

## imagineTrains Interview, South Africa

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Interviewee: female teacher, 30

Interviewer: Max

Duration: 51 mins 36 secs

Interviewer (I): Thanks for agreeing to do this interview. This is primarily about your personal ideas and personal experiences with trains and train travel. Starting out, what are the first things that come to mind when you think about trains?

Interviewee (IEE): I like trains, I like riding trains. I think trains are very comfortable and convenient, especially in relation to buses and planes. So, of public transport I think I prefer trains the most. Yea, comfortable, convenient, and beautiful scenery.... There.

I: What else? I'm sure there are a lot more that comes to mind when you think of trains.

IEE: Yes, I think of train stations, I think of people, I think of movement, traveling, I think of all the things associated to traveling, people, movement. Especially train stations. I like train stations very much, I like how busy they are, I like seeing people, I like seeing people on the move so I like train stations and I like watching people on trains and things. I like the quietness about trains, trains are quiet. It's a quiet time, time to read, time to work, time to sleep – I like that.

I: What else?

IEE: What else? Mmm... Trains are different in different countries.

I: How?

IEE: Trains in Switzerland are very nice. They are very quiet, they are very clean, they are very efficient, they are very fast, they are very reliable. Trains in South Africa are not. Everything that Swiss trains are they're not. Trains in South Africa can be very dangerous, they are very unreliable, they're dirty. It's not something that you should use. Trains in Korea are very quiet, very plain but very fast. Trains are expensive, they don't come cheap. But you have a lot of comfort in trains so it's worth the price. It's better than walking. [laughs]

I: Take your time and think a little bit more about trains.

IEE: OK, I can tell you about where trains begin. Where did trains begin in my childhood? The first time I took a train I was twelve years old. Trains in South Africa was something white people didn't use. White people didn't use trains. Have you seen the movie *Tsotsi*? The opening scene in the movie *Tsotsi*, that is what trains were like when I was a child. It was very dangerous, you could die on a train. So, it was something I was never exposed to. And then, when I was twelve years old, my school had an outing where they hired a steam train. They picked us up in Amanzimtoti and all the children got on, crowded onto the train and the train followed the scenic route along the coast to Port Shepstone. And then, in Port Shepstone, we got off and we spent a couple of hours on the beach and we ate ice cream and then we took the steam train back. And it was fabulous, it was exhilarating. It was a hot summer's day and the windows were open and all the kids were hanging out the train windows. You could see the steam coming out of the locomotive and you could see the beach and it was wonderful. It was really wonderful because trains were something that I had read about in story books as a child but it as something that we never used because trains were dangerous. So my first trip on a train along the beach was like, it was like a fairytale because it was like everything I had always read about in books and I liked it very much.

And then the next time I took a train I was twenty-something and that was in Korea. In Korea they are very big on public transport. They have a very efficient train system and it's a very small country and that's the main way that you move between different cities. You could take a bus, but the best and the fastest and the most reliable way is to take the train. I used to take the train to go shopping at Costco, which was very exciting. Korean trains are very quiet. Koreans have an unspoken law about public transport. That is that you must always be very quiet and so trains are very quiet and they are very fast so you have the country speeding past you in the windows and everything is hushed and people sleep on trains in Korea so it's always fascinating to sit on the train and it's sleepy but it is fast. It's fast on the outside but sleepy and quiet on the inside. It's nice, it's nice.

I am very tall and trains are very spacious, they have lots of leg room so I like trains. So I started using trains regularly in Korea and I really liked it. On Korean trains, if you buy a table, so if you buy four seats, four tickets, they give you a table and then you get a discounted price as oppose to when you travel alone. So they encourage traveling with your friends, which is really nice. I took trains on the weekends to temples and mountains to go hiking in the mountains and that was very special. Taking trains into the mountains in Korea is very nice.

