

## **Dan Stannard**

*Born in 1937 in India (now Pakistan). Left India in 1947 and grew up in the UK. Completed National Service in the British Army. Joined the BSAP in 1957. Joined Special Branch (CIO) in 1981 and retired in 1994. Left Zimbabwe for the UK in 2003.*

**This is Dr Sue Onslow interviewing Mr Dan Stannard in Newmarket on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2008. Dan, thank you very much indeed for agreeing to talk to me. I wondered if you could begin by saying, how did you and your family come to be in Southern Rhodesia in the 1970's?**

I had just completed my National Service in the British Army and felt that I wanted to travel abroad. I chose Southern Rhodesia because my eldest brother, Peter, was a member of the BSAPolice at that time and persuaded me to join too. I had no other family links to Rhodesia at that time. I was born in 1937 at Peshawar which was then part of India but which is now Pakistan. My father was in the British Ghurkhas and fought in Malaya during the Second World War. We left India in 1947 after it gained independence from Britain and settled in Lichfield, Staffordshire before moving to Liverpool. My parents and two sisters lived outside Liverpool. I also had cousins, uncles and aunts living in England. I spent a total of 47 years in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. From early March 1957 to March 1981 I was a member of the BSAPolice and then the Zimbabwe Republic Police. I was transferred from Special Branch in 1981 together with all other SB personnel into what is now known as the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) and retired in 1994 with the rank of Director Internal. I then acted as a consultant for the organisation for a further two years before starting up as a security consultant in commerce and industry. I later became a member of the Zimbabwe Cricket Union (ZCU) when I was director of tours, manager of the 'B' national side and then manager of the national squad before leaving for the UK in 2003. "Home" for me was Rhodesia and then Zimbabwe for 47 years before I was forced to leave and fairly quickly for reasons I will enunciate later. Suffice it to say that my family was at risk of political harassment and I know that I would have been arrested and detained.

I joined the BSAP because I was restless and needed adventure and a different life. As combatants I seriously believed in what Ian Douglas Smith represented and thought that I was fighting against the evils of communism using African Nationalism as a conduit to take control of Rhodesia and that region. I believed that Great Britain and the west would or should have supported us in fighting this evil threat. As mentioned I seriously believe that we were fighting communism and were using African Nationalism as their vehicle to overthrow the Rhodesian Government. I worked very closely with my black and white colleagues and after many arrests, 'contacts' and source running I had no doubts whatsoever that this was the case. Regular 'briefings' took place where my superiors gave us in-depth information on terrorist tactics, their training, indoctrination and the dangers posed to the country. As far as my friends were concerned we were all fighting the same

battle. My information of the war was gained mainly from first hand experience. I was stationed at most Joint Operation Commands (JOCS) throughout the country as the Special Branch JOC Officer and personally interrogated captured guerrillas and ran sources in these areas. I was involved in many follow-ups which usually led to contacts with the enemy taking place. I believe that the Cold War played a significant role in those (00:04:36) days as Russia, the Peoples Republic of China, PRC, and its allies were all very keen to establish a foothold in Africa especially Rhodesia which if they won would place them closer to South Africa with all its riches and minerals and vital port facilities.

### End of Tape

### **Dan Stannard Part Two**

The war definitely created a sense of unity amongst Rhodesians and as a result of sanctions imposed on Rhodesia this spirit enabled us to diversify in most areas. Clothes previously imported were now made locally, foodstuffs likewise, firearms and mine protected vehicles were manufactured locally. Tobacco was sold secretly at disguised tobacco auctions to most countries in the world. Likewise chrome was sold to the Russians as was other much needed minerals. Our motor vehicles were made or put together inside Rhodesia, knock down kits were sold to us by Germany, Italy, France, Japan and most British cars disappeared from the market as a result. I operated inside Mozambique clandestinely but only travelled to South Africa occasionally with the family for breaks. I only ever went back to England in 1972 to see my parents however I certainly made up for this after independence when I was with the CIO. I travelled then to most countries in the world attending commonwealth security conferences, regional liaison meetings etc. Black Rhodesian colleagues were magnificent and were equally if not more determined to eradicate the terr scourge. I worked very closely with black SB personnel, RAR soldiers, Selous Scouts, BSAP support unit personnel and never experienced any problems. We were all as one determined to win the war. It certainly never appeared to me to be a racial or tribal war. I worked with men from Matabeleland, Manicaland, Mashonaland and Fort Victoria, in fact from all over and we got on very well. In retrospect we should have capitalised more on the enmity that existed between ZANU and ZAPU but we didn't. ZAPU was trained by the Soviets while ZANU was trained by China. ZAPU was mainly Matabele while ZANU was Shona and they hated each other and still do.

