

WINNIE MANDELA: UNDER APARTHEID

57 minutes

WINNIE: I remember years ago, when my little daughter Zindzi was about 6 years, she was playing outside, and then she came into the house, and said, "Mummy - you say Daddy is, is er - is in prison because he is fighting for our black people." I said, "Yes, darling." And then, er, she said, er, "But now you say all, all the black men fight for the black people so they should have all the things the white people have in this country, isn't it?" I answered her, I said, "Yes". And then she said, "But next door, Mummy, their father is there, at home. Why is my father in jail, and not the father next door?"

In our sick society, when a man hasn't been to prison, you look twice at that black man. How is it possible that in racist South Africa, he hasn't been to prison? It means there is something wrong with that man.

TITLE: WINNIE MANDELA UNDER APARTHEID

NELSON MANDELA (1961): The Africans require, want the franchise, on the basis of one man, one vote, they want political independence.

NARR: For seeking political rights for democratic rights for the people of South Africa, Nelson Mandela has been in jail since 1962. During those long years, he has come increasingly to be represented by his wife Winnie.

WINNIE: Our leaders call on President Botha to remove violence, to free all those who have been imprisoned, and to allow the return of all those who have been driven into exile. To unban the people's organization, the African National Congress, to dismantle apartheid, to allow free political activity, so that the people may decide who will govern. We call upon the world to accept these demands.

NARR: Joined by their marriage vows, which the might of a police state could not put asunder, Winnie and Nelson Mandela have forged their union into an unflinching challenge to white supremacy.

Manzana Winifred Madikezela came to Johannesburg in the mid-'Fifties. She was fresh from the countryside, a brilliant student, newly graduated as a social worker.

WINNIE: I dealt mostly with the worst of our malnutrition cases. I dealt with hunger, with poverty, directly. I was involved with my community at grassroots level. And, it was one of the most painful things for me to be in touch with the reality of our country's problems. The rife unemployment, the poverty of the people, and the fact that there was no way of changing those conditions, other than changing the whole status quo, there was also the economic problems of a depraved society.

NARR: To change these conditions, the leading black liberation organization, the African National Congress, had begun a mass movement of civil disobedience, defying the laws of racial superiority called apartheid. Carried out with a Gandhian commitment to non-violence, this Defiance Campaign brought to prominence a young leader of the African Congress, the lawyer Nelson Mandela.

WINNIE: everybody was talking about this man. In the evenings, when the factory workers came from work, they would sing some songs, and invariably all these freedom songs were about Mandela. The factory workers sang so affectionately of this man, when they talked of better wages at work, they would say, "Mandela will get us better wages". He seemed to be the solution to each and every worker's problems. Just about everything they wanted to complain about to their employer, they would mention this Mandela and the African National Congress.

NARR: Winnie Madikezela was the first black social worker to be attached to a hospital, Soweto's Baragwanath.

WINNIE: One day, I was at work at Baragwanath Hospital, and I got a call from a man who introduced himself over the phone as Nelson Mandela. Um - he said he wanted to see me and discuss certain issues with me. I was petrified. I was so shocked at receiving that call. Um - I wondered what I had done. Um - then, on the appointed day, we met, and it transpired he wanted me to help raise funds for the then Treason Trial.

NARR: To crush the new spirit of black protest, the apartheid government had rounded up 156 opponents of apartheid, and charged them with High Treason. This was the largest of many political trials designed to suppress dissent. Among those on trial in 1956 was Nelson Mandela. An international campaign was launched to raise money for the defence, and to support the families of the accused. Nelson involved Winnie in this effort.

WINNIE: That is how I met my husband. And the relationship between us grew, and it was no longer just the relationship of a social worker attending - who was involved in the Treason Trial as a friend.

FATIMA MEER: Winnie came to visit us before she was married to Nelson. So she came as a very young woman, very much in love with Nelson, having photographs of him as a boxer in the ring, actually boxing, very proud of his physical power. That was our first meeting with Winnie, a very young Winnie.

NARR: Involved in the Treason Trial, his legal practice, and political organizing, Nelson proposed by asking Winnie to find a dressmaker to make a wedding dress.

In accordance with Xhosa custom, the first part of the wedding ceremony had to take place at Winnie's parental home, Pondoland, on the south coast.

(MUSIC)

NARR: Pondoland is the stronghold of the Madikizelas, Winnie's family name. There are said to be 3,000 Madikizelas, all related.

