

INQUIRY IN TERMS OF SECTION 29

HELD AT

DURBAN



21 APRIL 1997

**ZAHRAJ NARKEDIEN
(Previously GRETA APPELGREN)**

[PAGES 1 - 38]

CHAIRMAN: Mr Brummer, you are still under oath. I think we'll swear the witness in immediately and then I'll just give a brief introduction.

MR CURREN: Could I just mention before you do that that Greta Appelgren has subsequently taken to the Muslim faith, and her new name is Zahrah, Z-a-h-r-a-h, Narkedien, N-a-r-k-e-d-i-e-n, Zahrah Narkedien. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN: Ja, thank you. I became aware of that after the subpoena was issued, and I apologise for the fact that it was issued not in the correct name. Can you give us your full names please for the record.

MS NARKEDIEN: Which name shall I give you? My new name?

CHAIRMAN: Perhaps just give your old name, and tell us that you have changed your name.

MS NARKEDIEN: Okay, my full name is Greta Appelgren, Greta Margaret Appelgren, and I am now Zahrah Narkedien.

ZAHRAH NARKEDIEN (Previously GRETA APPELGREN) (Sworn, States)

CHAIRMAN: This is an inquiry in terms of section 29 of the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act of 1995. This is an investigative inquiry and not a hearing, and therefore it is held in camera, and no finding will be made at this hearing.

I'll briefly outline the duties and the obligations that are imposed on us by the Act. You have a right to legal representation, and you are legally represented. In terms of section 31 of the Act any person subpoenaed to give evidence is compelled to answer any question put to her in spite of the fact that

the answer might incriminate her. The conditions applicable to this section are as

/follows.

follows. There must have been consultation with the Regional Attorney-General on the issue. The Chairperson of the inquiry must be satisfied that the request for information is reasonably necessary and justifiable in an open an democratic society, and of course that the witness has refused to answer the question.

The Act also provides that any incriminating evidence which you may give at this inquiry is not admissible against you in a court. And there's one proviso to this, is that in the event of you ever being charged with perjury, where you give two conflicting versions, evidence of what you have said in this inquiry may be used against you to prove a charge of perjury.

Finally I just remind you of the offences contained in section 39 of the Act, section 39 (d) (1) and (2), which provide that it is an offence to - read out the sections there please.

MR LAX: It just says that,

"Any person who:

"(1) hinders the Commission, any Commission or member of the staff of the Commission, in the exercise, performance or carrying out of its, his or her powers, functions or duties under this Act."

And then (2) says,

"Wilfully furnishes the Commission, any such Commissioner or member, with any information which is false or

misleading will be guilty of an offence."

CHAIRMAN: Thanks. We were asked by your attorney before

/the hearing the hearing if we would have reference first, before we asked you any questions, to your amnesty application which you sent in to this office some time ago. Now, when your application was sent in it was sent directly from here to Cape Town, to where the Amnesty Committee is based, and we have been in touch with them, and they haven't for some reason been able to send us the application up until now. You didn't bring one with you this morning? --- No, I left it at home unfortunately. When I was taking all my other stuff I didn't think to go and look for it. It's at home unfortunately, and that's Kimberly.

Well, the position that we are in is that it's not -I understand the situation as expressed in outline to me by Mr Curren, that you are not absolutely - you can't recall what you put into that application, but we have to operate on the basis that you've been called her to answer questions, and we can't do it on the basis that, because you don't have your amnesty application we therefore don't go ahead with the hearing. So I'm afraid that we're going to proceed.

MR CURREN: We accept that, ja. We accept that.

CHAIRMAN: Mr Govender, do you want to start?

MR GOVENDER: Should we refer to you as Mrs Narkedien, is that right? --- Yes, please.

Now, Mrs Narkedien, much of the questions will ...
(intervention)

MR CURREN: Sorry, could I ask whether you could just tell the witness - she understands that these are now presiding officers, but she's not sure who these people are that are sitting on the other side. So maybe you can just tell her what your role is and the context in which

/you're

you're asking the questions.

MR GOVENDER: I am Sashree Govender. I am the head of the investigation unit. My colleague here, Lex Moodley, is an investigator, an international investigator, attached to the unit. He has been assigned to investigate the case, together with other investigators.

Our task is to put questions to you in terms of further information about what we require, the matter that we're investigating, and the Commissioners then will ask certain questions relating to the matters that we seek information about. Okay? --- Fine.

Is that fine? --- Mmm.

CHAIRMAN: And just to complete it, the person sitting behind you over there is one of our researchers, who is very familiar with this case. --- Okay.

MR GOVENDER: I hope you realise this is an inquiry, an investigative inquiry. We just seek information about - much of what we're going to ask relates to the - what has become known as the Magoo Bar incident, the bombing of Magoo Bar, and related matters thereto. Much of the Magoo Bar incident is known because of the trial and the media reports and so forth, and like your subpoena actually indicates we would like a little bit more information on the command structure in the context with which you and Robert McBride actually operated, and the

other units that operated during that time.

We'll start off my asking you this, Mrs Narkedien, that you were part of a unit involved with Mr McBride, is that correct? --- Yes. Yes, a special operations unit.

Okay, and do you know the members of the - did you /know the know the members apart from Mr McBride, the identity of the other members of that unit? --- You're talking about our local unit?

Yes. --- Actually I didn't know all the people. It was just myself, Robert and Gordon Webster initially.

Yes. --- And then I recruited my sister, Janet, into it. And then the only time I met about three others, that was at the Edendale incident, and only on that incident. Who all the other individuals could have been I didn't know. And even when I did see it was surprising to see that this person is in it.

What was your role in the Woodenberg(?) unit? -
-- Basically I was a logistics person. I would provide transport. Essentially that. Sometimes I'd have to find money for the trips to go to Botswana. Basically that was it. Not even to do reconnaissance, except at that last incident about the electrical substations. Basically I was to provide the transport to and from wherever we went.

