

1

00:00:00,220 --> 00:00:05,610

For using this. Okay so, yeah, I

2

00:00:06,110 --> 00:00:12,339

didn't prepare for this in any particular way. Hm I didn't

3

00:00:12,339 --> 00:00:15,289

realize this was going on until this morning but I

4

00:00:16,050 --> 00:00:20,629

have made a few notes and I liked the way

5

00:00:20,629 --> 00:00:25,519

you opened your own story with the little childhood anecdote

6

00:00:26,280 --> 00:00:29,079

I'll just start with two childhood anecdotes One is from

7

00:00:29,079 --> 00:00:32,090

my own childhood I remember when I was on a

8

00:00:32,090 --> 00:00:36,560

family holiday when I was about maybe six, seven

9

00:00:36,560 --> 00:00:41,049

years old with my older sister who was nine or

10

00:00:41,049 --> 00:00:45,450

ten at the time. My parents smuggled us across the

11

00:00:45,450 --> 00:00:47,960

border from Germany to Switzerland. I'm a native German and

12

00:00:47,960 --> 00:00:51,479

we were going on a family holiday in Switzerland probably

13

00:00:51,479 --> 00:00:54,689

somewhere northern Switzerland in the lake area there Lake Maggiore

14

00:00:54,689 --> 00:00:58,259

or something like that and about two or three hours

15

00:00:58,259 --> 00:01:01,640

into the journey towards the border between

16

00:01:01,640 --> 00:01:04,750

Germany and Switzerland my parents realized Oh shit, we've forgot

17

00:01:04,750 --> 00:01:09,670

the passports. We did obviously have children passports at the

18

00:01:09,670 --> 00:01:11,930

time and rather than turning back to go all the

19

00:01:11,930 --> 00:01:15,959

way back and pick up these passports, they just decided

20

00:01:15,959 --> 00:01:18,959

to smuggle us over the border. After all this was

21

00:01:18,959 --> 00:01:21,959

a German middle-class family going on a holiday. There wasn't

22

00:01:21,959 --> 00:01:24,780

anything wrong with it. What added the element of excitement

23

00:01:24,780 --> 00:01:26,599

in the sense of only for my father at least

24

00:01:26,599 --> 00:01:30,370

was that he was actually a public servant in the

25

00:01:30,370 --> 00:01:34,900

regional government in Germany. So they made us lie down on the

26

00:01:35,010 --> 00:01:38,530

back seat of the car, put blankets over us and

27

00:01:38,530 --> 00:01:42,489

told us to shut up when we approached the border

28

00:01:42,489 --> 00:01:44,920

and keep really really really quiet and we went through

29

00:01:44,920 --> 00:01:46,989

this border checkpoint and they did check the passports of

30

00:01:46,989 --> 00:01:49,549

my parents. At that time the Swiss-German border was not

31

00:01:49,549 --> 00:01:54,180

Open. This would have been the 1970s, 76. And so

32

00:01:54,180 --> 00:01:56,420

we were smuggled into Switzerland for the holiday and I

33

00:01:56,420 --> 00:02:00,519

guess we were smuggled out in the end as well.

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00:02:00,519 --> 00:02:02,530

Just three or four days ago I had a discussion

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00:02:02,530 --> 00:02:06,629

That was the first anecdote and it's my earliest memory

36

00:02:06,629 --> 00:02:11,039

of a particular border crossing and of any kind of experience of border, so there was a

37

00:02:11,039 --> 00:02:14,689

sense of doing something really wrong and exciting, but because

38

00:02:14,689 --> 00:02:17,009

the parents were advising to do it, it couldn't have

39

00:02:17,009 --> 00:02:20,000

been all that wrong. Looking back of course it seems

40

00:02:20,000 --> 00:02:22,370

quite kind of hilarious and somewhat dangerous.

41

00:02:22,370 --> 00:02:24,939

I mean, if you try something like that nowadays you

42

00:02:24,939 --> 00:02:30,889

could be really in deep shit. Uh, I have talked with

43

00:02:30,889 --> 00:02:36,259

my son about borders, every now and then in recent

44

00:02:36,259 --> 00:02:39,229

Times. He's six years old now and I asked him

45

00:02:39,229 --> 00:02:42,240

just four or five days ago. What is a border?