As the war progressed however skilled emigration to South Africa and elsewhere began to have its toll on the general situation. The collapse of Mozambique in 1975 as a result of a military coup in Portugal exacerbated the escalation of the war and increased our war front to include the whole of the Mozambique border. Incursions increased significantly from Mozambique and sanctions were beginning to bite at last. It was noticeable at this stage that our black colleagues were fearful of losing the war and all its consequences and I was asked on a number of occasions what my plans were in such an eventuality. I told them that I would stay and try and make it work as with a lot

of other whites. Eventually the war did end in 1979 and independence was achieved in 1980. Sadly I observed that those black colleagues from the BSAP and Special Branch changed and became quite vitriolic in fact more nationalistic than ZANU calling ZANU members 'comrades' and 'chefs'. If they did but know they were scorned and ridiculed by the 'comrades' who considered them weak and 'sell-outs'. I must stress however that this only applied to a handful of former members, the majority continued in their normal way but with new masters.

I was appointed (00:04:30) as "Liaison Officer" with ZANU and ZAPU in late 1979 when I had an opportunity to meet and work with such people as Emmerson M'Nangagwa, Rex Nhongo (a.k.a. Solomon Mujuru), John Mawema, Dumiso Dabengwa and many other of that hierarchy. We established a very good solid and sound working base which went a long way to defuse the tense situation that existed and avoided unnecessary killings and revenge beatings. I discovered that the most hardworking of ZANU and ZAPU personnel in CIO were the former combatants as they had fought and won the battle and wanted it to work. They were hardworking and I had no problems with them whatsoever. I found the worst ones were those who had studied outside Rhodesia during the war and had not participated in the 'struggle'. They pretended to know everything and wanted to make up for missing out on the action. They were the problem and had to be dealt with harshly and efficiently. Fortunately I had the minister's support. He was Emmerson M'Nangagwa and gave his total support to me which helped a great deal. It was only in 1997 that the situation began to deteriorate with the designation of white commercial farms and the awarding of large amounts of money to so-called "war veterans" and from this time on the situation got worse and worse as corruption and avarice set in until we now have the current sad situation prevailing in the country.

I left Zimbabwe in the year 2003 and went back to England where I now live with my wife and some of my children who emigrated at a later stage. I found great changes in Britain. Standards as I knew had been eroded. The British Police once powerful and internationally renowned had been emasculated and had become little more than a 'pen pusher' force with no respect anymore. The schooling discipline had vanished, school uniforms no longer worn, teachers manhandled. The country had become a 'nanny state', little respect for the armed forces. People, mainly children had become obese and ill mannered and people generally appeared to have too much money to spend. Good manners generally had gone and the people appeared spoiled and soft with very little backbone. Drug taking was another new thing that I had never experienced before in England. People appeared to be embarrassed about the British Empire and all it stood for and did nothing but apologise. Immigration I believe should have been much tighter and asylum seekers subjected to more scrutiny before being allowed in. Having said that, living here is very good, food is available, education is free and good. Health service is good especially for the young and elderly and other services such as free bus passes, winter allowances are a Godsend. Living in Zimbabwe today, I believe is not an option.

**Dan, thank you very much indeed for reading that into the record**

End of tape

**Dan Stannard Part Three**

**Dan, thank you very much indeed for your very frank comments that you have earlier read into the record. Please could you just elaborate on your father's background? You mentioned that he had been in the Indian Army, but was this a military family you came from?**

(00:00:39)

Yes it was, my father's father, my grandfather was in the British Army. My father joined as a boy soldier and then eventually was transferred to India where he then later joined the Ghurkhas and all my brothers at that time were encouraged by my father to join the army which they did and I was the only one really apart from my short stint in National Service to break away from that tradition and join the BSAP.

