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3 **KWAZULU-NATAL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**4 **INTERVIEW WITH PETER KERCHHOFF, CONDUCTED BY**
5 **JENNIFER VERBEEK ON 6 MARCH 1998.**6 **(*K' SHALL SIGNIFY THE INTERVIEWEE AND 'V' THE INTERVIEWER.)**
78 V: This is the third tape of an interview with Peter Kerchhoff,
9 of PACSA, held at the PACSA Offices in Berg Street,
10 Pietermaritzburg on the 6 March 1998. Interviewer,
11 Jennifer Verbeek. Today we'll be dealing with very
12 difficult questions and very emotional questions, the War
13 in the Valley and the deaths of Reggie and Skumbuza, and if
14 you feel that at any stage it's getting too much for you,
15 please just bend over and put off the tape, okay? And also,
16 if you should feel that the forty-five minutes is enough,
17 tell me after the forty-five minutes. Or we can go on for
18 the normal ninety minutes.19 K: I'd prefer, today, because I've got a meeting with ? at half
20 past four, just do one side.

21 V: ...do one side, that would be lovely.

22 K: (Inaudible)

23 V: Okay, fire away.

24 K: Certainly picking up on the whole war in the valley we need
25 to, to begin to focus, if you like, on the - the origins if
26 you like, from the UDF, the lack of support for Inkatha and
27 the Inkatha Youth Brigade in particular, in the aftermath
28 of the formation of the UDF. '84, '85, and as I've
29 mentioned before, the, the whole issue of the Sarmcol
30 strike, and for me, and sadly I think a lot of people don't
31 remember this, or realise this, but in, in essence - not
32 that it's something to be gloried at, but in essence when
33 the violence in - the political violence in Natal really
34 actually started in, in the Imbali, the centre of Imbali -

1 if you like, with the formation of the Imbali, the Youth
2 Organisation: EAL. And linked with that the SOYA, Sobantu
3 Youth, Ashdown youth, Edendale youth and then of course, in
4 Imbali, the Imbali Civic Association, which, which linked
5 into, or became affiliated to the UDF. So we are really
6 looking at '95, '90 - sorry, '85, '86, and the issues
7 there. And then certainly towards the end of '86, and I
8 did some reading and I've got all the figures here. But
9 certainly there were a lot of difficulties with taxis,
10 rival taxi associations in Imbali, some of them linked to
11 the Trade Unions, and others of course linked to Inkatha.
12 And that's when Gibson Msomi was one of the first victims.
13 In fact he probably, with the second victim of the
14 particular morning in November of '86 (if I'm not
15 mistaken), there had been a murder, earlier in the day and
16 this person was apparently knifed - Inkatha person - and
17 Gibson, in his taxi was actually going past the site of
18 where the body lay. And if I remember it correctly,
19 somebody actually shot at him - at the taxi in which Gibson
20 was and he was injured, no he was killed, and two
21 schoolgirls in the car were actually injured in that
22 incident. I'm saying this because it was in that sense of
23 Imbali, the initial murders, killings were taking place and
24 vigilante attacks at night were taking place there. And it
25 was, all was really developing the whole sad scenario of
26 war in the valley. And in this connection of late '86 and
27 the killings, and of course the killings of those four
28 people in Mpophomeni in December of '86, you had the
29 situation of the Imbali Council, the Urban Bantu Councils,
30 as they were described as in those days, or in derogatory
31 terms, the Useless Boys Clubs. Certainly there was
32 pressure on the Imbali Councillors, who were, I think
33 almost one hundred percent linked to the Inkatha grouping,
34 and that exacerbated the tension in Imbali, between EO, the
35 Civic Association, and the Councillors and this, this

1 really developed more and more and as pressures were built
2 up, with the vigilantes and with the Security Forces
3 monitoring and, and driving the wedge, if you like, between
4 Inkatha and the majority of Imbali. A Lot of these
5 activists were moving out - some to town, some into the
6 greater Edendale area, and of course, as I mentioned last
7 time, the whole issue of the National Emergency being
8 declared, and some of those people were activists - so
9 clearly Imbali were among the first to be picked up and ?
10 Their houses. But the point I wanted to make is the fact
11 that, because there was pressure on the Imbali community,
12 by vigilantes and Security Forces, the community, with the
13 message of oppression - not they needed to be aware that
14 they were oppressed, but certainly in terms of political
15 oppression, these activists were moving out into greater
16 Edendale and certainly into the Ashdown, Sobantu, Edendale
17 proper, and then more and more into what is known as
18 Vulindlela, where in fact the Chiefs hold control. The
19 five chiefs. And certainly this outward movement, if you
20 like, fanning out, was creating more and more trouble for
21 Inkatha people. Because, yes, they were certainly losing
22 support from the youth. And in fact, of course, from the
23 Trade Union movement because although they had formed
24 ILWUSA, it was in '85, COSATU certainly was - the main
25 Trade Union group that most of the people belonged to and
26 in fact many of the drivers for the KwaZulu Transport were
27 Transport and General Workers Union people who were, which
28 was affiliated or linked to COSATU and so in that period,
29 '86, '87, '88, '89, linked with the continuing detention of
30 activists and this spread further and further, until it in
31 actual fact got really right up to Elandskop and the domain
32 of the Induna, David Ntombela, who really was in fact,
33 himself the Chief, the Chief that he was under really I
34 think was in - in - under the control of David Ntombela.
35 And there is much that has written about David Ntombela,