46

00:02:42,270 --> 00:02:43,789

Do you know what a border is? And his

47

00:02:43,789 --> 00:02:47,379

answer was and I quote "A border is where the

48

00:02:47,990 --> 00:02:50,490

policeman is and you have to show your passport"

49

00:02:50,490 --> 00:02:54,280

Okay, so, pretty good explanation. And from that onwards we

50

00:02:54,280 --> 00:02:59,770

started talking about how borders actually are separating countries.

51

00:02:59,770 --> 00:03:04,889

Because my son is a German citizen and

52

00:03:04,889 --> 00:03:07,419

also a Finnish citizen, because I'm German and his mum

53

00:03:07,419 --> 00:03:10,879

is a Finn. He was conceived in Finland, he was

54

00:03:10,879 --> 00:03:13,770

born in Scotland and he lives there, he speaks all

55

00:03:13,770 --> 00:03:17,729

three languages and we frequently visit both our old home

56

00:03:17,729 --> 00:03:21,590

in Finland for the summer and also the family in

57

00:03:21,590 --> 00:03:24,520

Germany. So he kind of lives at least in two

58

00:03:24,520 --> 00:03:27,090

countries with Germany a third one. However last year we



59

00:03:27,090 --> 00:03:29,849

all lived in southern Africa for half a year because

60

00:03:29,849 --> 00:03:32,460

I was conducting field research as part of my research

61

00:03:32,710 --> 00:03:38,949

in African Borderlands, and we crossed numerous boundaries in southern

62

00:03:38,949 --> 00:03:41,580

Africa over the period of six months because we went

63

00:03:41,580 --> 00:03:44,599

also to visit some relatives of mine in South Africa

64

00:03:45,139 --> 00:03:47,150

and I took my family along on some of the

65

00:03:47,150 --> 00:03:49,919

research trips. So we crossed many African boundaries and that's

66

00:03:49,919 --> 00:03:53,490

where my son's memory of the policeman who wanted to

67

00:03:53,490 --> 00:03:56,139

see the passport mostly comes from. But he has also

68

00:03:56,139 --> 00:04:00,229

crossed boundaries many times at the airport, and it was

69

00:04:00,229 --> 00:04:01,949

quite interesting to see how he reacts when I explained

70

00:04:01,949 --> 00:04:05,090

to him. You see, these countries we keep talking about

71

00:04:05,090 --> 00:04:11,490

Scotland, Deutschland, Finland, Botswana, Namibia, these are actually countries separated

72

00:04:11,490 --> 00:04:13,900

by borders, and that's where the policeman is sitting and

73

00:04:13,900 --> 00:04:18,079

he was getting really interested. So, it was interesting for

74

00:04:18,079 --> 00:04:21,680

me as a border scholar to try to explain or

75

00:04:21,680 --> 00:04:24,709

discuss the concept of a boundary to a six-year-old who

76

00:04:24,709 --> 00:04:31,370

has experience with boundaries. And, it really means something to

77

00:04:31,370 --> 00:04:39,180

me personally as well as professionally, so my livelihood really

78

00:04:39,180 --> 00:04:42,399

is based on my curiosity in borders. I'm not really

79

00:04:42,399 --> 00:04:47,699

sure where it was really awakened in particular. I do though

80

00:04:47,699 --> 00:04:53,470

remember quite vividly the fact that when I was nineteen

81

00:04:53,470 --> 00:04:56,430

and I finished high school, was the year when the

82

00:04:56,430 --> 00:04:58,370

Berlin Wall came down, and it was an important event

83

00:04:58,370 --> 00:05:00,470

because it was also the time when

84

00:05:00,470 --> 00:05:03,579

I started to become a kind of a free adult person.