And did you know what type of work this unit was involved in? --- I didn't know specifically. I knew we were called special operations, but I was never explained precisely what it meant, and I understood quite clearly from Gordon, who was the initial

commander, that I could not afford to know. In order to be very successful the unit had to operate in such a way that each person only knew what your role was. It didn't matter the activity, the programme, even the destination. I would know sometimes I must just fill the car up, but I wouldn't even know if we're going just around the corner or right to Shongweni or wherever. I would just come and find that actually this is where we are stopping, this is where

/they're

they're going to get off and go and do whatever it is. So we operated in a very strict security type of arrangement, and I accepted that because I did believe in Umkhonto we Sizwe. I did believe in guerilla activities, so I knew it needed that kind of secrecy. And the Security Police were very successful, so we had to be almost foolish and say, "Okay, I will do exactly what is my role, regardless of what it is."

But you say your role was confined to logistics and providing money and transport? --- Mmm.

Were you involved in any sort of operation involving bombing and stuff like that, apart from the Magoo - which we'll come to now? Apart from that? ---

No, there was no incident where I had to assist them with that, except one incident where I had to pick them up from a certain place. It was near a discotheque. I only discovered subsequently when I had brought them back in - in fact they didn't even own up then, but I just guess it must have been them. I had to pick them up at a discotheque somewhere in Wentworth, take this one guy - I didn't know his name, but I only discovered he was a member of the unit that particular night -

somewhere to a place in Edendale. On the way coming back into the township I saw the lights were out, and we had to pass a substation to come in from the entrance that Robert and them wanted, and I saw it was on fire. But not the whole thing, just parts of it. And I was actually saying, "Gosh, I wonder who did this. How could it have happened? It's the second time someone is bombing." They never owned up, they never said a word, but much, I mean later, I sort of put things together that it could have been them.

/When you

When you say, "they," who are you referring to?

--- It could have been our unit.

No, the people that you were with, you had to transport and you travelled with. Who was it? --- It was Robert, Gordon and - they called him Blackie, I think it was. But even then it was just my suspicion. I discovered most of the things they were involved in and we had suspected, and even where I didn't suspect them, was at the attorneys when we were preparing everything. All the documents were in front of us. That's when I discovered a lot of it.

And did you ever make trips to Botswana with Robert McBride? --- Mm, several.

Several? --- Several trips.

And who did you meet when you went to ... (incomplete) --- I met a lot of ANC Comrades - I should actually call them MK Comrades - but I was only introduced to them by aliases. And I was introduced also to them as an alias, like I was Denise and Robert was Douglas. All the guys were - well, the names I remembered easily was Oupa, Chris and - well, Rashid I

only met - we met on two trips actually. No, the last trip, the June trip. He's the third one I remember. Then there was just the occasional guys, like there was some Georgie. You know, there weren't - there weren't a lot of them.

Now, you said you met Rashid on the last occasion. That was between the 7th to the 12th of June that you spent in Gabarone, is that right? --- Ja.

And under what circumstances did you meet him? -- He actually visited. We were in the Oasis Hotel, and he visited there, and him and Robert went into the room and

/they closed they closed the door and they had their private discussions. Well, that's how they always operated. Whenever they came for a meeting or drop they would go and sit privately and I would not be allowed to listen to it. Or he'd go off with them privately and get his instructions or whatever they would discuss. So him and Rashid were in that room for quite a while. He came out, he just said goodbye, and he left.

Are you aware that - on previous occasions when you did go with Robert McBride to Gabarone, are you aware of the people - are you aware in fact that he would have met with Rashid either in your presence, or leave you at the hotel at some other place? Were you aware of that? --- No, I didn't know about Rashid's existence. I think it was when he went down with my sister, Janet. That was - I can't remember which trip that was. It was only on one trip that we first met Rashid. It was just - he came in there, he met with us, it was about five minutes and then he left. It was sort

of a social kind of discussion then he left. And I didn't see him again until the June trip. But I don't know if he ever met with him again until that June trip, because I never saw who he went to, and he never told me.

This was Robert McBride? --- Robert, ja. I would stay alone in the motels.

And he would leave? --- He would leave and come back 3 o'clock in the morning or something.

And you didn't know who he had met? You were not told that, were you? --- No. But I would assume, I mean, it's the MK guys.

Now, the name Rashid of course is not the real name

/of the
of the person. Do you know the identify of the person now? --- Ja, in fact I only discovered it when I met with Robert yesterday. He came to visit me and he showed me Rashid's statement, and I discovered for the first time that he's - I am not sure - Aboobaker Ismail, something like that.

Aboobaker Ismail? --- Ja, something like that.

I am not pronouncing it correct.

Have you met him since June 12th? --- No, I've never met him again.

Never met him again. --- No.

Okay. Any of the other people that you came to know as Oupa, Chris and George, have you seen those people subsequently? --- Never. You mean in South Africa?

Yes, or anywhere else. --- No. In fact we were there - I don't know which of the trips - Oupa had

told us that Chris had been arrested and deported to Zambia, I think it was, so I never ever saw him again. But in South Africa, no, I have never seen them again.

Now, during the incident that is referred to as the Magoo bombing as such, were you aware of that operation prior to it taking place? --- No, I was not aware of exactly what the real operation was, because when he picked me up from home he said we were going to take this car and park it in - in town initially.

When did he pick you up? --- Actually I was in hiding for a whole week, because the police had come to my parents' home - I think it was on the 12th of June - no, it wasn't the 12th of June. I can't remember, but I think it was a week before that - and they arrested my brother and my sister and a whole lot of activists in Wentworth, and

/they came they came to my parents home and my two sisters' homes looking for me.

This is the 12th of June during the state of emergency? --- We were actually coming back from Botswana. We were coming back from that trip, and I'd come home and my mother said, "You can't stay here. The police are looking for you." So I had to go into hiding that very same morning. So I was actually in hiding at my granny's place and didn't see Robert for - I think it was about a week, until he came to see me that Saturday late afternoon or early evening. And he asked - he said to me, "I think you're going to go mad, you need to go out." Because initially we were going to go into town for me to be taken out, just to sort of air

my mind a bit, and I didn't want to. All I could think of was the police stumbling onto me and arresting me.

