

2 Now, what will I talk about? In the olden days when they taught them, they used to take them a long way out in the bush. They used to teach them how to look for animals, and how to dig up food. The old people used to teach the young women to get bush potatoes, yams and cheeky yams. There were lot of foods, for example, lily roots and lily stems. They would collect them as they were shown, and cook them.

3 The men used to teach hunting, when they went after kangaroos, or how to track buffalo. They used to teach them men's' things.

4 [[Break. Organizing play activities for BG's 3 year old daughter]]

5 They used to teach them. They taught them so they would know, and then when they grew up, they would teach their own children - their sons and their grandsons, their daughters' children and their sons' children. They used to teach them law - the Aboriginal peoples' law.

6 They used to make baskets and other things, whatever. [[BG attending daughter.]]And they would teach them as they made things. Back then the old ladies taught us how to make baskets, proper nets, fish traps. They used to make things and we would watch how they did it. Those old people would teach us and we would sit and watch how they did it. They would explain to us - what sort of string they used to get, from that manbudbud tree, and banyan trees. In those days we didn't have nets, they used to make string traps to catch fish.

7 [[Interviewer talking with BG's daughter.]]

8 Yes. And at school, they had us there too and taught us, so we went along through the bilingual literacy, so we knew both - English and Kunwinjku languages. That's what we used to do.

9 SE: Would you like to talk about...something I want to ask you. [Okay] So, now do you know how to read both English and Kunwinjku?

10 Yes. I can. I can read English and Kunwinjku. Back then they used to teach us in the bilingual classes. They taught us. We would go to school and the balanda would teach us, but we had bilingual where we used to write Kunwinjku. We wrote Kunwinjku with the right spelling too! We used to write it. When they would ask us in English, we would think about it, then write in Kunwinjku. They used to teach us how to spell correctly. That was those old ladies - those two Ngalkodjok, my mother was one of them, and when we went to RI they would come too, and they used to teach us in Kunwinjku. We all went together, combined. They used to teach us. We didn't say it, we only wrote it, or we would say it and then write it down, so we would know the right spelling for Kunwinjku. Back then we used to have our own Kunwinjku teachers who were on the staff with white teachers, and they would all teach us.

11 SE: So, did you go to Kormilda?

12 Yes. We went to school here, and then Kormilda. I went there. I went to Kormilda and I had a look at that school. It was okay. But it was a hard, and they had strict rules at school. We didn't muck around being silly. We couldn't go anywhere unless we asked permission - or our houseparents took us. They used to take us and bring us back again. We couldn't go anywhere for just any reason. The houseparents would go crook on us for that. They used to teach us. We went to school too and they taught us, but they were only teaching us about balanda stuff - they didn't have both, they didn't have bininj and balanda stuff, so they just taught us that balanda stuff when we went to that school. [*This is at Kormilda?*] At Kormilda.

13 But that was all right, we used to learn a lot of things at school: how to live in balanda society. You would learn how to co-operate with balanda, how to understand English, how to answer questions. They used to teach how to live life in a balanda way. So you learnt how to work out the difference between balanda and bininj ways, and how to compare them, so if you went to a balanda place you would know what the language meant, or if they came to you, you would be able to explain things to them in English - explain the culture to them, the meaning of what they are seeing, how people live the bininj way. Or from your own viewpoint, you could go and live there, and they can explain to you what that white way of living is about. We learnt

that at school at Kormilda. That's what they taught us so we could understand properly what everything was about.

14 SE: Did you attend high school?

15 Yes. We went to high school.

16 [[Break to make cuppa.]]

17 Yes. I went to high school at Darwin High School. A lot of us went there. Your brother Nabulanj went with me, that Ngalngarridj Ngalmok, Ngalngarridj your sister, and that Nabulanj Nawarddjak - the one I was later married to, and a lot of others too. A lot of us went to the high school but another group were just at (school at) Kormilda. A few of us they took to High School - Darwin High School. Yes.

