

Interview with Tshegofatso “Elsie” Motsusi

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Please note that I used the initials EM for Tshegofatso as there was going to be confusion with Tshepo Moloji being TM too.

Tshepo Moloi: Today it's the...we are going to speak in Setswana, granny.

Elsie Motsusi: Yes

TM: Today is the 23 June 2013, it's Tshepo Moloi and I'm In Braklaagte in the North West Province, I'm with granny Tshegofatso known as Elsie. She will introduce herself and tell us who she is and where she was born. I'm going to interview granny about the history of Braklaagte, focusing mainly on the Land Act of 1913 but our focus will be on the forced removals and forced incorporations in the 1980's. Granny will take us back and tell us who she is and where was she born. Granny, let me take this time to thank you for welcoming us into your home to come and meet up with you,

E M: Thank you, my child

TM: I'm very happy because we've been talking through the phone, and now I'm seeing you in person.

EM: Yes

TM: Granny, you can start by explaining yourself and telling us your names in full.

EM The names of Tshegofatso when they are in full they are three, its Tshegofatso, Mosetsanakhumo, Matlhageng and the name Elsie is just a nickname and she doesn't have an English name. Tshegofatso was born here in Lekubung; she is the daughter of Meiki Monne and Titesi RaMotsusi. As the first dwellers we are originally from Rakete here in close to Lekubung and Rakete is a small village outside Lekubung, and it was my grandfather's place, who is my mother's father.

TM Ok

[TIMECODE - 02:27]

EM: My mother's father was called Kete and all the Boers that come from other farms that are close to us- when they settled here my grandfather was already here. When I hear the elders talking, they say after the old man had passed on, we decided to come here in Lekubung because he was in the outskirts of this place.

TM: Mr. Kete?

EM: Mr. Kete had built on the outskirts of the village; I can even show you it's over there, and there are still houses.

TM: Oh, ok

EM: Mr. Kete's surname was Tlhame, my mom's dad.

TM: By the way what is Tlhame?

EM: Tlhame. T-l-h-a-m-e, is a Surname.

TM: Ohh!!!

EM: Kete's surname

TM: Oh, Ok

EM: We built here coming from Kete's homestead in the year 1950

TM: That is when you arrived here in Braklaagte?

EM: Here in Braklaagte.

TM: When was granny born and arriving here in 1950?

EM: I was born in 1945 on the 31st May even though it's misprinted that it was on the 7th July

TM: Oh, okay

EM: I just accepted it as it is, because you really struggle

TM: Yes

EM: After being born on the 31st May, I grew up at Rakete's. I came here in 1950 with my parents together with my disabled brother. He was walking by himself in his early years. He later got sick. He had Polio, he got disabled. He crawled like a baby.

TM: What's his name?

EM: Mosala the surname is Motsusi

[TIMECODE - 04:56]

TM: Oh, ok, now when you arrived here in 1950, you and Mr Mosala and the parents

EM: And the parents and some older ones who passed on

TM: Oh, okay

EM: We stayed under *Kgosi* (chief) Lekolwane Sebogodi, even if Lekolwane's father Mr Malebelele worked hand in hand with Mr Kete.

TM: Aaaaah

EM: Yes

TM: How did they work hand in hand, granny?

EM: Mr Kete was a farmer. In Setswana there is a penalty called *sehuba sa Kgosi* (Chief's chest) Mr Kete would every year give a *Kgosi* (chief) a sheep, for him to provide for the kids and the wife.

TM: Oh!

EM: Yes, that is what I mean by working hand in hand, so Mr Lekolwane worked hand in hand with Mr Kete and with us also afterwards, until the 1957 wars

TM: 1957, okay. Before then, granny, when you got here in 1950: you were 5 years old?

EM: Yes I was 5 years old.

TM: Now, let me start with the parents, what were they doing at this stage?

EM: The parents were ploughing in the fields, they planted sorghum, mealie, beans, *Letlhodi* [peas], *Tloo* [Lentils] .We had enough food- we were never hungry because of the ploughing.

TM: In this village?

EM: Yes in the village. OH, if you can look down, going down that way- it's a forest. That is where the fields were.

TM: Oh

EM: But now because of the civilization there is no ploughing.

TM: Okay, now the ploughing: were you only ploughing your field or the community's one?

[TIMECODE - 07:26]

EM: Yours. Each and everyone in the village had a ploughing field, those that came later in the village and didn't get the fields they would borrow from others.

TM: Oh, okay

EM: You borrow them and tell them I'm giving you few hectares and when I need then you will return them. So that he can plough and he can feed his children

TM: So, the parents would plough?

EM: The parents would plough

TM: And bring home

EM: And bring home

TM: Were they not selling?

EM: No, they were not selling, even if they were not selling they would bring sorghum grain and we would grind them to make sorghum mealie meal called *Segarona* (ours) today. We would really grind it with *motshe*(grinding stick). We would put it in a *Kika* (grind bowl) add a bit of water and start grinding with *motshe*(*grinding stick*). After that we hang them to dry then take *lefero*(strainer) to sort dirt from the actual sorghum. When we're done we take a stone called *Lelwala* (type of stone used for grinding) and the girl would sit there and grind, after that it would be sorghum mealie meal and we would eat.

TM: You didn't buy?

EM: You didn't buy; you would buy anything you want like sugar, flour, even that flour we didn't buy it. My mom's aunt at Dinokaneng [Dinokana] used to plant grain so we didn't buy. My sisters would go fetch it and we would grind it and make bread with it. Can you see the Tswana person is clever?

TM: Oh, okay, so when the parents ploughed who helped them?

EM: No one did they were struggling on their own; it was that time of the white people's era where they didn't care about Black people. They struggled, those that few *pennies* (cents) would go get from the Kooperasie (corporation) and buy seeds for sorghum, beans, etc. etc. to come plough and feed the kids. Those that didn't have a penny would lend from the others or sell a lamb to go buy seeds to plough for the kids.

TM: Now as kids what do you do at that time?

[TIMECODE -10:06]

EM: As kids, we are home helping with chores, when others are on the field ploughing. We cook and take food to the fields when you are more matured around 7,8,9 years old you now go to school now you are old enough to start school. I went to a Primary school called Banabakae. (Where are the kids?)

TM: Banabakae, ok

EM: Now, I can't tell you how long I've been to school. I was too clever. They would make me go to the next class. My brothers and sisters went to school- I would write whenever they are writing, so when I got to school I did Standard 1 and 2[Grade 3 and Grade 4] in the same year.

TM: Really?

EM: Yes, then they used to make you skip a class. I then did Standard 3 and 4 [grade 5 and grade 6] in the same year.

TM: Really granny?

EM: I did Standard 4 and 5 [grade 6 and grade 7] in the same year, then my uncle took me to Gauteng after passing standard 5 [Grade 7].

TM: Oh, okay .Where in Gauteng are you going now?

EM: I'm going to Meadowlands, when I got to Gauteng I went to do standard 6 [Grade 8] in Morris Isaacson.

TM: In Gauteng you live with your uncle, what is his name?

EM: My uncle is Piet Motsusi.

TM: Ok, when you get to Meadowlands coming from Braklaagte, how did you find the place?

EM: It was different, very different a village was different from the township. I got used to it.

TM: How different if you can explain.

EM: It's different that a village was different from the township. Here in the village, I can go from here, to there and ask for sugar. In the township there is no such.

TM: Okay

EM: If I don't have electricity I can go to a neighbor to ask for R20 that I can give back when I get my grant. There was such a difference, far different from what we have here in the village. What I got used to it quickly. Because my uncle had kids I was not alone.

[TIMECODE - 13:28]

TM: Oh, those that grew up there

EM: Yes, some were young. I groomed them. One is old now - he is was born in 1954

TM: Oh,

EM: He is now sick he called yesterday, crying that he misses me.

TM: Oh

EM: Crying that he is sick. I said don't cry my young one you will heal.

TM: Which year did you go to Morris Isaacson?

