

2 Yes. This is what it's about. They in turn used to teach us. They taught us the law according to Balanda. The law (is) true. Don't take it lightly, or joke about the law. When in English you (s) say "law", we say "kunkarre". Don't joke about it when you go to school to be taught. The law instructs you as it talks to you. Don't take that message lightly or treat it as a joke. We ourselves say that white business is teaching you. In fact, that law explains things to you (s) in the same way as Aboriginal people explain things, your father, mother, grandfather, grandparents or those you call your great-grandparents. I call all that the law. Your mother speaks the truth when she said, "You (s) go (to school)".

3 Mother, father they did that, they sent me. They send you when you (s) go to school. That's good. Balanda business teaches you something very good, so you (s) will go along and master what that white business says. It's doing...So, it teaches like mother, father. The same as when we Aborigines talk about things. We discuss it with each other, we are just the same as that. (The) Balanda when he does it, he talks with the child. A father talks with the child, or a mother talks with it. It's just the same. However, on our part, we don't really grasp the white business. No. In order to function well, you really know both. They are teaching you so you know our own law.

4 Our own law, which is established in the our traditional bush life, is men-based, that's it. No women. Our women and are same as us, being under our law. So then it is teaching us guiding us, as for example the Kunabibi ceremony going on at present. You know all about it, you children, you young men. That's the one. That's the thing by which we constrain you. We do that when you are going wrong. "That's not the right way", but you must live straight. Kunabibi, Mardayin, Wubarr, they are all the same, Lorrkkon, Burangkal. Burangkal is not known to people nowadays. Well, we teach you what is excellent. Don't you go a different way and lose the law - either the white one or our own. That's not the right way. Don't oppose the law when it speaks about white business, which is educating you and teaching you, as you keep on writing it at school (as they do there). What we ourselves say is, it is teaching you, and it is taking you along. It teaches you to do writing.

5 School educates you in the white way. Black people's way also - you go along that way some of the time, and it is teaching you. And that's good. That is the straight way - we guide you children in the right direction, you young men and young women. We teach you the real law. When it says, as we say, "kunkarre", Balanda call it "law". That law of the Balanda, though we ourselves say "kunkarre", is the same. We also have it and we do it ourselves. That is why I am explaining so he, Nabulanj, will explain to you, so you will understand this message of ours.

6 Also, some of you children don't know...you don't speak well. You don't know the law very well. You only know (how to say) "Grandma", "Grandpa", "Mummy", "Daddy". That's all. You don't know any of the big Kundebi (language). We educate you in that one, and we teach you that so you will get hold of Kundebi. Now, this Kundebi, we use it to refer to each other. We say "Mamamh", "Ngalkarrng", "Nangarrkkang", "Ngardukmawah", "Kenakurrng", "Kengalkurrng" and "Nadjakerr". That's what you must learn so as to live straight. You use Kundebi when addressing Kunwinjku people, and by doing that, you will have the law, the language. But if you don't use Kundebi, if you don't do that, you virtually lose the law. Kundebi, when you start using it as you talk, we would say - as English says - you are starting to do the law.

7 That is our Aboriginal school. It's just like that when we teach you too. It's the same, but you don't really grasp it. Maybe it's good you go along that Balanda way, but the Aboriginal law, you haven't already know it before, you children. We Aborigines, we black people, you are our children. You haven't known the law - we adults don't tell you about it. Although on my part, I tell my own children about it. In fact one of them, my very eldest son, got the law, he has the law, and he lives in accordance with it. He knows what I have told him about it - about what it says, so now he is telling that white man who is his colleague. They are working the right way, so we will teach you a lot, those of you who are very ignorant of the law. There's Balanda (law), but (we will teach you) so that you will also understand the Aboriginal law. You'll really understand. English says "understand." English says "understand", but we say, "You listen hard so you will know." Balanda say, "understand", then we say "You children listen hard so you will, hopefully, know".

