:00
(a silence) Well let me ask then you’ve talked a bit about the being inside the sauna is there an inside inside the sauna that you’re aware of or are there insides inside the sauna

Urdhvaretu:
II.i.55:30
There’s being in a cubicle and outside a cubicle or

Russell:
Are you asking me

Urdhvaretu:
Oh I’m saying

Russell:
Yeah yeah

Urdhvaretu:
that’s so

Russell:
Yeah okay

Urdhvaretu:
Obviously

Russell:
Do you understand the sauna as a place of interiors within in an interior

Urdhvaretu:
That seems a fair description

Russell:
II.i.56:00
It may be a fair description. I’m just wondering whether it’s something you identify as an experience you have (laughing a little) I don’t care really whether it’s a fair description is it something you experience.

Urdhvaretu:
Not to remark upon.

Russell:
Right, is it also a fair description to say that you have an experience?

II.i.56:30
of either being inside or outside not of levels of insideness (a silence) can I clarify it by saying for instance that you’re inside the sauna or you’re inside a cubicle or you’re inside a steam room but you’re not inside a cubicle inside a sauna inside a city.

II.i.57:00
for instance that you don’t have that um as an experiential awareness.

Urdhvaretu:
I don’t think so.

Russell:
Well, I wasn’t thinking so much of materiality I was thinking of something that’s not material but is nevertheless experienced as being inside something.

II.i.58:00
You mean a cultural framework or something.

Russell:
A scene.

Urdhvaretu:
A scene.

Russell:
Mm an event, participating IN an event being an insider at some level.

Urdhvaretu:
Not really.

II.i.58:30
er, (a silence) it doesn’t seem to be arranged to foster that kind of sense.

Russell:
Do you have any sense of being in a community.

Urdhvaretu:
No.
Russell:  
(a silence) You talked about the institution embracing you

Urdhvaretu:  
Mm

Russell:  
That’s not quite the building is it

Urdhvaretu:  
It’s the business

Russell:  
The business (I laugh a little) the business embracing you is that is are those words completely interchangeable

Urdhvaretu:  
Business and institution

Russell:  
Yeah in this context

Urdhvaretu:  
(a silence) Not completely interchangeable

Russell:  
I mean I wouldn’t talk about myself being embraced by a money making enterprise which is what it is that’s not what I mean when I that’s probably why I use the word institution I mean it’s [unintelligible]

Russell:  
So what is this institution that embraces you

Urdhvaretu:  
[unintelligible]

Russell:  
That as you experience it

Urdhvaretu:  
Yeah I suppose embrace was probably slightly too cozy a term ah you know it’s a place which is being run by a group of people it has doors there’s there’s one door ah where access is controlled um you know there are people who distribute towels and provide towel replacements and answer questions and not that they’re doing very much

Russell:  
But is that is that thing you’ve just described identical with the institution you talked about earlier

Urdhvaretu:  
Mm there is a very strong sense of being off the street when you’re there

Russell:  
you know it’s quite different from going into a shop or into a library or something partly to do with the fact you take your clothes off partly I suppose also it has a somewhat clandestine quality to it

Russell:  
Do you swim or go to a gym or something like that

Urdhvaretu:  
Swim

Russell:  
is it similar to that the experience of going swimming

Urdhvaretu:  
(a silence)

Russell:  
Somewhat (a silence) even though there are differences um a thing a thing at swimming pools seems to be that the people behind the counter have a duty to prevent people sneaking in and having illegal swims um (I laugh a little) ah while the and at the same time the door at the swimming pool that I go to doesn’t have the same finality to it it’s a sort of open space that you move through and as you go through it you er you know pay if you’re paying I get my swims for free now
Russell:
I’ll ask you about that in a minute um mm what about outside (a silence) do you have a strong experience of being outside when you’re at a sauna

Urdhvaretu:
When I’m just outside

Russell:
Just outside THE sauna is that what you’re asking

Urdhvaretu:
Mm

Russell:
Ah I was it was more free ranging than that

Urdhvaretu:

II.i.64:00
Um well as I’m sitting here I don’t have a sense that I’m outside a sauna (I laugh a little) but there is a there is I have a particular sense of as I’m nearing the sauna and I as I’m about to go through the door and I think I’m ah I wonder to myself if I’m being observed as I go through the door

Russell:

II.i.64:30
So I just need to go over this again you said a moment ago that as you’re sitting here you don’t have an experience of being outside the sauna

Urdhvaretu:
Yes

Russell:
Do you have an experience as you’re sitting here talking with me of being in some respects inside the sauna

Urdhvaretu:
No

Russell:
Right okay

Urdhvaretu:
No

Russell:
That’s that’s fine so outside isn’t just an opposite of inside

Urdhvaretu:
It depends what the word outside means doesn’t it if you mean that’s why that’s why I asked do you mean JUST outside because if you’re outside the sauna you’re standing outside and you’re for instance looking at the door you’re in the vicinity of it you’re nearly inside um or outside can just mean not in the sauna as a

Russell:
I’m thinking I’m thinking of the meaning that is most present

II.i.65:00
for you and it would seem that that could be it

Urdhvaretu:
Being just outside

Russell:
Yes

Urdhvaretu:
Yes

Russell:
Right that’s fine

Urdhvaretu:
Because there’s not much point talking about the other one

Russell:
(I laugh a little) Well for you there isn’t

Urdhvaretu:
Okay

Russell:
(I laugh, then) Um
Urdhvaretu:

Because I'm outside an infinity of places at the moment in the greater sense

Russell:

But do you experience them that way

Urdhvaretu:

I don't have the mental capacity to experience my externality from the plurality of institutions that I might go into at one time or another

Russell:

Do you have anything you want to ask me or say

Urdhvaretu:

Not really

Russell:

I'll leave it there

Urdhvaretu:

Okay

(I switch off the minidisc recorder)

END OF CONVERSATION