WINNIE: When we got married, in fact, the congregation sang the hymn *Lizalise-Idinga-Lakho* (*Fulfill Your Wishes*). That was the only way the Pondos showed their appreciation of the marriage.

(MUSIC)

NARR: This song is a peon to the beauty of the homeland. The homeland for Winnie's father meant only that region where he lived. For Nelson, it meant the whole of South Africa. Politics would later cause a painful break for Winnie between her husband and her father.

WINNIE: There is what we call in Xhosa *Ukuyala* (*How to Deal with Married Life*) - where elders come and give you the last wise words as a young bride, and tell you how to conduct yourself when you get to the other side. That when you join that other family, *** you must join it and do as Rome does. My father said to me, I must remember I am marrying the struggle, and not the man. And that by virtue of my bringing such a man to him, as a son-in-law, was in fact introducing the African National Congress to that part of our country.

NARR: Mandela believed, as he put it, "The struggle is my life".

A few months after her wedding, Winnie was swept into the struggle on the issue of Women's Rights. Up to this time, African women had been exempted from carrying the hated Passbooks which controlled the lives of their menfolk from the age of 16 to death, dictating where they may live and work in their own country. Now the government forced passes on women too. In their thousands, they were forced to line up to be photographed.

WINNIE: There are few black men who have not been in prison for pass offences. The extension of passes to the black women confirmed that a black woman would be similarly subjected to harassment and imprisonment because of pass offences.

(PROTESTING CROWDS, POLICE)

POLICE: If you do not disperse...

ADELAIDE TAMBO: And so there was demonstrations, and people were arrested, and filled

the jails. And Winnie was one of those people that were arrested. She was expectant with her first child at that time, and even in that state, she went to jail.

WINNIE: The prison was crowded, there were no special facilities for political prisoners, we were all just thrown together with other prisoners. We slept on the floor. We were each just given two blankets, and a mat, and that was all. And that was just my initiation - the life I've led from that moment has always been in and out of prisons, I can no longer even remember how many times I've been arrested and how many times I've been actually jailed. There have been too many.

NARR: For African women, the oppression is two-fold.

WINNIE: The struggle against apartheid, and the struggle of a black woman, as a woman first in society, and as an oppressed woman by the racist regime. We are prisoners of our own culture, the black woman has had to battle all the way, to fight against the oppression of her as a human being, to fight against the dominance culturally, in a traditional society where the black woman's position is in fact at home. And at the same time, she has had to emerge as the pillar in that society where she is deprived of the head of the family for many many reasons, as a result of the country's laws. The black woman in the rural areas where she has to live year in and year out without a husband - sees the husband when he comes home for a week or two or a month.

NARR: The system of contract labour in South Africa forces black workers to be away from home for years at a time, virtually destroying family life.

The struggle for black rights kept Nelson Mandela away from home most of the time. Devoted to her husband, and looking to him as head of the family, Winnie felt Nelson's absence keenly.

WINNIE: My husband was never there when both children were born. He was either in prison or else out gathering information about the Treason Trial. I never even heard him address a single meeting. He's never discussed anything political with me. I'm not his political product, actually. I've never been - I've never had the opportunity to be one. It is the African National Congress that has made me what I am. It was in fact the Women's League that organized the anti-Pass campaign. Um - it was the Women's League that er that rallied around and organized demonstrations against high rents, against high buse - bread-and-butter issues that really were dealt with by the mothers, and by the trade union movement. Um - the Women's League was more of a workers' organization, the female section of the African National Congress.

NARR: Within a very short time, Winnie had advanced to a leading position within the Women's League of the African National Congress and the Federation of South African

Women.

Then came Sharpeville. In 1960, the authorities showed how far they were prepared to go to stop the struggle for civil rights. At Sharpeville, police fired into a crowd of unarmed demonstrators, killing 69, including women and children. After Sharpeville, South Africa would become, in Nelson's words, "Ruled by the gun".

The government used Sharpeville for further repression. The African National Congress was banned, which made Mandela's political activities illegal. The women's organizations also suffered. All this time, almost 5 years, the Treason Trial, with Mandela as one of the chief accused, had been going on. In 1961, the trial came to an end. All of the accused were found Not Guilty. In an oversight on the part of the authorities, Mandela was released to full political activity. He knew he didn't have much time.

