

Learning by Ear

"Everyone's Different – Respect for Minorities"

Episode 04

Title: "Pink City" – Gays in Cape Town

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List of Characters:

<i>Narrator</i>	female	about 30	english
<i>Ryan</i>	male	about 22	english
<i>Junior</i>	male	23	english
<i>Leonie</i>	female	about 25	english

INTRO:

Welcome to episode four of our series "Everyone's different – respect for minorities". This series is about people who for different reasons are discriminated against. However they don't just accept their fate, instead they fight for their rights and for a more tolerant society. Today we are meeting two young men from South Africa. Ryan and Junior have some things in common: they both live in Cape Town, they are about the same age and they are both gay. And yet their lives are so different: Ryan is a white South African, Junior is a black Congolese who has fled to Cape Town. South Africa has a name for being the most gay-friendly African country. Whether this is actually true you'll hear now. Come along with us and visit both of them in Cape Town today.

1. O-Ton Ryan

Hi I'm Ryan and I am your waiter today. Here is the menu. I can recommend the burgers. I'll be back in a short time.

2. SFX: Beefcakes

3. Narrator

Ryan works at the hippest gay restaurant in Cape Town. There's pink everywhere: the waiters wear pink-black training singlets, pink garlands hang down the walls and pink cowboy hats sit on the tables. Ryan is also wearing one of these singlets as well as denim shorts and trainers. It's an unusual uniform for a waiter but Beefcakes is an unusual restaurant. All its serving staff are gay or lesbian. Gay means men that love men, women who love women are called lesbian. Ryan is also gay. For the native Cape Towner the city is the best thing that could have happened to him.

4. O-Ton Ryan

I love it here. I am really so lucky that people here are so open. There's no hate crimes. You can just be who you want to be. There are no bad feelings. Well, maybe a bit, but I can walk down the street here in pink shorts and nobody will even raise an eyebrow.

5. Narrator

It was for exactly this reason that Junior also wanted to come to Cape Town.

6. O-Ton Junior

I am Junior . I am 23. I come from Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

7. SFX: Door-Buzzer

8. Narrator:

Junior is sitting in the office of Passop. He helps out here sometimes as a volunteer. Passop is a charitable society that helps gay and lesbian refugees to find their way in South Africa. The young man from the Democratic Republic of Congo has been living in Cape Town for one year now.

9. O-Ton Junior

I came to South Africa because I wanted to live freely. That was not at all possible in Congo. I lived in fear for my life there. I was at university but I could not study because I was always being discriminated against. Congo is a very conservative country. Being how I am was unacceptable for both society and my family. So I looked for a country where I could be free and happy. I could not go to Europe or the US therefore I searched in Africa. It's said that South Africa is gay-friendly. So I came here.

10. Narrator

Junior is one of thousands of African refugees who have come to South Africa on account of their sexual orientation. The South African government has granted them asylum. This makes South Africa exceptional on the continent. According to figures from Passop it is unlawful or even illegal to be homosexual in 38 African countries. In some places you could face up to 15 years in jail for being gay. Junior was also constantly being discriminated against in Congo. It was especially bad when he was studying in Kinshasa.

11. O-Ton Junior

I found life very difficult. I was always alone. There were lots of gay people at the university but we didn't dare meet up. It was too dangerous. So we all tried to suppress the fact we were gay and didn't tell anyone about it. I studied law and even the professors attacked me and said that being gay was abnormal and that they didn't want any gays there. Even my own mother tried to kill me. And so I said to myself "I am going. I can't stay here".

12. SFX: Straße Kapstadt

13. Narrator

Junior walks along the streets of Cape Town. He is wearing tight jeans and a black leather jacket as well as mascara and lipstick. This would have been impossible in Congo. Cape Town on the other hand is considered to be the most gay-friendly city in the whole of Africa. There are music festivals, clubs and restaurants especially for gay people. It has gained the nickname Pink City. However, Junior's Cape Town looks quite different.