And now I take trains regularly in Europe. The first time I took the TGV from Basel to Paris was amazing. It's very convenient, it's very fast. You get on the train and before you've finished three chapters of your book you are there. It's amazing. But in Switzerland, having very nice

trains' means that you become very spoiled. So the last time I took a few trains in Paris I was shocked by the difference of the upkeep of trains.

I: What do you mean?

IEE: Well, um, in Switzerland, the trains are very clean, they are very well kept, like for example you wouldn't see graffiti, it wouldn't be dirty. And in Paris, the trains were dirty and there was graffiti everywhere. Sometimes the inside of the coach was damaged or torn apart and things like that. And that changes your experience of using the train very much you know. In Switzerland it's always nice, it's always comfy, you feel safe, you feel very relaxed. You know, you get on the train and you know it's a time when you can sleep or you can just relax, you can read or listen to music. It's a comfortable, quiet, safe space. But then the moment you get on a train and the environment is not so good anymore, so there's graffiti and the furniture's been damaged. You don't, you can't enter that comfy space of just relaxing because you feel that it could be dangerous or that there could be dangerous people around you. So then you can't enter the comfy train-space that I really like about trains.

I: Think about the very best memory that you have had on a train. Take your time and let me know when you have a beautiful memory.

IEE: Yes, OK.

I: OK. You have it in your head? Try to describe the memory with as much detail as possible and especially why it was so beautiful.

IEE: OK. I was on a train in Switzerland, first class. And this train coach had incredible windows. Windows that reached up to the roof, so not your normal square, rectangular windows. Windows that started from where your arms were and then went up, up, up so you had to twist your head to see the top. And it was very quiet. The train was very quiet, there were very few people there so it was very quiet. It was very nice, obviously because it was first class. But what made this really incredible was that the train was riding through the mountains, through the Alps, and it was snowing. And the world outside was as quiet as the world inside and that was the most incredible, magical world. Going through the mountains and everything was covered in snow, it was so beautiful. It is... I can't even describe it properly because I am an African and Africans don't know a world like that, they don't know a snowy, fairytale landscape. So it is just a fantasy land come true and to be in such a warm and quiet, comfortable space while being able to see this fairytale landscape is just magic. And we had snacks and we had coffee, and sandwiches, and pretzels, and I was with my husband, who I love very much and we were very happy and we were on our way to go sledding, actually, and it is just this beautiful memory of a

very enchanting landscape through these giant windows zooming through the mountains in a very fancy train.

I: Ok, now think of your worst memory on a train. Take your time...

IEE: Could it be about a train station? Does it have to be about a train because I have some hairy train station encounters. [laughs]

I: Preferably about trains. (13:05)

IEE: Ok, about a train. Let me think. Let me think.... The most recent bad experience that I've had is what comes to mind. I don't know if it is the worst but it stands out because it is the most recent and it was when I actually feared for my personal safety on a train.

I: Can you describe that with as much detail as possible focusing in particular about why it was so bad.

IEE: OK. I was visiting a friend in another city and I took the train back late at night. So it was a late-night train and there were very few people on the train. So I was alone. I think I was almost completely alone in the whole coach. And then maybe about ten minutes after the train had left the station these two guys came and they sat very near me. And they were intoxicated or high and they were very loud and very aggressive and they kept making eye contact with me and moving closer. I didn't know how to handle the situation because I wanted to just get up and leave but because we were alone I was afraid of how they would interpret it if I get up and leave because then they would know that they scared me and I didn't want them to see that they were actually scaring me. So I didn't leave. So, even though what I wanted was to get up and leave I was afraid that they would then come after me. And so I was really scared and I didn't know what to do. They were definitely gangsters, you could see that from the way they were dressed and from how loud they were and how they were behaving you knew that they were up to no good. And then I pretended that I was reading. But I was watching them out of the corner of my eye and then the ticket person came and they didn't have tickets to be on the train and then they produced identification documents that were in a language that the tickets officer couldn't understand. And then they were giving the ticket officer a lot of trouble and eventually the ticket officer called for backup and then it actually turned out to be quite a big thing. And for the rest of the ride, luckily for the rest of the train ride, the ticket officer and the people, the backup that the ticket officer had called, stayed and there was a big scene. And then when I got near my station, it was a direct train so it only stopped at the next station. Before it arrived, as they announced the next station, I got up and I went to the next coach so that I could get to an

exit that was far away from them. But then as I was getting off the train, the police were standing at the door where they were to take them away.

