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SECOND INTERVIEW WITH DANIEL SERAME MASEMOLA

Daniel Serame Masemola (DSM): I don't know what I said previously that made these people come back.

Dale McKinley (DM): What we have done is that we have gone through the previous discussion that we had and now we have some additional things we would like to talk about.

DSM: Okay, let's hear what questions have you got.

DM: Okay. We want you to tell us more about your family. For example, how did you meet your wife?

DSM: (Laughs) She was a lover, a beautiful, short girl. If ever I could meet somebody standing with her ... yoo, yoo! He would want to become her partner ... (laughing).

DM: She was a very attractive woman?

DSM: She was beautiful for my side, kindly for my side.

DM: So how did you meet each other?

DSM: I saw this lady passing by the street, I wondered. Then the eyes gave a certain erection to my heart (laughs) ... that this one should be somebody of whom I will live together, forever. And it happened really. There wasn't any fight against me and my wife. She was called by God, I can say, although through sicknesses and everything.

DM: How old were you when you met her?

DSM: I was about 25 years old when I met my wife. And I took only about three years and then I married her.

DM: When did you have your first child?

DSM: My first child was in 1944. my first born.

DM: You told us you had quite a few children after that ... how it like to raise your children at that point?

DSM: The first thing is that we should look after the children – that they sleep alright, they eat alright and then from there as they are growing, to attend school. They were all scholars. They are all educated presently, at the moment ...

DM: And was that because of your own love of education? You thought education was crucial for all of your children?

DSM: I can tell you something of which it is wonderful. While my wife is sitting as you are there and I am sitting here. What I can think of before she can say ... it was my thought, or her thought, Really I want to tell you. If I wanted to do something like this, she was also prepared to do the same thing. At the church, when I'm thinking of a hymn, she is also thinking of the very same hymn of which I'm thinking of. Even herself, she's thinking of something, that thing is already very involved in my heart.

DM: So you knew each other very well, hey?

DSM: You know, as if we were given, I don't know really ...

DM: You were talking about the importance of education and that your children were all educated, they are scholars. Why did you think that education was so important?

DSM: Ya, you are right to say so. This is from my parents. My parents ... never wanted me to do a bad thing. Those days you know, we used to make fire with coal, they never agreed that I should put a handcuff (?) while taking the coal out of a certain tee (?). No, they are telling me that I am a very lazy boy. I then had to take out with my clear hands, the coal and make fire. The education is from the parents – those are the people that gave me the way how to look after the children. They prepared me in a way like that.

DM: Your children, what kind of subjects did they excel in, do very well in. What were they interested in academically ... at school ... physics, mathematics, history ...?

DSM: You know, those days we never had a thing call mathematics but we used to have the mental ... two times one equals two, up to twelve, we were singing as a song. I myself, while working at AECI things were of mathematics, but according to my knowing the mental ... six times twelve ... I used to work through ...

DM: And what subjects were your children interested in?

DSM: You know the education was low, it was pressed, what can I say. They passed their sub-A, Std. 1, Std. 2, Std. 3 up to six. They went to the college but up till now I cannot tell what they were doing. They were educated and now they are teachers, they are mistresses and so on.

DM: When we talked before, you told us about how you have lost several of your children over the years, they have passed on. What were the causes of those deaths of your children? Was it illnesses, was it an accident ...?

DSM: It's through misfortunes. Because I had that first born ... we are talking about how they died huh?

Interpreter: Yes

DSM: Well, he was in charge of bottle stores. The way they told me ... as he was a drinker ... sometimes you know he was drinking beer and then he's leaving his glass here. When he came back, he swallowed the rest of the beer in that glass not knowing that it was toxic. I took him to the Natalspruit hospital where he died. The one was my granddaughter whom her boyfriend came over looking for. I sent the young one to go and call her, but she denied to do so. He said, no, I have got a

present to give to that girl. Then the very same girl there who was sent by that boy to come and call this lady, she said to that gentleman, give me that present and I will go and give her. But he said, 'I want to give the girl the present through my hand'. And actually she was so depressed that little girl and she came and called this little girl here in the house. Then they went out. Those days my eyes were totally closed but I see Before I make a certain operation of my eyes. And I and the old lady we were sitting there towards the door. We said. 'come back' but no we don't see the children coming back any more, till we went to bed and slept. Tomorrow, it happened that those people who had seen her with that gentleman and they told us they met that girl with that gentleman, pulling her down and they wanted to quarrel to that gentleman. He took out his gun and shot towards their legs there and then they went away – they were afraid also to be killed. And at that time he has taken that lady outside Zone 7 there, where we found that she was dead ... it took us a month looking for that child. A month, full. Then this Superintendent Mokoena was the man who investigated that case

DM: What year was that? (break ...) Okay, we're back. So that was in 2002.