EM: I remember It was in 19.. (she pauses) which year was that, I can't remember.

TM: How old were you, if you still remember?

EM: I went to High school at a young age because of the skipping of classes. I started school when I was 9 years old. I stayed for 6 years at school and passed standard 6 (which is grade 8 now)

TM: Because of the young age

EM: I was young at school. They used to tease me saying I'm a baby, they don't talk to babies.

TM: When you were going to Morris Isaacson, living in Meadowlands, you went there for how long?

EM: When I lived in Meadowlands it was 2 years. I went for 2 years doing standard 7 and 8 (which is Grade 9 and Grade 10 now) and standard 8 had a junior certificate?

TM: Yes, yes. And then after that?

EM: And then after that I started looking for a job.

TM: Okay

EM: My first work I was looking for work at *firms* (factory shops). It was tough, I went to Creses

TM: I see. Creses

EM: There were lots of factory shops there but I couldn't get one.

TM: They said no jobs?

[TIMECODE - 15:13]

EM: I got a job at Bic Ball point I learned to work there, I worked there for 6 months and I left it

TM: What were you doing there?

EM: I packed pens in boxes.

TM: How much were they paying you?

EM: R10 a month.

TM: A month?

EM: Yes, sir.

TM: Oh, okay, and then what do you do with it?

EM: What can I do my child? R10 a month. Then in 1960 something I remember my standard 8 [Grade 10]. I passed it in 1961. Yes and then 1961 I got that temp where they paid us R10 a month.R10 a month then I could buy a dress, shoes, a beret and still have money for transport

TM: Still staying Meadowlands?

EM: Still staying Meadowlands

TM: Are you visiting home?

EM: Yes I was visiting home

TM: How was life then?

EM: It was getting better because my siblings were working. We would all send money, and in the meantime no one is ploughing. The ploughing fields are dying a slow death. By late 1960s they were no longer ploughing

TM: Really, what was the main reason?

EM: The main reason was that men left women at home. Left for greener pastures. Women are not strong enough to plough or follow up on cattle's to plough. They went for Gold in Gauteng. They would live by the hostels; they would leave the wives and kids to starve.

TM: Oh, shame.

EM: Yes.(she chuckles)

[TIMECODE - 17:36]

TM: From Bic ball point where did you go?

EM: Form Bic ball point I went to Watrasies. Watrasies was at corner Plein and Jeppe street. They do sewing - learned to sew there. They were paying better R15/R20 a month. I settled a bit. I worked for 2 years then I went for greener pastures. I had this white friend; we come a long way with white people. I had this friend

TM: What was her name?

EM: Her name?

TM: Yes

EM: By the way who was she Marge? And her surname was Bishop? She told me they are looking for someone at their church. I said, "Doing what? Cleaning?" she said, "No to teach the Sunday school kids and conduct a choir". I said I would be happy to do that. She said, "Why do you want to leave a factory shop?" I said, "It's a mission to travel. Do you have accommodation for that person? She said "Yes" I said, "Thank you". Life at home was not nice. I was older now. I would buy clothes, then my uncle's kids would wear them. When I ask, my aunt would say, "Things get used if they are in this house".

TM: Clashes

EM: Yes, even leaving school at standard 8 -it was her idea." That you are paying for your brother's child's school- my kids needs to go to school too".

TM: Oh, okay, and you had a certificate?

EM: Yes but I at least got somewhere. I then went to Krugersdorp

TM: How did you meet Marge?

EM: How we met, it will be raining and then we would run to the café where we normally buy lunch. So I found her there. She was so wet, I said, "How come you are this wet?"She said," I came from far- from the Coronation hospital, I went to check my Mom is there, I asked if she wasn't discharged". I asked her to come via me on Saturday: "I will be off -we can go together". Hence I'm saying I loved people since an early stage. We would go to Coronation to check on her mom. Unfortunately her mom said, "I've been discharged" and we were all happy. She called her child to pick us up. I left with them to Krugersdorp. Where we were in Krugersdorp I told them, "I'm at fault I haven't told anyone where I was. Let me go home". It was around 3pm summer, so I came home and told them I'm getting a job in Krugersdorp so if I'm there they shouldn't worry. I got the job at the church Pentecostal Holiness church in Krugersdorp.

TM: Ok. Teaching kids?

[TIMECODE - 22:06]

EM: Yes, teaching kids, the teaching kids and the church choir, I worked there for 4 to 5 years

TM: Really

EM: They took me for training saying I must have formal training to be able to teach the Sunday school kids the Bible, so that they can know God. Then I agreed- I was older then. I had kids.

TTM: Where was this training?

EM: New York City.

TM: Oh, yes?

EM: It was in 1974 I went for 6 months for training

TM: In New York?

EM: Yes and came back To South Africa and continued with my work. My mom was still alive I didn't even tell my mom that I went on a plane. I went away quietly. She was too scared. I told her I'm away working but not knowing where I was.

TM: Okay. So here at home they are living from the money you are sending?

EM: Yes

TM: They are not ploughing

EM: They are not ploughing; even the grant's money was not yet there. So every month if you send something... at the Pentecostal church it was not bad-I was earning R1600 a month. It was a lot of money.

TM: Yes

EM: I managed to maintain my parents and my kids. After having a child I would send them home, when they are 4 years old.

TM: They come home

EM: They come home knowing I'm maintaining one side. Those at home in Meadowlands -I would see them once in a while visiting them and I would give them something to buy food. I knew my mom is here, her disabled son is here. I worked for a long time at Krugersdorp - for 22years. I left there in 1982. When my mom got sick, they sent me a telegram. I came. I realized that it's not the kind of sickness you could survive without consulting a doctor. I took her to hospital then went to my sister in

[TIMECODE - 25:39]

Rustenburg, told her to come and look after her, or I'm going to resign. My sister refused - she said she will look after her. Okay, then I would come on weekends to check on them until she passed on in June 1982

TM: In 1982

EM: After that, I looked back and said, "Who is going to look after my disabled brother?" I resigned the same year, I couldn't leave my sibling to suffer, I would rather go home and starve with him. The employers tried to refuse. I said "No". They said, "Let's hire someone to look after him". I said, "No- get someone to do my job".

TM: Really. The kids that you were teaching in church- were they black or white?

EM: They were white kids. They said, "Where will we get someone like you?" I said, "The same way you got me". They said, "It won't be easy"; I came home in 1982 to look after my brother.

TM: Okay, when you got here in 1982... let me take you back a bit,

EM: Yes, sir.

TM: In 1950 when you were still at school, how big was the village?

EM: It was few houses that you could count.

TM: Really?

EM: Yes.

M: Really?

EM: There were no houses down there. There was no houses, they were scattered.

TM: When you got here in 1982?

EM: There were more people

TM: Where did they come from?

EM: They are from local

TM: Okay

EM: There is something called *Kgotla* in Setswana (a household) if your first born has built here, the second born should be there, it's an agreement

TM: In the same yard?

[TIMECODE - 27:58]

EM: In the same yard.

TM: Oh, okay,

ER: So, my father never did such a thing. "You can build wherever you want, my children. I won't hold hostage as if you are slaves". Like myself, I told my kids, "I'm staying in Lekubung - this is my place, I grew up here, grew old here, I'm going to die here. You can go to other villages". Hence I'm saying my son bought a stand in Mafikeng. He built a house; he is staying with the kids. The one in Brits- I told him that there is places there, see to finish. The youngest girl is married In Limpopo - they are in Shoshanguve I wanted the guy to work and build for his mother; they said they will be far from me.

TM: They are scattered indeed.

EM: I said if you are far but still checking on me. I'm fine with that. Even if I'm sick: I call my daughter in law in Mafikeng- she comes and takes me to the doctor. She is a very sweet somebody. I got myself a real daughter in law. If I was a witch I would bewitch her (they both laugh) - you know the way she is so sweet. I love her more than my kids

TM: Oh, sweet.

