

Project name: AL3283

Date of interview: 9 October 2009

Location of interview: Centurion, Pretoria

Language/s of interview: Afrikaans

Length of interview: 5 minutes 2 seconds

Name of Interviewer: De Wet Potgieter

Name of interviewee/s: Director Henk Heslinga

Name of translator (if any): De Wet Potgieter

Name of transcriber:

Notes on access and use (if any):

Audio file name/s of interview: AL3283_PTA_HESLINGAHENK_20091005_1

De Wet	<p>I am sitting here talking to director Henk Heslinga, retired police officer who years ago, it is today Monday, 5 October 2009. Director Heslinga was the then second in charge of the Soweto murder and robbery squad when Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's personal physician, dr. Abubaker Asvat, was murdered in his surgery.</p> <p>Now, there were rumours that Winnie Mandela was involved in his death and that, because of political motives, orders were given for his assassination.</p> <p>Now, Henk, can you tell us about the investigation and what was your final verdict about the allegations against Winnie Mandela.</p>
Henk	<p>Yes, about two days after the murder, Walter Sisulu's wife was dr. Asvat's receptionist. She gave us a description about the two assailants and that was all we had to work on. About two days after it a induna from a hostel, a Zulu hostel in Soweto, approached us and said that there were two youngsters who fled from Natal after a armed robbery and were hiding in the hostel and admitted that they had shot dead a doctor in Soweto.</p> <p>We arranged with the Zulu chief and early the next morning he and a impi brought the two youngsters to our offices. We</p>

interrogated them and they admitted to the murder, they showed us the murder scene and gave statements and we could link them to the murder.

We never retrieved the firearm. They were from Nkandla in Natal where they were wanted for an armed robbery.

The Asvat family alleged that Winnie Mandela was involved in the killing because Asvat treated Stompie Seipei before he died and he apparently told Winnie that Stompie had severe injuries and he apparently had words with Winnie, but there were also claims that Asvat and Winnie were lovers at one stage, but this could never be proved.

I worked very closely with the Asvat family and with his brother, also a doctor from Carletonville. The two of us looked at every possible avenue to prove that Winnie Mandela was involved with the murder, but both accused denied this that they were involved with Winnie Mandela.

The case went to the supreme court and both of them were sentenced to death. I then received information that the two were due to be executed. This was more than a year after they were sentenced and I decided to visit them on death row.

I travelled to Pretoria to the death row and asked both of them if Winnie Mandela was involved in the killing.

I told them if they were prepared to give me sworn statements that Winnie Mandela was involved, I would be able to stop the executions.

The execution was subsequently stopped and they received amnesty at the last minute when the death penalty was abolished.

But that day in the eyes of the death they again reiterated that Winnie Mandela was not involved and I also testified to this effect before the TRC, a full bench of the TRC I testified.

I testified to this effect and I know that the TRC had accepted my testimony that Winnie Mandela was not involved.