**What was your experience on coming to Rhodesia? Were many of your colleagues also with fathers who'd been in the military, who had the same sort of military background?**

There were quite a few. I came over with, there were fourteen of us that sailed over from London at the beginning of 1957 and those people in that squad or in that group would either have been in the police as cadets in England, some had military background, parents had been in the British Army, others who had been in the colonies. So yes, on the whole it was people who had travelled.

**I'm very curious as an historian if I can, well, frame Rhodesian society in the 1960's and the 1970's as being a hierarchical one founded on a military ethos - if you like, the legacy of military service. Also whether this hierarchy was instilled at public school and how much this affected people's outlook on life?**

I would say that's probably correct. For example, Ian Smith as Prime Minister: he was in the Air Force, the Rhodesian Air Force, he fought in the Second World War, he was shot down and a lot of his cabinet were also, had periods with the military or the Air Force or the Navy and that influence, that background impacted on their running of the country

**But did it also go wider so once Rhodesian society found itself increasingly in a war? Did this military legacy, and hierarchy, as well as the need to pull together to fight, also shuts down political criticism?**

Yes, absolutely correct. I mean political criticism in the form of African Nationalism at that time was considered a very great threat to the existence of the Rhodesian Front and the Rhodesian whites on the whole and therefore as Special Branch people we were tasked, that was our top priority to keep abreast and monitor the activities of African Nationalism, which we did to the

best of our ability. So political criticism of the Rhodesian government was not tolerated.

**The question of interrogation has been mentioned. I wonder if you could just talk about if there were codes of conduct in interrogation? I've come across a reference to "heavy" interrogation being used. Could you clarify this please?**

(00:04:07) Certainly, I can say from my personal experience that a lot of the interrogations were physical. We would get a man who was considered to be a guerrilla or having carried out some actions, burning hospitals, dormitories and the usual system was, once we'd got his fingerprints and photographs he would be handed over to the African detectives, members of the Special Branch who then used to beat him until such time as they got the truth from him and then bring him back. And then I would sort of carry on from there and establish the story and who was with him and the full background. That was normally the way interrogation was conducted. There were instances where no force was used, it was not necessary because they were quite willing to talk about their experiences but generally speaking it started out with a beating by the African members of Special Branch until he started talking. That's the way it worked normally.

**That was by African members of the BSAP. These were not white Rhodesian members of the BSAP?**

Well, it was a combination but you know it was easier to interrogate sometimes in your own language. Therefore it was quicker to say to your Special Branch team of blacks, "here he is, this is what he's done" and they knew and they would do the interrogation and normally when he was becoming co-operative, he would come back and they would tell us.

**Dan, was there a rule book on this?**

No there was not. The superiors didn't really want to know, they just wanted the results. They wanted to know what was happening and they wanted it quickly. How we did it was left to us, there was no questions asked.

**I have to ask, that level of physical violence, even if to serve a purpose to extract information which could be then put, in your view, to the greater good, did you at any point see that as violence against the African population?**

No, not at all. We saw it as a necessary method, a harsh method to get information to try and stop this spread of what was going on and the African members of Special Branch and CID were even more keen to try and eradicate this problem. So they never had a problem themselves in this type of interrogation.

**And this is a time when corporal punishment is used in schools as well?**

Yes

**So there isn't, shall we say, the same Millennium queasiness about using beatings? I'm trying to ask you whether in the climate of the times it was considered, in your view, acceptable?**

It was

(00:07:18)

**You raised a point in your reading into the record of the Cold War agenda that you perceived in your opponents and how you felt the communists were intent on securing Southern Africa's key mineral resources. What formed your views?**

A lot of the people that were involved with having been trained externally either by Russia and its allies or China under interrogation would mention that they had people who were in contact with them and based in places like Zambia, outside Rhodesia and a lot of their ideology, the Chinese trained, they had little red books with them when they came in. It was all a question of they realised that these people were using them, training them to fight to overthrow the Rhodesian government so that they would eventually move into that area. So a lot of the people who were fighting were aware that they were being used by Russia and its allies and China to achieve an objective which they would benefit from.

