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Claire Clotney: This is American Dreamers my name is Claire Clotney and every week together with Aurra Studios, we have fascinating conversations with black Brits, black Americans and their families to explore wherever life for black people is better in the UK or the USA

stories about successful black women in the world seem to be emerging more steadily in what appears to be a broader public acknowledgement of the ongoing positive social economic contributions of black. On this episode of American dreamers, I'm speaking to a fellow public speaker on matters of diversity and inclusion, international multi award winning it business leader, Maryse Gordon this year.

Maryse won, the Yahoo finance, future leaders awards, beaten off competition from all over the world. And speaking of all over the world, and Marissa's done her fair share of traveling and knows what it means to be a successful single black female in the UK and the us.

Welcome Maryse, how you doing?

Maryse Gordon: I'm doing good. I'm like, oh my God. Who's that girl. Yes, me. Thank you guys.

Claire Clotney: I read your profile and I was like, well, your credentials are fantastic.

Maryse Gordon: I thank you. I thank you. I try to get involved in any, any given activity, got a dirt. We're going to be really real

Claire Clotney: and authentic on this podcast. I'm so pleased to say that I've known you.

Well, I can't really say I've known you because I haven't been in your life like that, but we've known each other for maybe 25 years.

Maryse Gordon: Yeah. Yeah.

Claire Clotney: Good old gummy days.

Maryse Gordon: I know it was so nice to hear from you. Cause I was like, I just reminisce about that entire period of my life. And I was like, this was, this is great.

And it's so good to like reconnect with all those people again. So yeah,

Claire Clotney: twenty-five years. So Marissa and I went to a Catholic convent girls school together many moons ago. I would say that we, we were the minority in the school. There were, there were 180 girls. Every year group. And there were probably no more than 10 black girls per year.

Maryse Gordon: Yeah. Yeah. Couple in each class. How do you think that shaped

Claire Clotney: your identity?

Maryse Gordon: Well, I think it was, it was probably the first time you really, really realize like how much of a minority you are, like in primary school, it was pretty much the same demographic, but it wasn't as obvious to you cause you just kind of playing around in that, in the basics of life.

Right. But as soon as you get into that actual structure, Like environments setting you up for the future. This is where you see. Oh, okay. There's, there's a lot less of us here and you start to realize what that actually means. But I think, you know, the, the school we went to, I think was. A great place. And, you know, my mum was very keen on sending me to this school because she didn't want me to be with the people I'd grown up with.

I think she already realized like how certain people were being given opportunities and I wasn't. So she wanted to be in a new environment to experience that. Yeah. I think it was one of those places where you really got to explore so much of who you are. And there was so much, I feel like so much opportunity.

I remember like putting on plays and dancers, you know, Me and the girls, we would dance, uh, uh, all the different events we had. And you really kind of built up this identity of who you were going to be moving forward. I

Claire Clotney: definitely think gumline set us up for a worldly experience. Um, we kind of got used to be in the minority, but that said, I have to emphasize

that we didn't, even though it is a Catholic convent girls school, it wasn't a private school.

It was, you know, public school. You had people from all classes, all areas of London coming

Maryse Gordon: down and yeah, I was brown girls with our curls. Hey, remember that, that shaped us. I'll tell you what you want to talk about standing out when we'd go home on the bus. Your girls in the brown uniform got that off that coach.

It was war. And they just, just

Claire Clotney: remember brown girls in brown uniform. We, we literally walking around looking like a new pair of tights from top to toe, you know, tie on. Yeah, I had orange, my type was orange

Maryse Gordon: red going

Claire Clotney: back to first and like early memories. Can you remember the first time you ever traveled on an

Maryse Gordon: airplane?

Ooh. Um, I don't remember this, but my parents told me the story of me. I think I might've been like one. And they said, we'll never forget the time you, the first time you got on a plane and you March up to the front door and said you wanted to get off and remit remit in the, uh, in the air. I totally believe I did that, but, um, I think that my earliest memory of being on a plane was probably like when my parents sent me and my brother and my sister to America for like the summer holidays.

So we have an aunt who lived in long island and we were put on the. And that British airways kind of looked after the three kids traveling solo. And my aunt picked us up at the other other end, but that was, I think that's the earliest one. I know we definitely went before that, but that's what I remember.