WINNIE: The day the trial came to an end, the leaders of the African National Congress came home, they came to celebrate the reversal of the trial and the fact they had been acquitted. My husband did not even enter the house, they were all jubilant, and they were standing outside. I still remember very vividly Joe Modise, who is now heading the military wing of the ANC, walked into the house and asked me to take a few items for my husband. I did, and I gave, I gave him the suitcase. And all I was told was that I'll be seeing him in a few days' time. I never really knew much about the political activities because I think they felt it was better that way. He left, with the rest of the leadership that day. That was the last time I saw my husband at home. When he left with that suitcase, it's when he was going to address that meeting, a big convention in Pietermaritzburg. I didn't even know that he was going to be the main speaker there. I saw in the press that he had addressed a meeting, banned as they were, and that after the meeting he had disappeared.

ADELAIDE TAMBO: When Nelson was underground, this is where the strong woman came out. Her husband was underground, carrying the struggle from underground, and Winnie was left to look after not only her immediate family, but also Nelson's mother and relatives in the Transkei, and she coped with it very well.

NARR: Nelson declared, "I've had to separate myself from my dear wife and children, and live as an outlaw in my own land". All open political activity was denied him, Mandela had gone underground to organize a two-day national strike - a "stay-at-home". In spite of Sharpeville, the stay-at-home was yet another attempt to effect change by peaceful means.

(ARMoured CAR SOUND)

NARR: The government's reply was again violent. Police and army were mobilized to force people back to work.

MANDELA: There are many people who feel that it is useless and futile for us to continue

talking peace and non-violence against a government whose reply is all these savage attacks upon an unarmed and defenceless people. And I think the time has come for us to consider, in the light of our experiences in this stay-at-home, whether the methods that we have applied so far are adequate.

NARR: A half-century of non-violent effort had failed, so a small group was formed under Mandela which began to bomb symbols of authority such as power-lines and pass offices.

Early in 1962, Mandela left South Africa illegally to travel to newly independent African countries, seeking help in training guerrilla squads. This new fighting arm of the African National Congress was called Umkhonto we Sizwe - Spear of the Nation.

WINNIE: When he returned, I also saw him, and I was always blindfolded, I never knew exactly where he was. And that was calculated to protect us and the children, who were small at the time. That was the last time we were ever together as husband and wife.

NARR: Mandela was the most wanted man in South Africa, the object of a massive manhunt. He must have known that sooner or later he would be caught. When he was betrayed by an informer, there was no evidence to link him with sabotage. Instead, for leaving the country illegally, and for organizing the 1961 stay-at-home, he was sentenced to five years.

While Mandela was serving this sentence, a small cache of weapons was discovered in Rivonia, near Johannesburg. Eight men were arrested, the multiracial high command of Spear of a Nation. Papers were found incriminating a ninth - Mandela. The nine men were charged with the capital crime of sabotage, and seeking to overthrow the government by force. Mandela did not deny the charges. Instead, he used the trial as a forum to explain to the world why government repression had left no choice but armed struggle to achieve democracy. The charges carried the death penalty.

Until now, Winnie Mandela had been known principally as Nelson's wife. Through her efforts to rally support for the accused, she caught the attention of the media.

WINNIE: I normally would have been a very private sort of person. I suddenly find myself in the limelight, and with world attention focussed on me, did make me feel I become uncomfortable, but that was the aspect of my life I had anticipated at that stage.

NARR: Although herself under banning orders, Winnie did not hesitate for her right to attend the trial. The children were refused permission to attend the courtroom. They would not see their father again for over 10 years.

With Nelson's mother, Winnie went to hear the verdict. At the trial, Nelson said: "I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons lived together in harmony and with equal opportunity. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die".

All but one of the accused were found guilty. The strength of world opinion prevented

a sentence of death. Instead, the 8 men were sentenced to life imprisonment.

WINNIE: Part of my soul did go with him.

My husband has been fighting for the liberation of the African people, for the working harmoniously of all the racial groups in our country. I shall never lose hope, and my people shall never lose hope. In fact, we expect that the work will go on.

CROWD: Awethu! Amandla!

NARR: Off Cape Town, Robben Island prison had been prepared as a maximum security to hold a wave of political offenders. Prisoners, kept in appalling conditions, worked in the rock quarries, prey to sadistic guards. Despite these conditions, and sealed off from the outside world, Nelson Mandela grew throughout the 'Sixties into the leading symbol of resistance in South Africa. In the early years, Winnie could only visit her husband every six months. For twenty years, they were allowed no bodily contact. Nelson wrote: "Your love and support is what life and happiness mean to me."

