

## KWAZULU-NATAL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

SECOND INTERVIEW CONDUCTED WITH PETER KERCHHOFF BY  
JENNIFER VERBEEK ON 16 FEBRUARY 1998.

'K' SHALL SIGNIFY THE INTERVIEWEE AND 'V' THE INTERVIEWER.

V: (This is the second)... interview between Peter Kerchhoff, of PACSA, and Jennifer Verbeek, which took place on 16 February 1998, at the PACSA Offices in Berg Street in Pietermaritzburg. This is the second tape. Okay, Peter, what I'd like to go through today, you can fill in for me, perhaps a bit more about the treason trials, commemorative service, your detention and the beginnings of violence monitoring and what was going on at PACSA at that time. Because we're going into that period where we're talking about the war in the valley, which becomes, is very, very important for our records, and know some of it is very painful for you, but we'll just take it slowly all the way through, if you don't mind.

K: Mmm. Okay, one of the memories of Veldboom(?), I'm sure it was Sharpeville, 1983, the commemoration service in the Cathedral. Or it might have been '84, because with the linking up of UDF and the linking in with youth groups, as a result of our affiliation to the United Democratic Front, the Sharpeville service was extremely well attended by people from the communities, or the suburbs around Edendale and well I suppose, boundary Edendale, but certainly Sobantu as well and in it, Chris Langeveld was a fantastic, well he is a fantastic person in his own right. And the service we - we planned the service together with some of the folk from St Joseph's, Cedara, and it went off extremely well. The Cathedral was packed, primarily I guess with youth. A lot of buses were used on that occasion to bring the youth in from the outside - the outer areas. But I can remember that the singing, we showed some slides of Sharpeville '60 and the whole bloom (?) Of Sharpeville 1960, in a sense was not apparent, it was almost as if in post-Soweto '76, the youth were on fire and they really were moving positively towards, ja, challenging the apartheid regime. And certainly the singing - and, and when Chris came on at the very beginning of his input, he had, I think he had the, the - the whole Cathedral congregation

1 eating out of his hand - they were jumping up and singing freedom songs, and.... So much  
2 so that in terms of the toy-toying, the dancing, the noise, the dust rising, certain pigeons  
3 that I wouldn't think frequented the Cathedral were moved to fly around the Cathedral,  
4 how they got in I don't know. Anyway, it really was a good function. But afterwards,  
5 of course, the negativism crept in. When we went out to ensure that the youth were able  
6 to get on their buses to go back to the townships - earlier on in the evening - sorry, I'm  
7 digressing slightly - earlier on in the evening we had noted the presence of the Security  
8 Forces, as always, but earlier on, before the actual service started, we took a little walk  
9 down Longmarket Street and actually monitored and saw a vast array of police in their  
10 vehicles, just round the corner, in Buchanan Street, and one was a bit sceptical about what  
11 might happen afterwards. So certainly, when we were seeing folk out into their buses, we  
12 were making sure that there was no harassment, or intimidation. One of the buses, when  
13 the kids got on it, and I shouldn't say kids, I guess the youth, the bus was swaying side  
14 to side from the chanting, toy-toying and singing of the youth as they were getting ready  
15 to move back to their... So for me that particular evening is very memorable, and I think,  
16 somewhere in our files, we have a copy of that service, which perhaps I should make  
17 available to the Archives, if you haven't got it already. But okay, that then, and I think  
18 it was, it was '98, 1984, not 1983 because UDF as was mentioned last time - had only  
19 really, well had only been formed in August of '83. Then in terms of moving on from  
20 there and the situation of monitoring. Ja in the '84/'85 period, before the Sarmcol strike,  
21 it was a case of really being involved with awaiting-trial prisoners, either from the point,  
22 or mainly from the point of view of the Treason Trial that was set up - held in  
23 Pietermaritzburg, by the State, and then this situation, we were closely linked to the  
24 communities who had loved ones awaiting trial and the one treason trial that sticks out  
25 particularly, well there were two in fact, but the one relates to the trial of three people and  
26 I am trying to remember their names, certainly Makubela, was one, Macina, was another  
27 and there's a third man - these people brought from the Eastern Cape and we were there  
28 on the - for a period of the trial and we met a most remarkable woman, Mrs Makubelau,  
29 who was a Librarian, I think, based at the - in Alice, Fort Hare, I think, if I'm not  
30 mistaken, but a remarkable woman and her husband was one of those on trial and we were  
31 - as I say, very involved in trying to help folk get to the court and to get accommodation

1 and the like. but on the day of sentence, it was quite remarkable, they were given long  
2 prison sentences and Mrs Makubela was really strong. I think she was clothed in - dressed  
3 with the ANC colours - if I can remember properly, but she, she gave them - she was a  
4 very striking woman, small, but very powerful and obviously saddened by the long prison  
5 sentence, but very impressive in terms of her ability to keep a straight face under the  
6 circumstances, and we were all waiting for the three trialists, or the now sentenced  
7 prisoners to come out of the one gate, and sly as the Security Forces were, and probably  
8 still are, they took the back gate out and so by the time we all got into College Road, the  
9 truck with the three prisoners in had taken off and we were only able to give a short wave.  
10 I'm not sure if that's the same occasion, or if it was another occasion, but Yusef Haffajee,  
11 whose brother, the dentist, Haffajee had been one of those killed in detention and Dr  
12 Biggs was the guy who did the post mortem, and I mean that's another story in itself in  
13 terms of his findings of the post mortem and how they tortured the Doctor. But I can  
14 remember, Yusef used to participate in - or attend a number of these trials and this one  
15 particular occasion was when the late Harry Koekoemoer (?) was still around and he was  
16 one of the Advocates for the Defence, and towards the end of - well, at the end of the  
17 days proceedings, one of the local constables, of I presume, of the local police heard all  
18 this chanting in the courts. and rushed inside, and unbeknown to us, he rushed inside with  
19 a smoke bomb - or a smoke - teargas cannister, and actually let this thing off in the courts.  
20 And if you remember, College Road Court House, it's got these double doors which don't  
21 open that easily and then as people fled to get out of the court, there was this logjam and  
22 they were trying to get out of the other exits in the court, but Yusuf was one of those that  
23 was caught in the centre and came out very much overcome with this teargas and teargas  
24 was very new to all of us at that time, we just knew that you had to try and wash it off as  
25 quickly as possible. But with lots of water, because little water didn't really help and here  
26 was Yusuf, retching, retching, couldn't do much else because he didn't have much in his  
27 stomach at the time, obviously because he had been at court most of the day. But, ja, I  
28 can just remember, vividly, him sitting on the edge of the verandah of that courtyard, of  
29 that court and this - and other victims of the teargas, the same experience, you know  
30 really in dire straits. Joan and I weren't even inside the court at the time, I mean it was  
31 choc-a-bloc, and that was probably the problem with the system then, as in order to keep

1 family out, they used to load the courts with police so that they would say 'no, sorry, it's  
2 full, come back ...' and lots of families couldn't get in and I'm digressing slightly again, but  
3 I remember on one occasion, actually coming out of court to allow the people to go inside  
4 and knew that there was space inside and yet, the cops said 'no, it was full.' So, you  
5 know, the pressures that one goes through the system along the line. But the other  
6 treason trial that I want to mention is the treason trial of the sixteen which eventually  
7 broke down to twelve and the way the community rallied around to support each lunch  
8 time during the entire Trial Proceedings. There were lunches brought for the sixteen, plus  
9 the advocates and the teams of lawyers that were - you know responsible for the sixteen  
10 members of the - this particular treason trial and on that occasion, one of the issues that  
11 cropped up was the small issue relating to videos and how it was possible to doctor videos  
12 and certainly this had been done in the case of some of the evidence that the State was  
13 leading against the treason trialists, or the alleged treason trialists and that - that was quite  
14 a significant change as well because they - the Defence brought in some very special  
15 people that were able to show the judge and the assessors that in fact the videos had been  
16 doctored and the system had ben out to try and manipulate the books, yet again. So, ja,  
17 in terms of the treason trials, that, that was the one that certainly stuck out and the fact  
18 that we had a number of people staying around Pietermaritzburg and I remember we had  
19 a young, not so young, a Trade Unionist, one of the three that were actually - well, he was  
20 actually staying with us. And again one was - it was either Tim or the other - one of the  
21 three of them ? - Sam Mokene and I can't remember - but Caesar Jikalala was the other  
22 and Isaac - was it Ndlovu perhaps, anyway, Isaac stayed with us and it was - particularly  
23 moving to understand, to to hear from him, what he, as a Trade Unionist had gone  
24 through in the Durban region during the period of struggle. That again, just another  
25 memory of the treason trials. Jikalala, was later very badly injured and was in a wheel  
26 chair for many many months. I'm not quite sure if he's out of it, but - he was - ja, he had  
27 been very badly injured. I'm just trying to think of - my memory is a bit rusty here, I'm  
28 trying to think of another Trade Unionist that might have been involved also in - but I  
29 can't remember his name, he was from the Eastern Cape. But anyway, I'll try and come  
30 back to that at a later stage. So then - ja - that's moving on and dates of the - that treason  
31 trial, I'm not too sure of - you can check the records, but what I'd like to move on now