EM: She was a teacher at a High School. She went to the Department of Education in Mafikeng. She worked as a subject advisor, now she is the one that checks the Matric results.

TM: Oh, okay.

ER: Even now she is at a marking center.

TM: Oh, for the June results

EM: Yes.

TM: Granny, you used 'Lekubung'?

EM: Yes

TM: So this 'Braklaagte' name: where is it coming from?

EM: It's the white people's name. When they wanted us to move they wanted us not to call this village Lekubung: "This village is called Braklaagte- it's a White area. Black people are not wanted here. They must move". The forced removal I was talking about.

TM: How does it all start, Granny?

[TIMECODE - 30:56]

EM: This forced removal starts with pass (ID): the white people came, they went to Mr Lekolwane, they said to him, "Please call women for us, to come take the pass". The old man was puzzled. "Women and IDs"? They said, "Yes!". He said, "I don't know... I will call them you will hear what they say. I don't know women carrying I.Ds". They came on the set date.

TM: They went to the *Kgosi* [chief]

EM: They went to the *Kgosi's Kgotla* [The chief's kraal]

TM: The women?

EM: Yes, he then said, "Here are the women". They stood up, they said, "Ladies, (plus some of the whites knows Setswana)... we are here to give you the pass [I.D books]". The women were like, "What I.DS? No ways. We are not men. We are not going to Mines, we don't take I.DS. Only men take the pass because they go to mines or Railway [now Spoornet]". They said, "You will take them whether you like it or not".

TM: (he whistles)

EM: The women then stood up and dispersed. They said, "You can give those to your mothers".

TM: Which year was this?

EM: 1957 the pass year. Let me switch on the light (she stands up and light)

TM: Okay

EM: It's normally not this cold, but because of the tile oh, my word I'm so scared of it. The women refused to take the pass.

TM: Which other women leaders do you remember?

EM: This granny was here

TM: Which one?

EM: Mamie's mom, Maria Sebogodi, left.

TM: Mama Maria

EM: Maria Motsusi. She's like our mother's child, and mama Mmamotho Molefi

TM: Mmamotho Molefi.

[TIMECODE - 33:46]

EM: Yes

TM: Okay.

EM: They were women leaders then. They said, "If we say no pass, no pass".

TM: No, pass

EM: And it was exactly like that, after the women had left they told the Kgosi [chief] they are leaving but they will be back. Indeed they came back after a few days. They found the chief with his old men *ba Lekgotla* [The Chief's council]. They said, "We are back". The old man said, "Yes". They said, "Because your wives are refusing to take the pass we want to tell you, you are moving to Driefontein".

TM: Really?

EM: Yes. There is a village called Driefontein, it's not only in Mpumalanga (they both laugh) I was laughing at Gille saying maybe she passed it somewhere on the way.

TM: They said they are taking you to Driefontein?

EM: They said they are taking us to Driefontein. "We are not moving here", the old man said, "this is not my land, it's the Bafurutshe [name of tribe] that is here it's not mine". They said, "You will then agree- here is a letter. You are going to sign it. You will sign that the village is moving".
He said, "I'm not going to sign. Can you see all these people? They own this land. I'm just an employee. They asked me to look after this land. Just like you, you can't tell me to herd your cattle and I then move them without your permission". Then they said, "You think you are clever: your women are refusing to take I.Ds, you also don't want a village that is moving". He said, "I'm not going anywhere". They set dates for him, that, "When we come back on this date we must find queues of women who queue for the pass".

TM: Really?

EM: "Yes, and then after that you are all leaving to Driefontein".

TM: When you hear me talking about forced removal.

EM: They came and there was no one, they ran around the village; there is no one to be found (she laughs)

TM: Where are the people?

EM: They are hiding in the neighboring farms.

TM: Really?

[TIMECODE - 36:49]

EM: Yes, they found the Kgosi [chief]. “Kgosi [chief], where are the people?” He said, “They are in their homes”.
”But we’ve been going around- we never saw anyone”. He said, “How can you come to my village without informing me, how do you come here without telling me? They have to hide because you didn’t tell me that you are coming. I was meant to inform them that you are coming to talk to them”. That old man was very clever. They said, “Okay, tomorrow morning we will be here”. The following morning they are talking about they met up with the whole community going to Zeerust.

TM: Marching?

EM: Yes, marching. Everyone- the whole community, including priests, chiefs, everything. That is when Charles Hooper interfered; hence I said I will go get that book from my nephew.

TM: Yes

EM: It’s about this village’s struggle of 1957 - it also includes that of forced incorporation.

TM: Yes

EM: When they meet up with the morafe [tribe/community]: isn’t it they coming in trucks to move people? The community said “No we are going to Zeerust, we are going to see the commissioner”. [Which now is called Home Affairs]

TM: Yes

EM: They said, “We want the commissioner to write overseas to report that the police from Sirosi [Zeerust] are killing us”.

TM: Police from where?

EM: Sirosi [Zeerust] (they both laugh) They called it Sirosi. They said, “You won’t even get to that commissioner” [Home Affairs]

TM: On the road here?

EM: Yes, on the road. People were running around: people were badly beaten with sjamboks [whips], others being followed on horses. Oh my word, the cruelty, sir! The old man was at his house. When they get to him they said, “You sent us your Kaffirs” [derogatory word used to call blacks]. He said, “I have no idea what you are talking about”. He knew very well what they were referring to. (She laughs.) That’s where they started assaulting him.

TM: Who the old man?

EM: Yes

[TIMECODE – 42:54]

TM: Pupsey's dad?

EM: Yes! That old man really went through a lot of beatings, the white people beat him badly. They shaved his beard with a plier. They arrested him and took him to the *trunk* [jail] with my 3 uncles.

TM: Really?

EM: Yes

TM: Who are your uncles, Granny?

EM: It was uncle Piet, Uncle Titus, Uncle Abraham Rankobotsosi he is still alive.

TM: He is still alive, is it, okay? We would like to meet him

EM: Abraham Rankobotsosi - he was in the trunk [jail] and Kgosi [Chief] Lekolwane.

TM: We would really love to meet with him.

EM: I really felt for him. He said, "My sister", I would say, "My brother". He would say, "You are up to nothing". Then I'm like, "What have I done?" He would say, "I thought you are clever, and now your cleverness is in vain or do you honour a baboon"? I said, "No I honour an elephant, the Bafurutshe honour a baboon, we honour an elephant".

TM: Oh!

EM: He would say, "Now why do you have the Bafurutshe traits? They've taken your mind. I thought before I die I would gain something after being abused by the whites in jail. They beat my toes with a hammer, I was with the Kgosi [chief] in the trunk [jail]".

TM: Where were they imprisoned granny?

EM: Eh (she pauses) they were taken to Potchefstroom and then taken to Rustenburg, then to a cruel jail called GaRamotshana. Pupsey's mom was also in a jail in Rustenburg.

TM: Did they take them all at the same time?

EM: They took men and then came back for women.

TM: Really?

EM: Yes, this girl she was this small

[TIMECODE -44:38]

TM: What's her name?

EM: Florence

TM: Florence

EM: She went to jail with her mom

TM: Really?

EM: Yes

TM: So, why did you they take the women with them?

EM: They refused to take the pass.

TM: Oh, it's the pass issue.

EM: Yes, it now came that I had this uncle. When he was sick the Kgosi [chief] asked me to come translate for people

TM: What's his name?

EM: Titus

TM: Oh, Titus yes.

EM: My uncle was like, "My niece, things are bad. Those people are in jail, there is no lawyer in Zeerust, and I'm going to Gauteng". Do you know George Bizos?

TM: Yes

EM: George Bizos was Pupsey's lawyer there

TM: When they were arrested?

EM: Yes, George Bizos. He was with this tall lady -German- like her name was Ms. Miller.

TM: Really,

EM: They were the lawyers of that time that helped our people to be released from jail.

TM: For how long were they arrested?

EM: They didn't stay for a year.

TM: So, granny what was going on about the force removal process: was it still on?