18 SE: Were you there together with Ngalkamarrang?

19 E___? Yes. She was there with us. [*In the same group?*] Yes. We were together but she was younger. And N___, Ngalkamarrang, Ngalwakadj, that other Ngalwakadj, the younger one. And Ngalwakadj Ngalmarndjulngunj too. They were younger than our lot. There were a lot of young men there too.

20 SE: That was happening to that big group of you at the time Ngalwakadj and I came, when we first arrived in Kunbarllanjja in 1977. So where were you, Kormilda?

21 Yes, We went to Kormilda. We used to go there. But I left High School in year nine.

22 SE: Year nine? Why did you leave? Did you just dislike it or what there some other reason?

23 Yes, I just started disliking it. I worked in the (council) office [*Here?*] Yes.

24 SE: A yes, I knew that. I remember.

25 Anyway, I worked in the office as a secretary. I didn't want to go back to Kormilda, so I just remained here. A few of us just stayed back here. Some of them went to year 10 and then finished: Ngalngarridj who is at Kudjekbinj and Ngalngarridj Ngalmok. But then half way through year ten they both stopped. Then they came back here and got jobs. But it was good that we went to school. We saw how to live in the city, what life is like living in the city. Yes. It's as if we can say, "Ah, so we know that's what it's all about living in the big city. However, we're back living here at our place, so we concentrate on here where we are." And they teach us the law and what it tells us is the right to do, in accordance with what those old people say. We understand the meaning of that law. Its strict just the same as the white people's law.

26 SE: And its big.

27 Yes, there's a lot of it and its hard too.

28 SE: Now, your two children, did you send them to Kormilda?

29 My two children? [[I used the wrong Kunwinjku grammar in the question, which BG clarifies here.]] Yes, the boy went to Kormilda, but the girl didn't want to. She just goes to school close by here. Her brother went to Kormilda but he left, half...he went for two years but he didn't want to go back for a third year. He just stayed here, and used to go here, close by.

30 SE: So you sent them here to the post primary classes?

31 Yes. Post Primary. The girl goes there but the boy left. But they were okay. The boy was okay. He wanted to go and do things, but I don't know what he was thinking. I don't know.

32 SE: Okay. Now about ceremonies. Do you want to discuss for example Marrayin, Wubarr, Kunabibi [[Two words inaudible]]. Did you go? [What?] Didn't you go to ceremonies?

33 No. Only Kunabibi, and we just stayed down the hill, where the women were.

34 SE: Okay, and this was here?

35 Yes, here in Kunbarllanjja.

36 SE: What I'm getting at is for example, when the women have their business [Yes] When you are all there, do the women teach?

37 Yes, they teach them, and they stay with them to do it. They tell them stories and explain to them, to the ones, as you know, who send their young sons up to the ceremonial area - all the mothers. They say to them things like, "You just sit there. Don't take this lightly." And they tell them what they are going to do. They don't make a mistake in what they are doing. I mean they don't just play around, or mess about. They keep quiet - they tell them strictly to be quiet. They take it seriously and don't muck around. Because they are thinking all this is all serious.

38 SE: So what if a young man or young woman treats it as a joke?

39 Well, they would be angry with them. The old people would tell them off and tell them straight, "Don't play around with this. You're just being foolish."

40 SE: So do they listen and obey, these kids?

41 Yes, sometimes. Sometimes they don't take notice of us. They just want to do whatever they like. But some of them listen and are obedient, they say, "A, those old people have told me, so I'll just do that. I won't just play games and I won't treat what they say with contempt. Or maybe they'll be angry with me, or say to me, 'Don't go being silly, and treating the law as a joke.' "

42 SE: Now, about school, as it is now, is there any comment you want to make?

43 I see the school as it is now, and its okay. Its slowly improving – it’s getting there. But we want more black people working there. So they can explain things to the kids, teach them. And we want more of them to, whatsaname, take our bilingual programme.