1 is the period of 1986 - the early part of the year in terms of what we were trying to do in  
2 the challenge against apartheid. And I think, if I'm not mistaken, we tried to set up  
3 another Sharpeville Commemoration Service and I think this probably would have been  
4 held out in the Edendale area rather than in town, because of oppression problems, but I  
5 don't have a clear memory of that and I can double check that. But certainly, in terms of  
6 June the 16th, 1986, as I mentioned earlier, we had been involved in the setting up and  
7 holding of the June 16th '85 service out in the - that area, in Imbali in fact - at the St  
8 Marks Anglican Church - that we were just getting ready for the 1986 June 16...and there  
9 had been a big meeting at the City Hall - sorry - City Hall - at the Cathedral centre with  
10 numerous people from various communities, all I guess, linked with the United  
11 Democratic Front, and we obviously saw our friends from the Security Police and I tried  
12 to take some photographs of these guys, quite quietly, as it were, and I was learn later that  
13 a lot of people had observed me doing this and I'll tell the story in a moment. That, that  
14 meeting was on the 9th of June and at - at that time people were getting a little anxious,  
15 because there had been this partial state of emergency declared, which hadn't really  
16 impacted on KwaZulu - well, Natal, at that stage. And some of the folk within the UDF  
17 ranks - or was it in fact Union ranks, were saying 'look, you know, something is moving,  
18 something is going to happen...' and for me, PACSA people, we said, 'yes, well, fair  
19 enough, but that shouldn't, shouldn't really bother us because simply as a church group  
20 we hadn't - been involved and wouldn't think of any possible action being taken against  
21 the State'. And so we were very unprepared for the knock on the door on the 12th of  
22 June, in the morning of 12th of June 1986, half past twelve in the morning. And to - to  
23 my acknowledging and opening the door, I saw all these Special Branch people and I  
24 think, ordinary policemen and asked them what they wanted and they said they wanted  
25 to come in and talk to me and I said 'Okay,' I suppose I was taken aback and said well -  
26 should have said something like 'well, could you come tomorrow morning?' sort of thing -  
27 or later in the morning. Anyway, they came in and they then told me to get some dressing  
28 gown - get clothed and they said to Joan, well, they said to us 'Tell Joan to get dressed  
29 and come out into the lounge.' And so Joan came through to the lounge and was sitting  
30 in the lounge with this policewoman, I was then asked to accompany the Security Police  
31 around the house and they then spent time searching the house and I don't know if I

1 mentioned last time that one of them was actually searching through Joan's journal and  
2 I said to him 'That's private, I don't even have access to that journal and I don't see why  
3 you should.' And he ignored me, but I did happen to notice that all three security police  
4 were wearing wedding rings and I said to myself 'You know, I really wonder what your  
5 wives must think of you looking ?? Anyway, after a reasonably thorough search of the  
6 house, including our childrens' bedrooms, the girls had left us by then - they were at  
7 University, or away, and we then went through into the dining room... They'd actually  
8 asked me to go and open the car in the garage outside to let them search there and they  
9 even searched the sewer because of the one of the policemen outside had said - this  
10 appears to have been moved, and of course, when they opened the sewer, all they saw was  
11 that a whole host of kakkalaks - cockroaches, in the bottom of the tank and they hastily  
12 put the lid back. But coming back inside, I said - and then they said to me 'You must go  
13 and get some clothes and a few things to take because you are coming with us.' So I  
14 went got a couple of things and I got a bible, I got a little cross that I got from Kadamina?  
15 And took that with me and then went through to the lounge and I said to 'Major  
16 Macdooling, would you tell my wife Joan what you've told me and why - what - what  
17 are you busy doing?' So he then said 'Well, we're taking your husband away and putting  
18 him in - under the criminal procedure act and you'll be hearing from us in due course.'  
19 And I said 'Well, why?'. And he said 'Well, I will tell you that later.' And with that I had  
20 to say goodbye to Joan and we took off in two or three cars, I can't remember, there were  
21 at least seven policemen - I suppose it must have been two cars and then took off back to  
22 - well, first of course, to the Loop Street police station. Let me just go back a bit  
23 though...on that evening, the 'phone rang and I answered it and Macdooling then took the  
24 'phone away from me and it was Monica Wittenberg on the other end. trying to find out  
25 what was happening because she had tried to get through to a number of people and found  
26 that their phones were disconnected and as she got through to me and wanted to speak  
27 to me, Macdooling took the 'phone and then just put it down, and then took it off the  
28 hook. So, Monica realised, obviously that something was going on because they had also  
29 come to find Martin Wittenberg. Anyway, I then accompanied these guys up to the Loop  
30 Street Police Station. Smuts, who I was to get to know much better afterwards - or later,  
31 he and Macdooling and one other guy - I can't remember his name, took me and then said

1 to me 'You stay in the car,' while they go into Loop Street Police Station. And so I sat  
2 there - I suppose, in a sense, I could have ducked out of the car then, but goodness knows  
3 who was watching and I didn't really think of it at the time. While I was sitting there, our  
4 friend, Dr Motala walked past in his skull cap - he had been picked up obviously - he  
5 hadn't got a suitcase, and unbeknown to us at the time, his wife - they - they were  
6 obviously prepared for something, what was likely to happen, so because he had been  
7 detained before, he had a little suitcase ready. And in that suitcase, as we discovered later,  
8 were a couple of packs of cards which - that's when I learnt to play bridge, inside the  
9 prison. Anyway he went past and up to the - the Loop Street Police Station with someone  
10 accompanying him and I just sat in the car. And then I suppose, fifteen, twenty minutes  
11 later, they came back, got into the car and then took me up Loop Street and around past  
12 the old jail and when we passed the old jail, in a sense, I suppose I heaved a sigh of relief,  
13 in some ways, but it was ...

14 V: ...disastrous...

15 K: ...not a very pleasant place as we discovered when we were taken through - through to -  
16 awaiting trial prisoners, or detainees, ja. Anyway, we eventually ended up at - what -  
17 what came to be known as the new prison in Napierville and we got out and I was taken  
18 inside and handed over to the prison authorities and Macdooling was just about to leave  
19 me and I said 'Oh, you were going to tell me why you detained me..' So he said 'Well, it's  
20 any one of a number of reasons, but we want to keep you out of circulation over this June  
21 16th weekend.' Well, as it turned out, it was a long, long, long weekend.

22 V: Yes.

23 K: Ja, anyway, he then left and I was then placed in the hands of the prison warders up at the  
24 new prison and a guy came along and took me into the sort of what I presumed was a  
25 waiting room; we had come through a couple of security gates already, so already I was  
26 inside three gates, and then waited outside this little room where they obviously received  
27 people, as we learnt later, and the guy had sent a guy - another prison warder away for  
28 keys because they had not been informed that this was actually going to take place, that  
29 the prison warders needed to be prepared for a number of detainees, and so one of the  
30 wardens came back with a set of keys, and this one Warder said 'Ugh, these are not the  
31 right keys - come, get the proper ones.' So he - I was then waiting and by this time

1 another person had joined me - Abadam ? - I can't remember his first name now - he  
2 joined me and we were waiting to get in and then they came with the right keys and got  
3 us in and then told us to hand in all our valuables. Our watch, our wedding rings, or other  
4 ... money, etcetera, etcetera. And as we were busy signing in and signing for all the stuff  
5 that we had given them, Theo Knyfel and Larry Kaufmann from St Josephs, arrived. In  
6 a sense we were able to welcome them because at least we knew that, you know, there  
7 was a group of us. together we would have some solidarity. And again we were all  
8 getting ready to - to be taken upstairs and a couple of others arrived, I can't remember  
9 who exactly - I'd have to go back to my notes, but they then asked us to actually write  
10 a letter, which they said would be sent to our next of kin, to let them know where in fact  
11 we were. To this day, Joan hasn't received that letter, but that is another story as well.  
12 Anyway, at about half past four that morning, and by this time we were without watches  
13 but there was a wall clock there and we were able to see the time. There were five of us  
14 at this stage. We were taken upstairs to this section on the second floor, or on the first  
15 floor rather and we walked down the prison and we noticed some prisoners, in prison  
16 guard and they were obviously there being woken up because they were going to have to  
17 be moved because this section is now going to be kept for detainees. And as we got  
18 towards the end of the passage, we past an open door and who should I see leaning over  
19 the handbasin, brushing his teeth, at half past four in the morning, was AS Chetty. And  
20 here we ...