1 somewhere - ? On that, just to say that in fact, certainly
2 one of the most notorious warlords in our region. So with
3 this fanning out, and the pressures building up, there were
4 all sorts of difficulties arising. Areas that had been
5 relatively calm were now being divided, up near Taylor's
6 Halt there in ?, there were some terrible incidents where
7 people were assassinated or murdered in large numbers.
8 And in a sense, in the earlier period of this political
9 violence the struggle was more in terms of numbers of
10 people being killed at any one time. Later it developed in
11 terms of actually picking out individuals like Skumbuza and
12 Reggie. And so, sort of '87, through '88, '89 this period
13 of fanning out, where pressures were mounting there was
14 certainly creating a much deeper divide between
15 communities. And at this time, as I mentioned briefly last
16 time, PACSA, when we were next door, had this - what we
17 called the Crisis Office and it was, you know, incredibly
18 busy with people flooding in every day of the week, and in
19 fact it would be open seven days, on Saturdays, Sundays, I'm
20 sure we would have seen people as well. But really coming
21 with the information, their stories, seeking help, seeking
22 advice, lawyers, doctors etcetera. So that was a very
23 important part of our work in '87, '88, '89. And linked
24 with this all, of course, was the whole Detention Saga, that
25 was continuing, which really came to an end in 1989, when
26 I think the hunger strikes, nationally, really put paid to
27 the apartheid government's detention without trial. So
28 moving beyond there in terms of the national scene, you had
29 the release of some of the Robben Islanders, Sisulu and
30 others, in September, I mean September/October of '89 and
31 there were these expectations that something 'if they had
32 been released, what was going to happen to Mandela?' And
33 yes, so of course, in 1990, ultimately they released
34 everybody that had been waiting for, the release of
35 Mandela, to massive crowds greeting him. And in fact in

1 February of 1990, the 25th of February, there was this
2 massive rally at the Kings Park Stadium and the estimates
3 from the reporters, journalists, people who are good at
4 judging crowds, indicated that the crowd was something
5 between one hundred and two hundred thousand people. I mean
6 a real significant turnout, and of course, he, he
7 disenchanted a number of his younger folk when he spoke
8 peace and he said 'you must throw your weapons into the
9 sea.' And you could hear the group of the crowd. Anyway
10 why I'm picking up on that is that that 25th of February
11 was a significant event for KwaZulu-Natal because it showed
12 the support that he had as a leader for the future. A Month
13 later we have the scenario where the Inkatha, now I think
14 they call it the Inkatha Freedom Party, of trying to stage
15 a massive rally for what purpose I am not sure, obviously,
16 in many ways to counter the rally of the UDF/COSATU/ANC,
17 and sad to say I think it was a dis - well, it was a
18 disaster, in many ways. They drew a crowd of maximum, ten
19 thousand people, it was a miserable day as well - which
20 didn't help them. But at that time, just before the rally
21 in March, there was an imbizo which was addressed by the
22 King, and by Buthelezi, and basically, from what I remember
23 - and it's also well documented in the Weekly Mail, those
24 years, or that month, the imbizo challenged the chiefs and
25 indunas to the extent that, I think it was the King that
26 said you know 'What is wrong with you chiefs and indunas
27 that you can't control your young people?' and this
28 obviously fired them up, which I guess was the purpose of
29 the imbizo. And certainly on the Saturday, the 24th of
30 march, it was more the Durban scene ? And I don't know
31 enough about it, but there was a chief in the Amanzimtoti
32 region, a Luthuli, a relative of the late Albert Luthuli,
33 who took action against some of the youth in his area, and
34 I'm vague on the details, but certainly a number of youth
35 were injured, and I suspect some were actually killed. But