That's

Claire Clotney: such a remarkable memory because you traveled alone as a child. So that probably set you up for traveling alone as

Maryse Gordon: an adult. I probably, yeah. Subliminally. Picks up a lot of things about how you can do this and providing you've got someone at the star and someone at the end, like you get there.

Right. And it probably did make me want to explore the rest of the world by myself. Possibly. What

Claire Clotney: were your early memories of long

Maryse Gordon: island? Uh, so my aunt had a pool. I remember being in the shallow end of the pool because I was not a swimmer at that point in time, my uncle, he was an ex Navy seal. So he would be up and down, like just swimming away, like this fashion.

We would just be paddling at the back with, uh, with their dog. They had like a big garden as well. So with the pool, we would also have a lot of barbecues and stuff. My grandma lived out there. I have a lot of aunts and uncles who live in America as well. So we'd all kind of gathered together. It may have been like a American holiday.

I have no idea, but we would gather together and like have a barbecue out there. And my cousin would braid my hair or she'd just brush my hair or whatever she wanted to do with my hair. I remember that. I remember the dog. I remember the food. Oh my God. Like the food that we would have. Was in the pies and like, everything was just covered with sugar in it.

Like everything, everything savory, some sugar coating. I remember that as well. It was great. Like, we, we really enjoyed that. And I think my parents tried to do that as much as they could like bring us over here to experience, you know, the, the family life and the big American way of living, uh, whenever we could.

So you didn't

Claire Clotney: have the America from the movies, you had American real life as a

Maryse Gordon: child. Oh yeah. Like in the. And we would go into the city. We'd be like a whole day tour and we'd go to, um, what was it? Some baby back ribs plays or whatever it is, what are those like big major chains or Bubba Gump shrimp. I think that might be the other one.

And we'd go visit the statue of Liberty and whatever other kind of touristic thing, but it was like a big day out. But our general experience, like you said, would be. In the suburbs and understanding like American living. So you're a

Claire Clotney: London girl. You were a London babe, or baby who had experience in the U S and then at some point decided, Hey, I'm going to live in America.

Why, how

Maryse Gordon: did you get there? So it was actually, I had no desire to really live here ever. I knew that I had. Interested in international business. So I knew that as part of my career profile, I would want to either be working heavily in an international space or physically being in an international space.

So my company was expanding the business offerings in the us and. I was doing really well. And I was kind of saying, you know, I'm a little bit bored now, guys, I need something, I need a new challenge or something kind of coming my way. That's going to elevate me a little bit. And so we started this conversation about, you know, what's going on in the U S is there something that I could be a part of?

I remember initially, like, they're like, yep, that's great. Then they were really cool. I was like, what's going on? They actually gave the role to someone else whose girlfriend was moving out there. So I was like horrified, horrified. So I kind of put that on the back burner and was all miserable for a while.

And then the guy, I think, like broke up with his girlfriend, so he wanted to leave and I was like, well, I'm single, so I'm not going to have any of those issues. Uh, let's get this conversation back on the table. So from there I kind of went over and it was kind of given the remit of, you know, replicating the success we had in the UK.

In the U S and so we had a small team there, and the idea was kind of expand that out and yeah. So it kind of having a bit more of an international presence. Now

Claire Clotney: you make it sound so simple. I mean, you've worked at the London stock exchange group for a while now, make it easy for me to understand what exactly it is that you do.

Maryse Gordon: So. I, um, a business development manager, my career has always kind of been in this client facing role, helping people understand technical and functional regulatory industry related activities. So it's that kind of. I guess bridging the gap between a product like an existing service and what the client needs.

So helping them understand an implementation, helping them understand like any kind of regulatory compliance, helping them understand the pricing, the mechanisms for, for, you know, putting things together. Guess you can quote like a subject matter expert on certain products and services within the, within the industry.

So that's always been my. So I started off in the regulatory reporting space and then I migrated into analytics and that's where I'm at at the moment. And one of the things I'm trying to transition into now is around ESG and sustainable investments. ESG is environmental, social, and governance, um, activities, and how that relates to impact that organizations have within, within the world from an infant.

Okay. So

Claire Clotney: you sound like you're speaking a different language, completely different industry, different industry, different sector. I'm wondering though, what does the workplace look like? Are you alone or are you surrounded by a community of people? Um, you know, black people who are doing.

