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Anthony Murphy

Anthony's parents moved to Rhodesia from South Africa after the Second World War in 1948. He was born in Rhodesia in 1950. Joined the BSAP after school via national service, and had to do Reserve work after completing his service. Studied law and married in 1976. Left Zimbabwe for South Africa in 1984. Left South Africa shortly afterwards tor Botswana. Left Botswana for Zimbabwe in 1987. Left Zimbabwe for the UK in 2001.

This is Doctor Sue Onslow talking to Mr Anthony Murphy at the London School of Economics on Monday the 1st of June 2009. Anthony, please, could you begin by saying how did you come to be in Rhodesia, in the bush war of the 1970's?

I was born there so that's how I came to be there.

Where were you born?

In Bulawayo

And were your parents Rhodesians or had they emigrated to Rhodesia?

They arrived there after the war from South Africa

So were they British originally or were they South African?

South African

So, they went up to Rhodesia when?

In, I think, about '48. It was just years before I was born in 1950.

Do you know why they left South Africa then?

I do, because they told us. They said it was because of the nationalist government in South Africa. They felt there were less opportunities for them, as a young couple and…

A young English couple

English speaking, yes, exactly. They felt that the Afrikaners wouldn't give them a fair crack of the whip. So they heard about Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia as it was and applied to go there. They made one crucial mistake though because the recruiting at that time was, they wanted nurses, they wanted young people, nurses, policemen and others. So Mum was a qualified nurse but they didn't want married ones. So when they got there, she couldn't get a job. That was…

Because she was married?

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Yes

How crazy.

Absolutely crazy, because there was a great need there obviously, in all sectors of the health…but that was the recruiting policy that they originally (00:02:14) applied. In fact, I don't think she ever worked again. She then had five children.

But what a waste. This is a country that encouraged skilled white immigration and then had it, in your mother's case, and didn't use it.

Yes

Quite illogical. What was your father's profession?

He was a…he'd been in the Navy during the War. He went under age I think and he then did…they had a release scheme for them to go University and he got a place at the University of Natal. He was going to study engineering but didn't settle down. He then studied book-keeping and worked for a small garage, repairing cars but as the book-keeper and he then developed that. He then studied by correspondence and did CIS. I think he got a job in the tax department in Rhodesia, first for the railways and then in the tax department.

So why did your parents settle in Bulawayo?

That was the headquarters of the railways. They worked for a while in Umtali but that was a back-water, you know, a much smaller place. Bulawayo was actually, at that time, the biggest city in the country

Was it really?

The administrative capital, Salisbury, was quite small. That was where it was all at, Bulawayo.

So when did the shift come? When did Salisbury, then Harare, really grow in size?

It had grown by the time I grew up. I think during Federation, the Federation, there was a lot of investment in Southern Rhodesia.

That makes a lot of sense. So your family then, had only very distant contacts, very distant memories of the UK?

They were very…what they taught us was that we were English

But you were English South African?

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They didn't think of themselves as South Africans. South Africa itself was a concept that had only just happened. It was after the Boer War. Well the union, when was the union?

1910

1910, so they were still young then and they had…South Africa, and I never thought of myself as a South African, that's for sure.

(00:05:08) **So you always thought of yourself as Rhodesian?**

Yes

So Rhodesia was "home" for you?

Yes

And for your parents, where was "home"?

Rhodesia as well

So just going back, did you…?

But they always, Dad always said how he wants to retire to the coast and the coast they were talking about was the Natal coast, South Africa. So they were like going back to South Africa but we didn't regard ourselves as having any links with South Africa. We had an uncle, my mother's brother had always lived there but they came to Rhodesia briefly before they went back as well. But myself and my brothers and sister, we've never regarded ourselves as South Africans.

So are you the oldest of your siblings?

Yes

You say "brothers": how many?

There are four brothers and one sister.

So born in 1950, growing up in Bulawayo, where did you go to school?

To the local government school, it was, what was it called? Hillside kindergarten, KG, the KG school.

And after that, then where?

Then to the Hillside junior school and then…that was quite a new area of town so we had quite a new house in a new suburb with a new school to go to although it had been there some time before we went there. And then private schooling was being developed and my parents thought it would be good for

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us to go to a Christian brother's college that had been established. So we went there to CBC as it was called.

So how old were you when you left school?

Seventeen I think or eighteen

(00:07:25) **How integrated was white society in Bulawayo for you growing up? That would be 1950 to 1967/1968. Was it quite a tight-knit white community or were there class divisions within it? You talked about the railways, the administration…**

Very, very divided, very…

Divided by class? Or cliques? Or what?

It was. For example, next door lived a train driver and they were Afrikaans and we didn't mix with them, we played with them but we were told that we were a cut above them.

Oh really?

And certainly the way they behaved, they were quite dirty; they ran around the house dragging a dustbin lid. I still remember the name of the boy, the one boy, his name was Yuti and we had school uniforms and went to school. But one day, he went to school and it was a public holiday. So we told him that it was a public holiday and he should go home. But that was, to me, an example that he didn't even know what day to go to school.

So when you left school, what did you do then?

I left school early because I didn't do the 'A' level exams. I did what we called 'M' level which was matriculation exam. In fact we all did that, we did 'O' level, 'M' level and 'A' level and I could have stayed on to do the year for 'A' level, the other year for 'A' level. But I got quite good results and I had an opportunity to go to university so I went.

Where did you go?

Natal

You went back down to Natal?

Yes, that's where my grandmother was. I went and stayed with her actually.

So growing up through the period of the end of Federation and UDI, what did your parents think of the political scene and what was going on in Rhodesia? This is your mid to late teens? That's quite a time of change in Rhodesia.

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Yes, what did they think about it?