**So you're relating a view that your antagonists, the terrors as you called them, were being used by the international communist powers, rather than a view of African liberation fighters using external patrons?**

I think it worked both ways to a degree. The African liberating movements wanted/needed training, they needed firearms, they needed weapons and the Warsaw pact countries also needed these people to establish a foothold on their behalf so it was both.

**Did you see it as a symbiotic relationship that was emerging?**

Yes, correct

**I wonder if you could comment on your views of Ken Flower, 'the longest serving director of an intelligence organisation in the Western world'.**

Yes, well Ken was a member of the BSAP. During the Second World War he saw service abroad, came back and it was only later that he was asked to form and become a director general of CIO, a new body that was being put together. He was a very nice man. I personally felt a little bit disappointed in him. I got the impression that he exculpated himself from any decisions that were made politically and that the feeling was that perhaps he was either working for or being influenced by Britain. Whenever anything of any significance came up politically, he would always go to England and come

back and he would always try and exculpate himself from any of the blame that he should have accepted. So I felt personally that his book that I read, there were a lot of...I noticed a few errors and if I could pick out one or two or three which I did, there must have been a lot more. I don't think he was being entirely honest. [Deletion]

**You made mention in your first reading of the terrorist scourge, the terrs scourge and that your black African colleagues, in your view, felt as strongly as you did, they needed to be dealt with.**

Yes, absolutely

**Why did you think your black African colleagues within the BSAP, within wider society, why did they co-operate, in your view, with the Rhodesian Front state?**

Well I don't think they saw it as a Rhodesian Front state. They saw it as either being in the army or being in the police and doing a job and trying to stop what they didn't like was happening and any way they could do it. The way they applied themselves to their duties, their interrogation, was very significant. If they had any second feelings about it or weren't keen it certainly didn't manifest itself because they were very, very keen and worked very hard.

**Out of curiosity, was there a deliberate selection of, shall we say, a different ethnic grouping to interrogate?**

No, I mean obviously if a man was a Matabele then one would try and get people who interrogated him who were Matabele so they could understand the language but there wasn't any specific specialised selection, it was members of the SB who were working with you did the interrogation.

**So you had a sense then that they supported, if you like, upholding the rule of law and order?**

Yes

**What was the recruitment area basis for units, such as the RAR, within Special Branch?**

Well the RAR as I mentioned earlier, traditionally 99% came from Fort Victoria province, Masvingo and it was a tradition, family tradition.

**Like the Ghurkhas then?**

Like the Ghurkhas. A lot of people in the Support Unit police also came from that area. Special Branch was a mixture of different tribes and they were probably people, they were selected more for their ability, they were a little bit "a cut above" their colleagues in so far as they had specialised techniques.  
(00:13:44)

**You mean their colleagues within the wider BSAP?**

Yes

**Was there the same family tradition and pattern of employment within the BSAP as you're suggesting in the RAR?**

No, not really I can't sort of say that area, all our Special Branch came from there, they were from everywhere.

**But father and son going into the BSAP?**

That happened on many occasions, Wilf Mbanga for a start: his family, his brothers were all in CID, Special Branch with me and his uncle was a fantastic bloke. He was a Senior Warrant Officer in CID in Umtali when I was there and then he had a brother who was later OC, CID and very strong police background so yes, from that point of view there were families that traditionally carried on and joined the police but generally speaking it was the RAR who came from one area. Police said there were instances but it wasn't too general.

**One thing I haven't asked you, but what was your view of the Guard Force and the auxiliaries?**

Absolute...well Guard Force, it was just utilisation of, sadly, the coloured people who they felt that they had to contribute to the war effort therefore they were formed into Guard Force. They did a good job but they were used like fodder really and the auxiliaries were a pain in the bum, they were useless. I've always maintained that, I think they were just...that was a big mistake.

**Why?**

Because they were nothing more than guerrillas themselves. A lot of money was wasted, they were highly inefficient, they started doing the things that the guerrillas were doing and they were not reliable. You couldn't say an area where the security force auxiliaries were operating was secure because as far as I was concerned, that was another area that was not under our control.

**So a question of poor planning, lack of training, poor leadership?**

Yes

**Poor recruitment base**

Yes and the fact that they were despised by the locals and also by the guerrillas so they were really ineffective.

