Dr M. interviewed by Mike Cadman November & December 2007
Missing Voices Project

	TAPE ONE SIDE A
Interviewer	Can you give me a bit of an indication of where you grew up, what type of family, middle class, so and so forth.
Dr M	I grew up very close to here in Saxonwold in Johannesburg. My early schooling was in a Catholic private school and then I moved to a government school. My family are quite left wing. My mother was a member of the Black Sash and she took part in Black Sash protests. My father was the treasurer for the Liberal Party until it was banned, and after that he was involved in a number of leftist anti apartheid organisations and also organisations to support workers. He had a strong worker perspective, even now in his mid eighties, late eighties, he reads Noam Chomsky and he's involved in the Workers Enrichment Project as a treasurer and he gives them advice and so on. I think they're largely very tolerant of him now and they admire him because he's not very able any more but he goes to all their meetings. I went to Parktown Boy's High School and one of my main memories about Parktown Boy's is it was, we had no option when we turned 16, there was a focused intent on the part of the headmaster and the masters to make sure we registered for the army. In fact it was almost like slavering hounds around victims. They absolutely insisted that we did it. If anyone was absent they would go out of the way to follow them up.
Interviewer	Did you have cadets at school?
Dr M	Yes. And I absolutely hated cadets, so…in our day it was sort of, a bit of a joke. There were rifles with the firing pins removed and we didn't march in uniform, but in later years, after I went to Parktown Boy's, they in fact marched in brown uniform. And then I think it was when I was about 11 or 12 years old, I became aware that the army was a possibility and I think it was 1974, I was 14, it was quite clear I'd have no choice, I'd have to go to the army. And I think that played a large part in my deciding to be a doctor, because coming from a left wing family like I did it was almost expected that one would conscientiously object and go to jail. And I knew I couldn't cope with jail. So I thought one way of not being a soldier was to be a doctor. And I honestly think that was a major motivation for wanting to do medicine, looking back on it. So I did my medical degree and got postponement…there was a word for that…
Interviewer	Deferment. And you started at Wits in what, '77?
Dr M	I started in '78 and my last year at Wits was '83. I did my house job in '84. And in January the 16th 1985 I went into the army at Klipdrift which was the medical services training base. It was a very newly formed base. I think one intake or two intakes before

	me was the first intake of doctors to Klipdrift. And I think that we were the third intake there. And the reason why this is significant, they got a madman from the Special Air Service in Rhodesia to come and head the base and he had this slogan that you're soldiers first and doctors second. And he had an incredibly harsh and punitive regime of training. And there's no doubt when I was there, there was viciousness to the way that we were treated, although at 25 I was not capable of the physical feats of an 18 year old. There was nastiness to the way we were trained. There was not really any real intent to make us physically fit. It was too patchy for that. So I would call our training physical abuse. And I've been doing a lot of reading in the last few months and I'm quite certain in my own mind that just about everyone who went through basic training has a complex post traumatic stress disorder. And in terms of the Amnesty International's…they published a document called…Stages or something of Coercion. 1973, this document was published, and every one of their five or six methods of coercion are used in our basic training. Do you want me to tell you what they are?
Interviewer	Yes, I would.
Dr M	The first one is that you isolate your subjects, so you make it very difficult for them to contact their loved ones, you isolate them in space, you do your best to pervert their relationships and make them uneconomical, too difficult to follow. You subject them to physical abuse, and the physical abuse we were subjected to was definitely kind of so called training, but running with our rifles over our head for long periods of time, going on route marches that started at 2 in the morning and finished at half past five in the morning, and then we had to have all our kit ready for inspection at half past seven. Being woken up frequently at night for things like roll call and to be shouted at. Woken up at night when people sprayed a hosepipe through the window. So there was certainly physical abuse and a form of sleep deprivation. And frankly the food we had was physical abuse as well. It was so bad that I eventually lived on tins which I brought from home during our passes. Then there is a deprivation from not just your social contacts but your transitional objects, and so being forced to wear a uniform, not being allowed to wear a chain, a ring…I think the only individuality we could have was what the colour of our underpants was because that was the only…our item of clothing…and people wore chains, particularly after the earliest phase of basics but if it was detected by the corporal or officer it would be torn off and confiscated. Then very important there is an unpredictable, very minute series of rules and regulations that you have to abide by completely. And they're very capriciously applied, so you're never really quite sure whether you're going to be in some kind of situation of infringing these complex rules. And then lastly, and probably most importantly, there's an equally capricious and illogical system of rewards. And what this does is that it increases your compliance with your abuser because you're always trying to get the rewards. But you're never quite

	sure what you've got to do, so you become utterly compliant. And there is no doubt in my mind that that is the coercive environment of our basics, and whatever various people say about enjoying the army and so on, I think they've suffered damage from that process.
Interviewer	You're all, at that stage, university graduates?
Dr M	With me…for some reason there was a cock up with our intake which worked to our advantage because in our platoon…there were 4 platoons that came in with our intake and in…I'm getting a bit muddled between platoons and companies…I was in Bravo company, but we were all either doctors or pharmacists. There may have been a couple of clinical psychologists, but we were all sort of graduates who had sort of 4 or more years of university. I think one of the ways it made a difference is although there was friction, it never went to the level of physical kind of fisticuffs and beatings up and so on. And really we had a consciousness that we were being so abused we must careful not to abuse each other with bad language and so on. Largely that was the case. But we were still very, very different people. A lot of people were graduates from Afrikaans universities, they had a very different attitude to their training, they had a very different attitude to what the army was all about. There was a kind of common consent not to discuss politics at all, because we knew that would lead to friction.
Interviewer	Did you sense any discrimination on grounds of language?
Dr M	There was very serious discrimination against English speakers. There were always really nasty jokes against English speakers. The worst thing was, when I was on the border, only the English speaking doctors were in remote bases that were subject to mortar attacks from outside. Only English speaking doctors went on search and rescue missions into Angola on the helicopter which was the only really dangerous thing that a doctor did on the border. And recent memories I've had indicate that on one day alone I did 4 sorties into Angola. I think, from the reading I've done, it must have been during operation Egret. Now I can remember sitting in the helicopter with a feeling of complete despair, knowing I was completely shattered and thinking why does nobody else go? Why am I the only doctor going in on these flights? It really…you know the English language was…I mean, kind of statements were made that when we finished killing the…and they used the word kaffirs…when we finished killing the kaffirs we're going to start on die Soutpiele. And that we have actually got 2 enemies, we're focusing on the kaffirs now, later we're going to focus on the Rooinekke or the Soutpiele, whatever word they wanted. And I've been fluent in Afrikaans because as it happens I have an Afrikaans mother and grandmother, but many people weren't fluent and I think it added enormously to the stress that there was no accommodation made, they would be just shouted at more in Afrikaans, no-one to translate it for them. The army had a rule, I think it was one week English, one week

	Afrikaans. There was never a week of English. Certainly not doing our basic training.
Interviewer	So your basics lasted what, 3 months, or was it longer?
Dr M	No we had 9 weeks of basics, which I think was very similar to basics anywhere. We wore overalls and things called mosdops. I've seen someone call them doibies. Plastic in the helmets. And then we went on to the officer's course. For my intake the officer's course was much, much worse, and the 2 intakes before. So they tried to make it like a junior leader's course like they have at Oudtshoorn, and it was much, much worse. It was during that time that we were woken up frequently at night, during that time we went on a route march starting at 2 o'clock in the morning, during that time for the first time we were made to do PT holding rifles above our heads. It was officially banned at SAMS but I'm quite certain that Colonel Spies knew perfectly well it was happening. He always would strategically be out of the camp when it happened. And from things that we overheard the officers, both the NCOs and the lieutenants saying, I'm quite certain in my own mind he would tell them, I'm going to be away and this is…you're going to give them all an opfok now, they're getting windgat and we are going to make sure that we drill them into the ground. So the worse opfoks always happened when Colonel Spies was away and I think it was this strategic thing of having the good guy and the bad guy. So we all blamed the Regimental Sergeant Major…who had an Afrikaans name, Ockert or something. But I know that Colonel Spies ordained this, it would happen when he was away. So officially he was the good guy. He had a box that you could put complaints. *Laughs* I don't know anyone who was stupid enough to put a complaint in the box.
Interviewer	Sounds like you're signing your own sort of physical abuse warrant.
Dr M	Absolutely. You would have been an idiot to put anything in that box.
Interviewer	Now this is going on and you're now a graduate…you're more than just an average graduate, you're a doctor. Did they attempt to say why they were putting you through this? Did they give you any political lectures? Did they sort of start to tell you who they thought you were there to fight?
Dr M	They were completely ludicrous lectures. Completely, completely ludicrous lectures. They were couched in illiterate terms and they were, we were told who our enemies were, and they actually included the Black Sash ladies. I remember one of our lectures was on how to handle *laughs* a Black Sash protest in a church. Basically it was, you shout a warning through the windows and then you baton charge them, that was how you handle it. *laughs*
Interviewer	Extremely sophisticated.

Dr M	So the enemy was the ANC and the South African Communist Party. I think our lecturers barely knew who Joe Slovo was and Ruth First was, and Mandela and Tambo. There was confusion among them, just who was leading the ANC. They kind of knew Umkhonto we Sizwe was the military arm, but whether or not Tambo, Mandela or Slovo was the current leader of the arm was really kind of very fluid. They didn't seem to really know much themselves, but they knew it was the enemy. And we were fighting the total onslaught. The Red submarines off our coasts. In fact I remember one night in '85 there were sightings of a Russian submarine off Simonstown. And also anybody who said defeatist stuff about the war on the border, anybody who said something that had to do with supporting the ANC or the Communist Party, and even more, any antagonism towards the Nationalist Party and its policies we needed to report it. It was negative propaganda and it needed to be reported and military intelligence would come and interrogate people who were guilty of that kind of thing. So it was quite clear to us there was an informer in our bungalow because a couple of our opfoks we were told were because of something that could have only been known to somebody who was in our bungalow. So I learned not to actually say anything too subversive. There was an incident where there was an electricity failure, and I'm ashamed to say it was a Wits graduate who was the first…no the water was cut. It was a Wits graduate who was the first to go with his Mosdop and collect water from a swamp, filthy water, to shave in. And I shouted at him, I said, you're a disgrace to the university. We've got all these Afrikaans guys and they're not actually licking ass the way you are. And it was the one time that I can remember someone threatening to beat me up. He said, if I didn't shut up he'd beat me up. *Laughs* But that started this whole thing, where then we all had to go because it was a powerful training tool they used that you didn't stand out from the rest. And even though we thought we were quite sophisticated, their techniques were much more sophisticated than we were. Whether we liked it or not we bought into this idea that one person had caused the opfok. Later on I would say, you know guys…and I was in the middle of the bungalow so people would be chewing the edges of their blankets. Doctors doing this, putting toothpaste and sleeping underneath it. I eventually…when I realised that the opfoks were ordained from above and had nothing to do with how good our inspection was, I really ceased to worry too much about it. And it's interesting even with wrinkles on my bed, no-one commented on the wrinkles on my bed, because there was going to be an opfok by the third bed and I was about the eighth or ninth. There would be a, oh no, you guys are absolutely…I can't actually remember the language now, but it would all be very, very coarse. Jy kan sif optel van hierdie vloer, or something like that. I once told the lieutenant that you can't get syphilis from the floor. *laughs* I had to 'sak for vyftig' (*do fifty press ups*) and then run around a tree. But you learn to shut up after a while.

Interviewer	So now you go on the officer's course and did conditions change much during this?
Dr M	Well it changed in that we wore military browns instead of overalls. We stopped wearing Mosdoppe and we wore berets. In a way the berets were a greater problem because they had to have a rigid fold and they had to be put on at exactly the right angle and the wapen…what's a wapen?
Interviewer	Your logo or your shield.
Dr M	Had to be polished. And so the level of smartness that was required of us was much higher but definitely the lectures in fact became very much like a sort of poor quality management course. We were being trained to be managers, a lot of it really obvious stuff. And then some more interesting stuff about what was really going on on the border started to come into our lectures. But the flavour of nastiness that had been there from the beginning deepened enormously. There was a tremendous antagonism because they thought it was unfair that we were going to get rank, whether we performed up to their standards or not, we were going to get rank. In fact that wasn't altogether true, some of us never got rank. But that was an area of great bitterness. And having now spoken…well now at that time, which after I was in basics, and particular along the border…spoken to young men who went through the leader's course, I can understand that bitterness. They actually sweated blood to get that tiny rise in salary and what was very significant, their higher rank. And I can understand that bitterness but it was a very difficult thing to be at the receiving end of it, because there was a constant thread of nastiness through what happened there. Which I don't think was there to the same degree even…the kids who went to Oudtshoorn and Phalaborwa had I think the worst time. Particularly the officer's course. They were treated terribly, terribly badly.
Interviewer	The nub of the issue is here you are, you're doing your duty and if you go through the literature the State President, the Chief of the Defence Force, and everybody else, constantly reminded people that it was their duty, and it was the right thing, that we had to admire these people who were protecting the country from all these evils. But at the same time, you know, within the camp, you were being treated just one level down from the enemy.
Dr M	I think the strongest consciousness I had was, I was in jail and I had done nothing wrong, and it was with the full co-operation of the law. There were five suicides while I was doing basics. 3 of them were kids we called, Kaboutertjies. You know, the flavour of nastiness crept into everything. I mean, these were school leavers and I think they had the most terrible time. We were in fact in a newly built bungalow and our comfort was much greater than the kids who were in tents. So all the school leavers were actually housed in tents for that intake January '85. I'm sorry I've just lost my thread. So I felt I was in jail. I felt I was in jail for…I

	hadn't committed a crime and I was in jail. You know, from 48 hours, I would say even less, we were put onto a train. It took forever to travel what is really a little bit over an hour by car. I think we were on the train by…we had to be at Sturrock Park some ungodly hour like half past six. While the parents were around and it was in the city, there was a certain level of restraint. The moment we were on the train the screaming and shouting began and I really think that alone, I know I was completely broken by 48 hours, I really felt that. I felt I can't take anybody shouting at me, I'll do whatever they say just not to get shouted at. And they took 3 days just to give us our uniform. At the end of the time we were actually glad to be getting into uniform because our clothes were stinking. We had nothing…we were lugging this kind of kit…they gave us a list of things that we had to have. But there wasn't enough to,.. kind of live from. So there were a lot of people who had come into camp earlier than we were and they were already marching and running…the first 9 weeks you run everywhere and you've got to run in groups. So we felt very out of the mainstream of things. But it definitely was 3 days just to get into our kit. It rained a lot during that time, we were frequently soaked to the skin because we'd stand outside and wait in a queue to have our medical examination, wait in a queue to have vaccinations and so on. We'd just get soaked, nobody would give a rats' about it. Then after the officer's course, which was, I remember, 15 weeks, we did one week…oh up to that time it was, the army said we were not going to be doctors until the army trained us and we were doctors. They trained us in one week of lectures, which were totally, totally absurd. I've still got the pamphlets of the lectures that we had and they really are of a very low intellectual standard and they've got nothing to do with teaching us to be doctors. They've got no real epidemiology of running camps. We would expect a cleaning water, vaccination, running camps, that kind of thing to be…instead it was really a lot of it Nationalist Party propaganda, anti Communist propaganda. And quite a dismal sort of management kind of truth speak. If you disagree with someone this is how you sit down, but you tell them you're the superior officer and they've got to do what you say at the end of it. So I mean, it wasn't a negotiation.
Interviewer	But there was nothing related to bullet wounds, bombs, explosion wounds?
Dr M	Nothing whatsoever, I couldn't believe it. I learned more at medical school and at Baragwanath about high velocity bullet wounds. Not a single thing was said about it. And when I went to the border and we pitchforked right into that, the last acquaintance that I'd had was 1983, and late 1985 is the first time I'm dealing with it. It was an abysmal performance on the part of….and one of many abysmal parts of it. You know it was so ludicrous, when we were in basics, one night the base doctor wasn't there…in fact I think he was a very low calibre person, but he wasn't there and one of the Kaboutertjies broke an arm. And in our whole bungalow of about 60 people, of which maybe 45-50

	were doctors, nobody had the guts to go and set his arm. So really from a sense of shame more than anything else I said I would do that and then two friends of mine said they'd come and help me, but they were…if we got into shit, I was the one who was being the doctor, quote. So we went into the sick bay and one of the orderlies was very grateful that we were going to do that and it was a simple fracture, so I just…they had in fact morphine there which was not properly under lock and key so I could give this kid morphine, and then I put traction on his arm and I set it and I was very happy with the result. We had just finished the plaster and there was still a big mess there, which plaster makes, and there was a noise of someone unlocking the sick bay. We all…two friends of mine from medical school, and the young school leaving conscript, and the orderly jumped into the cupboard. *Laughs* We closed the cupboard and we waited while somebody didn't come into that room. They pottered around in an adjacent office and then when he'd gone we came out again. And it was that absurd. We were told that we would go into detention barracks if we behaved as doctors. If we did any medical work.
Interviewer	Yet if you were outside of the army, operating in a civilian circumstance, you were a qualified doctor.
Dr M	Yes.
Interviewer	That's astounding.
Dr M	It is astounding. They were very scared that we would get uppity because, I mean I think they viewed the fact that we were qualified doctors as far more significant than we did. I mean, I don't think they realised the extent to which they destroyed us just with their normal techniques of abuse. So they really wanted to make sure there was nothing to give us a sense of self esteem.
Interviewer	It seems to be counter productive when bearing in mind they were going to send you off to look after people who had been wounded in conflict. I would have thought that you needed confidence.
Dr M	There's no doubt in my mind that the army was a coercive environment where abusive people had a field day. And I think most people in the Permanent Force I had anything to do with were abusers. And they gladly and gleefully and continuously abused National Servicemen.
Interviewer	You raised the issue of the suggestion box and we laughed that nobody was silly enough to put their suggestion into the suggestion box. But essentially you're talking about people…and you were experienced people, university graduates who had a lot more understanding of the world than say an 18 year old conscript. So essentially you had people who had been abused that had almost no recourse to any kind of justice or any kind of complaint system where they could stop that abuse.