Interpreter: Yes.

DM: The children that you have now, where are they, what are they doing now, your surviving children?

DSM: They are married, they are teaching.

DM: All of them are teaching, are teachers?

DSM: Well, you know they teach and sometimes they go into these government projects.

DM: Where do they live?

DSM: Now, the one is at Pretoria, the other one is at Botswana, and the other is in Soweto, and another is in Qwaqwa

DM: So none of them are living here in this community?

Interpreter: No.

DM: Do you see your children very often?

DSM: Yes, they are with me.

DM: How many grandchildren do you have now?

DSM: (laughing) lots ...

DM: Do you remember how many?

DSM: I can tell you. My first daughter has three girls and her first born son has a daughter. The other one who at Soweto has two boys and one girl. The one who is in Rustenburg has six children. The one in Pretoria has four.

DM: So that's seventeen grandchildren. Have you ever had a family reunion, where everybody has gotten together, all of the family?

DSM: They sometimes do come here when it's my birthday. They come here, make cakes, killing fowl, making food – and we enjoy. Then we dance together ... (laughter)

DM: That must make you very proud

DSM: Yes, when I'm looking at them I am proud of myself although I am so tiny (laughter)

DM: You know what they say .. dynamite comes in small packages

DSM: Ya, ya, that is the word (laughing).

DM: Now Daniel what we want to do is to go back a little bit. You told us previously about many jobs you that you had, many jobs over the years. We wanted to know, in any of those jobs, did you ever belong to any union?

DSM: It was only one that I belonged to a union, AECI in Midland. It was the only job when I joined the union.

DM: Did it help you, belonging to the union, was it beneficial?

DSM: They helped me with nothing ... still now.

DM: What was the name of that union?

DSM: I forget.

AV (Ahmed Veriava): Do you remember what year it was?

DSM: It's about nine years I've been out of that job.

AV: So it was the last job that you had?

DSM: Yes, I'm talking of the last job.

DM: So you didn't find any benefit from belonging to the union?

DSM: No, I never found any benefit. Even when we left Meyerton location, we were promised to get R60 000. Still, for now, they haven't given us that R60 000. They said, 'government has closed, government has closed' ... (some discussion around interpretation ...). There are those people from Pretoria, if people were removed from a certain place then they are there to find out how much we should get if we are moved away from that certain place.

DM: Like an evaluator, someone who values the land ... I understand.

DSM: So, myself, I never had that money from Meyerton. And Meyerton was erected in 1933 while still the house was belonging to my father. After certain years, my father passed away and then I was the man of the place. But now I never had anything for all, still now for today.

DM: So you never got any compensation for that house?

DSM: Never, it is promised always. Even now we are still waiting for that.

DM: In all of those jobs you had throughout the years, did you ever engage in strikes?

DSM: We just had a strike at the very same place ... AECI ... and also that strike gave us nothing and then they said we must come back to work..

DM: This is going back now... during the 1950s were you involved at all in any of the activities like the Defiance Campaign, the Anti-Pass Laws. If you remember in the 1950s there was that big Defiance Campaign, to defy the pass laws ... did you become part of that?

DSM: No I was not part of those things.

DM: What did you think about them at the time?

DSM: Well you know I could say something if at all I was a part of that ...because I never went in the congregation of which they were talking of so really, I can tell nothing.

DM: What do you remember about the time around the Sharpeville massacre in 1961 ... do you remember that time?

DSM: Those years I was still at Meyerton and that happened at Sharpeville. Well, of course it happened to those people while we were at Meyerton. Advisors were there to tell us what had happened in that shooting, and so on ...

DM: Did the things that happened there affect you and your family at all?

DSM: No not me, I was not affected by that trouble. But, I was still affected because I used to have that pass - Dom-pass – of which I told you there was a certain policeman – when you had that Dom-pass

DM: And your children, at that time did any of your children get involved in political activities?

DSM: No, they were still young.

DM: And what about in the '70s in Soweto, when those things happened?

DSM: You know with my family with those strikes, they were not in really. That is the truth.

DM: When you were forced to move from Meyerton to here, you were forced to come and you told us about that, and you got this place ... How did you find the difference between living in Meyerton and living here?

DSM: Meyerton was the best place to make up your life. When we came here it was very difficult because then we went around this Residentia to look for a certain house which you want to choose. I choose this house, I wanted this house, From there it was difficult because we had to pay rent. If you skipped one month the doors were closed, you sleep outside the house unless you go and pay.