Maryse Gordon: We talked about, you know, school being the first point of knowing that you're the minority and it just unfortunately continues.

I would say the first job I went into the placement, even going to university as well. Like you were the few. And the course that I was doing was. Computer

science and performing arts. I was the only person in the entire university. He did that combination. Didn't make

Claire Clotney: any sense. Sorry. I'm just confused.

Computer science, performing arts, right. Okay. Keep going.

Maryse Gordon: Carry on. I promise you, like I couldn't choose between the two and that's always been my problem. And I found this university that let me do both. I was like, great. I'll stick with that. And I think it's played into my career as well, right? Like.

Public speaking and presentations, which is a performance, is it's a performing element, but you have to have the technical understanding and capabilities behind it to articulate what you're talking about. So it, it did make sense, although at the time people were looking at me sideways, but yeah, I think when you're at school and you're going through that process of really seeing that you are the minority and what that really means to you and what you need to potentially do differently or think about differently or.

For how to present yourself, whatever it may be. It does continue, unfortunately, particularly in the space that I'm in, which is in financial services. We do have a good, I think good representation. There is diversity. Does it exist at every level in our organization? No, it doesn't. And that's, that's primarily what the problem is.

I think, I think there are diverse people within. Pretty much all industries. Right. But how, where, where did, where does that diversity and when it comes to kind of career progression, like, are they at this? Are they the CEO? Probably not. Right. Are they one level down? Are they two levels down? How far down are they?

What does that diversity really? And truly look like in the structure of the organization. So I think that's the. That's the thing you kind of realize is that that career progression is where the problem lies with that, that type of representation. So

Claire Clotney: surely you have had a decent career progression, but I'm quite intrigued about why you moved from London to New York.

You know, there they're more or less sibling cities. What was your experience like in London and how did it compare to your experience in New York in more sector? I guess

Maryse Gordon: when you're from somewhere you're kind of just embedded right. Was just embedded into the environment. So whether you're blind to certain things that take place, or you've just been kind of conditioned to accept certain things, I don't think I've really had.

Issues in London. I don't think so. I've never kind of really seen myself as different or an outcast or whatever it may be. And if I did, I was always using it to my advantage. So landing in the us, you know, one, it's an English speaking place. So. That's the one barrier you do not need to cross. It's another big city.

So you understand how they're going to work, right? It's not like you're moving to this remote location where no one, you don't speak the language and you'd really kind of struggle to, to kind of fit in your you'd have to do a lot more work to fit in. It was like a, you know, a natural kind of. Move into that whole international business experience, I think.

And so that's, that's the opportunities that came to me and it was a no brainer to kind of just jump on it. I I've been here before you, you understand you. Well, you think you understand America's you get in it and you live in it. It's another story.

Claire Clotney: Tell me more about that story.

Maryse Gordon: What is sure here? I, I honestly like this is.

I've experienced anxiety for the first time I thought what is happening to me? And so I was like, oh, it's anxiety. I was like, what? And then like just general stress, right? Or just oppression. Like you just feel this way on you all of a sudden, and you kind of wonder, like, how have I got through my entire life as a black person and never really felt.

Deep of a stressor on your existence, you know, that's

Claire Clotney: amazing. So you're, you're telling me that you have felt not more black, but you've really felt the weight of being black in America. More so than being in the

Maryse Gordon: UK. Yeah, I do. I 100%. Do you think that, and so. You know, a lot of the things that you wouldn't think twice about.

Like now it's part of my behavior to wonder if, if someone's thinking a certain thing about me, but before I really wouldn't care, like I would walk into a shop and get what I needed to do and walk out. Like, I was never of the opinion that someone was potentially watching me or, or judging me or whatever it may be.

But here, like you just feel like on edge all the time. And I think that the information that that just comes to you at every single angle is. Really kind of drains you mentally, like it drains you,

Claire Clotney: please break this down to me because there are some people who are, you know, Brits who are feeling, you know, or experienced in that and maybe would argue, no, it's better in America.

And then there's others like yourself who were like, well, actually I've been here. I know what I'm talking about. Give me examples of something that will make you feel really black in America. That doesn't make you feel really bad.

Maryse Gordon: Well, I mean, the first time I was called the N word was here and I was like, oh wow.

