

2 Yes. What should I talk about? That Ubarr. All right? [*Yes.*] Yes. I'll talk about Ubarr, as it was in the past. What did they do when they were holding that Ubarr? They used to teach the kids - they young men, but they didn't teach the women. Only the young men. They only taught the young men. They would say to them, "Watch this. This is the Ubarr. You watch this Ubarr." That's what we used to do there, what they used to do. The young men and old people used to do that, especially the old men. The old men used to tell them while they were sitting there. They explained to them while they performed that Ubarr. They performed it and taught them. That's what happened in the past. That's what they used to do - we used to do it. They would say, "Right!" and so they in turn would watch. They used to watch what they were doing, so when they grew up they would know.

3 That was when we used to dance, they used to dance, that was how they did it. Then the young men in their turn would get up and dance. That still would happen all the time if they followed it - if we followed what we did before, what we used to do. Some people still know this but some don't know that Ubarr. It's the same thing with the Mardayin. The Mardayin is only just surviving. Mardayin, they, we, know a little bit. But that Ubarr, some don't know it at all. Well those ceremonies are just like school. It's like school when we explain things to them, or they teach us so we know what to do now.

4 Those ceremonies, that is Ubarr, Mardayin and Lorrkkon are the old ceremonies. Those are the ones, the Lorrkkon, Mardayin and Ubarr. But the Kunabibi ceremony arrived only a short while ago. I don't know when it started again, when it came back from where it had been going - maybe to the east, the south of the north - no, not the north, the south. They reckon it stayed there in the south, that Kunabibi. But those older ceremonies are just like school. And that one too, that Kunabibi is the same, it's like school too. We teach the young men. The women on their part teach each other what to do. And that too, in the same way, is just like school.

5 But nowadays, nowadays, we're fragmented - we're all just separated from each other. We don't know much anymore. Nowadays, we know only one (ceremony), and that's Kunabibi. The Ubarr, Mardayin, Lorrkkon, and also a lot of other things that they used to teach them back then, the young men, for example when they

circumcised them, when they made those young men, when they cut them, that was just like school. (Now) the doctor comes and does it, cuts the young man. That's it, that's why I'm talking about this now. We've (inc) forgotten it. We've (exc) forgotten, we elders, we don't really know. Some we know, some we don't. I still know a little bit myself. I know a bit about that Ubarr, Lorrkkon, and Mardayin - and some of those other smaller ceremonies. Whatever. That's what I'm talking about now. That's what I know.

6 Now you (young men) don't know some of this. You don't know because you haven't seen it all, only some things the young men know, about Kunabibi. But Lorrkkon, Mardayin, whatever, they don't know. Whereas, I know a bit about Ubarr, Mardayin and Lorrkkon. And also that Kunj Murrng ceremony.

7 That Kunj Murrng too. That was for the young men when they speared a kangaroo. They speared the kangaroo and put the bones away. They put the bones somewhere, and they just lay there for one or two years, and then they painted the bones with red ochre. They would make (things from that) kangaroo. So they would dance, a ngadju dance. They did the same procedure for Mardayin, Kunabibi, and whatsit, um, Ubarr. They did that Kunj Murrng - just like the Ubarr. They were related, because that kangaroo belonged to the Ubarr. That's the one. That's what they used to do, what we used to do then, us, way back then, our ancestors. But we people who've come later, no. We've just forgotten work. Maybe our children - what will they want to do? Or our adults now, might want to make the ceremonies I'm talking about. Maybe we will show you what they teach us, so we, on our part will teach you. Then possibly you can do what we used to do back in the past.

8 SE: When you were little, did you go to school?

9 No. [*You didn't go?*] No, I didn't go. I went a little bit, but I was a scared, I was frightened of school. [*But you have a school for your children.*] Yes. I have a school [*Is it okay?*] for my daughters' children, you call Mawah, hang on, Kankinj. Yes there's a school there for them. Yes, it's theirs and they go to that school. But I teach them about Aboriginal things and I teach them about Balanda things. My daughter (Ngalwamud) goes there now and takes them for school. That school is there, and

you know about that? Yes. But I don't hold the ceremonies Mardayin or Lorrkkon, though I still know them. I'm thinking about what I might do for (the children.) But then they come with that Kunabibi ceremony, and it changes my plans. Or people go to Lorrkkon or whatever, and I go and watch them do that.