So anyway we left my granny's place where he picked me up. From there we had to go and fetch my sister's car and then go to - we were going to go into town supposedly, but then he said no, he has to pass his father's workshop. That's where the blue Cortina was, and that's where Matthew was, and that's where incidents changed. Then we actually ... (intervention)

Matthew who is this? --- Lecordier.

Lecordier, okay. --- I subsequently discovered who he was. He also had another alias, but he was a member of the unit. And it was that point he said, "No, no, we have to just take this car into town. We're going to park it in town. It's for one of the ANC Comrades."

Who told you this? Robert? --- Robert. But he didn't give me time to question, and even if he did I /would would not really have questioned. He just then got out of the car and went to the blue Cortina. They took off, and I just followed them from there. So that's how ... (intervention)

You followed them in your vehicle? --- Mmm. I was in a brown Mazda.

And what happened when you followed them? --- Okay, I am telling my attorney that I am having problems remembering from the time we got into town, because there's a lot of changes that took place which I can't seem to recall so well, besides it being 10 years ago. We had a philosophy that after a lot of - after each incident, each activity and - we had a policy where we

said, "It never happened." You know, in order to suppress the information and deal with the horrors of what we were doing. We used to suppress the information a great deal, so I can't recall the sequence of events so well. So I am quite confused. I can only recall that when we got into town he didn't give me proper instructions, so I didn't quite know what to do. Because they just went and stopped the car outside Hyperaemia, and I didn't know if that's where this person was going to collect the car or what. Because when they got out they seemed to have a discussion. I went and parked, if I remember, behind them, but others too remember I parked in front of them. It's terrible.

Anyway I saw them having this discussion. I didn't know what they were discussing. Then Robert came back to me and said no, I must go and meet him around the corner in Field Street, we're now going to Marine Parade. And then he just dashed off and went away from me. So then I didn't know what we were going there for, because

/I mean

I mean if you're just handing over a car to somebody you don't need a special place. I mean in my way of thinking. And then I can't recall all the movements we did. Then we got to Pine Street and we parked the car there instead. Then Matthew had to stay there, then Robert and I went to the Marine Parade. And then he found this parking outside this ... (intervention)

With whose vehicle did you go to park? --- The one that I came with. And I still said to him, "Why do you want to park the car there?" I mean to me it was not a parking, it was just a small little space which

the car wouldn't fit in in my way of thinking. I wasn't on their wavelength, and I actually didn't want to even park it there. And he insisted and insisted. We argued. We even had to drive around and come back there because he was now stalling over there. And then we came back the second time, then I thought, "Well, he really wants it there, and he's getting so agitated," so I had to squeeze it in there to reserve that parking to bring the Cortina too.

And when you had parked it what happened then? When you had parked the car? --- Well, he said okay, he's going down - he's walking down to Pine Street, he's going to fetch that car, he's going to drive it back, him and Matthew. And when he comes I must go out so that he can put it exactly there.

And that's what happened? --- Mmm.

Did he eventually leave the car and you moved out?

--- Ja, he didn't give me further instructions again, so to me that Marine Parade was quite busy, so I went and parked in just the next road that came up. And I made sure that they could see me, because now I didn't -
I

/wasn't wasn't able to say, "Look, I am going there," or, "I am not going to stand here." It wasn't so well co-ordinated, so I had to also just use my own initiative a bit.

Sorry, I don't quite understand that. Did you say that you moved off from the original place that you parked? --- I moved out.

Before he came? --- No, no, no. I waited exactly until he arrived there.

Oh, until he arrived. --- Ja.

Then you moved out? --- Mmm.

And he parked the Cortina there. --- In that same space, ja.

And did you then pick him up and leave? ---

No, no, I then moved to the next road and I waited for them.

CHAIRMAN: If I can just interrupt. Do you recall before you went there, after Hyperama, going to any other spot in town? --- The only other spot I can remember is at Pine Street, where we actually went and parked the car. I didn't know why he wanted it done like that, or what task he had to do, because even that to me was an ideal spot because of what I thought he was up to.

(Inaudible) ... Mr Govender. So, from Pine Street can you remember how you drove to the beachfront? ---

Ja, we were in my car.

Ja. --- We went in the Mazda to - well, we left Matthew there. Robert and I went alone to Marine Parade.

What route would you have taken, because Pine Street runs away, it's a one-way going the other way.

--- Ja. No, there's a - if I can explain it to you. There was still a small road that - okay, you can continue straight on as if you're going towards the market, but there's a

/small side small side road that brings you out to West Street again. I don't recall if I exactly took - I know I did take that short road, because I didn't go with the robots any more. But when I came out onto West Street I

don't know which route I took from there, and then we were on the Marine Parade. I don't recall. I may have just gone straight up West Street. I just can't recall.

That's what I'm afraid of, to try and work it out and give you an inaccurate - an inaccurate report. It was - I mean it also has been traumatic for me, and I have tried to block it out of my mind, and I don't recall.

No, we understand. That's fine. You mentioned that there were three other people in your unit, who you came to know later were part of your unit. Who were those other three? --- It was - well, I discovered them at the Edendale one. It was Matthew.

Right. --- It was - what was this chap's name now - Antonio du Preez, and Robert's father, Derek, Derek McBride. But I don't think he was really part of the unit. I think he just got called in.

At the time you were part of Gordon's unit, before Robert formed his own unit and then you moved across, who else did you work with at that time? --- Nobody.

It's only myself, Robert and Gordon. I'm sure there were other people, but I never met them at all.

You didn't meet them? --- Uh-uh.