I: Tell me a little more about why you didn't leave. Why didn't you get up and leave? You mentioned it already but tell me more about it.

IEE: Well, I knew it was a late night train. So I knew there weren't... I mean there was a big possibility that I would have gone to the next coach and that there would still be no one there. So, you know, I didn't know how you get to other people. If I knew that there were other people in the next coach, I would have gone and sat near other people but I was afraid that if they would perceive that I was running away from them and that I was scared of them and that they would pursue me, and if they followed me and I got to the next coach and there was no one there, what do I do then? And so, so, I didn't want them to know how scared I was. I didn't want to take the risk of turning my back on them and having them come after me and not know if there was help in the next coach or the coach after that. And the thing is that it was after midnight, I think it was maybe one o'clock or two o'clock in the morning. So it's the time of night when a woman traveling alone on a train.... I shouldn't have been traveling alone as it is. It's just, it's just, it's just a time when you should be very careful.

I: Why shouldn't you have traveled alone?

IEE: I don't know, I suppose it comes from growing up in South Africa. It is not a very safe country and it is just, it is just not acceptable, women should not travel alone late at night. That's just how I grew up, you know, in South Africa. If something happens to you, the police, the first the police will say to you is why are you traveling alone by yourself at one or two o'clock in the morning? Women should not travel by themselves at that time, especially not in cities and, um, I would do that in Switzerland because it's a safe place and I've done that before and never encountered any problems but then there were just these guys and out of all of the times I have traveled late at night it was just this one incident.

I: Earlier you already mentioned some of these but can you list, what are the advantages for you to use trains?

IEE: Um, well, they are very convenient. OK, wait, let's start with comfort, they are extremely comfortable. I use lots of different types of public transport. I use buses, I use trams, I use trains, I use airplanes, I occasionally use little boats. And out of all of these, except for the little boat, trains are by far the most comfortable. You have lots of leg room, you have lots of space around you. I very rarely have the experience of being on very crowded trains, so they are very comfortable. Especially for very long rides, you know for a couple of hours. Especially in

comparison with planes they are very comfortable. Especially for longer trips, you have a lot of time to yourself that you can use in various ways. It's not stressful to take a train. If you board the wrong train, it could be very stressful, but if you take the right train and you know where you are going then the whole trip is stress-free because you don't have to worry about traffic or other people like pedestrians or anything. You can just sit back, enjoy the ride and use your time however you want to, whether you read or sleep, or eat, or work, play games, watch movies. So it's a nice way to spend long trips. It's nicer than on planes because on planes you are confined to such a small space and you can't really move so it's not stress-free to take a plane. But to take a long train ride can be very nice and an overnight train is so nice. Sleeping on a train is such a cool experience. The movement of trains, it's very nice.

Um, I mean, generally, in Europe, I would say they are very safe for women to use. They're fast, which is really cool. They get you to your destination on time. In Europe, there are lots of trains, frequently, so you can get to where you want to be. It's convenient. They can be very scenic you know, so it can be very beautiful to ride trains. I like watching the world go by through train windows, it's fascinating, even in ugly places like Korea, trains can make the landscapes pretty. I like how trains can also cater for different people with different spaces. Like on the train between Basel and Bern, for example, there are different kinds of compartments. There are quiet places that you can go with smaller cubicles that have quiet signs and people are not allowed to use telephones and things and you can go there if you want to sleep or just be quiet. And then there are other coaches, where it is much more open and people are much more rowdy. So depending on how you feel or what you need from your train ride, you can actually access different parts of the train to put yourself into a comfortable space. Mmm, I like train windows. I like big train windows. I like that they have snacks and hot coffee because I am always hungry. Um, um, yea... and even catching the wrong train, you can get off and go back in the same direction, so there are limited places to get lost, which is nice. It's comforting...