Dr M	It wasn't almost no…I think there was no recourse whatsoever. I think in reality if one of us had run away and gone to the police or something I don't know what would have happened, but it didn't even seem like an option. You know I can remember people who were medical graduates actually crying with frustration and despair. There was just…you're utterly exhausted, you've been just taken on a 3 hour gallop across rough terrain, deliberately made to roll in ditches with your rifle and so on, and you've got to get everything clean and dry with a couple of electric power points…we were wealthier obviously than the conscripts and we very rapidly once we got the lie of the land, we invested in ironing boards and irons and multiple sort of adaptor jacks and so on. So we were never quite as bad as I've read the other experiences that there was one plug point and one iron for the whole bungalow. But it still was quite a mission even with multiple plug points…that we set up for ourselves, the army didn't set it up…multiple ironing boards…it was still a very big mission, and then on top of that we became obsessed with getting sleep. I in fact could sleep with 3 radios on different stations going and a whole cacophony around me. I knew that I would go mad if I didn't sort of…I knew I'd never be able to control what was happening so I had to just say to myself, I will sleep and then I slept. And I did in fact do that. So I think we had a perception that we were completely abandoned by the world. *(counter at 366)*
	SIDE B
Interviewer	So you spoke about the sheer need to protect your sanity and the need to escape, you could sleep anywhere anytime. So you've gone through your 9 week basic thing, you've got through your 15 weeks officer's course including your week of so-called medical…
Dr M	And that was at Voortrekkerhoogte and that was very nice because all discipline went out the window. We actually, although we were strictly forbidden to and we were told we'd be court-martialled if we did it, we actually all just drove to Joburg. Most of us were from Joburg or around. And so there was nobody or virtually nobody in Voortrekkerhoogte in their training place at night for that week. And we had an exam at the end of the time. The exam was supposedly leaked. I think it was a multiple choice exam. I made no effort to learn that. And I don't know, I mean, I graduated something like 218th out of 250, so I wasn't a star academic performer. But I also had no doubt that my family connections…I had a brother in Umkhonto we Sizwe at the time I was in the army…meant that I didn't get rank until…I was one of the very last to get rank…I even went to the border with no rank. I mean I said to Commandant Smit when I got there, I will not work as a doctor without rank, so if you won't give me acting rank then I will work as an orderly, but I can't work as a doctor. Finished. And I don't know what gave me the guts to say that because he initially said he had no power to confer acting rank and then he just reached into a desk and he handed me the pips. Bastard. So I had acting rank on the border but when I came back he made

	me promise that on the Flossie back I put on the KO bandjies again.
Interviewer	Ok with your brother's background was that known to the Security Police? Could they suspect anything?
Dr M	I fondly believed it wasn't, but I now know it was. My younger brother who went into the army in 1982 and '83, he said his first year at RAU, the student SRC leader who happens to be later the leader of the National Party, Marthinus van Schalkwyk, hauled him in and said, so many details about our family. That you are all Communists, that your father this and your mother that, you've got a brother in the End Conscription Campaign, you've got a brother who was going to be a conscientious objector. They knew stuff that was definitely in Security Police files. You must know that when I grew up we often had an unmarked car parked outside with two men in it recording the number plates of people coming in and out. My brother's 21st birthday, some people came, they were so freaked out by this car that they immediately left the birthday party. So I fondly believed this was all a secret to them but I now I actually am quite certain they knew exactly who I was. My wife was detained under the Security legislation…she was my girlfriend then…for 2 months in September and October 1984. And I used to do these elaborate things of sending her letters at her aunt's house. *laughs* I think it was all in vain. I think they knew exactly who I was.
Interviewer	Just to get away from the actual army itself, your family…you've got very strong political sort of family…how did they cope with you going off to the military?
Dr M	It's actually a very sore point, you know. I've got a family that makes everything nice. Nothing bad happens in our family, we're all really a loving, caring good family. So they sweep everything bad under the carpet but I think although there was lip service, well son, it's your choice, and you know, it's a pragmatic choice and you're going to be a doctor and so on, there was actually a covert climate of blame. And you know I was the eldest of 6 children. I really felt it was not an option to do what 3 of my brothers did, which was to become permanent students. I didn't see how my parents could afford to have most of their male offspring…since they had 5 boys that's almost all their children…permanently students. It certainly didn't look like a possibility that the Nats would collapse in 1985. It just didn't look possible at all. So I didn't see it, I just felt that I had to get my degree, get the army done and…vasbyt through it. And basically not be a charge on my parents. I also had a profound distrust of the left wing. I mean my parents were kicked in the teeth more times than I care to mention. I saw the left wing as being just like the Nats only just with a different story that they were…I felt they were aggrandizing themselves, they were into being in power when the black majority eventually did take over. And there were a lot of very, very unsavoury power plays that I saw when my parents got shafted. So I wasn't apathetic, I think I was an

	anarchist. My political philosophy was anarchism. I saw no benefit in a kind of government of…I maybe shouldn't mention names, but certain student leaders, I felt they had really unsavoury underbellies to their conduct and I have no interest in a government run by them. And I didn't see frankly, a likelihood that Nelson Mandela would ever be president. I mean, it didn't look possible. So, wandering away from this question a lot but I think the underlying message was I was on my own. I wasn't approved of. My mother and my father both wrote me a few letters, particularly in the first year in the army. In the second year I don't think I got a single letter from my parents. My brother had been to the army even though he was going through a very difficult time himself with 2 small children, very difficult finances. He managed to send me a letter at least once or twice a month. My wife…the woman is now my wife…definitely I owe my sanity entirely to her because she wrote, particularly when I was on the border, she wrote to me every day. So I would get a sheaf of letters twice a week from her. And a number of parcels. At least one parcel a week I'd get from her. So that kind of generosity and loyalty that people got from their families, I didn't get from my family, I got it from my girlfriend.
Interviewer	Do you ever go back now and explore these sort of things within the family, with your brothers and so on?
Dr M	I think it was…I mentioned to you that I've had… *tape turned off* Within my family I've never discussed like, anything really close to my…nothing that would raise ripples in my family until…I think it must have been mid August this year. I started having very intrusive memories of search and rescue missions into Angola on the 10th of July. So before then I had quite deliberately, completely expunged any thinking about the army, any thinking about that time from my mind. In the first years after the army occasionally I would get together with friends from the army and we would talk and laugh, but in fact the discussion was never on a deep emotional level. It was always about things that were funny, and there were things that were funny. And nothing really close to the soul, certainly nothing…I never revealed anything about how close I came to completely losing my mind on the border. I didn't even remember it when I came back from the border myself. But there were very bad experiences there and I might sort of have alluded to them in very shorthand kind of way, but I never went into how traumatised I was, even in my second year in the army, I was involved in court-martialling a major for assaulting my medical orderly corporal. And it was a very bad time for me. My wife was the only person who really knew what I went through, my family didn't know. And at a family gathering I just told them that I owed my sanity to my wife because they had basically ditched me. And they protested and I said, it's all very well to say I can do what I like, but you made no effort to find out what it was like to be in the army. You hardly wrote to me, and basically it was lip service to the fact that you supported me, but I didn't see the support. And I think my mother particularly was

	quite conscience stricken about it and she said she was very sorry that she had been unsupportive. My father has very rarely in his entire life said sorry about anything. But I think they both felt a sense of being chastened and sad that they hadn't given me that support. The other thing that was interesting in my mother's relationship with my wife has been very, very, very difficult, and when I told her that my sanity was entirely owing to her, her attitude to my wife has changed completely. She's much…a complete 180 degree turnaround. She's warm and she's loving and she made sure every one of my siblings phoned on my wife's birthday this year. I mean, it's just been such a turnaround. So I think that was actually an important moment that I said that's how I felt about things. And I think they did hear it.
Interviewer	Back to the mid eighties…so you were meant to write the exam, you didn't really swot for it but you wrote this exam…
Dr M	I think we had our marks, in inverted commas, before we wrote the exam. I think the mark was a joke, because in all my time during basics my intent was to keep a low profile, never to let on that I came from a left wing family, to do everything right. And outside of times which should have been private just within the platoon, but which I now know there was an informer in our bungalow…and the reason I know, that particular incident when a guy in our bungalow called, S…. (*name withheld)* went off to fill his mosdop and shave, that incident was reported because I was singled out afterwards as being the reason why the platoon had to run with our rifles over our head round the vehicle park. So it was said, I was…my windgat behaviour, my swak houding was the reason why. So someone had reported my swak houding to the corporal.
Interviewer	Ok so this is all going on, so you write your exam, the results are sort of pre determined as it were and…
Dr M	Yes, quite early on before we finished our basics we were invited to apply for where we wanted to go. In my undergraduate years I was a very dedicated student and I spent a lot of my vacations in Mission hospitals in northern Zululand. So I really wanted to be away from the army. That was my whole reason, in fact now that I think, for being a doctor. That was one of the key reasons. So I applied for a very remote Mission hospital in northern Zululand, quite confident I would get it because everybody thought it was a ludicrous choice. People wanted to be near the cities. I in fact, like you I love the bush. This is Manguzi so it's right next to Kosi Bay. It's the most wonderful, wonderful place. And a very good hospital run by very dedicated staff, still a lot of Mission staff there. So I didn't get my posting to Manguzi but about 90kms west right in that nook where you can stand on a…from the outpatients you could see Mozambique, Swaziland and South Africa and all the way to the Indian Ocean on a clear day.
Interviewer	Is that near Ngwavuma?

Dr M	Yes, the whole area is Ngwavuma, as I remember, right from that border. The hospital…2kms directly west would take you to the border in the Lebombo, at that stage, mountains. And Golela was actually about 40kms south. So it was right in that corner there. And actually if the army had left me there I would have been a very happy man. The work was very hard. There was a military doctor working as a superintendent called Rick Morcom, and there was another military doctor called Donald Berry. Both of them came from families with long Mission antecedents, working in Mission hospitals and so on. I in fact don't recall that there was a civilian doctor there at that time, and I was the third doctor. And I got there on about the 6th of June and I got the call up to the border, which really, my world fell apart I think on about the 1st of August. And there was very little warning. I was told I had to report to Voortrekkerhoogte to go for detach duty on the border, I think was how they put it, on the 5th of August, so I really had to pack up. Basically the hospital was left in the lurch in a big way. There's a whole timetable assuming that I'm going to be there and it all just went…I'm afraid I didn't feel any sorrow for them, I felt much more sorry for myself, and I had just had tick bite fever, so I was feeling very, very sick and sorry for myself. And so we went there on the 5th. I was wearing these KO bandjies so even though there were some people called up with me who did basics with me, there was already this kind of barrier between us. I think we were all scared. But also the army is a pace where rank is the essential feature, so even though, I mean I'd seen some of these people crying with frustration, we'd certainly kind of been shitting and pissing in front of them for weeks and so on, so they were really kind of no…we knew each other, there was still this barrier. I didn't speak to any of them and they actually, if I had to say, none of them made any effort to speak to me. And Voortrekkerhoogte is full of NCOs who just want to come and crap on you if you're a candidate officer. And it was a very protracted inefficient process. Once again they ask you to get there at half past six in the morning and there's this whole fuck up of a day, waiting outside of this magazyn or store for this item of equipment and that item of equipment. We had lectures which were really chilling. They were very accurate, these lectures, about what we could expect on the border. And what gunships the Cubans and the FAPLA were using, helicopter gunships, Migs, and no secret was made of the fact we had lost air superiority since 1984, that the commandant who briefed us said, you are not going to get…the lugmaag gaan jou gatte afveer nie. Jy mag vir jouself sorg and you're going to stop being wet behind the ears because you're used to luxury, now you're in big shit. This was basically the message we had. And I remember there were slides. We were given a bit of information of the tactics of the PLAN guerrillas, how they would come in, what their weaponry was. We were shown pictures of POM-Z mines and how a POM-Z mine looked with a trip wire. We were shown pictures of cheese mines. We'd seen Buffels during our basic training so we knew what they were but I mean again we were

	taken through what they were and we were shown some very scary footage of civilian vehicles hitting mines and what they looked like after they'd hit mines. We were given accurate information that there were sector one zero, two zero, three zero, and I think even four zero, but one, two and three were where doctors were going in our intake. One was the one all of us didn't want to go to by the time the lecture ended, because it was plain it was the biggest military activity was going on there. We were told that Unita is mostly controlling the territory north of the Kavango River, that's sector two zero, and that things were not as bad as they'd been even a year before, thanks to that. And we were given rifles, we were given officer's side arm, we were given actually a very well equipped medical officer's bag. Even now I remember it as being an extraordinarily well equipped, well thought out bag. So there was enough to even do minor surgery out in the field. There was drip sets and intubation equipment, intercostal draining equipment, equipment for suturing wounds, Schedule 7 opiates, everything…it really was a well equipped bag. And good equipment. The steel surgical equipment was really good German stuff. We were told if we lost anything we would bear the cost of replacement, which is a joke now that I remember, because one time the helicopter I was in was shot up and I certainly didn't take that bag back and no-one told me I needed to pay for that bag. But generally the whole thing was…and we weren't fed the whole day. It's the kind of thing I remember now. They were such bastards to National Servicemen. There was absolutely no allowance made for our human needs. We would occasionally be marched off to somewhere there was a toilet. So we marched in a phalanx. We were not supposed to talk to anybody, particularly after we heard this lecture. We had to sign the official Secrets Act before we heard the lecture. And then we waited interminably at Waterkloof for this Flossie to be ready. And I think it was sort of afternoon enough for there to be long shadows, I don't really remember the time accurately. It must have been going on for 4 o'clock before we went onto the apron, and the whole time I'd had this balsak, it was so heavy that I had linear bruises on both shoulders for about 4 or 5 weeks after I got to the border. And then we got on to the aircraft and I can remember feeling this sense of unreality as it took off. I think in retrospect, something very important happened to me psychologically because I was convinced I was going to be killed. I was convinced as the lowest ranking…I was the only candidate officer doctor going there…I was convinced that they were going to put me in a place where my life would be at risk, as the least senior in rank. And in fact I wasn't far wrong. And I think…you know my memory is very patchy of my time on the border and I've never questioned that until recently, but I have a feeling I may even have been stupid enough to volunteer for dangerous work just on the premise I'm going to die anyway. But I can remember actually saying to myself, well you're going to die so you might as well just relinquish caring about it and I went into kind of black exhilaration. I think it was exhilaration, it was I

	think only the third time I'd flown anywhere in an aircraft. So it still had that kind of pattern of excitement for me. And we got to Grootfontein and there no food was given to us. We were put onto a Samil…now this is the craziest thing. We were told both at the lecture briefing and we were told by staff at Grootfontein that a convoy had been ambushed three weeks before. So that must have been in July. I've never seen it anywhere else, but certainly least three kms north of Grootfontein a convoy was attacked with RPG weapons and automatic rifle fire at the very least. I don't know if there were some machine guns as well. And everyone knew that a doctor had been killed also at some time in the recent past on the border. But even so we weren't given bullets. I hadn't cleaned my rifle. No-one told us to clean our rifles. It's such a contradiction. My brother going to the border to deliver horses, because my brother was in a unit that trained horses near De Aar. He had a R4 rifle and they all had a bullet up the spout on the way up to Ruacana. Ruacana was more dangerous from Grootfontein to (*inaudible*) but considering a convoy had been hit I think they should have taken more care. And oddly in retrospect none of us really said, why aren't we armed. I mean, we had rifles but we had no bullets. And we weren't enjoined or encouraged to look after our weapons. I didn't in fact clean my rifle until I gave it back. Because I in fact decided I was not going to carry a weapon. And I wasn't going to tell anyone I wasn't going to…I had this sense, which I think was actually a bit of good inside that no-one is going to fuck around with a doctor on the border. Because the chance is just too great. They're going to be wounded and I will step over their bleeding body and say, I don't like you china because of what you did to me. So I just knew if I didn't make big waves but I just did what I wanted in terms of carrying a rifle, and actually one doctor did say, I'm a pacifist, I'm not carrying a weapon and he was continually being interrogated by military intelligence, sometimes in the middle of the night they'd wake him up and haul him in for interrogation. Whereas I just said I'm not carrying a rifle. One thing I remember is…and now my memory, I know, is uncertain about this, but I've written a letter so it was shortly after I got to the army, I ended up in a small base called Musese. Which was run by a captain and it had Kwangali troops who in retrospect must have been from 202 Battalion but with South African officers. The officers had all been trained at Outdshoorn and they were all deeply traumatised. Deeply, deeply traumatised young men. But the captain was a madman. He had red hair and a red moustache and freckles and he was an Afrikaner, and when he told me to go on parade and I said, which was not true but I said it, I've got orders that I'm here for COM Ops, (*Community Operations)* I'm not here to be part of this base. I'm billeted here but I'm not part of this base. So I have been ordered not to attend parades in case I'm needed for COM Ops. So he swallowed that and then he saw that I put my rifle in my kas and I locked it, so after a couple of days he asked me why wasn't I carrying my rifle? And he put me a time to go to the shooting range and I said, I'm here to heal, I don't carry a rifle. So

	he said, well since I was a baby, I was going to be treated like a baby and I would have 6 troops, a section, follow me everywhere I went. So when I went for a shit I had 6 troops sitting around me, when I went to shower I had 6 troops around me, when I went to the Mission hospital I had 6 troops around me. But you know, I set up a very, very busy schedule. I opened the sick bay at the base to the population. So I had a clinic from…I think it must have been about 8:30ish, I had a clinic for the local people. And then we would have breakfast at 10:30 or 11…I don't remember exactly, but mid morning we would have breakfast, and then I would go to Mission hospitals. The first Mission hospital, the first time I went, I had these idiots…I hated the Kwangali troops, I've never seen such feckless, useless troops in my entire life. But I went in a Buffel and understandably this Catholic Mission was locked *laughs* and no-one was to be seen when we arrived. And I climbed over the gate with my orderly. The troops wanted to follow me but I ordered them back into the Buffel. And it was in the full sun and I actually, I have to say, had no qualms about telling them they must sit in the sun. They wanted to come in and sit under the shade of the tree in the Mission and I said, no you're not going to do that. It took me some weeks to win the trust of the sister at the Mission, and obscurely and interestingly I won her trust really at a moment I threatened to take her to the Nursing Council. Because I'd seen a child, he was very ill, I then made an unscheduled visit the next day late in the evening to see him again and he was worse. And I could see that she had not administered the antibiotics I'd prescribed. So I was so angry I was almost in tears. I said, you're killing this child, I don't care if you like or dislike my uniform, I'm a qualified doctor, you're a qualified nurse, and if you do this again I will strip you of those epaulettes on your shoulders. And you know, this is one thing about black people that I often find, they sort of deal with the heart of you rather than kind of what you say. Because I would have expected antagonism but from then I got the most complete co-operation, and the next time I went I actually had home made lemonade ice cold with ice floating in it. That stage to see even ice was just like paradise.
Interviewer	Where exactly was this place?
Dr M	Musese was about 82 kms west of Rundu. There was only one military road which would go west as far as Nepara and then it would go…the one road would go north to the border at Katwitwi where the Kavango river meets the cutline, and then the other lot would go to those bases with names like Okongo and Eenhana and so on and then eventually to Ondangwa. So in sector two zero the western most space was Nepara, which was 62 kms west of me. And my base was right on the Kavango River and it was next to the compound of a farmer. We called him Oom Piet. I can't remember for some reason his surname. Oom Piet and Tannie something or other were actually very nice to the National Servicemen officers. We could phone home. It was a party line but we could phone home at a set time on Sunday. So each of

	the officers would have a time on Sunday morning when they'd make their phone available. We'd make reverse charges calls but we could phone South Africa. And they were generous to us in little ways, we'd be invited for supper on odd occasions and have koek susters and coffee and nice traditional cuisine.
Interviewer	So in the middle of the border war they were still farming there.
Dr M	They were farming. And in fact I'm good with my hands so I would often go and help Oom Piet with his incredibly antiquated irrigation equipment. He was a genius with his hands. I think he couldn't believe that a doctor could fix an outboard motor, because he told me if I fixed the outboard motor I could go fishing with his little rubber dinghy on the Kavango. So I fixed the motor and he was delighted with that. So there were nice…in fact that's all I wrote to my family about. I wrote about those kind of things that seemed ordinary and nice and I genuinely remembered nothing of what I remembered later. Even directly I came to South Africa. My wife said she was really worried about my sanity. I was totally, totally withdrawn, I was completely frenetic. I completely stopped being a good sleeper. I would wake with every noise at night. I would pace the floor all night. She couldn't sleep because I was so restless. And she said I would say something that sounded kind of warm and loving and immediately I would indicate that I'd actually hardly heard what I'd said the moment before. *Laughs* And I'd never been a person who went to nightclubs, and at one in the morning I'd say, I can't sleep let's go to a nightclub. She said she didn't know who I was. So I came back in a pretty fucked state but I didn't remember anything about why.
Interviewer	And you didn't explore it again for many, many years.
Dr M	I think outside of those, initially quite frequent contacts with friends of mine. So one of them was Steven Miller who was a clinical microbiologist, he still is. And my closest friend at university was here for a year before he emigrated to England. We would visit him. And those were the kind of scenarios we'd talk about the army. Every time I spoke about it I would tell my wife, never let me talk about it because I couldn't sleep all night. I was freaked out. She would say I was post traumatically stressed and I should go for counselling and I said, I feel like a complete *woes*. I mean, people went through much worse than I have and I don't actually see what I'm going to tell a counsellor. So I court-martialled a major, so I hated basics. I said, my time on the border was just so easy. I was in this military camp which is a bit like a holiday place. But I'm remembering things…one of the big things even about the holiday place is, you know, traumatised young men would not go to the dominee because although the dominee when I was first there he was a nice person, but they were seen as basically saying if you've got enough faith you can get through this. Some of the dominees said this and they also said you're fighting for the right. I don't think anybody on the border seriously thought they were fighting for the right after a