10 SE: When you were a young man here, and you went to the ceremonies, you took part, so who looked after you, who used to teach you?

11 Yes. The elders used to teach me - those ones who have died. Um, they taught me. [*Where they strict with you?*] They made it tough for me. Yes. They would say, "Don't you eat those things. That kangaroo is restricted for you, that fish is restricted, or bush honey, whatever, you don't eat that. You're restricted in what you can eat for maybe one or two years. You remember this. Then they'll release you and you can eat that stuff. At that stage (they will wipe their sweat on you ceremonially, and) you'll be released." And that's exactly what I did. I never went and ate in secret. I was too scared. I thought maybe I would have died, or they might have speared me because it was so potent. [*You really paid attention?*] I used to listen to what they told me. And young men...If any young men ate anything secretly, they would get really angry with them, because they knew that Mardayin or Ubarr or Lorrkkon. So they knew whoever ate would die, die or suffer in some way.

12 The Lorrkkon, some say the Lorrkkon is no good. It was no good because, they reckon, that log burst open, it split open and so we all suffered from that, they all suffered with knee problems, or they suffered with something wrong with their feet - because that log broke open. That's the log where they would put the bones of those people in the old days. That log, you know about this Mamam? Yeah.

13 SE: So children nowadays, do they teach them thoroughly?

14 No Mamam. When was this? The Kunabibi and Lorrkkon weren't the first ceremonies. [] No. They came later. They always just teach that Kunabibi all the time. That's the only one they teach - it's always being held so they know it. The ones who don't know, all the younger generation, well they don't know much. But

we know only that one, that last one that came, because it's south, north and east. That Kunabibi ceremony.

15 SE: And the Yabburlurrwa too?

16 Yes, that Yabburlurrwa has come too, from the south, but they didn't really know it properly, the ones who brought it here, just like us from the east, we didn't know it either. We only knew the Mardayin, Lorrkkon and Ubarr, and that Kangaroo ceremony - when they would spear the kangaroo and we used to save the bones and paint them. They painted them. That was like school. [*Yes.*] And also that business, that ah, that business when they used to cut them (circumcision) - we know a bit about that, when they would make those young boys. That one we know something about, we know enough. I'm talking about what they did a little bit here, I mean in this place. That was their business here.

17 Others have their own as well. Barrkid country, that had their own, different ceremonies, whatsit, the Morak, and another as well they had. Maybe they had one or several here, we don't know. I don't know either. I only know about the Morak ceremony. I know a little bit because they were teaching me little by little, here in Kunbarllanjnja and I even went up and stayed there at the ceremony place. But I was there only for a short time and then we had to leave it. The buffalo made it impossible for us because we had to work while they were setting up that Morak.

18 Now that Morak was very demanding. Yes, Morak was hard. They took the young men into the ceremony so they could teach them. They used to climb a tree close to the river. Close to it, they used climb it, a lot of them, ten or maybe twenty young men. Then they would chop the tree down under them so they all would fall into the river. They would all be there in the water. It didn't matter if they lived or died. Yes. [[Laughs.]] That's what they used to do.

19 And also I know about that, whatsit, Cheeky Yam business. Yes, the Cheeky Yam ceremony I know. When...oh, I know that Cheek Yam ceremony. The Cheeky Yam one. Um, in that, well in that, they used to put the young men in, they would make a bark shelter there, and the young men would be in there all the time. At the end, they

would set fire to the shelter. They lit the fire so those young men were being burnt, they were scared but they wouldn't come out. If they came out they would spear them with hook spears. There was no choice. [*With a bokko?*] Yes. Yes. That's what they used to do. And that was here, we did the same thing ourselves in the whatsit, Ubarr, and Lorrkkon, Mardayin, when they used to teach us very thoroughly so consequently we did it the right way, we did well. But if we made mistakes they used to get angry with us. They used to get very angry with us, they would get very angry with us, and they talk to us very severely. [*They pressured you?*] Yes, they forced us - "Don't do this the wrong way! Don't make mistakes!"

20 SE: *Why did they say that? Did they want you to learn quickly?*

21 Yes. Very quickly, we had to learn. We had to achieve it all quickly so we would perform everything the right way.

22 SE: *And what happened if you made mistakes?*

23 When we couldn't do it properly, so sometimes wasn't any good, then they would just have to do the thing all over again. So they would do it and we would go and watch it again. [*Really?*] Yes.