On your trips to Botswana who did you used to go with to Botswana? --- The first trip - I can't recall them all, but the first one or two trips only Robert and I went. Then on another trip Gordon and myself. That's when I brought my sister Janet in. She had to be a decoy

/for Gordon.

for Gordon. Then when we took Gordon out of Botswana, that was when he was injured, we took his girlfriend with. There's no other people who travelled with us.

Her name was Anne, is that right? --- Mmm.

There was no one else who travelled with us.

Okay. The time that you first met with Rashid, where he had a discussion with you, you said, lasting about five minutes or so, what was that discussion all about? --- Ag, it was just to meet us. That was the time when Janet came. He just wanted to meet these two women, and - ag, I remember Gordon jokingly saying that he's one of the important guys, and then he still laughed it off and denied that he was. And then we spoke about South Africa and what we doing as social workers, stuff like that. It was totally unpolitical than what it could have been. So then he left.

The impression one gets looking at that sort of meeting is that here's a guy like Rashid, who we now know was a very senior person, sort of checking you two out in a way, just trying to work out what kind of people you are, and whether he's concerned about you or not, that sort of meeting. Would that impression accord with how you might have seen it at the time? ---

Actually, you know, his whole approach was a very simple, very humble kind of person. He didn't give me the impression of someone with authority and power, and who had so much responsibility, as I discovered, I mean, much later, when we were arrested and so on. So I didn't get the impression he was checking us out, because then we met with other guys, like maybe before they go with Robert like openly they would talk to us for five, 10 minutes.

/They would
They would talk to me, ask me about myself, my family, like chit-chat type of thing. So at that time I didn't

think Rashid was an important individual. Maybe if he didn't sort of jokingly deny it when Gordon said so I would have probably thought, well, maybe he is, but he's disguising his whole image by his style and his presence.

MR GOVENDER: Later on when you met Rashid did he give you any - was the discussion political that he had with you? --- You mean the second trip?

The second trip. --- He didn't talk to me.

He didn't talk. --- He just - no, he just walked in there. I opened the door when he arrived. He walked in there and Robert was sitting there in the lounge, and he greeted me, he greeted Robert and - well, they knew the purpose what he came for, and they both dashed off into the room and closed the door.

Did you ever have a discussion with Rashid? Did he ever talk to you about politics? --- About politics?

Yes. --- No, never ever. I never had a discussion with him.

You were a member of MK as part of this cell, isn't it? --- Ja, of the special operations unit.

Special operations. Who recruited you into that?

--- Robert.

Robert did. And you knew what you were doing was part of the MK strategy in South Africa? --- Mmm.

But you knew also that the task that you were doing was confined to certain tasks as you outlined on the basis of security - for security reasons purely. -

-- Ja. Okay, I was not a combatant. I was never trained in explosives or anything like that. I had that role which

/I regarded

I regarded as just as important. Someone had to provide the transport, someone had to do the logistics type of thing. So I never felt foolish or anything like that.

Was the decision to place the bomb, the car bomb that was placed at Magoo's Bar - did you know where the decision came from? --- No, I don't know where - I mean I didn't know then, but I can speculate now, because I know when we left Botswana on that last trip Robert wasn't his normal self, jovial, talking, and so on. He was withdrawn, he was very anxious and hardly talking to me. He didn't really want to eat. And I didn't want to question him, but eventually I had to question him and say, "But why are you so tense? What's wrong?" Then he said that Rashid had given him an instruction which he feels very uncomfortable about. He doesn't think he can even do it. But he didn't say anything further than that, and I didn't pry, because I knew immediately we were going into terrain that I was not entitled to know. So he didn't go any further, and I didn't probe him any further. So that's why much later I realised that he was not fully to blame. Because I was angry with him for taking me, as a logistics person, into such a major event without my knowledge. Because I immediately - it was the next day, I think - ja, the Sunday, I packed up and I said, "I'm getting out of here. You're on your own now."

This operation was conducted barely two days after you returned from Botswana, isn't that so? --- I can't remember how many days.

It was the 12th you got back, and the bombing took place on the 14th. --- I can't remember how many

days it was, because I went into hiding immediately, so

I was

/totally

totally absorbed in my own problems.

No, but you said ... (intervention) --- I can try and work it out.

But you said earlier on that Robert came and picked you up on that Saturday morning. That was the 14th, wasn't it? --- Saturday afternoon, late afternoon.

Saturday afternoon. --- It was about five or six.

That was ... (intervention) --- It could be, as you're saying, about two or three days. I mean I didn't calculate it.

And you had no contact with him from ... (intervention) --- No contact whatsoever ... (incomplete - end of Side A, Tape 3)

You said that you were incensed after this thing happened, and furious about it, and you said he must go his own way and you're going to split up from him. What happened? How did you split up? Where did you go? - - I left. The Sunday I discovered everything in the press, all the details and exactly what had happened and so on. Then I actually went - I think I - I don't know, I got a message to one of my brothers to come and fetch me to go to another sister, and at my sister's place I told them, "I have a problem, I have to leave Durban." They went and packed everything for me, they made all the arrangements for me. And then when Robert came to visit me, he found out where I was, I told him, "I am leaving. I am leaving you. I can't work with you any

more." And then he felt anxious too. He didn't want to stay, he didn't want to be without me. He felt he can't handle what he has done either, so I said, "Well fine, you can come with me, and

/"we're

we're leaving together." So we travelled the same night or the next morning, I can't - I think it was the same night. I can't remember. We went to stay with a friend of mine there for about a few days, and we found a flat. Because we felt it wasn't fair to sort of impose on her the way we did, so ... (intervention)

Sorry, where was this? --- In Johannesburg.

In Jo'burg? --- And then while we were there we decided we have to give up and rather go into exile now. Well, he really wanted to go, and I wasn't too keen. I was prepared to rather take him and dump him there and come back.

Just for the record, at that time you were very close to one another. You were actually having a relationship, is that right? --- Mmm. Ja.

And then you were arrested at your uncle's house, is that right? --- No, his uncle's place.

