

# **UNDER ONE ROOF**

(Pilot)

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. LAGOS STREET - DAY

A chaotic, colorful market. Hustle and bustle. Vendors shout in Yoruba, Pidgin English, and French. A WOMAN in her late twenties, AYO (Nigeria), stands behind a row of pirated DVDs. Her braided hair is tied up, and her quick wit shows in her eyes. She thrusts a DVD toward a customer.

AYO

(selling)

"Hollywood blockbuster! No scratch! Only five hundred naira! Buy now!"

The customer walks away. Ayo sighs, pulls out her phone. A notification pops up: "Congratulations! You have been selected for the World Cohabitational Study. Flights booked."

AYO (V.O.)

(excited)

This is it, Ayo. Escape the market, see the world... and get paid.

She glances upward to an unseen sky, as if thanking the ancestors.

CUT TO:

INT. OXFORD UNIVERSITY DORM - DAY

A book-cluttered dorm room. JAMES (United Kingdom), a lanky, bespectacled doctoral candidate in his early thirties, sits at his laptop surrounded by linguistics texts. He speaks into a microphone, practicing Mandarin tones terribly.

JAMES

(practicing)

Ma. Má. Mǎ. Mā. Ugh.

His computer PINGS. An email: "The Global Cohabitational Study accepts your application." His face lights up.

JAMES (V.O.)

(deadpan)

Finally, a practical application for my PhD in endangered languages... living with strangers. Brilliant.

CUT TO:

INT. MUMBAI START-UP OFFICE - NIGHT

Rows of coders slump at their desks. Among them is RIYA (India), mid-twenties, hoodie over her head, typing furiously. Her code window shows live stock prices and lines of code streaming by. Her phone buzzes with a text: "U up?" She rolls her eyes and swipes it away. Then an email appears: "Flight itinerary enclosed - World Cohabitational Study."

RIYA

(to herself)

Free room, free food, reliable Wi-Fi? I'm in.

She closes her laptop, stands, and makes a triumphant fist pump.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIO DE JANEIRO BEACH - SUNSET

A tide of music, samba dancing. LUCA (Brazil), a muscular dancer in his early twenties, flips on the sand as tourists cheer. He lands perfectly, collects coins. A teen hands him a flyer that reads, "Can you bring your rhythm to the world? Apply now!" He grins.

LUCA (V.O.)

(cheerful)

If the world wants rhythm, I'll give them rhythm.

CUT TO:

INT. PARIS BAKERY - MORNING

Behind the counter, CLAIRE (France), late twenties, comedic and charming, packs croissants while flirting with a customer.

CLAIRE

(to customer)

Un café, a croissant and... my number?

The customer laughs. The BAKER (60s) appears, scowling. Claire's phone buzzes. She reads an email, eyes widening.

CLAIRE (V.O.)

(excited)

A chance to leave this bakery, travel and cook for strangers? Oui.

CUT TO:

INT. BEIJING RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT

A smoky recording studio. YING (China), early twenties, rebellious rapper with neon-dyed hair and attitude, bangs out a beat. She yawns. Her manager waves a contract.

MANAGER

(in Mandarin, subtitled)

They want you on some world experiment. Think Big Brother meets

World Cup. You in?

YING

(smirking)

Do they let me rap uncensored?

MANAGER

They want authenticity. It's global.

Ying shrugs, signs.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHANNESBURG INTERNET CAFE - DAY

A teenage boy holds a camera, vlogging. Beside him, NOSIPHO (South Africa), early thirties, an outspoken blogger with short dreadlocks, edits footage.

BOY

(excited)

Nosipho, you hit 1 million subscribers! You're trending!

Nosipho looks at her laptop. On the screen is an invitation: "The World Cohabitational Study invites you to be our voice."

NOSIPHO

(thinking)

A house full of strangers to roast? I'll bring the tea.

CUT TO:

EXT. U.S. AIRPORT - DAY

MONTAGE of the participants traveling, passports stamped, planes taking off. Each character crosses into an unknown future.