I: OK, what are, for you, the disadvantages of using trains?

(24:07)

IEE: Um, well, sometimes it takes longer to get somewhere because you are using trains. Sometimes there isn't a direct, sometimes there isn't a direct way, like just recently my husband had to get somewhere in Germany and he to take like eight or twelve different trains. He had to change so many times and then, if you miss a connection.... So taking trains can actually become really complicated to get to place that are not very central or not on the main routes. So as much as trains can be very convenient, getting to certain places can be very inconvenient. So that's one of the disadvantages. Um, catching trains in countries with different languages can be very difficult. Getting the hang of the train system in Korea took me a very long time because they only, they have no signs in English. Everything is in Hangeul, your train timetable is in Hangeul, your maps are in Hangeul, your train stations are in Hangeul. And it's extremely

difficult to catch trains and if the person behind the counter cannot speak the language that you speak, you're screwed. It's game over. So, in that way, access to information can sometimes, or the inability to access information can sometimes be a disadvantage. Very full trains can be a bad. Sometimes trains are too full. Sometimes you can't catch a train because there is no more space on it. Sometimes, they crowd the trains too much and I don't like crowding. So that can be a disadvantage. Sometimes, trains crash, so, that's obviously not good, or they breakdown. Um, you see, I would say that a disadvantage could be that because of set train routes, there are places that you can't get to because trains just don't go there. But the train system that we use is actually very well connected. So that's not really an active disadvantage for me right now but I can imagine how, for example in South Africa, that can be a problem because there are many places that you can't get to because trains just don't go there. Um, yea, those are some of the disadvantages.

I: How often do you use trains?

IEE: Um, regular-ish...

I: What does that mean?

IEE: Well, there are times when I use them more often than other times. I use the train, in Switzerland I use the train most often when I leave the city, you know, so when I go visit friends in other cities, when I travel, when I go to places to sightsee, when I go to the airport. So whenever I leave Basel, it is generally by train. So it's my inter-city mode of transport that I most frequently use. But how often I leave the city varies so that's why I say it varies how often I use it but whenever I leave the city it is most frequently by train.

I: And in South Africa, how often did you use the train there?

IEE: Oh, in South Africa I never used the train. In South Africa, I used the train three times. There was that one time I told you about when I was a child. When my school rented a steam locomotive. Then there was... no, no, no, only twice, I used it only twice. Because there was the one time as a child and then I used, I started using trains in Korea and then once, when I came back from Korea to visit South Africa, I used the Gautrain from Rosebank to get to the airport. That was just when the Gautrain had opened and it was brand new and I didn't have a car or anything and a friend was able to drop me off at the Gautrain. Yea, so I have only used it twice in my whole life, I have only used it twice there.

I: And for what purpose do you use train right now?

IEE: Intercity, for intercity travel.

I: For all purposes intercity travel?

IEE: Yea, yea, yea. For business and pleasure and outings. Yea, yea, yea, for all purposes. So, I would take the train to the airport, I would take the train to go visit my friends, I would take the train on a day trip into the mountains, I would take the train if travel with my husband, on business. Yea, all types of things.

I: And why are you not using trains more often than you are?

IEE: Um, well, when I am not in Europe, like right now I am in the US and there isn't a train system that they use here. Here, people use cars, so you use cars. There are no trains to use here. Although there are very cool freight trains here that you can see when you're driving in the car, when you're driving in the desert. You can see these freight trains that are just miles and miles long, that are amazing. That's an amazing sight, seeing freight trains in the desert. That's beautiful. But otherwise there are no trains to use here.