Sorry, his uncle's house. How did that come about? How did the police get onto you there? --- It's so confusing. There's so many events that could have led up to it. I know he had been phoning Oupa to say he wants to come out, and he was trying to make contact, and they were saying, "No, the police are on to them there." They were dodging the South African Police, and it wasn't safe for us to come. That's why we stayed for such a long time, a whole month. And then the day we had to go, the morning we woke up - I think

we had Robert's father with us. He joined us much later. One of the windows had been broken into. I suppose someone was trying to steal from - steal the car. So we decided okay, we'll go to his uncle's place.

I don't know what he really wanted there, but I

/don't

don't know if his uncle had a contact to get the window fixed very fast, or what it was. I can't recall. He was very agitated for that whole month. I couldn't talk to him much. He used to cry a great deal. He was depressed a lot. So we were there, and this person we went to couldn't fix the window immediately so we had to stay one more day. Then that evening - ag, I can't remember if I made the call home or he made the call home, but the next morning, early the next morning, the road was full of these - to me it looked like Riot Squad guys, but I think they were from the Defence Force.

The road outside his uncle's house? --- Ja.

They were in the yard, they were on the roof top, on the roofs of the other homes, in the street. You know, like as the door opened we stepped into a war zone. It was a terrible situation.

It was probably your phone call home that did it in essence, because they must have tapped all the phones of everyone in your family. They must have known where you were. --- It could be. I don't know.

For that month while you were still on the run, you and Robert, where were you staying? This thing's not on. Let me just repeat the question. For that month while you were on the run where did you stay? You said you stayed with a friend. --- Ja.

And thereafter? --- Ag, I can't remember. She was like in central Johannesburg, in a shopping - major shopping area there. Then we got a flat in a place called - was it Claim Street? Ag, it was a funny, dingy block of flats. I can't remember exactly, but it was Hillbrow, the lower end of Hillbrow. I can't remember the name of the

/flats.

flats.

Did you just stay in those flats? --- Ja, we stayed in the flat for a month, and we were indoors during the day, and at night only we went out. Sometimes we did go out during the day, but mostly at night.

Is that when the vehicle got broken into? ---
Mmm. There was nowhere to park it but on the road.

MR GOVENDER: You were arrested then, you said, at your uncle's house, isn't it? --- At his uncle's.

His uncle's. --- Mr McBride's brother.

McBride's brother. --- Mmm.

And were you brought back to Natal, or were you kept in ... (intervention) --- We were taken to first the ... (inaudible) ... Police Station and then the Springs Police Station, where they put Robert and his father in chains. They just handcuffed me. We were there for quite a while, a couple of hours. I think they were checking out with maybe the Durban police or whatever, I don't know, and then - I'd say about late in the afternoon they then took us to the cars, put Balaclavas sort of back to front and then drove us down.

We didn't even know where they were driving us to, but because - Derek and I were in the same car, and with

these thick woollen things we were perspiring, our hands were behind our back for three hours. We started to complain. I was complaining terribly. I was suffocating because it was damp with the perspiration, I couldn't breathe properly. They eventually agreed to at least wind it up above my nose, and I could at least look like that and see, "Gosh, look, we're almost in Harrismith."

Did they bring you back to KwaZulu-Natal? ---

/Mmm.

Mmm.

And then you were handed over to which police? -

-- To the Durban Security Police.

The Security Branch. At C R Swart? ---- Mmm.

Were you interrogated by them? --- Mmm. We were interrogated that same night. We were separated. Actually we were in offices on the - high up on the 12th or 13th floor. Robert was in the one just next to me, and they were first interrogating him, screaming at him, swearing at him, and then they came and started on me. Okay, first they started a little bit with me, and then Captain de Beer, who was leading the investigation, said no, I must be moved away, because I could hear exactly what they were doing to him. So I was taken to the next floor and then they started with me.

Who were the policemen that were interrogating you? Do you know their identities? --- Ja, because I mean they were addressing each other from time to time, and they always were in a group until say about the second month, and then we were left with just the two main guys. There was - Warrant-Officer Lotter was my main interrogator. There was Captain de Beer, who

used to also hit me at times. Then there was a Major Botha, who one day came to take down my complaints, he said. Because, you know, they were abusing me and torturing me and so on. And when I gave him my complaint, just as I was starting, he swore me.

Major Botha? --- That was Major Botha, ja.

Was he N T Botha? --- No, he didn't say his initials.

Yes. --- So I realised ... (intervention)

/CHAIRMAN:

CHAIRMAN: Just describe him briefly. --- Okay. I would say he was in his late 40s or early 50s. Quite a lot of hair, and I think he either had a beard or a moustache. He was a very sort of distinguished looking person, who I really thought had come to take a statement.

Was he a big man or a short man? --- Medium height and medium build. I remember him very clearly, because I was horrified when he swore me. Because they were suffocating me with a plastic bag, and I really thought they were going to kill me each time they did it, and my body was sore.

Who's "they"? Who suffocated you with a plastic bag? --- It was this Warrant-Officer Lotter who did most of it, and this other sergeant would just sort of hold my hands.

When you say "this other sergeant," you don't remember his name? --- No, I don't remember. I mean I can identify him from a photograph. They harassed me a great deal.

MR GOVENDER: (Inaudible) ... involved in your interrogation? Can you remember their identity? ---

Okay, ja. Well, Major Botha I remember because I addressed him a lot. Then there was - there was a Captain Botha also, Captain de Beer, and Warrant-Officer Lotter I mentioned. There were a lot of others, but I don't recall their names.

CHAIRMAN: This Captain Botha, was one of them N T Botha? --- Ag, I don't know, but I can describe him if that will help.

What was different to the other chap? --- Oh, different to the other Botha?

/Yes. ---

Yes. --- Well, he was younger, younger than him. I would say he was in his late 30s, early 40s, and he also came constantly to scream at me and threaten. He was a very chilling kind of man. In fact he testified at the trial. He was talking mostly about the explosives that were used in each of the bombs. He was like identifying them.

