INTERVIEW WITH WINNIE MANDELA

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David: Maybe if you'de just begin by telling us what it was like to grow in Pondoland. What were your duties as a young girl, because people in the states would know nothing about life there.

Winnie: I'm a typical country girl. I was born in the backveld of Pondoland. Perhaps I am what I am today because of that childhood. I loved my childhood. I loved the country in which I ran barefoot. I wore a shoe for the first time when I went to secondary school. I grew up like any other little country girl. My father was a teacher. He was a principal of the school in which I was. So he taught me history. There were eleven of us. I come from a family of eleven children. I'm just one of those in the middle, there was nothing particular about me. My grandfather, my father's father, had 29 wives. He was a chief in our region. So we grew up in a very large family. I was herding cattle, sheep, and goats like any other country girl. I grew up looking after cattle. I grew up milking cows, and I loved my country. My father taught me history. And he always said "the white man's version of history is this..." And then he would tell us the actual history. For instance I recall when he used to teach us about the ... what we have in our history is the nine Xhosa wars. Wars that were fought by our forefathers; frontier wars, where they fought the white man, whom they regarded as an intruder in this country. He would relish telling us these stories of our heroes. He would tell us about Nqoka, Sikana, Makana; and he is the one who taught me that Dingaan and Shaka were not barbarians, for instance. Those are the great Zulu chiefs who fought the white man. And he in fact addressed Shaka as "General Shaka" during our lessons. But he would then tell us that when the inspector comes, we shouldn't address them as generals, we should address them as they are addressed in the books. That is how I learned the history of my country. My father was in the old Transkei territorial council. There was something like that that administered the Transkei at the time, that was under the British rule. And he used to go away from home for periods of six months sometimes. And when he came back, he came back with stories of our heros and how they were fighting for their fatherland. That was the childhood I experienced. Until of course I went to secondary school. Unfortunately my mother died when I was very young. I was about nine years old when she died. And that made me much closer to my father. We never really had the child-father relationship with my father, because he was a school principal of the same school. So much so that even during our adult life if he walked into a room where we were, we would stand up because we used to do that at school. So we had a distant kind of relationship with him. And then he left teaching. Tragically, he joined Matanzima in the selling of our birthright. In fact, the constitution of the Transkei was drawn by Matanzima and my father. As they were moving the constitution, clause by clause, Matanzima would move a particular clause and my father would second it. That's when they were introducing the whole concept of bantustans. He believed, he really believed, that he could fight for his freedom through the bantustan concept.

Unfortunately, we clashed terribly, and the relationship was quite bad for all those years he was serving Matanzima. Matanzima thanked him by making him the first Minister of Agriculture and Forestry. He was in the first cabinet, puppet-cabinet, of the five. He was in fact responsible for my going to Johannesburg to do social work and train as a social worker, because I gave him alot of trouble. During school holidays I would bring almost half of my classmates home. Though we were so many at home, it never occurred to me as a child what burden I was bringing about on my father and his meager purse. I used to bring home the children whose parents could not afford to pay their school fees. And what used to happen was the school principal would tell certain children not to return if the school fees wasn't paid. So, I used to do this. And I think that is what made my father decide that I should do social work.

I went to Johannesburg when I was sixteen, after matriculating in Shawbury Institution. In fact, I left home at the age of twelve, when I went to secondary school. And then I did my matric also in a boarding institution, and then on to Johannesburg to do social work. I qualified in 1955. During my school days at the Jan Hoffmeyer School of Social Work, one of our patrons was Mr. Mandela. I had never met him. I had first come across his name in Shawbury Institution, where I was doing my matric. The students went on strike, and this was during exams, and this was during the period of the Defiance Campaign. We knew very little about such matters in the backveld of the Transkei. But we came across Mandela's name as long ago as that, when the children, in fact when the whole school went on strike. This was the name on the lips of every little child. Right in the backveld of the Transkei. Our teachers were mostly products from Fort Hare. And I came across the political side of my life in Shawbury Institution. I was influenced a great deal by our teachers from Fort Hare. But then, at that time, the teachers were mostly in the Unity Movement. And I was greatly influenced by the Unity Movement, that is where I studied. That was my first political home, much to Mandela's delight when he teases me, he usually says I must be very grateful to him, he saved me. So when I went to do social work in Johannesburg, I noticed that one of the school patrons was Mandela. And generally with the students in Johannesburg, everybody was talking about this man. I lived in a hostel in town, there was a school cottage there where we were housed by the Americans as we were doing the social work. Now, this hostel was comprised of factory workers. In the evenings when they came from work, they would sing freedom songs and invariably, all these freedom songs were about Mandela. And the ANC. And Oliver Tambo. And the rest of the leaders.

Interruption

David: Carry on or do you want a new question?

Winnie: Do you want us to continue on this?

David: Yes. You're answering all the questions I had. You're doing great. I appreciate that. ... You went up to Johannesburg to study, then? You did your social work studies in Johannesburg after matric? We weren't sure if you had gone there to take work or to study.

Winnie: Yes. The factory workers sang so affectionately of this man. And, the workers generally seemed to love him so much. When they talked of better wages at work, they would say "Mandela will get us better wages." And just about every problem in the lips of every black worker.....he seemed to be the solution to each and every worker's problems. No matter how minor these problems were, they would talk in terms of him. Just about everything they wanted to complain about to their employers, they would mention this Mandela and the African National Congress. Adelaide Tambo, who was Adelaide ~~Tyuku-thu~~ Tsukudu then, was also in this particular hostel at #76 Hunt Street, Jeppe. She was my friend. I used to go with her in the mornings when we went to work and she would drop me by at the station, and she was always with this man. That man, I subsequently learned later, was Oliver Tambo. I met Mandela through Adelaide Tambo. I was with them one day at the station, Park Station, we were driving through to the hostel where we lived. We saw this towering figure walking towards the car. And Adelaide introduced him as Mandela to me. I used to wait for the bus that conveyed me to Baragwaneth Hospital, where I was employed as a social worker after graduating. And this same towering figure used to drive past where I used to stand and wait for the bus. Invariably, every morning, he was on his way to Wits sometimes or on his way to court. One day, I was at work at Baragwaneth Hospital, and I got a call from a man who introduced himself over the phone as Nelson Mandela. He said he wanted to see me and discuss certain issues with me. I was petrified. I was so shocked at receiving that call. I wondered what I had done. Then on the appointed day we met, and it transpired he wanted me to help raise funds for the then Treason Trial. He wanted me to use my organizational power as a social worker and raise funds. He had seen my name in the press. I was the first black medical social worker. And it was a new sort of job for black women. All along, those were protected jobs. And in fact, the very fact that we were employed as social workers in hospitals was as a result of pressure from the African National Congress; the demonstrations by the African National Congress for better wages, for the improvement of life of the black man. I then raised the funds for the Treason Trial. That is how I met my husband, and the relationship between us grew and it was no longer just the relationship of a social worker-attorney who was involved in the Treason Trial at the time. In fact we just developed a very close relationship from then on, which led to my getting married to him. I had also at the same time met Matanzima, when he paid official visits to the hospital, Baragwaneth Hospital. He was taken on tour by the South African government and one of the places he went to see was the Baragwaneth Hospital. So I met him as long ago as 1956 too. And, at the time, he was with Mandela whenever he was in Johannesburg. They had a very close relationship. They loved each other very much. It was tragic that, due to ideological differences, they don't see eye to eye today. In fact, the relationship between them broke down when he opted for the so-called independence of the Transkei. I knew of the most violent exchanges between them, in which Mandela tried as much as possible to dissuade Matanzima from selling the birthright of the black man. Nonetheless, he went ahead. Though