Conditions on Robben Island did not break Mandela. As the next battlefield for Nelson's spirit, the government chose the most vulnerable part of him: his wife and family. They hoped to break Nelson by breaking Winnie.

Left alone in their house in Soweto, not able even to earn a living, Winnie had to endure slanders that it was she who had betrayed her husband to the police. Rumours were put out that she was unfaithful. There were even assassination attempts. The frail wall around the house in Soweto is a symbol of the permanent state of siege endured by the Mandela family.

WINNIE: This wall is my little building wall, which was built by a builder friend as a form of protection. Even though we really know that er if they do whatever they want to do, they can still do it. Er - we had had several attempts, there have been several attempts on my life, and friends felt that perhaps this wall could help.

NARR: Hardest of all for Winnie were the attacks on her through the children. For black children, education has never been a right, but a coveted privilege.

ZINDZI MANDELA: We were very young then, and my mother tried getting us into schools in Soweto, and the black principles then were very scared about the political atmosphere, they were afraid to take us, because one or two had already experienced, you know, harassment from the Security Police for having us there. Then we had to use, you know, we changed our surnames, and my mother took us to, you know, a coloured school um in town, and there as well the Security Police caught up, you know, with us, and you know, had us kicked out of that school, and this went on and on in about six or seven schools here, where we were just chucked out, you know, we wouldn't even spend a month, and we were kicked out, you know.

Um - It took some time, some friends of our mother, who had heard about our plight, and then they offered to have us educated in Swaziland.

NARR: The children were away in boarding-school in a neighbouring country, only coming home for vacations.

WINNIE: The Security Branch always, always arrested me the day my children were on their way back home. They never found me at home. I was never there as a mother, to ** them. I was never there as a mother to hold my little girls' hands, take them to school, and introduce them to their teacher, as is the glory of every mother. You know, when your children are starting school, each mother looks forward so much to that day when her little girl is taken to school. I've never entered any of the schools which have been attended by my children. My banning order prevents me from entering educational premises.

NARR: Under South Africa's peculiar punishment of banning, one's own home may be turned into a prison. Banning restricts most forms of human contact, including work, and even religion.

Knowing that the attacks on Mandela's family must have a devastating effect on him, the ANC asked Winnie to take the girls and go into exile. An old friend, Paul Joseph, carried the message to her.

PAUL JOSEPH: And Winnie flatly refused to leave the country. She said, her place was in the country, her place was in South Africa, and as long as the people were imprisoned, she could see no reason why she had to leave.

FATIMA MEER: Winnie, you see, was left - she had a very short marriage with Nelson, in the context that they lived together as man-and-wife for a very short period. Er - she was still very young, in her twenties, when Nelson was taken inside. And she was a social worker, she had a fair job as a social worker. But, from the time that Nelson was taken in, Winnie devoted herself entirely to continuing on the outside where Nelson had left off. Despite her banning, you find that Winnie is always getting into trouble with the police, she is always in the news. It is almost as if she has said to herself that, I'm not going to be banned and forgotten, the Mandelas are not going to be forgotten. So, she has continued the battle, you know, to keep the Mandelas protected, and what they stand for, and what they mean for the people alive in the minds of the South African community.

ADELAIDE JOSEPH: She grew to be a very politically dynamic and very very strong personality. When she spoke, everyone was so quiet, just to listen, because there was this young, very lovely woman standing up and making her speeches, but spoke, you know, from her heart. It really made it just really wonderful to listen to her. She gave inspiration to everybody. Even now, if I have just a telephone call from Winnie, it's something that just gives

me so much inspiration that I just want to get out and get that struggle moving, you know, to get back home again. That's the kind of person she is.

NARR: In 1969, Winnie Mandela was again arrested, this time under the Terrorism Act. Twenty-one others were arrested at the same time. But Winnie was held in solitary confinement for 16 months.

WINNIE: When they detained me, I had just been to a heart specialist, I have a heart condition. And the Security Branch knew that. They knew I had been to the doctor, they knew I had been to a heart specialist, and I think they particularly arrested me then because of that knowledge, er, with the hope that the heart condition would worsen in prison, and that whatever happened to me would then be attributed to natural causes. The cell in which I was held at the beginning was so small that if I stretched my hands I touched both walls. I could barely exercise. In this cell, all I had was a bottle, a plastic bottle with about five glasses of water, a home-made sanitary bucket, and three blankets, and a sisal mat. That is all, besides what I was wearing.