1 that was the day before the rally of the Inkatha People in
2 - at Kings Park. On the Sunday, the 25th of March a number
3 of buses had been hired, and again, one wants to question
4 where money came from for these buses and certainly,
5 digressing slightly, this was what David Ntombela was
6 really good at - going, getting his - his lackeys to go
7 round people at Elandskop and around to demand five rands
8 from each family to help pay for the transport. And that's
9 documented, and it's fact, it's not, it's not, you know,
10 it's been confirmed. Anyway, a number of buses were hired
11 and provocatively, they drove through Edendale instead of
12 going around, which they could have done which the police
13 could have instructed them to do, and certainly a number of
14 buses coming from Elandskop, and Taylor's Halt, came down
15 from the Henley Dam area, down into Edendale and ja, I
16 believe a number of UDF activists were waiting for the
17 buses and they actually stoned the buses. And then two
18 buses stopped and men got off the buses, with their
19 traditional weapons, and as I can recall, the youngsters
20 must have been on the top side and were able to throw
21 things down. When these men got off the bus, they looked
22 around and couldn't find anybody, but they saw some young
23 women drawing water nearby. And they gave chase to these
24 women, a number of them fled, the young, one young woman
25 said she was drawing water and she had done nothing and she
26 was not over worried and then she suddenly realised these
27 men were, you know, intent on doing some bodily damage so
28 she up and fled as well. But didn't flee fast enough - and
29 was actually stabbed in the back by one or two of these
30 Inkatha people from Elandskop area. She survived, thank
31 goodness, and we met her a couple of weeks later and she
32 showed us the scars on her back where this had happened.
33 And so that story of the buses coming through is important
34 to what I say a little bit later. And in the evening, and
35 these guys got back on the bus and went all the way down to

1 Durban. In the evening, on their way back, they again, I
2 think, rather provocatively, came along to the Edendale
3 Hospital and some of them actually were able to get through
4 to go back the same way as they had come in the morning,
5 but there was an altercation at the hospital bus stop and
6 I think some shooting took place both from within the bus
7 and outside the bus because, ja, Inkatha, well ANC, UDF,
8 COSATU people were in waiting for these people as they came
9 back. So there was a serious altercation, and if I'm not
10 mistaken, somebody in the bus was killed that evening
11 there. But the police also were there for a change and
12 although some buses had obviously got through, the other
13 buses were then re-directed up Caluza to go round
14 Sweetwaters and, the back way to Elandskop, but some of the
15 buses certainly did get through and on the evening of the
16 25th, at a bus stop near KwaMnyandu there was a very
17 thriving shopping centre, near Wudisaka? The bus stopped,
18 and a couple of these people got off because at this stage
19 that area was still very mixed, Inkatha and members of the
20 ANC. And two young people, seventeen years old, were
21 killed and they were cousins and their name was Zondi and
22 they were in fact, apart from the person that was killed in
23 the bus, and I will check on that - whether - that is a
24 fact. But certainly they were amongst the first people to
25 be killed in what we have come to describe as the Seven Day
26 War. Those two Zondis were waiting at the bus stop and as
27 these Inkatha people got off the bus, they were attacked
28 and killed. The buses then obviously got home to their
29 destinations, whether via Sweetwaters, or via KwaMnyandu,
30 KwaShange, the next day, it was relatively quiet, there was
31 a lot of unhappiness in the Ingebezulu? The other areas of
32 Elandskop, and on the Tuesday, Pierre Cronje and Radley
33 Keys flew - who were both Democratic party at that time,
34 were actually monitoring... Radley has been very involved
35 in Peace in Natal Initiatives within and the two of them

1 were out with people on a ? Situation, on the Edendale Road
2 and the Caluza/Sweetwaters Road, and in fact observed that
3 one group of people were trying to come down from the
4 Chief's place, up the top of Sweetwaters there to
5 supposedly attack Edendale. And the police were there and
6 Pierre Cronje was able to say to the police, 'Look, if you
7 don't take action there, you're going to be in serious
8 trouble. You must send those people back.' Fortunately
9 sense prevailed on the part of the police and they forced
10 those others to go back. One thought, okay, relatively
11 quiet, in the aftermath, of analysing all the situation,
12 Father Tim Smith, who has been very involved in monitoring
13 the situation up at Blackside Mission?, in the Holy Family
14 Convent at Elandskop, told us later that, in fact, on that
15 Tuesday evening, David Ntombela had a massive crowd of
16 people around his place and obviously they were preparing
17 for what was to come. Mainly what we describe as the Seven
18 Day War and because there were crowds of people and he was,
19 you know, talking to them. And where they stayed that
20 night, I don't know, but obviously in the area surrounding,
21 because the next day certainly there was a mass of people
22 that came from all sorts of areas, from the upper areas of
23 Elandskop, from Sweetwaters and from beyond KwaMnyandu sort
24 of Taylor's Halt, Gezubaso area. And this really was the
25 start of the Seven Day War. That Wednesday and Thursday
26 were the darkest days I think, in Pietermaritzburg's
27 history, except of course, if you look at Kangakhele and ?.
28 So this then was the - situation and I've looked around it
29 to show, as I see it, that in fact the pressures were
30 building up as the situation deteriorated in Imbali and
31 people were fleeing. It really fanned out and the
32 pressures were on and Inkatha were losing ground and in
33 fact this is what's happened in KwaZulu-Natal in a sense as
34 well. But not to the extent of the Seven Days War,
35 although some areas, like Port Shepstone and I think ? as

