

- J.F. Can you tell me where you were born and when.
- R.G. I was born in 1955, somewhere round the 10th. February in a small dorpie in the Freestate called Beltfontein - Beltfontein B u l t f o n t e i n .
- J.F. And what did your parents do?
- R.G. They are both former teachers - they are both retired now because of ill health.
- J.F. But they were teaching?
- R.G. Yes.
- J.F. Did they teach at a mission or a Government school?
- R.G. No, they were Government schools.
- J.F. And how many kids in your family?
- R.G. We are five in all. One is my mother's child. I'm the first born in the family ...
- J.F. Now ....
- R.G. ... but one is late already. The one immediately after me - the only girl.
- J.F. When you were growing up in the place like the Freestate - what's the closest town near to ..... (Tape off)
- R.G. .... and then it's about - must be about 60 kilometers from Bloemfontein ...
- J.F. .... (Can't hear - traffic noise)
- R.G. ... it's not necessarily accurate, but I think it's about 60 to 70 kilometers from Bloemfontein.
- J.F. So was that a little township or a village that you grew up in?
- R.G. I use the word dorpie
- J.F. Dorpie, yes.
- R.G. It's a small town with a township outside it.
- J.F. What was the black township called or did it have a name, or just a location?
- R.G. Old location - this is what we used to refer to it - I don't know for what reason.
- J.F. So when you were growing up - I'm just thinking of this - there's a lot of things I'm asking - thinking, but I want to ask just the non racialism thing - when you were growing up did you have, as a child - were there any kind of good whites, or did you see whites as oppressors - did you think they were better than blacks - how did you feel about white people?
- R.G. I don't recall any particular experience then which I could describe as having any particular impact on me when I was growing up, really, as a young person, and the other thing was that, ....

R.G. .... although I was born in Bultfontein, almost I spent my holidays regularly in Lesotho. My father actually - that's where he originally comes from. In fact, he still carries his Lesotho passport now, and still pays taxes in Lesotho, as my mother and the rest of us are South Africans per se,

and, as I'm saying, I don't recall any particular pronounced attitude for or against whites per se in my early stages of growth. If ever one began to experience those things, it could be later when I was, say, at school - when I was at secondary school when because of financial problems, one had to do part time jobs and so forth, and I must say that I was a book worm then already (laugh) I read quite a lot, and I was generally interested in people, so one came to hear of people's experiences at work and in different situations,

and also during those part time jobs that I did, which meant actually going to flats in town - this was now in Bloemfontein, because I think we must have left Bultfontein early. I didn't stay long there basically. From there we went to stay next to ..... from there we went to ..... we left Bultfontein to stay in Tobanju, which is also in the - which is now part of Bophutotswana - town is somewhat in South Africa or something like that, given the borders - so then I - I stayed at one stage at teacher training college where my father was (.....) 047 master, so largely I was staying in that sort of environment, and contact at early stage, just as I was explaining with whites (049) was limited, except for, perhaps members of the staff and - at the training college, who were also pretty distant, as I don't recall any particular experiences, but then, as I say, my experiences with those began when I was doing part time, when I was doing secondary. Now we were in Bloemfontein then, and even then that's not necessarily adopting attitude - could hear about people's experiences at work and so on O.K. But then, of course, through reading and so forth, I remember my father used to subscribe to some publication which I don't see any more in bookshelves - it was Psychology - it was a regular psychology magazine, and that in a way, prompted my interest in people generally, but I was a very withdrawn person then, and I think through love of discussion and so forth, they then began to put me into questioning some of the things that otherwise were taken for granted and so forth, and in some ways, one tended to be - my father was a very strict person, by the way - he was a - you could call him a - he was a combination of an educated person, but who was very traditionalist - for instance, he was a herbalist as well, so he had the two in him, basically - the strictness of a traditionalist, and on the other hand the sort of status that, for instance, he enjoyed, which struck me from a very early age, that ordinary folk then regarded people like teachers and so on very highly. Wherever you went people would give him gifts of some kind or another, for some odd reason, because of his status in a way, but, of course, it was also - it also had to do with his assisting people .....