8 I will tell you about Kunwinjku. We speak two kinds of Kunwinjku, some, in the west speak it one way, and some in the east (the other). We here, we speak, myself and my children, as I taught them to speak the Kundangburdjinkaberrk form of Kunwinjku. But the other form of Kunwinjku they speak has the (word) “la”. That’s what they say, that one, unlike our (exc) word for “la”. Instead we say “dja”. That’s what we (exc) say. If they say, “Maybe you and I will go in the morning? But perhaps, I’m just suggesting it, to you, so we will go hunting tomorrow?” Then we would say, “I don’t know, but maybe you and I will go in the morning.” When they say “bu” we in that context say “dja” which is real Kundangburddjinkaberrk speech. It is real Kunwinjku that we (exc) speak.

9 But this other thing I will talk about so you will know: you must learn when we teach you children. I have already talked about before, about school. When we’re teaching you, it’s “school”. It’s true. We’re educating you, teaching you, so you will go on and work hard for us, you new generation. You children are more or less working. Young women too, they work so they will get knowledge. You will get knowledge; getting language. Don’t take that law lightly when we are telling you about it – this Aboriginal (law) I’m telling you, or when Balanda tell you (law). This is what’s true, we’re educating you and teaching you. This is not a joke we are teaching you, it’s school that educates you. We say we are teaching you; Balanda call it “school”, which teaches you Balanda (law). You must learn it - don’t take it lightly. What should you do? You must really believe that law you are hearing, that school where we are teaching you.

10 You (pl) should really believe it. You must say, “ Of course, that’s it! That’s what I will do, that’s what I will do, that’s what I will do.” Don’t take it lightly. If you’re taking it lightly, you will not really get hold of the law, no. If you let go of the law, it will leave you, the Balanda law, and our law for us black people too. The same in both cases. We also have the law , but we don’t (any longer) teach each other by speaking earnestly about it, or discussing it seriously. No. In fact we just send you one way, Balanda, and it teaches you. It educates you, school. But don’t leave our language behind. It’s our very own language. Don’t always talk English. I...then you will speak well!

11 But pay attention to this: you must use both. We should have Balanda language ourselves, speak his language, the Balanda language. And also our language, we black people, our Kunwinjku - you must keep hold of it, so you can run with both: English and Kunwinjku. It's good that you do that. But if you just go always on the one side - English says, "one side": "kukarnkudji" is what we say -if you (s) go just the one, the one way as it says...(but) if you also go the other side, then by doing that you will know, you children. If you go "one way" as English says, "one way", then you will not know our own law. You'll miss out, you won't know the law. You will "miss" as English says; "You don't know the law, you 'missed'." (You missed) that law which is our own Kunwinjku language. You children must always go to school. It teaches you Balanda language. (And you must also learn) Aboriginal language, so you will really understand it. This is true.

12 If you go on just the one side, if you (s) go one way, you won't know the law. You (s) should go a long way, further on, through the black (law), and (don't) drop it. A child, a young man, a young woman, it's the same for all, when we talk to you, you must learn whatever we (exc) talk about. When we do that, we (exc) talk about the truth, that includes when I myself explain the truth to you. That's why when I talk you listen...you should understand whatever it is, when Nabulanj comes and tells you about it. This is the one thing, the message I am leaving for you: Don't dedicate yourself to the Balanda (law). You must run with both. You must also hold on to our own language as well. Don't discard it and go to the white (language), no.

13 Supposing you go on getting further and further away, you'll let the law drop, our own law, and you won't be able to come back. You won't know where you are, so someone else will drag you along. You must hold on (to the law) always. Now, I myself have come to talk about this. I am explaining it to these two of my children, these two Nabulabulanj. Later they will talk to you about that law I am explaining. I myself know about it. My father told me. My mother's father told me. My mother's uncle told me. My great grandparents told me. You call them "Doydoyh" but we (exc) say "Ngulubulu" There are the two words. For you, it's "Doydoyh" as you say in the west, but for us down here it's "Wulubbulu". This is when we are speaking about our Kangkinjhkangkinj. That's what I have talked about and those two will explain, committing themselves to that message, those children of mine. They (2)

will write it too, so that you will listen to them, so listen to anything those two children of mine say. The one named Andrew, he is the younger brother and maybe he will be the one to tell you, or that older brother, Steve will explain it to you. So then you listen to this law I am talking about, so that you will be able to understand anything, so you will get it and really know it, really understand the law.