	couple of months there. I just don't think you could see routine torture of the local population…these poor bastards had SWAPO on the one hand torturing them and beating them up for information and they had us on the other hand with this treacly disgusting COM Ops exercise where they'd say we're giving you medicine and so on, treating them with the most open contempt.
Interviewer	Just for the tape what does COM Ops stand for?
Dr M	Community Operations and it was a deliberate policy…I'm just trying to remember from my reading when it was, but it was not from long before then, I'm thinking about '81, '82, it became an official policy and in fact 101 Battalion, which was the South West African Territorial Force Battalion, was supposed to be chiefly charged with it. I'd pricked up my ears when they said it in lectures and although I hadn't officially been given any brief to do that, I said, that was my brief. And that was how I managed to go to the Mission hospitals and I motivated for…I found it intolerable to have to requisition a Buffel to go places and to have a military person. My medical orderly had a military driving licence so I requisitioned and I eventually got a Unimog ambulance. And it's another incidence of how stupid I was. I used to drive over these roads that were yellow and red lined and I didn't wait for any official thing to say they'd been swept. Because I said, I've got to get to my clinic. And I often wonder now, you know the longer I was there, the more kind of thing that would happen was they would know that this Unimog ambulance was mine. And people would stand and they would wave me down and then they'd ask me stuff. And sometimes they'd ask me complete bullshit. And I wonder now if they knew there was a mine there and they called my vehicle away from the mine. Because you know it's a dirt road so someone's on the right side of the road you just drive up there and stop. So I've often wondered now because I can remember sometime drivig off and saying to the orderly, what the hell was that about? Why did they want to talk to me? So in retrospect now I do wonder if I didn't leave a…
	END OF SIDE B *(counter at 423)*
	TAPE 2 SIDE A
Interviewer	…you were based there, you were driving around in your ambulance and so on. Then what happened, how long did you stay in that sort of position at that base?
Dr M	Well that's what I've only realised recently I don't know the answer to. I've only recently been retrieving memories. That I was definitely as far east as Katima Mulilo. I was involved with something to do with Koevoet there and it is a very bad memory and I can't retrieve much of it. I can remember seeing a body tied to the bumper, not the mudguard, of a Casspir. I can remember seeing…and this is interesting to me because although I had as I thought expunged all of this from my mind, I told a patient of mine in '91, that I saw Eugene de Kock standing with his head out of the hatchway of a Casspir near Katima Mulilo. Now I had

	completely blocked that memory from my mind and I just am amazed and somewhat appalled that I did remember it in '91 and I told this patient of mine that I'd seen him there and I told her that he was a big Afrikaner standing in this powerful, menacing machine which was shaking the earth as it went past and it was like this whole archetype of the power and the indominitability and the ruthlessness of the SADF and what was being done. Anyway so I can't really answer your question properly because I had no memory of this. I'll tell you how it happened, when I was actually dealing with very bad memories of from when I was five years old, I couldn't sing, my throat would close. And from the time I started reading these army stories in An Unpopular War, I couldn't sing anymore. I couldn't reach the upper six notes of my range at all, my throat would close and in fact I would want to burst into tears. It was quite humiliating. I've got a very understanding teacher and I was quite open about what was happening to me and she was very sympathetic and tried every trick she had in her lexicon to make me be able to access those notes, and again and again I could do it when I was doing scales and arpeggios, but as soon as I sung a song with any emotional content I couldn't access those notes. And on the 10th of July I was coming back from a lesson, I was on the motorway, and a thought occurred to me that the last time my voice had given in on me like this, with this peculiar sensation of being throttled, was when I was accessing these traumatic memories of my 5 year old self. And actually as I thought that I got an incredibly intrusive picture of a Puma helicopter viewed from the port side, about a three quarter view to the rear, and as I watched it and I got other inputs, I got a very…I got the sound, I could see the shimmer in the air from the exhaust port, I could see dust swirling and as I watched this sort of camouflaged (*inaudible)* I the rump of the aircraft, two black holes appeared in it, quite big holes, and they smoked slightly, and absolutely incredulously I realised these are bullets and they've hit the helicopter and to hit the helicopter they've come over my head. And it was so intrusive that I was battling to make a following distance from the car in front of me, I was in the fast lane, and I knew there was a car trying to overtake me on the inside the way they do, and I was aware I had to leave enough of a space for it to slot in because it was being driven…and I was really battling, I didn't have enough spare concentration to indicate and get onto the shoulder of the road, so I felt I was a guided missile, I was not in control of the car. And the content of this was so powerful my legs felt weak, my bowels felt loose, I couldn't breathe, and actually I wanted to cry. It was these very intense emotions and the sight all at the same time. It took me from…at that stage I was between the Corlett Drive offramp and Atholl Oaklands…it took me all the way until just before the Riviera offramp before I could actually get off the highway. I managed to blot it out enough…I was kind of conscious of the emotional content of it but I could blot out the image enough to get home. And as I went in I said to my wife, I can't believe it, I'm getting hallucinatory things. I said, the only

	explanation if it's not a hallucination is that I was under fire on the border but I don't remember it. And actually I really thought I was going to burst into tears, so…my daughter was there with a friend, I didn't want to get too emotional in front of them, so I went to the bedroom and she followed me there and she said she didn't say this now, but I understood her to say, you know you heard so many people's bad stories that maybe it's all been stirred up and your vivid imagination is creating this picture. And actually that was very comforting to me to think that. So I blotted it out and I didn't think about it again, and then I woke up at two in the morning, and this has been most nights since then, I wake up at two in the morning with some particularly violent memory. And these memories are true intrusive memories, they've got smell, they've got taste, they've got touch, and particularly they've got this incredible adrenalin charged sense of terror, anguish, and misery with them. Anyway over about three or four nights more and more of the memory came back and I eventually remembered that memory in a lot of detail…in fact I got two images on the motorway…but the image of the helicopter being hit, I was running with…there were 3 of us holding a stretcher. I had ordered the major, who was the pilot of this helicopter to stay on the ground while I fetched the last of the wounded, I think there were about 10 wounded. They were all Unita soldiers. And I think from the vegetation it was somewhere in Cuando Cubango province. We were never told where we were. I have a sense it was very far into Angola because we flew for a very long time to get there. And these people were all injured for at least 48 hours. They were shrapnel injuries and they were all smelly – that was gangrene, so it was really in some ways a late salvage of very, very seriously injured men. They were all dehydrated, so we dripped them on the ground and we injected them with an opiate called sosegon**.** And this last memory, as I'm running, I start to hear, you know the sound of rifles, it sounds really innocuous, it sounds a bit ludicrous like a popping noise, a lot of corks popping. But it also a moment later you realise and you suddenly feel weak with horror I think, that this is rifle fire, and then seeing the bullet holes appear on the helicopter, there was not just the bullets that come over my head, I'm in the line of sight whoever is firing that, but also is the helicopter going to take off without me? Because I told the major, he didn't want to stay, and I mean I don't remember now what happened, but he must have been aware that this Unita base was under attack. And…I told him that in terms of section 19C of the military disciplinary code I was the superior officer and I was giving him an order as a superior officer in the course of my military duties. That's one of the few things I really remembered from my lectures, the military disciplinary code. And I told him that he had to stay on the ground. In retrospect, I'm sure I was wrong to do that, because I put all the occupants of the helicopter, and I can't remember how many there were but there were many, and myself and the three orderlies who ran with me for that last patient, and it was about 200 metres away that we ran. And I can remember this terrible

	feeling like I was running as fast as I could but I wasn't moving, and I'm feeling I couldn't breathe, and I think panic must have lent us wings because I see the bullets and the next thing we are jumping with bruising force into the helicopter and it's taking off without us securing the stretcher. As I'm running to it I can still hear the swearing in Afrikaans from the major, you know…you varknek and Soutpiel and fokken kont and all kinds *laughs* of words along those lines. And the thing I really admire about him in retrospect and I feel bad about, he actually did stay there until we got on the helicopter. And interestingly just after that…I always have this memory of the border and I've never asked myself where it came from…it's being in the helicopter which is on its side, so it took off and it literally stood on its side and peeled back to Namibia. And I've always had this image of looking down, seeing this sunlit, mostly a bare dirt compound with debris, ratpacks, bits of plastic, ammo boxes, piles of human shit, old boots, and seeing the dust swirling, and knowing I'm safe because the centrifugal force is holding me against the floor of the helicopter. I've always had this memory but I've never asked myself where does it come from? So that is the moment I now know that it came from as it took off and then it was the most terrible long trip back. Everyone on that helicopter hated my guts. Because really, I'd put them in severe danger and the Unita soldier that we'd rescued died on the way back.
Interviewer	But what was your option? Was it to just abandon these soldiers?
Dr M	Well you know, medicine accepts the principle of triage, so when you've got a disaster and you can save some people and you can't save other people then you've got to make a decision. You've got to play God. You've got to say this person can be saved, that person I can do nothing for, and you actually have to have the moral courage to make the decision, I will have to bear the opprobrium and the guilt of this choice but this is the choice I must make, and I think in retrospect that choice was wrong. To put all those lives at risk to run all the way…I mean it's like a comic book super hero, it was wrong to do that. And I feel this major was entitled to shout at me and I actually feel extremely grateful to him that he didn't take off. And I didn't have a rifle, none of us were armed, so we were in this base…I remember Unita soldiers running past me to go towards the source of the firing, and I don't think any further bullets were fired over my head. But those two bullets hitting the helicopter were just a powerful…I think it's the first time I was ever fired on. And it was a bad enough experience to be blanked out completely until…the other memory that I had on that same thing…I've got these two memories right next to each other, and that was being on foot…part of this memory I've also always had and again I've never asked myself where it was. Now I know the terrain around Musese and the immediate area very well. It was definitely not there. So I've been looking on Google Earth and I recognise that terrain as being…and in fact a patient of mine who also had bad experiences and was in Angola in 1976, '78 and '81, he said to

	me initially that's got to be one of the alluvial floodplains. Because it's grey earth, quite hard packed, with patches of red kind of exposed, red earth. Very stunted trees, all about 30, 40 metres apart and some kind of Acacia, and they all looked as if they'd been burned at some time in the recent past, but they had scanty leaves. And this memory is very, very intense. I can feel the air is so hot it's like breathing oil and it feels as if there isn't enough oxygen in the air. I can smell that I'm smelly, I'm stinking of sweat, and it's a kind of bad sweat that you get if you've been terrified for a long time. I can feel crystals of salt between my collar and my neck, and my collar feels like sandpaper. I'm quite badly burned, I'm wearing browns which are short sleeved and just above my elbows down to my hands is burnt red. My neck and my face are burnt, I'm not wearing a hat. The people with me, I know the one is a sergeant and I can see his face as I'm speaking to you but none of us are wearing rank or unit insignia. This when I got this memory was a puzzle to me. I've since learned that if you were in a helicopter just in the front line where action was taking place, you didn't wear rank, but I didn't know that until I got this memory. And I asked this same person who had been in '76, '78 and '81. And this memory, we are in a state that we are totally, totally keyed up. We've been keyed up and tense, it feels like for hours and a helicopter suddenly appears. It's a thing that I have always remembered and that is that the helicopters would fly very low and very fast and they'd fly abreast. They didn't fly in line astern because then someone with an RPG weapon or a SAM missile apparatus could get ready to fire at one of the later helicopters. And I also remember that the helicopter comes very low and very fast and the extraordinary thing the bush is silent. You don't hear anything and suddenly there's this incredible noise and the helicopter is right above you. I still don't fully understand how the acoustics of that work. And there's this helicopter, and I've always had this image and I thought it was close to Musese but I never ask myself why is the vegetation wrong. And the helicopter is suddenly really just over me sort of, in army terms, at about 11 o'clock and very low, about 30 metres in the air, and there's this instant of terror because we expected it to be a Hind gunship. I don't know why, in this memory, I definitely expected a Russian helicopter. And the fact that it was a Puma, it was just this complete sick relief, and then this desperation because I didn't have a way to signal it. And the sergeant behind me must have had a flare, it was definitely not a smoke grenade because in my memory I can see there's a puff of smoke over his left shoulder and now my memory is that he set off a flare. I don't see the flare in this memory. I just see his body hunched and he's just set it off. And then I can hear the helicopter, there's a kind of Doppler effect and you can hear that noise that the rotors make when they hit an air pocket. And then it's kind of clawing its way back to us. And my memory, and I must ask helicopter pilots if they did this kind of thing, they didn't put the wheels down. They just hovered just above the ground, and we ran like mad and we leapt onto it and literally as we hit

	the deck its tail went up, its nose went down and it fucked off out of there fast. So the pilot definitely had a sense of this was a dangerous place to be. Now, under hypnosis yesterday…I don't know for sure if it's linked to this memory but, it's still a very raw memory, and it's still very not filled in. But I have a memory of being on the ground, there's an incredible amount of dust, grey dirt in the air, and the amount of noise that is absolutely insanity. There are mortars going off. I can see the black smoke and there's this prolonged kind of billowing cloud after the mortar goes off. And I know that there is a machine gun that we didn't expect, and the machine gun as I watch on its tracer, it hits the helicopter and it stitches the helicopter from the nose to the rear of the fuselage. And I can see the shadow of the pilot against the glass and he's not moving and I don't know if he's alive or dead, I don't know if he somehow ducked it or missed it, but I mean I suspect that pilot was killed. And the helicopter, I can see the silver of the rotors, they're going quite fast but the helicopter is on the ground, and as I watch the left front of the helicopter lifts slightly, it slews very suddenly about 45 degrees and bangs down on the ground again with dust coming up from the wheels. And the rotor starts slowing down. I think that helicopter must have been immobilized. In the same kind of state of images I see a young man in a bush hat, white National Serviceman, probably in full kit, and as I look his mouth opens, either in a scream or shock and he crumples and he's running forward at full tilt and he stops dead, lifts slightly in the air and falls to the ground. So I know that he was hit. And then just after that something hits me in the face and I can't remember…I remember not being able to see through my left eye. And I remember the same sergeant that was in the memory that I had first, he's got a rifle in his left hand at the time, he grabs my shoulder and he pulls me down to the ground and he pulls me down so hard that my forehead this the ground. And I can taste the dirt in my mouth. And then he grabs me and he runs with me into the bush…this was a kind of a clearing. The clearing was full of dead bodies, some of them National Servicemen, some of them black soldiers in brown uniforms and some of them in the uniforms that were just kind of motley rags. And from photographs I've seen later, I think it must have been one of the PLAN bases because there's that…you know they dug trenches that was underground, so there was a zig-zag of covered trenches. And then I have a memory of just running and this sergeant grabbing my shoulders and pulling me down with him to the ground at intervals. I don't remember anything about why and what was happening. And at some point, if this is the same memory, and it must be because it's the same man, he didn't have his rifle, he was the only one of us with his bush hat still on when we were picked up by the helicopter. And then I can remember someone saying in Afrikaans, he's lost his senses, about me. So I think that's very likely to be why I was on the ground and in Angola with a sense of miraculous relief when a Puma came overhead.

Interviewer	In any of these memories do you remember having to treat anybody, to deal with an injured person?
Dr M	Yes. that's one of my worst memories actually. Until recently I couldn't tell you without crying. It's a memory that has been modified by hypnotherapy techniques, I can talk about it now. But in this memory it was also, we came in as a first wave. So 20 minutes after the attack had started on the SWAPO base, and I think it must have been part of operation Egret. My main reason for believing that is this memory came back on the 11th of September. I just had a strong feeling that it was the 11th of September. The 11th of September was a Sunday. On the 12th of September I wrote a letter to then my girlfriend and it is like written by a machine. There's not a single emotion in that whole thing. And I mention in that that I had to go to Rundu. So I think I got to Rundu and I was put onto the search and rescue flight. And I remember the helicopter accommodation area or administration area, and we were waiting there and then we went in with the, 20 minutes afterwards, so there was still dust and gun smoke in the air, cordite, bodies on the ground. And there was this young white National Serviceman, no rank, I don't know what rank he was, had this very straggly blond moustache and his face was kind of incredibly dirty and there were tears streaks, so he'd been crying. And when I came he had these wound dressings bound on his chest, his tunic was kind of partly ripped open. So the Ops medic said he'd actually sustained chest injuries. So I unbound them to look at them and as I did it they started to bubble. So clearly they were penetrating injuries. I remember looking down at my hands, they were filthy, there was no water to wash and I grabbed a silk suture and I literally cobbled about 4 or 5 of these bubbling wounds closed and I put in an intercostal drain. We really didn't have the kind of training you needed for this work. We really didn't. He was still conscious and I said to him, don't worry, I'll get you back to the states, you'll be fine. I really regret saying this because he died. He was unconscious by the time we got him onto the helicopter. We had one drip up and he plainly lost a lot of blood. On the helicopter his blood pressure kept falling. It was very difficult to measure blood pressure so I did it with the pulse. I got another drip up which was something of a triumph and we put something called Haemaccel which is a plasma volume expander but the blood pressures kept dropping. And I've got very intense memories of looking down at him, he had a very stained sort of canvas watch strap with a velcro cover to it. Very dirty. He was very dirty. He had a heart tattooed on his forearm with an arrow through it and the initial L. And I remember thinking Louise or L whoever she is, is in for bad news. He had a gold chain on with a St Christopher and a cross on it. And when his blood pressure kept falling we stripped him completely and he was wearing brilliant scarlet underpants. And you know just these memories…I knew what all this meant. The scarlet underpants is an attempt to get some kind of individuality where you've got none. The cross and chain as well. And I knew