21 V: Old game to Chetty.

22 K: Now he says 'Hey, what are you doing?' sort of - you know, in a sense again, under the  
23 circumstances, a reasonably joyful sort of welcome because, ja, it meant, again, the  
24 solidarity, the sense of community. And then we discovered, inside was Dr, oh dear, my  
25 memory at the moment has become - and then a young chap from Eastwood, a young  
26 Catholic guy - I'll remember his name just now as well... but there were also the three of  
27 them there, so this made eight of us and we were then - we were able to just sit around.  
28 They didn't lock us into any cell at that time and we were waiting and as we were sitting  
29 there, more folk arrived, until - and I'll jump a little bit ... later in the day there were  
30 seventeen of us in the - in the prison. But prior to all this, after a number of us had  
31 arrived, we were then ushered down to the medical centre area where we had to have the



1 District Surgeon examine us because you know, detainees - they had to be carefully  
2 monitored healthwise - to make sure that nobody had any trouble while they were in  
3 detention so we were there for quite a considerable period of time - being checked over  
4 and then taken back upstairs to - to our breakfast, which by this time was ice cold. I mean  
5 there was porridge there and there was some bread and there was some of this liquid  
6 refreshment - which, as Azarea Ndebele told us, and he was one of the seventeen, and he  
7 had been on Robben Island as a prisoner, he said 'you know, it was a mixture of tea and  
8 coffee and just goo.' And again, through his experience, he said 'rather than send it back  
9 to the kitchen, just turn it down the loo, otherwise you'll just get it at lunch time sort of  
10 thing.' So, that was one of our first learnings ... but certainly, that, that breakfast was a  
11 terrible thing. I mean we were hungry obviously, but, but cold porridge, at that time of  
12 the morning, and this was about seven thirty or eight, was not, not the most appetising.  
13 So we then had to wait for our lunch, which I think, if I'm not mistaken, came about half  
14 past ten or eleven. Because the meals in prison are at crazy times...

15 V: Ja...

16 K: Early, early morning and then late tea, if you like, sort of ten thirty, eleven o'clock.... I  
17 was talking about the mealtimes. Certainly breakfast was very, very early and lunch was  
18 ten thirty, eleven o'clock and then supper in - during the week I mean it would have been  
19 about four o'clock and on Saturdays, Saturdays and Sundays it was about three o'clock.  
20 It was on the weekends they came and locked you up at four o'clock in the afternoon;  
21 during the week, it was probably a bit later - six, and then of course later in the evening,  
22 the security check would come around and unlock, and lock, and unlock and lock, and then  
23 he checked to see who's there. But, ja, getting back to those, those first few days - that -  
24 I've got to look at my notes in terms of the situation, certainly later on that day, the 12th,  
25 in the afternoon, it must have been about 2 o'clock, the Security Police came, with some  
26 of the senior prison wardens and described to us what had happened. That we were now  
27 no longer under the criminal procedure act but we were now detainees in the process of  
28 the National State of Emergency and being bright academics, according to the system, we  
29 were pretty negative when we asked questions, we wanted to see a copy of the legislation,  
30 etcetera, etcetera, which we eventually did get, but not without various snide remarks  
31 from these security police, but that's par for the course. Anyway, that gave us an insight

1 into what, what we were facing and under the circumstances, realised that. Okay this  
2 theoretically was going to be at least two weeks and we weren't sure after that and so we  
3 - I guess just accepted the situation except in so far as one could try and get information  
4 on our legal status and so we were putting pressure on the prison wardens to get security  
5 police to come up with this material. Anyway we then said okay, under those  
6 circumstances, it looks as if we're going to be here on June the 16th and what we need  
7 to do, is do something in commemoration. Which we would have done, had we been on  
8 the outside and so we agreed, yes, and then it was quite funny, the prison warders - at  
9 certain times during the day you couldn't be seen moving around in the cell block, you had  
10 to be locked away in your cells I suppose when they were having their meals, or what  
11 have you. Anyway on one occasion, they said 'no, you can all stay in the one cell, so  
12 seventeen of us were crowded into these cells and there were what, four beds, two double  
13 bunks and so were squatting and somebody sitting on the loo, some of us sitting on the  
14 floor, some sitting on the bottom bunks and some sitting on the top and we just then  
15 started sharing stories and this is when Azaria gave us information on the selective goo  
16 that they said that we should turf out t and not send back to the kitchen. Motala and  
17 others were saying, ja, giving insights into what, what we could expect and it was - ja- it  
18 was a very helpful, learning experience, sharing with folk who had gone through this  
19 experience before, and ja, being able to laugh about it under the circumstances because  
20 of - of the fact that Motala had been able to bring his little suitcase in, with a thermos -  
21 and I'll tell you a story about the thermos later. The thermos and, and these packs of  
22 cards and so there were people starting to play bridge in the time that they had - and they  
23 had lots of time on their hands. And in fact that is where I started to learn to play bridge,  
24 I think I have forgotten. Anyway we then agreed that we would do something on June  
25 the 16th and so we then planned and we invited the prison chaplain, who happened to be  
26 Joe Kruger, a Methodist, to - to participate in this and we conveyed this via the prison  
27 authorities, and so, come June the 16th, we, we met, having decided that we would fast  
28 for the whole day, we met with the prison authorities and said 'look' - when they called  
29 us to get our food, we said 'this is no, we are not directing this at you, we are fasting  
30 today and we will break our fast at dinnertime , um we're not trying to create any  
31 problems with you but we - we are telling you we will not be partaking of breakfast or

1 lunch.' And they said 'well, that's up to you, but we will leave it here, it will come and  
2 we will leave it for you if you want it.' So we said 'no, well thanks very much.' And I  
3 was, I was asked actually to be spokesperson for the group to just explain the situation  
4 to the prison warders and explain that we were not trying to upset them, but that we were  
5 committing ourselves and then we would, during our exercise time, have a time of service  
6 and then ? Debate service in the exercise area. And he said 'you know, the prison warden,  
7 the prison chaplain can come - that would be good.' So, come, come the exercise break  
8 we then moved into the courtyard, and sure enough, Joe Kruger, the prison chaplain  
9 came, what he made of this to-do, I don't know, but we had a little service and we sang  
10 the national anthem and generally remembered Sharpeville, I'm sorry, Soweto, '76 and  
11 that was it. And we all, then, after our exercise, went back into our various cells and and  
12 then were able to wait for supper. Lunch came, but we again declined to take. And that  
13 evening we broke fast and had our meal together and it was - we suspect that - well we  
14 don't suspect, we know that the media - we had said were fasting, the information had got  
15 back to the security police who were - you remember - possibly in distorting the picture,  
16 but, nevertheless they were not happy with what we were doing and we learnt about that  
17 later. But in terms of the food, even in prison, apartheid is rife and you would think that  
18 they - there would be some sort of relaxation. But no, not at all, the meals were such that,  
19 for example, on the Sunday - the day before Sharpeville, um Soweto Day, we had the  
20 wives - and there were four of us, John Jeffrey, Theo Knyfel, Larry Kaufmann and myself,  
21 we had roast chicken, and roast potatoes, and vegetables. The Indian and so-called  
22 coloured folk were given curry chicken of sorts and the Africans were given crunched up,  
23 graunched up chicken, bones and meat in - in a sort of stew and with, with some of the  
24 vegetables, if you like. And right from the outset, and I mean it was even before that  
25 Sunday, when the food came and we saw how different it was, there was an actual sharing  
26 of the food so that everybody got a bit of each. And I think this indirectly must have  
27 impacted on some of the warders, I don't know. It's difficult to say, but certainly some  
28 of them were not so hard nosed, they were doing their job. And I think, you know,  
29 there's - not exhibition - this, this non-racial attitude, had an impact on some of them and -  
30 ja - because it was interesting talking a little bit later with some of them, how you know,  
31 one of them, particularly was almost brought us some newspapers, but then chickened out

1 at the last minute because he said 'I really can't jeopardise his pension' - he was going on  
2 pension in a couple of months time. But we felt for him because we knew, he had the  
3 newspapers with him and he was, he was almost about to give them and then he, then he  
4 got cold feet, but, ja there was some of them that were, were open and obviously caring  
5 in some ways - although in the situation in prisons it's not the easiest place to show caring  
6 and compassion. Anyway, the situation then developed into a pretty mundane sort of  
7 regular system of meals, exercise, meals, exercise, meals - close up and what, what had  
8 happened on a couple of occasions, there had been some toing and froing, or toing, rather  
9 than froing, toing from, from the detainees, to the kitchen, providing cigarettes for the  
10 prisoners who were obviously working in the kitchen (sorry) and ....