Was he an explosives expert? --- He identified himself as one, ja.

So what did he do to you? Did he assault you at all? --- No, that Captain Botha just screamed at me, swore at me, and every time came close to me. But the ones who did it was Captain de Beer himself, who was hitting me with a clothes brush. And - ja. And then this Warrant-Officer Lotter, who made me do physical exercises, even on my two fingertips. I had to lift myself off the ground. I had to hop, and I was wearing a dress and I was menstruating, and they wouldn't hear anything. All these men were there, and I had to do all sorts of things which were like - I mean no woman wants to do that in front of the men, and doing it on for

hours and hours. And I had to stand for hours. It was terrible. I couldn't walk for a couple of days.

What did they want to know from you when they were interrogating you? --- They didn't want to believe me that we had this code of conduct and we sort of abided by it so maniac fashion, and they didn't want to believe that I was just a logistics person. Because I previously had a record of being very involved in the UDF, and the youth, and the church, and so on. I was a high profile person. But in 1985 I sort of - I became so frustrated with all

/this non-violent change that was getting us nowhere, so I sort of withdrew from politics. So they couldn't believe that someone who had such a high profile had such an insignificant role, and for Robert, who didn't have a high political profile, that he was actually the commander. They were convinced that I must have been the commander. I was older than him, and so on. So they tortured me, they tortured me. They would force me to write certain statements this way, that way, and if I wrote it this way they shredded it. Anything I did, and I said, "This is the truth," they said theoretically it's not possible. So they gave me a hard time.

What did they want to know from you? --- They wanted to know from me - actually they knew everything, because Matthew had given them a statement in just a couple of days, and they actually brought it to me and read it out to me and said, "This is what Matthew says." And they played a cassette of Robert, but then I could hear them screaming and swearing at him there as well, so I couldn't hear what he was saying. And then they

also brought a statement of his. And so - so I said,
"But they are not even saying some of the things that you are saying, what you understand, what you theoretically believe it to be." And they're saying, "No, this is what it is." So then they started to actually threaten to go and - because they took me home to find my passport, and my nephew was there, Christopher, he was about four years old - to go and fetch him and hold him out of the window. And they seemed so sincere that they really would do that, so I said, "No, I will do whatever you want." And then I started to sort of try and backtrack and say, "No, I want

/"it done
"it done this way. This is what really happened." Then they threatened to go to my family and harass them and murder them. And at that time, you know, your whole reasoning shrinks. You don't think, "Ag, they're now just threatening." You start to believe it. You know, your whole mind becomes - you know, you sort of hand yourself over to them. You feel safer that way.

Did you make a statement to them? --- I made several statements, which they shredded, redid, and then said okay.

Well, did you eventually sign any? --- Ja, I signed them. Each one I did on my own I signed, even though they shredded it, and others they said, "No fine, you've put that. We want that in, we want this in. Sign that." I didn't - in fact there were times when I refused to sign a lot of the sections where they dictated what they wanted. Then they harassed me all over again, and I decided I am getting nowhere. And they

also said that the others are getting psychologically damaged, they wanted to go to trial, they wanted to go to prison, they wanted to get it all over with. So I felt I was holding up the others by being difficult, so then I gave in and did whatever they wanted.

Just going back a little bit to this special ops unit that you belonged to. The unit, I presume, conducted certain operations in keeping with the aims of the MK and the ANC. --- Mmm.

And, notwithstanding certain instructions were given to the unit from Botswana and so forth, there must have been certain decisions that the unit took themselves in terms of operations, local operations. Were you part of

the decision making? /the decision
--- No, I wasn't.

Well, let's put it this way. Did they take those decisions and were you part of the decisions? --- I was never part of any decisions. I was only given instructions. When I was needed I was called in. "We need you to drive us, and pick us up here, pick us up there." As I was explaining, I would find myself picking them up and we'd drive and they would just give me instructions. When we're in the car I'll be told we're going to Shongweni. We'd get there, I won't know what we're getting there for. So I was never part of decision making.

So did you join the unit on the basis that you would be given instructions and carry out instructions?

--- Ja. And I would just be that logistics person.

And you were not in this unit on the basis that you would also be part of making some of those

decisions? --- No, it was necessary for me to be part of decision making or planning.

Did you know where those decisions came from? To you it came immediately from Robert McBride or Gordon Webster. Did you think it was confined just to those people, who did it go higher? --- No, I accepted that because it was a special operations unit it had no authority or links with any regional MK structure. It was a direct link with the Botswana group. That's why we travelled so far to go and - he would go and give his reports and have his private consultations. But I took it all his instructions came from them, came from the Comrades in Botswana.

And you believed that all he did was just pass on /the instructions the instructions to you or whoever? --- My instructions - ja, came from him.

Do you know anything about - well, the actual choosing of the Why Not Bar/Magoo Bar complex as a target? Do you have any information how that - or who would have made that decision? --- Well, I mean prior to the event I really didn't know why he really wanted that particular - that parking spot, let me put it that way. And even afterwards I didn't know why did he plan that particular hotel. But I discover when I was in detention, and the police were swearing at us, that at least two of them that was their favourite spot, their favourite hang-out spot. Because when Warrant-Officer Lotter was interrogating me he said he just escaped death. He had visited his girlfriend at her mother's place in Pietermaritzburg, but that's where he usually went. And one of the others said he was sitting

in a car close by with another friend, another security policeman. They were having a chat, but they were going there as they usually did, and the explosion took place while they were there, and they both had - their car had rocked like a boat. So only long afterwards I started to put, you know, my own conclusions when I was in detention that maybe he knew - someone had done some reconnaissance and knew that police hung out there. But it still to me didn't make a lot of sense, because then what about all the others that are not policemen? What about their girlfriends and wives? But anyway that's what I had discovered there.