**Did they contribute then to a spiral of violence between 78 and 79?**

(00:16:26) Yes they did and a lot of them became victims of that violence. Large numbers were just gunned down by the guerrillas and they also precipitated violence of their own in areas that they operated so they were, as far as I was concerned, waste of rations, really were.

**Not just a waste of rations it suggests that they in fact could have made things worse on certain occasions**

Yes

**Again, one thing I forgot to ask you but what was your view of protected villages?**

Yes, that was a concept that never really worked because people don't like being locked up in a secure place and dictated to and became pretty obvious very quickly after their erection that the guerrillas still had contact, no matter how many protected villages were erected, they still had contact with the people inside those areas. You can't lock them up all the time, they have to come out during the day and so the contact was still maintained and the people manning those protected villages became targets.

**But the idea seems to have been practised by the Portuguese at the end of their imperial rule of Mozambique and I've gathered that in fact when the Portuguese were trying it they were really something of an object of ridicule from within Rhodesia. And then you see the same thing being tried in Rhodesia.**

I know, it didn't work

**Were you an early critic?**

Yes I didn't like the concept at all. I always believed and perhaps I shouldn't say this but I'll say it, in the early days of the war people that I arrested and who admitted being locally trained guerrillas had access to arms...you know, once they became helpful...I never had them sent to prison, I never had them prosecuted, I used to release them, I shouldn't say this but that's what I used to do because my belief was, there were people at the top who wanted statistics, they wanted to be able to tell the Commissioner and the government fifteen hundred people have been sentenced last week for failing to report the presence of terrorists. I mean, to me, once a village person has been sentenced and locked up, you've lost him forever. You will never, ever rehabilitate that person; he's gone so you were just increasing the number of opponents. If they hadn't done that we would have had more chance maybe of getting a little bit more co-operation from them.

**But were you unusual in your attitude then?**

Well I think...I don't know, I kept that to myself because personally there were a lot of people that I got on with very well and I didn't want to get them locked

(00:19:39) up because once they've gone, they've gone. I'm sure there are others that might have done that but I certainly did.

**But the pressure from above was to identify, interrogate, incarcerate?**

Correct and they wanted figures, statistics

**So this is building on also a fixation on figures of the body count then?**

Yes

**Is this again the dominance of the military mind focusing on military statistics?**

Yes absolutely

**Were there any lone voices that you knew of who were saying "we need a political solution, not a military one"?**

Well, we used to have discussions sometimes and a few of us came to the conclusion that the only way to win a war like that would be to kill every single black person; if you didn't do that then you would never win the war and who is prepared to do that? Nobody, so therefore it was imperative to get a solution.

**But this is the Vietnam mindset; 'We had to destroy the village to save it.'**

Yes I know and people realise that couldn't be done and people didn't want to do that so a political solution was the answer which happened eventually but it was the wrong answer as it turned out to be.

**The political solution that was moved towards obviously involved African Nationalism through Muzorewa but there was also the possibility of ZAPU and Nkomo. I know that effort was tried to support a compromise with Nkomo. You made reference to ZAPU being mainly from Matabeleland, Ndebele?**

Correct

**So that political movement contained people from Mashonaland?**

It did indeed, some of them are quite high up in the party, someone like Nathan Shamuyarira and others were high ranking members of ZAPU.

**But it was predominately from Matabeleland?**

Correct

**And reflecting a particular cultural outlook?**

(00:21:49) Yes I mean they're a Zulu nation, very warlike. I'll give you an example; after the war I was talking to Minister M'Nangagwa who was minister of security at that time and he was head of intelligence for ZANLA and special advisor to President Mugabe in Mozambique. We wanted to know what happened to a lot of people who were abducted during the war and he told me, gave me details of every single one and contrary to belief they weren't taken away and killed they were taken into Mozambique and eventually released, a great fanfare in Maputo. There were instances when FRELIMO took some of their prisoners away and they disappeared, presumably killed. When I went to see Dumiso Dabengwa who was the head of ZAPU intelligence and asked them the same questions about people who had been abducted by ZAPU and ZIPRA he said at every instance once they had interrogated them, they killed them. So there's the difference you've got the Shona who's not quite so war like and the Matabele who are – big difference.