11 V: Shall I turn it off?

12 K: Ja.

13 V: Did you say you were four to a cell, did they also do this racially, were you four whites  
14 in one cell, or were you mixed up?

15 K: Oh no, no, and that's another aspect that I can come to later. No, certainly, old JJ, Theo,  
16 Larry and I were kept in one cell. During the day, of course, we could mix as we wanted  
17 to - and as I said, they let us all - seventeen of us - stay in one cell during the day when  
18 we were discussion the meeting. But certainly at night, it was applicable to whites, but  
19 in terms of African, or Black South Africans, African, Indian and Coloured, they could  
20 mix - there was no problem there at all. But certainly for us, the four of us, there was the  
21 segregation and that kept on, until the, the night that Theo was actually taken from our  
22 cell, and unbeknown to us at the time, deported within thirty-six hours. And then after  
23 13 days, when I was moved into solitary, the other were released on the fourteenth day,  
24 the morning of the fourteenth day and so after that I was the only white in new prison and  
25 there were ten or so others that were back in the original cells - who were dumped on the  
26 eve - the morning of the 12th. But anyway, getting back to this toing of cigarettes, or  
27 concerning the cigarettes from the detainees, from our group, to the kitchen, what was  
28 also - and this was being done in a thermos, Dr Motala's thermos, because he was wanting  
29 - he had a condition and AS Chetty had a condition relating to their hearts, I think, they  
30 wanted a hot drink last thing at night and so the plan was that they would simply, with the  
31 permission of the warders, send the thermos through for hot water at lun- supper time and

1 they would get hot water brought back and during the evening, when the others came to  
2 fetch the dirty material, the dirty goods. Anyway, this occasion, the thermos had been  
3 sent through in the morning, again for hot water and I was - we had collected our  
4 breakfast and I was then - well, they then called 'oh you hot water, thermos of hot water  
5 is here' So I went to col - pick it up and I opened it just to see what was inside and I saw  
6 this yellow mixture inside and I thought 'Oh silly blighters, they've actually put water onto  
7 the cigarettes. Unbeknown to me, but as, as I got into the cell and opened up, there was  
8 a whole lot of scrambled egg.

9 V: In Motala's flask.

10 K: His flask. That - a little bit of egg for the group - so you know that - that you know - the  
11 solidarity, if you like, within prisons was well, between prisoners and detainees. So yes,  
12 that, that period of, of thirteen days was a - was a - was a - not unpleasant time, I mean,  
13 I, I - one of the warders said to me on the 13th day 'you know what's your experience  
14 been of the situation?' And I said 'Well, you know, it's - it's because of the experience  
15 of people having been in detention that are with us. it's been very helpful, learning how  
16 to cope,' and I said 'I think what would have affected very much more seriously would  
17 have been if I had been in detention on my own.' And he said 'Oh, okay, mmm.' Then  
18 later that morning he came to me, the same warder, and he came to the four of us, and we  
19 said 'no, leave us' because, Theo had already been deported, as I said, unbeknown to us,  
20 and he said to the three of us, Larry, JJ and myself, 'good news or bad news?' and we  
21 said, naturally 'good news'. So he points to me and he says 'get your things.' So I said  
22 'oh, okay.' Very strange because I had been subjected to - as others had been -  
23 interrogation by the security police and the security police - when I first was in - in under  
24 questions.... I delayed in telling them information that they wanted about certain  
25 photographs that had appeared in the Witness etcetera, wanting names of people who  
26 took part in Synod....

27 V: Yes.

28 K: And I said 'well, you know, I'm here, I'm not at risk any longer, I don't want to put  
29 others at risk, so I'm not going to tell you.' And they said 'well, it doesn't worry us.  
30 we've got lots of questions for you, and we've got lots of time and so - you know - we'll  
31 learn from you in due course, you know.' Anyway, that, that particular day, of, of, I think

1 it might have been my first interrogation, if I'm not mistaken, I went back upstairs, a nit  
2 sort of under pressure, because, I - you know - thought 'what have I done now in terms  
3 of creating problems for myself?' But also saying 'I'm not willing to divulge information  
4 at this stage.' Rather if people are worried they would get out and get away sort of thing.  
5 I mean, from, from being at stand ? With placards in front of your face so you can't see  
6 who it is, I mean, and - and simply a demonstration placard, placard demonstration, I  
7 didn't really see how, how they could impact on people who had been behind the placards.  
8 Anyway, on that day I was - I was a bit put out and I can remember Yunas Carrim saying  
9 to me 'No, just relax, take it easy, don't worry.' And again now, in terms of memory, I'm  
10 not sure if it was on that day that I'd - that we were all getting visits - and, anyway, it  
11 doesn't mater which day it was - it probably was the same day and I had a visit. I was  
12 called to say that there was a visitor and I went to the cubicle and you know, sure enough  
13 it was Joan. A glass partition and a pipe through the glass that you talked with, there's  
14 no physical contact at all - anyway, to my disgust, my listener-in, was this guy Smuts,  
15 Warrant Officer Smuts, who was the security police guy who was one of those who had  
16 come to pick me up and he said 'I'm going to be sitting in on all your conversations with  
17 Joan and you're not allowed to talk about conditions at all - you can talk about family and  
18 that's all.' And you know - relating to situations at home. So, okay, we got to know how  
19 to talk about our extended family, in terms of trying to

20 V: Yes.

21 K: ...get the names of people and what have you. But that particular name - for some  
22 unknown reason, well, not - it's known, but I can't remember it, I'd have to check. but  
23 the visits were cut short and everything - ja - everything was put on hold and I, I realised -  
24 to find out why that happened. Anyway, the visit, which should have been half an hour,  
25 was cut down to quarter of an hour. Joan had to leave - all the others who were having  
26 visitors had to leave and I was taken back to our cells where we were all taken. And as  
27 I was going back, one of the leaders, a guy that was very good at languages, and has been  
28 used in court interpretations as well, said to me 'you know I don't know what's wrong  
29 with you and people like you - you're giving your family such a hard time - I've just come  
30 from seeing your wife to the car and she was bawling her eyes out.' sort of thing. Pure  
31 rubbish, but still, I didn't know that at the time.

1 V: And that upset you, of course.

2 K: Ja, and I said 'well, you know, it's nonsense.' But this whole ting of the SB using internal  
 3 people to create a disturbance as well, anyway, I, I suspected that he was lying, but you  
 4 know, in ? Who knows for sure sort of thing. But that was the sort of intimidatory tactics  
 5 they, they would get up to - both the SB and the prison warders. Anyway, that, that - that  
 6 was my first visit, which as I say was reduced, was reduced significantly. And then after  
 7 more of our mundane life together, that one morning... Oh, while we were waiting for the  
 8 prison warder to come - I mean the warder whose come to say to me 'come, get your  
 9 things.' and to the other two - I'm sorry, I realised I was jumping around - to say to Larry  
 10 and John 'Don't get your things.' Ja. We, we then discussed the poss - possibilities of my  
 11 being released and the prison, part of the prison where we were at, overlooking Edendale,  
 12 and I said 'look, what I'll do, knowing that you have TV at certain times, I will go to  
 13 Edendale Road, and I'll have a white handkerchief and I will waive to you so that you can  
 14 things are okay.' And JJ said 'no, that sounds alright, you know, we'll make a plan.'  
 15 Anyway, then, then the warder came back to me and he said, 'okay, have you got your  
 16 things?' Si I said 'Ja.' So he said, 'alright, well, give me a few minutes and I'll come and  
 17 fetch you.' And then JJ said to me 'look, take some of this tuck,' 'cause we'd been able,  
 18 by then, to buy some tuck from external tuckshops sort of thing, which improved our sort  
 19 of daily ration as it were, because the food, and I want to talk about that just now, he said  
 20 'Jus'....

21

22 (End of side one)

23

24 (Side Two)

25

26 K: ...eat ... at ? Prison ??? in going downstairs and as we were going downstairs, instead of  
 27 turning to the left, to go out, we turned to the right and he said to me 'now the bad news.'  
 28 and he said 'I'm taking you into another part of the prison.' And I was mad. Um,  
 29 anyway, umpteen doors later, gates, security gates later. I was left in a cell in P4, which  
 30 was on the third floor of the prison, right in the bowels of the prison, if you like, but very.  
 31 very close to the boilers, which, of course, meant, knowing the difficulty in sleeping.