Yes

Or what did we think?

I mean, did they talk to you about it a lot? Did you debate it?

(00:10:12) What did we think about it? They didn't, they didn't. When we were very young, there were the 1960 riots and we just were told to lie down on the floor of the car if there were stones flying around but stones never flew around on our journey. Subsequently I've learnt about what those times were like and then I joined, I was in the police and then the police reserve and I met some of those people who saw those times. In fact, if I'm remembering rightly now, of course it was going on while we were young and when they were throwing stones. It was just regarded as sort of hooliganism. And then shooting started. The police shot first and I didn't like that but it happened and then I think, I suppose that's the escalation of the whole thing, wasn't it?

Yes

But we didn't, I suppose we must have been cocooned because they didn't debate it with us. I was curious and wanted to know…

Did you talk about it at school with your mates? With your teachers? Did you discuss what was going on?

No, no and the school; you were asking about integration, racial integration. The school was white.

Was it?

The private school then had one Indian in our class and he was the son of the mayor of Gatooma and so he'd come. I remember that very well and there were Jewish people in our class at the private school.

Jewish people at your Christian Brother's College?

Yes, the Catholics. There were about half Catholics but the education was regarded as better than the government schools which by that stage were quite big and they felt that maybe there weren't enough teachers I think. But it was also very academic because my brothers then didn't finish their…well, my second brother did but then others went back into the government system.

So after you'd finished your university education, did you spend your university holidays in Natal with your grandmother, or did you go back home?

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No, there was a hitch because I never settled. I think, looking back, I must have been too immature because I didn't finish the first year. I gave it up after a year and that's when I joined the police.

Right, so you were a volunteer going into the BSAP?

By that stage, things had developed and there was compulsory military service so I considered…I think I did discuss this in some detail with my (00:14:06) parents and they were disappointed that I hadn't finished at University. I was disappointed too but I didn't want to stay there. I was homesick and it just didn't work out for me. It was either do something and be conscripted into the Army, which didn't… it wasn't a sort of…not many people regarded the Army as a career and officer training somehow wasn't available to me although I was interested. I think it was because it was so elite. There were just limited places so I couldn't have qualified on the results I had. I certainly looked into it but there was no chance of doing that.

Had your father served in the police before this?

No, but my grandfather had and he had…

But down in South Africa?

Yes, in the South African constabulary which was the force that was established by Baden-Powell after the Boer War. We were told all about that and Dad especially was quite proud of that.

Ok, so there's a family collective memory then?

Yes

Public service and supporting law and order in that way?

Yes but he was also from Ireland apparently. There were whatever problems there - I think poverty and famine and things. The British Army recruited by making them do things like leaping over a horse to see if they knew about horses and our grandfather apparently succeeded in leaping over the horse and it showed that he knew about horses. Eventually he became like a vet but he never got formal qualifications.

Just as an important detail then, when did your grandfather go down to South Africa? Did he go down during the Anglo-Boer War?

1899, I think that's when he arrived there or before that. No, it was the Second Boer War, that one was 1901 wasn't it?

Yes

Yes, he must have gone at the beginning or end of the second Boer War. I am still trying to find out about that.

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So you were recruited into the BSAP. You did your…?

Yes, I went. I decided then, with family, that I would…because of this grandfather business, my father spoke with some authority. Looking back I wonder, but he said that it was a good way of developing your character and the whole police recruiting thing at that time was a big adventure in the (00:17:29) colonies, sort of develop your character and have a good time. So the family story, myth or whatever it was fitted in with the recruiting campaign.

It's – 'Go and be a man. Go and learn to be a man.' It's very much empire building philosophy

Yes, Kipling and all that. Of course we'd been taught all that in cubs and scouts which we went and did.

So you did your basic training, including equitation, so you could jump over a horse too?

The sad part of it is because things were escalating and they wanted people out of training, our training was cut from nine months to six and all we did was look after the horses and muck them out. I wanted to ride them but we didn't.

So where was your first posting as part of the BSAP?

The depot training, Morris depot in Salisbury

And how long were you there for?

Six months

And that was basic urban policing?

Yes, law and police, sports, the limited equitation that I mentioned. Various training, we went around and saw the prison and the gallows which was quite frightening. The brewery was better because they gave us samples after the tour; that was the training! But the training was interesting also because the transition at the time, they were still recruiting from England which was amazing considering that's 1970, after UDI and everything. And my first room mate was a metropolitan policeman. I think his name was 8440 Heron Thomas Walter. He'd served and everything and now he was coming for adventure. The other Englishmen in our squad were; (1) 8439 Dodd Adrain John who had been in the Royal Marines, and (2) 8446 Walters Derek Mitchell. See *The History of the British South Africa Police* detailed below.

To a rebel colony

Yes, people didn't seem to worry too much about that. But yes, exactly. But then he got homesick for his pub. We didn't really understand what he was talking about but somebody said that afterwards, and he deserted. So he disappeared and then I had another room mate actually before him who was

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like me, a Rhodesian and he was a farm boy and English speaking also, not Afrikaans, so he was as similar to me as you could get but unfortunately for him, on his form, he didn't declare a conviction for a firearms offence. I think in those days, if you were a farmer, it was very difficult not to be convicted for a firearms offence, particularly if you were young and perhaps got a weapon without permission or something. It's simple, it wasn't a serious thing but he was kicked out because of that. So after that, they didn't give me room mates.