44 SE: So you want a bilingual programme?

45 Yes. So when those kids grow up they will know, they will see it, and say, “We’ve got the two - white way and black way.” Like it was when we used to go school. That would be good, so that way, kids would learn to speak Kunwinjku and they would know how to translate into English. So that is why we want more literacy at school. And they are teaching them now two ways.

46 Do you know about “Culture week”? [*Yes.*] It’s good. They are teaching them. They’re going on teaching them for example spear making, bark painting, so they can cut spears. There are more things in Cultural Week - like traditional ways, how to hunt and cook kangaroos, right now they are teaching them that. That’s what they’re making now. They want to know more about hunting other animals – teaching them how to cut up kangaroo and hunting whatever, for instance finding goanna, or going hunting with spears.

47 SE: What about language?

48 Kunwinjku? Ah, Bilingual.

49 SE: I’m thinking about how children learn things, or young men and young women really learn things specifically when they start understanding Kundebi, and using Kundebi...

50 Yes. That too. [*Mother-in-law language?*] They should teach them Mother-in-Law language too.

52 SE: Should the school teach this?

53 No. They want to teach them at home too, where they live. [**The adults?**] Yes, the adults teach them. Some...But some kids, they just run around. They don't want to learn. I mean...they should sit with the adults, because then they would see the adults and say, "Oh, they'll tell us stories." But they would rather play than sit down and listen to elders talking. But, [**But if...**] they listen! I've just thought of this: if they want to learn Mother-In-Law language too, they can always come and see you and maybe you can write that book, like you've made this dictionary, so then you could give it to the school and, if they want to, the black teachers could use it to teach bilingual, whatsaname, literacy. They could get that book so, they would know, because, I've heard some kids who speak and know Kundebi. [**Some of them do?**] There are a few, a few children I know, I've heard.

54 SE: Do you mean little kids or teenagers?

55 Oh, there's...there's one boy, Nawamud, but, like I call him Nakurrng. When he was small, only so high, about her size and age [[BG points to her daughter]] [**He started then?**] He started talking Kundebi and Mother-In-Law language. Ngalbulanj taught him. She's passed away now. It's her son B___ D___. When he was very small he knew Kundebi and Mother-In-Law language. Now he's a big boy and he knows and uses Kundebi, because from an early age he knew it.

56 Some mothers, you know?, they think, "Oh, I'll teach him. He'll start doing it while he's little." For example, Ngalwamud, your little niece, little M___. [**Yes.**] She knows how to talk with her mother in Kundebi. Her mother is teaching her. So she's learning little by little. So she knows how to... A few days ago I heard her talking Kundebi, about Tina's husband. [**Really?**] Yes. I heard her come and say to her mother, "Ah, Nakiwalak, give him some money." Because that is his sister's child. Because he is S___'s son so she calls him *korlonj*.

57 SE: So how did she learn it?

58 She used to explain it to her when she was small - I've heard her talk to that child. Like she tell her a bit at a time, like she would say to her, "This is the word (you use), because D____ is your father, and he is William's uncle, so you will call him Korlonj, I mean he calls you Korlonj, and I (when we talk about him) I say Nababba and you Nakiwalak." Because, you know, that little girl calls W____ Ngabbard.

59 SE: So she does it properly?

60 Yes, I heard her say that, and I realized, I was thinking, Yes, she's teaching her. There's a lot (she knows) but that's the only bit I heard her use when he asked for that money. I don't know what else she knows, but I could ask her mother.

61 SE: She knows other different things too?

62 Yes, that's what I'm saying, we should teach the little ones, so then they can go along and grow up knowing Kundebi and Kunbalak. They'll know it. They'll use Kundebi.

63 [[Interruption to organize a drink for BG's daughter.]]

64 SE What about a child, what if he just doesn't want to go to school? What do we (inc) do? Should the adults send them, or just leave them be?