[TIMECODE -48:07]

EM: No

TM: Oh,

EM: No, they didn't proceed. My uncle met with Charles Hooper, this Charles Hooper was a priest at Anglican church in Zeerust. Charles Hooper called home in England to tell them about the cruelty that was happening here, that the Braklaagte are being killed, they are made to apply for the *pass* by force, they are being forcefully removed. I didn't know that these small planes Dakota [private jets] I didn't know they can land on such a small space, they came flying from England and landed here in Lekubung, or maybe England hired them from somewhere. They went to the Zeerust white people and told them, "This is nonsense, you are talking about, leave those people alone they are not bothering you with anything in your town, leave them in their village that's their village". Hence I'm saying Pupsey's is losing it sometimes I'm watching him carefully.

TM: What was the main reason for force removal, what did they want?

EM: "This village is a white area", that is what they were saying.

TM: Oh

EM: "It's not suitable for Blacks"- that's how they moved us.

TM: Oh. Driefontein -where they wanted to take you - did you ever see it?

EM: Yes, some of the soft ones went and it's a very dry place. It has no place. Those people are struggling- they in a forest. There is a tree called *Mokgwang* (type of tree). Our elders told us, "If you see that tree you must know there is no water underground". The root goes all the way deep underground to get water. That is the only type of tree dominating in that area so it's dry, people are struggling, there is no water.

TM: Moving people: were there people who wanted to move?

EM: Yes sir, there were people who wanted to move. (She laughs) you know I don't want to think about that, it was bad

TM: How?

EM: There were those that wanted to move except *the Kgosi* [Chief]. The Gautengers heard that so and so wants to move- they want the white people to move them and they are hiding it from the chiefs. They came- I don't know with what- their houses were burnt, their livestock was shot at (she laughs,)

TM: Really granny?

[TIMECODE - 50:15]

EM: Yes, one of them I called him uncle. His surname is Mafora , he lived towards the bus stop where we turned.

TM: Yes

EM: Some of them had already built here in the village but I can't even show you a wall, they ran away to go there

TM: To Driefontein

EM: To Driefontein

TM: Oh, what was their reason to want to move?

EM: They said they want to move because they are farming - there are farms there. We told them here are farms, this village has farms - even before we got the farms nearby we had space for our livestock to graze.

TM: So, it's the village's farm?

EM: Yes, I used to look after my father's cattle's there. They are Lekubung farms.

TM: Oh

EM: Yes, these ones - they wanted to go apply for the pass [ID]. There is rumours that their wives did apply.

TM: Now how did the ones in Gauteng heard about this?

EM: You will never know, things fly. By then we didn't have cellphones, telephones, but one thing for sure whites thought they were clever. They had public phones in their town - we used them to call. (she laughs, they both laugh). You know I went to a public phone in town - in fact at the post office I called Lusaka

TM: Lusaka as in Zambia?

EM: Yes

TM: Who were you calling?

EM: Those that were that side. I wanted them to come do work for me on force incorporation (she laughs)

TM: You will tell me granny.

[TIMECODE -53:21]

EM: You know we're speaking in riddles. I would say, "Uncle, you said you will send me people to come extend the kraal. You know they have calves - the kraal is full and it's small when are you sending people?" "How many must I send?" that's his response. I would tell him how many people(they both laugh). It was the time of the white police people - they had tents in the village

TM: Oh, the tents are cattle?

EM: No, people that are full here are tents. I want the Lusaka people to shoot them. It was shameful. The police were loaded as if it's cows in the van

TM: They came?

EM: Yes, they did come. We are not playing here

TM: Granny, the George Bizos and Ms. Miller managed to get those out of jail; Pupsey's mom and others ?

EM: They got out of jail, so afterwards the forced removal issue disappeared because of England. The Queen reprimanded them, then it was quiet. It was then we relaxed. We became friends with Charles and all that they helped us with ideas.

TM: How did they help you do you know?

EM: He helped us in a way that we held our meetings at his place.

TM: In Zeerust?

EM: Yes. We would hold meetings to find a way forward. I was 12 years old in 1957 but I led these old women

TM: You accompanied them to meet Charles?

EM: Yes, they were scared of white people

TM: Why were you not scared of them?

EM: Who the whites? No, I realized they are also people. Another thing, my grandfather who lived up there, he had white friends

TM: Oh

EM: They would come and sell cows - even Indians - so I got used to them.

TM: So the force removal issued died and what about the *pass[ID]*?

EM: They also kept quiet

[TIMECODE -57:20M]

TM: The women didn't apply for the pass [ID?

EM: They took them later; you know when did they take them?

TM: No.

EM That era of the *Dom pass* [I.D document meant for blacks] because they would need to go work at the *kitchens*[suburbs] domestic work. That's only when they took them without being forced, because they wanted work.

TM: Yes, so, this time of forced removals: after the uncles and the *Kgosi* [Chief] - after they were released from jail did they still use the ploughing fields?

EM: They used them at that time

TM: Oh

EM: Yes, because it's a long time ago. It was in 1950 something.

TM: Now life goes on.

EM: Life goes on. Even now the plough fields were fading away. Kids going to work, sending parents money to buy food, and the men went to work in the mines and *Railway* [Spoornet]. They would send money home. No one is ploughing. There are things that sometimes comes to my mind - especially talking about land reforms. I sometimes tell Pupsey that you know *Kgosi* [chief] there were organizations could help, but now we don't have those now because we are in a Democratic era. Before you could take a distance of from here to the tarred road and fence it and start ploughing even myself. If I had a good fence I would love to plant some vegetables. Plant vegetables, give to the poor like me, give to the orphans, I think about those things but now I don't have a fence. The cattle's will just walk over and eat them. Now that thing that makes me think of ploughing fields

TM: Were there were ploughing fields before what happened to the land?

EM: It's just a forest now.

TM: It's a forest, is it a rich land?

EM: Yes, it's very rich this soil they call it **seloko** [black soil]

TM: Yes

EM: That soil has heritage. I was telling Pupsey that we must look for surveyors - this black soil has rich heritage underneath. I'm telling you about the soil that we have at Marikana. There is a small hill by Kete's place: there are small shiny stones; they are heavy when you weigh them. I realized this is chrome

[TIMECODE - 01h:02m:13s]

TM: You must take steps for it.

EM: I was telling him if we can get help from surveyors, we will say, "Our kids needs jobs - only find that we have them right underneath us".

TM: Granny, let me ask: when you were fighting that you are not moving to Driefontein, whose land is this?

EM: It's our land, owned by the community of Lekubung we bought it. The whites will tell you, my father's fence was here, the chief will then say okay your father's farm was up to here. How many cows do you want? Those days the Batswana were rich in farming you see, that for you to extend your father's fence: "How many cows do you want"? He would say, "10 or 20" , then each house would give a cow, then the white person goes back

TM: Oh!

EM: You see that.

TM: Oh, so that's how they bought the land?

EM: Yes, we even have a title deed for this land

TM: For this land?

EM: Yes sir.

TM: Is it a village's title deed or the individuals each have one?

EM: It's for the village sir.

TM: For the village, oh

EM: Even the one that I'm saying, It's the farm - we are still fighting for it. It's in Pretoria we want it.

TM: So, where is the title deed: is it with the *Kgosi* [chief]?

EM: It's with the chief.

TM: Oh, so the people had a right to fight because they bought?

EM: Yes, now the white person would say, "Move - you are a Kaffir [derogatory word used to call Blacks] this is for white people" .

TM: Now, 1982 you went back home?

[TIMECODE - 01h:06m:15s]

EM: I went back home sir.

TM: The forced incorporation: when did they start?

EM: Forced incorporation started in 1989.

TM: But before 1982 and 1989, when did you actually hear about them?

EM: I only heard about them when Pupsey's dad came to me in 1985

TM: Yes, ok, so when he got here, what did he say to you?