(00:21:06) **<u>You</u> were the problem! But Anthony, this is suggesting actually that you're meeting people from different walks of life that you wouldn't have met before. You're moving out of your circle in a way, moving out of your home circle, meeting a lot of different people. You hadn't joined with a great group of people. You'd gone in as a single recruit, so you hadn't joined with your friends from school. It was a different…?**

Just by myself. In fact our family was very close, almost, and looking back I think, almost smothering. Dad had been an only child and now he had five kids to remedy what he thought were the defects of being an only child. But he had some crazy ideas like, his one crazy idea was that we shouldn't have friends because we've got enough in our…we've got brothers enough in our own family. We didn't accept that and he let us have friends but I thought that was an odd thing.

No, my mother was the same. She believed we didn't need to have friends in to play because there were four of us. So she didn't need to organise anything that because we had play mates.

So that's a common idea, is it?

I don't know. I'm just saying it's common to my mother as well

Bigger families

I've made up for it since. You were at Morris depot then for six months. Were you aware of the bush war starting to emerge?

Yes because it had started; the shooting war had started. Prior to that, what was it '68 or something? The first incursion and one of the chaps, I still remember his name, I think Sindall [I have since checked, his full name was Alan Maxwell Sindall and I see he retired as an Inspector. His regimental number was 8444; this also means of course that he turned out to be a senior and responsible policeman; not "twitchy" as we speculated below. I retired as a Senior Patrol Officer and my regimental number was 8443. See *The History of the British South Africa Police* published by Something of Value (pty) Australia Limited ISBN O 646 40119 X]. Alan's brother who had been a dog handler had been killed in that incursion actually in combat and he was twitchy as a result when we did sort of what they called PATU training, police anti terrorist training. Walking around in the bush with guns and everything

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like that, I and all the rest of the group were quite casual about that and even put our rifles on our shoulders sometimes and he got bothered and shouted at us for being casual. Because it wasn't…we weren't training in an operational area but it was the bush and he felt threatened by just being in the bush.

Was he one of those then that would be quick to fire first rather than be more cautious, do you think?

Yes, because he was totally twitchy and we said "oh, hang on bloke, be realistic, where we are". But because of his own loss, we were as sensitive as men are about these things – i.e. not much.

No. So what did you think you were fighting against? You talked about the bush, the shooting war had started?

(00:24:37) When I filled in your questionnaire and even before that, I've been trying to work out who we were or were not fighting against. I wasn't fighting against anyone. It was preserving law and order and that was Ian Smith's propaganda as well.

Well, you believed it?

Yes, yes because I knew nothing about the nationalism

You knew nothing about African nationalism at that point?

No

Even though you'd grown up in Bulawayo during the 1960's riots? You knew about, after all, independence elsewhere in Africa, Northern Rhodesia, just north of the border

Yes but that had all been… the Congo had happened even before that. I know a lot about it now I've studied it. I've got a degree in African politics. I have to promise you I didn't know about it then, aged 19.

So you had no understanding of African nationalism? You just thought that these were criminal deviants who were coming into the country? Why did you think they were shooting?

Well now, I understand why they were shooting, I would have been shooting too

But at the time you just thought they were criminals?

Yes

Ok, did you think they were communists?

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I found that a bit hard to understand or believe but again, I think I'm agreeing that my sophistication at that stage was zero.

But you were normal in that respect? You weren't unusual?

Break in interview

Part two talking to Mr Anthony Murphy

I've just asked you, Anthony, whether in fact you were normal in your lack of political sophistication, your lack of understanding of African Nationalism in the early 1970s? Did you discuss things with your mates within the BSAP?

(00:27:10) Not at all, that wasn't a topic, perhaps surprisingly but I've touched on some of the things we talked about and when we went drinking, we didn't even discuss it. You know I was very impressed with, for example, going to the prison and seeing the gallows and relating that to perhaps arresting people who committed murder and then them getting hanged. I thought about that but I didn't really debate that with the rest of them.

What did you think of Ian Smith and the Rhodesia Front? After all, you were an apolitical police force but serving the political agenda of a state?

I started understanding politics when I followed it and so on. I had the vote at quite an early age, or was it 21? I think it only became 18 later and I exercised my vote seriously and I never voted once for Ian Smith.

Whom did you vote for?

Whoever else was available and there were, towards the end, there were only more right-wing options available. The Rhodesian Action Party, if I remember right but in the early stages, there were liberal options. People who I thought were sensible and that's who…I never voted for Smith. I don't know who my parents voted for, I don't think. They said they didn't have to discuss that but I wonder if they voted for Ian Smith.

How about your brothers? Were they also conscripted into the police? Where did they do their national service?

I think we also, I understood that we couldn't (win), this couldn't be a success, whatever this…if there was going to be a war, that it couldn't be a successful outcome. The way of life that we were supposed to be preserving was…we couldn't maintain it. So my brother, my second brother, who's a year younger than me, when we were young, he'd lost an eye. So he just had one eye and my advice to him, and we certainly did talk, was to forget about getting caught in the Rhodesian conscription. Dad got him articles, again in South Africa with a relative, a cousin…no, not a cousin, it was through a cousin who

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organised it, he did accountancy articles. So he went away and he never came back

And how about your other brothers?

The third one; then comes our sister. Women weren't subject to conscription so there was no worry about her. It was a concern of getting killed, the idea was not to get killed and our second brother also had, he had medical problems. When he was young, had a brain tumour or something and had post-operative epilepsy and he was quite intelligent and everything but I think he, medically, was not allowed. And then our youngest brother was conscripted. He went into the Army and then even did selection for the Selous Scouts but he didn't pass that but he was in the Signals, Selous Scouts Signals and we were worried about him rather than pleased with what he'd achieved.

(00:32:02) **Yes, I can see why. So just going back to your four years in the police service, you said that you were in Morris depot, then you went and joined your PATU?**

No, no that was just part of the training

Oh, I'm sorry, ok

I was trained as a…to be a policeman, a regular policeman and that was policing, to do policing and I passed out top of my squad. I was the best recruit in my squad, got an award and everything and because of that, I could choose where I wanted to be stationed and I chose home, which I regret now but I was stationed at Hillside police station.