14 Don't you (s) let go of it. It's not a laughing matter. It's what is teaching you, it's taking you through school. Nowadays, well what you children are doing, you call it "school". In fact we all say the same thing. We however, we black people say "We are teaching you, which is what educates you and teaches you." Well, English says "It's this school that educates you." Why use the word "school"? School educates you and teaches you law. That's why we say, we on our part say (the law) is teaching us. You must teach – oh, teach like school! I mean our own language, that you must teach!" That's all. That's enough for now. I'll stop for a minute.

15 [[Taping interrupted briefly, but tape left on]]

16 SE: *It's still going, it's okay. Okay.* [The big tape recorder?] ***Yes, it's got plenty of tape. Yes, it's okay. Yes.***

17 Yes, that issue, they don't understand very well...[***The law ?***] Yes. The law.

18 SE: *When there was no school, when it wasn't there, but they were teaching them- the adults - were they teaching them?*

19 Yes. There was no school. A long time before that, they used to explain the law to them: "Don't go and steal." "Don't go and take things." Or, "What are you up to?" They warned them about wrong. Then, later, Balanda people arrived and made a school. [***Missionaries?***] That's right. The Aboriginal people way back then said, "Ah, that's it! Right then. Why not let's send them to the Balanda people." So, we took them to school. But the parents did not think about something else, in that matter they didn't say, "Hang on, its up to me to teach (my child) so he will know." No, they just went along to them said to (the children),

20 “Yes, that’s settled, you (s) enrol.” So we put them there and it’s teaching them the white way, and that’s okay. But they should have thought back at the start, and taught them language too, those people back then, the parents, our people. And thus explained things to them, while they were with them, and told them things. Those people long ago, should have explained it to them, told them about it. So of course some lost the law, they didn’t hang on to it firmly.

A child should have been educated. They should have explained to him/her, telling him/her, “ Don’t eat that, you’ve seen Mardayin. Don’t eat that big fish, or maybe you’ll get killed.” Or,” About kangaroo - don’t eat the taboo one, or maybe you’ll get killed.” They didn’t really learn that law, no. They didn’t tell it to them straight, “Don’t you go start a fight with another man. He will kill you. This is the law that I’m telling you. Don’t you go and steal. If you are stealing, then by that you are opposing the law - when you are stealing. When you are stealing, by that you are opposing the law. When you just go and grab something, just pick it up in your hand, that’s the wrong thing.” It’s like the ones who go and steal petrol, that stuff they sniff, that juice, petrol, that stuff. Children who do that are opposing the law, it’s as if they’re making themselves unable to keep the law - they go and break in and steal things. They are opposing the law.

25 The law they are opposing says to you, when anyone teaches you, father, father or mother, you must live rightly. The father mustn’t forget. He should teach you to live right. And this applies if you (s) go and steal, if you (s) break in and steal from white people, you’re breaking the law. When you steal whatever from a white person, it’s morally wrong. If you oppose the law white people make, then you will become a criminal and not unfairly. Probably you oppose (the law) and moreover you don’t really understand the law belonging to us (inc) Aborigines. White people’s law also educates you. The school educates you and teaches you. But then you (s) reject that law so you (s) can go and break it. This is morally wrong. That’s the wrong thing to do. It’s morally wrong. You (s) must hold to what the school teaches you as it educates you and teaches you. So you (s) keep hold of it. Don’t come back and break law when you come out (of school). Don’t you (s) go and steal. Then it will be all over. If you steal now, then as a consequence, later on you’ll get much worse and

become a criminal. Thus the law will hold you liable and accuse you. You'll be blamed for things.