I: Actually, let's go back to where you are living right now in Switzerland. Why are you not using trains more often?

IEE: Well, well, and tram doesn't count because I work and I live in Basel and its only eight kilometers from home to work and there isn't a train. There isn't a train that does those eight kilometers and I rarely leave Basel so I don't use the train when I am in Basel because Basel is small enough that I don't need to use the train. But when I leave Basel for intercity travel that's when I would use the train or sometimes I would drive.

I: Why would you drive instead of taking the train?

IEE: Um, sometimes we travel unplanned. So sometimes we would be at work and we would have the car and then suddenly we would decide that we want to go on a trip or something and then we would just drive because we are in the car already. So sometimes it's unplanned and then we would take the car and other times we are going to specific destinations that are maybe not on a train line. So planned journeys are by train and unplanned journeys are sometimes by car.

I: So would you say that all planned journeys are done by train?



IEE: Um, well, all is a bit, you know, there are always exceptions. Yes, but as a rule planned journeys are by train.

I: Tell me about the exceptions.

IEE: Exceptions like when we drive very far. Like when we do very long road trips like when we went to, we drove to Prague or we drove to the Czech Republic, I suppose [long pause]

I: Why didn't you go by train?

IEE: Because we were planning on visiting towns and family and friends along the way that were not on train routes, so it would have been, I mean you could have done it by train but it would have become a complicated journey and with a car it would just be more easy. So I suppose the exceptions would be when it would be easier for whatever reason to travel by car.

I: What do you mean easier?

IEE: Like if you are visiting a small town in the middle of nowhere, it's easier to use a car. You see, the thing is because it can become very expensive outside of the train if you are reliant on taxi's or if are reliant on a form of public transport that is not systemic, it can be very expensive and that's not very reliable. Especially in small towns and things, you know, you don't know how you are going to get back to the train.

I: You mentioned earlier trips for business and pleasure. What are the places around where you live now? Does this mean that you have always gone there by train?

IEE: No, no, I have gone there by car as well.

I: Why?

IEE: Because my husband was driving. [laughs] I suppose we have a car. Using public transport is an option for us, you know. We are not completely reliant on public transport for intercity travel. We do use it but, um... Like for example, we use to have a place in Lausanne and I suppose we drove to Lausanne more often than we took the train but we would frequently take a lot of things with us. When you take a lot of things, it is easier to take a car because you don't have to carry so much between the train station and wherever you are going. And if you start your journey, even if it is going to work in a car, it is just much easier to just continue the journey with the car. So again, I think there is a lot of unplanned journey's that happened by car. If it was planned, it would have been. In bad weather, we would take the trains for sure,

you know. In the winter, it is much easier to take the trains because it's a lot more reliable in the snow, it's safer. So, in the summer, we would possibly take the trains less because the weather is really nice, so it's nice to drive the car to get out...

I: Why is it nice to drive the car in the summer?

IEE: Well, we have a car where you can take the top down, so that's really nice. You take the top down and you have the sun and wind in your hair and that's really nice.

I: What else?