DM: And what about your children? Did your children enjoy ...

DSM: They were with me.

DM: Did they like being here, in the schools and the community here?

DSM: Yes, they went to school and they liked. What could they do? The home is the home and it is as it is. They were living with me here.

DM: And what was your wife doing ... was she a housewife, or was she working?

DSM: She was a wife house.

DM: You said you weren't involved and it didn't affect you – all those political problems and struggles that happened – but in the 1980s in this area here there were a lot of things going on in this area in the 1980s ...

DSM: To '84.

DM: What did you think about the things that were happening at that time?

DSM: It was very difficult. They would sometimes say that there are the AmaZulus, the Zulu's are coming ... then we close the house and we ran away to the police station, to go and sleep at the police station. A group from Zone 7 here passing and going to the police station, being afraid of

those people. Even while at the other time I was at Baragwanath Hospital and they closed the gates and said that the Zulus are there to come and kill the people in the hospital. We used to live through .. we were shocked, shocked, thinking of death. No one wants to die.

DM: That's true. And your children at the time, did they get caught up in a lot of things that were happening?

DSM: It's just as the wind is blowing, it did blow through them but nothing accidentally that has happened to them.

DM: You told us that you retired from your last job in the late 1980s yes ... when did you leave your last job?

DSM: It's this one which I am telling you ... it's about nine years back.

DM: The AECI job?

DSM: The AECI one ... I don't know whether the pass can tell or what ...

DM: What did you think about ... we never really talked about this in the previous one ... in the early 1990s when the negotiations were taking place here in the country between De Klerk and the ANC and the PAC and all of the movements ... what did you think at the time there, as a person who had lived and seen all of these things that had been happening since the 1930s, 40s, 50s – what did you think about that?

DSM: It was difficult. We used to think of those times but it was difficult because we had no word to say ... going this way, do it this way ... we had to live as cattle in a kraal

DM: To use your metaphor ... did you feel in the 1990s that the gate had been open to the kraal and the cattle able to go out. In other words, did you feel a sense of freedom was coming?

DSM: Yes of course. There was hope and I was looking forward to freedom, and I was thinking that things were going to be good, but even now we are still waiting ... not all parts of the country. Freedom is not open for all of us.

DM: Tell us what you mean by that, saying that freedom is not open for all of us?

DSM: The deeds, or they look after ... what can I say? Look, they have just started now making grants for the children isn't it? It's something that has happened presently, it used not to be there. Well, it's a part of which we say okay, thanks, although there's a certain poison of which now this grant .. the children they make the other children because they want to have payments of two children, three children and so on, so on. Of which now, it's breaking the family.

DM: And when you say that some people have more freedom than others ... who do you think has more freedom ... ?

DSM: Those on top, those on top of the government. They are getting better things, they are living alright. We here at the floor, no, no, no, they don't think of us. No, they don't think of us. Do you think they think of you?

DM: My personal opinion, I agree with you.

AV: Do you think that the situation of white people is better than black people?

DSM: Yes, in fact whites are living far better than we are. Even the old age wages, whites are getting more percentages than we are having, we are given.

DM: The pensions?

DSM: Ya, the pension..

DM: What is your pension?

DSM: It's R900 and something. It's in the bank. While you go to the bank it is deducted still isn't it?

AV: Do you get your pension from ...?

DSM: From the bank.

AV: But does it come from your old employers or does it come from government?

DSM: From government.

DM: Do you think ... you say those on top and white are still getting .. but within this community what do you see? Do you think everybody here is on the bottom or are there also differences within this area where you stay?

DSM: We are not having the same cash of money in the hand.. We are not having that cash. Some of the other people they have got money. Those people who are controlling the football, they've got money like something, we've got nothing.

DM: Who do you think has money here, in this area here?

DSM: Let me say – house-to-house has its own secret. No one can ever tell you that I've got money or no one can ever tell you that I've got *tokoloshi* to go and kill the other people ... never, it's a secret, per house (laughing)

DM: So what you're saying is that ... you can never tell ... some people might have money but you don't know it, is that what you are saying?

DSM: Yes, that's what I'm saying. They may have money but they will never tell you, you will never know.

DM: You told us in the previous interview that you supported the ANC, is that right?

DSM: Ya

DM: Have you always supported them?

DSM: Yes, I am still ANC of which there is a certain corruptions of them and I've got no word to say where I am, or my hand to put in. But one thing is this – when they say that go and vote I just go and vote for that ANC.