26 Think about it. You (s), a young man or whoever, a young woman, it's very serious if you go and break the law and you stand accused. The Lord who made us. What did he say and do for us? He's the one who accuses you when you don't obey the law-his law for yourself and oppose it. So now, when (your) mother and father tell you plainly, you (s) must understand it, you must take hold of it! That's the one that educates you and teaches you – that's the school. I mean your father, your grandparents, your mother's uncle, and the school that educates you in the Balanda (way). It teaches you, that's the one, it teaches you, that Balanda one, that white (man), he'll teach you. He'll explain things to you and educate you the straight way. He'll teach you. Don't do wrong with the law, but hold on tightly to what he tells you about the right way. Write it down well. If you (s) come back from that, you break the law of the white man, and our black people's law

27 SE: Younger brother is coming. [[MM gestures to turn off tape]] ***It's okay it's running. Probably we just forgot about it. It's okay.***

28 Yes. Don't you (s) break (the law), that's morally wrong. Going beyond the law – what is already there in the law, what it's already said. The law? Well, yes, that law of ours. That law we used to have. In the past what used to happen was when they taught (someone) the Wubarr ceremony, if someone then went along breaking the law, they would kill him, he would die. Mardayin – when they taught someone, if he just went along and broke the law, they would kill him, he would die. Why did they kill him? He was breaking the law of those senior people, the Mardayin and Wubarr law. Those are the ones that keep you going straight, that teach you. Those are the ones that teach you...Wubarr, Mardayin, Lorrhkon, Kunabibi, those are the ones that teach you, that give you direction so you (s) go straight. You (s) listen to the law. You (s) think about what (you learn) up at the ceremony, you young men. You know what we (exc) do at the Kunabibi - they do it for us senior people. That's what I'm talking about. That's what the law is about. It's the same thing. So that is why you (s) don't break the law. If that's what you are doing, you are opposing the law. You (s) oppose the law as the white man says, you're against it. We (exc) say you (s) are

“disobeying the law”, you are opposing our (inc) law, which we Kunwinjku people teach each other - Kunabibi, Mardayin, Wubarr, Lorrhkon - we teach each other.

Don't you (s) oppose that law.

29 You think about what I'm explaining to you. They say to you, “Don't you (s) steal, and don't you go and eat anything forbidden, lest they spear you - they hunt you.” All of this, what I'm talking to you about is not morally wrong. I'm explaining what's morally good. That's why I'm just talking about what is straight, so you children will listen. Some adults don't explain it you properly so you would know. You just keep on going further off, a long way, so you make yourselves unable to keep the law. You forget what you go and learn the Balanda, what you write down, the law he teaches you. You go along with that for the day, but then at night you turn around and break law. You acting against the law. Then that Balanda will think, “Why am I teaching him? He's no good, he goes and steals breaks the law? Why?” I don't know what he will say about us, that white man. He will teach him in the afternoon, the morning, the middle of the day, night time. He puts it on paper, so he can remind himself, he puts it there so he can look at it. But you don't go all the way through it so you can graduate for him. No. You do it rigorously at school when he can see you and he teaches you, but then it's as if you emerge from there and subsequently just go and steal and break things, whatever. The law is what you (s) break. They showed you the

30 Kunabibi, you (s) come and they paint you with body designs and they teach you.

31 [[Tape turned over and rewound to start of side B. MM waited for restart.]]

32 They teach you the Kunabibi. I mean the Kunabibi is going on at the moment. We teach you how it is we do this and that, and we just keep going and going until we complete it, when we come back from it. We return to camp, we go down (to camp). When we complete the ceremony of Kunabibi, we go back down. We come (to the Kunabibi) and body paint you. Then in a few days time, you forget it. You subsequently just go wander around anywhere. Perhaps another month and you forget - you go and steal things from white people, this and that. Why don't you think about that business we teach you? Well, why not? Why don't you really hang

on to what that (law) or ours? It is morally wrong when you (s) go beyond the law, when you (s) break the law. It belongs to us, it's ours. That business - that's the thing that takes us straight. It reminds us about what we (exc) used to do.