- R.G. .... with their ailments and so forth.
- J.F. Did he bring you up - did he have any views about whites or about non racialism, or about Coloureds or Indians - did he feel like : We're African and that's that, or did he speak about whites in any way or was it just not an issue?
- R.G. It was never an issue. I think it began to become an issue when I, in Sunridge (076) (Some ways) myself, began to question things myself, and I generally used to engage them in heavy sort of debates about questions like what they had done and so forth, and I recognised even as early as that that he, being a traditionalist : No, no, you're a child. You don't know what's involved in this. You don't know how much we have done - these people are just .... there was an impression of whites being invincible - that one shouldn't begin to tamper with them, which is the kind of view that one has come to recognise as being very characteristic of traditionalists. People who do not want to tamper the bood (bude) (085) at all, and like I think partly through his strict up-bringing, it prompted in me a lot of questioning of authority in some ways. I think this is where the whole thing started, and then, of course, beyond school, or rather whilst, as I said, at secondary. This is where I think these issues begin to sharpen a little in my mind - developed very sharp sense of fairness, and as I began to see these things happening, it just didn't make sense at all, so that sometimes one used to get involved in ... on reflection, what I regard as being - having been stupid things, which is still there, as you go around taunting whites for the hell of it - out of having those kinds of experiences, and also having had them and so forth, and in a sense, when I passed my Matric I went to work at the hospital as a clerk - this is Blin-something (100) hospital ...
- J.F. Where (what) was the hospital?
- R.G. Bilnome Hospital - it's in Bloemfontein - I was an admission clerk there, so I think there a lot of things happened which created serious problems for me there, as well. It ended up with me being retrenched for some odd reason, because we had very serious clashes with the T Fourth (105) clerks there, because he was busy at the racist, and one of the things that led to that sort of relationship was, for example, there was an old man who worked in the department in which I worked. He was a filing clerk. He was very old - you've seen R.D. Naidwe (109)
- J.F. Not yet, no.
- R.G. You haven't seen him yet - anyway, he was the kind of guy like him when you see him - he was bearded, but he had a slight stoop - very serious minded kind of person - this old man ....
- J.F. Black guy?
- R.G. Black guy - and we used to have very interesting sort of .....

R.G. .... conversations with him. He was very - like he - I remember he used to talk to us about the struggles in their time, for instance, when blacks were prevented from drinking liquor by law, and at some stage, in fact, we enforced that - a number of homes were visited, and people's homes were raided and the home brewed stuff was built over, and people beaten up and that kind of thing, and at some stage man

decided to resist, using antiquated weapons and what not - stones and works, and at some stage there was a confrontation between the people and the army - literally. The presence of the S.A.D.F. in the township - it's not starting today. It has always been used even as far back as that.

I began to grow a very - a lot of respect for this old man, but the way in which he was treated there by this chief of clerk's (.....) 124 it was very I think, humiliating to an extent which I couldn't take, and I didn't hide my displeasure of him. Generally other people did not show anything about it - they didn't actually bother to indicate their displeasure, and even if I didn't show it by word of mouth,

I refused to co-operate with the kind of gangs which I considered racist in their nature basically. The kinds of things that he would do to that old man, for instance, which he wouldn't do with any other body else of similar skin, and I think that that strained our relationship very badly, so

that he went around looking for the slightest excuse to mess me up at work, and (.....) 133 then being Bloemfontein, he readily got audience from the superiors as well, like one ridiculous case I remember, they put me up was to suggest that I was not treating people well because some of the whites would come to the hospital bringing patients, and maybe a

person who works for them, injured his or her finger, would come but there's a long queue of people in the admission wards - in the casualty wards, with various, some very serious injuries, and they would demand to be treated first, and often giving clumsy excuses like : I've got to go - my husband is waiting for me - we've got to go : Correction : We are going out to the bus stop - I can't wait here any longer (laugh) I couldn't just find how can these people reasonably expect

me really to co-operate with them? Like, I was - my attitude to them was that this - these are reasonable people - they ought to understand - reason basically, and their attitude was completely the opposite, so I think that led to a number of clashes with some demanding - literally labeling

me cheeky and those kind of things, and - well, what happened is that - and there was, for instance, the hospital - it's next to a Coloured township, so that at work there, you were dealing with everybody almost - both Africans and Coloured people there who spoke Afrikaans, for example. Now one of

their reasons - they've got a hatred for blacks - Africans who speak English ....

- J.F. They've got a hatred for what?
- R.G. For Africans who speak English. They would often call you Karamanta Kaffir ...
- J.F. A what?
- R.G. Karamanta ja Kaffir - you are a stubborn Kaffir - that's the kind (laugh) of thing because you've got to speak Afrikaans, and in return they wouldn't even speak to you Afrikaans properly only as an African. They'd rather speak broken Afrikaans - the one that they - what you'd otherwise call Pidgin English if it was English, which in itself was racist (laugh) in a number of ways. They don't expect to address you in the way in which they would address anyone else, and so one of the - when they put up that sort of case with me, that I'm not communicating properly with the rest of the people - one of the questions is : Look, man, I literally have to man the office alone, and I'm dealing with people who speak Afrikaans and that kind of a thing. How the hell do you think I've been coping all along, you say : I don't understand Afrikaans obviously (laugh) but I'm trying to point out how ridiculous some of their - our situations were (160) which merely amounted to trying to find an excuse to mess me up wherever possible, and finally they retrenched me, I remember, they said because I was - my relationship with the - with my superiors was not good - something to that extent - that they couldn't keep me there for long, and I think after that what happened I went to where one of my former teachers at the - when I did Matric. I think they had problems at that school. They didn't have sufficient staff, so she then called me to come and help teach English and Afrikaans, so I went to teach for them for a year ..... (Tape off)

END OF SIDE ONE.