Did you ever figure out in the scheme of things that you'd been in that, you know, that that type of decision, who would have taken that decision, the actual choosing of



/the actual the actual target itself? --- I can only think that perhaps - and I am only speculating, that perhaps - well, I don't know if I can speculate. I don't think I should speculate. I feel scared to speculate.

But you never ever thought about that, did you?

--- No. When I was in detention and hearing these men swear me like that, and realising that gosh, these guys go there, and perhaps that's why it was, I suppose, in whoever's mind who instructed Robert, or was part of instructing him, must have known it had that, so to them that was probably a hard target in their way of reasoning.

Well, let me put it this way to you. Would you say that's a type of instruction that will come from higher up, or was it the type of decision that would be

left to the local office to make? --- Robert and I spent a lot of time together, and I don't recall him going around there and checking it out. Although someone else could have checked it out and given him the information. But all I can say is that to me he was intent on that spot and that Why Not, as though he had to do it there, and nowhere else but there. And that because he did say on the trip that he was given an instruction that he felt uncomfortable with I can only conclude that someone else had done some homework and had said, "You've got to do that one." That's why he probably felt that trepidation.

Ja, you wouldn't know of course the type of instructions that Robert got, because Robert was the only person who got instructions from Rashid, is that right? --- Directly, ja.

Because you never got instructions when you were in ... (intervention) --- Never ever.

/And were

And were those instructions ever discussed with you or the other people that accompanied him who were part of the unit? --- Discussed with - other than Robert, you mean?

No, did Robert ever discuss that with you and other people in the unit, the instructions that he received? --- Well, he didn't discuss it with me. I don't know if he discussed it with the other members.

I would think not.

I take it that the unit never met as a group at all? --- No. We didn't operate like a regular unit that comes together on weekly meetings, or monthly meetings, planned, and progress reports - nothing. We

never ever operated in that structured fashion. It was totally unstructured. He decided, whatever instructions he got, he needed person X and Y to help him this time.

Person A and B are supposed to help him on another occasion. I would never know what the others were involved in. Again I can only say when I was arrested and reading the newspapers - because a lot of the others were tried before us, and then I discovered so-and-so was involved in that, Robert got this person to help with that. It never was, you know, well organised with clear plans.

But it was an accepted thing that Robert was the commander in the unit, and if he gave instructions to any one of you you would carry out those instructions.

--- Exactly.

And as far as you're concerned Robert was your immediate superior who you took instructions from? ---

Uh-huh.

But you had some inclination that he had other

/superiors

superiors in Botswana that he visited from time to time, which he took instructions from. --- Yes.

That's all you know about it. --- Mmm.

CHAIRMAN: Just two things to follow up on really. One I'll come back to. That was your treatment and your interrogation. But you said that Robert was very depressed and nervous and edgy and so on after all of this, and he cried a lot and so on. What was that all about? You were very close to him. --- Ja. In fact, you know, he's a very macho type of man, so he used to get up like early hours of the morning - this was when we were in the flat - and he used to cry. His

whole body would be bent over and crying, sob so badly.

And I would want to get up and comfort him and ask him what it's all about, but I could only conclude what it's all about, that he's done something which is way above his ability, he can't cope with it. He was in a bad, very bad state of mind. But he still used to phone those guys and stay in contact. I think he was still trying to keep up an image that, "I can handle it all," but I knew he couldn't. He was damaged after that.

It just seems, looking back, that it's a hell of a pity that none of that ever came out. That might have made the difference between a death sentence and not at that time. --- Ja. The lawyer did - sorry.

You know, his intense remorse afterwards. But I suppose it wasn't politically correct to do that at the time. --- Ja, and he was still a freedom fighter. He wanted to testify and he wanted to talk to the Court and all that. And I knew if I spoke I was going to tell, "But he's an ordinary man. He is not this tough image that he

/"makes out."

"makes out." But he wanted to project that image so much.

Ja. The second aspect just went back to your interrogation and so on. One of the people who played a central role in Robert's interrogation was a chap called Taylor, Captain, as he was then, Jimmy Taylor. Did he interrogate you at all? --- No.

Do you remember? --- He used to come in and just sort of look at me and pass bad remarks, but he never interrogated me.

Did you ever get interrogated by a chap called
Andy Taylor, a very big, tall, blonde-headed fellow? -

-- No.

A huge man. --- No, not that I can recall.
You see, there were a lot who used to come in and out,
and sometimes they'd just come and look at me and pass
bad remarks. There were a few big-built guys who made
bad jokes about me, and speak about, "The ANC has
deserted her and she's all alone," but my memory is
blurred and I don't recall the names of the others.

Were you sexually harassed in any way? --- Ja.

While you were being tortured? --- Ja, the
kind of exercises that - I mean I don't want to explain
some of them. And I actually made a full statement to
the Inspector of Detainees, the district surgeon, and a
month after reporting to the Inspector of Detainees this
warrant-officer from the assault section took a full
statement from me. So ... (intervention)

Sorry, let me just take details of that, because
again, as I said to Mr McBride, one of the things we'll
be looking at as a Commission is the role of the legal
system at that time, and obviously the checks and
balances with

/regard to
regard to detainees, there were lots of them, and they
were sort of, by the looks of things, honoured in the
breach rather than in the true fulfilment of those
balances. But you said the Inspector of Detainees. Who
else? --- The district surgeon and - I don't recall
the warrant-officer's name, but he was in the Assault
Unit. In fact, while you're on that issue, you know
Captain de Beer even said that section 29 they can

detain us without trial and without contacting our parents as punishment, so they don't punish us with torture. And, you know, he made a mockery of that, and still said, "But nobody knows what we are doing to you, and we'll make sure we don't leave marks. And we'll take you to the district surgeon when he has gone." So I missed the district surgeon that first - I was arrested the Thursday, that Friday. I only saw him the following Friday.

Were you ever visited by a Magistrate or a Judge?

--- Ja. They only started to come to the cell - every week we used to go to the Inspector of Detainees, who also declared that he was a retired Magistrate. Then I think it was ... (intervention)

Do you remember his name at all? --- No. I am sorry.