IEE: Um, you can go up into the mountains to the most incredible places. You can just get into the car and you can just drive to a place that is hardly on a map and you can't do that with a train. So you can take the train, like the proper mountaineers in Switzerland do. They take the train to the nearest train station or city and then they hike to where we drive the car. [laughs] But they are proper mountaineers, they do ten hours of hiking in a day and they still feel fresh you know. We are not mountaineers like that. We enjoy hiking though, so we would get in the car and we would drive to these really tiny little places up, up, up, up the twisty mountain roads and then up there we would go for a really nice walk then go back and um.... You can't do that with a train. I mean, you could but you going to have to plan it. So there it is again, I think a big thing that I am seeing here is the difference between it being planned and unplanned. You know, if you are in the car, the GPS magically tells you, which route to take and you go, the options are unlimited. If you have the same destination and you want to go there by train. You now have to look at timetables, not just of the trains but also of bus systems and tram systems and the connecting public transport systems, you know. You need to know (a) is it even possible and (b) how long will it take you, or what are your timetable options. So, there is a lot of planning that goes into it. You know, it happened to me a lot, in Korea, that I miss the bloody last train because, for example, this happened to me frequently, at sunset the monks in the temples have a special prayer that they do at sunset, being up in these sanctuaries, being up in the temples in the mountains during sunset is one of the most incredible experiences. They had these giant ancient bells and these massive wooden beams, and they come out in their cloaks and take these massive beams and then they would chime these giant bells and it would echo through the mountains while they would do this special prayer while the sun is setting in the mountains. It is really beautiful. The problem is that this usually coincides with the last train, which is down in the valley. So it's not only do you have at least a forty-five minute hike down the mountain away from the temple to get to the exit of the park and then you still have another half-an-hour to forty minute hike to get to the train station. There is no way that you could ever see this ceremony and catch the last train home. It is humanly impossible. And then, the option is sleeping on a floor. If the monks are nice enough, they would let you sleep on the

floor in the temple and if the park is very strict and they don't allow that, then you have to hike out of the park before they close the gates at six, and then you find some strange place in some little village in the middle of the mountains and you sleep on the floor there. You have limited options, if you want to go to places off the beaten path. So it takes a lot of planning to do these trips and this is not only by train. I am talking here also about the connecting systems after the train, the buses and the trams and what what what.

I: Finally, my last question. Why didn't you take trains in South Africa?

IEE: Because trains were dangerous there, trains were very dangerous. White people don't take trains in South Africa. I have spent some time in train stations in inner-city Johannesburg and inner-city Pretoria and those are very dangerous places. They are very dangerous places for white people, white people don't go there.

I: What do you mean dangerous?

IEE: I mean, they will kill you know. There are a lot of gangsters, there are a lot of Nigerians, there are a lot of drugs, there are a lot of weapons, there is a lot of violence. It is the under-belly. Inner-city train stations belong to the under-belly of the city and connected to that are the trains you know the Metrorail of South Africa. Growing up and during my teens, it was very, very dangerous. I can't speak for now because I don't live there and I haven't lived there for a long time and I haven't taken the trains and that's earlier when I mentioned Tsotsi. I mean, this movie opens on a Metrorail carriage and it's full of people and it's very crowded and people are body to body everywhere, so it's very crowded in a train coach. The story begins, this scene begins when a group of young men surround an older guy who is catching the train and then they size him up and they ask for his money and this happens in a very crowded train, and it's quiet. They just say: "Be quiet, give us your money." He hands over his money and they kill him, they stab him and he actually dies. They hold him up, he's dying, the train stops and everybody gets off the train. The gang waits for everybody to leave and once they've left they step away from the dead man. He falls to the carriage floor and they walk out. Now that is something, yes, it is a scene from a movie, but this really perfectly sums up the potential of violence and how dangerous trains and train stations are, especially in Pretoria and Johannesburg. That's why I never took the train and in my shady teenager years, I got to encounter some of the deeper darker happenings in inner-city Pretoria and inner-city Johannesburg and those are very, very dangerous places. If the normal Joe on the street had stumbled in there, they would kill him and take everything he owns just because he is stupid enough to go into there. It's just, you don't go there, it doesn't belong to you. And then, the train station in Durban is the most amazing place because you have the train tracks and the train station and then you have this large pedestrian bridge that goes across it and it is really wide and this, over the years had become the