they differ so much ideologically, they have always continued respecting each other very much. They have remained very close in so far as family ties are concerned. Matanzima's concept of nationalism is quite distorted because he does all what he does from a completely different angle of nationalism. Matanzima hates the white man intensely. The only reason why he worked with Pretoria was because Pretoria restored his chieftanship. He always wanted to be a paramount chief. Anyway, that was a family dispute. So when we got married, in 1958, Mandela was in the Treason Trial. We got special permission to go and get married. He was banned, and restricted to Johannesburg. Three months after that, after our wedding, I was arrested. The first time I was arrested, I was arrested for anti-pass demonstrations. He was in the Treason Trial, and I was in prison at the Fort, the then Johannesburg Fort. In our group, we were six-hundred women who defied the pass laws. We were charged, and I was found guilty. That was my first brush with the law. And that was the beginning of a running battle between the South African government and those of us who are opponents of apartheid.

Peter: You were pregnant at that time, were you not?

Winnie: Yes, I was expecting my first daughter. In fact, I nearly lost her, because....

Peter: Could you speak about conditions in the prison? Was there any special provision made for pregnant women and children?

Winnie: No. No! I slept on the cement like every other prisoner. I slept on the sisal mat. And in our group, as I say, we were 600. We were too many, we slept on the floor and the prison was crowded. There were no special facilities for political prisoners, we were all just thrown together with ordinary other prisoners. We were just each given two blankets and a mat, sisal mat, and that was all.

David: And how long were you there?

Winnie: That first detention I was in for a month. And, of course, that was just my initiation. From then on, I never .... the life I've led from that moment has always been in and out of prisons. I can no longer even remember how many times I've been arrested and how many times I've been actually jailed. There have been too many.

And then, in 1959, the Treason Trial was still going on. In 1960, there was a state of emergency. And then there was the Pondoland Uprising, at the same time. That was one of my most difficult moments in my life. In that part of the country which I loved so much, Pondoland, the Pondos rebeled against the introduction of the so-called Trust in the partitioning of their land.

This is what is so ironical about him, that he should have been the first to sell the birthright of the black man: in a most twisted sort of way, you know, to him he's hitting back at the white man. The white man must give him his part of the land because as a traditional leader that land is everything to him. And then, in the process, he'll do anything, he'll sell anybody to get that land. He's a very complex man.

David: He must be.

Winnie: .... eighteen months in solitary confinement. (laugh) I'll tell you all about it.

Interruption

David: ...with the rebellion, or if the rebellion some new developments politically in Pondoland.

Winnie: When we got married, in fact, the congregation sang the hymn "Lizalisiti Ngalakho" . That is a historical hymn. It's supposed to have been composed by the Reverend Tiyo Soga, when they returned from making representations to Queen Victoria, 1910. When they had gone to plead with her for the inclusion of the black man in the then constitution of South Africa. And, of course, it is reported in history that they never even had an audience with her. And when they landed back at the Cape, Rev. Soga is supposed to have stood on the deck, looked at the beauty of Cape Town, and looked at the beauty of Table Mountain. And he broke into that song. They had lost the cause. The had gone to make representations and that had got them no where. So when we got married, that hymn was sung right through. That was the only way the Pondos showed their appreciation of the marriage. In fact, when my father (there is what we call in Xhosa "nguyala," where elders come and give you the last wise words as a young bride and tell you how you should conduct yourself when you get to the other side. That when you join that other family, you must join it and do as Rome does.). My father said to me that I must remember that I am marrying the struggle, and not the man. And that by virtue of my bringing such a man to him, as a son-in-law, was in fact introducing the African National Congress to that part of our country. The same man you saw, my cousin, Njisane, can relate to you better about that wedding. When my father spoke, he addressed -- (we had gone down to Pondoland, firstly, with most of the leaders of the African National Congress, Duma Nokwe, Lilian Ngoyi,) as he was talking to them, during the wedding, and he addressed them on Pondoland. And he said, in his famous speech, "the people who come from the urban areas have a tendency of looking down on those who are in rural communities. As if people have a choice to be born, where they are born. A people have no choice." That it was not of their making that they were in the backveld of Pondoland. And that those who come from the urban areas and find that there is alot of mist in areas such as that part of the country, that people are very ignorant, that such people need their leadership more than those in the urban areas. That was his speech. That showed then how alert the Pondos were, and how sensitive they were about the problems of the black man. When there was the Pondoland Uprising, my father was one of the first victims, which was a terrible experience for me. I have never been as torn apart as I was at that stage. He had joined Matanzima in the Transkei issue. And when the Pondos rebeled against the whole concept of bantustans and apartheid, my father, by virtue of the fact that he had joined Matanzima, he was now aligned with Matanzima by the Pondos. And they felt that he was also partly responsible for the selling of their birthright. He was the first man to run a fleet of buses. When he left teaching, he acquired

some buses which were used to transport people between the village - Bizana village - and the countryside. The Pondos wanted those buses. They wanted to use them to convey the people to where they used to meet which is called the Hill. Then, because he was virtually part of the system, he couldn't very well give them the buses because he would then be seen as promoting the aims of those who were rebeling against the state. Then he was attacked, physically. [slight sound drop off]

Interruption

I'm talking of Xhosa men, you see. When Swanepoel was interrogating me during those seven days and seven nights, [slight rustle] he says to me: "Poor people think Mandela has gone to prison for political reasons. Poor Mandela hasn't gone to prison for political reasons, he had to find a way of escaping from a woman like this. Which man can live with a woman like this?" (laugh)

Peter: He had a sense of humor then, Swanepoel.

Winnie: Nakela--------, he was the one who murdered alot of my people behind bars. He was actually the horror of Pretoria Central. (Prison)

Peter: He's still alive, isn't he, Swanepoel?