	he'd put that thing on his forearm so every time he looked at his watch he was reminded of his girlfriend. It was incredibly poignant for me but the worst is seeing him struggle to breathe, and being totally helpless and I just knew if I were in Milpark Casualty, or Trauma Unit as it is now and I had all these highly qualified staff I may have lost him, but just to feel this totally ill equipped…ill equipped by reason of my skills, ill equipped because I had no staff who were trained to help me, and certainly ill equipped because we had a couple of bottles of Haemaxcell and some bottles of Maintelyte and that was what we had to try and remedy a really desperate injury. In retrospect now, because I can see his wounds, I think he developed something called disseminated intravascular coagulation, which is a kind of a shock. All the platelets in the body clot and then there's no more clotting capacity, and the reason I think that is very watery blood started to drain from the chest wounds that I'd cobbled together. Anyway, he died, and I remember…you know these memories have got details that you can't explain…I remembered was the third sortie…now the word sortie has never been in my vocabulary before and it's linked very much to this memory – the third sortie. And I completely, completely lost it. I was screaming, I was crying, I started punching the inside of the Puma metal fuselage, I drummed my fists on the frame of the stretcher. I was cursing God actually. Now you can't hear what people are saying, but it must have been obvious that I was cursing God. And that's one of the beautiful memories I have of the time is this very young ops medic looking up at me and I could see his mouth saying, it's not your fault doc, it's not your fault. And that was really a benediction, it was just…it sort of pulled me back. I literally was prepared to jump out of the helicopter. I'd completely had enough. And just sort of seeing that, and there was a lot of compassion in his face, there was no judgement at all, I was an officer, and I was losing it, there was no judgement. And I just remember in that moment…and I think this was significant for my capacity to block these memories…I remember this incredible effort that I made, I said to myself, you have to become a machine, you have to pull yourself together, you have to be an example, and there are other wounded men on this plane. And I somehow just completely took all my emotions and I bundled them into this cage and I shut the lock and I pushed it deep out of my consciousness. And I turned like a machine and started dealing with the next wounded person. very recently I was assisting Dr ….(*name excluded)* who is a superb vascular surgeon…I've always remembered he was a brigadier. He was a Citizen Force brigadier and I always remembered he was there at the time there was a massive push by FAPLA and Cuban troops against Mavinga. The first of the 4, the ultimate last one was successful. That was the first, and I know that from my reading we were given absolutely fuck all information about what was going on. But he was there for the incredible stream of Unita injuries and I think I've attained a lot of survivor guilt over that. I felt, here's my white skin coming from the country that's causing

	all this conflict, safe because all of these absolutely destitute black people in Unita are taking these injuries. I felt such guilt over that, and I always kind of did…I went the extra mile, I would be there late at night…I wasn't posted in Rundu, but at the times…I only remembered this as I say about 2 weeks ago, I was assisting Dr L , and it just, as I was assisting him it came to me that I'd assisted him all night for several nights in a row in Rundu. So I said to him, Lewis, do you remember me assisting you in Rundu? So he said, yes. So I said, you've never spoken about it. So he said, well I don't remember the details but you were there, those were long hours we spent. I thought, fuck this, I didn't remember any of this. So I've always remembered, and in fact since I was in the army, if I come to a road accident, before I was always the kind of person who jumped out and tried to help. Now I feel a sense of panic, I do not want to see mutilating injuries and not be equipped to deal with them. I cannot bear the thought of it in fact. So I never stop at road accidents, I never stop when someone…I've done it once since in…I can even remember the date it was…sometime in March 1991. So that's the only time I've ever stopped. I now know it's, all of those injuries were mutilating. So they're people who stood on a POM-Z…I can remember one guy lost his leg, he lost part of his buttock, he lost his balls. And when we were saving his life I had this strong feeling, is he going to thank us for this? And the shrapnel injuries, basically you slash everything open and leave it to drain and heal from the inside out. I mean Lewis to me is lacking in insight because he said it was fun and most of the people got well, and I said to him then and there, I said, you didn't see all the people who died on the helicopter on the way back. you didn't see the body bags. I felt incensed actually.
Interviewer	Did he seem to be surprised that you'd forgotten? Did you tell him that you'd forgotten the details at all?
Dr M	I did. And he was actually quite sympathetic. He said he'd heard of it before, and he said the mind is an amazing thing. So he has experience people who've done that before. And I mean that's the thing that came to me after that is I cannot bear mutilating injuries and I really cannot bear severe trauma on a roadside accident when I don't have the equipment that you need to deal with it. And the trained staff to assist me because in fact the doctor is not even as important as the trained trauma sister and having the equipment there right at hand, and someone trained to put it on a tray ready to give you. Because you have seconds sometimes in which to act.
Interviewer	Do you remember the third sortie, do you have any memory of landing somewhere and people talking to you, people saying, take a break, people giving you a cup of tea, anything like that?
Dr M	No. No there was…you know one of the most traumatic memories which I haven't fully accessed, I remember having my hands bound by a white rope, it was tied to a stake, it was about 10 metres long and I'm running as fast as I can because

	someone is setting a German Shepard on me, and my hands are jerked violently and I crash to the ground on my right shoulder, and whoever is holding…I can't see his face in the memory, I can see his thighs and he's wearing non standard canvas boots but kind of paratrooper boots. And I've always had a memory of that. I did medical examinations and signed affidavits to the effect that Koevoet was physically assaulting local people, plaaslike bevolking…
	SIDE B *(counter at 10)*
Dr M	…I always remembered that it was affidavits plural. In my possession I have only one affidavit and in it I don't mention Koevoet. And I just have a strong feeling although I remember nothing definite that this bad time in Katima Mulilo has to do with Koevoet and that they in fact took me into custody because I'd had the temerity to sign an affidavit, and I think I gave in and gave them the affidavits. And I think, and this is the ambiguous relationship and that's why I mention it now, Commandant Smit, it was a very patriarchal, he took no care of our mental well being and in fact our physical well being. I wrote a letter every week to say our food was atrocious. And he would sometime laugh at me and say I was a windgat Soutpiel, and he would say he used those letters I wrote him to vee his gat af. I think that he told Koevoet you release that officer of mine right away. And fuck you give him back. Because I think that was the kind of person he was. So maybe we were like his kind of trained dogs and we were available to him but we were definitely put himself out to make sure. A couple of times I ran into trouble with the airforce ordering them to send a helicopter and they thought…the once was with the black 101 Battalion troop who was injured in a Buffel accident. This I've always remembered. And the flight lieutenant who was on the radio, said couldn't he go by Samil? And I said, no he can't, he will be in too much pain. He had a compound fracture of his ankle. And he said, no, in his judgement he could go on a Samil. And I said to him, your judgement doesn't count in terms of Section 19C of the disciplinary military code and I'm the ranking medical officer. If you want to get the surgeon general on the phone to countermand my order you can do so, but until such time as you're prepared to do that you will send a helicopter and you'll send it immediately. So when I got back into Rundu I was hauled onto the carpet and told I must not speak on the radio like that. But he, Commandant Smit, did support me because I was told that the flight lieutenant had phoned and asked Commandant Smit to countermand the order and he said, he's the ranking medical officer and he's right. You do that, you send the helicopter. And the other time, and I had no idea why I was in this place, I was on the Kavango river near Katwitwi, which is miles away. And what I was doing there I don't know, but there was this young black guy, a kid, 12 years old, and then a hippo had attacked him in his dugout canoe and the tooth had gone right through the solid wood canoe and through his thigh. Miraculously missing his thigh bone and missing the femoral artery and the

	circumflex femoral and the femoral nerve…missed everything. But it was about an 8cm length slit where it went in and about a 4cm where it came out the other side. So it was this huge gash. And I spoke, and this time it was an airforce major, and I said I wanted a helicopter to get this kid to Rundu. So he said, wouldn't it be possible to look after him at Nepara military base? And I said, no. Although I think it's missed all his vital structures, where it is it might have hit it and it might suddenly start pumping. So he said, alright he'd send in a helicopter and he joked, he said, he supposed that the hippo doesn't brush his teeth. And I said to him, the only animal that does brush his teeth has a far more dangerous bite. Apparently this was considered insubordination so a complaint was made about me and I was again reprimanded for abusing formal radio talk. And he backed me up there too. So he called me in and he said, I afforded him a lot of mirth because I was such a windgat Soutpiel but he wasn't going to take it any further.
Interviewer	He was the commanding officer in charge of…?
Dr M	He was the head of SAMS at two zero.
Interviewer	Your flashback to what you think was Koevoet and Katima, essentially if I interpret that correctly, you were taken into custody by Koevoet and tortured because they felt that you were…
Dr M	I think so. I cannot think who else would tie my wrists together to a stake in the ground…and it's definitely that, it's like sea sand. The soil around there is like sea sand. And there's a stake in the ground and actually the memory, the dog is so terrifying it took me awhile to identify it as a German Shepherd, just these glaring eyes and these teeth and this kind of ruff of white fur around its head and the pointed…but eventually it can only be a German Shepherd, the dog that was attacking me. And it was pulled back quite violently by someone just before it sunk its teeth into me. And I've always remembered the affidavits and actually when I went through my papers I was surprised I only had one. Because I always remember it was affidavits plural. And I'd always remembered I'd mentioned the name and the officer who had actually done the assaulting. And in this, it's a very tame affidavit, it just said, these are the injuries. It didn't say who had done them. So I think after that, probably with great courage and fear, I did that one later one which was for a child. But…that's the only thing that makes sense to me. I have always…when I think of Koevoet, even the words Koevoet, they strike a feeling of terror into me. I'm terrified at the thought of Koevoet. I don't have any sense that they're on the same side as me. Even Three Two Battalion I can remember being in Angola and being relieved that these monsters are on my side, I've got some monster protecting me, but that's what I felt about Three Two Battalion. About Koevoet, I felt they were monsters attacking me.
Interviewer	Were you ever required to treat Koevoet guys?

Dr M	Yes, they would come into the base from time to time and they would demand medicines and I would always tell them I don't have it or I don't have the authority to give it to them. I didn't…I really can't tell you how profoundly I hated them, I hated their Casspirs, I hated their uniforms, I hated the way they swaggered, and I hated the way they drove around with bodies tied to their vehicles.
Interviewer	And then Three Two Battalion, did you walk with them…were you on foot or were you flown in? Do you remember?
Dr M	I feel reticent about saying I do remember…because I always used to say I remember everything, but when I actually remembered the memories I have fill about a quarter of the time. There's a lot I don't remember and my efforts to get…the Lutheran minister was with me, I've got his e-mail address, he hasn't replied to my e-mail. In fact none of the people who were my friends with me in the army, a couple have been delighted to hear from me but when they hear that I'm thinking about dealing about this, reading of this, they don't want to talk about it. So I think like me they've banished it completely from their consciousness. I think if you spoke to my friend Michael, if you spoke to this dominee, Hugo Filter, they would not remember even that I've emailed them.
Interviewer	That's very interesting because these people are like yourself, they are qualified people, I don't know what they do with their lives now but I presume that they carry on practising medicine and so on and so forth…
Dr M	Michael is a chief paediatrician at a hospital in Alberta in Canada.
Interviewer	So these are not unintelligent people yet somehow they've managed to create this firewall around their memories.
Dr M	My second letter to my wife during basics, I say it in black and white. I said to her, I'm not going to tell you about the bad things that happen here. I myself am not going to remember the bad things that happened yesterday and I'm not going to think about the bad things that are threatened for tomorrow. I will only live in the present, and if the present is unendurable, I will think about when it's finished. And I think I did exactly that.
Interviewer	Now during this time, you were in the army for 2 years, did you come home on passes and things like that?
Dr M	Yes. The first pass was about the 16th of February, and I'm pretty sure about that date because the first pass I went to my sister-in-law's wedding. And that was the first time I'd ever been on a plane. So my wife booked tickets for me and I went from Joburg to Durban and Durban to Empangeni. And my wife says that I was completely bossies. She said I was emotionally very distant. She said I slept…I got there Friday night…on Friday night she said I woke up, I was sleepwalking and I was screaming and shouting and I thought I was on the shooting range, and it took

	her a quarter of an hour to wake me up. She said I was looking for my ground sheet and nothing she could tell me…couldn't wake me up and she couldn't tell me I was safe, I wasn't anywhere… *interruption*
Interviewer	Ok, so we've just gone through the Koevoet thing, and then I think somewhere along the way I asked you about, do you remember any of these aircraft landing, any time that you were helped out…sorry I know where we left off…you said your wife had struggled to wake you when you thought you were on the shooting range you were looking for your ground sheet…
Dr M	And she said, she had an old boyfriend of hers was there, and she said he said to her, why are you going out with this fuckhead, he doesn't pay you any attention. *Laughs* So it obviously was bad enough to be visible to a stranger. And then our second pass was cancelled at the last minute and we had the worst opfok that I can remember. That was a very significant moment for me because I reached the point where I knew I would rather die than continue to be a good soldier. It was so bad, it went on for about three and a half hours. I mean, in the course of it we were…we had to squirm on our faces through a ditch that had filled with mud and diesel oil and old car oil and bricks. And we had to go under a series of planks and they required in fact that you put your face down and your eyes were out going through this muck. My rifle was completely full of mud, the whole barrel was completely blocked with mud. And then the last straw was we had to do firemen's lifts and it was under pressure because the platoon that won would be able to stand down for a smoke break for 15 minutes. And the last member of the platoon had to be in, so we had to fire lift each other running for about…firemen's lift…in full kit, a hundred metres around a tree and back again. And actually it was easier for me to carry the other guy…to be carried I remember my balls felt like I was…I was in absolute agony the whole way. In fact I was crying with pain by the time we came in, and actually I got off this guy's back and I just grabbed my rifle by the barrel and I dragged the butt on the ground and I just started walking in the direction of the base. And I remember vaguely…I think I was maybe even semi conscious en remember the lieutenant screaming at me, he was a little man with a shrill voice. I paid no attention to him and then a couple of other people stood on each side of me and shouted. And then I think they got worried because I think they thought they had killed a doctor. I mean, I don't actually know in retrospect how worried they really were, but certainly they were worried enough to back off and then they detailed one of the corporals to walk back with me back to the base, and in fact possibly that shook them because the opfok stopped shortly afterwards. So all the guys came marching back past me to the base, but I refused to march. I refused to go in step. I just trudged, and I trudged there and I walked into the bungalow and I started peeling off my kit and getting off the mud before I went in, and basically getting ready, and I paid no attention to what anyone said to me. And I think at

	that moment they lost any chance…I think that was the beginning of my recovery from the brainwashing, because after that…you know what I perceived was that if you marched purposely on the base the would assume you were following a legitimate order. So it was as brazen as if we were ordered onto the parade ground, I'd march in the opposite direction. Obviously not every time but frequently I would march in the opposite direction and I would skulk somewhere, so behind the officer's mess was a good place because there was no-one there all day, and there were some trees and shaded places there. You had to keep your wits about you because if anyone came in your line of sight you had to go around the edge of the wall so that the officer or whoever was marching past didn't see you. But within limits and I got away with it very, very…the one time that I was nearly caught was I was with 2 other guys who fortunately were light duty. And the officer said, well, I'm going to really fuck you guys up, what do you think you're doing? And he read the first two light duties and I was holding mine out as if it was light duty, but it wasn't. He didn't bother to read mine. *Laughs* And when they did counter insurgency operations, I marched to the vehicle park and got onto a vehicle going to Potchefstroom. And I looked at the degrees of all the medical people there and there was one dentist who'd qualified at Wits, Mark Rumbak, now a Maxillo-facial surgeon. I went to him and said, Mark, I don't care, you are to pull out a tooth, you find some reason to do something on my teeth, I'm not going on TEIN ops So he pulled out a molar and he gave me a poorly worded sick note which said I was from this date to this date, and the date that I must be back was a Monday, and we were supposed to go on counter insurgency operations Monday morning. So I arrived on Monday evening. So technically I was…and the whole week I slept under the bed in the bungalow, I didn't switch on the lights, I ate out of tins, didn't have the shower going, I skulked for that week. To my surprise there were 2 guys from the platoon also skulking there. They'd somehow gotten out of it. So we played cards during the day but we didn't dare have a light on at night. And so maybe it was fair that I was 218th out of 250, because I was the most unparaat person from then on.
Interviewer	Well when you think about what you were going through I'm not surprised you skulked. A lot of people did.
Dr M	I in fact regard it with pride now. I regard myself with a very critical of any time that I did even think that I wanted to…the one thing that was a surprise to me, I always thought that I would like firing a rifle. I thought that would be…that boys with toys stuff would be fun. I think after a diet of weekends at Bara with gunshot wounds, I thought a gun was the most disgraceful, horrible thing and I had no pleasure in firing the gun at all. And in fact it was a moment of pleasure in another way for me because the corporal, for years afterwards, I would quite truthfully say if I could kill him I would. But I would just hold the rifle against my shoulders so that I didn't get injured by it, but I didn't watch where

	I had the barrel and I would just pull the trigger, and every time I fired there they would wave a flag sort of to 180 degrees to show that they hadn't seen it went where *laughs* . So I completely fucked up the platoon's statistics because not a single one of my bullets was seen, short of going into space. And the corporal took off his beret and flung it on the ground and jumped on it *laughs* in such a rage and that was really a wonderful moment. *(Counter at 201)*
	TAPE THREE SIDE A *Second part of interview 14/12/07*
Interviewer	…spoken before and I know that many other memories have come back to you since we started speaking, and I'm just happy to explore lots of aspects of them. You were saying that you've got these bad memories of Koevoet and Three Two Battalion.
Dr M	In fact Three Two Battalion the memory…there were people I was scared of there, but there were also I think people I admired and who contributed to my own safety. We all knew that they were superb soldiers, superbly good at what they did. They were permanently there in the bush, they could live off the bush, they could run rings around SWAPO and PLAN, and definitely around FAPLA troops. So there was a sense of safety when Three Two Battalion were around. Koevoet were like mad pit bull terriers. They went around killing and they rejoiced in killing. And really the terrible seamy underbelly of a repressive state apparatus, that was there. So I remember an incident, and I think it must have been inside a temporary base inside Angola, because it was a very rudimentary kind of camp with cut down thorn trees around the edge, as always had a temporary base, had just one entrance. And I remember this…he had a British accent but he was a sergeant, very, very heavily built muscular guy. And he actually threw a grenade inside the camp. And I just remember it always as being an incident that just shows how mad we all were. We all dived to the ground and were terrified and then a lot of people laughed, and then I just picked myself up, wiped the dust off myself and carried on with what I was doing, as though I hadn't been sure that I was about to die. And he wasn't even reprimanded. It was…we knew, all of us were very close to the edge and this kind of behaviour was normal. The one nice memory I've had and actually it's…in a sense I've always had a kind of memory of this and I've placed it as being at Musese, the military base on the Kavango river I was, but the visuals are actually of a very different…actually even a different kind of a river, also very clear water with this golden beach sand underneath, lovely lush tropical vegetation. And I remember being with a group of black and white troops and it was very different from the South African scenario, is the black troops were equals. I think to some extent in Three Two Battalion that was the case but it was really to some extent, it wasn't totally real.
Interviewer	Because Three Two had white officers.
Dr M	Yes. And they had up to some non commissioned officers as