33 I'm talking about what I used to do. It warned me that we (exc) shouldn't steal things, any of us. So I didn't do wrong. I just went along like I am now. The young men who were the same age as me, who used to be together, a lot of us, right here in Kunbarllanjja - they've all vanished. I'm the only one left now, here in Kunbarllanjja. Me. Wait on, I'm thinking whether there is anyone the same (age) as me here at Kunbarllanjja...No, they've vanished, all of them. That one man, Jacob, who was here with Isaiah Namulidjbud, they've been here for might be three or four years, those two. They're still alive. They had the law. But those who were young men with me who saw them, well, they have vanished, all of them. The Nakamarrang men, those Nangarridj subsection men, they have disappeared, all those who were the same age as me. So I'm the only one left they can look to about this.

34 Now that law of ours, "business" as English calls it, we say our law, Kunabibi...Nowadays, it's Kunabibi that we have. Mardayin has gone, Wubarr has gone. Lorrhkon...maybe we have it, I don't know. It's gone, we only have Kunabibi now. So is it a fact that we don't believe that law? That's the thing that schools us. English says "school". We teach you when you watch Kunabibi. That's what happens, we take you and we teach you at the ceremony as we do all those many different things. Then later when you (s) come down you (s) you go bad. The next week, you (s) will deliberately just become stupid, you (s) change and then just go along breaking in, then you (s) steal things. So then you (s) just do wrong, then you (s) just do wrong. You're (s) acting against the law. English says, "Against the law", which is business. You're (s) acting against the law, as we Aborigines say, you're opposing the law. You're (s) "against the law" against your own business, our business. The white man knows you've seen Kunabibi or whatever, or Lorrhkon, and then you go and steal. He knows and he says, "This one, didn't the men explain any ideas to this child?" The white man knows about the law. But you (s) haven't got hold of it, not at all.

35 [[Brief interruption by visitors to interview. Tape left on.]]

36 You (s) don't have the law, nothing. You (s) oppose what they teach you. You (s) oppose the law. Balanda also know about Kunabibi. They've all seen it - many lots of Balanda, white people. So they know. So they also know that now you are breaking the law when you steal, or do wrong. So, the Balanda at school will see you when he's teaching you, and it's good when he takes you (s) and you (s) do writing. Later when you (s) come out of school, when you (s) forget what you learnt, you break the law. The Balanda knows. He'll think, "Why did he watch that business? He doesn't really have that law. Well that's how it is. That child has nothing. Did his father not tell him, or his mother's father or mother's uncle, or great-grandparents?"

37 This is what the law says. Straight, that's how I will explain it in language so maybe they will hear. Some of this also you (2) take for your younger brothers. You (2) write it for them on paper and you (2) come and read it to me, anywhere. When you (2) finish writing, when you've written it, you (2) finish it then you (2) come and read that text - I want to hear it.

38 SE: Yes. Younger brother will put it there, he will write on that whatsitsname, computer, in Kunwinjku. [Yes.] Then I in turn will look at it and I will put it in English as well, both languages.

39 Yes. That's good. Hang, on, I will just make whatever comments when you (2) come and talk about it, and read my document, which you (2) will explain. I will listen and then I can say, "Ah, you (2) did it right, that's good." And that Kundebe. Kundebe, don't you (2) leave out Kundebe. You (2) must get a permanent hold of Kundebe It's about "Mamamh", "Kakkak", "Nakurrngh", "Yabok", "Rdardda", "Morlah", "Karrangh", "Yimanjmeng", "Narrumanj", "Nangarrkkang", "Nabibe", "Kenakurrng" - the brother is "Kenakurrng" and the sister is "Kengalkurrng" - "Ngalbadjan", "Ngalbibe", "Ngaldaluk", "Ngalbibe" - and the male is "Nabibe". For example, when I speak to you about your (2) nephew, and I call him "Narrumanj". A woman I would call "Ngaldumanj". "Nakarrng," "ngorrkbelko." Don't you (2) leave Kundebe out. You (2) must you (2) put that Kundebe on paper. Those ones that I talked about - "Karrangh", "Mamamh", and so on - those ones I went (through), you

(2) must put it all on paper so that you (2) will go and teach the children so they will know Kundebe too.