Winnie: Yes, Yes, retired now. Um, if anything he taught me how to hate, you know. I didn't know that for ideological reasons you can hate that much... that you can kill. He instilled in me the same nationalism that drove him to kill my people behind bars. I understood the Afrikaner better then. That in defense of their so-called distorted nationalism, in the process they are prepared to kill whole nations to defend the purity of the Afrikaner as a race. It is psychological. They are mentally sick. It's a sick people that is governing over 30 million blacks. Anyway, where were we?

Peter: I don't know. We were talking about Pondoland. Did you argue with Nelson at all? Did you try to defend your father's position?

Winnie: No, I couldn't. I couldn't. What I was refering to as ironical was the fact that the leaders of the Pondoland Uprising were consulting there, in my house, with my husband. And some of these consultations, of course, resulted in what happened to my father. As I said earlier, I've never been as torn apart politically as I was than. It was a very painful experience. To see the anger. To see and feel the anger of the people my father in his own twisted way had tried to sacrifice so much for. And it was so tragic that ideologically we just never saw eye to eye. And that has left terrible scars in my heart...the fact that my father subsequently became a victim of apartheid himself. When they attacked him, the night they attacked him

Break

He escaped through a very small window. It was actually a miracle how he escaped. Because the Pondos meant killing him. And when they didn't find him in his bedroom, then they attacked my grandmother. My grandmother, my paternal grandmother, exercised tremendous influence on us, on all the children. I don't know what the explanation was, but she was the first racist

I knew. She was very anti-white, extremely anti-white. She related folktales and stories of her own childhood to us. She used to tell us that grandfather was the first black man to have a shop, for instance. One of those trading posts in the rural areas. And grandmother was one of the 29 wives. It appears she must have been a favorite, because grandfather was with her most of the time. She was extremely bitter about having lost this trading post they had. She said it was taken by what she called "abanyepe" meaning "those pale skins." She was extremely bitter about having lost most of her cattle when the white man came to that area. And then, of course, one of the things grandmother found very difficult to accept was the rezoning of the fields. That's when they had introduced the so-called "Trust" which the Pondos were rebelling against. She felt very deprived and she hated, she hated the white man for having deprived her and her husband of the little wealth they had. So when the Pondos didn't find my father, they attacked her. She died a few years after that, paralyzed. She was paralyzed during the uprising. She was one of the victims, instead of my father. That she should have been attacked by people who were fighting against the government, and there I was married to Mandela. That's what I was referring to when I said I have seldom felt that torn apart ideologically as I was then. It was a very hurting experience. We loved grandmother. She had helped bring us up after the death of my mother whom we lost when I was a young child. And that is one of the wounds I have found very difficult to heal. Little realizing at the time that that was the beginning of the tragic life, that one was going to lead. In 1960, there was a state of emergency and my husband was again arrested, even though he was already in the Treason Trial. When the government declared a state of emergency they were detained in Pretoria. They attended the Treason Trial whilst they were detainees. So he was inside for five months at that time, and I had had my first baby, my daughter who is now married. My husband was never there when both children were born. He was either in prison or out gathering information about their Treason Trial. So during 1960, the Treason Trial came to an end, and we had just got married in 1958. When the Treason Trial came to an end, the day the trial came to an end, the leaders of the African National Congress came home. Everybody was jubilant, they came to celebrate the results of the trial and the fact that they had been acquitted. My husband did not even enter the house, they were all jubilant and they were standing outside. I still remember, very vividly, Joe Modise who is now heading the military wing of the ANC, walked in the house and asked me to pack a few items for my husband. I did, and I gave him the suitcase. And all I was told was that I'll be seeing him in a few days time. He was banned, and I never really knew much about his activities, his political activities, because I think they felt it was better that way. He left with the rest of the leadership that day. That was the last time I saw my husband at home. I hadn't lived with him. He had been in the Treason Trial, and most of the time he had spent in Pretoria. And when he was not in Pretoria, he was in detention. So it has never, I've never really led a so-called "family life". I never lived with him. The few moments we had together, put together wouldn't even be six months that I lived with him. When he left with that suitcase, it's when he was going to address that meeting. The big convention in Pietermaritzsburg. I didn't even know that he was going to be the main

speaker there. And, as I said, I saw in the press that he had addressed a meeting, banned as he was. And that after the meeting he had disappeared. That was the last time we ever were together as husband and wife. Then followed a string of hardships. He was underground after that meeting in Pietermaritzsburg. I never knew where he was. I saw very little of him when he was underground. The one time I saw him, he told me he was leaving, he was going abroad on missions of the African National Congress. I don't know how he left, but he did leave. And when he returned I also saw him. And I was always blindfolded, I never knew exactly where he was. And that was calculated to protect us and the children, who were very small at the time.

Peter: Were you in fact interrogated about his whereabouts?

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Winnie: Yes, almost every other day. I was under surveillance for 24 hours, so it was extremly difficult to see him because all they needed to do was just to trail me.----------. And, I didn't even know of his arrest. I didn't even know he had gone to see Chief Luthuli. And that he was arrested on his way back from seeing Chief Luthuli in 1962. Then, he was charged for leaving the country without documents and for organizing the very successful stay at home of 1960. I attended the trial right through. The Minister of Justice at that time was the late John Vorster. And, uh, I had to get permission to attend the trial because I was myself banned. I was banned in 1962 and have never been unbanned since, except for a very brief period in 1976 when the order expired when I was in prison. Then, of course, he was never to leave prison. He was sentenced to that five years. Uh, then there was subsequently the Rivonia Trial, in which he was Accused Number One. So, right through all these years I have spent going in and out of prison, and visiting him in prison. We have known alot of tragedies in our lives.

David: Many people in North American and western Europe would be interested in your own views of feminism and the degree to which that's communicated at all with your husband or with other men in the ANC.