1 well. But on that Wednesday and Thursday, there was no
2 doubt that there was a massive campaign that had been
3 strategically worked out and I mean David Ntombela gave as
4 one of the reasons for attacking the three areas of
5 KwaMayandu, KwaShange and Edendale - Caluza particularly,
6 was that the buses on the way to the rally on Sunday
7 morning had been stoned by these ANC comrades and they were
8 going to say 'Look that's not democracy, you've got to
9 allow us to go to our various rallies. We want to show you
10 our force and not allowing us our right of access.' I mean
11 the story had an element of truth in it, the buses were
12 stoned. There is no doubt in my mind and I suppose, that
13 ultimately the TBC may get more information on this, but
14 really, that, that campaign was planned, long before that
15 Tuesday night of the gathering around David Ntombela's
16 house. In a sense, it's a little bit like the Trust Feed
17 incident, where people were involved and Ntombela again,
18 implicated in that with the Security Police. And so, ja,
19 to my mind, that was a grand campaign, with elements of the
20 security forces on there and monitors, journalists and
21 people like Cronje and Keys, who were in the aeroplane,
22 with Khaba Mkhize as well, monitoring the situation, were
23 able to look down and see in fact, three pockets of people
24 actually attacking these three areas of KwaMayandu, Bishu
25 and Caluza, and you know, from the affidavits that certain
26 adult educationalists put together in the aftermath of
27 that, with those sanctuaries, or places of refuge put up,
28 a number of people went in to take statements from the
29 victims who had fled the violence and there is no doubt
30 that in fact the police were simply going up and down the
31 roads. They were not trying to stop the violence, they
32 were just simply driving around, but I think, worse was the
33 fact that some people were seen to be - from the helicopter
34 - seemed to be dropping something to these attackers and
35 the communities said - 'Well, what can they be dropping?

1 They aren't dropping food, they're more dropping ammunition
2 sort of thing ...And what was happening in terms of the
3 youngsters and some of the workers who didn't go to work,
4 were trying to have an organised retreat away from the
5 attackers. So they were defending - yes certainly they had
6 guns, probably illegal weapons, illegal weapons, but
7 others, of course were with their spears and sjamboks and
8 whatever they could protect themselves and they were trying
9 to form the rearguard action to allow elderly people to
10 flee. And I'll never forget, two women that were killed -
11 Rose Mpumul and Agnes Sibisi - this - those coffins, or the
12 part of the one mass funeral that we were involved in.
13 Agnes, I think was 72 and Rose Mtolo was 75, and these
14 elderly women obviously hadn't been able to get past ? And
15 another horrifying story that I have really - haven't been
16 able to finish off, to find out, but a young woman, who was
17 pregnant, was killed and when they went to collect bodies
18 at the police station, they found the baby, who must have
19 been born a few days, maybe a week before, under these two
20 mothers - still alive - and I was, you know, would wonder
21 what had happened to that baby, but those are some of the
22 little things that wasn't covered. Because at one stage we
23 did an investigation, we had a couple of interns going to
24 the mortuaries, and also to the courts to try and find out
25 what criminal cases had been closed, in other words an
26 inquest had been performed, and what case, what incidents
27 or murders were the Crs, the Criminal cases still open. It
28 was incredible how some of these inquests would just like -
29 you know, no real investigation, unknown cause of death
30 sort of thing, I mean - death by shot - ? Weapon - you
31 know, typical of a justice system that wasn't concerned
32 with justice and in reading, eventually getting some help -
33 written copies of those inquests, quite horrifying. I mean
34 one I can remember of the policeman going up into
35 KwaMayandu and sort of going ten metres and coming across