1 Anyway, I, I was dumped there with my goods and the guy, the prison warder in charge  
2 of that section, brought me some few magazines to - to have a look at - I had to buy them  
3 from him - well, I had my own bible - of course I had taken that in. And then I waited for  
4 the prison security, a guy, Captain Schaeffer ? - every evening before close up, the prison  
5 security guy would come round and say 'any requests, or any complaints?' And I said to  
6 him 'Yes, I have a complaint, I really find the way I was treated by that prison warder as  
7 disgusting and I want to complain about it because he gave the impression that I was  
8 being released and then he tried - he brought this stunt - without being - you know - he  
9 was not being transparent...'

10 V: Yes.

11 K: And I said, 'I, I'm - I take serious exception to that and wanted to report back, because  
12 I am very angry.' I don't know if that was ever reported, it would be interesting in the  
13 archives in the prison to see. He noted it, but I think that is far as it got and then for the  
14 next 32 days I was in - before - on my own, with at about, thirty to forty metres away on  
15 the other side - because there were stays in between the cells, these isolation, single cells -  
16 there was another chap from - I'm not quite sure, but I was told that he was awaiting  
17 transfer to the death cells in Pretoria. How true that was, I don't know. But it was quite  
18 ludicrous, because here were the two of us and although there was no guard on his side  
19 and although there were all these gates, I had to have, well, I presume, it may have been  
20 the two of us - that this - that our prison warder had to be there all night just to make sure  
21 - he'd look in on us to see if we were okay and we were not doing anything stupid. And  
22 I can remember on a couple of occasions asking this one particular character - he wasn't  
23 very much forthcoming - he didn't talk much at all... what the time was at various points  
24 and he originally, or initially told me what the time was, but he eventually said 'no, sorry,  
25 I haven't brought my watch.' And then, for me, because he wasn't only on night shift -  
26 his shifts varied, so what I had to try and do during the day - to get an idea of time and  
27 I tried this by checking the sun, going at various points and trying to mark it on the cell  
28 wall, but in addition to that, trying to go by the, the planes taking off from Oribi - because  
29 I could hear them and I knew that, you know, theoretically 7 o'clock or thereabouts and  
30 then in the evening, again, about 7 o'clock and so that was one way of trying to keep track  
31 of time because it was this that had been taken from us. And, well, all our watches had



1           been taken, except one guy who was able to - he had a woman's watch and it was a  
2           battery operated one and so he had it secreted away somewhere and we used to try and  
3           keep this battery alive by putting it above the fluorescent tube to get the heat, in a sense,  
4           the sun as it were, and that helped a lot because that little watch kept us in touch with time  
5           as well. But I think certainly for me the, the worst period for me was that time in  
6           isolation. I don't ....

7       V:     You did have communication, you could communicate with the warders, but with no one  
8           else.

9       K:     Ja, I also did have visits from Joan, while I was in isolation, but again, because of the  
10           security policeman, Smuts, sitting in on the discussion, I could not say a thing about  
11           isolation or solitary. And Joan was able, in terms of her questioning, discreet questioning,  
12           was able to sense that I was on my own. She asked where I was eating now, etcetera and  
13           she eventually realised that I was on my own and then, in terms of legal action, was able  
14           to get this whole process going with Lesley Weinberg and others and that eventually, paid  
15           dividends. But in the interim she was really just trying to find out how things were. And,  
16           and as I say, sensed that this was the case.

17      V:     Were you given no further reading matter except for the bible and the few magazines that  
18           they gave you right in the beginning?

19      K:     And I should go back to that period when the seventeen of us were together, we did get  
20           the library books from the - the library books from the Provincial Library. Some of them  
21           real junk, but other, reasonably helpful and we were able - to take a couple and read them.  
22           On some occasions, and again I think pure vindictiveness, they would come and take the  
23           library books and say they've got to go back to the library because of stock take and this  
24           happened on a couple of occasions, not only while I was there, but while I was in solitary  
25           as well - in terms of books being taken back. So, to answer your question, yes, we were  
26           able to get other books and magazines from the provincial library and I read some  
27           fascinating stuff in my - during my time in, in prison, which I have noted and recorded.  
28           So, ja, that was a possibility, but, as I say, every now and again - whether the security  
29           police had some negative thing going against them, or whatever, that the books were  
30           taken away and then kept away for some time.

31      V:     Mmm

1 K: Ja. Anyway, during this, this isolation, my cell experience, the boilers, and there are three  
2 boilers right next to the isolation cells, and I eventually discovered that these blooming  
3 boilers were actually being started up at about two thirty, 3 o'clock in the morning and  
4 they would wake me and because of the repetitiveness of the noise, there was obviously  
5 a pump that was injecting oil into the systems, it was - it reminded me of the dentist of  
6 years ago with gas - the sort of nightmares that one gets from that (he slaps his fist)...

7 V: Mmm.

8 K: I used to get terrible nightmares in the dentist's chair, but this, this repetitiveness, kept me  
9 awake and I really struggled and I suppose at the time I was thinking now 'you know,  
10 what have they got against me, surely they must have something against me, but...' and  
11 of course the psychological isolation must have meant hampering, or having an effect, and  
12 I was thinking back to what I could possibly have been involved in that might have upset  
13 them and one thing that I did certainly say to folk on the outside, in the anti-apartheid  
14 movement, and I remember sharing this at a mission that I had gone to in Durban at a  
15 Catholic situation - a Catholic premises. And I was talking to these people from Canada  
16 and saying 'you know, in - in one way if you really want to create a problem for - for a  
17 South African industry you could actually see to the situation of preventing the aluminium  
18 oxide coming in from outside, because the aluminium industry in South Africa is entirely  
19 dependant on the aluminium oxide coming in - because there is nothing available in South  
20 Africa at all. And that, that, that, in many ways, the aluminium itself is a strategic metal  
21 and was used extensively in the - in various wars - in Korea, in terms of landing mats and  
22 all sorts of things and I, I said to the folk 'You know if you really want to try and put a  
23 crunch on industry, alright, the aluminium industry is not the only industry, but that might  
24 have an effect, impact.' And that then played on my mind. I'd told a couple of other  
25 people about this and I thought well maybe, they've, they've picked up on a couple, of  
26 people that have squealed in a sense, although not really. And so, you know, this, this  
27 worried me and I thought well, dammit, what - what is likely to happen? Am I likely to  
28 be sentenced and incarcerated? And not see family for a long time - you know all those  
29 little things, picking - you know picking at one's mind at that time of the morning and so  
30 eventually I - I said 'well, you know, I'm, I'm going to have some sleeping pills to keep  
31 me sleeping during the night.'

1 V: You needed them.

2 K: Ja. And I eventually got that as - as - from the medication. But also, at that time, during  
3 these interrogations, I was having to write out - Smuts told me, 'you know you're  
4 probably a highly ?' He said something about 'You're linked to forty-six different  
5 organisations in this - in this area - you must tell us all about them.' And I had to then  
6 write out all sorts of information that I could - without giving names or anything like that -  
7 write out all these various, organisations that I was supposedly involved in and at the time  
8 - well, at the time and then afterwards, in terms of some analysis, it certainly became  
9 apparent that what they saw is a group of whities, Martin Wittenberg, myself, Peter  
10 Brown and a couple of others involved in political - the politics of the situation, really  
11 manipulating the same situation with a couple of the leading Indian families, or Indian  
12 people in the area, and really manipulating the process because we were all involved in  
13 these different organisations and then encouraging, inciting the oppressed to react. I  
14 mean, for goodness sake, I mean how naive can they get. I mean the fact that the  
15 oppressed people knew why they were oppressed, why did they need people to manipulate  
16 them sort of thing. But that - they seemed to be trying to develop a - a spiderweb, or a  
17 sort of network of relations that were actually dealing with the outside, dealing with the  
18 outside, dealing with the inside and encouraging, because on one occasion, they came out  
19 with when I was overseas in '85, I'd met with some ANC people, at a cocktail party. And  
20 that's probably ? Already with - um - in the City Press, there was a big article of my  
21 meeting with this chap in - in my - in Germany sort of thing. Ah, but, but this idea of  
22 manipulation. Anyway, what I was having difficulty with was remembering, and quite  
23 honestly, I mean, it wasn't a bluff, I was, I was battling to remember various details and  
24 they - Smuts was saying 'You know, all the stuff that you've written, my child could have  
25 written for me and you know, we all know about - you're not giving us any information,'  
26 And then the one day, I don't know whether it was the first time that I was allowed out  
27 of prison, that was after sixty-two days, and this obviously would have been when I was  
28 back - when I was back in circulation. I don't remember exactly, but, anyway, the ? The  
29 guy in charge at that time - it wasn't Buchner, he was saying 'you know, I really think I  
30 must believe Smuts, because I, I think you - you're hiding things from us. It's not a case  
31 of forgetting, etcetera.' Anyway, eventually they allowed me to see Berty Lund and

1 eventually they also put me in touch with a prison psychologist, all the way from Durban  
2 and they - they - I remember those meetings as well. Particularly with Bertie, because he  
3 was actually brought to the prison one afternoon and chatted with me and he said 'now  
4 for goodness sake, you probably have forgotten.' He said to me 'It's all inter -  
5 intertwined, interwoven.' So he said 'You know, don't worry.' And then on another  
6 occasion I was taken to his rooms, in the MediCity Centre and I can remember being  
7 taken there by Smuts, and his colleague and that night - it was the second time that I was  
8 allowed out and I remember Smuts sat down in the waiting room and I sat down and then  
9 Bertie Lund came to me and said to me 'come on in.' Smuts got up to accompany me  
10 through and then he said 'well, you can go back and sit down.' And as he turned round,  
11 his safari suit was up, and here was his gun - sticking...