Winnie: The black woman in South Africa has had to face a struggle which is twofold. Firstly, there is the cultural problem. We are prisoners of our own culture in the sense that we have had to fight the dominance of the black women by men. And culturally "the woman's place is in the kitchen". And we have had to fight against apartheid, and we have had to put up a fight against our own culture. Um, the Afrikaner has also helped a great deal to build the black woman. Helped in the sense that in the countryside, for instance, the black woman has had to live with migration. And the fact that she's left alone to mend the family, to plow the fields whilst the man goes to seek work in the urban areas, whilst the man enters into contract with the white man in the cities. And she has had to plow the fields, fetch huts, build herself. And in order to do that, the black woman has had to fight all the way, culturally and politically. In terms of the South African law, the black

woman is a minor to her dying day. Legally, we are meant to be holding the same status in the family as that of your own children, in terms of the law. For instance, when I had to make an application to the Supreme Court, in my own case, when the Security branch brought me here in exile, and they declared my premises banned. Their interpretation of my banning order was that, for instance, my daughter, Zinzi, couldn't receive visitors as well, by virtue of my being a banned person. They had narrowed their interpretation of the banning order so much that my daughter led a life of absolute hell. It meant she was as banned as I was. So we had to make an application to the Supreme Court and ask for a legal interpretation of the banning order. I should have been the person who is banned, and not the premises. And that shouldn't have affected my daughter's visitors at all. I discovered then that I couldn't make the application myself. We had to go and get Mandela's permission and signature to the papers that were to be brought before court because I was a minor. I could not bring about any application on behalf of my own daughter, in terms of the law. So it has been a twofold struggle for the black woman. And the fact that the Nationalist has destroyed the nucleus of black family life. The black woman is virtually a grass-widow. You seldom come to a black home where the head of the family hasn't been to prison for one thing or another in racist South Africa, where millions of blacks are turned into ready-made criminals by the country's racist laws. There are few black men who have not been imprisoned for pass offences - this influx control. The black woman has had to toil, all the way, to bring up a family in the absence of the head of the family because for one reason or another the head of the family will be in prison. So, in a way, the black woman has had to emerge as head of the family herself; not only because of defying cultures, but because of South Africa's racist laws which are still there to this day. The extension of passes to the black women confirmed just that fact, that we were there to live with the apartheid laws and the extension of passes to black woman was in a way bringing up the level of a black women to the status of a black man - because a black woman would be similarly subjected to harassment and imprisonment because of pass offences.

Interruption

Peter: You know, I asked you that question about if Nelson ever discussed politics with you. Could you answer that one again?

Winnie: He's never discussed anything political with me. I'm not his political product, actually. I've never had an opportunity to be one. The little I did get from my leaders was more from Walter Sisulu than Mandela himself. He was never there. We never really had that sort of chance where we could discuss even the kind of life we were heading for. And he has never in anyway stood in my way. Even when I went to defy and to demonstrate against the issuing of passes to women, he was in Pretoria in the Treason Trial. And I went to join other women to protest against the extension of passes in his absence. He in no way influenced me one way or another because we never had that opportunity. What I do know of him, politically, is also what I read about him like any other member of the public. I never even as much as heard him address a single meeting. We just never had that

opportunity because I've never really lived with him. I have been made what I am today by the struggle. It is the African National Congress that has made what I am. It is the struggle against oppression. Struggle against apartheid. And the struggle of the black woman. As a woman first in society, and as an oppressed woman by the racist regime.

Peter: Could you now repeat what you just said about a woman's position, how difficult it is for an African woman to behave politically?

Winnie: Yes. In our country, the black woman has really had to fight all the way. The brutalized mother, she is torn from her children by the laws of the country, bringing up families without the assistance of the head of the family, where the status of her husband as head of the family has had to be reduced because of the color of the skin. Reduced by the Afrikaner. Where the dignity of the head of the family has been so violated by the country's racist laws, that the black woman has had to battle all the way to fight against the oppression of her as a human being. To fight against dominance, culturally, in a traditional society where the black woman's position is in fact at home. And, at the same time, she has had to emerge as the pillar, in that society where she is deprived of the head of the family for very many reasons as a result of the country's laws. The black woman in the rural areas who has had to live, year in and year out, without her husband, sees the husband when he comes home for a week or two or a month.

Interruption

Winnie: Yes, you see, the dilemma of a black woman in a racist society "with South Africa's unique problems" as Pretoria would say. For instance, in my own case, when I was exiled here, the security branch had their own interpretation of the order that authorizes them to exile me here. They interpreted it to mean that the premises in which a banned person resides are in fact banned. The very premises were banned, which meant Zindzi, for instance, couldn't have visitors. And I, indirectly, had her banned by virtue of my banning order. We had to seek a way out of it, Zindzi wasn't banned, I was banned. And that type of interpretation of the order was just sheer further harassment by the security branch, the facist security branch. Then I discovered that I would have to go to their own courts to test the validity of that type of interpretation of the order. When my attorneys worked through this application I wanted to bring about to take the government to court, it was discovered that I couldn't make such an application because in terms of South Africa's laws, I am a minor; and that I cannot be, therefore, a legal guardian for my own children, and that I couldn't sign the documents that were to be presented in court because I am a black woman. We had to go, to Robben Island, my attorneys had to go to Robben Island to get Mandela's signature on those papers because he remains the legal head of the family. And the status of black woman in racist South Africa is that of her own children, in terms of the law. I am as much a minor as my own children. That is the dilemma of the black woman. Not only has she to fight against apartheid, against the brutality of a society that is riddled with hate by the oppressors, she has to fight against the very laws of the country that are calculated to subjugate her by virtue of the color of her skin. Those laws still exist to this day. My status hasn't, for instance, changed in any way in terms of the law. I am just equal to my children.

David: And did that incident help to shape Zindzi's feminist consciousness, if I can call it that, you know, in a positive sense? I'm also wondering: to what degree has the consciousness of your daughters affected their parents?

Winnie: Yes of course, that did affect her a great deal, as it does affect every black woman, And every black woman who is emerging from the political quagmire of the Nationalist creation. The black woman has had to emerge and fight all the way. My daughters, for instance, have literally grown up without their parents, and that has affected them a great deal. And what the Security Branch did throughout the years - I placed my children at a very early age, for instance, in boarding schools. And the first boarding school I sent them to was a Roman Catholic institution in Swaziland. And ironically, the name was "Our Lady of Sorrows", the name of the school. The Security Branch always arrested me the day my children were on their way back home. Invariably, if you checked the record of my arrests when the children were schooling in Swaziland, they never found me at home. They would make it a point to pick me up that same morning when they are travelling through back to Johannesburg. So they virtually had to bring themselves up, I was never there as a mother to shape them. I was never there as a mother to hold my little girls' hands, take them to school, and introduce them to their teachers, as is the glory of every mother...you know when your children are starting school. Each mother looks forward so much to that day when her little girl is taken to school. I've never entered any of the schools which have been attended by my children. My banning order prevents me from entering educational premises. I've never met any of my children's teachers. I couldn't do that because it would have meant violating the terms of my banning order.

David: With your daughters...when through their lives, your own consciousness was enriched.... Well, my parents, for example I think, would say that certainly their consciousness about South Africa has been changed by things which I've said to them or spoken to them about. Now I'm wondering if your understanding of feminism has been enriched in some way by some experience that your daughters share with you. Or if your independence and your consciousness as a woman is through your own experiences apart from them. I mean I'm asking questions which I'm interested in...