Being held incommunicado um - is one of the cruelest things any human being can do to another. About a week after I was held, I was transferred to a condemned cell, a condemned cell. A condemned cell means a cell that usually holds prisoners who are going to be executed.

In this condemned cell, there were two grill doors besides the prison door. To this day, the memory of that bank of keys clicking, the noise they would deliberately make in this stillness and solitude of a prison life - you actually felt they were hitting the inner core of your soul.

(Sigh) They never switched off the lights, I had the floodlights night and day. I lost track of time -

This particular warder who always brought my food would open the cell-door, and I could hear someone outside putting the food down, and er he would stand right at the entrance to the cell. They would then take the bucket, the sanitary bucket and turn the lid upside down, and put your plate of food on that. And he would stand right at the cell-door and kick the food in, into the cell.

The mind finds it very difficult to adjust to such solitude. It is such utter torture that I could feel that um that my mind was so tortured with lack of doing something and not communicating with anyone that um I would find myself talking, talking to the children. I would think I am thinking about them, and actually find myself in the end conducting conversations with my children as if they are with me in the cell. It becomes so difficult to keep sane with absolutely nothing to do that I would actually hunt for ants. If I had an ant in the cell, or a fly, then I would regard myself as having company for the day. (Sigh)

When I was given anything, anything at all, it was the Bible. One day, this Swanepoel stood at the cell-door, and flung the Bible at my face. And he threw it, and said "There you are, pray. Pray that your god can get you out of this cell."

NARR: When in solitary, Winnie underwent intensive interrogation under the direction of Police Colonel Swanepoel.

WINNIE: He was the one who murdered a lot of my people behind bars. He was actually the horror of Pretoria Central. I was interrogated right through, day and night, for seven days and seven nights. Er - as they changed the teams, Swanepoel would rub his hands and say he is waiting for that moment when they shall break me completely. By the time they interrogated me um they knew everything, they knew all about er my political activities at that time. And the African National Congress was of course a banned organization, which meant that whatever political activities I was involved in at that time were underground political activities. There was nothing they didn't know, they had managed to break a few of those they had interrogated before me. (Sigh)

The body devises its own defensive mechanism. I didn't know it was such relief to faint, for instance. And during - the only moment I ever had any rest from the intensive interrogation, intensive questioning, where your mind just loses track of everything, was during those fainting spells. They were so relieving. I could recover and er from each fainting spell, when I came round, I felt a little refreshed, to face more and more interrogation.

On the seventh day, I started urinating blood. And the body was swollen like a balloon. Um - I don't know the medical explanation for that, whether it was because of sitting in one position, for days and nights, right through. But, er, my legs, for instance, were as if they were just poles, and not part of my body. I could actually feel the weight, so swollen, so oedemaed were they that I found it difficult to stand. (Sigh) That didn't stop my interrogators in any way. I don't remember when - how I was brought back to the cell, I found myself just there,

In the end, the fainting spells were much more acute, I think as the body was beginning to give in to um that type of brutality.

Prior to my detention, I knew like every mother and every social worker, um, life, a human being was so sacrosanct that I could never on my own lift up a finger against any human being, for ideological reasons. But what I went through, that personal experience, hardened me so much that at the end of my interrogation, looking at my interrogator, and what I had gone through, I knew, that as I sat in that cell, in that cell, if my own father, or my brother, walked in, dangling a gun, and he was on the other side, and I had a gun too in my hand, in defence of the ideal for which I was being tortured, then, I would fire.

The Security Branch had made me the soldier at heart I am today. There was no way that er you could talk any language of peace to vicious men who treated defenceless women and children in that manner. I realized then that the Afrikaner had closed the trapdoor of negotiation and that the decision taken by my leader in 1962 could, whilst arrived at with difficulty, but that there was no other way. The decision to defend our honour, the decision to stop turning the biblical "other cheek" - the white man had hit us for too long. Our patience had been tested and had endured for too long. I knew then that somehow there had to be a

political crisis in this country for us to reach the ultimate goal. That is what I emerged as in 1969-1970, during my months of solitary confinement.

NARR: The charges against Winnie and her co-defendants were dismissed. She was jailed again, and arrested. And again arrested. Mandela wrote to her, "Although I always try to put up a brave face, I never get used to you being in the cooler. Few things disorganize my whole life as much as this particular type of hardship, which seem destined to stalk us for quite some time still."