EM: When he got to me, he said to my disabled brother Mosala, he said "Mosala I'm here to ask your sister to go with us which is the chief's council. Wherever we are going sometimes we find whites and some whites we misunderstand each other, we want her to be our interpreter". That's how I got into that council in 1985

TM: The Chief's council?

EM: The Chief's council

TM: What did he see in you granny?

EM: He saw my wiseness, because that time when my uncle Titus was working in the office, I would stand in for him, so he noticed something - that I have brains. That's when he came to come get me

TM: you are the only woman that time?

EM: Yes, and I was hot hey?

TM: (He laughs) Hot?

EM: Yes, there was one white person who tried to be funny with us. We got there to negotiate with them. *I said "Kyk hierso, wit vark die is Suid Afrika. Jou oupa het nie die land"* [look here white pig your grandfather didn't bring the land]. I forgot what is a ship in Afrikaans. I told him your grandfather Jan Van Riebeeck didn't carry this land in a ship. Even this one that was murdered recently -Terre Blanche - we once pointed fingers at each other

TM: Really?

EM: **He said, "Ek sal jou skiet". I said, "Jy sal jou ma skiet, nie ek".* [I will shoot you I said you will shoot your mom not me.]

TM: Damn! Granny you are from way back.

[TIMECODE - 01h:09m:17s]

EM: I'm from way back! I fought for this country for nothing. Sometimes I cry because of the ANC - it's so messed up. People are looking for positions. They are getting rich, and for us people that made ANC to be where it is, we are struggling.

TM: Now Granny, when you started interpreting at the chief's council...

EM: Yes

TM: The incorporation thing: when did you hear about it?

EM: The incorporation thing: we heard about it in 1985. I would be called at the Chief's house, be told, I would be told to come early there is a meeting, this meeting is for the enforced corporation. There is a meeting and the whites and the other chiefs will be here. And the following day I came, I checked when is the meeting; no, the meeting is at 9h00. When I got there around 8am, when I got there, he said "Koko" [granny], I was named after my granny's granny. He says "Koko", I said "Yes sir", he said "Now the meeting is about this boy behind me". I thought literally behind him, I said "For what"? He said, "Mangope says we must fall under him we must be under Bophuthatswana". I said to chief, "Do you know I was talked about? That here at the chief's council your men reprimanded me saying I'm talking all languages? I asked them that, guys, our village is central South Africa let's come here (it was called Central). The schools were in Bophuthatswana - I asked why. They said no, no, stop talking about such things. Leave kids to go to school".

TM: Wait granny, you are in South Africa but your schools are in Bophuthatswana?

EM: Tell me about it.

TM: Really?

EM: Yes, it was like that. The chief's council refused to listen to me they just didn't want to hear anything, so I kept quiet, so when chief told me, I said, "Do you remember that day when we were here, I asked why are we in South Africa and our schools are in Bophuthatswana? Can't you see this was leading to that"? The old man was like, "Yes, you are telling the truth".

TM: When did the schools start to be there?

EM: Damn! It was a long time around 1977... that time I was not home.

TM: You were not around. So when you got here in 1982, the schools are in Bophuthatswana

EM: Schools are in Bophuthatswana. When I questioned, I was told to leave, no leave things as they are, let the kids go to school.

TM: Schools only?

[TIMECODE - 01h:15m:47s]

EM: Schools only or was it schools and churches? Schools only, I told this guy that let them come.

TM: Who's coming now?

EM: The old white men,

TM: Ok

EM: The Van der Merwe, Du Toit, who was the other one, I forgot. When they got there, the chief said let's go hear what they say. Off we went.

TM: Oh they don't come into the Kgotla [chief's council]

EM: No, they don't; they have to be on the side. Remember that Dingaan witches thing? (They laugh out loud)

TM: The Dingaan thing?

EM: The Dingaan thing - they stand on the side, they say we want to know what are we saying now. They had huge black men.

TM: Black men?

EM: Yes, Mangope's ministers

TTM: Were they big?

EM: Tall and all. When we asked, "What's the issue?" those guys said, "We came with these white guys, these white guys have signed that Lekubung and Makgoba fall under Bophuthatswana".. "What did they sign?" "They signed papers". "What are they saying about Lekubung- who's land is it"? They were like, " No, we are not here for politics".

TM: (He laughs)

EM: "All you need to know is you have to go to Bophuthatswana". I said, "You black men go to Bophuthatswana- we remain here in Lekubung". I know they know Setswana. Said, "You go to Bophuthatswana- we remain here in Lekubung". This guy said I'm Stubborn, in Afrikaans, I forgot the word.

TM: He meant you?

EM: Yes

TM: Oh, you are the one saying that! (he laughs)

[TIMECODE - 01h:18m:58s]

EM: Yes I said go to Bophuthatswana, they want to be friends with Mangope they must go. He said I'm stubborn. I said, "Everyone fights for what is theirs". I stamped with my feet and said, "This land is my grandfather's land".

TM: You did that?

EM: I did, I told him not your grandfather. Jan Van Riebeeck, he never came with a land on the ship. I said 1652 when Jan van Riebeeck came here, we never saw any land on the ship. He said you are naughty. I said I'm not, you are the one who is naughty - who followed me to my home. He said, "Chief, can you hear how this child is talking to me?" The chief said, "She's right- she is the land owner. " I said, 'Do you know why I say that'? He said "No". I said, "The reason I say that, is because when this village moved from Dinokana to here, it found his grandfather here, his mother's father, so she is right to say it's her land. She is right when she says Jan Van Riebeeck never carried any land on the ship. If he forgot the land it's possibly in the Cape not here" (she laughs).

TM: They got angry?

EM: They got so angry they changed colour, they said, "Yes, you're trusting lawyers, but this land will fall under Bophuthatswana, like it or not". I said, "There is no land that is going to fall under Bophuthatswana, I said Cheadle Thompson and Haysom (not audible) is there.

TM: You worked with them now?

EM: Yes

TM: How did you get to work with them?

EM: It was because of my openness of loving people. I got used to this lady who worked for Transvaal what what - TRAC

TM: Oh, do you remember her?

EM: That lady who worked at TRAC

TM: Yes

EM: Lydia Kompe, I worked with her a lot, Lydia Kompe- when I heard about this surname it was in Limpopo. They are called Komape

TM: Oh,

EM: Yes, that's her surname. I was telling Lydia and she said you are not alone, you are with the Boons ones, Boons is Mogopa you are with the Driefontein from Mpumalanga so Black Sash got you lawyers that is when I met them, they appointed a lawyer to work with this village Frans Plasket he was French

[TIMECODE - 01h:21m:44s]

TM: Plasket. Ok, how do you meet mama Lydia?

EM: How I met Lydia I was in town in Gauteng, I was somewhere, I forgot now, but do you see that court in West street?

TM: Yes

EM: There was someone that I went to fetch someone and then mama Lydia crossed the street I had seen her on the papers, I called her and that's how we met and I explained to her. She said no come let me show you the lawyers tell your chief there is lawyers are there, she took me to Chalestomson and met the French guys. At Mokgola they had a lawyer each village had a lawyer,

TM: Had their own lawyer.

EM: I then came home I told Pupsey's that we got a lawyer there are times we needed to go to a meeting in visiting Wanderers

TM: In town?

EM: Yes, in town.

TM: Who are you meeting in town?

EM: We are meeting the Bafurutshe Sebogodi

TM: Oh, those that work in Gauteng?

EM: Yes

TM: Oh,

EM: Yes, they had a building where we met every weekend to discuss domestic issues.

TM: Oh

ER: That's where we met with the lawyers, the Mokgola one was James Sutherland

TM: Oh, that side?

EM: Yes, I was telling Gille that it was a lot of boys Gregory North, Steven Goldblatt, Mohammed Randera

TM: You remember them?

EM: Oh, yes a lot - they then led us

[TIMECODE - 01h:27M:33s]

TM: So, you met with in Clive after the 1985 meeting with the Whites?