	black previous…Roberto's troops, what used to be FNLA. And the reason I remember this is we were swimming naked because our clothes were filthy and it was such a wonderful opportunity to wash our clothes, we didn't have soap, but we pummelled them and stamped on them and beat them with rocks, and I can remember all of our underpants were kind of stiff with sweat and dirt and so on, and it was just such a relief to take them off completely and be in the water and clean them and put them out on the bushes to dry. And I remember swimming, and I was very badly burned up to the level of mid upper arm, my face, my neck and the sort of V on my chest, which was the only place exposed from the military browns. And I remember there was such a sense of camaraderie, one of the black guys said, oh you can see all you white men should go back to your northern snows. And there was this hysterical high pitched laughter from all the black guys there, but it was nice kind of, it wasn't nasty. And that wouldn't have happened in a South African setting, I don't think. Anyway I remember that as being a kind of very pleasant interlude just sort of forgetting all our cares and so on, behaving a bit like it was a holiday. And I don't think that lasted for long. But when I spoke to you last, I was actually thinking I'm not going to say anything about…in fact I get anxious just talking about it…I'm not going to say anything about my memories of Koevoet, but it was just talking about it to you kind of triggered this enormous sense of anxiety and fear, and profound disquiet. And when I went next for my next trauma debriefing, *(inaudible)* suggested we go under hypnosis, and actually I was completely certain I would retrieve nothing and what I did retrieve was, military intelligence officers and Koevoet officers came. There were about 2 or 3 Buffels and 4 Casspirs, and they just rocked up without any warning. And this is…I remember Koevoet officers used to do this, they would just rock up in the camp, stride around as if they owned it and make demands. And I was I think quite new there and still a bit wet behind my ears, I didn't know how to handle myself with them. And they came in and they just said to me, as if I knew about it and there were orders to this effect, that I was to come with them to do a COM Ops operation. I must grab my medical bag and I said, well what do you mean a COM Ops operation? No, I must just run a clinic in a rural village. They wouldn't give me any details about what they were doing and they were actually quite contemptuous of me and I really felt this is just going to be a complete army wank. So I got my bag and I got into the back of a Buffel, and we travelled for hours and hours and hours. And I've been able to remember even where I sat in the Buffel and the appearance of the other people in the Buffel with me. The Koevoet guys were white and black and they weren't in any kind of uniform a number of them. They had maybe camouflage pants and a grey shirt and wearing quite funny clothes. Some of them were wearing the police blue peaked cap and any kind of boots but mostly sort of paratrooper kind of boots in all kinds of colours. There were grey-black boots, there were the normal police grey-blue boots, there were black

	boots, you name it, they were a very funny kind of crew in terms of uniform. And I remember we were travelling so long that I started to feel completely exhausted. It's exhausting being in a Buffel.
Interviewer	You were in Buffels but Koevoet usually travelled in Casspirs.
Dr M	There were three Casspirs, they didn't put me in the Casspir, they put me in the Buffel. And there were some other troops, and I actually cannot remember that they had insignia of any kind on. Black and white, I don't know if they were 202 battalion or if they were attached to Koevoet, they were in camouflage. And in fact they were armed with the R1 rifles. Anyway we bounced and I just have memories of the profound discomfort of this. I hadn't put on any kind of sun repellent cream and I was getting burned. Your ass gets very sore on these very hard kind of black rubber seats, and you keep trying to ease that by standing up but that frigging central bar means you can't stand up straight unless you stand on the chair and the roads are bumpy, so you are gripping the top of the side of the Buffel and the bar which is too big for your hand to fit around. It's just whatever position you're in, you're…
Interviewer	That's the roll bar in a Buffel.
Dr M	Yes. And eventually coming towards the end of the day, so we've been travelling from early in the morning, like 7:30ish, it's coming towards the end of the day, we turn off the main dirt road. And I think we must have been going east, and the reason I think we must have been going east, because later that day we definitely passed Three Two Battalion's headquarters. We turned off south on a vestigial kind of track on this sea sandy kind of terrain with quite sparse trees, and the road sort of wound between the trees. It was clearly kind of a rural track. And it ended at one of those stockaded villages. They have sort of old saplings about six centimetres in diameter, about as high as your shoulder or head, and they just poked into the ground and they're kind of loosely kind of tied or splinted together with any kind of thing, from string to rope to barbed wire. And some of them just in the ground. And inside were these incredibly poor huts which were roofed with a very poor quality thatch made from the river reeds, and they were semi buried. They were a bit like… the Highland bothy ? it was really the roof came down to the ground and the living area was about 2 feet below that. So they would dig out a circular pit basically and roof it. And we were…I remember the military intelligence guys in their black berets going forward with this very big heavily built, you know that kind of very muscular person that looks fat and then you look more closely and although they've got a paunch they've got really hectic muscles. And I don't know what his rank was, but he was clearly in charge of the Koevoet guys. And they strode into the village and they'd heard the sound of our engines and in fact we were one of the last vehicles in this convoy. And the Casspirs had just kind of gone off the road on each side and then a car that couldn't kind of park as it were, just

	sort of were in a string behind. So by the time I got out of the Buffel and got my bag and started walking towards them, there was already a collection of villagers with the men closest to the police and then the women and children standing closer to the huts, and I just got the impression of these big white eyes and this sense of incredible weariness and tension among the indigenous people. And there was a lot of talking in kind of very imperious Afrikaans. The local language was Kwangali. And…they had black Koevoet guys and a couple of them were kind of very well spoken confident guys, looked like they'd had a tertiary education, and I remember thinking, how can they be part of this? And they were very ostensibly to interpret, but in fact the Koevoet guys insisted on speaking Afrikaans and being replied to in Afrikaans. And this cringing, thin man in a kind of oversized white shirt and navy blue-grey trousers, barefoot, came out from the crowd, obviously kind of quite terrified, and…it's actually the black guy actually kicked him violently and then when he was on the ground, he and the very big Koevoet guy kicked him a couple of times and then they picked him up and they frogmarched him off to my left between the huts. In the meantime the military intelligence lieutenant came back and he said to me that…in fact we picked up at some point another doctor, an Afrikaans National Serviceman, and we didn't talk to each other because…I don't know, he had a very odd manner. He was extremely surly, and I think he exhibited that kind of strong antagonism many Afrikaans speakers have to English speaking National Servicemen. And we were told to go and set up a clinic in what I think now must have been a hotla. I remember it being as a kind of reed enclosure, much better quality, sort of proper grass reeds. There was matting erected on three sides, and there was a kind of fire pit and there was some fairly rudimentary benches around it and no shade. And he told us to set up a clinic there and I said, but how do you imagine I'm going to get anyone to undress in such a public setting? And he didn't give a rats. It was quite plain it was the most…somebody had ordered them to have a COM Ops operation to mask or to detract from the violence of what they were intending, and that was all they were doing, but they hadn't given it any thought and they didn't have any seriousness about it. I said, you gave me no warning, what do you expect me to do? So he said, just give them tablets, that's all they want. And in fact there was a little queue of people despite the other drama going on, who were standing there, mainly women and children and very old men. And he said, give them malaria tablets, they'll like malaria tablets. So, anyway, we went there and actually then this is when things got really bad. I started to hear things being smashed and screams, women's screams and men's screams. And a lot of the village people kind of disappeared, I don't know if they went into their huts. And then there was a man's voice sort of crying and I could hear a really pleading note in it. It felt terrible because I really felt I should do something to stop it but I was too scared. But I couldn't maintain the farce of the clinic so I didn't open my bag, I just sat down and I said to the Afrikaans doctor,

	they're making fools of us, this is not a clinic and there is no point in pretending they're doing anything as doctors here. He in fact unwrapped his bag and started to take blood pressures and he lined them up and he gave them each malaria tablets and they chewed them. And as you know they're incredibly bitter and I just remember these faces as they chewed the tablets. Anyway I don't really remember how long that went on, but I next remember that it was…I don't think it was a long time because the whole convoy was moving again. I remember the road going through the centre of the village, which seems odd to me, but that's what I remember. And we went through the centre of the village and out the other side, and we travelled for some time again but not as much as an hour. The light was getting really low now, getting that lovely golden look, and the terrain changed, it stopped being sea sandy and it became harder, still with quite yellow gravel. And the first Casspir then came to a halt and I think there'd been several halts with the engine running, no explanation, then it came to a halt in the bottom of a dip. It wasn't quite what they called a shona (*also sometime written ''chana''*) because it was kind of more rocky and rudimentary than that. And we turned right along this dip, so right would have been probably south and a bit west. And…travelled for a short distance, about 400 metres and then we came to a stop…it was at this stage very sparse tussocky grass and spindly bush and no trees. And being the last Buffel, by the time we got there the Casspirs were in a kind of rough laager and all the Koevoet guys were clustered around something when I came closer. Because I got out to see what they were doing. It was a termite hill and you could see the termite hill had been hollowed out and obviously someone had recently broken it all open, there were bits of the hard termite earth lying about and splintered wood and it was empty. It didn't mean anything to me at the time. But now remembering it, I think it must have been an arms cache. And one of the worst memories then is that this very spindly black guy was actually on his knees with his forehead on the ground prostrate with his hands up like that begging for his life. And really that's one of my worst memories, I felt totally complicit in this destruction of him. They had taken some of the other black male villagers from the village and they were standing in a semi circle and I remember looking at them and there was in their faces…a contempt for this guy who was begging for his life. I just had a sense that he would never have a community anymore because he had led them to where the cache was, he'd led Koevoet to where the cache was and now he was begging for his life. So without kind of being privy to exactly what went on it was quite clear to me that he had been beaten up, and his wife too…all the women in the village, they were all going, aweh, aweh, aweh, sort of crying, sort of low moaning distressed sound, a sort of a terrible sound. And I just had such a sense that we can never be forgiven for this. This is such a huge crime against God and…

Interviewer	But realistically what could you ever have done? You as a National Serviceman doctor put your hand up and said, officer stop this, what do you think the response would have been? I don't think there would have been a response, you would have been rejected, I think.
Dr M	Fok weg. But at least I would have made that complaint. Anyway, it's a bad memory of mine and it's one of the most strongly repressed memories and it came out under hypnosis. I then remember driving…I don't know if it's the same day. And this time…I think it was the same day because in the back right seat of the Casspir I remember this totally broken man just sobbing quietly to himself. There were Koevoet guys and military intelligence guys in this Casspir that I couldn't bear them so much that I stood with my feet, I think on the seats. And I put my head through, I thought it was a turret, but I've since looked at pictures and I think the Casspir had a long open panel in the centre. And I was standing really out of it to my waist, we were driving very, very fast through much the same bush but with low trees and it was dangerous to be there because the Casspir was going at about 60kms an hour and it was bucking and bouncing and rolling and it has a very high centre of gravity so it doesn't feel that safe. And I kept on having to duck when there were branches or thorn trees coming towards me, and the guys inside told me to sit down and I ignored them. I couldn't bear to be in the same space as they were. And I remember looking to my right and there's a vehicle that I've since identified as a Kwevoel. And it was funny, it was not in the camouflage of the Casspirs, it was in a kind of pale green, limey green colour. Very odd that I remember…that's what I remember, that was its colour. And we were racing across the veld, it was racing almost parallel with us, and I think it may have been on a road, but I remember it hitting a landmine. Now there's that book called, Taming the Landmine, it's complete bullshit in terms of what I saw. That vehicle was destroyed and it was supposedly mine proofed. There was this unbelievable explosion. I don't think anyone who hasn't experienced it, it was ten times worse than a mortar explosion and that's bad enough. And this immense heavy thing cartwheeled, it seemed like in slow motion, up…I'm not good on estimating distances but it cartwheeled up for an eternity, did several sort of cartwheels, there was all this sort of debris flying around with it, a lot of dust, an incredible amount of grey dust and smoke. Anyway, it did a couple of cartwheels and it landed right side up and it bounced just once and then it ended up facing towards me and the whole engine compartment was totally smashed, the bonnet was gone, the windshield was gone, the roof of the cabin was gone. There were kind of 2…you can't call them bodies…2 sort of smoking partial carcasses sort of left on the seats. It was totally destroyed. You know none of the vehicles stopped. We just carried on and then I remember there were several stops and the light was almost gone and they stopped and had a conference and I gather that they were saying they'd

	have to come back with Bushmen trackers. And…then we went north across the bush until we hit the main dirt road that goes between…I don't know where it goes, east of Katima Mulilo but we did go within west and we came to Katima Mulilo and I'm sure of that because it was the Three Two Battalion headquarters. We went in there briefly and we offloaded this guy who was going to be kept for questioning and they were offensively gentle with him now like he was a naughty child and they'd given him a hiding and now he was going to be good. They offered him water and he would drink water from their own water bottles and so on. And then we got into the Buffel again, after I'd been in the Casspir, we got into the Buffel again and we went west and we stopped, I don't know where it was, a camp with earth walls, very small camp and it had electricity, because I remember they gave me a very filthy sleeping bag and the standard army metal bed with those filthy foam mattresses. And I didn't want to sleep with the guys I was with, I didn't…I went and I sat in the guard hut which had an electric light and I sat in one of those chairs they have in school halls that have got grey plastic seats and I leaned against a wall and I sort of dozed the rest of the night there. And I remember that I really was convinced that there was no God and there was no meaning to life.
Interviewer	Now all these events took place in the same day?
Dr M	I'm not sure about seeing the Kwevoel blown up, but I think it must have been because my memories it was the same guy, the same very thin, scrawny, totally broken man that they had interrogated.
Interviewer	And this period…the interrogation and then the landmine incident, was this before or after your experience that you spoke of last time with Koevoet? With the dog.
Dr M	I think it was before. You know, I have always…Steenkamp's book says that Peter Storey…and I want to talk to him…Peter Storey had been asking questions, had been reported as saying that he had evidence that Koevoet was torturing civilians. Now interestingly I've always remembered that those affidavits that I did were going to be sent to Peter Storey *(an anti apartheid Methodist minister in Johannesburg)*. So I went for my…I've had some weeks not going for counselling…but on my last session I went there and I said, I need to explore that memory, I need to understand what happened. But the memory is that I got my hands tied together with white rope, then I've got a lot of pain and discomfort in my upper arms and my shoulders and I've been in that position for a long time. It actually is torture just being tied like that. And I'm looking down at the back of my hands and I'm burnt and brown and I've sweated a lot and there's dirt in the sweat. So there's sort of rivulets and then there's kind of dirt in the rivulets if you know what I mean and I can see my military browns on each side. My face is very burnt, my neck is very burnt, I'm incredibly thirsty. And I'm running as fast as I can, looking back over my shoulder at a dog. My initial memory is it

	looked like a Husky but I think now it was a German Shepherd a very pale furred, very bushy furred German Shepherd And the rope was tied to a stake in the ground and I was running hard away from the German Shepherd and it yanked me very painfully, and I crashed to the ground on my right shoulder, and as I was looking up and there was dust and stuff in my face from the fall, I could see this dog being yanked back just before it bit me. And there is a black kind of strap like lead holding it. It's snarling and it's terrifying, and I can see in this memory, the right thigh, the right knee and the right foot, and the very muscular arms of the guy holding the lead. And that is…it's almost definitely SWAPO…I forget what they called it, but it was a grey camouflage and the boots were black paratrooper boots. So…I can't make sense of that. I don't know for sure it was Koevoet or 32 Battalion, but I think it was one of them. And what I remember associated with this memory now is that…I was detained for giving the affidavits and I surrendered the affidavits or documents that I had signed to them and that I thought I was going to be killed…I was certain I was going to be killed. And this is, I've always had a very ambiguous memory about Commandant Smit. Because he was quite…I don't know, it's difficult to describe this man…he had a sort of attitude of jovial contempt towards English speaking National Servicemen, perhaps that would be a good way to put it. But I think he felt a strong moral obligation to come to the rescue of any of his ondergeskiktes. And I know that I don't have a memory of how I know…I know that he threatened the Koevoet commanding officer…actually when I say that, I think the Koevoet captain. I know that he told him that there would be questions involved if he didn't return his officer immediately. So I know Commandant Smit got me out of what might have been a life threatening situation. Certainly got me out of torture.
Interviewer	At no time in your memory can you remember the Military Police being involved in a formal procedure of…?
Dr M	No, no. I remember being back with Commandant Smit…I mean there were several times I had this kind of interaction with him. And him saying to me, Soutpiel, you've given me more trouble than all the other officers in two zero. And I can remember him saying that to me. And I've thought it was about other things where I was reprimanded for indisciplined radio conduct…there was a word for it…
Interviewer	Radio protocol?
Dr M	Yes, protocol, but there's an Afrikaans word for it. Anyway, there was once when I told a flight lieutenant who was manning the radio at two zero that I outranked him as the medical officer on the scene because he didn't want to send a Puma. That was for a 101 Battalion troop who had been injured in a Buffel accident, and I was taken along there. That was between Musese and Nepara, which was another military base to the west of it. And they had been drunk and they'd driven this Buffel around and around in this high speed circle, graunching the veld and the

	mostly sea sand like stuff into all kinds of hillocks at a crossroads, and the Buffel had sort of gone over the edge of the kind of gravel that constituted a military road and dug its wheel into the soft sand and then flipped over. And he'd fractured his ankle very badly. So I had come there, and then this flight lieutenant, because it was a black troop, I think, was suggesting I just get a Samil to fetch him in the morning and I said, this is a compound fracture and it needs to go to One Mil (*One Military Hospital*). And he was disputing. And I said, listen I'm the ranking officer here. I'm a medical officer in the course of my military duties under section 19C you are going to be guilty of insubordination and I will have you court-martialled if you don't send a Puma immediately. Then I was reprimanded for bad protocol.
Interviewer	So…thinking back on our discussion last time, your basics were basically…was abuse from start to finish. There were parts of it that were acceptable and not too worrying, but there's a large amount of abuse. You then get off onto this operational area where the abuse just continues and gets down to the Koevoet incident that you talked about. You must have felt incredibly trapped, there was no way out of this. Your service must have seemed like a life sentence.
Dr M	It did but you know how I handled it, I just completely suppressed the memory. You know, looking back on it now, I can see that there are very significant areas where I failed to question the memories I did have. I remember on my way back to South Africa, which was two weeks at least after the rest of my group went back to South Africa, I was asked to do a Casevac to Odongwa. And I've never asked myself why the hell did they ask me to do it, and I realised now it must have been because I had the background of doing Casevacs and I can remember no detail of the injuries of this person or why he needed a doctor to go with him to Ondangwa. And I remember being very well treated by airforce colonel and major general who were piloting this Hercules craft…it just went with one Casevac. The whole Hercules C130 or C160, I don't remember the difference anymore. This whole aircraft went just to take this one stretcher patient to Ondangwa, and you know what, I cannot remember anything about it, but it does seem odd to me that they should have singled me out of a group of medics to go and do this Casevac, and I've never asked myself why did they ask me, why did they think I could do it, what did they think was my qualification to do it? And lots of other things. Of the time I can remember on the border, it's probably about a quarter of the time I was there. And these very, very searing violent memories are I think just the tip of an iceberg of a number of…we didn't call them Casevacs, they were called search and rescue missions. I've never read that in any of the books but I remember that being the term, search and rescue missions.
Interviewer	Yes, I mean, search and rescue is not a term that I know well. Casevac's the common term that everybody uses. I can't recall if

	you mentioned it last time, how long were you on the border for?
Dr M	Well, I've got grey spaces…I've always remembered that I came back mid December. My grey spaces said I came back mid November. My wife remembers…she was my girlfriend then…that I came back mid December as well. So…you know it's such an awkward thing this memory lapse thing. I don't know if I came back and then went back to the border straight away. Because looking at the records that I have retained, I've got that reis wyse *(travel authority)* which is for the 13th of November to go back from Waterkloof to rejoin Med Natal. My memory is that when I got to Med Natal, I overheard a conversation between Captain Holding, who was the postings officer and a real bastard, and a National Serviceman, clearly a favourite Afrikaans speaking doctor…no, in fact, I heard him talking first to the superintendent of Osindisweni, which I knew was a hospital very close to Durban, and the superintendent from the context was clearly pleading for another National Serviceman doctor. And then he kept me waiting, he had a reputation for this, delighting in kind of humiliating and just demonstrating petty power. Because he took a series of phone calls. And then the second phone call was with a clearly favoured Afrikaans speaking doctor saying quite obsequiously, he would find him some good posting and he had something in mind and so on. Anyway when I went in, I was really bossies, I was very, very aggressive. And he said he was going to put me in a hospital called Mbongolwane, which was a 100 kms west of Eshowe. I said, I'm not going there. I overheard your conversation, since you kept me waiting here for half an hour, I overheard that the superintendent from Osindisweni wants me and I have priority because I have just come back from the border. That's the deal. So I want Osindisweni. So he said, he's sorry, he's already got someone for it. I said, I also heard you on the phone, clearly someone that you feel is more worthwhile than I am, but I'm telling you, I've come back from the border and I'm not going to go to Mbongolwane. So we had a bit of a set to, but I think he saw that I was so wired up, I actually could physically have turned over his desk and hit him, I was really, really, really angry. And not under control. So he said alright, I'll make a deal with you, you go to Mbongolwane for a week because I've got no officer there…I remember now, the officer who was there had just gone AWOL, the medical officer, hadn't come back from leave, something like that, but he suddenly had no doctor at this hospital, which in fact desperately needed a doctor. So that's what I did, and then I went to Osindisweni. And my memory is I went to Osindisweni so if it was mid December it really fits because I remember spending just a couple of days there and going on a Christmas break…taking 7 days over Christmas. So to me it fits with