1 a body and then going twenty metres and coming across a
2 body and another twenty metres and coming across another
3 body. I mean, ja, quite, quite sickening. But yet how
4 many of those stories are not recorded, or unrecorded
5 because, you know, people haven't been able to get to the
6 inquest files and things like that. And there's still a
7 hell of lot work for people to do to you know to get
8 stories of those days. So, ja, that, those? First, the
9 Wednesday and Thursday of that week was particularly dark,
10 and I can remember in fact going out with Ben Nsumbi, the
11 Methodist Minister - it must have been on the second day,
12 the Thursday and I had gone up to his place in Georgetown
13 and we had come back together in two cars - we wanted to
14 get up to the Sweetwaters, up into Caluza area, where in
15 fact you could see on the hillside that fighting was
16 actually taking place. When we turned down, coming from
17 Georgetown, to turn down the Caluza Road where that clinic
18 is to go through into Sweetwaters, there was just a mass of
19 people in the road, in fact Edendale Road had become a mall
20 as it were, there were so many people, but also what they
21 had done to prevent traffic moving freely - like the police
22 and the army - they'd put barricades on the streets - it
23 was very difficult to move along there. But down this
24 Caluza Road, there were a mass of police vehicles, intent
25 on stopping these people from moving to Edendale, now
26 primarily ANC/UDF, from going to the rescue, if you like of
27 their (excuse me) colleagues at - on the Caluza hill and
28 when we got there we spoke to the police and said 'but
29 lock.' you know 'There's an attack going up there, why
30 aren't, you know, sending people up?' 'Well, we've got stop
31 these people from getting through.' So we said 'Well, you
32 know there's an attack right there now, why don't you go
33 and stop the killing there?' Anyway, as we were waiting
34 there, some shots were fired from Harewood? And I can
35 remember then shouting 'Drop everybody, drop.' Because

1 they couldn't see where the gun shots were coming from, but
2 that was Sifiso Zuma's home territory - he was ...and ja -
3 fortunately nobody was, was killed in that little bit of
4 cross-fire. Eventually the police allowed Ben and I to go
5 through. We got up to the hill and we had a look around to
6 see what was happening and we picked up one injured girl
7 and brought her back and then passed through the roadblock
8 again, of the police and took straight to Edendale
9 Hospital. But eventually, as we were coming back down
10 through that roadblock of the police there was an old, what
11 do they call Saracen. What was their nickname, I can't -
12 remember now, but there was this truck trundling up the
13 hill very slowly, trying to go and intervene with the
14 fighting that was happening on the hill. Ja, no - those
15 were the - that was the Tuesday, the Wednesday and
16 Thursday. That Thursday evening I was interviewed by
17 Canadian television and as I said on the TV camera when
18 they were recording, you know, you can hear the shots in
19 the background, from the hill, the fighting is still going
20 on. By that time of course, we were at Esigodini, the St
21 ---- Mission. There were thousands of people already there
22 at the Church and that was the pattern over the next couple
23 of weeks with people just flooding in from the upper areas
24 and then of course, as I say, the various, the churches in
25 Edendale, had set up their halls and their Church to
26 minister to these refugees, or these survivors of the
27 violence, and that's where John Aitchison, of the
28 University, Centre of Adult Education, folk were able to
29 meet people who were then able to share their stories and
30 that's all documented. So that certainly for me was a
31 major part of the War in the Valley, although obviously, as
32 I described earlier, it was a, it was a build-up. But all
33 along, in this whole process, was this notion of 'you've
34 got and try and stop this - this warfare, because it's not
35 getting us anywhere - it's just resulting in more and more

1 deaths and this is where in fact we were trying to work
2 with the churches, both at the provincial level, and at
3 national level, to try and get talks going between Inkatha
4 and Mangosuthu Buthelezi and the ANC, COSATU/UDF. It was a
5 struggle, I mean there were lots of discussions, there were
6 lots of meetings. There was a big meeting with Mandela in
7 the Cathedral, there was a meeting with Inkatha at
8 Koinonia, Botha's Hill, there was a meeting with people up
9 at Ulundi, with Mangosuthu Buthelezi, but really, I mean
10 the intention sadly was not there, or the will wasn't there
11 to stop this sort of thing. But eventually, I'm a bit
12 fuzzy on these details, but eventually there was that
13 accord between Inkatha and ANC, through Mandela and
14 Buthelezi that was signed in Durban 1991, I'm not sure, it
15 must have been late 90 - you know, anyway. So, but for a
16 long time the situation here was very, very serious and
17 particularly with all those victims still housed in the
18 church property and try and see what would happen there.
19 And I don't know if I mentioned last time but certainly
20 there was this ad hoc Crisis Committee that came together
21 to minister to the needs in various ways at mass funerals,
22 communications, doctors. And I can remember doctors going
23 out to St Albans' Mission, doctors and sisters, helping the
24 people not only in terms of being injured from violence,
25 but in terms of basic health, from colds from cold water
26 etcetera. So, many people were involved in that and come
27 to mind. And of course as I mentioned, I think, early
28 April, national church leaders came on the scene and we
29 were able to take them round to the victims and survivors
30 on all sides because there wasn't only ANC, not ANC, sorry
31 UDF people - there were victims from all sides and we were
32 trying to put them in touch, or the church leaders in touch
33 with everybody to try and ?? Because obviously, as part of
34 - a peace initiative, you needed to try and engage people
35 from all sides. Certainly at the time the church leaders