Like that's a, that's a thing. And you just shout out on the subway, like, oh, all right. Um, just,

Claire Clotney: and that was by a non-black

Maryse Gordon: person. Yeah. But I mean, you know, they obviously have like mental health issues, but that's another thing that we did. That's w I feel like we have a good system that if there was a mental health issue, we could call people and they, you wouldn't just see them on the streets or, you know, on the, on the tube or whatever, it may be just their running and screaming and shouting at people.

Like, whereas here, like it's just common practice. And so you have to learn to just ignore people. Like that was one thing I really struggled with. Just ignoring the people who clearly need help. Right. So when that kind of language is just thrown at you here as a brown, I'm like, oh my gosh, like, you know, I'm, I'm real.

And I'm like, oh my God, how could someone even do this? But then you have to think of the bigger picture. It's like, there's a lot of mental health issues here. And there are people here who don't have the same access to that care. And that's why the. Yeah, wherever they're at and doing the kind of things.

So you learn to not take it so personally, but just the fact that that happened, and it was just so such a blahzay incident, again, like if you were living here and that was your interaction every day, like that would hurt. That would really, they would pick up. It's

Claire Clotney: interesting that you used the word blahzay.

Um, I recently went, I went and I got my hands on, so I've got these wonderful dreadlocks and I'm yet to find my regular go-to in Nevada where I am. And I went last week, black woman. She was like, your looks are not dreadful. They're they're just locks. I hear you SIS. I'm feeling you. And she said to me, when she was doing my hair, oh, I really love working with your texture hair.

I was like, yeah. She was like, yeah. N word hair, you know, it just really locks up. And I sat there. I didn't know what to do. She just say my hair was N hair and this is a black woman. I want to say since we don't use that word. And I thought, well, actually, maybe I need to learn the code because clearly she was very comfortable with that word and she wasn't using it or her intention wasn't to insult me little, little

Maryse Gordon: cultural nuances.

There was sure. I don't, I don't think it's really part of our culture. I mean, I I've never really used it and I don't think anyone has used it against me. So that was like the other thing as well, I think is just, there's just so much racial tension as well here. Like it's, it's everywhere it's in.

Politics is in like TV is in the rate is just everywhere. So you, you literally can't escape it like every day, pretty much. Pretty much everyday you're hearing about some incident, right? Whether with a young Batman or whatever it may be, or a police officer or some or something like that. So you're always just constantly being fed these stories about what's happening to you, to your people.

And for me, it's, it's, it's odd because it's like, On the surface. I am not, but, um, I didn't grow up here. So I don't really consider myself as well. African-American is, is what you would be identified as I'm a, well, I'm a black

bread. So this is a, it's a little different for me, but you're still like in the space or the environment where those things are happening to people like you and you realize like how differently you could have grown up, you know, like how differently you think.

just general society. So it's a, it's a strange kind of realization like being embedded in that, but. Visually seem to be that person, but you're not because you haven't grown up in it. And now you're just learning about it all now, to be fair. Do you think

Claire Clotney: that people treat you different when they realize you're a black

Maryse Gordon: birds?

I do. I do think that the accent, which is why I've retained it, like, I hope everyone's like, oh, she's clearly from London. I don't know. There's some kind of like, Like intrigued. Right. And you're kind of like, oh, you're not like people from here. Like, what is it like in other places like that? There's that kind of like curiosity about it.

You can see that like change in dynamics when you, when your voice comes out. Right. And you start articulating and inherit different accent. And when I was a kid, it was always the thing that would get me, like free gifts at this. You know, they'll Chuck in an extra 20% discount. Cause you're from, from the UK, I love, I love, how can you say this word or whatever there was that as a child, but as an adult, you see it in a different way as well.

Right? Because you just now have a bigger picture of what that really truly means. So

Claire Clotney: you've traveled a fair bit. How do you identify when someone asks you where you from wherever it is you go, because you go a lot of places go and start reading off some of the amazing destinations that you've been to go on.

Maryse Gordon: Oh, okay. I'm going to look at my wall and I'm just going to go for it. So Patagonia, Antarctica, Mexico, that was traveling in the U S so like grand canyon, or is that Cuba? Bahamas? I just came back from Peru, South Africa. There's a lot of stuff there. Just, sorry I work to do this. This is, this is

the reason I've been put on this planet is to collect passport stamps and do good things

Claire Clotney: for others.