**I've read in Heidi Holland's book "Dinner with Mugabe" your comment about the sense of frustration that was felt amongst some sections of the white Rhodesian security forces who moved to collaborate with South African military elements in the run up to independence.**

Correct. It was a horrible period because nobody really knew who could be trusted. We had instances within the organisation whereby we discovered that they were working for South Africa and we had to get rid of them. It wasn't a very nice feeling and it all contributed to...you know, we knew certain people in the Selous Scouts who had gone down there, joined the security forces in South Africa and then coming back to carry out operations in...

**And this is before independence?**

Well they were recruited before independence a lot of them and they were used after independence.

**But you talk about people being recruited within your organisation by the South Africans. Did you identify this before independence as well?**

No, in one or two cases, yes we did but it became more prevalent after independence but I think they must have recruited in the 70's and left them in situ as more or less as sleepers until such time as they needed them.

**Dan, how did you scotch the madcap idea to assassinate Mugabe and possibly others, possibly many others?**

How did I?

**Scotch it**

Well the information I got came from a man called McGuinness and the source was a member of that group and he was very worried because his mother was living in Harare and he knew that if they carried it out, she might

(00:25:30) well feature in the backlash, in the blood bath that would have ensued so we had the information...

**The information was just to kill Mugabe or was it to kill who?**

Well it was to destroy Zimbabwe before it had a chance to achieve independence so it was planned for the night of the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 1980. It would have been horrific and Mugabe almost certainly would have been killed. He was the target, the others were coincidental but it would have achieved what they wanted.

**Which was what?**

Which was a bloodbath, a backlash from the blacks on the whites, the what was left of the Rhodesian army didn't have weapons, they were confined to barracks at that particular time and it would have given the South Africans justification to come in from Beit Bridge area to restore rule and order and then the idea I believe, I was told later, was to then annexe Rhodesia as part of South Africa.

**So an idea hatched within the South African military?**

Yes

**I can just imagine what Pik Botha and the department of Foreign Affairs would have to say about that!**

Absolutely, I mean I was not aware that that was the plan at the time. My intention was to prevent it from happening, which we did and we did it in such a way as to protect the source. We went out in the early hours of the morning to this house in Mount Pleasant area and we made a noise so that the people heard the noise coming and fled and we recovered all the explosives and sophisticated weaponry and things that they had knowing that the source would be one of those to escape. We knew the names of them but the idea was, the agreement was that that's the way we would play it with the source and to this day his name has not come up and it worked and then the government wanted to keep it quiet because they didn't want the rest of the world to see that Zimbabwe, a new fledgling state, was not going to function.

**Then there's also the post independence violence that developed in Matabeleland in what had been described as the Gukuruhundi campaign.**

Yes

**Did you have any knowledge of that in your capacity in CIO?**

Yes I did, I mean I was Director Internal which covers the whole of the country but it was a very frustrating time because what happened with the Gukuruhundi was M'Nangagwa who was the Minister, there were ZANU-PF

(00:28:24) governors and senior personnel being brutally murdered in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces by ZAPU dissidents and at one such killing Mugabe said to M’Nangagwa “enough is enough”. M’Nangagwa took that to mean the time has come to...

### **Deal with it?**

To deal, to sort it out. He then called in his senior ex-ZANLA members of CIO, nobody else, no former members black or white were involved in that operation. The 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade was under the command of Perence Shiri who is now the Air Force commander, it was totally North Korean trained, it was made up of 100% of former ZANLA. We knew that they were having operations in Matabeleland, we knew they were using the Selous Scout type ‘freezing’ areas, no personnel whatsoever were allowed in there other than 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade and then they moved in armed with information from CIO and ZAPU committees whom they eliminated. Nobody knows the actual figure but between 30-50 thousand

### **I was going to say I’ve read between 10 and 20**

No it’s more than that

### **30-50 you believe?**

Yes I personally believe anything from between 30-50 thousand. I read that book the Bishops put together afterwards and even to this day, well till I was there, people were talking about their relatives. The Matabele people will never forget that and that’s another reason why Mugabe is behaving the way he is