Okay, it doesn't matter. The district surgeon?

--- His name?

Ja. --- No.

Dr who, or whatever. He must have been a doctor.

--- I didn't take his name.

Okay. Was he - please excuse my reference to race issues, but was the district surgeon a white person or ... (incomplete) --- No, an Indian, an Indian doctor.

/An Indian

An Indian person? --- Ja. And the inspector was an elderly white man, who didn't want to record ... (intervention)

Just to help us identify the right person. That's the only reason I am asking those questions. And Magistrates and Judges besides the Inspector of

Detainees? --- I think it was in my third month of section 29 they started to come to the cell, but they were all a total waste of time, because no matter what you said they did nothing about it. The place used to be infested with rats. Rats used to crawl all over us when we were sleeping. The only Magistrate I can remember is this one, he was a Commissioner at the Children's Court, because when I used to go and present cases there he was the presiding Commissioner. I can't remember his name now.

Okay. But you did make general complaints to these people and nothing happened? --- All the time, ja.

Okay. --- Because even when I complained about the assault this inspector refused to record it, and I said, "You must record it." I had to force him to do it.

Were any of the statements recorded and signed by you used in your trial at all? --- No. In fact the police - I mean the prosecutor did want to use that, and then Advocate Gordon said but first I didn't make that statement to a Magistrate, where he could have said no, I didn't make it under duress, I was making it freely in his presence. They were all made only in the presence of the Security Police under that time of, you know, all the torture and everything, and there was at least some proof of that.

Okay. So there weren't any formal confessions as
/such?

such? --- No.

Made to a Magistrate. --- No, they forced me.
They offered me to be a State witness, and I said I

could never go and take the oath and still lie what you
want me to say.

Thanks.

MR GOVENDER: What type of training did you receive?

--- I didn't receive any training.

No training at all? --- No, not at all.

The only time you knew that Robert had perpetrated that car bomb was after the explosion, is that correct?

--- Not after the explosion. We were up on the ridge. We had taken some route going out, and then they wanted us to stop. He said I must stop there. And I couldn't see what is - what are we going to stop for? And he said, "No, let's stop here." And then Matthew said, "Ja." He sort of looked out the window and said, "Ja, I think we can hear the explosion and we can see the flames from here." And I asked, "Well, what flames are you talking about?" I mean I couldn't imagine, "What are we going to see from here?" And then I think Robert mentioned a car bomb was going to go off in ... (inaudible) ... time. He said the time, then I said, "How much time is left?" because suddenly in my mind is if we could get back there, as crazy as it sounds, but you do get crazy in that situation. And I said - but now they were totally, I suppose - I don't know, they had this look of total draining, I mean totally drained, like they couldn't make any more decisions, they couldn't do anything. Then I took over from him and said, "We are going home now." And I decided which route and everything.

/Did the

Did the explosion go off while you were there, or what? --- We didn't hear anything. We didn't see

any flames, so I didn't fully even believe them. The next morning I couldn't wait for the news, but I listened to the 6 o'clock news that didn't report on it.

I don't know which station I had tuned in to. I had to wait quite a while. My sisters came to visit, and they brought the Sunday paper for my granny, then I read it on the front page and I realised - so, what we parked there was no ordinary car for another Comrade to come and collect.

What did you think of doing at that time? Did you think about doing anything? --- I was out of my mind, and I couldn't talk to anybody about it. And my mother and my sister who came down were so upset about it, and they went on and on, and my granny went on and on, and I couldn't comment ... (incomplete - end of Side B, Cassette 3) ... I was in another world. It was a miserable and horrible situation.

How are you coping now with all that in your life?

--- I think if I wasn't a religious person I don't know what I would have done. I could only pray about it, pray for Robert, pray for Matthew, because I didn't know how they were going to deal with it. I knew how Robert had suffered psychologically. And I mean it crops up in my mind. Certain things will bring back the memory, and all I can do is say, "Well, I'm in God's hands. It's entirely up to Him what He does with me," because even though I didn't have full knowledge I still feel I sort of helped them, and I helped to park the car, even though I argued with him. But I was arguing for another reason altogether. So - I mean I don't feel like intense guilt,

/because

because I wasn't so deeply associated with it, but I do feel bad that - not only the three who died, but those who seem to have long-lasting - one of the witnesses who said he still has bits of glass in his head, he has headaches, he can no longer do the job he used to do. Like his life had come to an end. So even though I can match it against all the black victims, if I isolate it and only look at the whites, those Magoos victims, I do feel bad about it. But there's nothing I can do except pray about it. I can't do anything more.

Just for the record, what were you convicted for?

--- I was charged with a lot of things, 18 counts, and the Court said that only these five - four of them related to the Edendale incident. What do they call that? I wasn't physically there when these two sergeants got shot at, but because I was part of the team ... (intervention)

Accessory. --- Ja, something like that. So it was those three, and then the one of taking Gordon illegally out of the country, and then the last one was taking notes for Robert on the substations on a dirty envelope sort of.

In relation to the Magoo bombing you were not convicted of anything? --- No, not at all. I was acquitted of all of them.

Okay. That's all the questions I have.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mrs Narkedien, very much. I don't foresee that we will be recalling you at all, but should we require to do so, in the unlikely event that we may require you again, we will be in touch with Mr Curren, and we will set a date. How did you come down

here? Did you fly or did you drive? --- I was
actually at a

/conference
conference in Pretoria, and then I was going to fly back
from Johannesburg to Kimberly, so I just rerouted and
came here.

Okay. --- On Monday - Monday evening. But my
husband had to come and fetch me, so we're riding back
now together.

Okay. Well, you are entitled to the price of a
return airfare, or the cost of travelling her by motor
vehicle, whichever is the lower. So if you can put
something together and send it to our regional manager
you will be reimbursed for your trip here and back. -

-- Thank you.

Thank you very much.



/TRANSCRIBER'S