DM: You say you see lots of corruption and lots of people on the top that are doing well ... so what is it about the ANC that you like?

DSM: Well you know now at the present when I say that there is a certain corruption, I don't know what will ever take place because they are still on their own strikes. I don't know what will the end be, whether it will be a big rain (?) or whatever, I don't know.

DM: Do you think the government is doing a good job?

DSM: Government is trying to do a good job but it can't afford. If you've got ten children, you've got to give them food, all of them. But now he cannot ... he's having thousands and thousands of

children, it's not easy. And as to helping those people, from here onto the farmers there, it's not easy, it takes time. Even for electricity towards the other places, it's very difficult and it takes time.

DM: As a retired pensioner, how do you think that elderly people and pensioners are being treated by government, as a pensioner yourself?

DSM: I would like that, if at all, they could think alright – as the government is living alright or he is making money – he could print more money to give us. Rather R2 000 or what, what. What is R900? R900 is nothing.

DM: So you want to see the pension amounts go up ... ?

DSM: Yes, it could be better, a thousand something. Really, it could be better. R900 is nothing. Petrol is up, paraffin is up, everything is up.

DM: The money that you get every month ...

DSM: Look now, my children in Soweto, Every month they are taking money out from the back for me. They travel from there to come here. Sometimes when he comes here he says no, grandfather I loaned R50 here just to put petrol to come here to give you your money. I had to think over and say, rather take R100 and put in petrol isn't it. Because he's not even a chance of going back ...

DM: And for you, the money that you get, how far does it go in the month for you – to take care of your needs?

DSM: You know, the hand of a wife in the house, in your own house – it's far better than any other family that supports you or is with you. Now you see I've got those two little girls here. When they say grocery, they say R600. And after R600 you will never do for a month with the money. The groceries are finished of which I cannot even find them. Maybe they take, they buy their own things ... but I don't want to quarrel with them and say *aikona* man, you bought small groceries or whatever. Because they will leave me alone and what will I ever do. Who will wash for me, who will do whatever if they go away?

DM: So you're pretty much dependent on those two to take care of you?

DSM: Ya, I am depending on those two. And one thing of which I would like to have forever is that no quarrel in the house, no bad words against each other.

DM: The young women who take care of you, are you like a family?

DSM: Ya, I like them. They can even come here and just question them about how they live with me, they will tell you.

DM: You've mentioned certain things that you don't like ... corruption, certain people ... as a grandfather, as a family person who has lived for a long time who has had children, grandchildren and everything ... what worries you most?

DSM: I'll tell you what worries me. You know what, growing up to be old, it's alright, it's good and it's bad for the very same reason. You, who is growing up, sickness is very now with you, you cannot do anything. You see now my yard, I'm struggling to clean the yard, I cannot afford. While I am cleaning the yard, it happens that I cannot even see ... now to grow up is very bad, it's not good but I don't want to die, one thing is that. Who ever wants to die? But the trouble is the body, pains in your body, eyesight .. and even when a *tsotsi* can come in, no power to fight, to hit him. I will still

try and knick him but he may knock me off because I've got no power. But the power is in my heart ... I don't want any bad movements to be in my heart.

DM: In this community, do you feel vulnerable. Do you feel safe here where you live?

AV: Are you afraid that people are going to come and rob you?

DSM: I am safe because really, I haven't seen any other people coming and breaking my house, chasing my children ... no nothing. I still say I'm safe because there are no bad movements against me at present. I'm still in love with all other people outside. Although someone may say he loves you and yet not, you will never ever know.

DM: I have a question here. You previously told us that it is very important for you and has been, in your life, for people to respect each other and to treat each other well ... but then you said you don't feel in this community that is happening, that you don't feel that people often treat each other with respect now, maybe like they used to. Why do you think that?

DSM: One point is this. Now this other little daughter here with me. She was from Soweto and while she was just here at the shops, it was in the evening at about half-past seven ... there came two *tsotsis* to her. Then they pulled off the bag and in the bag there was that ID card and R5 and they went away with that one. Then there came another young boy and he said let's chase that boy and get that bag back. Why does he say let's run again? It means that he wants this girl and they must go and treat this girl bad, for what? Still, even today the pass (ID book) is gone and then they thought there was plenty of money but it was only R5. So it only means that people, in fact these young boys they are very bad.

DM: What I'm hearing you say is that these young boys, young people today, they don't maybe have the respect that they used to have. Why do you think that's the case?