EXT. AN OLD VICTORIAN HOUSE - DAY

An imposing, quirky Victorian house sits at the end of a suburban street. A sign reads: "Global Cohabitational Study - Welcome." A production van parked outside boasts huge satellite dishes and cables leading inside. A NEIGHBORHOOD KID cycles by, staring.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Rows of monitors show feeds from inside the house. DR. TILDA WREN (40s), the eccentric anthropologist behind the study, sips espresso as she watches. Her assistant, SALLY (20s), a tech-savvy intern, types.

DR. WREN

(to Sally)

Cameras check?

SALLY

(nervous)

All six floors, thirty-two angles. Live stream ready.  
This is insane.

DR. WREN

It's science. Sociology meets reality TV. We'll discover how people truly connect when they're forced to... share a bathroom.

She smirks.

EXT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The cast members arrive one by one, dragging suitcases, eyes wide.

AYO arrives first, craning her neck at the architecture.

AYO

(to herself)

It looks haunted. If a ghost appears, I'm charging extra.

Luca arrives carrying a duffel bag and a portable speaker blaring samba. He spots Ayo.

LUCA

(Brazilian Portuguese accent)

Hola! You here for the... global thing?

AYO

Yes. I'm Ayo. Nigeria.

LUCA

Luca. Brazil. Do you dance?

AYO

Only when no one is watching.



They laugh awkwardly.

Claire pulls up on a small scooter, red scarf around her neck.

CLAIRE

(cheerful)

Bonjour! I'm here to cook and maybe find love.

AYO

We'll see about love. I'm here for the cash.

LUCA

And the exposure!

Ying arrives, headphones around her neck, unimpressed.

YING

(to group)

Is this the right place? Are we the social experiment  
or the control group?

CLAIRE

Both, I think.

James emerges from a taxi with far too many suitcases and a  
stack of books. He struggles. Ayo laughs and helps him.

JAMES

(out of breath)

James. United Kingdom. I'm a... linguist.

AYO

Of course you are.

Nosipho arrives, filming everyone on her phone.

NOSIPHO

Say hello to the internet! I'm Nosipho, and this is my new reality show.

YING

(deadpan)

We don't even know if they have Wi-Fi yet.

Riya runs up last, backpack bouncing.

RIYA

(panting)

Sorry! The rideshare driver tried to pitch me his screenplay. I'm Riya. Programmer. Please tell me there's fiber optic here.

AYO

I hope there's fiber anything. Come, let's go in before the ghost locks us out.

They exchange nervous smiles and step toward the ornate front door.

CUT TO:

INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

The door creaks open automatically. A smart speaker voice booms.

SMART SPEAKER (V.O.)

Welcome, participants. Please remove your shoes.  
Recording has commenced.

JAMES

(whispering)

Recording?

The group hesitates, then enters. The door SHUTS behind them with a loud CLANG.

AYO

(startled)

That is not reassuring.

They look up. Hidden cameras dot the ceiling. Nosipho waves at one.

NOSIPHO

Hi, Mom!

LUCA

Who is Mom? The world? Are we on the internet already?

CLAIRE

At least the wallpaper is cute.

There is indeed floral wallpaper, with monitors occasionally blending in. A sleek, modern kitchen is visible through an archway.

RIYA

Guys... look at this.

She points to a giant touchscreen on the wall. It flashes:  
"WELCOME. PLEASE SIGN IN TO BEGIN YOUR EXPERIMENT." A digital contract scrolls down.

YING

(reading)

"By entering this house you agree to be recorded 24/7  
for one year... cannot leave... compensation upon completion..."

CLAIRE

(concerned)

Un an? Excusez-moi?

JAMES

(confused)

They didn't mention the no-leaving part in the brochure.

AYO

(sarcastic)

Welcome to the fine print. Where do I sign?

They laugh nervously. Dr. Wren's voice emerges through the smart speaker.

DR. WREN (V.O.)

Hello, housemates! I'm Dr. Tilda Wren. Congratulations on being selected for the first ever World Cohabitational Study. Your participation will advance human understanding of cross-cultural dynamics. You'll receive one million dollars to split evenly if you stay for the full year.

The group gasps. Claire claps.