1 were at pains to try and meet with the political groupings,
2 the government, you name it, they were really trying to do
3 what they could, getting about a cease-fire and controlling
4 the situation, but where the will wasn't there, and
5 certainly the will wasn't there in my view, from the
6 Inkatha side, and certainly wasn't there in terms of some
7 of the security forces. Anyway, in the aftermath of what
8 we call the Seven Day War, the situation in the valley
9 lessened somewhat, but the violence, the political violence
10 certainly didn't lessen, it spread, Richmond, lots of areas
11 around KwaZulu-Natal. But what did happen, was the
12 violence, the political violence took on a new direction,
13 if you like. It certainly didn't take the form of mass
14 killings, they seemed to identify and go for individual
15 targets and certainly in that connection, the late Chief
16 Mapumulo from the Table Mountain area, was one of those.
17 Certainly, our own colleague and friends, Skumbuza Ngwenya
18 was another, and Reggie Hadebe was another and then
19 Professor Sibankhulu, not a professor, that was his name,
20 nickname, from Northern Districts, North Natal, again,
21 another person in detention, in detention, out of
22 detention, an activist also taken out. That one we think,
23 sadly, well not sadly, they are always sad, we think that
24 one specifically was as a result of the security forces,
25 whereas with Skumbuza and Reggie and Maphumalo we're not
26 sure, we suspect the links between IFP and the security
27 forces were implicated, but ja, the court case indicates
28 that Skumbuza was useless, I mean the jargon certainly had
29 sort of, Chief Maphumalo...There was a post mortem, if I
30 can remember correctly and they had some person that they
31 suspected was the killer but that seemed to just disappear.
32 And then of course with Reggie Hadebe there has been no
33 court case whatsoever and so, you know, very - you know,
34 very upsetting for the candidates. But in that connection,
35 certainly with Skumbuzu and with Reggie, we were very

1 involved in many ways with the two of them. Skumbuza had
2 been working for PACSA for about six months and we sent him
3 on to a Peace Programme in Johannesburg and he had ben away
4 seven days and I'd met him on Friday night at the airport
5 and to pick him up in fact, and ? To him, that he was using
6 from PACSA and then suggested, because we had these
7 visitors from America, the Kellogg fellows, that he join us
8 for supper on Saturday evening to just share some of his
9 community development with peace work with these people and
10 also talk about some of his experiences, the workshop that
11 he had come from, which related to the whole peace
12 imitative that we were engaged in and he said 'Yes' and he
13 said he'd try and bring Zonkey with him as well. He
14 pitched up earlier than we did at the hotel, down in
15 Victoria Road and when we got there we discovered that
16 Zonkey hadn't come and he said 'No. Zonkey wasn't feeling
17 like it and she just wasn't happy about the situation.' A
18 premonition. Anyway we sat down to this meal with these
19 Kelloggs students and some PACSA people and some friends
20 and Skumbuza was sharing all sorts of information with this
21 group and really showing his excitement with wanting to get
22 grips with the Peace Track that he had been on - the work
23 experience - through insights that he'd gained, that he was
24 really wanting to put into play back in the PACSA office
25 the following week. And ja, we've got photographs, you
26 know showing the sort of - the spirt with which that, that
27 function was going. Then at about twenty past nine he said
28 'look I've got to go to a funeral tomorrow, my cousin,
29 unrelated to me, but I've got a cousin in Claremont.' ? In
30 Durban had died and he was going there and he said also 'in
31 terms of the situation, it's still not one hundred percent
32 safe and I need to go home.' And he said 'alright, you
33 know, we'll be in touch.' And with that he left and I
34 think, I don;t exactly what happened, he got into the car
35 whether between the time of leaving the restaurant and