85

00:05:03,579 --> 00:05:05,720

I travelled in the United States for three months after

86

00:05:05,720 --> 00:05:08,529

high school, and really was away from home for the

87

00:05:08,529 --> 00:05:13,379

first time just by myself, and then three years later

88

00:05:13,379 --> 00:05:16,069

I found myself moving from Germany to Finland to continue

89

00:05:16,069 --> 00:05:18,620

my studies in geography there. So, that was the first

90

00:05:18,620 --> 00:05:22,100

time I really relocated to another country and really cross

91

00:05:22,100 --> 00:05:27,889

the border relatively permanently and it never seemed to be

92

00:05:27,889 --> 00:05:31,379

really a big problem with following an Erasmus scheme. So

93

00:05:31,379 --> 00:05:33,279

the fact that there the Erasmus scheme was opening the

94

00:05:33,620 --> 00:05:35,939

borders for young people in Europe to study wherever they

95

00:05:35,939 --> 00:05:38,720

Wanted, it really, really was a big thing for me

96

00:05:38,720 --> 00:05:42,060

in a very practical sense in my life. And when

97

00:05:42,060 --> 00:05:46,670

I then later moved to Scotland because I got a

98

00:05:46,670 --> 00:05:48,939

job at the University of Edinburgh at the centre for

99

00:05:48,939 --> 00:05:52,540

African Studies to study boundaries in Africa, then I moved

100

00:05:52,540 --> 00:05:56,449

once again to another country. But I've lived in a couple

101

00:05:56,449 --> 00:05:58,735

of other places. So, for me this whole idea of

102

00:05:58,735 --> 00:06:03,060

moving across borders has- it's never been really like a kind

103

00:06:03,060 --> 00:06:05,290

of big deal obstacle. I'm not afraid of borders in

104

00:06:05,290 --> 00:06:11,850

the way that some people you know know are, because I'm

105

00:06:11,850 --> 00:06:15,214

quite used to it. But, it's coming back into my

106

00:06:15,214 --> 00:06:18,339

life in an interesting way as something that really

107

00:06:18,339 --> 00:06:20,230

was never a problem. I quite like the process of

108

00:06:20,500 --> 00:06:24,439

going through border checkpoints because I always know that I

109

00:06:24,439 --> 00:06:28,790

have nothing to hide, and also I do research when

110

00:06:28,790 --> 00:06:34,560

I cross boundaries and sometimes if... checkpoint people are starting

111

00:06:34,560 --> 00:06:37,889

to ask me certain questions, I will sometimes tell them

112

00:06:37,889 --> 00:06:40,540

I am actually doing research on boundaries and then I'm

113

00:06:40,540 --> 00:06:44,079

very curious to see what the border checkpoint person how

114

00:06:44,079 --> 00:06:46,569

they react to that because that moment they realized they

115

00:06:46,569 --> 00:06:49,459

are now an object of my research which turns the

116

00:06:49,459 --> 00:06:54,910

whole situation around. But, at the moment I find that



117

00:06:55,230 --> 00:06:58,600

the whole question of boundaries comes back into my life

118

00:06:58,600 --> 00:07:01,879

in a quite strange way because I

119

00:07:01,879 --> 00:07:06,100

live in Brexit- Britain. So your experience of travelling in

120

00:07:06,100 --> 00:07:10,560

Europe and not showing your passport, which is my experience

121

00:07:10,560 --> 00:07:14,829

too of recent years on some of my trips has

122

00:07:14,829 --> 00:07:16,889

not been my experience most of the time when I

123

00:07:16,889 --> 00:07:18,529

travel because I have to actually travel in and out

124

00:07:18,529 --> 00:07:20,279

of the Schengen zone. So I have to show my

125

00:07:20,279 --> 00:07:23,449

passport all the time. In fact when I now change

126

00:07:23,449 --> 00:07:26,199

planes in Amsterdam yesterday on the way here I was

127

00:07:26,199 --> 00:07:28,310

in the wrong queue because I'm so used to going

128

00:07:28,310 --> 00:07:31,509

to the queue where you have to show the passport

129

00:07:31,509 --> 00:07:33,850

Not remembering: Hey, wait a minute I'm flying from Finland

130

00:07:33,850 --> 00:07:36,079

because I'm on summer holiday. I'm already in the Schengen

131

00:07:36,079 --> 00:07:37,620

Zone I don't have to show it on the way

132

00:07:37,620 --> 00:07:39,899

to Austria because I always have to show it because

133

00:07:39,899 --> 00:07:42,519

I always come from Edinburgh outside the Schengen zone. So

134

00:07:42,519 --> 00:07:45,009

it's getting a bit confused The guy at the checkpoint

135

00:07:45,009 --> 00:07:47,500

reminded me "Hey you don't have to show this, you're

136

00:07:48,050 --> 00:07:52,949

in the wrong queue here. Go there". So the situation with

137

00:07:53,339 --> 00:07:57,939

Britain and Brexit is really changing my outlook on how

138

00:07:57,939 --> 00:08:01,009

I want to plan potentially the rest of my life

139

00:08:01,009 --> 00:08:03,540

I have a strong discussion with my wife right now

140

00:08:03,540 --> 00:08:06,920

about moving back to Finland, because we do not want

141

00:08:06,920 --> 00:08:11,689

to live in that country which is going in that

142

00:08:11,689 --> 00:08:20,540

particular direction at the moment. Britain is always going its

143

00:08:20,540 --> 00:08:23,730

own way, but to be in Scotland and be dragged

144

00:08:23,730 --> 00:08:28,319

out of- that's less than 3 minutes. to be in Scotland and be dragged out of the EU by the government in Westminster is