DSM: Because they are doing it, they don't respect you, they don't respect me. Even down there towards that side of the tar road last week, they stabbed two men to death. That young man went to the police station saying he's going to report that I killed somebody here at a certain place because he was trying to take his parcels. And yet, there were two girls knowing of this trouble and they said to the police that he is the very same man who rushed that old man, and killed that old man. The old man did nothing to him, he was handcuffed at the same time. Because they are sick, they don't respect, they are lazy and they don't want to work for themselves. Even their yard, you can go around and you will see, you will find that the grass is as big as this (gestures above his head). Instead of taking a shovel and clean and what, what, they run around at night here looking for people form work or from which places – killing them and taking their money. Really, our children are very bad, it's one thing I don't know. Maybe by so saying those other people who are having those children will hate me, they may kill me tonight I don't know.

DM: We won't tell them, don't worry.

DSM: (laughs loudly)

DM: I juts want to keep on that for a minute. You said, as a father, it was always very important for you to make sure that in your home and your house there was a good feeling amongst people yes? Do you think that the new times ...

DSM: The coming time?

DM: Since 1994, do you think that things have changed so much as opposed to the past, that that has had effects on the way that people treat each other? I know it's a difficult question.

DSM: There is a great change. Even now at the bank we are going with whites together. Things are soft, to see that we are all human beings ... look here, if you've got a small dog like this (points to dog in the yard), you will find that this small dog is harsher than the very same big dog. Why? Because of the heart. This very small dog is having a bad heart, but this big one is not having that heart. It changes how the feeling of a human being is.

DM: Just a few more questions. I'm sure you look at the TV and listen to the radio about the news, about what's going on in our country, in South Africa yes?

DSM: I pay attention while looking at, but the attention is not full because I can see that the other people are doing bad things and all those other things. But I'm there to look at it and to find out what are they doing.

DM: What do you think about what you see?

DSM: I do say, the other people they are not good, they are bad. Some people as they govern sometimes, they govern the people very bad. As Mugabe like that and all those things .. Mbeki.

DM: What do you think of Zuma?

DSM: You know what, lawyers, they sometimes just support because they get money from somebody isn't it? Zuma used to do many mistakes but the lawyer always says no, no, no. He's having many corruptions, Zuma, of which we don't know at the last moment why they are going to elect. We don't know what will take place.

DM: Daniel just two or three more questions to end off. As a wise man, as a wise elder ...

DSM: I don't know, I cannot say (laughs).

DM: Yeah, I think you are. I think we can conclude that you are a wise man even if for no other reason simply because you have lived longer than the rest of us. So life itself, you have experience in life. What would you say ...

DSM: But I'm not so well educated.

DM: But you speak very well, you think very well. I don't think that a formal education is always a sign of being smart. I know many people who have lots of degrees but that doesn't mean they are smart. But anyway, as a wise person who has seen a lot of things over many, many years, what would you say to the younger generations now? What would you have to say to them?

DSM: Ya. If standing in a meeting, while I'm in a meeting where they are all standing together ...

DM: What would you tell them?

DSM: Yes, I'm going to tell you what I would say to them. I would like to say to these children, to these people, that there are old people also because there are certain old people who are not good, who are always doing bad also. Hey people, we were brought down here by God, in the way we were taught, that we are from God. And God is a man who is having love. The first point is that he saw that Adam was lonely in the field. So God wanted Adam to live in peace. He made a wife for that gentleman, to have love. I would like to say to these people ... wishing for these old people you should have love, love each other. In this way do good for somebody and that somebody will also do good for you. Don't kill each other. Because death in the house of one man causes a lot of worries towards the end of years. Love should be between us ... love is good to be between us. While my car is getting broken in the road I should have somebody to come and help me. But now, you will find

that people coming there are coming to take the wheels off, killing us, robbing us. So people, have love and don't do the mistake to the other people. Because, even you, your own self, you don't want somebody to do you bad. You must pray if there is a church , revolve your opinions from badness to kindness. I would like to say so ... And what do you say, while I am saying s? Is it good?

DM: As I said, to me, wise words, wise words. I completely agree.

DSM: (Laughs) You know, those past days of '84, these children in this place or these other elder people in this place, they never wanted to see a white man coming in the location. They used to kill them. Is it good? It's bad, isn't it. It's even now better because they don't do it anymore like that although still, they are people who are still robbing each other.

DM: Ok, I think that's it. Thank you very much.

DSM: Ok. Are you done?

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DSM: We gathered here, with the wise people, but when trouble arises, don't get me wrong if I said something wrong in anytime that has passed. I spoke with these men telling them about peace. I say ... (starts singing a gospel hymn and is joined by community liaisons)

MINUTES: 64:11