40 I hear these children going about – they don't have Kundebe. No. They just use names. They don't use Kundebe with each other, no. There is no Kundebe. They are not addressing people as "Nakarrng" or "Ngalkarrng" or "Nabibe" - no. "Mamamh", "Ngabbah" – the one who is father - "Ngabbah", "Kenakrrung"- no, they lack Kundebe. They've left the law behind, they haven't got it. That is what you (2) must teach the children. You (2) explain to them Namardku, Nangarradjku, Ngalgarradjku and Ngalmardku. You (2) explain it all to them. You (2) must teach them Kundebe, and you (2) must write it on paper. This you are hearing me say about Kundebe, well, you (2) write it on paper and also explain it. Don't just go and talk about it without a purpose. Explain about Kundebe continuously so he will know - the child. Then he will use Kundebe himself to address other people when he grows up, if you (2) explain to him about it all. The law itself says: if someone has no Kundebe, he breaks the law, he goes outside the law, the law. He opposes it, he actually opposes it. He doesn't really oppose it, but he just goes without it, that's what he does. That child doesn't really understand, not at all.

41 He must understand all you (2) teach him. This is what the law says. He must not go along without law, that child. Suppose that child just goes along and does his writing, but he doesn't understand properly, he doesn't really know how to address his father, mother, mother's mother, mother's father, mother's uncle, uncle, mother. Nothing. His older brother, his youngest, he can't address them. Nothing. He just goes along without any purpose. He goes outside the law. If it were explained to him, he would know. What I mean is you (2) should go and explain it to the children so they will know. Kundebe will educate them like a school. Those black people but who don't know how to address others using Kundebe, it would educate them, it's a school. They must teach them Kundebe too. The school, okay, fine - they educate them in English. The Balanda don't have Kundebe. Although, I don't know if maybe the Balanda has Kundebe in his law. That's his law, but for us, we blacks must teach a child Kundebe so he will know it.

42 You (2) talk about all of this, and write Kudebi. You (2) must write all the Kudebi, a child will get the concept, so he'll have the right idea. You (2) give him the concept. He will hear/understand the concept when you (2) talk to children about it. Adults will listen too. He must not go outside it. Already he is leaving behind, as I see it, the whole big traditional lifestyle, our Aboriginal lifestyle – (he's got) nothing, he's just leaving it. He comes along and crosses the line, he comes along and steals things. Why? He opposes the law. He is against the law we teach, our business. This is wrong.

43 [[Brief discussion off tape.]]

44 So if he goes well, okay. Kudebi, good ideas, you (2) teach all the time. Explain the concepts. You (2) must write all about concepts and about Kudebi. The concepts...so that maybe that child will hear the concepts, then he will follow your teaching, and so he will know. A child who just goes along without those ideas, the result will be he will break in and go and steal things. He smashes, and he then goes and steals, he steals anything. He acts against the law. He doesn't know anything, nothing. Without any use he just goes along. He knows about school when he goes, but he doesn't know any concepts, either non-Aboriginal matters or Aboriginal matters, nothing. A useless person, he drifts along. If we first of all, we blacks, remind them about our language, then the child will know. He will get understanding about Balanda and about black (law). So he will understand how to live the right way. He will go to school, so he will know that, and he will come back (to the Aboriginal context) and he will know that. But what's happening now is this: he goes to school, comes back and just forgets. Why has that child not already learned to address father, son, mother, little boy, little girl? He can't address them. Mother's father - he can't address him. Mother's uncle, nothing. Without any purpose he just goes around. That's it – that's the thing you (2) should explain, so you (2) write it and teach all of it to the children. He will go straight then in whatever he does.

45 That's all. I have talked about it.

46 SE: *That's all.*

[[Interview finished. Tape off.]]