EM: Yes, they led us to take the case to Pretoria, that we don't want Bophuthatswana, they took our case to Pretoria it was. It kept on being postponed - I think it set in 1990, I remember my disabled brother was in hospital. I did not want to go. He said, "No you cannot start something and not finish it". I went, only to find that it was his day of passing

TM: Oh, no.

EM: Really, when I came back I got the message from the kids saying brother passed on. They also called him brother. I said he didn't want me to come see him in hospital, so that he can leave.

TM: Yes, so that he can leave. But before the 1985 case, you met lawyers. The Bophuthatswana government is aware that you don't want to leave, what are they doing now?

EM: They made plans. The government made plans by erecting tents in the village, it was just an excuse to come harass the local people, they assaulted others, shot them, it was bad

TM: Where were the tents erected in the village?

EM: That side at Moilwa's chief council. He was friends with whites.

TM: Ok, let me ask: how does Moilwa feature in this whole thing?

EM: Moilwa wants to be a chief because Sebogodi doesn't want to go to Mangope. He was like; if you make me a chief I will take this tribe to come to you.

TM: What is he in the meantime, he is not a chief?

EM: No, but he is related with the Royalty.

TM: Oh, yes: the Sebogodi Royalty?

EM: No, the Moilwa's

TM: Oh, the Moilwa's, where is the Moilwa Royalty coming from?

EM: Dinokana

TM: Dinokana

EM: Dinokana at Mokgola. The Sebogodi Royalty is at Lobatleng.

TM: So, where is Moilwa?

[TIMECODE - 01h:30:30s]

EM: He is in the same village here.

TM: In this village, he is friends with Mangope?

EM: For things to get this bad, it was because of this man. We were beaten sir.

TM: How do you know about his plans to move people to Mangope?

EM: For us to know the dealings of this Moilwa guy, we would see people gathered at his house.

TM: The community?

EM: The community. We saw Mangope's cars parked at his house. We started sneaking around and we got it. That is how we managed to know where is this coming from.

TM: He didn't openly admit he wants to do that?

EM: No. he didn't openly admit, he only admit after the trucks and cars from Mangope's office came and camped at his house - that is when he said, " I'm the chief, Sebogodi is nothing".

TM: Where do they camp?

EM: At Moilwa's, around Good Friday

TM: Why are they camping there?

EM: The army is going to camp there to look after Moilwa so that Sebogodi shouldn't dare bother him. On the other hand they are there to assault us and our kids.

TM: After erecting tents they attacked.

EM: They attacked. They started with a school bus, like I said we didn't have a High School our kids went to Zeerust township.

TM: Oh, yes

EM: After erecting the tents - you saw where we turned on our way to the cemetery?

TM: Yes

EM: They did a road block. There would be a road block there, kids would be offloaded from the bus, then went on to the bus one by one. They would be asked who is your chief? If you say " It's Moilwa", "Get on", if it's "Sebogodi", "Voetsek! Get off"! The kids that said their chief is Sebogodi, they slept in jail

[TIMECODE - 01h33m:00s]

TM: They were arrested?

EM: Yes (she laughs) that's when war started: when as parents we heard our kids slept in jail, we all went to the chief's council. No one slept in their homes. We said they must come kill us - they are used to killing people

TM: What about the group that was on Moilwa's side?

EM: They were very few, not a lot of them. Some of them here in front of my house. I remember one day the TRAC employees came. They went straight to the chief. It was Janet and Harold. I was meant to go to a meeting with them in Gauteng and then Pupsey sent me a message. I went to the Chief. When the message got here I wasn't home. I didn't have my bag with. When I got there they had 2 cars I think, so this boy left in another car - he said let's meet in town. Harold and Janet came this way to get my bag. I understand this guy ran so fast to go get the Bophuthatswana police where they camped at Moilwa's. We got home, parked, I took my bag, we left. As we are about to leave, one Hippo [Casper] comes this side, then other one this; we were in the middle, we are in a car. They say "Yes Ms. White person, where are these whites coming from"? I said, "From the usual place". They said "you are full of nonsense you old lady, we are going to arrest you, I said go ahead arrest us I'm your daily bread. One got off and said to Herald hey move over

TM: Is Herald driving?

EM: Yes, (she laughs) Herald laughed I said poor German boy". We were taken to prison - those Casper's are following us, the police person is driving us. We went to the Lehurutshe police station. When we got there they were like, "You go this side, you go that side". We not going to the same office. I got in, sat down. They said, "Today you will tell the truth". I said, "I always tell the truth". They said what truth I said that Bophuthatswana doesn't exist they said this old lad is she crazy? (She laughs) I said I say it every day what are you doing let me help you, this thing it's a get rich quick scheme this man that you call president he is a foreman, he is a foreman for white men he is watching you not to make mistakes. This is not a president, the president are still to come.

TM: You were telling the police?

EM: Yes, my child I said this is a foreman, presidents are still to come, black presidents he said I will tell him I said I'm not scared of him. He knew me, Mahome he was my teacher at standard 5.

TM: Ok, here at Bana Ba kae?

EM: Yes, at Bana Ba kae he knew me well. I would go straight to him in Mafikeng and tell him this will happen

TM: Questioning you?

[TIMECODE - 01h:36m:59s]

EM: Questioning us, they released us at 21h00 in the evening, we got into the car we went to Jo'Burg, the following morning I went to the lawyers in Jo'Burg because they will arrest you now knowing what are they charging you with.

TM: How many times did they arrest you granny do you remember?

EM: 6 times sometimes I would be arrested in the morning and be released during the day.

TM: Asking the same questions

EM: Asking the same questions, same presidents are coming this is a foreman.

TM: Whilst this is happening Mr Mangope hasn't arrived this side?

EM: Mr Mangope used to come to Moilwa's house; they would hold a meeting there.

TM: Oh, ok.

EM: He had a meeting with Moilwa's followers that he will give them farms, I will give you livestock, where did they see all of that? Because he is living in a *pantoki* (rondavel) as if he is a pig without an owner.

TM: Who?

EM: Mangope, If you can go to Mangope the fence is on an eye level, the police station is by the gate, he is starving himself.

TM: So how does this issue finish?

EM: The forced incorporation issue for it to end it really hurt, we went to refugee camps

TM: Where?

EM: At Dikagelo location.

TM: How did that happen?

EM: We were running away from the village but most people did not know what I had aimed for, My aim was to expose Mangope to the outside countries to see the cruelty that is happening here. I had told the Zeerust white police people that you know what, what you are doing to us with this Mangope thing, you won't win they said we have nothing to do with Mangope, I said you sent him, you the police of Zeerust sent him because you are saying this is the white spot our land, now you want us to move to Mangope so that you can take over our land, over our dead bodies

[TIMECODE - 01h:40m:36s]

TM: So, who is going to the refugee camp?

EM: Us, the whole community

TM: The whole community?

EM: The whole community of Sebogodi

TM: How did you get there granny?

EM: We walked to Zeerust.

TM: Really?

EM: I was the first one to leave, sometimes it's like I my ancestors are telling me something, the previous day I had, had a meeting with Pupsey's wife. Pupsey's was in Gauteng I told his wife and other people that were there that, should anything bad happen the community should run to Zeerust. I was the guardian then. Pupsey was in Gauteng then.

TM: Oh, Pupsey was the chief then?

EM: Yes, he was in Gauteng then: where are we now?

TM: Township

EM: Oh, yes we are from a meeting I told the others to spread the word that should anything funny happen, just go to town. I will get you army trucks. That morning I went to town to meet the Chereitomsom [Cheadle Thompson and Haysom] lawyers. I was going to meet this other lawyer called Magrieta Bruitenbach

TM: Is she from Zeerust?

EM: Yes, she is my friend. I met her to help with this in the meantime. People getting arrested, like I told I've always loved the white people (she laughs) that morning I was with the preacher's wife of the *Lutere* (Lutheran church). She is German.

TM: What's her name?

