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Oral History Programme

an interview with

AMEER DOST

1978 - 1980

DOST MAHOMET
DOST AND GRIGO FAMILIES
SWAN BOYS' ORPHANAGE
WHALING
FIGHTING AND BOXING
PROSPECTING
LIFE ON THE MURCHISON GOLDFIELDS
MEEKATHARRA RIOTS

conducted by

Michael Adams
Oral History Officer

Reference number OH405
Verbatim transcript
(10 x 90 tapes)

VOLUME 1 OF 5 VOLUMES

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MA. What was Tom's name?

AD. Tom Mathieson, Mathieson, a Norwegian or Swede, I'm not that sure.

MA. Where did they live?

AD. And then...He finished up, used to be contracting all around, fencing and all that business, you know, and up North.

MA. But based on where?

AD. Based at Meekatharra and then he was finished up as a miner. Then later on he got his eyes blown out boring a face out of, in Norseman, OK Mine and got blinded.

MA. Lil is dead now is she?

AD. Yes she's just died, yes.

MA. And Ada?

AD. Ada married a post office. A bloke that just used to run around, you know, with the vans, postman. Married a man called Freddie Mitchell.

MA. Freddie Mitchell?

AD. Yes.

MA. Where do they live?

AD. They lived in Victoria Park, in Shepperton Road. And now the other one, Jean, the name Bolitho. Herbert Bolitho, he's dead, Herbert is, but she's still Mrs Bolitho. And they finished up in the saw mills, he was a mill man, you know, in the saw mills in Manjimup, okay?

MA. Yes.

AD. And now Vi married Tom Potter who was a very brainy man. You've got a tape on have you?

MA. Yes.

AD. He was a very brainy man Tom and he was a refrigeration mechanic and also superintendent of the Robbs Jetty refrigeration. And he was the man that invented the freezer carts, you know, carted all the things in the war, and carted all the carcasses down and he recently died. And he lived in Money Road, Melville, got a lovely home there. Ada is the only one that can speak Hindustani, yes. And she used to cater for all the Indians when they come across here, the hobnobs, you know, from India. And of course they used to grab Ada and course she could converse with them in Hindustani, and she was a lovely cook too with it, you know, curry and rice, etc., you know what the Indians eat. Oh the reason why my father left Coolgardie was because of the animosity and maliciousness between my uncles and my father, because they didn't want to consent to the marriage, although my grandmother consented, but they didn't. So that's the reason why my father took my mother across the saddle and away he went up to Broome and back to Port Hedland, to get away from them, and then bring all the camels up there and everything, ordered them up there, and then they must have come up and followed them up there. Yes, yes, he set them up,⁸ yes that's right.

MA. So he set them up in Perth?

AD. Yes, he set them up, yes, that's a fact, yes he helped them, see thinking it would make them sweet, you know. You've got it on have you Mike?

MA. Yes.

AD. Yes he set them up in many ways, just to keep in with them, because, you know, he tried to help them so that he

could be good with them, and no trouble. But whatever he done, whatever he done to them they still, you know, bucked on him and made things tough for him on every angle, until finally, you know, he went away to come back to Port Hedland. And then of course they come up there too. And he set my auntie up, Agnes, in the pub, Poondina, and make her happy, and then up they come and he set one up into a bakery. He gave one five hundred sovereigns, and then the other one in the electricity business and then....

MA. In Hedland?

AD. In Hedland, yes that's a fact, and then he asked them to keep away from his home and let them live a decent life. But they used to come home to my mother's place drunk, and of course my father never drank nor smoked. neither did my mother. And of course he'd come home and then he'd see them there in that state and he'd say, "Listen I don't want you to come here again. I've come here all this way out of your road and here you are now, interfering with my marriage." And of course he said, "If you ever come here again look out!" So anyway of course six weeks later they came again and they were both drunk, so he tore into them and of course he didn't know how to fight, he could wrestle. And he threw one through the door and broke one's arm and then he threw the other one through the door from behind him.

MA. Whose arm did he break?

AD. He broke Harry's arm. He broke his arm. And then in the early hours of the morning they came back and hit across the head with a three by two jarrah piece of wood.