	my memory of just how it panned out, a week at Mbongolwane and then to Osindisweni. So I don't know for sure…I was definitely three and a half months on documents that I can prove I was there, I was there three and a half months. But I suspect there was something…and you know the memory of the incident of going and being there, and torture was definitely early in my time, and my memory is clear, I was really wet behind the ears, I didn't know how to handle these guys. After that although I was terrified out of my wits of them I wouldn't give Koevoet anything. They would come in and they'd ask me for drugs and this kind of thing and I'd say I'm sorry I can't help them, I've got orders from Commandant Smit that this is military Suid Afrikaanse Weermag se voorraad *(stores/supplies)* en jy mag dit nie gebruik nie, and you are police people, go to the district surgeon. I don't even know if there was one, I don't give a rats, I said you must go to the district surgeon for these kind of requests. And they would threaten to be back and threaten to, but they would bugger off and not come back again. And you know, I used a kind of ambiguity, after that I used the whole COM Ops thing as my reason for not participating in any military thing. I didn't get up for parades, I had to go to ordegroep *(order group – officer's briefing)* group once a week, which is…and strangely I remember very little of what went on in ordegroep group. I think I was sent out around military sensitive things, but I was there with the officers for most of the briefings that they got. And one of the briefings I think…I mentioned to you about napalm. So after that I told them I had orders from Commandant Smit to service the local Mission hospitals. And fortunately my orderly was a really nice young Afrikaans guy, called Wickus Els, and he'd been on their border a long time and he knew where the Mission hospitals were. And I think we pitched up first to the Catholic Mission. And at that time, because I refused to carry a rifle, the captain who was a nut case at that time at Musese base, said since I was a baby I must be treated like a baby and I must go everywhere with a section of troops, with me to guard me, because now I was a baby. So literally I had to go for a shit with troops standing around me, I had to shower with the troops standing around, they stood around me like idiots while I was washing my clothes. I actually made them water…I planted trees, or I think Wickus had planted trees just before I came, around the sick bay tent, and I made them water the trees every day. *Laughs*
Interviewer	I recall you speaking about that. Now when this happened, you were ordered to do the Mission hospitals and you had your guys follow you around, was this when the local community, you believe, directed you away from the landmines?
Dr M	Yes, I think that did happen. I know that this is one of the things

	that kept me sane, was it actually forced me to be a doctor and be responsible, so…I ran…there was a clinic at Musese military base in the mornings, so I would get up, everyone would go for a parade at seven. I would get up half an hour later. I would start the clinic. And then we'd have breakfast at ten or ten thirty. I think at ten to ten thirty was breakfast. And then you'd have a short period where you could sort of do your own thing, but I would then almost immediately get into the Buffel and then later I requisitioned and Commandant Smit allocated me a Unimog ambulance. And I would go to the Mission hospitals. When I first went there they were very, very suspicious of me. In fact no-one came to the gate, the gate was barred and I had quite a lot of chutzpah I think in retrospect. It was just desperation. I knew that I had to swing this Mission hospital thing otherwise I was going to be hauled into more of these COM Ops things with military intelligence. And I climbed over the gates. I made the troops stay there in the sun…I really disliked the Kwangali troops. They were slackest most useless bunch I've ever come across. And I had no compunction, I just made them sit in the sun. Bad officer. And I jumped over the gates with Wickus Els, and my military bag, and I must say, this woman had a lot of courage. She was a mixed race woman, called Sister Leonarda. And she came forward, she had the nurses' epaulettes on, and a nun's outfit. And she sort of said, what was I doing there? And I said, I'm a doctor and I'm going to be there for three months and I have come to offer my services to the Mission hospital. So she said, we don't need a doctor. I said, do you have a doctor? She said, no. So I said, you do need a doctor, and I'm here and I'm going to see the patients whether you like it or not. I'm not going to twiddle my thumbs in this area and be of no use to anybody. So very grudgingly she accompanied me on a ward round, and as I realise now, was kind of taking absolutely none of my instructions down. And kind of couldn't see the back of me quick enough. The next time I came I had to climb over the gate again. The third time I came…I told her I would come on Monday on Thursday. And about what time. The next time I came the gate was still barred. And the third time I came the gate was open and she was waiting for me. I think later that same week…we saw this child and I thought he was a…I couldn't tell what was wrong with him, he was very sick, high fever and so on. So I wrote him up for intravenous penicillin. I gave her military penicillin in fact. Penicillin G, and I put up a drip and I set it running and I came away…and there was no way of communicating with civilians so I said I would actually come back on Wednesday which was the day that I normally went into Rundu, and I said if he was still sick I would take him into Rundu with me. And I got there, and firstly she wasn't there, like she hadn't heard me to say that I was going to be there on Wednesday instead of Thursday and…I don't remember how emotional I got. I was totally furious with her, it was almost like I was so furious that I thought I was going to burst into tears. I just said, I will have you stripped of those epaulettes if you disregard…the drip had not…it wasn't taken down but it was

	clear to me that the drip I put up, the penicillin G I'd given, was the only dose the child …much, much worse, it was clearly meningitis. And I said, I'm taking the child now with the mother to Rundu and I said, if you pull a stunt like this again, I'll have you stripped of your epaulettes. You're an absolute disgrace to the nursing profession. I don't care if you like or dislike my uniform, you've got no grounds to think that I'm not a doctor as I tell you I am. I'll bring you a copy of my degree if you want it. Do you want it? She said, no. I said, then you'll have to accept that I'm a doctor and you will have to do what I say. And if you're not prepared to do it, I'll have you stripped of your epaulettes. I will complain to the council. And actually it's a remarkable thing that I think I've often found this with black nursing staff. She saw it wasn't an issue of my power, it was an issue of desperation about this child, who she could see was now mortally ill. And I must say the next time I went there, which was in fact the next day, she was totally transformed. She was clearly writing down, asking for clarification on the instructions I was giving. Patients who had had wounds and bedsores that were not clearing up, she for the first time…and I was kind of saying, I want you to mix the Betadine with honey and I want you to do it like this and it's got to be every day like that. She was writing it down for the first time. Before she just saw that as if I was hot air. And it completely transformed my relationship with here and in that same visit she said would I like some lemon juice? Now, we were fed like pigs there, and the thought of lemon juice was just so fantastic, and I said, yes, I'd love some lemon juice. She took us to an area attached to the hospital that I didn't know existed, it was clearly a small apartment, very nicely done. This Dominican hospital was beautiful. It had been built a German Dominican lay brother who clearly had skills as an architect and a construction engineer, and it was beautiful. It had wooden windows, small diamond panes, wood panelling, lovely furniture, lovely German sort of Victorian period type cabinets with surgical and medical instruments in, including dental extraction pliers. And there on the..on this little coffee table, was a elegant starched white Damask…can't remember the name, where they embroider around little cut out bits of it. Something called petit point. You cannot believe…you've been in such a rough environment with these ghastly sort of military colours everywhere and you're in this extraordinary colonial thing. And there was this huge lead crystal jug, frosted…I hadn't had anything really cold for a long time. *Laughs* Frosted, full of ice and it was home made lemon juice. The orchard had lemon trees and they had made the lemon juice from it. And there was a huge box of very stale Pyotts biscuits. I remember Wickus and I, we actually finished that whole kind of about 3 litre thing of lemon juice. And then the next time we went she took us there again and she said, could I pull teeth. So I had been a very keen student and I worked in a shelter and I said I hate pulling teeth but unfortunately I can. And then every time I went there, there were at least 4 or 5 people I had to pull teeth for. And they were very, very difficult teeth and

	one of the worst things is you have different plier handles for which teeth you're going to pull out. The plier handles for the right molars…
	END OF SIDE A *(counter at 553)*
	SIDE B
Interviewer	…and you felt that you had a very good working relationship.
Dr M	Yes, I think we had a good working relationship, because I had a very deep commitment to the people there. I had a really deep sense of the wrong we were doing…South African military being there. I had had a direct experience of what was being done in my name as a white South African by Koevoet and by the South African government there. And I just had a feeling I really owed them. So really anything she asked me to do I did. Oh, and the other thing the same day that she showed us this…gave us the lemon juice, she took us…a little bit further on they had a huge pharmacy. I mean, some of the stuff they had stock in, it was 1940s… *tape turned off* …this pharmacy which had Second World War stock of penicillin, these very dinky little glass vials with rubber corks. And you know, I used that penicillin and it worked. *laughs* And it was exactly the wrong storage set up. It was a really hot little room, it had too much light in it, although the windows were quite small. It was a really hot place. But I used it and they had lots of…obviously not 1940s stuff but lots of Chloramphenicol, and that is an amazing drug because it kills everything…we don't use it because one in 1.6 million people get something called aplastic anaemia which is a deadly fatal kind of consequence of using it but in a setting where you've got nothing else and you've got someone dying of meningitis, that is a fantastic drug. So the Mission had Chloramphenicol. They had lots of drugs I didn't dare use because they were so past it, I think everything was expired. I don't know how many years since a doctor had been there. But it was kitted out for a doctor, a very nice cushy pad for a doctor actually, particularly a young person who wanted lots of clinical experience. And then the other Mission hospital was…I remember it being Eloch, but I'm not sure if I'm confusing that with…it was the Lutheran Mission, Evanegeli se Luteranse…ok, I can't remember what it stood for. And there were two very well qualified, very strong German nursing sisters in charge of that one. And their response was very different. Sister Leonarda was obviously a mixed race woman and didn't have their kind of confidence. I mean, I pitched there, I also found it barred, climbed over the gate with Wickus, so I went there on the Monday, I went to this other one on the Tuesday. ? what the names of the two were, but I think the one was called Tandoro. I'm not sure if that was the Catholic or the Lutheran Mission. And I climbed over the gate and I went there, and she plainly could see my rank epaulettes, I was medical services.
Interviewer	Just to go back, that's the second time you've had to climb over the gate, would they not let you in?

Dr M	No, I'm in a military vehicle, they would bar the gate. And they were serious gates. So I left the Buffel there, also with these awful Kwangali troops who I disliked, standing in the sun, and…their attitude was different. In fact they were more…greater enmity for me, a greater kind of perception that I would be of value to them as a doctor. So they scrupulously followed all my instructions from the beginning, but really, really…treated me like I was shit under their shoes. And actually that was quite late in my time there. I must have visited there for some weeks before we had an incident where I was trying to put up a drip on this very dehydrated child with diarrhoea and he was so close to death that I didn't feel I could take him to Rundu. I didn't feel that he would make the journey. So I tried and I tried and I tried…they had these old fashioned rigid steel needle butterfly needles. It would have been easier with Teflon, it's flexible. You know the scalp is round, it's a little baby. So you can't put the needle in far, and there seems to be something that operates with severe dehydration, the vessels become very fragile. Anyway I must have been 3 hours trying to put a drip up. Now the only languages we had in common was Afrikaans. They spoke German and Kwangali and I spoke English and Afrikaans. And we communicated in Afrikaans and I was swearing in English, I was completely beside myself with frustration, and it was hot, hot, hot there. My browns were wet with sweat. Because you're in a very awkward position and you are…it sounds odd but it's quite physical. You've got to poise yourself over and hold your whole body still and focus entirely on the tip of the needle. I kept getting the drip up and the vein would pop. And we eventually had shaved this kid's whole scalp. The mother was kind of sitting there and…she had a lot of faith in me, so I couldn't stop. I just had to keep trying and keep trying and keep trying. And…I eventually got the drip up and I plastered it in place with plaster of Paris and it was running. And actually the child visibly, over 20 minutes that it took me to make sure the drip would not come out, the child visibly swelled as the water went into him, as the drip went into him…and I had been carrying on in English, fuck this, this bloody fucking drip, I hate this fucking border…I don't know how much she understood because she affected not to understand me. But she certainly understood that I was beside myself with frustration and that I actually was not going to give up. Anyway we came out and she gave me an cold can of coke *laughs* Wickus and I, she gave us, and I had no idea they had even…and anyway every time we came there she offered us a selection of Stoney ginger beer or coke or Fanta or something. So that was also a complete change, and then from that time she would take me to areas of the hospital that I didn't see. She would tell me which patient she wanted to see. Now she clearly took me to some problem patients, including some mentally ill patients. And the Germans being Germans had…none of their drugs were expired and they had access to psychiatric drugs. So after that I could send psychiatric patients from Tondoro to this Lutheran Mission. And they would take them into this kind of

	small psychiatric unit they had there. I was very under qualified really for dealing with it, but I was certainly more qualified than anyone who was there. And I think, you know, in October from my letters, Wickus left the beginning of October. He was a major support for me. He was a really decent young man, must have been about 17, just gone into the army after school, he'd had a rudimentary South African medical services training as a medical orderly, but the doctor before me was clearly completely…in the nicest construction, bossies. He lay on his bed all day and didn't do anything. And Wickus used to run the morning clinic on his own. And he was a young Afrikaner but he had such a commitment to doing his best for the people who came. I really admire that. And he was very alert, very bright. Anything I said to him I didn't say it twice. I mean, he would basically…we ran the morning clinic which was sometimes up to 75 people, which I had to see by 10 o'clock breakfast time. We would have interpreters go through and they would sort out who were the venereal diseases. And the venereal diseases, because there was the numbers, we just had a stock thing. We gave them all penicillin and we gave them all something called Probenecid which keeps the penicillin working longer. And we gave them 10 days of Doxycycline and we told them to come back. And basically all the venereal disease, I didn't bother to check whether it was the drop, or syphilis or anything. If they said it was the drop which was the…then they went off into a sectioned off area, the tent and Wickus would give them the injections and finish them off. Hopefully not literally but he would finish off that line, that queue of people. Then Wickus would go through…so the Kwangali interpreters would go through, they'd get everyone with the drop into the tent. Wickus would then go through quickly with an interpreter, he would assess who was ill enough to see me, and then I would see probably about between 10-20 people, and Wickus would see the rest. And I basically made a thing out for him, if it's diarrhoea you do this, if you think it's a chest infection then you do that. He would dispense it and I restocked the whole thing and I had…and we used to pre-stock with courses Amoxicillin and so on. Penicillins I found worked very well. And he was just a very efficient and willing hard worker. And he was very supportive in other ways. I started to actively avoid being in Rundu and going on search and rescue missions and he was very quick…I remember once hearing on the public address, Lieutenant Connell report for search and rescue mission and I had to go in to have my Unimog ambulance…you know the constant bouncing on these very bad roads broke the support for the battery, which was a heavy item and it would be on this kind of rather bendy exposed ledge of metal. Anyway, it needed to be welded. I engineered eventually that I went to Nepara for my vehicle repairs. I got the thing transferred so I didn't have to go to Rundu and be at risk of being sent on a search and rescue mission. And I remember once hearing this on the public address and going to the non commissioned officer's mess and just standing within earshot of Wickus and when he looked up I just

	did this beckoning gesture, and he didn't say a word, he came, we both left all our kit there, we got on to the Unimog and rushed back home. Rushed back to Musese. That was very typical of him. You didn't have to say things twice to him. And I got instead of him, the most revoltingly stupid paraat idiot. In terms of military usage I didn't have a licence to drive Unimog and I was quite happy for Wickus to drive me but this guy drove like an absolute moegoe and eventually I just drove it because I couldn't bear being driven by someone. He would go from 4th into 2nd without slowing down. And then he would try and turn a corner in 3rd and he'd stall it in soft sand. That kind of thing. Anyway, as time went on, we used to have…in retrospect now, quite strange things. Someone would stand at the side of the road and they would be not on the left side, they'd be on the right side of the road. And they'd insist on waving us down. We would drive over to them, because they're dirt roads, very little traffic, we'd just drive onto the wrong side of the road and ask them what they wanted. And sometimes it was the most specious kind of stuff. What's the time? Do we have water? In retrospect now, I do wonder, because I would drive on that road before it had been swept. There was a convoy would come and sweep it in the morning, but they would set off from Nepara and one would set off from Rundu and they'd meet somewhere in the middle. But it would be certainly after the time that I set off. So I ignored the kind of instructions on…it was a yellow road, it was classed that classification, a yellow road. And I do wonder in retrospect now. I was totally indifferent to the danger of that. I would swim in this crocodile infested river. None of the Kwangali troops got deeper than ankle deep and they always had someone watching while they were washing. And I would swim and dive under the water and swim for long distances under water and I have nightmares now about a crocodile's eyes looming out of the green depths. Because that could easily have happened. The dominee and I used to go for runs along this yellow road at dusk, which in retrospect we were crazy to be doing it. We'd go jogging. It was too hot to go at any other time than dawn and dusk.
Interviewer	But in retrospect also, now you look back 25 years later, yes, you were crazy, but at the time you were under such pressure, your coping mechanisms were under such stress, that it probably didn't seem that outrageous at all and that's exactly why you did it.
Dr M	Yes, and we would drink huge quantities of liquor in the evenings when liquor was very cheap. Towards the end of my stay in one of my letters I say, I'm going to have to cut down the drinking, I'm feeling really liverish from it. I'm really feeling sick from all the drinking. And I also say that all the other officers were kind of furious that I was cutting down how much time I was spending drinking in the bar.
Interviewer	Peer pressure.

Dr M	Another incident I remember that has to do with the drinking, it was one of the maddest nights…I remember just being six weeks before I came away. The reason was six weeks because it ended up in toppling the radio mast. We were a vulnerable small base and not to have a radio mast and be able to call for help was really…we were all of us aware of increased danger after that. But I think everyone was completely drunk. I had sort of rolled into bed completely drunk sort of…I don't know what time. I think it was officially lights out, ten in the evening, some time like that. There was a generator which would go down at ten in the evening. And I was in bed and asleep before then…I was woken up by an R1 rifle or an R4 rifle, I don't know, set on…they have a semi automatic setting and it sounds like brrr. It sounded like it was right next to my ear. In fact it was about five metres from the entrance to our tent. There were sand bags up to about nipple height and then there was sort of a clear space and then a tent roof on top of that. And I could hear the bullets hitting the sand bags and hitting the ground. And this corporal…I only remember him as Bra Socks, and that was from an old joke from his basics that his socks apparently were very smelly. He had this personal body odour attribute. And so his comrades made him wash the socks several times a day and wherever he went he had socks drying and so he was called Bra Socks. And we all knew he was completely over the edge. These kids had been on so many patrols in Angola, and so many contacts, and they'd been there much longer than 3 months all of them. And in retrospect now I don't remember if they were 101 Battalion. I don't recall that they were wearing those funny shoulder rank things that they have. They had diamonds instead of pips for rank. I don't remember that they had that, but they were somehow seconded there and not officially in the South African army. Because officially you were there for only 3 months. Anyway, he really was a person who was difficult to talk to because he…it's difficult to describe this mental state. He couldn't make sequential logical thought processes. He was enormously racist. You just sensed he was absolutely packed with rage and violence. Anyway on this incident he opened fire at somebody who was like across the table. One of the Kwangali troops, he opened fire on him, right next to, inside the camp, next to my tent. We took his rifle away for 48 hours and after that he had his rifle again and I mean, I just…the rest of the officers, one of the lieutenants drove a Buffel around at high speed through the camp, careering around between the tents and eventually rode over the radio mast. The mast was guyed up with guy ropes so he didn't hit the mast itself, he hit the guy rope, but he hit it at speed. So it basically crumpled the radio mast and toppled it. And we didn't have radio contact, or radio Coms. I can't believe it but we didn't have radio Coms for until…and certainly that's one of the reasons why I went back later than everyone else. If they had sent a signal to say I must come into Rundu, it didn't reach me, and by that time I was getting my vehicle repairs done at Nepara and not coming into Rundu at all.