Mandela was particularly concerned about Winnie's courage, which at times seemed to him to be reckless. In 1975 for a brief period, Winnie was completely free. Immediately she was in public political activity.

FATIMA MEER: Her ban had expired, she had been banned for fourteen years, so we organized a tremendous meeting, jam-packed, at which all of us spoke, and then we were at the airport, leaving Winnie, and a reporter said to me, "That's Jimmy Kruger there." And I said, "Who's he?" and he said, "That's the Minister of Justice and Prisons". So I said to Winnie, "Winnie, look, we can go and have some fun and games now". We went up to the car, er, this little man, his head was still in the trunk, he was taking out some suitcases. So I went up to him, and I said, er, "Mr. Kruger - ". So he took his head up, out of the, you know, trunk, very delighted, broad smile, and said, "Yes", you know, very happy that he had been identified by a member of the public, so I said, "I'd like you to meet Mrs. Mandela, I don't believe you have met her". So, still large smile on his face, I mean his hand was stretched out, and Winnie straightaway said to him, "When are you releasing my husband?" quite sternly. And he wagged his little finger at her and said, "That's up to you." And she turns back to me and she laughs and she says, "Listen to him. My husband's destiny is in my hands!"

NARR: By jailing Mandela and other leaders for life, by destroying new leadership whenever it rose up, the South African government believed they could hold up the tide of democracy in South Africa. Then came the revolt of 1976, and took it by surprise.

WINNIE: Over there, the school where the explosion took place, that was when 1976 erupted.

(CHEERS)

WINNIE: That was when over 10,000 children demonstrated in the street there, out of school. There was in this direction, that is where the police came, it was more of a war situation. That was a military zone, and the government, the security forces were that side, and the schoolchildren were this side.

We saw in 1976 the tragedy of our country. Any mother who saw that would not wish to see that again. The bloodbath we went through, collecting our children's bodies from the street, because they dared oppose the Afrikaner.

VOICE: Amandla!

NARR: Together with a number of others, Winnie was accused of plotting the Soweto Uprising, a charge later dismissed. Although Winnie was already banned, the police raided her house.

WINNIE: It happened ever so suddenly, about 3 one morning, the cops, they broke the door down, they took my mother off to a police station, then after a few hours, the truck arrived, and they took, they loaded things. Then they took me and the big truck to the police station, and my mother was told then that she would be moved to Brandfort, and was just taken. It was quite shocking, you know.

NARR: Without any charge or warning, Winnie had been banished 250 miles from her home in Soweto. Her place of exile was Brandfort, in the Orange Free State. The Orange Free State is the most rigidly conservative of South African provinces, the heartland of Afrikanerdom. The unrest that periodically rocked the rest of the country did not cause a tremor here. With Winnie tucked away in what she called "Her little Siberia", the government must have thought it could forget about her.

WINNIE: Firstly, I had to overcome the depression aspect of Brandfort, and decide in my mind that wherever there are my people, my ministry, my own crusade against apartheid goes on.

NARR: The local people had been warned that Winnie was a dangerous subversive. She began to build from the grassroots, in those areas of greatest need for the community. Food for the elderly, a daycare centre for the children, a mobile clinic, kitchen gardens. Small victories that won the confidence and respect of Brandfort's black community.

WOMAN SPEAKS, TEXT TRANSLATION: When we go to work, we leave our children at the daycare centre, before Winnie came here, we didn't have a daycare centre.

ADELAIDE TAMBO: Winnie is really very, very amazing. Um - there she is, banished to Brandfort, a godforsaken place, a place where the Afrikaner thinks very little of Africans. To them, an African is someone that is there, that has been put into this world to serve them, and work for them. So, she gets there, and um, she revolutionizes the whole place, and she enters a shop where normally black people are not allowed to go. With the result that er Afrikaners in Brandfort wanted her to be moved from Brandfort as a place of banishment, to be taken to another place. It was said that as soon as Winnie came to Brandfort, the kaffirs were becoming very cheeky. And of course, the other people, seeing the way she's fighting the system and the oppression, they start taking it from her, you know, it becomes infectious.

NARR: Winnie's grassroots' organizing built a base for the African National Congress in the Orange Free State. Journalists and statesmen from all over the world made the journey to this out-of-the-way spot to visit Winnie.

In 1982, without explanation, Mandela was moved from Robben Island to the mainland prison, Pollsmoor. When not in prison herself, Winnie visits him once a month. She's always tailed by the Security Police.