You didn't go very far, did you!

No

So is that where you spent…?

No, then I realised that that wasn't so much fun although I was interested in what I did, investigating things and rural patrols so I explored…

Were you in CID? What branch were you in?

I was in their uniform branch but I could have, that was the idea, to go to CID or anywhere else but I stayed there for a while and realised I was missing…I wasn't having the experience that I originally thought of so I applied for a transfer and I got transferred to the districts and that's where I spent…

Where in the districts?

Western Matabeleland, Plumtree but actually that was on the way to an even more remote place, Madhlambudzi.

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On being posted out into the districts, what were your responsibilities? Still investigation? Intelligence gathering?

Yes, because the war hadn't arrived there. The initial incursion in '68 was in northern Matabeleland and then the war heated up in the north-east so I was in actually the opposite corner, the south-west where it was quite peaceful. So it was normal policing.

But weren't there ZIPRA incursions coming across the border from Botswana?

No

From refugee camps into Matabeleland?

(00:34:47) Later, but not at that time, not in '71

Right. So when did the war start heating up for you?

Only after…because I then served in western Matabeleland in Plumtree, Madhlambudzi and Mphoengs, that's all those stations and Tjolotjo, those are all stations in western Matabeleland and we were only armed towards the end of that. We went out on patrol without arms. We were only carrying weapons towards the end of the period which was about '70…I left the force in '74, so '73, we were carrying arms. Prior to that we weren't, we were unarmed. There were no terrorist related incidents in the whole of that time, that I came across. One thing I came across was arresting a stranger, because there were controls of entry into the tribal trustlands, as they were called. So if anyone strange was there, we would hear about it and then go and find out what they were doing there. If they didn't have a permit to be there, they were arrested. So I was told to go and arrest a coloured person who arrived at some remote part in our district and took him back, but he was dealt with by the Special Branch. I don't know what he was up to, if anything bad, but that was the only thing. There were no landmines, there were no ambushes, there was nothing. The other thing we were doing is we were going around and drawing plans of all the stores because there'd been an incident on the other side where a store had been held up or something and so we wanted to have on record, plans of all our stores. But I did some of that. I suppose that's intelligence gathering work that I did and going and checking all the old men who had shotguns, Africans who had shotguns from the old days, they had licences to have shotguns. So we were going around checking that. It was normal policing, all that.

So you're saying that in fact your exposure to the war, between '70 and '74 was relatively limited?

It was very limited and I thought that was quite good because that was the whole plan, to serve whatever conscription I had to serve without getting myself in danger.

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But then you said you were conscripted into the reserve, part of your…?

Afterwards, then, well the idea was to serve the three years, eventually I did four because I didn't leave when I could have left. I was happy and just enjoying life although I felt I wanted to make progress in life. You know, being a policeman was not…I felt I was, as I've subsequently proved, I had the capacity to do more. So it was just larking around, rather than thinking that that was a career. But I thought, the idea was then that I wouldn't be…I would have done my time and I wouldn't have to go back to do that ever again. But because the war heated up, there was then compulsory call-up duty so that's when I went into the police reserve.

Ok, so what were relations like, in your experience, between black and white policemen?

(00:39:05) Very good, my relationships and I didn't see anyone having bad relations. But I've thought about this a lot and they were good relations but limited relations. Like in all the police camps, say Mphoengs for example, I was the patrol officer on that station with a section officer in charge and about twenty African police, which would have been from a Sergeant Major to a constable. They all lived on one side of the police camp and we lived on the other and I lived by myself in a house. So we had good relations but probably hardly relationships at all and I think that's what went wrong, that there was no…Ian Smith certainly wasn't communicating.

But it seems to me that, to use a phrase that has come through in other interviews I've done, you regarded them as "our Africans". There was a feeling of 'them' i.e. the nationalists fighting. But "our Africans" are good black Rhodesians with whom we're fighting together?

No, no, I never thought that, I never thought that. I think the way I was brought up, we were brought up to respect our fellow human beings and I related to African police colleagues with respect because although I was nominally senior to them, when I was in the regular police, when I started, I knew nothing and I was very careful to relate to them in a respectful way so that I would learn. And they appreciated that. I think perhaps there were some of us who were a bit arrogant although I didn't witness too much of that and if I had, I would have objected.

How much do you think the war helped to create a sense of Rhodesian identity, a sense of Rhodesian patriotism? That it was the white community pulling together, with black Rhodesians supporting it too?

I don't think it really did. For me it was an opportunity to get to know African people, fellow Zimbabweans as they became, because we only left there, as I've told you, in 2001. We spent twenty years trying to make Zimbabwe work and I was interested in that, in getting to know them, about their background, all the different tribes, what that meant in terms of their heritage. What they thought they were doing now and one thing I remember on patrol from Madhlambudzi when I was there is on their gates, a homestead, there would

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be a notice saying “X member” and it was an “X” and “member” and that meant that he was an ex-policeman. He was so proud of it, he put a notice on his gate saying “X member” and we would visit those ex-members as ex-members to see how they are. ‘Is everything ok with you?’ But even that wasn’t so clever for them because in the dissident period afterwards…

They were targets

They were targeted and killed and I, in fact found myself representing one of those dissidents who’d gone around killing my ex-members. I wasn’t very pleased with that.

But you had to provide their defence because you were appointed?