MA. Hang on, was it the same night?

AD. Yes, he went over and told his men that he'd had big

troubles here and he had a fight and that he would have to you know, let his camels go. They let him have them, and go back to India and take his family over to India, and finish with Australia altogether. But as I say that night, anyway, they came, Harry and Billy came [in] the early hours of the morning, about three o'clock in the morning and hit my father across the head with [a piece of] three by two jarrah. And that's where he was murdered.⁹ And they finished up they done six weeks gaol and got out of it.

MA. Hang on, what did Dr Browne tell you about it?

AD. Oh I talked to Dr Browne about the murder and he said it was a terrific and you know, disgraceful business what they done to him. And he said, "And I held your father's tongue out," he says, "for a long time." He said, "I don't know how he lived as long as he did, because his brains were protruding through his skull." And to finish up my mother had to try and help *her* brothers from being hung or long term gaol. And they got to my mother, my uncles Billy and Harry, said, "Look Annie, for God's sake help us out of here, because we're in big trouble now. What about you saying that he grabbed *your brother* by the throat and the other one got a lump of wood and hit him across the head to relax his hold and make it look like it was a manslaughter job." And this was what was put over in the court and they earned six weeks gaol and got out of it. But the Indians knew different and....

MA. Because he'd been over to them?

AD. Yes he'd been over to them and told them see They blamed my mother for this and my mother got the blame for this

⁹ there are some details of this murder in the library. Paper cuttings, reference number PR3565. See also Police Gazette, 1909, pps 110,125,194. There is a Police File consolidating material about the murder of Mrs Dost, the dispersal of the children to orphanages and the disposal of the estate. Several Departments' files are consolidated in this file. The file contains material from 1909 and was closed in 1922. The file reference number is 4837/1913 entitled Murder of Dost Mahomet.

and they eventually got my, kidded my mother over to India and murdered her there.¹⁰ And two of them come over from Australia to India because my eldest *sister* Lil saw them come in with the knives.

MA. Hang on.

AD. Dad's murder was about 1909.¹¹ He was buried I believe in Port Hedland, yes.

MA. What your father was buried....

AD. Yes, buried, yes.

MA.in Port Hedland?

AD. Port Hedland, yes. And at the time then, of course my mother then, her son was in India. And then she decided, you know, after some time, to go back to India and bring her son back to Australia, and also settle up for some of my father's property. However my uncles tried to persuade her not to go, because they reckoned it would finish up with murder.

MA. Why did they think she'd get murdered?

AD. Because they must have known, you know, that there was something funny be going [on]. They must have had an idea that they blamed her. The Indians are an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth you know, it's in their tradition isn't it? So naturally they would think that they would murder her for this, because *she* got them out of gaol, you know, being hung. So the Indians would know, you know, they knew too, the Indians knew too, what went on, see. And so of course naturally they would [seek revenge]. Also the government, two officials said, "Don't go," they tried to stop her.

MA. The government did?

AD. Yes, yes.

¹⁰ Some details of this murder may also be found in the paper cuttings already cited, reference number PR3565

¹¹ 7 April 1909

MA. At that point?

AD. Yes, yes, yes. At that point they tried to stop her from going, so she wouldn't go.

MA. But she had her eldest son in....

AD. In India.

MA. Yes.

AD. But she wanted to go and bring him back. They said, "Don't go." They'd get him back over here without her going. Yes. And of course anyway finally she was determined to go and bring her son back. And Harry and Billy wanted to put a .32 Colt revolver in her hand. Said, "Well take this Annie and put it under your pillow, because you'll need it." And after they tried to persuade her, "No, no," she said, "I'm going now and I'll come straight back." And that's when she took us family to India and they murdered her there. Yes, as soon as my father....after my father's murder, the other Indians on the camp, they grabbed all the camels. And my father's brand was DM, on the camel's brands and they put a bar in the D and made it BM. They said they would confuse everybody and don't know whose camels they belonged to. They changed the blooming initials, that's come back to me too, and changed the name to B. Dost Mahomet it was and they altered it and put a bar in there. So no one could make out, you know, who was who, you know, and how many camels he had or how many he didn't. And they took them over them. They grabbed the camels and used them themselves you know, and reaped the profits themselves. My mother never got any of that, no, no.