### **It’s a deep scar**

Yes, very deep and people like Dabengwa will never forget. But that did happen and interestingly it was allowed to happen because none of the West or the world got involved or criticised

### **I know the second secretary at the British High Commission was touring Matabeleland and gathering information; and it was not filtered up and acted upon, much to his anger.**

I’m sure and Peter Godwin too was in the police, he did his national service in the police, he was in Ground Coverage. I met him afterwards and he dug up quite a bit of information and he was deported from Zimbabwe; M’Nangagwa said to me he was a member of Special Branch. He was not Special Branch, he never, ever was, he was a ground coverage man and he didn’t like what was going on and he did write about it and got deported. He’s gone back subsequently and I’ve met him. Yes, so that was a very black mark really but they got away with it because it was allowed to happen. Nobody tried to stop it, nobody.

(00:31:59)

**Do you think there was an element of people not quite believing that this could happen in this new era of nation building?**

I think a lot of people didn't want to interfere in a new country where they had been supporting them directly and indirectly, financially and other and they wanted to give Mugabe the chance to sort himself out therefore they turned the other way.

**What about the role of South Africa? After all this is an era in which South Africa embarked upon a policy of destabilisation and sabotage?**

It was perfect timing for South Africa because they had just or just introduced at that time or shortly after their Super-ZAPU, former Rhodesian black police and army and whom they'd trained and sent back in as Super-ZAPU to destabilise that area so it worked.

**Were you conducting surveillance on this?**

Not surveillance on the...?

**On Super-ZAPU**

We tried yes and we captured quite a few and we were able to find out and positively identify them as being trained by the same people as the RENAMO in Mozambique were being trained in South Africa. Ballistically we were able to tie up weapons that had been used by RENAMO and ZIPRA or Super-ZAPU were the same. Their tactics were the same, cutting off of ears, poisoning wells and raping and burning, killing and so it was manna from heaven.

**Excuse me for saying, Dan, but RENAMO was first raised as, shall we say, a dissident anti-FRELIMO organisation by the Rhodesians**

It was created by Ken Flower and by us, yes

**So those were tactics inherited, it could be said, from their previous training?**

Yes I mean I lot of them...RENAMO was handed over just after independence to South Africa, lock, stock and barrel

**In your view then was it a perpetuation of technique or was there again an escalation of violence and mutilations?**

There was an escalation, an escalation because the situation as perceived down in South Africa was that it was getting the whole area was escalating therefore their training and their tactics and their priorities and their targeting had also changed. So whereas they were used, RENAMO was used in Mozambique primarily against FRELIMO, Super-ZAPU was used to (00:34:49) completely de-stabilise Zimbabwe, as was RENAMO, they used to

come across from Mozambique and do similar things in Manicaland and that area, the same as Super-ZAPU were doing.

**I'm just stepping back, this is in the era then of Rhodesia that RENAMO operated across the border you're suggesting?**

No, I'm sorry I was thinking of after independence

**Oh ok thank you**

When the pipeline was destroyed so many times by RENAMO people, Super-ZAPU were doing the same thing in Matabeleland and Midlands Provinces.

**Something you commented upon was the language of 'sell-outs' and the labelling attached to political opponents of people who were seen as 'deviants'. That's very similar to accusations of treason that were levelled against those who criticised the Ian Smith government.**

Well not really, it goes really more for when the word Tshombe was used in the Belgian Congo

**In what way?**

Well, anybody who was considered to be a 'sell-out' then was called a Tshombe. A person who's been disloyal to his party, to his tribe was considered a sell-out or a Tshombe

**So it really is, you are cast out?**

Yes

**Which for an African is appalling?**

Yes it is so that is it. Ok when a guerrilla has pointed out somebody was a sell-out because he was working for the government, Rhodesian government in Internal Affairs or was considered to be an informer, they'd have a meeting, he would be accused of being a sell-out and then killed. So a sell-out is synonymous with that, you're letting the tribe down, you're letting the village down, you're letting the party down.

**Letting your family down**

Yes

**And also letting your ancestors down**

Yes, if in fact, I mean not all of these so-called sell-outs were genuine. I mean sometimes it was somebody you didn't like, somebody would say to them, he or she is a sell-out and that's all they required.