Interviewer	This kind of dysfunctional behaviour you're talking about, I mean, it's anger management, it's post traumatic stress, it's all the stuff. You've got the guy you spoke about who opens fire on one of his fellow troops at a range of five metres. A lieutenant goes mad and so on and so forth. The drinking. In the literary archives I've found a couple of sort of classified reports about alcohol abuse in the SADF and I haven't had them declassified yet, because that takes forever, but in your experience, I mean, alcohol abuse was rife in the SADF.
Dr M	It was…rife is almost an understatement. There was a near hundred percent pattern of officers getting completely blotto from 6:30 until 10 every night. And actually the culture was so pervasive that it was very difficult to get out of it. There was a lot of pressure to be there and get drunk with your mates. And when I was at 121 Battalion as the doctor on the base, I invented a totally spurious interest in fishing because that's the only way I could get out of drinking. We would go fishing, 3 of us like minded people, didn't want…just couldn't…frankly my liver couldn't take it apart from anything else. And we would go fishing and we had wonderful times together. That's one of my regrets…I can remember the one guy's name was John and the other one we called him Moolies and I don't remember anything about their names. The guy called John had gone to Kearsney. I think in fact in terms of my recovering from the army madness they were a really, really major support. That and my wife. But that time with them, and actually another guy called David Eedes who I'm still in contact with…but he doesn't want to talk about that time, he was in a base that was revved with mortar fire, and the man he was talking to, he tried to put an intercostal drain, after 5 minutes of talking to him, after the mortar fire attack had stopped…I don't know if it was five minutes but a short time…he put in an intercostal drain and the guy died as he put in the drain. So he had this feeling like he was stabbing his friend and he died. And he was deeply, deeply traumatised by that.
Interviewer	Now 25 years later, I know that you're working in a fairly…certainly your practice is in a fairly affluent sort of area and so on and so forth, but when you speak to your patients, men roughly our age, a bit younger, a bit older, do you detect that they…many of them who have also had the misfortune of compulsory military service, are also struggling to sort of work out what happened in their lives and what it means to them?
Dr M	One of the things I'm grateful about for this process is it has…I think my experience with people who were my comrades and friends…and some of them were friends from medical school before I went into the army... the way I handled it was I thought this is going to be two years out of my life. It's a price that I paid for staying in South Africa in the country of my birth and belonging here, and I'm going to shut it out of my life completely. It will never have a reality in my life. I didn't choose it, I didn't want it. And it's not real in my life. And in the first ten days of my

	basics I wrote a letter to my wife where I said, that thing from proverbs, “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof”, I am not going to remember what bad happened to me yesterday and I’m not going to think about what bad is going to happen to me tomorrow. I’m going to live only in the moment and if the moment is unbearable, I will be focusing completely on when it ends, not on the moment itself. And actually I think I made a plan of how I was going to handle it and that is how I handled it to the extent of totally suppressing these incredibly violent direct memories of combat and direct memories of torture. And I find it intriguing the process. I remember seeing the Three Two Battalion booklet in the book shop in Plettenberg Bay and thinking who the fuck would want to read this book, I cannot imagine opening the covers of this. Now I’ve read it. and I saw this book, An Unpopular War, and for some reason I just spontaneously reached out, I picked it up and bought it. It took me four or five months to open it and that triggered firstly memories, mostly of my basic training, and it was very, very powerful. I actually…I’ve slept now 5 nights without sleeping tablets, and probably because I’ve been away on holiday. But I think the total must be 12 nights I’ve slept without a sleeping tablet since about the 10th of May. So that’s how potent the post traumatic stress thing was. And you know, these are intrusive memories. They will wake me up with the total potency, almost like a sense of reliving it, that I have to…in fact for some months it was like I had this…the beginning of a CD where they’ve got several tracks on the same kind of screen…like you can see…in my case, it’s soldiers marching, it’s Buffels driving over dirt, it’s…bush, people in the army screaming and shouting at me, that kind of thing. It’s like this constant track and this constant feeling of being hyper alert. No-one can walk behind me. It’s unusual that I’m sitting with my back to a room, I don’t sit with my back to a room. I close the curtains as soon as it gets dusk, I don’t want people looking in on me, I don’t actually feel safe anywhere. That has declined to some extent but it’s still there. The trauma debriefing has been very valuable in defusing the intrusive nature of the memories. Particularly when I first started getting memories of being under fire. I would wake up and I would be sweating…and I’m not talking slightly, I’m talking sweating to the extent that my pillow and my sheets were completely wet. And shaking, my whole body shaking. And a powerful feeling of terror. It’s just being waking up completely terrified and it happened night after night after night. If I don’t take a sleeping tablet…not the last five nights…but at 2am…and actually 2am has been sometimes any time between 1-3 but almost always on 2am is the time I’ve been waking up, since I finished with the army, without having the memories associated but I haven’t slept well since I’ve been in the army. Even now, when I say I’ve slept, I wake up often. I’m aware of noises outside. I’m aware if a car travels down the road at 1am, and I’ll listen to see if it stops. We’ve got a security system where flood lights come on in the garden. If they come on I’m awake, and I can’t sleep until I’ve checked the whole

	perimeter of the house. And at those times I think I'm going to have to get a pair of infra red binoculars because I actually do not feel safe.
Interviewer	Is that exacerbated by the current state of South Africa?
Dr M	It is. There's no doubt that hearing of people being shot, people being attacked inside their own house, is…I'm aware of waking up…in my dreams the intruders in the house have really been the memories. In therapy I actually I'm fairly certain that in dream construct the house is my psyche. And the intruders these memories that I've been trying to repel. And interestingly now the intruders are always inside the house in my dreams. Before they were outside and I was about to open the door unknowingly or semi knowingly to a threat outside. Now the intruder is inside the house.
Interviewer	Given your family background, a very liberal family, and your own…as I get to know you I can see exactly what type of person you are, you're a caring person, you're a part of normal society. When the TRC came along did you feel a desire to go and say, well this is what I experienced right or wrong?
Dr M	I did, I did. In fact I went so far as to draft a personal apology for being complicit in apartheid. A personal apology for ever thinking it was normal that you had a hospital for black people only. For in any way, complying with that system. I think we all did. All doctors did. Our training did. And it was true that even in the white hospital if one of the black porters was ill most of us, well I certainly did see them and…the Joburg hospital used to be like a sieve for medical equipment. We could gyppo equipment and drugs and so on, so the black porters and so on…I think there was no-one really above the rank of auxiliary and porter in the Joburg hospital when I trained. But we would treat them and we would wangle drugs and medication for them and follow up and specialists would see the but it was such a pitiful small gesture in an ocean of…I mean there's a whole meaning, I think we should have been taking down signs saying, "Net vir Nie Blankes" and so on.
Interviewer	But do you ever feel that you and people like you were also victims of apartheid?
Dr M	I didn't see it at the time the TRC was there. I didn't see it all. I definitely feel that now. And you know, so many patients of mine, people I know well, that have been my patients since I started in practice in 1988, my age and a bit older as well. One of them, he's on his second marriage, they clearly love each other, he and his wife. There's a very deep caring and bond. But there's an enormous amount of friction. When I was at the height of this and I said to him, do you have memories? And he started crying. He said, I can't believe I'm crying. He said, he never talks about it, he never thinks about it, but he's always remembered what he did and what happened. And I mean, he's got memories of going into villages and taking stuff because that disastrous retreat in 1976, it

	was completely unorchestrated, logistically a complete nightmare and they made a complete fuck up. The parabat who writes in Pro Patria, describes actually sitting there on an airfield, they didn't have enough Buffels to take them out, and they said they'd come back for them, and they saw tanks coming in. And they basically left all their kit and ran for, I don't remember how far, but something like 20 kms they ran to get to where the retreating South African main stream was. They were just left there. Parabats left there. You'd think as the crème de la crème of the Defence Force they would look after their parabats. And I certainly don't know if I could have run 20…I probably could have run 23 kms. I don't now how many kilometres I ran after that disaster at which I think now must be north of Cassinga, but I remember running and falling, and running and falling, and my next memory is in the morning, so we must have slept in the bush and then been found in the morning. And I've actually always remembered being so cold and sleeping spoon fashion with somebody in front of me and someone behind me and all of us with our arms around each other, just desperately, desperately cold. And I think that must have been from the memory of that.
Interviewer	It's interesting that you, when you dream, you obviously have very clear memories of your dreams these days, I don't know what it was like 15 years ago. But you obviously have very clear memories, you remember things in remarkable detail.
Dr M	The intrusive memories I have smell, I have taste, I have sound, I can feel the sweat, sandpapery, the crystals, I suppose, of sweat in my collar rubbing my neck and my neck is raw from sunburn. I can feel that. I can feel the quality of the air, it's like oil, it's so heavy and humid and unbreathable, it doesn't feel like it's giving you oxygen.
Interviewer	It's quite remarkable, there you went up to medical school and you studied with a whole bunch of people who did the same work as you, some did better, some did worse, yet you are then forced into this situation which is a complete disconnect from the world than for example, a female student or a student who immediately went to live in another country.
Dr M	It is completely different.
Interviewer	And your entire experience in the military was one of merely trying to cope just to get through to the next day. And eventually it was the end of the period and then you could come home, but it puts an incredible pressure on a young human being.
Dr M	Yes, it does. I think I'm just very lucky, I had a very deep committed relationship to a woman before I went into the army. She'd been detained under the Security legislation, so we had a very, very shit time and in a way…it was a time when I was really there for her, I would visit and bring a parcel every week of clean clothes for her and take her dirty clothes back to wash. So all the time she was in detention I would be there every week with a parcel for her and I smuggled in messages to her inside Rice

	Krispie packets and got my father's bible to her and we pencilled all kinds of messages to her in areas where I thought she might look. And the Security Police didn't detect any of these because she got the messages and so on. So we had a very deep relationship and I think that was…definitely saved me on the border, she wrote to me almost every day. And you know, the fact that I was a doctor and I had something to anchor me to a different reality. The last weeks I was there I can remember lying there on the bed and thinking, there is almost no will I have to get up off this bed and go to the Mission hospitals. And somehow it just tipped the balance that I would get up and go. particularly when Wickus left and the dominee, Hugo Filter, left, because there was a very great sense of bonding and camaraderie with them. the two guys that came after…I mean, the medical orderly corporal was just a very stupid person. I'm not saying it in a nasty way, although I didn't like him as a human being, but he just was stupid. He didn't understand instructions, he couldn't follow instructions. The morning clinics became infinitely more difficult. And the Afrikaans dominee who came he was Gereformeerde Kerk and he wouldn't speak any language other than Afrikaans…it wasn't a problem, I was totally fluent…but it was a barrier because he just so plainly denied everything about who I was. And it's funny, we're sharing a tent, and it's one thing sharing it with someone who's a friend, a comrade you can talk to and we have a really very pleasant relationship. He'll read me bits of what his wife said in a letter, I'll read him what my girlfriend said to me in a letter. We'll exchange views on life and philosophy and so on. And this person who's a total enemy in my tent. And trying to get me to join the parades, in fact actively saying to the captain it's a disgrace that the doctor is not on parades. He's an officer, he should be taking parades. And I said, you're barking up the wrong tree but I'm not doing it. I'm just not doing it, it's against my orders. *Laughs*
Interviewer	That's another thing, you talk about your wife being detained by the Security Police and the State, which in itself is a form of torture. So we've got this society that apartheid is driving a wedge, even between…and it happened many times and I know that your situation wasn't unique…but it's driving a wedge between a couple who have got a very close relationship and yet she's been a victim of State torture, completely illegal activity, and you are then compelled to go off and do your stuff and you are now forced to work with Koevoet who represent the State in their worst form…
Dr M	In fact the whole Defence Force, the whole military establishment is.
Interviewer	The whole military establishment and Koevoet were particularly sort of the extreme.
Dr M	The epitome of the worst.
Interviewer	Exactly. So yet again apartheid is breaking down, dividing…even

	the very subjects it was meant to be benefiting, i.e. white people.
Dr M	It did. I know now for 22 years I've lived behind a barrier. I have been really remote. I really understand that when you suppress a group of memories, we can't surgically excise the memories that we don't want, you suppress an enormous amount of other stuff. now I've been very, very passive in my life, I think. My only kind of…holy grail, if you like, has been to be a very good doctor, to be the best doctor I can be. And unfortunately I can see my family and my wife have suffered enormously. My wife's a very loyal person…she's found this process of me being…wrapped up in this process of remembering and coping with the memories very difficult, but she says I've always been remote. It's more like she's angry now at the idea that I'm only dealing with it now and it's been 22 years of repressed trauma. But I can recognise the effect of it and a certain level of creativity and motivation and drive has been completely absent since I came out of the army.
Interviewer	And I would think that in the early years…when I say the early years, but soon after you'd come out of the army, I suspect that it was so painful that it was impossible for you to try and deal with it then. It was just too raw and too fresh.
Dr M	Yes, you know, I did have lots of meetings with people I'd been in the army with and I think my wife certainly found it very trying. We'd talk about life in the army but I think this is the level most men talk about the army, it's a sort of jokey thing, remembering the bad corporal, remembering a bad sergeant, and rolling around with laughter remembering things that are actually not really funny, but you had to kind of make them funny because that was the only way to make them bearable. But it was that kind of level and it was very repetitive. You went over the same memory and the same shared experience, and that must have gone on for at least 6 years, after…and I don't see any of those people now and some of them I tried to contact don't want to…a lot of my emails have gone unanswered. And I know they've reached the person. Hugo Filter to my surprise hasn't replied to me. And now, I mean, I don't know if this is paranoia, but I'm wondering if I was much more bossies than I thought, and that he put up with me.
Interviewer	I guess the only way to find out is to actually persuade him to talk to you, but I suspect not. In my experience in doing what I'm doing now, some people don't want to talk, simply because it's just too painful and they can't bear to…and they've compartmentalised those thoughts and they've packed them away, and they hope they're going to remain away for the rest of their lives. In many instances it manifests itself in ways that people aren't even aware. You've gone on a fairly sort of determined mission to deal with it.
Dr M	And I don't know where I've had the guts to do it from. I think maybe it's a bit of desperation. I'm nearly 50 and I haven't got much life left. I don't want this to be my albatross around my neck

	for the rest of my life. I've got a very strong commitment to set up rap groups and a strong commitment to…I mean, one of the best writers on it is a psychiatrist called Judith Lewis Herman…in fact I'm just wondering if I've had 5 months of sleep because I've been going through this thing of suppressing it again. But…she refers to these rap groups having a rationale based on the 12 steps, Wilson's Alcoholics Anonymous 12 steps. And now I want to get those out and look at them. I've set up an appointment to speak to Merle Friedman who is at the South African Institute for Traumatic Stress in Observatory. And I want to access their library and I actually am going to do my masters research on…I want to do a qualitative research, and I'm not sure if I'm going to look only at doctors. I don't think I'll get us any kind of sample on that. Maybe I'm just going to look at National Servicemen. And maybe I'm going to talk to you about that at some point, see if any of the guys you talked to would be willing to participate in that. But I just really…it is extraordinary to me how this increased sensitivity to this, people my age, now I mostly will ask them, do you think about the army? I get really incredible…I mean, people will say I don't think about it too much. I did talk about it…I don't want to talk about it anymore but I do remember everything that happened and I feel I worked through it. That, my brother or my brother-in-law is still very fucked and he's drinking and broken relationships and…but that's the common thing. Substance abuse and broken relationships, and completely drifting, aimless, career-less people. People who have not fulfilled their academic and…life potential at all. And I think there are a lot of people out there.
Interviewer	I agree with you and I think it comes from that mindset that…I recall when we first spoke, we spoke about, and there you were, a whole bunch of graduates you were all qualified doctors but during basics you weren't doctors until the army told you, you were doctors, and they did that with everyone. You were merely a troop, you were a number, and the army would decide what you were going to be, and fortunately you were well educated and you dealt with it the way you could.
Dr M	I didn't you know, that's the thing that was most devastating. And I was in the army 48 hours and I thought to myself with a kind of incredulity and a kind of panic, they have fucked me. I am destroyed. I'm not who I was. If they tell me to shit on the floor, I'll shit on the floor.
Interviewer	Well that's what they did, they broke people down didn't they? They took away every reference you've ever had in your life.
Dr M	It took 48 hours with me. It really, I couldn't believe how quick it was. I did start to come out of it but it was a survivor thing. It wasn't a mentally healthy thing, it was a subterranean devious survivor kind of thing.
Interviewer	But when I say that, fortunately you had the intellectual ability to process it, if you'd been a lesser person you might have had

	even a worse time and in fact you might have just simply fallen into their ways. Which is I think what happens with some of the people I've spoken to, their understanding of right and wrong was very different, they were very plugged into an authoritarian society, they came from authoritarian childhoods, and so when the colonel said, this is what you're all going to go and do this week, people did that without thinking. You questioned it and you battled with it, which is what you're still battling with now albeit later. But I've spoken to many people who didn't seem to notice that what they did was wrong.
Dr M	Even now?
Interviewer	Even now. They think that they did what they had to do and it was actually quite acceptable. It's remarkable how many of them…none of them profess to be racist…not to me…and they're convinced that they were fighting to protect society against the Communist onslaught. I mean, I've even had a general, who's a well known name, who's convinced that he was only fighting Communism. Which to my mind is quite clearly not the case.
Dr M	You see I think that runs very deep in the South African society, it's a kind of schizophrenia…no, that's wrong…I would say a multiple personality disorder is one of the ways South Africans handle the world. And so, the same kind of Koevoet guys who could beat and torture and so on, once they had…the word they used was turned…once they'd turned this guy, they treated him in a kind of…like a kind of soft, caring, sympathetic, brotherly way and for me it was quite nauseating but it was a very…it was kind of part of the way people handled it. My wife is doing her PhD over many, many years…one of the reasons is I think it's been very traumatic for her. She's been looking at victims and perpetrators of human rights abuses who gave evidence to the TRC. One of the things that was very traumatic for us both is I went with her because we were in the Cape and I drove her to…she was a bit worried she couldn't find the place, and I think worried about the man she was going to visit, who was a Security Policeman. And he insisted that I come in. And in fact it would have been…you know that gasvryheid of the Afrikaner? It would have been very, very rude of me not to, but I said to him, I don't think it's appropriate, I'll sit in the…no, I have to sit. And then he spilled his guts and it was a freaky experience because I actually thought he was a really worthwhile, decent human being. Now he doesn't think what he did was right. He thought it was right at the time, but he feels completely duped by PW Botha, FW de Klerk, General Cronje… *(counter at 446)*
	END OF TAPE 3
	TAPE 4 SIDE A
Dr M	Anyway, he has now got a very much more complex understanding. He understands that he was brainwashed in his youth as to the Communist threat, the Total Onslaught, that the narrow financial and power interests of the politicians were being

	served, and worthwhile, honourable feelings of commitment to your own country and your own volk were manipulated for base personal ends by these politicians. He totally, totally despises them and he despises himself for being a dupe to them. He's made quite courageous decisions. He now kind of, not even got a police pension. And he despises his colleagues who actually have given lip service to the new regime, and most of them have avoided giving evidence. In fact the paradox is the establishment people who gave evidence to the TRC, their marriages broke up, their wives said, ooh I married a monster and they fucked off. And so they were being ditched by their families as being monsters. They were ditched without pension by the State services and they're in a very bad way. And people who did the same things as they did, they've got promotions, they've got pensions, some of them, he really despises this whole post traumatic stress disorder…some of them have been boarded for post traumatic stress disorder, and he said, they were the people who were doing the torture. And the writer, identified only as Kobus in Pro Patria, has very much the same kind of thing. I gather from the way it's written that he's not in the country anymore. But he had a deeply traumatic series of 3 months or longer camps in the Citizen Force. And one of the things that just stands out for me as being such an injustice, Eskom…and I remember this happening…the various state facilities decided they weren't going to…you know initially you gave full pay and they had their army pay…and then they decided they're not going to pay. And I think that was really such a violence done to these people.
Interviewer	Well exactly, they were state owned (*inaudible)* encourage that, although they were state owned, but it's interesting that you say this writer Kobus, you think is probably not in the country because if you look at a lot of the internet information going on in the chats and stuff, many, many of the people are no longer in South Africa. And many of them left before '94 as well. So they weren't leaving because they were frightened of a new government, they were leaving because of what was happening then.
Dr M	I can tell you now that of my intake of medical doctors I think every single one was out of the country within 48 hours of klaaring out. Some of them have come back, but that was within 48 hours, gone. And certainly all the Med Natal doctors, gone, overseas. And I think they've handled it by burying it and I don't know if there are going to be consequences long term in their lives. I mean, Michael *(name withheld)* is a friend of mine, was a friend of mine at university and we went on holidays together and I emailed him, got this kind of quite joyful email back, oh so nice to hear from you, exchanging information about our families and what we were doing. And then I sent him an email saying that I'm really battling, I've remembered things of actually being on search and rescue missions and being fired on, did anything like that happen to you? *claps his hands* Nothing.