65 Some of them do just leave them alone. But there are many things about school that mean some kids don't want to attend. For one thing there is teasing. Sometimes they call each other names, and they argue and disagree with each other. I'm just thinking of my daughter. She went to school, but she was the only big girl, and she was getting bullied a bit in the classroom so she didn't want to go, but I said, "It doesn't matter. When they say whatever, don't pay any attention to them. You just go to school for yourself, you just think about learning at school. If they say something, just ignore it. Don't turn around and speak to them or they'll argue. You'll be shouting at each other." [*And some of them are violent.*]

66 But what you're talking about - well some of them just let (the children) hang around at home. But if they're hanging around at home, it would good if the older people get them and teach them and explain things to them. They could explain to them what school is all about. And this school – it's important for us to go and learn. For us to learn so we will know what is right to do in the balanda context.

67 [[Interruption: visitor wanting to talk with BG.]]

68 SE: *In the post primary class, you know?, well some of the people who run the school have put the young men and the young women in together. Is this a good thing or not? Should they go separately? [Separately.] Would you want them to be separate, the young men and young women I'm talking about?*

69 Mmm. When we went to school, they mixed us together. We were there in a group together. [**Really?**] Yes, when we went to school, it was as a group. But, because we had rules we didn't tease each other. [**It was strict?**] Yes, it was strict. It was very tough, we had strict rules when I went to school. We used to mix in together going to school, but we didn't muck around or argue with each other. We didn't call names.

70 SE: *So if you did anything wrong, what did they do to you? What did they say to you if you did anything wrong in class?*

71 They used to give us whansaname, if we were maybe arguing or teasing, they would send us to the principal's office or they would give us, homework, I mean detention. [**Detention?**] Mmm.

72 SE: *That's not what happens now.*

73 Yes, we would do all that writing and then go home when we were finished. It was very strict back in those days. [**Not now.**] Nowadays, they just let it happen. If they are silly, they either send them home or just leave them there at school.

74 SE: Nabangardi's job as liaison officer means he know more about that problem at school. Have a think about what else you'd like to say, and I've got a few more questions, three or four.

75 Okay. Go ahead and turn that off while I have a break.

76 [[Interruption: visitor to the office, then discussions about BG's daughter.]]

TAPE TURNED OVER AND REWOUND TO START AT 000 ON SIDE 2

78 SE: So what else do you want to talk about? Is there anything you've got? Or is it okay if I ask you something? [Go ahead.] Um, this one's about, specifically, how a teacher teaches a child. [Okay.] Now a teacher, should he just explain things to you or is it all right if he asks you lots of questions to make you find out for yourself about the ideas? What would you prefer? A teacher who just tells you, or one who maybe questions you?

79 He should ask us questions. I think this because a teacher...I want the teacher to explain it to us then ask us, to give us ideas, in order to teach us. We write it, and we can read it so he can explain, do you know what I mean? This might be just roughly, but we study it to find out the meaning of what is written there. [*And...*] But the teacher always teaches us, and explains. (She is looking here at another way of talking about student initiative – topic!!)

80 SE: Let me ask this one in English:[Mm.] What's the difference between a good teacher and a bad teacher?

81 A good teacher, well a good teacher teaches us step by step. He explains what everything means when we write things so we can really understand it. He explains things clearly, what I mean is he teaches us step by step. A bad teacher, and there are some, will just come by and not really explain things and then just leave, or else stay there but leave it completely up to you yourself to figure it out or write it. Some of them (students) find it hard, and they don't really understand. They read but they

don't really understand because the teacher doesn't explain properly what he wants the student to do, or how to write something.

82 In the past we had really very good teachers, they used to teach properly. They would talk about things step by step, they used to explain properly what things meant. And they would help us with some things that we found difficult. They were always there to help and explain properly. That way we understood, so we could then write ourselves. So a good teacher is always there to help. He would be there to keep an eye on what we did, so if we made a mistake he could correct us, or explain, "This is what you should do".