MA. But what sort of estate did your father leave?

AD. Oh I couldn't tell you that Mike, only the station that he had, that's all, I couldn't say how much. But all I know [is] that my people robbed us of all, everything we had here, you know. And my Auntie Agnes was the chief one and Billy Grigo and Harry. It was them three robbed us of everything here; what we had here.

MA. About how long after the murder and so on was it that your mother went to India?

AD. As far as I can remember, it was round about....within twelve months after the murder. And I remember going over to India and riding on a rickshaw too, I remember that part of it.

MA. Where was that?

AD. In Ceylon.

MA. Oh yes.

AD. Yes, yes, I remember that one. The bells were ringing so much on his head and going along, you know, with all this noise on his [head] frightened hell out of me! My mother grabbed hold of me and she said, "Don't worry," you know, that it was quite alright. And anyway....

MA. The whole family went?

AD. Yes the whole family went. My four sisters went too. And then we got to India. And over there they made a fuss of my mother, they put [her] on a white horse and made a big long procession of, you know, with palms and that on the ground, where the horse walked over. Well I don't remember this but my sister told me, Lil, who was the eldest sister. She remembered everything. And then we went out to the castle, out from Karachi in a place called New Khumbarwara, which is twenty

miles out from Karachi. ¹²

MA. Now how did you live there?

AD. Oh I remember having lots of rice you know, and curry and rice, yes. And I used to walk out, you know, with my sisters and get mangatels. But it off a bit Mike. We used to go out and eat these mangatels you know my sisters and I, she took me out she knew all about them.¹³ And we used to hop into these [food stalls] but anyway a terrible lot of rice and curry.

MA. What sort of reception did you get? You said it was very good for your mother, but did your father's brothers look after you properly in this castle?

AD. Well we had everything we wanted there Mike, you know. Have you still got it on there?

MA. Yes.

AD. We had everything we wanted there. I remember the servants there, with us, all the time, you know, used to escort me wherever I went around, you know, specially me. And as a matter of fact in the finish I had a photograph with my servants alongside of me. And my sister's got one of those photos.

MA. Now what did your mother hope to achieve when she was in India?

AD. Well what she wanted really, her main object was to get settled up with some money, because you know, she and my father had a lot of property in Karachi. And she wanted to settle up with a bit of money. And also the main thing was to bring my brother back, her son back, and finished up getting murdered instead.

12 See footnote number 2 page 3

13 This may not be the correct name but said to be a fruit small, green like a fig with pinkish kernel.

MA. Well look how long were they over there?

AD. Well I think we were there about eighteen months Mike, you know. About eighteen months, yes.

MA. What actually happened during that period?

AD. Well I'll tell you what, my mother had a lovely watch dog. And it was the night before the murder, these two Indians they must have been from here, anyway two Indians came....from here I believe, borrowed the dog to [help] catching some animal or something. And took the dog away because they knew he'd bark see. And it was the following night (my sister told me all this) and the following night they murdered my mother.

MA. Now who were these two Indians?

AD. I believe they were come from India here¹⁴ according....

MA. What from India?

AD. Yes they were Indians they were, they were Indians from up the north here, where my father used to work, you know. They used to work for my father.

MA. So these were your father's servants.

AD. Yes the servants, yes. They worked for my father, yes.

MA. Do you remember their names?

AD. I couldn't say Mike, no I couldn't say the name, but I wouldn't even know their faces again, you know. It was a long time ago. But I know they escorted me always, everywhere I went they went with me.

MA. Oh so these were the two servants that looked after you?

AD. Yes looked after me, yes, that's right yes.

MA. Now why did they murder your mother?