WINNIE: One of the most painful experiences is to give the prison your back and return back home, knowing fully well that you are leaving him there for life, as far as those in Security think. It makes quite a man to retain your senses behind bars. Throughout the years, visits to him have been a tremendous inspiration.

NARR: Nelson writes regularly from his prison to Winnie in hers: "If on my return I found you away from home, I'd seek you out, and report to you first, for that honour is yours, and yours alone. No-one else has, or will ever have it from me, and it would shame me for life if I ever surrendered it to any other person."

LETTER TEXT: Anniversary.

NARR: Many of the letters have been seized in police raids, and only a few survive. "Your beautiful photo stands about two feet above my left shoulder as I write this note. I dust it carefully every morning, for to do so gives me the pleasant feeling that I am caressing you as in the old days. I even touch your nose with mine, to recapture the electric current that used to flush through my blood whenever I did so."

In August 1985, while Winnie was on a visit to her doctor in Johannesburg, her house in Brandfort was raided by the police, and later firebombed.

WINNIE: It was the government's own version of a prison without walls, a prison outside prison.

NARR: Winnie's visit to the house where she had lived in exile for nine years was watched by a police helicopter.

WINNIE: My legal advisers, we have to see to it that the government restores the prison it gave me to a livable situation, and that they restore all what they have destroyed. Except that of course, er items that were here are invaluable, they were priceless, and they cannot be replaced.

JOURNALIST: What kind of things were those?

WINNIE: Oh, family things, of sentimental value.

(HELICOPTER NOISE)

JOURNALIST: Who do you think then was responsible for burning it down?

WINNIE: It is the South African government, through the police, through the er Security Branch. They simply just came back to er complete the job they did last week, when they invaded the house and attacked several children who ran into the yard for protection.

NARR: During the police attack, Winnie's sister was beaten unconscious. Winnie's grandson lay teargassed for two hours. Police claimed gasoline bombs were being made in the house.

WINNIE: And they had to create that kind of atmosphere, to present us as a violent people, who are manufacturing bombs in the bakveldt of of the Free State. Through the years I did develop a sentiment about the place, I engaged myself heavily in numerous projects for the community, in a way it became a livable prison, er, which was a point of departure for me to serve my people where I had been placed without any choice. Um - the feeling I have is th feeling of everyone else who has suffered such losses which have been inflicted by the racist regime. It is painful. It is the reality of our struggle for freedom. And it is only a continuation of the physical participation and the physical suffering of any freedom fighter.

JOURNALIST: Are going to keep right on struggling?

WINNIE: The struggle goes on, there has never been any doubt about that.

(FUNERAL CORTEGE)

NARR: In the surge of unrest that has swept South Africa since 1984, fifteen people were killed by bullets and gas in the township of Mamelodi.

(CROWD SINGS)

NARR: Defying government orders to return to exile in Brandfort, and under the forbidden banner of the African National Congress, Winnie broke her ban to make a speech at the funeral.

WINNIE: I bring you messages of love from our leaders inside prisons. I bring you deep sympathy from the families who share with you the pain of our country.

(HELICOPTER NOISE)

WINNIE: Pretoria has failed to rule our country.

VOICE FROM CROWD: Viva Mandela, viva!

WINNIE: We are here as testimony to the fact that the solution to this country's problems lies in these black hands. This is our country. In the same way that you have had to bury our loved ones, our children today, so shall the blood of these little heroes we bury today be avenged.

(SHOUTS FROM CROWD)

WINNIE: We are here today to tell you that that day is not far when we shall lead you to freedom. Amandla!

CROWD: Awethu!

WINNIE: Amandla!

CROWD: Awethu!

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Research:

Peter Davis
Peggy Stern

Production Assistant:

Russell Brooks

Interviewers:

Kenneth Mdana
David Mesenbring

Sound:

Joy Davis
Annalis Groenewald
Kenneth Mdana
David Mesenbring

Camera:

Peter Davis
Sam Groenewald

Co-directors

(South Africa)
Kenneth Mdana
David Mesenbring
Zwelakhe Sisulu

Editing:

Peter Davis

Consultants:

Thomas Karis

Bernard Magubane

Script:

Peter Davis

Narration:

Max Robinson

Coordinating Producer:

Brigette Sarabi

Producer/director:

Peter Davis

Executive Producer:

Mabel Haddock