12 V: ...sticking out the back of his pockets....

13 K: Anyway, so - that, that was another story in terms of the whole situation. But after Joan  
14 and Lesley had succeeded. Oh sorry, you were also talking about visitors, while I was still  
15 on the other side with all the others we were trying to - to get someone to bring  
16 communion to me and Nachtnaal is what, I think, every month, every three months...?

17 V: Mmm.

18 K: And this, this warder, gosh, um, said 'you know, but why do you want communion, I  
19 mean why do you want it so regularly.' So I said 'well, I'm used to it, I mean every  
20 Sunday, we take communion.' And he said 'well, you know, we can't find any person in  
21 Pietermaritzburg to do it, we've got to bring somebody up from Durban.' And I said  
22 'well, that's very strange, because I know there are prison chaplains.' Eventually, they  
23 discovered, you know, not discovered, they allowed me to have the prison chaplain - the  
24 Anglican Prison Chaplain come and give me communion but he happened to be Black.

25 V: Yes, we know those problems, too.

26 K: Anyway, he came in and - and gave me communion on a number of occasions, but he was  
27 also thwarted by the system who said 'sorry he's not available, you'll have to come back  
28 another time.'

29 V: Yes.

30 K: You know, this nonsense, they know that I'm not tied up but they just deliberately said  
31 to him 'don't - you can't see him.' And that happened to Lesley Weinberg when he tried

1 to have - when he was eventually to have some appointments, well, meetings with me.  
2 He was told on a number of occasions that I'm in interrogation and that none could see  
3 him - they'd have to make another time. But, you know, all this time, when Joan had  
4 discovered that I was obviously in isolation, she'd been talking to Lesley and they had got  
5 a court case going and there's - it's in the law courts that I can give you the details on and  
6 you can take copies for your files perhaps, but eventually they - they um got this court  
7 case. asking for my release from detention, and eventually it was agreed to that the  
8 security police said 'that. Look, he's a white. the only other whites in detention are either  
9 Klerksdorp or Krugersdorp and he'll have to go up to Krugersdorp or Klerksdorp. So  
10 Lesley and Joan said 'well, that's - that's nonsense, I mean you can't send him up there,  
11 sort of thing' Anyway, some pressure must have been put on in some way, because I was  
12 allowed back, into - with the others and as it happened. back into a situation with I  
13 suppose about ten of us - African and Indian, and AS Chetty was one still there and a  
14 number of others and I was then put in with two African folk, Frans Zuma, from Sobantu  
15 and another guy, whose name I can't remember, who was a Sangoma, and who apparently  
16 was killed later. Because he - well not because - because he was originally ANC and then  
17 switched to Inkatha and then somehow was taken out of circulation - he'd been an  
18 informer I suspect. But anyway, when I got back from isolation, it was obviously a  
19 tremendous relief, but coming from a very quiet situation into a situation with people and  
20 being able to talk and share, these two that I was with - we talked during the morning -  
21 in the afternoon they slept and I then tried to read, in the evening they jabbered away. It  
22 was ? And in a sense it was a bit of punishment if you like, I mean coming back to  
23 freedom with association and having these two talking their hind leg of a donkey way  
24 hours in the night sort of thing - but, nevertheless - ja, that court case, obviously did help  
25 and I was released from solitary confinement and I - they never saw it as solitary  
26 confinement by the way, they always said 'no he's not on his own, I mean he has contact  
27 with the warders, and he has contact with the chaplain etcetera, etcetera.' But. still ,, you  
28 know, anyway, then moving as I say, back to that was a release and then some time later  
29 when there were only eight of us left in detention, we all went back to P4, where we spent  
30 a very long time together for, and four, and four - AS and I had asked, when we were  
31 moved, if AS and I could be in the same cell together. Not on your Nellie, ...

1 V: That would be the last thing they'd do, yes.

2 K: Ja, again, so AS and Mdu Ndlovu and a couple of others were together and I was working  
3 for - um - um - oh dear, I'm just trying to remember. Shoes was one of them, the  
4 bodyguard to Mandela was another - he became bodyguard later - I'll remember his name  
5 - the two of them were very badly affected by the vigilantes, or the Inkatha group that was  
6 in Imbali/Edendale and then another fellow from Sobantu and I just, I just can't remember  
7 their names for the moment but that's where I learn the iNkosi Sikelela, properly and well,  
8 for the first time. Ja, another memory that I have is on the one occasion, a number of  
9 people were picked up from the Elandskop area and the prison was filled to over -  
10 overcrowded and on one occasion, there was a heck of a lot of singing and shouting and  
11 it really disturbed the prison warders and I think they had to call in the security police to  
12 try and put a sort of calming situation - to get the situation under control. Another  
13 occasion that I remember - when we were on the - the original side, we were in the  
14 exercise yard and looking down into the proper outdoor exercise year, we saw a number  
15 of other ordinary prisoners and they - they'd obviously got a photograph from the Witness  
16 of the court case, which Joan and Lesley had been involved in - the photographs - we  
17 couldn't see at that distance - but it - they were - you know indicating to us that there was  
18 something in the paper which was quite encouraging as well. But once we were back on  
19 the other side we were left more or less to our own devices. There was continual sort of  
20 question and discussion and interrogation from the system, all along, from the very  
21 beginning, we said to folk 'listen, at any time when you are out of the prison,' and you are  
22 in police custody, and you are hammered, 'let us know, because we will make sure that  
23 it is reported immediately.' And there was some intimidation on one occasion, but no -  
24 nothing serious, but nevertheless, we reported it because of the - you know, the attitude  
25 of the police. And a couple of other folk that were brought in - and Skumbuza Ngwenya  
26 was one of them. He had been held in a police cell and had really had a rough time, as had  
27 others who had been in these police cells. Once they were within the - the prisons'  
28 authority, I think the people were very much more concerned about how they were treated  
29 because they knew that there would be problems if anything happened to them, so, ja.  
30 And then there's - there are lots of anecdotes, but I just want to end with two. The one  
31 relates to the food, and eventually, once I was on my own and getting food that was

1 obviously par for the course for everybody in prison, it, it was quite, quite crazy and I  
2 don't know, I, I -one of the main um, ingredients was spinach and I think this comes from  
3 Seerfontein ? Prison, where they've got beds and they grow ...