AD. Well they murdered my mother because they blamed her

14 apparently means from Port Hedland, see page 22 of this transcript

for my father's murder. Because they knew there was something wrong in the statements she gave. Because my father, after the fight in the first place, he went across to *the* camp, I mean over to the camp where the Indians were working for him. And he told that he'd had a big fight and broke my uncle's arm and then came back. And that night they murdered my father with a lump of wood. But my mother turned round in the court then and said that they were fighting on the floor. Well how could they be fighting on the floor. You know, it was so obvious that there was some concoction. And my mother had decided....they got to my mother, my uncles did, her brothers, and told her to put up this concoction to get them out of being hung. So then my mother gave it over that *my father* grabbed one of my uncles by the throat and the other hit him across the head to relax his hold, and then he smashed his skull.

MA. Why did they wait so long?

AD. What do you mean Mike?

MA. Well you know, she'd been in India a long time.

AD. You know I think she went more or less to try, you know, to square up the [property]. And another thing too, I've heard some talk too from my sister that, you know, they were holding my brother back there, see her son. They wouldn't let him come over, you know. They didn't want him to come over either, because he was born there of course and they held him back too, see, all the time. He wouldn't come over, you know. They got round him too, to hold her back too, you see, that was the plan.

As far as I can remember Mike, it was quite good, you know, my recollection of it, while I was there. It was quite [good]. I was happy, you know, and I had plenty to eat, you know. And I was well attended to and I always had nice clothes, you know I can't

MA. Plenty of servants?

AD. Yes I had plenty, yes always around me Mike, yes I always remember them, yes, I did. There was a fellow dressed in white and a red round the thing here.

MA. What a cummerbund round the middle?

AD. Yes and they had little red thing on their heads. I remember that part of it, yes. Wherever I went they went with me, you know, yes, that was strange that, wherever I went they were with me all the time. Not so much with my sisters but me.

MA. Yes. Did you have any sort of shock at that time, going back to your father's death? I mean you were clearly asleep and all the rest of it, you probably never knew what happened.

AD. I didn't know much really about that one Mike. That was a shock, it wasn't too much to me, but I guessed you know. But it was just a passing thought more or less you know. I never really was....too young exactly. You see a bit older my sister would remember everything, not me so much, no. It wasn't....that was no shock to me, but the other one was. And I remember that.

MA. Yes that's what I'm coming round to,

AD. Oh yes that was awful, because I remember kneeling alongside my mother, trying to wake her up see. A hell of a difference, yes. I tell you I was given such a shock for years after by it. You've got the tape on have you?

MA. Yes.

AD. Oh. It give me a hell of a shock after, I tell you, I thought they were going to kill me, you know.

MA. Yes. Did your mother have any sort of form of protection or anything?

AD. That was the only protection she had was that man, and his wife.

MA. Who was that?

AD. Mr Lintle and Mrs Lintle.

MA. Now who were they?

AD. They only camped about half a mile away from us.

MA. But who were they?

AD. They were just....they were white men.

MA. Yes.

AD. White family. And I think if I remember he was a sergeant, Sergeant Lintle, as far as I remember.

MA. What Army sergeant or what?

AD. Yes Army sergeant, yes Army sergeant.

MA. But who were they, were they Australians or....

AD. British I mean, British, yes, British not coloured people.

MA. But how did your mother come to know them?

AD. Well she was introduced to them, like. They would be there to protect her, you know, in her stay in India. Because really the government really thought that she was going in for a trap, but besides my uncles, besides her brothers, they really thought that she was going in for some trouble.

MA. Now this was the Commonwealth Government?

AD. It must have been Mike, as far as I know it must have been.

MA. Yes.

AD. Because she was introduced to this man, Mr Lintle, Sergeant Lintle, and he was camped about half a mile away from where Mother was in the castle.

MA. And you think it was [that] he'd actually got a job to look after her?

AD. Yes, that's right, yes that's right, he got a job.

MA. Really?

AD. Yes, yes, that's true.

MA. Do you remember very much about him?

AD. No, I saw him coming there very often, you know, and his wife come there and she used to grizzle to him, go to him, and talk you know.

MA. And this was at NewKhumbarwara?

AD. Yes that's right, New Khumbarwara, that's right, yes.

MA. New Khumbarwara.

AD. Yes he came there many times, yes. Yes and she did too. He come up very frequent, he did, because to see if everything was alright there, and this is how he caught us. Otherwise [if] he hadn't come in there we wouldn't have been alive now, we'd have been taken away. He came the next morning and there he saw mother and took us away. No one else was there but him. He's the man that saved us. Mr Lintle.