DR. WREN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And here's your first challenge: In one hour, you will host your first live global broadcast from the living room. Introduce yourselves to the world. The audience will vote on your performance. Bon chance!

The touchscreen DINGS, counts down from 01:00:00.

YING

(shocked)

They want us to... perform? Now?

RIYA

I'm not even camera-ready.

NOSIPHO

(thrilled)

This is my Super Bowl!

JAMES

I suppose this answers the "Wi-Fi" question.

AYO

(to Riya)

You're a programmer; hack the timer.

RIYA

And get disqualified before we get a single penny? No thanks.

The group stares at the ticking clock. Each character's face reveals a mixture of dread and excitement.

BLACKOUT.

TITLE SEQUENCE - montaged glimpses of each roommate's country and them adjusting to house life, cut with a graphic of the house globe spinning and the title card: "UNDER ONE ROOF."

ACT ONE

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

An eclectic lounge with mismatched couches, throw pillows and international knick-knacks. Cameras built into shelves. The roommates are in various states of panic, prepping for the live stream. Riya fiddles with cables; Nosipho sets up her phone like it's a vlog; Luca does push-ups.

CLAIRE

We need structure! An agenda!

JAMES

An opening line. Something to hook them in the first five minutes.

AYO

First five minutes? Try first five seconds. People click away quick. Trust me—I sell movies on the street.

YING

Relax. Authenticity is content. We'll be ourselves.

NOSIPHO

(directing)

Okay, we'll sit in a semicircle. We introduce ourselves one by one, say something fun about our culture, then answer questions from the live chat.

LUCA

Can I dance in the intro?

CLAIRE

Only if I can juggle baguettes.

Riya groans.

RIYA

The stream will be worldwide. We'll need translation subtitles and bandwidth allocation. I'm configuring the router to prioritise our upstream.

JAMES

We can each speak in our native language and I'll interpret. That will be an impressive demonstration of my degrees.

AYO

This isn't the U.N., James. Keep it simple.

They scramble as the clock ticks down. Music plays over the montage: comedic prepping—hair, makeup, technical difficulties, Claire dropping croissants, Ying teaching Luca to dab, Nosipho writing name cards.

RIYA

(annoyed)

Where is the ring light? Lighting is crucial! I will not have the internet see my dark circles.



NOSIPHO

(laughing)

Too late. They're called authenticity.

The clock counts down to ten seconds. They run to the couch, out of breath.

SMART SPEAKER (V.O.)

Ten... nine... eight...

CLAIRE

Breathe. Smile.

LUCA

(fist bumping everyone)

We got this.

JAMES

(panicking)

Do we, though?

SMART SPEAKER (V.O.)

Three... two... one... you are live.

All eyes widen as the indicator light goes red.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Wren and Sally watch monitors with expectation. Thousands of chat bubbles appear on-screen, languages from all over the world.

SALLY

(to Dr. Wren)

We have 8.4 million viewers.

DR. WREN

(clasping hands)

Don't screw this up, humanity.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The roommates freeze, then smile widely. Nosipho leaps into host mode.

NOSIPHO

(to camera, enthusiastic)

Sanibonani, world! Welcome to Under One Roof, where seven strangers from across the globe share a house for a whole year. I'm Nosipho from Johannesburg, South Africa. I'm a journalist, activist, and professional tea spiller.

She gestures to Ayo.

AYO

(cheerful)

I'm Ayo from Lagos! I'm a hustler, a storyteller and part-time pirate DVD dealer. I came here to show you Nigeria's pride and maybe get this bread.

JAMES

(British)

I'm James from Oxford. I study languages, which I'm sure will come in handy when we inevitably offend each other. Fun fact: I can say "I am trapped in a house" in eleven languages.

CLAIRE

(flirty)

Bonjour, je m'appelle Claire! I'm from Paris. I bake, I flirt, and I'm here to prove that French people can laugh at themselves. Also, I will feed these savages.

LUCA

(energetic)

Hello, world! I'm Luca from Rio. I'm a samba dancer and capoeira instructor. I'll teach them all to move their hips by the end of this show.