Winnie: You see, insofar as the black woman in this country is concerned, you know each black home is a political institution. When it comes to the harassment of those who are opposed to apartheid, we are harassed similarly as men. And the level of ones consciousness is drawn out by that very fact, that when it comes to the subjugation of the black man, when it comes to their methods of harassment, we are equal.

[Break]

And as I say, each home is really a political institution where the black woman finds herself having to explain to the children what is going on in society. I remember years ago when my little daughter Zindzi was about six years, and she asked me questions I know each and every mother gets faced with in a racist society such as ours. She was playing outside and then she came into the house and said, "Mommy, you say Daddy is in prison because he is fighting for the black people." I said "yes" darling. And then she said "but now you say all the black men fight for the black people so that they should have all the things the whites have in this country, isn't it." I answered

her, I said "yes." And then she said "but next door, Mommy, their father is there at home. Why is my father in jail, and not the father next door?" Difficult questions like that which a little child knows only that game----. That you can converse at that early age about police, the state, the position of the father next door. The level of consciousness is drawn out from the breast because you are bringing up children in a racially torn society. Where there isn't a fiber of a black man's life that is not intruded upon by the apartheid laws, by the country's laws which are so brutal that they affect little children to an extent where they know of no other way of life. The black woman has to find a way of bringing up the children to know the difference between wrong and right. In our sick society, when a man hasn't been to prison, you look twice at that black man. How is it possible that in racist South Africa he hasn't been to prison? It means there is something wrong with that man. Completely distorted values. The brutalized black mother is expected to bring up these children with that knowledge that there is a difference between wrong and right. If it is, therefore, right to go to prison; if there is something wrong if a man hasn't been to prison, that must be a very sick society. How do you bring up the children to know that difference, if you can hardly say to the child, "look, if you are doing so and so, if you are doing this and that, that you are going to end up in prison...you will be arrested....you mustn't do....you musn't do..."...things like that in a sick society where, in fact, if you haven't been to jail then of course it means you are on the other side?

David: We were also interested in your experiences to try and communicate with your husband while he's been in prison. So maybe this would be a good way to lead into that, if you speak about how much the father of these children has been able to learn through his home these political experiences.

Winnie: Yes, yes. It has uh...you see, the country's laws are such that, for instance, we are unable to discuss anything else other than the health of the children, the health of the members of the family. That level of consciousness on Mandela's part, for instance, would merely be on the basis of what he gathers in between conversations and what he picks up from the papers now that they are able to read censored papers. The country's laws are such that there is no way we are able to discuss anything that relates, no matter how infinitismal the way to the political situation in the country.

David: Can you speak about the process that you have to go through to see him?

Winnie: The process is quite cumbersome. I have to, because I am a banned person and have been banned for the past twenty-two years, I have to get special permission from the Minister of Justice. This permission is granted through the local chief magistrate. We first have to put in an application in advance to the local magistrate, then he in turn gets this permit from the police/Security Branch and the Minister of Justice. Then I get given the permit in writing, and it's very restrictive indeed. I have never been able to travel by train or by car, for instance. In my case, they actually tell me that I can only get permission to visit my husband on condition I fly. Which was just really another form of harassment, because they've always known how

costly that must be to fly each time when there are trains available which are much cheaper. And they know that they have taken me out of work. I have never had means of maintaining myself during my years of exile, for instance, here in Brandfort. So when I do get this permit, I have to fly only and I have to take a flight prescribed by the Minister of Justice, and I have to report my departure at the local police station. And when I get to Cape Town, I go and report my arrival at Caledon Square, the biggest police station there. And of course I usually find the Security Branch waiting for me at the airport and they follow very closely. Then when I go to the place where I usually stay, they park there right through the night, for 24 hours. And when I go to prison, they follow me very closely to prison. And I go there and visit him. When I leave prison, they follow almost bumper to bumper very closely back to the place where I stay. I usually visit him on Saturdays and Sundays. So on Sundays, I then have to go and report again my departure from Cape Town to the police station, Caledon Square, and fly back to Brandfort where I find them waiting for me at the airport, and escort me back here, to Brandfort.

David: How often do you see him?

Winnie: I see him once a month. And that has been made possible by various friends who have assisted and who always do. So I owe them alot of gratitude.

David: Can you take yourself back to the Rivonia Trial, and remember how you felt when he received the sentence of life imprisonment?

Winnie: I expected it. Throughout our political life, we have had to anticipate even the worst. I did expect them to sentence him to life imprisonment. I had never, as I pointed out earlier, lived any normal life, really, so it wasn't new to me - the fact that I would live without him, perhaps, as they wish, for the rest of my life. The only time I found it

Interruption (change film)

Peter: Where were we? Oh, yes, your Pretoria experiences after 1976, the Soweto Uprising, and your experiences in the Pretoria jail.

Winnie: No, that was before.

Peter: Oh, was it before that? I'm sorry.

Winnie: Oh yes, yes. No, that was during my solitary confinement. I was in solitary confinement for eighteen months. We were held incommunicado. We were the first victims of this so-called, the then "Terrorism Act", which was subsequently changed into the "Internal Security Act." And we were Section Six detainees, which meant that we were held incommunicado, without access even to our defense. And then, that was one of the worst experiences during my political life. When they detained me, the children were still quite small, they wouldn't even let me take them to my sister who lived with me in Johannesburg.

Interruption

Winnie: Yes, the night I was arrested, they wouldn't even let me even take my small children to my sister who also lived in Johannesburg, and I left them sleeping. That, twelth of May, 1969...there have been quite a few painful experiences, and that's one of them. I didn't know how long I would be away from home. They were so small, and they had just returned from boarding school. They were on holiday with me.

Peter: How old?

Winnie: Well, this was in 1969. Zeni was born in 1959, and her little sister a year after that. That, it was a Monday. On a Saturday I had just been to a heart specialist, and I had just been diagnosed. I have a heart condition, and the Security Branch knew that. They knew I had been to the doctor, they knew I had been to a heart specialist, and I think they particularly arrested me then because of that knowledge, with the hope that perhaps the condition would worsen in prison, and that whatever happened to me would then be attributed to natural causes. Anyway, they detained me then. And at that stage I wasn't, I didn't even know that there had been a national swoop, that large numbers of people were detained with me. Because when you're held incommunicado, you lose complete touch with the outside reality. I was held in Pretoria Central prison. I was one of the many, although I didn't know, as I say, at that stage. The cell in which I was held at the beginning was so small that if I stretched my hands, I touched both walls. I could barely exercise. In this cell, all I had was a plastic bottle with about five glasses of water, a homemade sanitary bucket, and three blankets, and a sisal mat. That is all, besides what I was wearing. Being held incommunicado [MIKE RUSTLE] is one of the cruelest thing any human being can do to another. About a week after I was held, I was transferred to the "condemned cell." A "condemned cell" means a cell that usually holds prisoners who are going to be executed. I lost track of time. Throughout the years, my experiences have always been that the best thing to keep sane and to know what day it is of the month, the first thing I usually do when I am arrested is to draw my calendar on the wall [SOUNDTRACK DOWN] so that I can keep track.....