MA. I see.

AD. Yes.

MA. I see.

AD. That's right, yes, he's the man that saved us, yes.

END OF SIDE ONE TAPE ONE

TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

MA. [Why did your] mother decide to leave India?

AD. Because she'd had, I think, more or less, you know, as far as I understand, she'd had bloody enough of it, you know. She wasn't very well treated by the [Indians]. She was fearing that something was going to happen, because they were....You know what my sister was telling me the same thing too. I said, "Why did Mum go there?" "Because of the blooming [property]." They were all against her there. She had some feeling that there was something going to happen to her, you know.

MA. Really?

AD. She did yes. She had a feeling, yes. And she tried to get away on the quiet. It was arranged between Lintle and her to get away. Of course something leaked out, you see, and the word leaked out, it leaked out that she was leaving. And they got her before the day she left, see, that's what I'm trying to explain to you. And Lintle came across to see what was wrong, why she didn't call in.

MA. The following morning?

AD. Yes.

MA. Now look tell me what happened that night.

AD. Well that's what I'm saying. I don't remember that part of it Mike, but my sister all knows all about it. They came in first....oh I can tell you some more, my brother told me, he told me more of the detail. He said they came to the window first with the revolvers, to shoot my mother through the window, and they saw Jean, my youngest sister Vi laying on her arm. They said, "Don't shoot because you might miss and hit the baby, and we'll go round the other way." So

they didn't shoot the revolver. They came around with a Gurkha knife and my sister saw them and she screamed, because she saw them, she remembered them from....

MA. This was Vi was it?

AD. No, no, this was Vi laying on her arm, but Lil, Lil was the eldest. She saw them come in and she remembered them from Australia.

MA. Really?

AD. Yes, oh yes. Pity she wasn't alive. And she saw them from Australia. And they went straight away and put the switch out and came across, and she screamed because she saw the knives, the Gurkhas, the knife in the hand, they had a big knife in their hand. And two came in. And then they went across to my mother and then she heard my mother scream for the first hit, must have stabbed her in the dark. And the next thing of course there was a hell of a commotion on, and you know, sunk on the floor, you know, where they dragged her out on the floor. And then my mother bit one bloke on the finger and took half the finger off. With his finger in it she knew that she was going to [die], you know, I suppose, and tense, excited and also get up, you know. That's something, you know, she knew she was going to get done in, she must have got a few stabs and she grabbed him and bit this fellow on the index finger. Anyway, as I say, they dragged her on the floor there and that's where I saw her in the morning when I woke up you know.

MA. But what happened to Vi and your other sister?

AD. That's what I was saying. Vi was still laying on the bed and Mother was on the floor, and Vi was bleeding through the head, you see. Her head was all cut open, right through the

top of her head with a knife, they stabbed her through the head. And then of course Lintle he went stone mad, you see, and he rushed across and got her into Karachi Hospital straight away, and we all went too.

MA. Did you see your mother that morning?

AD. Yes, I saw my mother yes, all the hands as I told you, I saw the hands all cut off there you know.

MA. Tell me about that.

AD. Yes well I woke up and I saw my mother on the floor with blood all over the floor, which I remember just like it was yesterday. And this is the shock I got, see, when I saw this. And I then knew then that Mum was gone, you know, blood everywhere and cuts to the throat, and all her throat was cut and all stabs all over her chest. And her hand was on her breast and all the fingers were missing and right down through the breast like that, deep into her breast. And I could see the blood all coming down you know. It's so bad that I just can't relate it, Mike. It was pretty crook. And I knew Mum was you know, gone. Big....well there was a bloody pool of blood everywhere on the floor you know, and also her throat was cut see, through the throat.

MA. Mmm. And they cut her hands....

AD. And I saw here, right down here, it was cut off, like that there, that way.

MA. Across the knuckles?

AD. Yes right down there across the knuckles, yes.

MA. Was that....that was just....

AD. Just was slapped down like that.

MA. Yes.

AD. Must have been see, and straight through there and into the breast here, you see.

MA. Yes.