traditional Sangoma [African witch doctor] market of Durban. So, it's really incredible because when you walk over there, all the Sangomas have their stalls there so you see all the traditional witchcraft, the herbs, the medicine, the dead animals, the organs. It's wild, it's wild. There is a clinic at the bottom of the stairs where I use to work while I was a student. I went there, sometimes two, three times a week, at least once a week for almost two years and every single time that I was there I never ever saw another white person there. I was the only white person there. And so many people would stop me and say: "Ai, Sissie, aren't you scared? What are you doing here? White people should not come here." And I would laugh. You know, now when I think back on what I did, I was crazy, now would I do it? Absolutely no way you know. But back then, it's not even that I was a different person. I just lived life differently. I wasn't scared, I felt at home in my country, I felt at home with all people and I was very happy you know. I didn't feel that that part of the world or that part of the city did not belong to me. I was very streetwise, I was very comfortable and I loved being there you know, walking through that traditional market and watching just the way people live its beautiful you know. But they used to tell me that I was crazy for being there, that I was being a stupid white girl. But nothing ever happened to me because I suppose I had a purpose. You know there is a difference between someone that's lost and someone walking around with a purpose. I had a reason for being there and I really enjoyed being there, it was a cool place, but I would never take the trains there. Especially not as a female. No way.

I: It's an interesting kind of an inconsistency. You say that you had a purpose so as a young woman with a purpose, nothing would happen to you but then you say that on the one hand you wouldn't do that or you wouldn't recommend that anyone else. Presumably, white people should not do that. What if a white male businessman with a purpose just strides through it and takes a train?

IEE: I think, I think he would be OK. I mean, I think, um, you know, the thing is and this is what I mean with a purpose, if you stumble into this place, if you stumble across this place, if you are lost or you don't know where you are going, if you go in there as a tourist, if you are flashy, if you have a camera out, if you have money out, you know, if you send the wrong message, you will get into trouble. And that's what I mean, if you have a purpose, you are not there as a tourist, you're not lost, you know where you're going, you are aware of your surroundings you know, then I think you would be fine because they wouldn't pick on you. But there are people, there are eyes in these places, in these train stations, on these trains, who will take advantage of people who they perceive as possible victims, as potential victims and that's what I mean. So the thing is, crossing that bridge or being in that train station area is something that I would do but I wouldn't get on a train because the moment you get on the train, the moment those doors close, you are in a confined space and you cannot get away. If anything happens, then you're stuck, and then you are at the mercy of whatever happens. So that's why. So I would be at the

train station, I would use the bridge, I would be in that area, but I would never take the train. I suppose I couldn't run away on a train. If I ended up in a position or a situation, if you end up in a situation on that bridge or in the train station, where you feel that it's dangerous, you could just turn around and you could run. You couldn't do that on a train and I think that's what bothered me about those creepy guys on the late night train in Switzerland. That you cannot escape. When something bad happens on a train you cannot get away.

I: If you had to get one tip to train bosses in, let's start with South Africa, what would that be?

IEE: [long pause] Um, I think I can give a tip that would go across all of these different countries, and it's really that the condition of the train reflects the environment, which reflects my comfort, my ability to be comfortable in that space. So the better the condition of a train, the better I feel about being on the train, and the more I can relax and actually enjoy the train ride. The worse the condition of the train, the more uncomfortable I feel, the more prone I am to anxiety, stress, or even fear, and these things, this runs across all the different countries, where I have taken trains. The moment a train is derelict or vandalized, it really reflects on the train ride or on me as a passenger. Immediately, I don't feel safe.

I: So what's your tip?

IEE: My tip would be to take care of your trains. Take care of your trains. By taking care of your trains, you take care of your passengers. Yeah, that would be my tip.

I: "Take care of the trains..." Can you say a few more words about that?

IEE: Um, take care of your actual trains. Make sure your trains are clean, make sure that they're not vandalized, make sure there is no graffiti, they're not dirty, you know, the upkeep. I think the upkeep of trains. The windows should work, the doors should work, yea. And the better that works, the better I feel using the train.

I: You say that you use Swiss trains. Any tip that you would have for the Swiss train bosses?

IEE: Yea, uh, those windows in first class, make it for the whole train. [both laugh]

I: Ok, wonderful. Thank you so much for your time.

IEE: Sure...