EM: Reigta

TM: Reigta

EM: Her husband's name is Ubber Hagte Reigta

TM: Aah

[TIMECODE - 01h:43m:37s]

EM: We went to town with the preacher's wife, then when we got to town I told her to come check me later

TM: What was happening then?

EM: For me to say she must check on me?

TM: When you told people to run to Zeerust

EM: The police were assaulting them

TM: Oh, they had started assaulting them?

EM: Yes, the police were assaulting them, arresting them. I told them if they are assaulting anyone or arresting anyone, the whole community should come to Zeerust. They said they could kill us on the way. I said, "They won't. You will meet up with the army vehicles on the way" and I meant it. Whilst I was still waiting for the lawyers by Magrieta, the lawyers came around 1 or 2, Pupsey's wife popped in. "What's the problem?" "They are killing people, there are gun shots". I said, "Clive, they are killing people". The French man took off his jacket, got into the car. I said, "Be careful, they will shoot you". He said, "I would be happy if my fat could water the white man's land". He left in the car, he went to their camps. He asked them what is happening.

TM: He went to the police?

EM: He went to the police. They said they don't know what is happening. He said, "You will know", and he left. When I heard people were on the road I went to the army. Started at the police station - told the station commander that it's bad. He said, "What must I do, Ms Motsusi?" I said "People are walking from home to town; please give me a car to take me to the army".

TM: Is this the South African police?

EM: Yes. He sent a car to take me to the army. He sent cars to go get people. When the trucks came, I said, "Offload everyone one here at the police station". Every truck offloads here, it was an open space at the police station, the station commander said, "Now what are we going to do"? I said, "Look here, leave me with this, whether they sleep in the offices or in the police station". He said, "I can't allow you". I said, "Who are you?"

TM: (he laughs) there is lots of people then?

EM: Yes, Just like when there is an ANC meeting at the stadium

TM: The whole village was out?

[TIMECODE - 01h:47m:10s]

EM: The whole village was out; I thought deeply what am I going to do with these people. Came dusk the station commander came to me. He said, "Elsie, what is going to happen?" I said nothing.

TM: Where is everyone?

EM: They are sitting in front of the police station in an open space

TM: Everyone sitting there?

EM: Pregnant women, children, elders. As they are sitting there I asked someone to take me to churches. I went to churches in the township, the priests agreed to accommodate them. After that I went to the taxi rank and asked them to take people to the townships. They were accommodated in 9 churches in the township

TM: Which township granny?

EM: Ikageleng, Zeerust

TM: Oh

EM: That is how I was exposing Mangope - to show him he is not human, as we were there, I called - we had a regional office in Klerksdorp

TM: Which year is this now?

EM: 1991,

TM: 1991

EM: Yes, 1991 we ran away on the 8th January 1991. I told them that you know what, I need contacts everywhere for the operational hunger [Operation Hunger - an NGO]

TM: Oh, people left their homes with nothing?

EM: Yes, at sunset I went to the priest at the Roman Catholic church to ask to use the telephone , he said go ahead. I called Red Cross: " Here I am with people. Mangope is killing them, we are from Braklaagte, we are in Zeerust in 9 churches no one has blankets, no one has food or anything". Red cross said, "By early morning we will be there". I then called Operation Hunger. Had a friend, Tingi, Tingi

TM: What was her surname?

EM: I think Shabalala I called him Mshengu.

TM: Ok

[TIMECODE - 01h:51m:06s]

EM: "Tingi, we are in Zeerust township everyone that is here has no blanket, food nothing".
The Klerksdorp ones helped with contacts

TM: The church people?

EM: The ANC regional office.

TM: Oh

EM: I'm busy calling around. In the morning, there were lots of cars; there was a truck as long as from here to that tree. They offloaded all kinds of food, blankets of all kind. I remember one day I left with the lawyers and Pupsey was left with the community. They complained that they are hungry. He said, "I also don't know how Elsie got food". I said, "You should have hit him" (she laughs)

TM: He can't call?

EM: "I don't know how Elsie got the food"

TM: How long did you stay there?

EM: 6 months.

TM: 6 months, at the churches?

EM: Yes in churches

TM: What is happening in the village?

EM: The police are vandalizing the place, stealing, even the Moilwa's followers. I had property, even if my child has built for me. I had property of 8 rooms. They took everything

TM: Really?

EM: Yes

TM: So, no schools?

EM: Yes, the main reason is that they attacked them in Secondary school.

TM: So, the ANC was unbanned. How do you meet with the regional office?

EM: ANC was unbanned. For me to meet the regional office, it was the nearest to Zeerust. I was introduced by the lawyers Clive - they told me about the regional office and gave me the contacts. Then I called, they said come, then we started communicating.

[TIMECODE - 01h:53m:38s]

TM: How did they help you?

EM: They helped us but they had nothing mainly helped with ideas.

TM: In 1990, did you have any connection with the ANC?

EM: This old man on the photo

TM: Which one?

EM: Pupsey's father

TM: Oh

EM: Let me tell you ANC secret: the 1957 war that I told you about? That I was 12 years old? That was when Mr Thambo and Mr Mandela came to the village and the chief was in prison. Who welcomed them? it was me.

TM: Really, Granny, 1957?

EM: Yes, I was 12 years old. I took them there and gave them accommodation at the chiefs' sister's house. It's a rondavel. I said, "You can see everything that is happening at night; the white police are on horses. They assault people, they do this and that". They saw for themselves

TM: What were they here for?

EM: They were sent by Ms. Miller

TM: Oh, the lawyers

EM: Yes, it used to be nice here; the only thing was this forced incorporation that disturbed our peace

TM: Your connection with ANC before 1990: how did you connect

EM: Like I said, God gives you a good mind. My staying in Gauteng helped, I worked with Mrs. Sisulu, Mrs. Zuma, I used to go with these old ladies to go see their husbands, hence I realized how the ANC operated. Even when the old man was released from prison I had messages for him from Mr Mandela and Mr Thabo.

TM: OH

EM: He made a plan to go see them in Rivonia

TM: What was the message, Granny?

[TIMECODE - 01h:58m:40s]

EM: The message was that the old man is being released, tell him we will be here as the ANC, he must come to Rivonia, they said will hide it? I said, yes I won't show it to anyone.

TM: And you did?

EM: I did I only revealed it when the old man came out of prison

TM: Where did you hide it

EM: I don't know where the old lost it, maybe it's his advisors

TM: You said you once called to Lusaka?

EM: Yes

TM: How did it start?

EM: It started with the Mangope police harassing people in the village, and then I trapped them. I told one of my relatives that at this time you must go to those tents. As you approach them, turn and run to the outskirts of the village, they did exactly that. As they turned the fools followed them in a hippo [Casper]. Before they could leave the village they bumped into the cars. The boys threw lee.

TM: what is *lee* granny?

EM: (she laughs) hand grenade.

TM: Who are these boys?

EM: They are my relatives from Botswana; they are my mom's cousins. I told them the "donkeys" are bothering us. They said, should we scare them, I said, yes.

TM: Were they in the ANC in Botswana?

EM: They managed to help our kids skip the country and go to Zambia

TM: OH

EM: Yes, before that car could leave the village they shot at that car. The boys just threw the "egg" and it burst into flames, it vanished with everyone inside. Those ones left.

TM: The Casper guys?

EM: No the ones in the car - they left to Botswana

TM: The ones at the tents?

[TIMECODE - 02h:03m:28S]

EM: They only saw flames, they were screaming hey the hippo [Casper] is burning. Found ashes of burnt people. That cattle business was this one.

TM: Oh

EM: After any disturbance, they will gather there in trucks, and then I would leave for town, go to the public phone use the white man's phone.

TTM: Where did you get the numbers?

EM: I always had them

TM: Really, Granny? (He laughs)

EM: I always had them. There were few men that were in exile. One of them was Pupsey's uncle.

TM: Oh

EM: Yes

TM: Is he Sebogodi?

EM: Rantao

TM: Rantao

EM: Yes, I kept his contacts, Mr Rantao. When I saw all this mess I would call Lusaka. I asked for Mr Rantao, I was asked to identify myself. I said a name only known to them that side.