1 getting into the car, he saw some people that he knew,
2 because we heard later that people that were allegedly
3 implicated in his assassination, were seen at the bar, in
4 the - next to the restaurant and the allegations are that
5 he was followed by these people from Imbali. And he got
6 into the car and was reversing out in the bakkie, when
7 inside we heard what I thought initially was the sound of
8 a car backfiring and then after thirty seconds, or even
9 less, later, there were repeated noises which were
10 obviously gunshots. And I said 'those sound like...' or
11 'those are gun shots.' and I ran outside and I went to the
12 sort of - the fence, 'cause I thought, you know, if it was
13 a car backfiring, or what have you, or it was some fire
14 shooting, it must be surely in the street outside, not in
15 the, not in the hotel premises. Didn't see a dam thing in
16 the street, then turned round and saw the bakkie, and
17 that's strange, he's in an awkward position and I went
18 round, and Skumbuza had reversed around and had backed into
19 the tree, and then as I looked inside, the window was open
20 and there he was slumped across on the passenger seat and
21 all I could hear was his rasping and I realised that he had
22 been shot. So I just ran inside 'for goodness sake are
23 there any doctors here?' and there were two and there was
24 in fact another family in the restaurant at the same time
25 - and I think even one of them might even have been a
26 doctor. So the Kelloggs doctors ran out and I in the
27 meantime then ran to the hotel manager who then tried to
28 get the public telephone; the manager wasn't there - but he
29 was, but the office was shut and the public telephone
30 wasn't working. So I then ran back inside and said 'look
31 we've got to get to the cops.' And then old, the - he's
32 from the Support Group?

33 V: Oh, I know who you mean.

34 K: Ja, okay...

35 V: I'll give you his name just now - the names ...??

1 K: He was, ja. His bakkie was outside and all of us were now
2 jammed inside because of the vehicle, Skumbuza's vehicle in
3 the way of the gate and I said 'well, look now we must, we
4 must get to the cops.' And I mean we just then took off
5 and I left the others milling around trying to see what was
6 happening and later I learnt that the doctors hadn't been
7 able to do anything with Skumbuzo and he died within a few
8 minutes of them ministering to him. We got to the cops and
9 I said 'Sorry, come on, we've got a problem down in
10 Victoria Road and you've got to come.' 'Oh we've got no
11 vehicle.' 'I'm sorry, get into our vehicle and come,' And
12 then they realised, okay we were serious and there was a
13 vehicle just pitching up and they said 'okay, follow these
14 guys.' And we all rushed back down to the scene and of
15 course by them a whole crowd of people had gathered and
16 then we waited and these cops were then starting to look
17 around and typical of people looking around, the
18 bystanders, they had moved some of the bullets, the shells,
19 anyway the cops then said 'no,' they put bricks over the
20 bullets and said 'don't touch,' and tried to cordon off the
21 area. And then I think we must have waited for three
22 quarters of an hour for the investigation people to come
23 and when the investigation people arrived, I was outside
24 talking to the police on the pavement, the others from the
25 group were inside and the - obviously the leader of the
26 CID, or whatever they call themselves, got out and looked
27 at the policeman and laughed and joked about something and
28 I know I heard Noel from the background shouting something
29 about Boers and their attitude to death and something and
30 I was saying to this guy that had just got out the car 'we
31 have somebody who has just been killed here, how can you
32 make jokes at this time?' Then he said to me, 'you know if
33 we had to be serious all the time - we see death so often,
34 how ...ja.' So I said 'that's tough, we have a situation
35 here..' anyway, sort of made him angry, I suppose. But

1 what the hell I was angry because of his attitude. Anyway,
2 then, then the situation was taken care of by him and
3 others and then we had to then wait for the photographer,
4 and the photographers ... and then I said 'well, you know
5 -, his family back in Edendale must be getting worried.'
6 I then went and fetched Monica Wittenberg, who was very
7 close to the family as well and at the same time, Mark
8 Povall, over the road from Monica, we got hold of him as
9 well, and so the three of us came back and stood around and
10 it must have been about midnight when - just after the
11 photographer came and some other cops came, and we said
12 'look we need to get out to Imbali to go and talk to these
13 people and we're a bit anxious because we don't know where
14 his killers are,; And he said 'no well, okay we'll send a
15 car to accompany you.' So we went our, we turned into
16 Imbali turnoff, the cop then hooted behind us and said 'I
17 can't go any further.'

18 V: You're talking of Noel Oethley?

19 K: Noel, Oethley, ja, yes, ja, ja, sorry okay ...

20 V: So the cops pushed off?

21 K: Ja, so they said 'we can't go in, and you know it's not
22 our jurisdiction, ha, ha...' It was supposedly Imbali fell
23 under Plessislaer, ...