(00:43:42) Yes, provide their defence, yes and part of the defence was, it was a technical defence, was that if you were not Zimbabwean then somehow there was some benefit. I don’t remember exactly and that sounds a bit illogical but anyway, the question of my client’s place of birth was important and he told me a long story about where he was born, to be on the beneficial side of his defence. He was sentenced to death and I then got a whole bunch of papers to argue his appeal which I was getting paid nothing for and I had to travel all the way to Salisbury to do it. But in the meantime, I got a phone call from him, having been released on an amnesty or something, wanting me to help him get a South African passport and I said “but in your defence, you told me you weren’t a South African?” “Oh whatever”. I had a phone call with him so then I phoned the Registrar and said “what are you appealing, doing this appeal when you’ve already released the guy?” So thank goodness I was relieved from that charade.

<u>Break in interview</u>

Part Three talking to Mr Anthony Murphy

Anthony, please, after you left the BSAP in 1974, what did you do next?

I did articles, law articles. In fact that was what was originally suggested I should do, and I must say, our vocational guidance was just about zero except from parents. But the original idea is that I would do law because there’s family lawyers, lawyers in the family and I had been taken to look at a law firm. I came away with the conclusion that they made money out of other people’s problems and I didn’t like that and told my father so that’s why all the rest of the saga that you’ve heard about occurred. But then I thought, no, that looks like a good sort of thing to do, sensible thing to do so I wrote to all the law firms in Bulawayo and one of them phoned me and I went for an interview. I got articles; and then I signed up for five years articles and did study by correspondence at the same time.

So did you travel outside Rhodesia in this time at all? Or were you very much based in Rhodesia? Having come back from South Africa after your first year of university, did you…?

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I didn't go anywhere, I was quite happy there

You didn't visit the UK?

No

You didn't come to Europe or anything like that?

No although, wait a minute, I got married in '76

So you had a honeymoon away?

Yes but in South Africa

(00:47:32) **You still didn't travel very far?**

No, but then a year or so later, we came to Europe, no, that was quite a few years later when our son was a baby so that was '83/'84. I don't think we went anywhere because I'd started those articles; I hadn't been outside Africa by the time I started that.

How were South Africans viewed by Rhodesians? Rhodesians of your generation. South African police, Afrikaners?

With disdain, if I know what that means. We regarded ourselves…I still regard myself as superior to South Africans. They had everything, our relatives in South Africa, they had better things than us, material goods but somehow we felt we had a better life than them. And the Afrikaners we met, I've since met very educated Afrikaners because our eldest son went to a choir school where we met them but the ones, the police, the customs and immigration officers which were the main ones we came across were pretty horrible people.

So what did you think of the SAP, the South African Police who came up because of incursions in the late Sixties?

Apartheid, which had been growing in South Africa and we saw this, as we went down there. Being very young, you don't notice but when I became aware, I was very bothered by what I saw. Like notices saying that only white people could sit on one bench and black people have to sit on another. At Johannesburg railway station, white people had to walk up one staircase and black people another, I didn't like that, I was very uncomfortable and Zimbabwe was never like that, I thought.

So you didn't have the petty apartheid? It wasn't in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe?

No, not that I…We didn't go and sit on different benches or walk…have to go different ways on the station and things like that.

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In the 1970's, did you ever have a sense of the war is going wrong? This is not going to work?

I knew it was going wrong from the beginning and I didn't think it could go right but now, this is trying to think back on my sophistication at that time. Now, I'm saying that I actually could see it wasn't going to go right, but I felt that and that's why I persuaded my second brother not to even be involved in it. As I was more sophisticated and reading the news, even the news as limited as it was, the one argument that came through that I couldn't find an answer for was the numbers argument, the population arguments.

What was that?

(00:51:31) Well if I remember rightly, it was South Africa, it was about five to one or six to one (5:1 or 6:1) or something and for us it was about ten to one. So we felt that it was just…I felt that that's impossible. If you were trying to beat people with numerically superior population like that and I never actually wanted to beat people, I don't think.

How much was the Ratio part of everyday discussion and debate, in government propaganda, people's awareness of the racial imbalance?

I think that was huge and maybe if they were using it in a propaganda way, they were trying to persuade people to fight harder but it came across to me as a hopeless situation. Sorry, but you asked me about what I thought of the South African police who came.

Yes

They just stayed by themselves in fortified encampments, they didn't socialise with us. They regarded themselves as superior to us when we knew we were superior to them, and then they got hammered

To start with, their uniforms also stuck out as well because they were different from yours! I think they were highly visible in the bush as well, or so I've been told

Yes and they were stupid. They'd just walk around, swaggering around

Or were they poorly trained, rather than stupid?

Stupid and poorly trained but that's the whole thing about this Afrikaner myth that they know everything about Africa. That they can beat anyone who tries to fight them in Africa and it turned out to be a lot of nonsense. But we were like that in the beginning as well. I think they first discovered how far the BSA police, which was a proud colonial police force, had got from its bush prowess when there was a very able criminal. I don't think he was violent but he stole a lot; he was called Ayden Diggeden and he used to escape regularly and when the police couldn't catch him, because he went and ran around the bush. The police realised that there was a training shortfall so we started

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doing that training, what I called PATU training before. The South Africans, they just got too soft. They didn't know about what their grandfathers knew.

From the beginning of 1977, it seems that the debate about the war was it was worth fighting to get the best terms possible, that you were fighting to achieve a moderate transition? What did you think of that sort of talk?

Not only did I not vote for Ian Smith but it became quite clear to me that he was being stupid and what I've learnt subsequently is serious people like, for example, Herbert Chitepo who was a lawyer and a sensible bloke and who could have built a country maybe with room for everyone, was blown up by Ian Smith in Lusaka. So what they did, is they got rid of all the people they (00:55:19) could have talked to and then ended up with Mugabe, so they got what they deserve.