The only problem is they don't always stamp your passport, which has really upset because you're like, oh,

Maryse Gordon: whatever is that I've been here. I know they didn't do that in Peru. And I was really mad about it, but yeah, they, they didn't ask that my passport, but I took a picture. So at least people knew that I climbed Machu Picchu.

So get

Claire Clotney: deal with that. And you've, you've done a lot of this traveling solo. What is it like to be a solo black female traveler?

Maryse Gordon: It's all the things. So it's really liberating. And I think it's. It's one way that I've just kind of understood more about who I am as an individual, as a black person being thrust into these different situations.

And one of the most difficult things in the world is to kind of be by yourself, like just out there, on this wonderful planet somewhere. Um, so the first time you do it, you're like, oh my God, wow, this is amazing. And you realize like how many things you do because you're by yourself versus if you were with a group of friends.

Right? So. You meet people all the time, bring a book like that's one way to start a conversation. Someone's words could be like, oh, I've read that. Or what is that? You know, that's, that's one way to open up conversations. You also have your own agenda, right? Like you go there, you're not on anyone else's time, but your own.

And so when you're out and you're, you have a few things planned and then you meet someone who tells you about this one really cool thing you should do. So you go and do that. And you just find this new sense of freedom and accessibility to life is what I kind of see as, as a, as a black person. I dunno.

Th th that to me was like the women's side of things. Right? Cause I think being, being a solo female traveler is one of the most liberating things in the

world. And it kind of gives you this grit of like, I can do this. I don't need to be dependent on anyone or anything. And I think that's what a lot of ladies get taught.

Right? Like not told, but it's kind of like instilled in our society that you need to rely on this and then, you know, have something secure and blah, blah, blah. I think that by doing these things by yourself as a woman, like you just, you realize your own power, right? Black person. It's interesting. Cause you, you really do experience the world differently.

I think, you know, there's places I go and people are like, just totally fascinated by me for whatever reason. And they want to take pictures and whatnot, and you're just like, that's really weird. Like how. You generally telling me on the first black person you've ever interacted with, like how could, how could that be possible?

And you just learn a bit more about like those cultural differences in, in the world. And then you see other people, there are people who are curious and then there's people who are fearful and you're just kind of navigating your way around it. And it just, I dunno, it just helps you build this kind of character, right.

For whatever it is you're going to do. So if I'm going to go into a new work office or a new. Uh, industry or a new country, like you've already kind of experienced the fear and the curiosity that you can, you learn how to manage it. You know, nothing becomes a barrier for you now. It's just like, go climb over that.

That'd be pretty easy. Well, I did say

Claire Clotney: a solo black traveler, but you are a successful single black woman. Do you think that your independence has had anything to do with.

Maryse Gordon: Oh, probably, you know, everyone's always like, oh, you probably terrify people or non terrify this probably a bit dramatic, but like the intimidations story kind of comes up quite a lot.

I definitely always wanted to meet someone and I've always kept bite that door open and that little, you know, avenue of hope. I wouldn't say that. Dead

focused on that. Right? Cause it involves another person like having to be in the same mindset. Of course. I think I'm just too impatient to sit and wait for us.

I'd rather go traveling and do something like that. I think it probably means you meet a certain type of person, right? Who wants to join you on that kind of like adventurous journey and maybe. There are fewer of those types of guys available in the realms that I'm kind of operating in. That might be the case, but I'm not going to change it.

I'm more, more dependent just to kind of get, uh, former

Claire Clotney: head teacher, sister, Brenda would be so proud of you right about now, Brenda, I love her. I do want to know though. I mean, I'm praying really a lot into your personal affairs here. How has your data and experience compared,

Maryse Gordon: uh, Well, I U S is, is a hard one, right?

Because I think New York is a separate beast to the rest of probably the U S sure. So New York is extremely transient. It can be very superficial and. That dating is like, it's, the culture is like to serial date, as many people as you can, you know, don't expect to be in a relationship for at least like a year.

If you're with someone they're probably seeing other people and it's totally normal and blah, blah, blah. And I just never been able to buy into that. We don't really have that in the UK. I don't think on this things have changed in the last six years, but you know, you go out, you have a great time with so many, see each other again, a couple of times you're like, great.