RIYA

(dryly)

Hi, I'm Riya from Mumbai. I'm a programmer. I'm here for the gigabit internet and to see if I can debug human behavior.

YING

(cool)

Yo. I'm Ying from Beijing. I'm a rapper and beatmaker.  
This is weird. Let's make it weirder.

The chat explodes with hearts, laughing emojis, and translations. James reads the screen, translating frantic messages into English.

JAMES

"Brazil loves you!" "Marry me, Luca!" "Say something in Igbo!"

AYO

(in Igbo)

Ndewo! We bring you good vibes.

The chat swoons. Luca jumps up and dances a quick samba, pulling Claire up to join. She laughs, spins, and then knocks over a vase. Water spills. Everyone cheers.

NOSIPHO

We want to share cultures and maybe some fights. Send in your questions! For example: Who snores? Vote now!

They all point at James, who blushes.

JAMES

Science has proven that my snoring can lull a person to sleep. You're welcome.

Laughter. Riya's phone beeps. She whispers to Ayo.

RIYA

(whispering)

The router just overheated. I'm rerouting through my hotspot.

AYO

(whispering)

See, you're useful.

The chat asks for a cooking segment. Claire runs to the kitchen and returns with a baguette and jar of peanut butter.

CLAIRE

Today, we make... PB&J, French style.

She dramatically spreads peanut butter on the baguette. The audience roars with laughter and hearts.

LUCA

(pointing to Ying)

We need some rap.

YING

(rising)

Fine. My name is Ying, I'm new to this thing, I'll drop some bars that'll make the world swing—

The beatboxing begins. Luca claps along. Everyone dances. James tries and fails to floss. The chat goes wild.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sally looks impressed.

SALLY

(to Dr. Wren)

This is actually... fun.

DR. WREN

It's working. We may actually prove that people can enjoy each other's differences.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ten minutes in, the energy is high. A chat question pops up on the screen: "Who among you do you think will snap first?"  
Laughter. They each pretend to raise a hand, then point at Riya.

RIYA

It's true. Don't talk to me before I get my coffee.

NOSIPHO

(semi-serious)

Real talk: We're here for a year. We will annoy each other. But we promise to be honest. To talk about our cultures, our differences, our privileges, and our biases. If we can do it, maybe the world can, too.

The roommates nod, serious for a moment.

LUCA

(smiling)

And if not, at least we have good food.

They laugh. Suddenly, a LOUD CRASH. The lights flicker. Everyone looks around.

AYO

Ghost!

Ying runs to the window.

YING

It's just the camera crew dropping something. Relax.

The chat goes nuts with ghost emojis.

JAMES

(to camera)

Ladies and gentlemen, we've discovered poltergeist activity. This house may be haunted by the spirit of colonialism.

Laughter. The feed returns to normal. Dr. Wren's voice interrupts.

DR. WREN (V.O.)

Thank you for joining the first Under One Roof live stream. Stay tuned tomorrow for the Housemates' first group challenge: design a communal space that reflects all your cultures. Goodnight, world.

The red light goes off. The roommates collapse on the couch, exhausted.

AYO

That was insane!

CLAIRE

My hair is ruined.

JAMES

My dignity is ruined.

RIYA

(grinning)

We have 12 million followers. And trending hashtags.

NOSIPHO

(sincere)

We're a hit, guys.

They all look at each other. A mix of shock, pride, and fear.

LUCA



(softly)

We're stuck together for a year.

YING

(deadpan)

You're all going to hear my next album before anyone else. Sorry.

Laughter. Dr. Wren's voice again.

DR. WREN (V.O.)

One last thing. Somewhere among you is my research assistant. They know what tests are coming next. If you find them, they lose their share. Goodnight.

The roommates gasp. They turn, eyes narrowing at each other. Suspicion spreads like wildfire.

CLAIRE

(dramatic)

Plot twist!

AYO

(pointing at James)

It's him. He knows too many languages.

JAMES

Hey!

NOSIPHO

(laughing nervously)

This just got interesting.

The camera slowly zooms out as they stare at each other with playful paranoia.

FADE OUT.

END OF PILOT