What did you think of the internal settlement and Bishop Muzorewa's…?

It was a joke

You thought that at the time?

Yes, I knew it was. We knew it was, we all knew

And then Lancaster House? How about that?

Well, they were serious because we knew they were the serious guys and Mugabe held out to the end and then started saying that it was good and there's going to be reconciliation for everyone. But he was talking out the other side of his mouth in Shona saying something else; that the whites are the problem and they must be sorted out.

As a family, did you think about leaving at the end of the Seventies? Or did you think, 'We're going to stay, we're going to build a new Zimbabwe? We're going to listen to that rhetoric of reconciliation?' You've said that you stayed until 2001?

Yes but as a family, what do you mean?

Your parents, were they talking of leaving?

No, dad had always talked, even when we were kids, he was going to retire to South Africa, that's what he did. I think he retired a bit earlier than he planned to or he was told to retire early or whatever.

And so he went down to the Natal coast?

Yes, but we'd already left ourselves, we went, because…and there were economic pressures. There was no pressure about or altruism about building the new Zimbabwe although that's the way I say it now. What happened was,

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I qualified in ’81, just as there were huge changes in the profession as well. It was a divided profession, they made into a fused-bar. Previously, there was discrimination against women as well as racial discrimination against African people. Now women were allowed, and I’m very pleased about that, I must say, so huge changes when I qualified and I got a junior partnership with a very good firm but we very soon weren’t able to live in the style which we thought we were entitled to live in. The economy started going down the drain. There were a few droughts and because it’s an agricultural economy and it picks up quickly when there’s rain, but especially western Matabeleland, during droughts cattle and people start dying.

Did you know about Gukuruhundi at the time?

Yes, I was absolutely appalled by that

(00:58:18) **That was part of everyday awareness when it was going on, even if it wasn’t publicly acknowledged in the press?**

I even represented Shiri, before he became notorious. I think he’s the Air Force chief now. We didn’t know exactly what was going on but they were getting people off buses and killing them by the side of the road and I think it was courageous magistrates, young magistrates, who got it out. The magistrates were African of course. There was a total security clamp down over the area but these stories started coming out and one of the initial strategies of the Army, the Fifth Brigade was to get legal representation and then the idea was on the evidence, try and defend themselves. So I got sucked into a bit of that; actually when I started my own firm because I did ten years with Webb, Low and Barry, the firm where I did my articles. Then with the dissidents, and the economy, we went to South Africa. And I was probably trying to plug into the legal heritage that our family had but it was over by then, that was too historic. We didn’t like South Africa; we only stayed there for a year.

When did you go down to South Africa?

In ‘84

And then you came back to Salisbury, Harare as it then was?

No, we went to Botswana and I had a contract with a law firm in Botswana for three years and then I established my own firm in Bulawayo in ’87.

So do you still feel yourself to be Rhodesian or Zimbabwean?

We stopped being Rhodesian in ’81 and we became Zimbabwean and we, now we are British but I don’t meet many other British with my accent.

I was going to say, how did you find coming and settling in Britain? Obviously the Isle of Man is a very particular part of Britain.

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Yes, and that's how it's possible because I didn't know when we came, that was a rescue mission because my practice, the economy had got even worse than it was the first time and I had to wind down my practice and we had to escape so…
;
When you say 'escape', that's an interesting word

Yes, bankruptcy, that's what would have happened it we hadn't got out. We'd put all our money into educating our children, we couldn't…the exam system was debased because the Minister of Education's daughter sold their exam papers so our school said that we've got to get GCSE's again and we had to pay a foreign currency for those. But at that stage, there was no legal way of earning foreign currency so as a lawyer, I was stumped. I could get it on the black market but what was the point? And I persuaded my wife. It took me (01:02:26) quite a while to persuade her that we'd had it. We had to get out of there; there was no more future for us.

Was she Rhodesian/Zimbabwean?

Yes

I can see why it would be so tough for her. How did you find the Isle of Man when you came here, besides cold and wet?

Well, fortunately we had promised ourselves that we wouldn't moan about the weather because we heard that English people moan about the weather. To discuss it is one thing but to moan about it is another and so we promised we wouldn't and so then we experienced it because, wow, they have weather there, horizontal rain and snow and beautiful days and every kind of…we'd never experienced so much weather in our lives.

Weather, as you say, rather than waking up and "oh, it's another beautiful blue sky today"! But how about English ways, English people?

I've had to try and understand them and make them understand me because I've got all this experience that I'm trying to sell now in a totally different legal market and I've been misunderstood especially in the beginning, I sort of wasn't so humble. I think I've tried to be respectful certainly always but I wasn't so humble in the beginning and when I saw what a nice place it was and the green fields and even the poor people have cars, for example, I thought, you know, I can't go wrong here, I'm going to find something and that's how it's turned out. I haven't had plain sailing at all but I've found that from a legal point of view, living under the rule of law, trying to live your life, you know, so I had a bit of a view of things, a sharper view say, than an ordinary person who doesn't…is not a lawyer. I've found the English to be quite cheeky when it comes to the application of law and at first I thought, the only people that I'd come across who were like that were Afrikaners, you know, strictly applying things and then ruling you out of order and like visas for the border and all that. I've found the English are quite cheeky.

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You mean, there are rules and then there are exceptions, is that it?

And they sometimes are a bit arbitrary about the way they apply their exceptions. But I don't worry about that, that's been our experience. Well I've had to battle against it but that's been my experience.

But you've also settled – I'm interested in this – you've settled in an Island that's British but prides itself on its independence from Britain?