Interviewer	That's interesting because I spoke to another doctor a while ago and he told me a very similar thing. He's got friends who are in countries all over the world and one or two are quite happy to sit down and chat, but others, it's an area you just do not go into.
Dr M	I still haven't found anyone who is happy to sit down and chat. The patient I mentioned who's having a very difficult time now but has been intermittently having a very difficult time, I mentioned to him that I was thinking of setting up a rap group, my own rap group, because this Colonel Pillay is not coming back to me and actually I just had such a negative experience of talking to this chap called Sellick, Richard Sellick, who's their expert on post traumatic stress disorder and he was such an asshole. And he put me down as a doctor phoning him. The moment I told him that I was a battling with post traumatic stress, he started lecturing to me as if I was…he infantilized me. What did someone call it? The deficiency model of the therapeutic relationship. I'm deficient and he is efficient. And I actually said to him during conversation, have you been in combat yourself? He said, no. And actually one of the most traumatized young men…well he's not young anymore but he's ten years younger than I am, and he was in operation Hooper…he's on mega doses of stuff, and that's actually why I phoned him, I just said, is there any way of reviewing his medication? And he basically defended it but in such a…I know what I'm doing and you are…you cannot question this. Anyway, I just said to him, there are other views of how to approach post traumatic stress disorder, and I said, I must tell you that there's a sizable body of literature that regards it as a normal response to an extreme event. And that is my view too. But you clearly have a model of it as being a mental deficiency. So he started to backtrack a bit, and I said I don't see any point in talking to you and I ended the conversation.
Interviewer	Pillay is with the military?
Dr M	Colonel Pillay, she's head of social services at One Mil.
Interviewer	And Selleck?
Dr M	He's a clinical psychologist, which means a clinical asshole, and he's got this reductionist, Afrikaaner…Afrikaaner doctors have it too. If it's written in the textbook, it's true, if it's your own intuition or particularly if it's someone else's intuition, it's bullshit. So he's got a very mechanistic algorithm base model of the treatment. If this then that. So he justified the incredible barrage of drugs this 39 year old is on, on saying he's on this to control impetuous behaviours, on this to control anxiety, on this to control depression…by the end of the day this guy's so sedated I don't know how he's running a business, which he is doing. And he's had 3 relationships that have broken up and what I really admire about him, he's still got amicable relationships with all the women, and he in fact is bringing up his oldest son himself.
Interviewer	Throughout all the trauma of your military experience…your

	upbringing, you were taught that people are people irrespective who they are, do you have a resentment to…you mentioned something about some Afrikaner doctors…do you have the sense that you are in any way prejudiced against Afrikaans speakers because of that experience?
Dr M	Yes, yes. I mean, I have a complex position on that because I'm half Afrikaans, my mother's an Afrikaner. In my childhood my mother never identified as an Afrikaner but now she gets quite tetchy if someone says something anti Afrikaner. And I've always loved the language and I've loved the poetry, and I've had…in my family, my Afrikaans grandmother, my ouma who was very dear to me…my English grandmother was a battle axe and a cow of extreme proportion, so I've got very fond memories of this Afrikaans grandmother who spoke to me in Afrikaans. So there's a complexity to my response, but I can tell you if I hadn't had that background I would be very, very, very anti Afrikaans. And if people behave in a certain way I have such a…almost an uncontrollable surge of rage, particularly that what Selleck did to me, that kind of control thing. I know, you don't. Ek is die meerdene jy is die ondergeskugte, jy luister vir my, ek is die doktor, ek weet. All that kind of thing. I had such a surge of rage that I actually had to count to ten before I spoke to him again. And I realised that all of us, and I think Afrikaans speakers English speakers, going into that, that is not a therapeutic environment. Top down, deficiency based kind of approach. That is not a therapeutic approach that is appropriate for post traumatic stress disorder. So the military is incapable of dealing with it is my conclusion. And Pillay, I've emailed her with my proposal that we meet and we talk about it and she was very nice on the phone when we got on the phone, I actually wouldn't be surprised if I tried to phone her on her cell phone now, if that number was rejected. Because she, I think gave soft soaped me. She said she'd contact me when she got back from her course and I emailed here and actually I'm not even going to chase her up because, that experience with Selleck it just gave me a strong sense that we must deal with it ourselves.
Interviewer	It's interesting you say that, because I've been sitting in the military archives and I don't know if I mentioned it last time, going through their files which are all manually done and they're very vague and nobody in the world knows what's actually in some of those documents, but they won't let you go through them, I've got to get them declassified, which could take forever. And they've got hundreds and thousands of files so it's not possible to do them all. But I've been looking for stuff about meetings or discussions or studies into post traumatic stress and I can't find easily anything that they've got. And I'm talking about now, pre 1990. And I'd have thought that would be something that the senior psychologists and doctors would have thought of doing.
Dr M	Completely unaware of it. I think they're completely unaware even now. I really don't think they have an interest. And as this

	39 year old said to the panel…they put him in front of 12 people…and they said to him tell us about yourself. And he said, but I've spoken to the psychologist, who was present, surely you've got her report? Why do I have to expose myself to all of you, I don't know any of you. So they basically said, you've got no option, if you want a disability grant, you've got to convince us that you're disabled. So he said, well I want to start by asking you how many of you have been in combat? And not one of them had been. So he said, how can you actually even sit there and expect me to reveal how I'm feeling inside myself and you have no key to understanding. And they said, well, take it or leave it. Tell us or don't. And he had to. I think that was an act of violence on its own. And I know they do behave like that because I saw that when I was in the army, that is how they behave.
Interviewer	But we're now with the military that is meant to be part of a democracy, I mean, how long ago did this youngster sit in front of the board?
Dr M	It was in 1991, it was before the new South Africa. Because I think I remember him saying he had a disability grant since '91. When I came out of the army I think, although I didn't remember what had happened, I was terrified of the establishment but I also…deeply, deeply resistant to it, so we acted as a safe-house for all kinds of people who were on the run from the police for political reasons. I was involved in seeing people who were victims of torture by the Security Police. I saw people for DPSC and later the DSC. And I gave lots of evidence in court on the physical injuries that I saw on people, including with Winnie Mandela when she arrested Kenny Kgase and Thabiso Mono and Pelo Mekgwe. And funnily enough that was one of the worst, what Winnie Mandela and her soccer team did to those boys was worse almost than our Security Police did. Although Kenny Kgase escaped before his wounds could heal. The other two were pretty much kind of healed by the time I saw them. But…I think I was always politicised but I became less scared for my safety…I'm finding it quite empowering to remember that I've been under fire and so on because I think to myself, nothing can be as bad as that again. I don't really have to fear anything, I've seen the worst. I've survived the worst. It's quite an empowering thought. But I think I had some of that…actually I think I had the feeling…when I got onto the plane to go to the border that I was not going to make old bones, that I was not going to live long. And my whole life up till now, I've always had that feeling I'm not going to live to old age. So I don't really plan for the future. I mean, I've got a pension scheme and so on but I don't think about, I don't plan for it, I don't see myself as being an old man.
Interviewer	Is that as a result of what you saw in the military or do you think you might have had that inclination anyway just because of the nature of who you are and what you are?
Dr M	No…I don't think I expected to survive the military and I don't think I've ever questioned why do I think that? When I got onto

	the thing to go to the border there, the Hercules transport, whatever they call it…funny I was writing my brother, the only brother who went to the army as well, he wrote to me and told me what his experience of the border was. Now he was…because of his asthma he was classified basically mediese ongeskikte, but he did accompany horses, he trained horses at De Aar for the border. And he said they destroyed those horses on the border, but he took them up to Ruacana twice…took a load of horses up to Ruacana. And he told me about how bizarre it was and how they were armed to the teeth and had such access to bullets and shells and so on, and just some of his memories of it. And he asked me to just sort of say what I remembered and I just sat down intending just to give him a brief thing, I ended up writing several pages of stuff. But the thing that came back was I really intensely remember the day of going to various military stores to be kitted out to go to the border at Voortrekkerhoogte then Waterkloof. And…I remember getting on to the plane and after a whole day of being rondgevoeter and fucked around, and not having had anything to eat…you know, I was a lieutenant but we were herded into various places, it was all in the name of security. But we couldn't talk to anybody, we couldn't tell anybody what kind of briefings we were having. We couldn't phone. It was bizarre. And for that whole day…we had to be there some time like 6 in the morning…so it meant I left before dawn because it was August. My first meal was after ten at night in Rundu. So we kind of shared whatever we scrounged around the place. But I remember getting on to that plane and what I wrote to him was a kind of black exhilaration, was kind of feeling like all the rules are gone, I'm not going to make it. And I don't know why I had that sense that I wasn't going to make it. And I don't know if I volunteered for some of those search and rescue missions.
Interviewer	For that reason.
Dr M	I think I told you that I was assisting a surgeon, a very good surgeon recently, and I said to him…just as I was assisting him, I had a memory of doing it for hours and hours and hours at a time in Rundu, and I said to him, did he remember that? I always remembered I saw him there. I didn't remember I assisted him. So he said, yes, I've always known that, that's why I wanted you to assist me now. I've always wanted you to assist me because you've got a good pair of hands. He never mentioned it.
Interviewer	That's interesting…what you're describing yet again is, although this military is meant to represent 'protect white South Africa', if you believe the argument of the National Party, it was nothing of the sort, it was actually a very divided organisation in which you had people who some were more acceptable than others. And those often based on language and/or attitude.
Dr M	I'm amazed we waged war anywhere because we were so at war with ourselves.
Interviewer	Well that's exactly the point and I hear that often. People's

	experiences when they get there…first time you opened your mouth you were immediately categorized according to your language. And as a National Serviceman, even more so. Have all your experiences made you want to be a pacifist? Are you a pacifist or would you use a firearm if you needed to, to defend yourself or your family?
Dr M	I think there are almost no circumstances in which I would use a firearm. You know, I always thought that was a position I had before being in the army, and I think being in the army has strengthened it. I know that I was more traumatized in these combat situations because I didn't have a weapon. I felt totally defenceless. But I also felt that if I carried a weapon I would be just like them. I would be totally, totally beyond the pale. Because I'd be part of the military establishment. I didn't verbalize it but I think looking back on it now that's what…and I didn't take anyone head on. I just in the situation, being a doctor there, I just didn't carry my rifle. I locked it in my sidearm in a kas, and I didn't put them on, I didn't put the holster on, and initially there was some resistance from the captain. He said I must have this seksie *(a section of troops)* follow me around everywhere, and they did for a while but in fact they couldn't keep up with me. They had that kind of terrible ennui and boredom and laziness and misery that everyone had, that they didn't follow me around. And I understood it in my last weeks there because I had that. I don't know quite what made me able to get up and go and do my work as a doctor but it was certainly not a sense of passion for healing people anymore.
Interviewer	But you wouldn't think of…even in your concern of late at night you wake up and you're concerned of what's happening outside and so on and so forth…
Dr M	My concern would be to be alert and to escape, get my family out of danger…
Interviewer	So it would be to escape in a non violent way.
Dr M	I had a very interesting experience some years ago, where I parked my car outside a house in Waterford Road in Parkview, a very quiet tree lined street, and I left a bottle of wine and a bowl of salad…and I was going to pop in and see and just check that a patient was actually mending. I'd seen her earlier that day, she was very sick and I hadn't told her I'd pop by, but I just had this slight worry that maybe she should have been admitted. So I just popped past her house on my way to dinner with friends. I popped in and I saw her and I came out. In that time, someone smashed the front window, took the bottle of wine and the salad had to be chucked out, it was full of glass. And I had this intense rage, and then I thought to myself, would I have shot this person if I'd…and I thought I can't shoot a person for a bottle of wine. I couldn't do that. So I felt in a way, I'm glad I don't have a gun and I'm glad I wasn't here to see them do it. I must just not be such a fool as to put a bottle of wine on the seat in the car. *Laughs* So I

	did have this actual moment of choice where I decided that even if I could have killed him, I wouldn't have done that. If I could have handed him over to the police, I wouldn't have done that either.
Interviewer	You wouldn't have?
Dr M	I just think how desperate must you be to walk around, take a bottle of wine out of a car. And what are the police going to do? It's just going to be a training house for worse crime.
Interviewer	But if you caught somebody in the process of trying to pinch your car, would you hand them over to the police?
Dr M	I think I would feel it's right to collar somebody if they do something violent, if they're prepared to be violent. And if someone is actually inside my house when I'm in it, then I would say de facto they're prepared to be violent. And I would be quite keen to find some way of immobilizing them and handing them over to the police, but it would be completely secondary to getting my wife and daughter and myself out of the house as quickly as possible and calling the police from somewhere outside the house. We have called the police sometimes with intruders and they've come within minutes. I must say the Parkview police have been extremely positive. But I think that is their attitude, if there is an immediate present danger they react very quickly. If it's someone that's just been hijacked they can come hours later. But the violence…a medical colleague anatomy professor and his family were held up inside their house and his wife was savagely beaten and his daughter was raped and it sent shock waves through…and that's been a particularly nasty kind of thing, because he's a very kind of quietly spoken, gentle sort of person. I cannot conceive that he would have been threatening or abusive.
Interviewer	This must be playing a role and people who are suffering post traumatic stress affects and trauma from having fought or being involved in that period of '76 through to 1990, or even a bit after, survived all of that, in a fairly sort of well defined war situation…and I'm talking purely about the military action now because the war was, as you know, political, psychological and so on. But nevertheless they survive that and now they're in a society which is meant to be a society in peace time, yet many of those memories must come flooding back to them quite dramatically under the circumstances we're describing. So it must compound what's going on in their minds.
Dr M	It does. As I say, there's a new awareness I have and it's been valuable both in sort of understanding what's happening with my patients and also helping them to understand. Because sometimes they'll say to me, I cannot understand why I'm so freaked out. Nothing happened. And now I'll ask, were you in the army? They'll say, I'm feeling exactly the way I felt then.
Interviewer	Well it sounds like if you can get your groups together, I think it

	would be a good thing, because there's an awful lot of people who've got stuff to contribute. But then there's the side of the people who didn't go and through no fault of their own, the wives, the girlfriends, the mothers, the sisters. And I don't know of any studies that have been done into that era we're talking about now up until 1990, but it must have had a huge impact on their lives as well.
Dr M	I think there are a huge number of broken marriages. I haven't asked this patient of mine if his first marriage broke up around that actually. I mean, I've been more concerned with the problems with his current marriage. But a couple of them will say…maybe the most balanced and rational…with the one guy it's interesting, for some time his wife has said to me, in confidence, she finds him very difficult, he's totally reserved and withdrawn. Now that's me. And she said that for some time and then quite recently, and there's been marital friction over that. She correctly perceived that a man he was a partner with was actually going to defraud him, and I think also correctly kind of felt that when he had parted company with him this guy was capable of being a threat to the children. And I told her, you must go with your gut feel, you must make your children safe and you must do what it takes. And she set up a whole lot of measures to make sure that no unknown adult would collect her children from school and all kinds of things like that, and double checked with her on the cell phone, and all kinds of stuff that she set in place to protect her children, but she said he was not involved in it at all. It was as if it wasn't happening to him and his family. And then I asked him and he tells me that he spent many months on the border and he was in a…he drove Buffels and he actually also was involved in mine sweeping the roads for the convoys. And he told me about how it was to uncover a double cheese mine. And he confirmed what I remember from my memory that they didn't tame the land mine. If you had a double cheese mine it would destroy a Buffel and kill everybody in it. And certainly in An Unpopular War, one of the people records that they heard the sound of an explosion, they found this Buffel destroyed, and the side sheet had gone up in the air and come down and cut off somebody's legs. And everybody else was dead, and I mean, I remember reading it and thinking that this is a Buffel, a Buffel is mine proof. This is before I remembered seeing the Kwevoel go up. And it's funny when I remembered the Kwevoel, I remembered it as being film footage that was shown to us in our briefing but the memory that I have now is not film footage. I can see the dust, I can hear…the sound of the explosion makes me want to shit my pants. It's just such a frightening powerful violent…
Interviewer	A Buffel is built on a three ton truck chassis and it's armoured, so it's a very, very heavy vehicle.
Dr M	And it's got that V shape over the cab.

Interviewer	So to pick it up and turn it and throw it into the air…
Dr M	It did this. It did somersaults. Fore to aft somersault.
Interviewer	So that's a huge explosion. But isn't that part of the propaganda we're talking about earlier on? Steenkamp's book…I think Steenkamp did that book as well…the intention there was to say that everything's under control guys, don't worry about it when you go off to the border. At worst you're going to get perforated eardrum or something.
Dr M	You're right, the people who write about it are generally trying to push a point. It's kind of extraordinary to find in my own memory… *(counter at 277)* END OF INTERVIEW

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