TM: Oh. What was your name?

EM: Matshindi.

TM: (He laughs.)

EM: I said I'm Matshindi may I kindly speak to Mr Rantao, they said, "Hey, are you in Gauteng? I said I'm in Zeerust". They said, "Okay, hold on we will call him". He came. I said uncle, he said, 'Huh?', we are not using names that time. I said, "How can you do this to me, the cows you said I must look after, the kraal is full they gave birth. You said you will send the boys to sort this kraal and make the calves kraals, what must I do with the calves? I can't deal with the cows they are too much for me: send me the boys". "He said, "How many do you want?" I said, "8, not a lot (the moderator laughs) only 8 will manage they will know what to do". "Okay". I called very early in the morning

[TIMECODE - 02h:06m:48s]

TM: What time?

EM: 8am. I was in town. I used the 6am bus. He said, "Okay, you are going home from there?" I said, "Yes".

TM: Was this before the refugee camp or afterwards?

EM: It was before, yes, I came straight home I bought a loaf of bread and milk for kids to make me tea. I got home sat down and ate, then I saw the boy. He looked familiar. I was in Lusaka

TM: You used to go to Lusaka?

EM: Yes, I was a spy

TM: Going to Mr Rantao?

EM: Yes, as he is coming, I'm looking at him: he is just ordinary torn clothes. I was seating on the *stoep* [veranda]. He greeted. He asked if I'm granny Matshindi, I said, "Yes", he said, "I was sent to you to show me the big kraal". I said, "Okay my child". I had donkey in my yard by brother sister as a go- cart car. I said, "Let's beat them" and we went that side the same route we used coming here. You saw how we came?

TM: Yes

EM: I said, "Just follow those donkeys: you will follow them until you see the tents, just follow them and you disappear. You will see what you can do". He left with the donkeys, later I saw them grazing here. I knew the boy is gone. I remember that night the cups in the cupboard were shaking. Damn the things that were happening outside?

TM: What was happening?

EM: They were throwing bombs,

TM: They were coming from Botswana

EM: I've never heard "cups dancing in the cupboard". I said yes, they are onto them. There was a house called a police station that they used to arrest us and lock us there, they went there and killed them. Later it was quiet. You could only hear some crying sounds. I thought those were the injured ones. Come 2h00 a car passed here speeding, in such a high speed, I thought if it overturned, it was going to kill people.

TTM: Leaving now?

[TIMECODE - 02:h:10m:37s]

EM: Yes, they were leaving; even if the borders are closed, there is a place that they can cross over. The following day: oh, my word this village! I don't care who says what. They were screaming that they want to rule. After all these events the following day I would go to town, then I happened to meet this boy, De Villiers. He said, "Elsie what was happening last night?" I said, "Where? "

TM: You acted surprised.

EM: I said, "Where?" He said, "At Braklaagte". I said, "I don't know anything". He said, "You're making me a fool, where were you last night?" I said, "I was in Lichtenburg, visiting. I just came now, now". He said, "What happened, it was bad. We could have come as white police people; you could hear the sounds at Zeerust police station". (She makes the sound of gunshots) He said, "We said, we are not going there, leave those people. They are paying for their sins". That's a white man talking (she laughs)

TM: Did this appear in newspapers?

EM: No, but the poor kids were dead, only the coup de tat of Mangope in Mafikeng. That man killed people - he is so cruel. He is going to be a ghost. Some of the people apparently were killed in Moilwa's kraal.

TM: Really?

EM: This man is secretive, that's witchcraft

TM: When did you start going to Lusaka?

EM: I started going to Lusaka, I can't remember but I enjoyed going there with women. Let me tell you something: do you know when did I join the ANC? (She laughs)

TM: No

EM: I was 16 years old at Dr Patel.

TM: Where is that?

EM: New Claire - it was in June's holiday. I was visiting and met a friend next door; she told me at Dr Patel, there is a meeting going on there. I went there and listened. When they distributed the youth membership cards, I took one. I've been in politics.

TM: The ladies you were with to Lusaka?

EM: I went with Mama Winnie, and some of them the husbands were that side. Like Zanele Mbeki

TM: Ok

EM: She was my friend all along, her mother in law would say, "You gave a man to Zanele: can you see Zanele is not giving Thabo kids?". I said "No, Thabo was not meant for me". I was friends with the Sisulu kids, the Nzo's kids,

TM: Oh, you befriended them working in Gauteng?

EM: Yes, when I was off or when I go to Soweto during my leave I wouldn't come home. The Thabo Mbeki house and my house were opposite each other.

TM: How did you go to Lusaka?

EM: We crossed here at Ramotswa, there is a village here in Lehurutshe it falls under Zeerust it's called Moshana, we would cross under the fence there is a river. You know if the river is like this and the fence runs here, there is space there. We would even attend church in Ramotswa in Botswana. I would sneak out to Botswana

TM: Oh, which year did you go to Lusaka?

EM: It was in 19 what (she thinks hard) it was after the forced removals

TM: After they stopped in the 1960?

EM: Yes

TM: And this Matshindi name: how did you get it?

EM: This Matshindi name we discussed that we should use known names, so we gave ourselves name

TM: What does Matshindi mean?

EM: It just came to me.

TM: Oh, did you go with some of the people from the community or they were from Gauteng?

EM: Some were from Gauteng, some from Botswana

TM: No one from this village?

EM: No

TM: Now, granny, we find our democratic government: what is happening in the village?

EM: We fought for this government, for it to be where it is, it's because of us. You know if I could tell you what I did for Mangope to be out of the position, I used to go with chief Sebogodi to the Contralesa meetings. I would go with the priests to the meeting of South African Council of Churches. I would get their pamphlets; it was easy to overturn Mangope. I used to go to Mafikeng, churches, schools with South African Council of Churches pamphlets, but when I got there I would preach ANC. That is how I overturned Mangope in Mafikeng.

TM: Going to schools?

EM: I would go churches, schools

TM: And say what?

EM: Telling them the apartheid government is coming to an end. They were happy. They said, "We will be happy because the whites are abusing us". I said, "It's not the whites, it's Mangope, if you can get rid of him everything will be fine". He will run around trying to arrest me. I would be in Ramatlabama sleeping in the police barracks. (They laugh)

TM: He was really looking for you?

EM: I slept at the police barracks in Ramatlabama; he would come with his people trying to kill me. That is how I overturned him.

TM: He hasn't forgotten about you?

EM: Even when we meet he says, "You child! You child!" I would say, "What did I do to you sir?" He would say, "*Morutwana o botlhale go feta moruti wa gagwe*"[a learner is wiser than their teacher] I said, "If you understand that".

TM: Now, growing up, Granny: they used this land for ploughing. Today, what is it being used for?

EM: It's not used for anything; the only thing is that the cows walk all over, even if you can plough nothing would grow, there is no care like before. What I noticed is that the whites care. The whites would make a fence this side and that side on the road

TM: Two of them

EM: These fences: the cows won't cross over. Now they are no longer there. If you had that fence the cows can never come eat your plants. Now they are all over, sometimes you would see one peeping in the window

TM: In the house?

EM: Yes, they will break our windows because of lack of fence.

TM: Granny?

EM: Sir?

[TIMECODE - 02:h:06m:48s]

TM: We chat for 2 hours?

EM: It's two hours? *They say kgetsi ya puo ga e tlale* [you can never chat enough, she laughs]

TM: Is there anything you wanted to say and we didn't touch today? (Silence) We spoke about a lot of things, ok, if there is anything we will cover them later. Maybe over the phone, or when we have time we will come again. We covered a lot

EM: I'm done. You will interview others.

TM: We are going to transcribe it. We will send it to you; I think it will help us compile the history of this area. It will help the youngsters to know who played the role

EM: I was telling them (then someone knocks and interferes) come in my child.

[TIMECODE - 02h:11m:55s]

[END]