4 V: ...have a garden ....I suppose?

5 K: ...and I've never seen spinach the colour that was brought to us - it was brown, I don't  
6 know what they did to us, but you know, it was brown, brown, almost like rust. Some  
7 of the food was alright, I avoided a lot of the starchy stuff on occasions because you  
8 know, mealie meal, every day, day in day out is not good for one's metabolism. And I  
9 used to try and drink as much as I could but the food was not really well done at all. I  
10 mean probably the - the best meal of the day would have been lunch - which would have  
11 been bread and butter - or bread and jam which was extremely thinly sliced, but in addition  
12 to that there was a Vitamin C drink that we used to - they used to bring it in a glass and  
13 we used to make sure that it never went back, that we'd take the whole stuff. And that  
14 we were able to build up and use and make drinks out of that quite easily, I mean a good  
15 refreshing drink. But on the - on the - in general terms, the food was not something that  
16 one - I mean one wouldn't expect to write home about it, but nevertheless, one occasion,  
17 I remember we saw some folk getting some salad and with these ordinary prisoners, the  
18 prison warders had brought our food ahead of theirs and we said 'well, that looks very  
19 good' - it was a green sort of coleslaw - and we said 'you know, that would be good.' and  
20 'here have some.' And they looked around 'come on, take some.' That was the first time  
21 that we had some decent salad in that place, that time. The - there are two other things -  
22 sorry I did say that I would end, but there are two other things, one relates to food, and  
23 as I mentioned earlier, the food for Black or African folk was very much lower quality  
24 than for white, Indian and Coloured, but eventually we started getting all the same and the  
25 - it would either be samp or maize meal and this so-called stew - pork stew and on one  
26 occasion, the folk had gone on strike, I remember Skumbuza was one of those as well -  
27 hunger strike and he was 'this is junk food, we can't eat this -there's no gravy and it's not  
28 appetising.' And then Visser, Colonel Visser, who was the Head of Prisons, it was a  
29 Saturday afternoon, came around when the food was being dished out and he said 'well,  
30 look what's wrong with that maize meal? What's wrong with this pork stew?' And he  
31 looked at the pork stew and we looked at the pork stew and there was lots of meat but

1 there was this fat crust - you know - pork crust and then this fat that had been eked out,  
2 or boiled out of the pig, swimming around - an he said 'well, what's wrong with that  
3 gravy?' And folks said 'no that's not food enough, we don't want his junk, we want  
4 better food than this.' And yes, it had an impact and I think they did try and get rid of  
5 some of that excess fat that was in this pork, but that was folk standing up for their rights  
6 and the same, oh it was Bosman, not, not - did I say Bosman, Warrant Officer Bosman,  
7 who prided himself on being a linguist and he said to the African folk 'Kom, kom, ???,  
8 kom, kom,' and, and Skumbuza said to him 'Hey, you're supposed to be a Zulu linguist,  
9 we are not young mfaans, we - isinsizwe. huh? Young men.' I'll never forget that in  
10 terms of putting Bosman in his place, and ja, after that he realised he couldn't treat  
11 everybody as kids sort of thing. Finally, on the day, the 16th of September, I had a visit  
12 from Smuts and Bezuidenhout, the two who had been responsible for my interrogation  
13 and Smuts had just come back from leave and Bosman, I mean Bezuidenhout, had been  
14 doing the sort of questioning that I was supposed to try and answer and by this time, I  
15 don't know what got into me but I was really peed off and when, when they said 'come  
16 out of your cell.' and they didn't want to talk to me in front of the others who were in  
17 their ?? This was up in P4, and so we went down the passage a bit and then they started  
18 asking questions again, especially Smuts and I then just went off the deep end and I said  
19 'You know this is nonsense, you keep asking me questions, I'm here after so long, I don't  
20 know what you're after, you, you just continue with all these same stupid questions, I'm  
21 really not happy with this and I'm not, not keen on really responding to any more of your  
22 interrogation, you can do what you like to me then.' Because earlier he had said to me,  
23 in terms of the interrogation 'you know this is not what my friend can do...' who was with  
24 us at the time ...it's not what Mdu told me ' he was saying this to me a couple of weeks  
25 before ' you tell us this and that and the other.' And I said 'if Mdu told you that, okay,  
26 I'm telling you what I know,' sort of thing. And there again....the system ....

27 V: They were playing one up against the other.

28 K: Ja, sure and when I spoke to him a bit later when we did come together, he said 'Who's  
29 Smuts?' (He laughs). Anyway, so that afternoon I really sounded off at these guys.

30 V: They deserved this...

31 K: 'What's wrong with you? I mean you've been very calm and quiet with me these last few



1 weeks whilst Smuts has been on leave' I said 'What's the problem? Here I am, detained  
2 without trial and you ask me what the problem is.' Anyway, with that, I think they cut  
3 the visit short and said 'no.' And then I suppose an hour later, I don't know, whether  
4 they'd had any sort of - they must have had insight into what was happening, because an  
5 hour later, AS and I were told to get our things - we were being moved. And AS said  
6 'well, that's strange, where are they going to move us? Because they won't let us be in  
7 the same place together. Where are they going to move us?' So they said 'alright get  
8 your things and get ready to go.' So we got our things and then I got all my notes and  
9 my little book that I'd been taking - taking a diary of and put them in various parts of my  
10 luggage. put some of my notes on toilet paper, in socks and what have you and then when  
11 the warders came to have a look over our luggage before we went down to the basement,  
12 the bottom, they, they looked, they found my book and they looked at the front and it had  
13 Zulu grammar and they looked at the back and it had Zulu expression. But they didn't  
14 look in the middle. And so I was very lucky in that situation that I managed to bring all  
15 of that out with me.

16 V: Mmm.

17 K: But then when we got downstairs they said 'well, we've got to take you to the medical,  
18 you can't go out of here without a medical, so come in and see the doctor.' And one of  
19 the sisters, the prison sisters said 'you're going home.'

20 V: Had you been fearful that you were going to Klerksdorp or ?

21 K: Well, we weren't sure what was going to happen. We had a feeling that we might be  
22 being released, but on the other hand, never knowing what they were up to and so the  
23 sister said 'but don't worry, you're going, going home.' And so then we went through  
24 the medical and then that was it and then Bezuidenhout came back and said 'well I'm  
25 taking you home.' So I said 'oh, thank you very much.' And somebody else took AS  
26 home...

27 V: They actually took you home, they didn't take you and drop you somewhere strange, as  
28 happened to so many other people?

29 K: No, ja, they - they took both - ?? And I presume they took AS to his house as well,  
30 because they took me straight home, and, and as we got home, Bezuidenhout said to me  
31 'you know, I've tried to be decent to you, um, you know, ...' etcetera, etcetera, and as we

1 got out of the car - I was collecting my luggage he was still trying to carry on the  
2 conversation, the conversation, meanwhile, out of the top of the driveway, Sue and  
3 Sheldon were just about to go off and buy some milk and Sue shouted out and of course,  
4 Joan heard as well and then came rushing out. And I said to Bosman, 'No, no.' I mean,  
5 Bezuidenhout, 'no, it's okay, you go, thanks very much.' And he kept on wanting to stay  
6 around and I said 'Look I want to see my family, go.' He took the message, but, ja, that's  
7 - that was a real homecoming and you saw the photograph. I suppose.

8 V: Mmm, Mmmm.

9 K: And that was the end of the year, people were saying - we recognise Joan, but we didn't  
10 recognise you.

11 V: ...recognise you....

12 K: And I was sure that I wasn't going to allow those guys to come ?? From me??

13 V: You had also got very thin though, over that period.

14 K: Ja, I had lost weight, I hadn't, ja I suppose, ja, I had been doing regularly, and I mean to  
15 this day I regret that I hadn't kept it up, but I certainly was keeping myself fit. I mean an  
16 example was given to me by those young men in prison who were doing, you know, sort  
17 of press-ups, and pull-ups and all sorts of things and so I determined to, to make sure that  
18 I exercised and because I had a problem - I had a hernia, hernia, I said, no I must exercise  
19 after my meal because it's not best food to eat.

20 V: Mmm, mmm.

21 K: And so even then, before, with the cell, 2 by 6, I would walk up and down, try and walk  
22 as briskly as possible those six or five paces - trying to move backwards, forwards. all  
23 sorts of things to keep fit and then when I got into the quadrangle to do ordinary exercise  
24 for half an hour, I made sure that I - you know- did a lot of other running, jogging or what  
25 have you to try and keep fit and so I was - I think I was relatively fit, but, ja, had lost  
26 some weight.

27 V: You were also going to come back to the psychia - the psychologist from Durban.

28 K: Oh, ja, okay. I don't remember much about him - but expressing my concern about the  
29 situation within prison and finding - sort of people doing this as their job, and I suppose  
30 under normal circumstances, psychologists are helpful for prisoners - under normal  
31 circumstances, to have different psychologists for detainees I though a little bit ...