We're like actually like, you know, hanging out date and building something for his hair. It doesn't, it really doesn't mean not really treat doesn't mean that I can. It's just like, oh no, it's my last girl hanging out with this. There's 20 of them. Uh, so. You just can't, you don't have that sense of, I guess it's not even security.

Cause you still don't really, unless you've had the conversation right in the UK, you don't really know what's I don't know. You make more assumptions there, I guess then you can potentially. But that,

Claire Clotney: is that the same for women? Uh, you know, black women or women just dating multiple people in New York.

Yeah.

Maryse Gordon: And it's cool. Yeah. You're like, that's what you're expected to do. I feel, and again, I just, I haven't got the patience for it. I, I can't, I can't talk to more than one person. I just can't, I don't have the mental capacity to share that much of my time and, you know, repeat conversations and, and the rest of it,

Claire Clotney: not dating saves money.

Right. I know you spend a lot on travel. I mean, you're in the financial world, so I'm not going to ask you to tell me your salary, which I hear is very, a very comfortable thing to be discussing here in the U S but you're making money. How have you found making a managing money in the U S. Is it easier to make more money here?

Maryse Gordon: Well, I mean, the cost of living is higher, so therefore you will naturally. Well, you should be paid higher because of the cost of living. And the, the other thing with that, as well as that, you know, what you would get in the UK, you don't have to worry about medical bills or like excessive things. Like, you know, you go out, you know, you go out to buy a dress and then you got to pay.

Another there's a different figure in it, right? Like you don't have to worry about that. Like the taxes or, you know, tipping 20%, uh, you know, places you go to eat or whatever. So the cost of living is significantly more expensive in the U S hence, why you get a higher salary? I think like, you know, New York is such a, a wild place and there's so much you can do for free.

And then once you've kind of. Bridge the, like I'm a tourist mentality. And then you start looking at the local activities and the local places to hang out. And the local people, you do find the opportunity to kind of save money or just be a bit more thoughtful with where you're, where you're spending it.

But it is definitely a very expensive place. And, you know, I think just the nightlife and the, the general kind of social aspect of things, if I'm not. Like that's where most of my money is probably going to, and like going to the doctors that cost me a lot as well. It's annoying. I mean,

Claire Clotney: the, the, the cost of the doctors and, you know, medical insurance in the U S is spare of a popular

Maryse Gordon: common topic.

It is, it's a business. Yeah.

Claire Clotney: It is a business. Um, I, but, but it's not just the medical field where they're making lots of money. I mean, I went to open a bank account the other day and I was horrified, horrified to find. Unless I had a certain amount of money in the account. I would be charged a monthly fee and I was, you know, I was a bit confused.

I was so ticked off that I wanted to walk out and not bother open the bank account. I was like, I'll find somewhere else then.

Maryse Gordon: But apparently it's just common practice and all this

Claire Clotney: thing. Yeah. And it wasn't a lot of money, you know, it was a, you know, a grand in a half. You have to have that in the. Oh, they start charging you.

And so I said to the lovely customer service rep, who is, was just doing her job. I said, so what, how does, if I'm bored, like if I'm a poor person and I don't have a grand in the account, you're going to charge me to have the little bit of money that I have an account in the account. But if I'm rich, I can have my money in here and not pay any money.

How does that even make

Maryse Gordon: sense? I mean, Pretty much the narrative for the U S sometimes like if you read, she kind of do really well and things are kind of built towards, like, they were talking about the systemic issues within, within us. And that is one of them, like it's geared towards a certain race and it's geared towards a certain level of income that makes life easier for you.

And if you're outside of that, then there's just, so there are a lot of like strange things like that, that just create this cycle of like, You know, you, you may be low-income, but you're going to stay there. They just keep you there because of this fee or whatever it may be. Or like, you know, you're not gonna have access to medical care or, you know, there's people who walk around with bands that

say like, don't call an ambulance because if something happens to them, they don't want the bill at the end of it.

So are you kidding me? No, I'm not kidding you. Unfortunately again, like this is one of those things. Realized until you get here and you kind of experienced it and you, you see it as just like a living person here. And again, like a, just another disparity between here and the UK that you have to kind of like address or get used to

Claire Clotney: has living in.