END OF SIDE TWO

Winnie Mandela - Side III

Winnie: My experiences have always been that the best thing to keep saying and to know what day it is of the month, the first thing I usually do when I am arrested is to draw my calendar on the wall so that I can keep track of the date, time, etc. Um...in the condemned cell I think the whole idea was to give one that feeling of eternity, that your political life had come to a complete end and, um..., it was such psychological torture that, ah, it is hard, very hard, to keep sane when you are held incommunicado. In this condemned cell there were two grill doors besides the prison door. To this day the memory of that bunch of keys, the clicking, the noise they would

deliberately make in the stillness and solitude of a prison life. You, you actually felt they were hitting the inner core of your soul...(sigh). They never switched off the light - I had this flood light night and day. I lost track of time. I didn't know whether it was in the morning or in the evening. Um, I could only tell with the plate of food. Food which was inedible, that, ah..., what time of day it was. In the morning I knew the coffee, um, the porridge had that inevitable black cup of coffee without sugar. And, there was no communication whatsoever with anyone. The prison authorities who brought the food to the cell would be three white wardresses. Um, this particular wardress who always brought my food would open the cell door and I could hear someone outside putting the food down and she would stand right at the entrance to the cell. They would then take the bucket, the sanitary bucket, and turn the lid upsidedown and put your plate of food on that. And she would stand right at the cell door and kick the food in, kick it into the cell. So I never ate. For weeks I didn't eat the prison food. I was not allowed out of the cell at all. When I was taken out, it couldn't have been more than 10 minutes or 15 minutes. Then, of course, I was never taken outside. I would just exercise in front of the cell door by going up and down, up and down. The mind finds it very difficult to adjust to such solitude. It is such utter torture that I could feel that my mind was so tortured with lack of doing something and not communicating with anyone that I would find myself talking to the children. I would think I am thinking about them and actually find myself in the end conducting conversations with my children as if they are with me in the cell. It becomes so difficult to keep sane--with absolutely nothing to do--that I would actually hunt for ants. If I had an ant in the cell or a fly, then I would regard myself as having company for the day. When I was given anything--if anything at all--it was the Bible. One day this Swanepoel stood at the cell door and flung the Bible at my face, and he threw it and said, "There you are--pray. Pray so that your God can get you out of this cell." Sarcastically, very sarcastically.
[PAUSE FOR TAPE CHANGE]

Keneth: I'm also out of tape --

Peter: Okay....

David: ...Swanepoel threw the Bible at you and said, "Pray."

Winnie: Yes, he said I must pray for my God to take me out of the cell and also said, "Winnie, you are politically naked. We have finished you this time. This is your end." Um, I was taken for interrogation a month after we had been in detention. Eh, my own interrogation -- of course -- is absolutely nothing, ah (sigh), worse than any of the things that have happened to those of us who are opposed to apartheid. Um, I was, um, picked up on Monday from the cells and I was delivered back into my cell on a Saturday. I was interrogated right through day and night for seven days and seven nights. Ah, as they changed the teams, ah, Swanepoel would rub his hands and say he is waiting for that moment when they shall break me completely. By the time they interrogated me, they knew everything. They knew all about my political activities at that time and the African National Congress, of course, was a banned organization which meant that whatever political activities I was involved in at that time were underground political activities. There was nothing they didn't know. They had managed to break a few of those they had interrogated before me. Um, during those seven days and seven nights they

didn't touch me physically as they do with other detainees. I was tortured psychologically. Um, at the end of that ordeal, um, for some reason the body devises its own defensive mechanisms. I didn't know it was such relief to faint, for instance. And during, the only moment I ever had any rest from the intensive interrogation and intensive questioning where your mind just loses track of everything, while during those fainting spells, they were so relieving I could recover and, uh, from each fainting spell when I came around I felt a little refreshed to face more and more interrogation. Um, on the seventh day I started urinating blood and the body was swollen like a balloon. I don't know the medical explanation for that--whether it's because of sitting in one position for days and nights right through, but my legs, for instance, were as if they were just poles that were a part of my body. I could actually feel the weight, so swollen, so edemous they were that I found it difficult to stand (sigh), and um, that didn't stop my interrogators in any way. I don't remember when, how I was brought back to the cell. I found myself just there on Sunday. In the end the fainting spells were much more acute, I think as the body was beginnning to give in, um, to that type of brutality. (Sigh)..It was during that experience that I realized the extent to which the Afrikaner is frightened of the Black man. It was then that I discovered the type of hate I had never encountered before in my life. I knew then, you know, that, um, all the political speeches I had been making, for instance, I knew that if I was required to carry a gun and, and fight in defense of my ideals, I knew that as a mother I would never have had that courage to fire at anyone, ah, for political reasons. That was prior to my detention. I also knew that as a mother and as a social worker, um, life, a human being, was so sacrosanct that I could never on my own lift up a finger against any human being for ideological reasons. But, what I went through, that personal experience hardened me so much that at the end of my interrogation looking at my interrogators and what I had gone through, I knew that as I sat in that cell, in that cell, if my own father or my brother walked in dangling a gun and he was on the other side and I had a gun, too, in my hand, in defense of the ideals for which I was being tortured then I would fire. I knew then that it was possible to pick up arms in defense of those ideals they were prepared to almost take a life for. I knew then why my leaders, um, resorted to an armed struggle when everything else had failed. I knew that I love life no less but that if this is what these ideals mean to the Afrikaner and I have to defend them I will do so to the last drop of my blood, too. I knew that in defense of my honor, in defense of the country I love so much, the Security Branch had made me the soldier at heart I am today. There was no way that, ah, you could talk any language of peace to vicious men who treated defenseless women and children in that manner. I realized then that the Afrikaner had closed the chapter of negotiation and that the decision taken by my leaders in a (sigh) 1962 could, was arrived at with difficulty but that there was no other way--the decision to defend our honor, the decision to stop turning the Biblical "other cheek." The white man had hit us for too long. Our patience had been tested and had endured for too long. I knew then that somehow there had to be a political crisis in this country for us to reach the ultimate goal. That is what I emerged as in 1969-1970 during my months of solitary confinement. I realized then that, um, the Afrikaner will fight and go down with the nation if need be in defense of

their own ideals. I realized then the extent to which the Afrikaner is petrified of being swamped into a black society, black government, the future government of this country. There is no way that the Afrikaner will peacefully and gently hand over power to the majority in this country. I knew that in my own little infinitesimal contribution to my cause had to take a different course altogether. The Afrikaner made me that way. Then (sigh), that was 1969 and 1970.