145

00:08:28,319 --> 00:08:30,199

quite strange for us personally. So this is not at

146

00:08:30,199 --> 00:08:34,940

all like scholarly stuff. This is really personal stuff and

147

00:08:34,940 --> 00:08:38,629

for me connected with the experience of crossing borders is,

148

00:08:38,629 --> 00:08:41,169

of course the fact that I am a citizen of

149

00:08:41,169 --> 00:08:45,090

a certain country. I have considered that sometimes in the

150

00:08:45,090 --> 00:08:47,980

past to change or to apply for double citizenship to

151

00:08:48,240 --> 00:08:50,299

have both Finnish and German citizenship because it would look

152

00:08:50,299 --> 00:08:54,570

like I was settling down permanently in Finland. Then I

153

00:08:54,570 --> 00:08:57,029

realize it's quite a complicated, expensive, long process, and anyway

154

00:08:57,029 --> 00:08:58,960

I've got the job in Edinburgh so it wasn't so

155

00:08:58,960 --> 00:09:01,740

important anymore. I am now very very

156

00:09:01,740 --> 00:09:04,799

very certain that I do not want British citizenship. They

157

00:09:04,799 --> 00:09:09,200

can fuck themselves, uh because you have to swear an oath

158

00:09:09,200 --> 00:09:13,059

of allegiance to the Queen of England if you want

159

00:09:13,059 --> 00:09:15,350

to become a UK citizen if you're not born with

160

00:09:15,350 --> 00:09:17,350

it but if you want to apply to become one

161

00:09:17,350 --> 00:09:19,820

and you have to swear the oath not just on

162

00:09:19,820 --> 00:09:23,779

the queen but also on her offspring, which is outrageous

163

00:09:24,190 --> 00:09:25,610

because I don't believe in the monarchy. I think they

164

00:09:25,610 --> 00:09:27,039

should have cut off the head of the snake a

165

00:09:27,039 --> 00:09:30,679

long time ago, and it's really a representation of some

166

00:09:30,679 --> 00:09:32,870

of the things that are fundamentally wrong in my view

167

00:09:32,870 --> 00:09:36,070

with that country. So I'm not interested to become a

168

00:09:36,070 --> 00:09:41,500

citizen of Britain and therefore potentially have less problems crossing

169

00:09:41,500 --> 00:09:44,000

borders in the future. And because of the way the

170

00:09:44,000 --> 00:09:46,909

country is going I am really concerned about myself and

171

00:09:46,909 --> 00:09:49,429

my family in terms of our long-term future in that

172

00:09:49,429 --> 00:09:51,389

Country. I don't think they're going in a good direction

173

00:09:51,590 --> 00:09:54,470

I don't want my son to be a foreign citizen

174

00:09:54,470 --> 00:09:57,509



in a country where he grows up and I'm not

175

00:09:57,509 --> 00:10:01,830

particularly keen myself to be an old person in a

176

00:10:01,830 --> 00:10:06,700

country that treats non-citizens differently than citizens. This is the

177

00:10:06,700 --> 00:10:10,509

way things are looking now increasingly. So, this is quite

178

00:10:10,850 --> 00:10:14,320

kind of what bloody personal stuff that I'm a little

179

00:10:14,320 --> 00:10:19,649

bit passionate about at the moment. Uh, the other thing is

180

00:10:19,940 --> 00:10:23,200

of course that I do really appreciate boundaries in a

181

00:10:23,200 --> 00:10:26,000

similar way that you talked as something I'm really curious

182

00:10:26,000 --> 00:10:29,090

and interested about, and I actually really quite enjoy crossing

183

00:10:29,090 --> 00:10:31,779

them because I always do research and it fires up

184

00:10:31,779 --> 00:10:36,120

my mind. Uh, it gives me data to analyze and to

185

00:10:36,120 --> 00:10:39,620

process and to write scientifically about and publish and lecture

186

00:10:40,720 --> 00:10:45,070

and perhaps in the final minutes I can say that...