Yes

(01:06:01) **So you're in a community that's 'We're with Britain but not of Britain' (to paraphrase Churchill's phrase about Britain and Europe). It's sort of Britain slightly removed?**

Yes and the way I can describe it is tell you another little story and that is as Rhodesians, although we didn't travel much as you've heard, we always wanted to travel and thought it would be nice to travel. Glenda, my wife, she'd done a grand tour of the whole of Europe when the Rhodesian dollar was equivalent to one pound. But we were going out together before we were married, and she was saying, if I wasn't going to declare my wishes, she was going to come and work in England.

That got your attention!

It did, it did and I declared my wishes quickly. So we, all along, knew …Even when I was sixteen/seventeen, I was enquiring from my father about Irish passports because our grandfather came from Ireland and he was embarrassed. Yes, he was cagey and I wondered why but eventually I pressed him and it turned out he was embarrassed about Grandfather's birth certificate because it had a blank in the father's column. He didn't seem to have a father and on top of that…

Now this is your grandfather who hadn't got a father?

Yes and on top of that, the person who reported his birth had signed with an "X", so Dad, I think, was a bit embarrassed. I'm proud of it but I think he was a bit embarrassed about that.

So rather than thinking, 'My father made something of himself despite this, these huge drawbacks at that time of being illegitimate and being from an illiterate family. But he really made something of himself'

Yes but I think the grandfather was conservative as a result and for example, when Dad got that new house I told you about, Grandfather said "oh this is going to be a burden around your neck for the rest of your life" because he'd borrowed money and stuff. So that was a misunderstanding perhaps but…Now, to get back to the Irish passports, so it was 1965, UDI, we came overseas on Rhodesian passports and at Heathrow, the guy just checked some list he had, luckily we weren't on it and we were let in. But it was getting

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worse and worse, sanctions and everything. So I said “we’ve got to get another passport”. And so Dad, as I’ve told you, produced the birth certificate and then I got us Irish passports. Now the irony of that of course is that our grandfather was born in Belfast which is Northern Ireland and he’s got two birth certificates. He’s got an Irish birth certificate and a British birth certificate but the British, with their tricky ways, didn’t allow you to get a British passport from our grandfather.

Yes, because of the Nationalities Act in the 1980’s

(01:09:58) But the Irish, who at that time claimed those provinces to all those counties, would give Irish passports so we’ve got Irish passports as a result and that has helped the whole of our family because they’re now in Australia and here and so we could then get out of Zimbabwe. So we did it with that sort of irony and then now, I find myself with the same irony because the Isle of Man, as you said, is proudly British but not British and I went through the citizenship thing and I’ve got my British passport and everything and the First Deemster, that’s the judge, said to us at the public ceremony, a number of people are going there to be citizens. All sorts of people an American, us, Filipinos and you name it, and he said, “if people ask you if you’re British, you must not say you are”. And this was jokingly I hasten to add, but there’s that sort of…and then he gave us a long story about what it is to be Manx. You know, you think Manx is only Manx cats. It’s not, it’s people, they’re Gaelic people, a Celtic Gaelic people and that’s why I felt comfortable also because this is back to the Irish connection and Irish are jokers so I’ve found this all quite intriguing and enjoyable.

So there are cultural reference points?

That’s what it’s been for me. I hadn’t thought of it as a cultural reference point but as something that’s so reassuring

No, but it’s an identity reference point as well, a sort of cultural heritage

Yes because I felt it so reassuring. I thought, fine, this suits me fine

Yes, there are connections here that you can make

Yes and then talking about that service. You said about ‘service’, public service, the way we were brought up and we were. As you‘ve heard also, service can be onerous and to fuel the economic turns, you’re forced to do (pro bono?) work and that one gangster I told you about. So when I got here, I thought, oh boy, I’m in the place now that originated service. So of course I’ll be able to…I’ll have to do service here but I was working for a lawyer who surprisingly, because I think most lawyers recognise public service as something you should do, said “no, you don’t have to do any public service”. And I didn’t stay too long with him but he had a bit of a harder approach to things.

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Anthony, my last question, just looking back, do you think the war was worth it?

Oh, a total waste of time and so sad because look what it's done. If Ian Smith had had a bit more wisdom or the people who he ganged up, there wouldn't have been a Mugabe and look how many people have died now. I was reading that book about Mao, Mao Tse Tung. He has the distinction of having killed 70 million people. I'm going to try and work out the proportion of people that Mugabe's killed. I think it's probably more because there were eleven million people in the country, there's now about six million. A hundred thousand have just died of cholera, never mind all the others that died here, there and everywhere. I think proportionately, he's maybe worse. Certainly, (01:14:03) that's what I thought of when I read that. It's absolutely disgusting, there's no other word for it.

Break in interview

Anthony, you've mentioned about the police reserve, could you add some details on that please?

Yes, instead of being released from service after four years in regular, I then was forced to do what we called call-up duties and I was married by that stage. We were married in '76; we didn't have children for a long time because we didn't see there was any point. The situation was bad, we didn't see it getting better but we hoped it would and, as I've told you, in '81, we then stayed on until 2001. But the police reserve, as I say, it was just a forced thing. I wasn't doing it because I was thrilled by the idea and it was actually impeding my career because I was called out of the office where I was losing the practical experience that I was getting in the office. It was interrupting my studies which were all via correspondence and made it more difficult

So how long would you actually go in…?

It got more and more and more. It started off six weeks and then sometime and then six weeks again and eventually at the end, it was six weeks in and six weeks out, just over and over and over. And lucky for me otherwise we would have been forced to leave I think. But lucky for me, the regulars in the police reserve organised themselves as any service men and I suppose, these days, women do. So it was someone's bright idea that all of us who'd done regular service should form a Signals Unit. So I was put in the Signals Unit and Signals Unit was a safer place to be than walking around the bush, so that's what I did most of the time.

What did that involve?