Peter: Your, the, um, after ... your charges were dismissed, weren't they?

Winnie: Yes, what they did was, ah, they charged us and in the midst of the trial, suddenly in court one day the state prosecutor just stood up and said, ah, "The case against the accused is withdrawn." At that stage we had been so conditioned, so conditioned, ah, because of solitary confinement. I was right at the end, for instance, sitting in court there when the prosecutor suddenly stated that the charges were withdrawn. Now, I was the first, I should have stood up and walked to the back of the court and left, and should have left the court, but I had been so conditioned with interrogation, intensive interrogation and conditioned to solitary confinement that instead of standing up and walking out, I stood up and led the other Accused back to the cell and did exactly what the police wanted. I had been so conditioned to that way of life, interrogation, solitary confinement, that even though the judge said we must leave court, I went straight back to the cell and all they simply did was just to come and lock up, lock us up, and, ah, we were redetained again. In terms of Section 6 of the Terrorism Act, we were held incommunicado, we were harassed, and we went through the same thing all over again. Such humiliation is beyond any human endurance. We would be searched as we leave our cells we would be stripped naked. There are few things that are as humiliating as that. We, they would go through our hair with their fingers, search us stark naked, strip us outside the cell door (pause). Um, you often hear people asking why we are not bitter. There isn't a black man who is not bitter. Our type of bitterness is not in the narrow sense of the Afrikaner because we know amongst ourselves we have heard some of the greatest sons of Africa who happened to be another pigmentation. There are few who have contributed as much as Bram Fischer, for instance. We in the African National Congress, to our dying day, will remain believing -- and knowing so -- that the future of this country belongs to all who live in it. Even as bitter as we are because we know the reality of life, ah, we cannot wish the white man away, we cannot drive the white man to the sea. The reality of the South African situation is that contained in our bible, "the Freedom Charter." That sacred document, it's sacrosanct, it's a sacred cause, ah, we thirst for freedom, we thirst for human dignity and for that we are prepared to fight to the last drop of blood. We saw in 1976 the tragedy of our country (sigh). Any mother who saw that would not wish to see that again. The bloodbath we went through, collecting our children's bodies from the streets because they dared oppose the Afrikaner, because they dared refuse to speak the oppressor's language--

Afrikaans. Of course, we do know that that was just the tip of the iceberg. The Afrikaner who shot our children to death is the Afrikaner who interrogated me, is the Afrikaner I have lived with here in the Free State. The violent Afrikaner I know will never, ever give us our country on a round table conference. That is the Afrikaner who is prepared to massacre innocent men and women in the streets because they dare to go to the street and say, "Look, we haven't got--money. We cannot afford increased rents, we cannot afford this life, we haven't the means." For that, we have had to pay with our blood. We are no longer prepared to stand by and watch the Afrikaner annihilate and massacre our people who are defenseless. That is why in the African National Congress that painful decision was taken to hit back which is all we are doing. We are not a violent people. We could never have picked up arms had it not been the fact that we have to defend our honor. We have to fight for our country. When we request the West to assist us with sanctions against this country (sigh) with arms embargoes on this country, with disinvestment, it is because we love life that much. Those are the only other alternative measures we know of that wouldn't lead to a blood bath. Those are the only alternative measures we know of that would save what can still be saved of our people. We cannot understand those who sit in their palaces and even dictate methods of our struggle and tell us that this is how you should fight YOUR enemy to get YOUR libertion which is what Reagan is doing. No white man from ANY corner of the globe is going to prescribe to us anymore. All we are requesting, we know that, ah, for instance, the American public, we know we have lots of friends, we know we have lots of support from individual members, not the various West governments. We know we've got friends amongst them. Um, we know we will be hit hardest by such measures. We know that we will go hungry. We hunger so much for this freedom we are prepared to go as hungry as we have been with the constructive engagement. We are prepared to go as hungry as we have been in the last 300 years. We are no longer prepared to be fat slaves with golden chains. We do not care anymore. We want our freedom and that we shall attain--if need be, with our lives.

Stop. New start.

You go and collect their husbands at 3:00 o'clock, 4:00 o'clock in the morning. You go and hold meetings with them in their mountains, in the mountains. When are you sincere? (noise, laughter)

Stop. New start.

Peter: (readjustments)...Ken, could you move back a little bit?...That's it. The cables should go behind me. Again...

David: We have a photograph of you wearing an ANC uniform and helping to carry the coffin in a funeral of someone--we think by the name of Ida Mtwana?

Winnie: That's correct. Yes.

David: Can you describe the significance of that event?

Peter: We want to use it in the film. You see there is a very nice series of photographs of the funeral. OK? And, I sort of wanted to use it to get into your ANC commitment and the ANC women's commitment.

David: Do you remember...

Winnie: Yes, Ida Mtwana was one of our heroes. In fact...

Peter: I'm sorry. OK.

David: OK, go ahead.

Winnie: Yes, Ida Mtwana was one of our heroes. One of the founder members of the Women's League--um, the women's section of the African National Congress--and a founder member of the Federation of South African Women. Um, she taught me a great deal. I learned from her strength, her courage, a great deal. Um, she was one of the greatest woman politicians I knew of other than our mother, the late Lilian Ngoyi. She was in the same caliber with our late mother, Lilian, and Albertina Sisulu, our senior members in the African National Congress. So that was a national funeral. It was an honor for me, um, to play even that minor role in that funeral. I was paying tribute to one of my heroes, one of our national heroes.

David: When did this happen?

Winnie: It was in the early, late '50s rather.

Peter: What was the Women's League exactly? Could you tell us what, um, how that was organized and...

David: And your own participation in it?

Winnie: The Women's League. The Women's League was the women's section of the African National Congress and, of course, when the ANC was banned the Women's League was also banned. I was personally chairman of our local branch of the Women's League and subsequently became chairlady of the Federation of South African Women in our area and I was also in the Provincial Executive and the National Executive of both organizations and, ah, one of my leaders was the late Ida Mtwana. We were working together in the National Executive.

David: What sort of activities did the League engage in?

Winnie: Ah, it was in fact the Women's League that organized the Anti-pass Campaign. Um, it was Women's League that, ah, rallied around and organized demonstrations against high rents, against high bus fares--bread and butter issues that really were dealt with by the mothers and by the trade unions mostly. Ah, the Women's League was more of a worker's organization--the female section of the African National Congress.

David: We also have a photograph of you receiving the eucharist while seated in your car. Is that how you engage in Christian worship here in Brandfort?