187

00:10:46,539 --> 00:10:50,480

Uh, it is a very different experience most of the time

188

00:10:50,480 --> 00:10:54,169

you cross African boundaries than it is to cross European

189

00:10:54,169 --> 00:10:56,809

Boundaries, mostly because most of the boundaries I cross are

190

00:10:56,809 --> 00:11:00,899

on airports in Europe. In one Africa it's

191

00:11:00,899 --> 00:11:04,259

typically land borders that I cross as part of my

192

00:11:04,259 --> 00:11:09,679

work and what's really, really interesting and very different also

193

00:11:09,679 --> 00:11:13,820

is the presence of people intensely involved in making a

194

00:11:13,820 --> 00:11:15,860

living off the border, which in a sense is funny

195

00:11:15,860 --> 00:11:18,210

for me because I'm also making a living off these

196

00:11:18,210 --> 00:11:20,100

borders in a way. The people who make a living

197

00:11:20,100 --> 00:11:23,144

off the borders they are mostly at the very bottom

198

00:11:23,144 --> 00:11:26,470

of the global kind of value chain if it's about

199

00:11:26,470 --> 00:11:31,200

Trade, uh, in terms of smuggling all kinds of kind of

200

00:11:31,200 --> 00:11:35,299

borderline legal or illegal activity and very much kind of

201

00:11:35,299 --> 00:11:38,159

survival type of activity really. I wouldn't say out of

202

00:11:38,159 --> 00:11:40,750

desperation that's too much putting people in the corner, but

203

00:11:40,929 --> 00:11:43,850

they need to be creative and the people I'm most

204

00:11:43,850 --> 00:11:45,730

interested in right now as part of my current research

205

00:11:45,730 --> 00:11:48,529

are actually truck drivers, and these are all truck drivers

206

00:11:48,529 --> 00:11:52,009

that are cross-border truck drivers, so they deliver the goods

207

00:11:52,279 --> 00:11:55,820

which in this case are refined copper from the mines

208

00:11:55,820 --> 00:11:59,639

of Zambia and Congo through a transport route that crosses

209

00:11:59,639 --> 00:12:02,509

two boundaries to deliver them to the port for Spain, Namibia

210

00:12:02,509 --> 00:12:05,720

then maybe they go for export to China. So these

211

00:12:05,720 --> 00:12:08,279

truckers cross borders all the time as part of their

212

00:12:08,279 --> 00:12:10,629

work as well, and so we have something in common

213

00:12:10,940 --> 00:12:14,179

and it's very interesting to talk with these guys. They're

214

00:12:14,179 --> 00:12:19,450

really interesting characters and a lot of the life experience

215

00:12:19,450 --> 00:12:23,090

and how they solve the multiple problems that they face

216

00:12:23,090 --> 00:12:28,029

when they have to cross borders, corrupt officials, uncomfortable situations

217

00:12:28,029 --> 00:12:32,159

just very personal stuff like that hygiene, bad nights, bad

218

00:12:32,159 --> 00:12:35,750

Sleep, long work hours, a boss that keeps breathing down

219

00:12:35,750 --> 00:12:41,679

their neck especially on the border, papers, customs, immigration. There's

220

00:12:41,679 --> 00:12:44,090

a paper war every time they cross. All these things

221

00:12:44,090 --> 00:12:48,549

are of great interest to me, so I don't see

222

00:12:48,549 --> 00:12:54,669

borders only as an inconvenience or obstruction in my life

223

00:12:54,669 --> 00:12:57,610

Although there are aspects that as I just explained with

224

00:12:57,610 --> 00:13:00,779

my reference to Brexit, Britain. I've crossed

225

00:13:00,779 --> 00:13:02,590

many borders in my life I intend to cross many

226

00:13:02,590 --> 00:13:05,850

more and I'm certainly very, very curious to meet the

227

00:13:05,850 --> 00:13:07,929

other people that also cross them and how it works

228

00:13:07,929 --> 00:13:10,299

for them And I guess that's, yeah, Well that is

229

00:13:10,299 --> 00:13:12,450

why I'm in Vienna right now, because I'm in this

230

00:13:12,450 --> 00:13:16,960

Conference, right? Did I forget anything from my list? Yeah

231

00:13:16,960 --> 00:13:19,909

It's more or less, there I guess we can start

232

00:13:19,909 --> 00:13:21,099



the conversation into a