

Speaker - Johannes Oghoro Wordsmith - Safiya Kamaria Kinshasa

Pour a tomato stew into the pot.

Add onion, bay leaves, curry powder, thyme, a pinch of salt and a lot of pepper.

Let it all become a fragrant harmony.

Stir in rice and wait for the beautiful mix. It doesn't have a choice. It has to mix.

Simmer down and watch the beauty unfold.

I'm Johannes. Some of you might know me as Tega. Some of you might know me as TJ.

I want to take some time to focus on the things in life we are all here for. Those moments that put fire in your belly.

Our government has been wobbly to say the least and speaking of wobbly moments, it's made me think, life is like riding a bicycle.

The best way to stop wobbling is to have a destination. The freedom of riding, not knowing how you're going to get there, but you keep your eye on the prize. That's what I am doing here in Salisbury.

My family are all over the world, Nigeria, US and throughout Europe. But I am here working hard, riding my metaphoric bike, so that I can eventually go back to be with my family and we can cook that recipe together.

If you were to ride a bike through Salisbury, and at this time of year it can be very beautiful with the leaves and the rain and more rain and more rain...



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But what if you were to ride a bike and the whole world was grey. Grey, plain and boring... You would hate it right? You would say, where is the colour? Where are the splashes of yellows and greens?

Sometimes being here in Salisbury, this is how I feel.

I feel that sometimes colour is not welcome; bland, dull colours are preferred.

I'm not saying there aren't electric blues or deep violets but when you look different on the outside, sometimes it's hard to fit in.

It was never my plan to be in Salisbury I don't even remember how I got here I think I was cycling, but here I've had to learn to interact with different people that I normally wouldn't interact with.

Uncomfortability has led to comfortability. And I thank Salisbury for teaching me that.

Right now it feels like if Salisbury were a buffet, every dish would be bangers and mash. Every. Single. Dish.

A place should have its own style and still have something for everyone

I promise you; variety helps people to bond.

Food is the backbone of a community. It brings people together. One of the places that you see everyone sit down and smiling is always around food. Lalahan Turkish Restaurant, Noodle Camp and shout out to Nandos.

How many of you have eaten Jollof rice?

In my opinion, it's one of the most delicious dishes on the planet, colourful too.



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Rice soaked in an abundance of seasoning and when you eat it, it makes you feel warm, it makes you feel welcome. You're welcome.

We should all just have a mass Come Dine With Me at my place? Might be too many people though.

Eating until our hearts are content and maybe the quarrels will stop? What does it matter who likes what? And who comes from where?

Back in Nigeria, where I am from, boarding school was rough. I used to get bullied. I wanted to work against that and eventually I ended up being awarded most friendly student.

Bullying is cruel.

Being kind costs absolutely nothing.

Empathy costs absolutely nothing.

We all the right to feel good without judgement.

We can't be free in hostile environments.

I'm one of the privileged Nigerians able to live overseas. As a child my parents tried to shield me from things like police corruption and racism, but as an adult, I'm living it.

Over there and to be honest here too, people in charge get a bit power mad and feel it is their right to make people uncomfortable.

We must challenge those with power and defend those without.

Ensure we don't become the hostile environments ourselves.

Create the world we want to live in and start pushing for those in charge to do what they were hired for.



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I have a passion for my country. I want Nigeria to be a functioning democracy. I want Nigeria to feel like freedom.

One of the few industries the Nigerian government doesn't have a hand in, is the music and the movie industry. Everyone has seen Nollywood memes and Burna boy, Wiz kid, the list goes on...

My passion is music and music journalism. I love the Nigerian music genre called Afro Beats. It's the sound of my family. A mix of crazy and calm. Good chaos.

I run an underground online magazine. It's a place where I can elevate creatives to talk about their process and how they feel? We regularly share new music playlists and interview upcoming Creatives. It's building a community I want to see and support.

I hope Salisbury one day can be like my magazine, where new and different things are celebrated. Young and old together. Food and culture at the front.

Where we are all provided with the opportunity to shine – a place where we can see ourselves in each other regardless of our choices at the buffet.

I don't judge you if you like bangers and mash. In fact, forget Salisbury, I want the whole world to be like this, but first we need to start in our own homes and in our own bodies, remind ourselves what it means to be safe, and extend that idea wherever we go.

You are welcome to try Nigerian Jollof, don't listen to any Ghanaian who will tell you theirs is better.

And it all tastes better with a Fela Kuti song.
My name is Johannes and I approve this message.