Winnie: Yes, that is correct. Um, my banning orders prevent me from going to church because I cannot leave my premises over weekends. Over weekends I am under 24 hour house arrest like everyone else who is under house arrest which meant, therefore, I would have had to apply for permission to go to church. Um, I have never done that. I have never believed that, ah, another human being should determine my place of worship. I have always felt that if I had to apply to the Minister of Justice to attend church, I would really be giving them godly powers that they must now determine even my place of worship, so I've never applied for such permission. What has been happening throughout the years of my banning, some priests have come to minister to me here at home and because of the banning order we could not hold such services inside the house. Um, so throughout these years, I have received my Holy Communion in the car and I have had my services with those priests who have been, ah, to minister to me here at home, in the car.

David: Can you say something about your...

Peter:...I just to...Can we make a note of the current priest, the one who comes to minister to you, so that we could be able to get in touch with him and maybe talk to him as well at some point? Is that possible?

Winnie: Oh, he's in Bloomfontein.

Peter: Would you have a phone number?

Winnie: Perhaps.

(Break)

David:...your religious upbringing in Pondoland and then how your religious faith has evolved, ah, since then. Has it changed? Why do you receive communion? What does it mean to you?

Peter: Is it just a white man's religion to you?

Winnie: (Laughter)Um, my mother was fanatical. She was extremely religious and all I remember of her is her prayers. She would pray sometimes three times a day. Um, she belonged to the Mamyano Women's League, those who wear red blouses in the Methodist Church, she was a very staunch Methodist. So we all had a very religious upbringing. My eldest sister, who should have been a teacher, she's late now, died. And mother used to pray three or four times a day, and what I remember of her is her kneeling next to the bed, next to my dying sister, praying and exhorting God to please spare her. And that never left my mind. When she died, with my mother praying fervently as she did, as a child, that affected me, I could not understand this God, whom my mother prayed and exhorted day in and day out, and that is the same God who took my sister's life. She was so wounded by that, that she never recovered from the death of my eldest sister. Her life had failed, and she continued to pray, and she continued forcing us to pray day in and day out as she was lying there dying, and the memory of her in her deathbed, praying even as she was leaving this world, left a very deep scar in me as a child. There was a second person

I loved so much, gone. Praying the same God. When she died, mother died, we simply almost fell apart, really, we stopped going to church, my father didn't get married until we were all of High School age. So he brought us up, under extreme difficulties. He became our closest friend. He didn't of course attend church like my mother, in fact he never went to church at all, until much later in life. And so when I got to High School in Shawbury Institution, where I was doing my Matric - Shawbury Institution was a Methodist institution - and our priest there was a very impressive young man, the Reverend Dagmo (?) - I still remember - and it was then that I tried to go back to church again, after all those years. So when I left Shawbury Institution and went to do social work in Johannesburg, I had really almost begun going back to church. And then the Roman Catholic priests and the Anglican priests have always played a mojor role during the most difficult years of my life. And when I was a young bride, and I was suddenly left with two small children, by a man I knew was going to prison for life, the Anglican Church ministered on me, they gave me tremendous strength and inspiration to go on, there was a Father Leo Fragari (?) who came to visit me almost every other day, after Mandela's arrest. [FILM OUT]

REEL E and end of D.....

David: ...see the role of the Church in South Africa today, how do you evaluate?

Winnie: Yes. Well, the church has always played a very vital role in the life of the black man. Especially in the latter years, with the conception of Black Theology. There was the aspect of religion that had begun to be questioned by the younger generation - the concept of a God that does not relate to us as Blacks. The concept of a God we were made to feel was not really our Father. The photographs of a white Jesus Christ. The photographs of the religious heads of the churches as white, made it difficult for the militant young black, who wanted to relate the god to his own religion. The role that was played by the churches was not always quite innocent, from a historical point of view. The missionaries were really used as a tool of oppression, in the sense that the black man was, er, in fact exchanged his land for the Bible, and that's what the priests were used for, the priests of earlier times. And it is the younger generation's belief that it is true, the White Man came in, said we should close our eyes, and they should pray, they had the Bible in their hands, and when we opened our eyes, after that prayer, we had the Bible and they had the land, they had our land. So the youth, the militant youth, questioned these things. What has saved the church is the concept of Black Theology, to relate God to us, our struggle, and interpret the Bible as the story of a great freedom fighter because that is what one would look at Jesus Christ as. And he fought for the rights of the oppressed. And using the Bible for that angle, one has been able to rally the youth, to rally the church, after all, the church plays such an important role in the black man's life that unless one relates that same God to our own life, there was no way that the churches could be part of the struggle of the black man. Now, what is happening today, is the rallying of the churches and the identification by the various churches, identification with the freedom struggle. Because after all, who comprises the congregations but the same oppressed of this countyr, the majority of this country.?

David: What positive experiences have you gained from all of your adversity?

Winnie: I think my whole life has been a tremendous inspiration. It was because of that adversity that we are what we are today. And if I had to relive my life all over again, if in order that my own children, and my children's children wouldn't go through what I've gone through, if I had to go through the same thing, I'd do it all over again. If, in order to attain my honour, in order to restore my national pride, in order to fight for the ideals which I cherish, which I believe in, I'd go through exactly the same thing.

David: Will you be together with your husband again some day?

Winnie: Yes, of course, I'm absolutely certain of that. I'm absolutely certain he will come out and lead his people finally to liberation. That I have no doubt about. That can be the only course of history.

Peter: Why did they move Nelson to Pollsmoor?

Winnie: I think it is because he turned Robben Island into Mandela University. Robben Island became a-political institution, and the best courses in politics were held in Robben Island. The youths who went to Robben Island, had gone as far as Standard Six, emerged from Robben Island not only with one degree, but with degrees. He concentrated a great deal on the upliftment of the youth there, and from an academic polint of view, and from a political point of view. And the same week he was transferred from Pollsmoor, from Robben Island to Pollsmoor, he had in fact received something like 15,000 for the prisoners on Robben Island, he looked after them academically, and he saw to it that they reached a start at Unisa and attained their education there.

David: At the time of Rivonia, were you shy of being in the public eye?

Winnie: It could have just been the strain of being in the limelight unexpectedly. That was the aspect of my life I hadn't anticipated at that stage, to suddenly find myself the focus of attention. And, to suddenly find myself in the limelight, and with world attention focused on me did make me feel a bit uncomfortable. It was the beginning of a life-long struggle. I normally would have been a very private sort of person. It was not easy to emerge from that private life into the public spectrum which I found myself subsequently. It has been an uphill road.

Peter: OK.....

David: The one thing we haven't done that we wanted to do was for you to talk about being banished here.

Winnie: Oh, I see.