14. O-Ton Junior

Cape Town is gay-friendly if you live in a safe part. Most of the gays who can enjoy their freedom here are white. And it's also only the white South Africans who are open and educate themselves about homosexuality. The people who live in the townships on the other hand show no understanding. It is very difficult for us there.

15. SFX: Restaurant Beefcakes

16. Narrator

Unfortunately being gay in South Africa is not just a question of being gay. It is also a question of your skin colour. White homosexuals can live openly and freely in Cape Town. If you are black it is totally different. Worst of all black lesbians are very often being raped. There is a superstition here that raping a gay woman will make her heterosexual and thus make her interested in the opposite sex. The white man Ryan, in contrast, has had until now very few negative experiences in the restaurant.

17. O-Ton Ryan: Problems at Beefcakes

From time to time you get a few idiots who think it's really clever of them to make fun of us. But it happens very rarely. And anyway we are like a family here. If somebody makes fun of a waiter then there are immediately five other waiters there to show the guys what's what.

18. SFX: Strandpromenade

19. Narrator

Leonie really can't understand any of this. The heterosexual Cape Town woman likes sitting at the beach promenade and watching people. She thinks it is great and exciting that people are so different, how they behave and dress and speak. Most of her friends are gay and Leonie just doesn't understand why anyone has a problem about whether someone is gay or lesbian.

20. O-Ton Leonie

Actually they are not at all different to my straight friends. We enjoy the same things. The reason I want to spend my time with them is not because they are gay. Friendship is about the person, whether they are gay or not, is secondary. More important to me is that we have shared interests, that we enjoy being with each other, that we have the same sense of morality, that we can go on holiday together. It is exactly like in a straight friendship. They are gay because that is their sexual orientation, but that doesn't define our friendship.

KW Anfang

21. SFX: Strandpromenade kurz hochziehen

22. Narrator

Leonie watches two men holding hands as they laugh and walk by.

23. O-Ton Leonie

They don't have problem about holding hands and kissing in public. They don't have a problem with being gay and that's great. I think it's very important that homosexuals can show their affection for each other in public without being looked at in a funny way. That couple simply feel good about themselves and each other.

KW Ende

24. SFX: Strandpromenade kurz hochziehen

25. O-Ton Leonie

We have a long road ahead of us. There are still lots of people who have to understand that a person's sexual orientation is not important. It is a part of them and they can't change it but it does not define their personality. I believe that if more people would understand that, at an earlier age, their own lives would be much easier. They would find it much easier to accept other people, and also themselves.

26. Narrator

Congolese Junior also hopes for that. He is disappointed that Cape Town is not the gay paradise he'd hoped it would be. He has not yet found a job and is almost always broke. But he is not giving up. He strives as an activist for gay and lesbian rights worldwide.

27. O-Ton Junior

This gay thing doesn't only happen in South Africa or Congo. There are gay people all over the world and they are all striving for their human rights. Some African leaders say it is un-African to be gay, but that is not true. Nobody ever said to me, right, from now on you are gay, nobody forced me. It's just the way I am. And there are loads of other black Africans who are just the same as me. Lots, in every country. It is not un-African, it is a human reality.

28. Narrator

Also Ryan, the Beefcakes restaurant waiter hopes that one day it won't matter if a person is gay or straight.

29. O-Ton Ryan

In a perfect world there would be no hatred or animosity. Unfortunately people have so many prejudices. I wish that gay people could run around everywhere without anyone getting upset. But I believe we will have to be a bit patient until that happens and just hope for the best.

30. Outro:

With this appeal for a more tolerant society from Junior and Ryan in Cape Town, this episode of Learning by Ear comes to an end. Have any of you experienced examples of discrimination yourselves? Or have you caught yourselves being prejudiced towards others? Share your experiences with us. And if you'd like to hear this or any other episode of this series again, just go to our website at www.dw.de/lbe. There you will also find a link to our Facebook page, where you can post comments. Until next time, bye!