Signals was based mostly at Wankie joint operations headquarters, JOC. Wankie JOC, down there at the airstrip and we would just provide 24 hour signals service to the police part of the JOC which included the Air Force and the Army. So that was a reasonable job but then as the war went on and we were needed more, and we did security checking on the trains. Again, from

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way out in Victoria Falls to Bulawayo, back and forward. Our railway guard duties, when they built the railway line from Beitbridge to Salisbury, Rutenga. We went down there guarding the railway line and then at the very end of the war, if you were still fortunate enough to be "A" category fitness which I'm glad to say I was, then we went back into the PATU which I told you about before, and that involved patrols.

Where did you do that?

(01:18:16) Again, it was actually at Lupane which is midway between Hwange (formerly Wankie) and Bulawayo. That was scary and it was unpleasant.

Why?

People got killed there, it wasn't nice

And did you find yourself in incidents, or contacts?

Yes, I'm very pleased to tell you that I never fired one shot in anger in the whole war but I was in incidents where shots were fired and one where a young chap got killed, just a kid from school. Another one where he was, I think he was very English and a much older man; he used to play the piano in the grand hotel in Bulawayo; it used to be called Victoria Hotel. Anyway, he got killed by some fools. Our own guys were hunting ducks

And he was shot?

Yes, with a 303 and it ricocheted off the dam and went into the barracks and killed that guy. I had to go and, by then I was a lawyer, so they said "oh you must go and sort out all his effects" and so I did that. It was particularly poignant because I'd also been to the hotel where he played rather nicely and what a waste, I thought, that was. And then the other one was Nkayi. We went to Nkayi, we did a lot of patrols there and that was quite a hot area so it was near the end of the war and it was quite obviously a waste of time, to put yourself in danger. So we made sure we stayed out of danger but we went on patrol. I remember one incident when a terrorist ran out of his kraal as we went past so we just carried on going past, we didn't bother about him and in the village, Nkayi village, there was the usual gathering of people in the village including a village idiot. This guy, apparently his party trick was to dive down when military vehicles came past as if he was going to shoot and he did this to us once and we were just about to shoot but other civilians, villagers stopped us, including, I can remember, a young woman, she just put up her hands and said "no, he's a nutcase, don't shoot him". I still remember her as very brave.

It sounds as if then, there's not quite a break down of discipline but you weren't exactly being, as your seniors would say, "good soldiers" if you saw a guerrilla run out of the kraal, you just let him go. There's a…

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No, we were. I think we were autonomous, we didn't feel…I don't think we were even told to go out on patrol; we just went on patrol because we were there and we thought we should do something. There weren't any particular instructions and then that actually was at the end because then the ceasefire came and when we were going from Nkayi to…the outstation of Nkayi, the name I just forget now [I have since remembered that the name of that outstation was/is Gwelutshena] where that chap, the piano player got killed, I think we started changing what we called them as well. They weren't to be terrorists any more, now they were guerrillas or something. We had a different approach. He stopped us on the road with his gun, AK and everything and we (01:23:07) just let him get in our truck and took him, because he said "is there a ceasefire?" and we said "yes, there is" so he said "oh good. Well, take me to…", I just forget the name of it, but it's an outstation of Nkayi and we took him to that police station with his gun and everything. That was quite eerie, sitting in the back of the truck with him, all of us armed to the teeth but we…

But there was a ceasefire?

So we didn't do anything, yes, we just behaved ourselves

Were you involved in any of the policing around the elections or the holding camps?

Yes and I was at Lupane at the time and there was a big assembly point at one of the missions nearby and the other day, I read about one of the incidents I knew about and in fact, I just looked on the internet and I saw this report of, I knew a helicopter had attacked a busload of guerrillas coming in to the assembly point or something. What we were told is that they were leaving their assembly point against instructions, not that they were going into it so I thought, well, that's alright because I believed until I saw it on the internet and even now, I'm not certain what exactly happened. There were shenanigans going on around those assembly points. There was an exclusion zone and you couldn't go closer than a certain thing but it became quite clear to me that our Special Branch had snatched some guys who were trying to go into the assembly point and they were torturing them in Lupane police camp because we heard the guys screaming and I remember I was furious.

Was that unusual?

I never came across torturing before, but I was so furious that at the pub I shot my mouth off and our section leader, who was another one of these English guys, and he worked in a shop in town, in Bulawayo, said "now I've made some report" – that I was a security risk for saying what I said and as a result, I was ordered back to Bulawayo, driving one of the armoured vehicles with other people who were going back. For me, it just meant that I was home early so I was quite pleased about that. But on the way, someone had obviously been tampering with wheel nuts and one of the wheels came off as we were driving along. On that road, Victoria Falls to Bulawayo road, in the forest part of it, there are huge big trees, even in the road reserve so we could have all been killed; but I kept cool and the wheel, the front right wheel came

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off and preceded down the road in front of us, separate from us so I just held on as the vehicle…it was one of those armoured, like Land Rover, I forget the name of it and I just held it tight. There was an African sitting next to me; he was sleeping until the wheel came off and there were four others in the back and I just held onto it and then eventually got off the road and it was the soft Kalahari sand. I managed to miss the trees and we came to a halt - upright.

How fast were you going?

(01:27:32) We were going as fast as we could go, about 80 mph and I just remember, I was quite relieved myself but I remember the relief of the guy sitting next to me, he said “today you have saved my life”. So I felt I’d done something worthwhile as well. That was virtually the end of the war then because I don’t think we had call-up any more after that assembly points but we also had some interaction with English, some Air Force guys who were supplying whoever and they were really friendly to us and I thought that was nice also.

Yes, Anthony, thank you very much indeed for talking to me.

End of interview