(00:37:09)

**But then it becomes a very potent weapon?**

Yes

**To remove anybody whom you see as a threat or a critic**

Correct

**Because if that then shuts down the space for debate**

Correct

**Was there the same process of shutting down space for debate on the other side?**

Yes, there was to a degree I mean for example the Commissioner of Police, PK Allum at that time would not tolerate anybody saying that Muzorewa was not going to win. Muzorewa, as far as he was concerned, was going to win and he would not tolerate any discussions that suggested otherwise.

**So the wealth of information that was coming in, shall we say, to the contrary was not used to revise...?**

No, I mean I, as being the liaison officer as appointed by Officer Commanding Special Branch at that time, it was an intriguing, fascinating period of my life. It started off by being awful. I had to go every day, two or three times a day to the audio/visual centre where ZANLA and ZAPU guerrillas were being kept and I was subjected to, obviously, physical searches and things but then I got to know people like M’Nangagwa, John Mawema and Dabengwa and others, Lookout Masuku and we made things work. I began to realise that what they wanted really was basically what we wanted - that we wanted the country to survive. We didn’t want any interference from others. They just wanted an opportunity to run the government and working together with them proved to be very, very beneficial. Now, I was privy to information from these people which I passed on in meetings with the Commissioner who accused me of being a traitor and if I ever mentioned...I told him that I believed that when the elections came that ZANU-PF would get at least 57 seats. I knew that. I mean, M’Nangagwa, we worked together daily. Allum called me a traitor and he would have me kicked out if ever I said that again and then sadly when it happened, he phoned me up and said “what went wrong Dan?”

**What did you say?**

“I want you to arrange a meeting with Mugabe”, so I said “I can do that, pleasure, how many senior officers do you want?” “no, no just me and you” which I did. A lot of the senior officers were very angry about that because they wanted to go along, they didn’t want PK Allum there on his own without knowing what he was going to talk about.

(00:40:13) [Deletion]

**When did Commissioner Allum leave?**

Very shortly after, he stayed for a little while and then his deputy became Commissioner

**Who was that?**

Denley, Jack Denley. So Mugabe at that stage was thinking he was right because he was keeping people with experience like Ken Flower running the organisation and the army commander would have been General Walls if he hadn't been so stupid, the Air Force was left...

**Hadn't been so stupid?**

Well, Walls was alleged to have said to the press about criticising Mugabe you know when he'd been allowed to continue before he had even had a chance. So Mugabe said "that's it, off you go". So it all looked quite good because Mugabe wanted the thing to work, he wanted people to stay, he wanted the country to progress.

**That had been President Machel's strong recommendation "don't do what we did in Mozambique: Keep the whites there"**

Yes and Nyerere

**Yes and Tongogara**

Did you know him?

**I knew of him. Of course he...**

He was killed

**Yes, he was killed. But the recommendation from the Mozambiqueans and the Tanzanians "keep the whites, keep the skills"**

We tried, and the Chinese also

**Build a new nation**

(00:42:15)

And he did and things were going well until 1997

**You made reference to dealing with critics within ZANU-PF harshly and efficiently. What did that mean?**

I actually witnessed it on one occasion when I had information that Mugabe, before independence was flying from Maputo and that on the road between Harare airport and there, there was an ambush. So I went out in my car with

M’Nangagwa and Rex Nongo and we went out on to the airport. As the plane landed we took him off, whisked him away in my car the back way to his house in Mount Pleasant. Now John Mawema was trying to follow us in his jeep and M’Nangagwa was so angry at him being so stupid that he gave him a good beating, a thrashing in the garden of Mugabe’s house; it was a viscous beating and he was calling him a “stupid, stupid man” and this was a senior man in ZANLA who later became Director Internal after me. So that’s an instance of non-toleration of anything, they would be dealt with very harshly.

**It’s obviously established practice?**

Oh yes

**This was nothing new**

This was something that had been going on in Mozambique

**Yes**

I mean they had to have that rigid control, they didn’t want people running away

**No, it’s solidarity, what does that mean? How is it achieved?**

That’s right

**Dan, you’ve been extremely frank and confiding. Thank you very much indeed for your time**

End of interview