- 1 V: A bit odd?
- 2 K: Ja, because they really listened, but, but, ja, because they were part of the system, there  
3 was nothing really that they could do, or would do. except of course if you were a District  
4 Surgeon, like what's her name? In Port Elizabeth? Jenny...?
- 5 V: That was a very close court ??? Wendy Hall...a very strong lady..
- 6 K: Ja, that's right, that's right.
- 7 V: That's super Peter, do you want to go on beyond this, into the period after your  
8 detention? The beginnings of the war in the valley, or do you want to break now?
- 9 K: Well. Let's see, um ...
- 10 V: We shouldn't have very much time left.
- 11 K: Let's, let's just try and finish off in terms of the aftermath of detention.
- 12 V: Okay, okay.
- 13 K: ...and then pick up the valley next time you ??? Um, during my incarceration, it - it was  
14 Joan had shared with me that there is lots of support. and I was aware of this in terms of  
15 my own working with the Deskom and Daycom groups, of the knowledge of how  
16 detainees are supported and realised at various stages that you know, as isolated as I was,  
17 I knew that there were people out there rooting for me, rooting got us, all of us inside.  
18 And that, that was very encouraging and PACSA's little agape Group, met regularly  
19 during my period of isolation or my period of incarceration and it was a, it was a great  
20 help, I'm sure to Joan and to others, in terms of that solidarity. Um, and in addition to  
21 that. um, both through the local Council of Churches, under the Dependant's Conference  
22 and the SACC, who had helped with this whole process of taking, taking issues to court  
23 and then eventually taking the issue to the Supreme - the uh - the Appeal Court in  
24 Bloemfontein, you know there was just one heck of a lot of support.
- 25 V: Mmm.
- 26 K: But when I came out, I didn't actually realise the extent of that support, it was fantastic  
27 and we got letters, numerous letters - Amnesty International had been truly marvellous  
28 in getting information out and the number of people that made contact was absolutely  
29 incredible. And when we came out, Joan and I did a little thank-you note and letter of  
30 gratitude, expressing our gratitude for the support that we had had over - over the - this  
31 last three-month period and ja, we 'I've got a scrap book of it all. And it just was truly

1 amazing for me to see all this and to- to experience, you know, the love and support that  
2 obviously was extended not only to myself and Joan as a family, but to all detainees  
3 around...

4 V: Mmm.

5 K: And so that - that was really a wonderful experience to come home and find that and then  
6 certainly over the next couple of months trying to settle in - trying to get back to normal.  
7 It didn't take too long mind you, given the ? We got back to work. I was allowed to take  
8 time off, obviously and Joan and I went up to Mbona for a weekend break, up at  
9 Michael's's cottage at Mbona - that was made available to us. It was just super just to  
10 relax there and be quiet at Mbona. And then we went to Cape Town and spent time with  
11 my Mum in Fish Hoek, and I had never experienced a colder spring than I did that year,  
12 after 1986, we thought it was reasonably springy, summery, and we didn't take much  
13 warm clothing at all - boy, was it cold ??? And then in fact the letter writing that took  
14 place, setting and sending out this little card and then getting feedback and replies, it really  
15 was a - ja - a very moving experience and in fact what I didn't say earlier was that Sue  
16 was determined to have a visit of her own to see me before she went back to Nottingham  
17 University and that time was drawing near - end of September. and she went up to Beukes  
18 and said 'Look, I need to see my brother and my father. You must give me the  
19 opportunity because I'm going back to England and I don't know when I'll be able to see  
20 him again, and he said 'well you can have one of your mother's visits.' And she said  
21 'Nonsense, I'm not going to deprive my mother of a visit - it's her right and she pestered  
22 him and pestered him and eventually he gave in and I was brought into town to Loop  
23 Street Prison, and Joan came up with Sue and stayed in the street down below and I was  
24 ushered into this little room and Sue was then brought up and Sue said 'Mom's down  
25 there.' So we were able to waive - I don't know what people thought...

26 V: Without Sue ???

27 K: Anyway, Sue and I had a wonderful visit and she actually was at that time - no that was  
28 another time - ja, I got a t-shirt that the girls all did something on it - but I won't go into  
29 that ow - as I said to you - there are lots of anecdotes that were - ja - ??? but Sue had  
30 brought a bouquet, a littler bouquet of flowers and I said 'Sue, this is great, but I really  
31 can't take them back to prison, because, you know, it might upset others because they

1 would then know that I had a private visit as it were. And so I took a little flower and put  
2 it in my bible and said 'okay, I'll keep that.' And I suggested that she give those flowers  
3 to Brigadier Beukes. So, as she was leaving, she thanked him for the visit and said 'I  
4 really do appreciate this and I'd like to give you these flowers, my father can't take them  
5 back to the prison, but I'd like to give you these flowers to thank you ' He was so - I  
6 mean it just had an impact on him, he didn't know what to do so he gave them to his  
7 secretary.

8 V: Oh, my goodness.

9 K: And the secretary comes up to me and says. 'this is the nicest thing that's happened to me  
10 in this place for a long time.'

11 V: Ja.

12 K: But, ja, I just wanted to share that little sort of incident with Sue coming up. But then  
13 when, when, so we were able to share with Sue and John before they went back overseas  
14 and that was great too. They - it really was - you know it was, it was a great sort of  
15 experience to come back home after that and in many ways, sort of making commitments  
16 to try and be more of a family person than I had been in the past because work had been  
17 very much one of these things that I get caught up in and involved in and certainly have  
18 tried to make much more of family than I was in the past, and sadly used to the fact ??  
19 Quite often, but that, that happens. (Jennifer chuckles).

20 K: My only sadness in terms of that homecoming, Jenny had come down quickly - in that she  
21 had to go somewhere else, so when Elaine Anderson from the Witness came, she took the  
22 photograph of the family that were - Sue and Clare, Jenny wasn't there - we should have  
23 'phoned and asked her to come down to be part of the photograph - we didn't and I'm  
24 still to this day very sad about that. Jill, our youngest was in, in America at the time and  
25 for her. I think, my detention had been very problematic because she was so out of touch  
26 ...

27 V: She was unable to ....

28 K: ...and her link telephone conversations with Joan, and they did have obviously these  
29 links was very problematic, but I am very grateful to Derek and Judy Kotze, because they  
30 were very supportive, they are Methodists from here that were very involved in Christian  
31 Education and leadership training and in the Christian Institute that we, Joan and I were

1 involved in with so many others. And Derek and Judy were very supportive and there was  
2 a little amnesty group in Boston, near where Jill was staying - so that was very helpful for  
3 Jill as well, but it wasn't the same...

4 V: No, it's very hard when you are far away.

5 K: Ja, and in, in terms of playing - you see one of the things that I - was able to understand  
6 was, you know, which outside people didn't know, is this whole situation of I know how  
7 I am but I can't convey that ...

8 V: Tell you.

9 K: That's right, and so, in a sense, people from the outside, always worried because of the  
10 horror stories that one gets out of detention.

11 V: There of course was the people who were detained slightly after you, people such as  
12 Clare, had already worked out a whole code system because of what people like yourself  
13 had experienced so that they were in fact able to pass on certain basic information.

14 K: Ja.

15 V: And I think a lot of that was due to the problems that the June detainees had.

16 K: Mmm, Mmm.

17 V: That the later people worked out that this was an essential thing to do.

18 K: Right, ja, sure. It, ja ....

19 V: It would have - it was a most un - unpleasant and highly unnecessary performance.

20 K: Mmm, ja, it was, it was. I mean, getting back to that about the folk outside not knowing  
21 inside, did I mention last time the allegations - the phone call that Colin Gardener had  
22 received. Let me finish with one Saturday morning Colin had got a phone call from  
23 unbeknown - some prison authorities to say 'look they're trying desperately to get hold  
24 of Joan Kerchhoff, because Peter Kerchhoff has had a heart attack and has been taken to  
25 ....

26 V: Mmmm - the usual story.

27 K: And Colin, taking it because how could he not take it?

28 V: Yes.

29 K: So he eventually got hold of Joan and expressed it as carefully as he could; Joan said 'okay  
30 I'll get up to Greys straight away.' She rushes off - could have an accident on the way  
31 because of the rush, I suppose, gets to Greys, finds out ....

- 1 V: There's no Kerchhoff there....
- 2 K: ...that there's no Kerchhoff there. She's as mad as hell by now and then gets back and  
3 phoned Brigadiers Beukes; he said 'agh it's only a rumour.' She said 'You phoned prison  
4 now and find out how my husband is.' And he said 'alright, I will.' He phoned and then  
5 he phoned her back and said 'no, he's okay, he's in prison, he's alright.' But that was the  
6 sort of thing...
- 7 V: They tried sneaky nasty of things with really ? people.
- 8 K: Sure, sure, ja, ...
- 9 V: And it was pure vindictiveness, but then again nothing ??? says
- 10 K: Absolutely, I mean the course that Sue, no Jill had taken - she was studying at home at  
11 the time and getting nasty calls and she was taken in connection with - with a - one of  
12 them was that they had taken Jenny, given her what for, raped her and she was now in  
13 hospital in treatment and they were coming for her. I mean, you know, as you say,  
14 vindictive, nasty, just, just crude, crude, crude.
- 15 V: I think they thoroughly enjoyed it and I think watching the TRC at the moment, one is  
16 finding even more and more evidence that some of these people thoroughly enjoyed it ???  
17 the suspense and nastiness.
- 18 K: Absolutely.
- 19 V: Thank you Peter, thank you very much.
- 20 K: Okay.
- 21
- 22 (There is nothing else on the second side).