83 SE: *Well that's a good summary. And children; some children don't learn well, and some, some grasp things quickly, some.* [Some are slow.] ***Yes! But why is this?***

84 Some children have other things on their minds. For example, they want to learn things but there is always something here (in their head) to sidetrack them, you know what I mean? [**Yes.**] They are thinking. So sometimes they are slow in learning. They think, but it just takes time for them to really understand well. They can read but they don't always really understand. They think, but they don't know how to do things or make things or write things, and they can be really slow in doing their school work.[**Yes.**] Some of them have good brains, so if you teach them they pick things up quickly, and then they'll just know it permanently. They understand quickly. Some of them, their minds are slow, so it takes them lots of time to pick up things the teacher says and wants them to do, or is teaching them to write. Some are fast learners and some are slow learners. But, for slow learners it takes time.

85 You know, you can't just get tired of it and say, "Oh I'll just give up on him. He's going too slow." In that situation, you have to manage it and keep on wanting to teach him. Don't give up on him. Sometimes teachers get sick and tired of kids, you know, they'll say, "Oh, that one is going too slow to learn. I don't want to (keep teaching him)." But [] some kids will look at you as teacher and say, "Ah, that teacher has given up on me. Maybe he doesn't want to teach me." You know what I mean? "So I'll just stay home. I don't want (to go to school)."

86 SE: *So they won't go back for that reason?*

87 So he doesn't go back (to school). But some teachers have, you know, patience. Do you know what I mean? And they teach one step at a time. "Oh, this one is teaching us one step at a time. He must want me to learn more, so I'll know." Kids, some kids, nowadays at school, they experience the way you as a teacher act, and how you feel towards them: "What's he on about?". Lots of kids, I've seen them watching the teachers to see what they are like. Either they are patient teachers in their teaching or they just teach you and that's it, they just leave you to it. You know? [*Yes.*] Some teachers just want to do that.

88 Nowadays some kids are just there – it's not only that teachers teach, but we don't know what the kids are up to. They just sit there and study you. They watch how they act, how you act, how you speak, and what you do - your actions. [*Mm. Yes!*] And they might say, "Oh, this is a good teacher for us, he teaches step by step." But some might say, "He just teaches us, but he doesn't really explain properly what it means. So I just won't go because he doesn't teach me properly." Some kids say this. I've heard them, some kids: "He just rouses on us, he doesn't teach us properly." Some kids do that. Some kids I've heard some of them saying this. "Ah, he just gets angry with us and doesn't teach us properly."

89 SE: *That's the situation. So...* [That's what they did, those kids, yes.] *Okay. Think about this: This is what I would say in English: "This is hypothetical."* [*MmMm.*] *It might not really happen. Two children: let's say both born now on the same day, one balanda, maybe born in Sydney or Melbourne, and one bininj born here. [MmMm.] What if we were to steal them and one, the white one, we put with bininj to grow him up, and the black one we put with balanda to raise him? So they would grow up separately. What would happen to each of them later on as they grow up?*

90 So what will happen to each of them? [*Mm.*] They grow up separately?

91 SE: *The black one raised by balanda, and bininj raised by white people. So, as they both grow up what will they do?*

92 The white would do as black people do. Because the white one maybe just doing what black people do in accordance with (their culture?). The white culture, I mean, the white people raising the black child, well he would do the white way like they do their law, as they are raised. So he would probably just know the white culture. He would just act that way.

93 SE: *So something different... [Or..] Sorry, just keep on going! [No, its okay.] Well deep down, I mean in thinking, in emotions or will, are bininj and balanda different or the same?*

94 They are both the same.

95 SE: *What about in thinking and ideas? Are bininj as intelligent as balanda, or...?*

96 Yes. In their thinking they are both the same. But, because they were brought up in two different ways..., but their thinking ability is the same.

97 SE: *You know some bininj or balanda will say, no, they're not the same. [Some.] Yes, some boast about themselves, so a balanda might say, "No way. We are superior to those others." [Mm.] I've heard people say this.*

98 They don't know [] to start with, but some will say, they will think, "I'll make myself someone big. I have to be equal with other people." You know what I mean?