Um, has it met your expectations prior to

Maryse Gordon: coming here? I don't think I had expectations. Um, I think I was just kinda like, oh, this would be great. Like thing to do for, I wanted to get, be here for two years. I'm now here as the, my sixth year. And I think like, you know, Land of opportunities, right? Like this is what people kind of see as, and I, I do think that there is a vast amount of opportunity here, and a lot of things you can experience in the U S 100% more that you can, then you can like experience in the UK, for example, where this small.

Island with a lot of gray clouds, whereas here is it's fast land and all these different climates and land masses. And, you know, you can ski in the north and surf in the south and whatever it may be, but for us, we have to leave, right. We have to leave the country to get any, any of that experiences. So just that in itself, like allows you to cut.

Various different states, which have various different ways that they want to operate and live. And, you know, the coastal areas of poverty, more cosmopolitan, and you get kind of to the middle areas where they're very different, just that in itself was something I wasn't anticipating. I didn't really realize the physical beauty of the country.

That was one thing. The other parts of. You know, the, the politics that was very strange to me. And that plays a big part into your experience here as well. But New York in itself, like I have done so many things being here. Like my, I ended up in times square one day, which was awesome. Like my little face, like against one of the times square little banners, I was on like an NBC show.

I'd been going. Yeah. Going around the country and like doing all these different races and meeting people, all sorts of stuff. Oh, I went apple picking, which

again, like I had never done that before, so that was a delight for me. It was just so interesting to see like a different way that people have grown up.

Right. You know, we grew up in this small little island really in truly, and. Cultural experiences came from traveling to Europe. Whereas if you're here, it's literally traveling across state some of the times and you just see like all this opportunity and all these like, experiences that people will just get because they live in the U S so the plan was to two years.

Yeah.

Claire Clotney: And you've been here six years.

Maryse Gordon: Yep. What's

Claire Clotney: next? Are you going to stay here? You're going to live in another state.

Maryse Gordon: What's the plan. So my visa is going to run out. So I'm actually in the green card prices at the moment, but, you know, given what's going on with COVID like, I haven't been home in two years, so I haven't like had dinner with my family.

And in all that time, it really does kind of make you think about where do you want to be right now? And so, yeah, I mean, I'm, I've obviously got this application in the works and it's going to take a little while. Joe now have the patience to wait for it. So it may be that I kind of go back to the UK and, um, continue my journey there.

Or, you know, I see what's going on in Europe. I've always wanted to go to Asia. So that's another opportunity as well that I might start to look into too. But I definitely know. You know, I'm not going to settle here, but that's for sure. I definitely, for sure. No, I can't like, I don't want the medical bills.

Like I don't really want to go and get pregnant and then have to like, worry about how much it's going to cost me a birth, the child. I really do think that's a big factor into like why I would potentially stay or go, you know, I'm a Londoner. Um, I'm from I'm from the UK. Like I'm European, I guess, as it, as it would, if you could say that.

Following Brexit, but Hey, but that's where, like, I, what, I know what I feel comfortable in. I would love to keep traveling around, but as for like a settling down space, I probably do think that that might be where I end up heading to. But who knows? You just really don't know.

Claire Clotney: What would you be taken back to the UK and your suitcase?

What will you be packing that is American to take back to

Maryse Gordon: London, America. This is really bizarre, but like I found this tea company that creates like these weird flavored teas here. They're in Arizona. I've

Claire Clotney: heard of them. Do they do the biscuits and jam

Maryse Gordon: and something like that for that? Probably I haven't seen that.

I know I haven't seen that Hackberry Hackberry. Okay.

Claire Clotney: I don't think it's them. Someone was telling us fellow Brit was telling me that there's an amazing tea company, not too far from us here in Nevada. And they do all kinds of extreme flavors. Yeah. I

Maryse Gordon: would never thought that I'd be leaving America to go back to the UK with tea.

But that was one thing that like came to mind about or what I stick in my suitcase that's American. It was like, I'll take the tea. Don't like the sweets. So I won't be taking any of

Claire Clotney: that or the. Now, when I come to the U S I always pack tea. That's the standard you'll pack Contigo. And back when you came from London, Oh, when, whenever you visited home, what needed to be in the suitcase with

Maryse Gordon: you?