24 SE: *This is good. Okay. Listen, Mamam? [Yes, Mamam.] Is it okay if you just keep on talking? But if you want to go, well I'm happy to give you a lift. [Yes.] I don't want to tire you out.*

25 [[Laughs.]] Yes, Mamam. Yes, I understand you. Yes. Go ahead. Yes. Go ahead. What else will I talk about? The ceremonies in the past, what did they tell you? What did he say to you? [*Like, what was it about?*] The name of that, whatsit Yirrkku. [*Start?*] Yes. [*Rat. And, I've seen it in that book that my brother and I produced.*] Yes, I know the one. [*And the Balanda name for that animal is "False Water Rat".*] Good one! [*It's like a water rat, like a rat that will go into water.*] Yes. [*It lives in water.*] Mm.Mm. [*That's the idea.*] Yeah. [*So how do you spell it, whatever...*] Yoh. [*Or what about Djuddjud?*] Yes, Djuddjud. Yes.

Djuhdj...**[Djuddjud was...]** Djuddjud (it lives near) the sea, from there. It's got a band across its throat. **[Ah.]** Yes, it's from the sea.

26 Djuddjud is sea-based. In fact...**[It's like a Namaddorl (fish eagle), but...]** Yes, like a Namaddorl but you know, (it's got) maybe a yellow body, and a stripe across the neck, a white neck. Yees. And that one – (not) Djuddjud, I've named that one – ah, whatshername, ah, manbiri (large sea turtle). The Manbiri used to lay eggs. And she taught those two men. Yes. **[Manbiri lives in the sea.]** Yes, she lives in the sea. **[Djuddjud in the air.]** Yes. **[Laughs.]** Yees. That's the one I named. So you read one there so I can give the name of something else. Yes. Djuddjud, and what other one? That's a good one, do you whatsit, ah, Djabbo (Native Cat)? **[Yes.]** Djabbo, well he's the one who, Djabbo and Dird (Moon.) **[Yes.]** And Moon. You know that story? I'll talk about that too because you know it. Moon, he maybe Nangarridj, Namardku. But...**[Laughs.]** He was Namardku, I think, yes, Djabbo, yes. Not Nangarradjku. Namardku. **[Namardkumardku? Was he good, Djabbo?]** Yes. Yes. **[And they argued, they had a discussion.]** Yes, they had a discussion. **[They were arguing over whether when you die it is forever or...]** Yes. That's the one. **[Yes.]** You know that one...**[I like hearing that story.]**

27 Yes, that's the story. I tell lots of stories all the time. Yes. And those two are always wanting me to tell them all kinds of stories. Some of them I can do, some I can't. But those names, all those names like Yirrkku, whatever, Djabbo, all kinds. Yes. You can write that there, or she can - any (of those names). She's working on this too. **[A long time ago when all the children used to learn. The elders would teach them.]** That's it. **[But TV...]** Yes, it maybe the TV Mamam. Yes. Yes. I should tell those two about that too. But I'll paint a bark picture first, then tell them about it.

28 SE: So in the past, when the elders used to teach, did they have bark paintings to use?

29 No, they didn't have the bark paintings.

30 SE: It was just in words?

31 It was just in words, that's how they would teach them, when they taught them about Kunabibi, um, or, whatsit, Mardayin when they held that (ceremony) – maybe you haven't seen that? The Mardayin? [*Some of it I've seen.*] Good. That's good. That's the one where, when they taught you, if you did something wrong they would spear you. For that they used to use a fishing spear. Yes. [*It was very harsh?*] Yes. Very harsh. When they used to paint (the novices) with *rarrk* lines, they would paint two (designs), they would make two, and paint them up, then teach those children, “This *rarrk* is how you enter this. This is how you go in.” That was Mardayin.

32 SE: Like Christianity here.

33 Yes. Its like Christianity. Mardayin, and the Ubarr, they both taught them the same thing. But maybe you haven't seen that one Mamam? No? [*Ubarr?*] Yes. [*I saw it.*] Oh, yeah. That's good. [*That, you know that old man M___?*] Yes. [*He's passed away some time ago. He taught me.*] Oh, that's good. It's good that you know. [*I called him Nakurrng (father's mother's uncle)*] He gave it to you. He knew it from a long time ago, because he was a little bit of a “singer”. [[Laughs.]] [*And he taught me. He put me into that (Ubarr) they had at Wurlwunj.*] Oh, yes. Good. [*That, probably, was the last one.*] Yes, that Ubarr is held there at Wurlwunj, I know. [*But this was actually a long time ago. 20 or 18 years ago. We lived there, and I went into it.*] That's a really good thing. [*And that old man was a good man.*] Yes.