99 SE: *And some bininj I've heard talking among themselves, they'll say, "Its no use. We just fail."*

100 Okay, but fail at what?

101 SE: *White people's (culture/language)?*

102 White people's (culture/language)?

103 SE: *Maybe they see balanda working at all the jobs here, which they've got. [Mm.] Something is depressing them, so maybe they are feeling within themselves like, "It's not use. I can't get a job." That's why I asked you this question, that's why I was asking.*

104 But, some of them think...some people really do think, "I can get that job. Its just that I have to..." You know? I've got an idea that every person could be working. I mean, if you're black, you still have thinking ability just like a balanda. So its up to you, in your own will, you might say, "Oh, maybe I won't do this, working like a balanda in this job." This is up to you entirely. But you haven't tried it, see? You know? But you yourself you could just say to yourself. You know you can do it, but you just can't do it. You know? [*In your heart?*] Yes. Your heart tells you, but also in your thinking, in your idea, its the same. You know you can do it, but you don't do it. Maybe you think, "Maybe other people say something different." Isn't this right?

105 SE: *Yes. I've been telling children here, and adults, sorry, not adults, young men and young women. I say to them, "Look, if you want to, if you want to learn something, well, great, you can do it. You can do anything.[Yes.] You can learn anything."*

106 Because it doesn't matter if you didn't go on and finish your, you know? Schooling. It doesn't matter. But when you work, every step you take you are learning all the way. So you're working but learning new things. You know? It's like school. You learn new things, so while you are working, you are learning. But then, if you want to keep on working, you must keep learning because there's new things coming up all the time. So it is like a school – you learn new things. You just go on, and keep on learning step by step.[*Mm.*] Still learning, on the job.

107 SE: *Kakkali, what if somebody...let's say a child comes to school, attends all the time, all the time, and really learns. He learns a lot and grows up [Mm.] then goes to Kormilda. White and black, he has both. [Mm.] So he becomes and adult.*

What goes on in his thinking? Is it like he has two minds? Or does he maybe think sometimes in black and sometimes white? How does he mix them together?

108 When he mixes them together?

109 SE: Mixing two ways of thinking together is his way? Can he do that really?

110 The way he thinks? Yes. He goes along, goes to school, grows up, and goes and learns black way. Now I think myself, when he goes to school, maybe in his mind, he's thinking both (ways). There's two ways: white culture and black culture. When he comes home, here, well specifically he thinks black culture, you know?- cultural ways [Mm.] but when he goes into balanda culture, well he thinks balanda ways of thinking, you know? But always in his mind, he's thinking, he's got two cultures. But first things first, he puts black culture first, so then that balanda one, the white culture, is his second. So that's what he thinks here in his mind.

111 SE: So the one takes priority over the other?

112 Yes. It's as if he puts one in second place, so he will probably go to where he wants to be in a balanda environment, in English, and then he will put the black ideas second, and just think in a balanda way. But when he comes back he puts balanda ideas second and thinks in a black way. Or, he can mix them.

113 SE: I've been thinking about some bininj, who may be getting muddled up, and asking themselves, "So, who am I?" [Mm.] You know what I mean? [Yes.] "Identity crisis" we would say! [Yoh.(Laughs)] It can happen too. [Yoh.] Okay, well, like we're nearly finished. Is there anything else you want to talk about? Or you can ask me anything if you wish. Ah, what about if we all meet together, all the people I've interviewed. Is it okay if we do that later and then, have a talk about it where ideas could emerge? You could all discuss things and give me something to write down. [I don't know.] Or maybe later, not soon, I could ask you some other questions? [Okay.] Yes, I'll be writing. Another reason I have is to leave something with them, the Kunwinjku people who will be in charge of the school. [Yes.] So if there is complete book they can get ideas from it. [Yes, they can get ideas.] One day

*soon I hope. Okay. That's it, we're done. This is good. I like this (indicating tapes).
The next job I've got is to listen to this again and write it up in Kunwinjku and
make a translation. [Yes.]*

TAPE OFF.