Oh, wow. Okay. So Robertson, the squash, the orange fiver needed two bottles of them that was happening baked beans. That was also staple. And I would

also, I would come home with an empty suitcase that mum would just like pack with all the stuff she bought from like the, um, what is it like the wholesalers.

And so I'd come back with like 14 cans of baked beans. Um, Yorkshire pudding mix needed that. Yeah. And then the Bisto gravy, granules, I'm all the way with you. There

Claire Clotney: Marise hundred and 50%. Like, I mean,

Maryse Gordon: I'm feeling you. And so I'm very like upset right now because I haven't got any of that. Like I said, two years and I run out of all those good things.

I'm like making Shepherd's pie with like the local stuff and it's not the same. Like it's just not, it's not what I want. So, um, yeah, that's what I would always come back.

Claire Clotney: The best experience about living in us

Maryse Gordon: view, what would it be? The best thing I would say is. The weather. I would, I would honestly say that people are always like, oh, fool is the best, the best seasons for that.

For people who don't know what that is, it's autumn. I still use the word autumn, but that's the term that they use here. And I totally agree. Like it is just, it's so nice to have real seasons, like, you know, you're going to get this. Better winter with these blue skies and like flurries of snow. Then you're going to have this spring where all the cheerleaders are coming out and they hang around and all that kind of good stuff.

Are they going to have this humid, like summer where you're dying and you need to hide under a Bush to like get some shade and then you go into autumn slash fall where the leaves are turning, and then you can go pumpkin picking and apple picking, like there's this, this. You don't, you don't have to, like for the entire summer worry about like, oh, is it, is it going to rain today?

Is it going to be overcast? Like if it doesn't happen. And then the, this, the wind is so glorious as well. Like, I didn't realize how much blue sky existed until I got here, because that's just. Uh, thing in the UK. So yeah, that's probably my

favorite thing about being here is like just the seasonal changes and how each one of them brings something different to

Claire Clotney: life.

And with the possibility of you going back to London, what are you looking forward to the most apart from obviously

Maryse Gordon: being with your family? Yes. I'm looking forward to my family. Looking forward to like a roast dinner, like a real roast. I think just like, just getting back into that safe space for me, you know, of the things I know the people I love and not to say that I don't think that here, but it's just different being home.

Isn't it? I think, I think that's the case. You know, if I ever do move back, I feel like I would have a different experience in London to where I grew up and went to school and all that kind of stuff, you know, maybe I'd live in. The fancy areas of London or, you know, where I would be before, but I'm not paying that much money, but now I get it.

Like I I've lived here in Manhattan and spent, you know, how much percentage of my income on accommodation and I get it. Like I get why being in the center of activity is a, is an important thing to some people. So that would be a different experience for me, uh, that I would look forward to, to doing. Um, and yeah, I think.

Got a pubs going to pubs. I really miss that. That's

Claire Clotney: hilarious. A pub. I went to an Irish pub the other day. It was marvelous. It was full of Brits. Mind

Maryse Gordon: you for the love that yeah. And watching that football and all that kind of crazy stuff. Yeah.

Claire Clotney: All that Marise I need to call you marvelous. Marise you've just achieved so much and you're very inspiring and I'm sure that whoever listens to this is going to be like, oh my gosh, I'm going to enter the world of finance or I'm going to go and live here and.

Different nuggets that you've been able to share with us. How can people stay in touch with you?

Maryse Gordon: So I guess the best thing is to find me on LinkedIn. If you want to have a little business connections, don't ask me what that is. But Marie school, you can find me that I was having an open profile and Instagram as well.

So Reese Gordon, and that really probably captures like my living experience from me taking a picture. The donuts. I eat on a weekly basis to finding myself climbing a mountain in Peru. So all of that will be on there as well. So they're probably the two best things. Sure. Last

Claire Clotney: question. Just last question.

Is it better to be black in the UK or in

Maryse Gordon: America? I think, I think being back in the UK.

Claire Clotney: Thanks Maryse Gordon, a positive living and breathing example of single black female. And from her perspective, it's better to be black in the UK over the U S. To share your experience of being black in the UK versus the U S email us directly at Ameriandreamspodcast@gmail.com and please rate and review American dreamers on apple podcasts is the best way for people to find this podcast.

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