24 V: ???

25 K: So Monica, Mark and I said 'we're here and there's no way
26 that we're going back, we've got to go and see the family.'
27 So we then drove out to the house and got out and then
28 rattled the gate because the gate was locked - both gates
29 were locked and we called out to Nehi and Zonkey and they
30 must have been aware, well they must have been worried -
31 wakened because it didn't take them long to open up. But
32 by this time, all the neighbourhood has said something as
33 well, ?? So basically, ja, as we moved into the house,
34 Zonky just took one look at us and then went straight to
35 the bedroom. And we had Nehi sat down on the sedan and

1 started screaming because we were obviously.. and ja,
2 sharing that information was not the easiest. We couldn't
3 do much more, we stayed for about half an hour, we prayed
4 with the group and then the families from around, the
5 neighbours - I ?? All - these names and we said 'look, you
6 know, we need to get back to the others,' And so we then
7 left them offering to obviously see them again the next
8 morning and we went back to the hotel where the rest of the
9 people were and by that time, when we got back, they had
10 taken Skumbuza's body away. Ja, it's one of those nights,
11 one of those experiences that one will never, ever ...

12 V: You definitely see this thing as 'here was an up and coming
13 star of the UDF and one could have been alive today?

14 K: Oh ja, he, he....

15 V: Because certainly that was my view of Reggie, which we will
16 probably come to on the next tape.

17 K: Ja.

18 V: Was that Reggie was more or less the - the natural
19 successor to Harry Gwala, and that one couldn't allow this.

20 K: Oh, no, certainly I mean people had been wanting to get at
21 Skumbuza for many, many a year. It wasn't simply that he
22 had come to suffer that night. I think people had been
23 waiting for the opportunity to find him in a situation
24 where they could attack. And I mean his house was attacked
25 on a couple of occasions in Imbali - it was unsuccessful -
26 they obviously went ? As he was ? Off. But, ja there was
27 definitely a campaign to get him out of circulation because
28 he was a leader in the Imbali community that was actually
29 uniting groupings that saw themselves as either as ANC.
30 UDF, ANC, and Inkatha because there'd been this massive
31 turmoil between....

32
33 (End of first side).

34
35 (Second side)

1 K: ... his ability and skills, he and peace process, he was
2 very instrumental in bringing together communities within
3 the divided community of Imbali and he got involved with a
4 number of people, including Ruth Benghu on what they called
5 the Edendale/Imbali rehabilitation committee and he - they
6 were moving towards and it comes out of the initiative of
7 Lomo Buthelezi, Mandela and others who were going to
8 generate a fund way back in 1990 or 1991 in terms of
9 restoring homes in the Imbali area in particular and
10 obviously in other areas. And H would be particularly
11 successful, was Skumbuza, in bringing people, and yes, I.
12 I think people were frightened about his pace making role
13 and the fact that he was being successful in bringing -
14 uniting communities. And undoubtedly if he was alive today
15 he would be in parliament, there is no two ways about it.
16 But it's, ja, it's just one of those things that - you
17 know, there were two guns used in his assassination. One
18 gun they recovered, one they never recovered, certainly the
19 community had their suspicions, strong suspicions as to who
20 the gunmen were, they certainly knew the - they had the
21 information, somehow from who was the driver. And what
22 annoyed us at the time was the police didn't even bother to
23 set up roadblocks and sort of 'phone around to say 'watch
24 cars in these areas for ...' And then the investigation
25 was, was useless, I mean, eventually I asked the church
26 leaders to accompany me to see the area Commissioner of
27 Police in the old Trust Bank Building, because we were
28 totally dissatisfied with the process that was taking, you
29 know, that wasn't taking shape. And sadly also the
30 Acting, or the Assistant Attorney-General, with due respect
31 to him, I mean he decided to take the case, to prosecute
32 (the) case himself and he was useless, absolutely useless
33 and then the judge that's sitting in this Nkabinde trial,
34 he was in fact Judge then. And I was, I was quite appalled
35 at his attitude because he was cross-examining, not the

1 State Presec, I mean not the Defence Attorney, he was
2 cross-examining people and I thought judges usually...

3 K: You should stop this?

4 K: ... and now the others ?? So I was, you know, there was no
5 real intent to find a criminal, the perpetrators of
6 Skumbuzo's death, like so many others in this sorry saga of
7 our history in KwaZulu-Natal. And I mean, ja, we could
8 speak of Reggie the next time.

9 V: Ja.

10 K: But the fact that Reggie's murder has not appeared in court,
11 I mean has not come to the fore is indicative of where,
12 where I believe the investigation people were at that time
13 and I suppose, to a certain extent are, still. And it's
14 not that they don't have the ability. I mean look at the
15 murder of these two Swedes, this, this weekend.

16 V: Very quickly picked them up.

17 K: Ja, so it's not that they can't do it, it's the will is not
18 to do it.

19 V: And also the ? Investigations are thoroughly mucked up.

20 K: Ja.

21 V: And then it's very hard for the other person.

22 K: That's right. I wish, I wish ? Dutton had been involved in
23 the investigation of Skumbuzo, and and Reggie. We would
24 have got somewhere.

25

26 (The tape is switched off there is nothing else on this side).