34 You know, it (might be too late) but that's what we wanted, that's what we should have seen I mean. He should have taught us more. We would have watched it properly, every time. I don't know about this old man here, (M___'s) grandson – Mi___. Maybe he didn't see much because he was just a little boy, I mean he was too young. [And his children, that Nakurrng's children, J___ M___, my brother, and J___. They don't really know much about it.] They don't know much. They just don't know, because he didn't teach it to them. [*And those two Nawamud men, my uncles, have both died. Those two brothers. But they reckon there's one old man who might still know, V___ C___ – not V___, what's his name? Another, somebody C___. He might know but it's not enough really...*] He's still alive? [*Maybe that one man is still alive.*] Yes, I don't know where he lives, or whether he

knows, so we could have told him to teach us. Because those of us from this side, from the east, we don't really know (Ubarr). Well, some, some of us. For instance I know something about Ubarr. Just as with the Lorrkkon, I know that. Mardayin I know. Kunabibi we know. Yaburlurrwa I don't know. [*The new one.*] Yes, because its new.

35 SE: *I'm thinking about the kids: I mean they don't go to school here. They're not learning anything. Not about Aboriginal things, and not about Balanda things, (they're not) learning. Nothing. They don't really know either.*[And that's true Mamam.] ***Nowdays they're not teaching them...***

36 That's the thing Mamam that I, I'm worried about that, because the children I look after there (at my outstation) go to school. And it's good thing when they go. Sometimes they go, sometimes they are distracted by hunting trips instead. Yes.

37 SE: *Do they teach them things when they go hunting?*

38 Yes. About hunting. [*So they can spear things.*] Yes. [[Laughs.]] So they can spear things. Yes. I mean...Yes. That's what I do out there, but here, it just doesn't happen at all. I see kids going everywhere: to get money, to play cards, to the club, wherever. Shop. That's why they don't know anything.

39 SE: *They're sexually active even though they're still kids. They haven't grow up and they're sexually active.*

40 That's right Mamam. I don't like the kind of things I hear and see. Its got worse here. The situation has become very serious.

41 SE: *That's why maybe I'll go around places, next year, after the wet season finishes* [Yes]. ***We'll come, I've got a four wheel drive vehicle, so I'll come with Ngalwakadj, and we'll teach the young women, young men, some adults maybe, about um, the Bible. How they can use the Bible to teach the children, I mean about Christianity. That's (the idea).***

42 Yes. That's it Mamam. I've been waiting for you, and I've been waiting for Nangarridj, but there may be too many (people) here, or going into Darwin, anywhere and everywhere. You can only look after them in one place, or teach them. I mean so they can keep (using) the Kunwinjku Bible, or the English *Bible*. [*English is okay, but if they are to really understand it well...*] Yes, well you do that Mamam. Yeah, and anytime you may want, or we want you, well, then we'll talk again about you coming or whatever, or maybe I'll come back here.

43 SE: Okay, I'll give you one copy [I see] and I'll have another one that I'll write on paper and think about, and then maybe later I'll come back to you maybe ask you about something. [I see. Yes do that.] I'll write this so that parents all over, Kunwinjku, all the Kunwinjku people will understand about teaching their children. [Yes, that's it, that's the one I think Mamam.] They can go along straight. They'll go right way. Those who are virtually without direction. They don't have any direction in their lives. [Yes. That's true.] No one teaches them. No one teaches the kids, so where are they going? [Yes, Mamam. That's very true.] I see them here, there over the other side in those houses, they were playing there a few days ago, among themselves, adults and children together playing "Holey Holey". [That's what's happening. That probably means the mothers and fathers have given them the wrong ideas at a very deep level.] Okay, that's it. I'll leave you Mamam. [Yes, yes, Mamam. Yes. Yes. So that...] I don't want to put you under too much pressure. [Yes. Maybe later on too Mamam.] Okay? [Yes].

[[INTERVIEW FINISHED. TAPE OFF.]]