AD. And it was deep all through here, the bone was laying open, one big bloody long cut, gee they must have cut with a vengeance. It was deep you know, right into the breast, you know. Yes.

MA. Yes....and did....do you think....did they steal anything?

AD. Oh yes, well the beautiful rings he put on her. That's what they were after.

MA. I see.

AD. They were trying to get the rings off her Mike, you see, because she put them on when she was young, you know, and they were valuable rings. I believe one was, according to Vi and my sister Lil, one was....my uncles said one ring was worth two thousand quid. Yes one big beautiful diamond, you could see it glistening anywhere, specially when she was on the race-course, or anything, they reckon you could see it from a mile away, you know the glistening of it. One big beautiful Indian diamond, yes, and all, not only one, but plenty of them. And they couldn't pull them so they just bang off there, and cut them off, took the lot.

MA. Good Lord!

AD. Bloody mongrels, yes. That's the shock that I got, because I always used to see my Mum with these rings on, too you see, whenever she, well you know, when she walked around. And those days they put the rings on, a hell of a lot on, some women, in those days, according to the woman. They just clustered them on, on there, you know. I don't know what they

paid for them either. My father paid plenty for them.

MA. So Lintle came over in the morning?

AD. Yes, yes, that's right he came over in the morning, yes. And then he saw us like that and of course he didn't....I didn't see him do anything with my mother, he took us off quick, see and then he found my sister, my younger sister. He bound her head up, he cut across the sheets, and I remember him putting something round her head, I suppose that was a bandage and oh God, he went stone mad, I mean she wounded. He was bloody....in a terrific, you know, terrific state himself. And then next thing he took us off, you see, carried us like, carried Vi in his arms. He only lived a little way away, and then took us up and Vi and all of us went with him. I mean Ada and Jean and myself, Lil, and he took Vi in the arms. I didn't see no more of my mother then. So then we went in to Karachi then and from there we went into hospital. And that's where I was telling you there, we had to stop there till a court case come about. We were there for some time, we were near a month there, in hospital, in Karachi. It was a hell of a big place. And the first time I walked around, as I told you, these Indian police were with me, everywhere I walked, because the word had come through that they were going to kidnap me. They didn't want to do any harm to me, you know, they would have just got me away from coming back to Australia. This is when the court case happened and also my sister had to wait for a court case. And then she'd recognised them when they put them all in a line and she picked the two out. She said, "I know them from Australia."

MA. Which sister was that?

AD. Lil. Lal Mahomet was one.

MA. Lal Mahomet.

AD. Yes, Lal Mahomet was one, yes. I don't know the other
¹⁵
 man's name. My sister did know. I can't think of the other
 bloke. Lal Mahomet was one

MA. Did they get hung or did they get off?

AD. Yes they got hung, yes, they got hung. They hung them,
 yes. Well that's the one they caught with the finger bitten
 that's how they knew.

MA. Ah!

AD. Yes. He confessed it was only on his own, but my
 sister said there was two and she remembered them being in
 Australia. Mongrels! Couldn't find the rings, they tried to
 get the rings too, you see. Must have sold the rings Mike.

MA. So that must have been a terrifying period for a
 young child.

AD. Oh Jesus it was terrible Mike, oh Jesus. I never
 forgot that for ages, I tell you, I [can't] forget it now even.
 Just like....even now I can just see my mother now on the floor, you
 know. Terrible. It came as such a shock to me Mike that I
 thought that, you know, that I thought that everyone I saw was
 going to kill me, you know. That's how much of a shock it gave
 me. You wouldn't believe that such a shock would give it to you
 like that, but it did. Everywhere I went, in the police station I told
 you, when I went away, you know, I'd run in for help. ¹⁶ I said,
 "Quick, quick," I said, "the Indians are out there, they're
 going to kill me." The sergeant said, "Oh," he said, "oh don't
 worry, what's wrong?" And I told him. "Oh," he says, "they
 won't kill you." You know, by gee, I tell you.

later Mr Dost told me that as far as he could remember his sister Lilian had said the other
 was Karda Bux, son of Jourack. He said that Jourack was the man who paid R.S. Haynes, solicitor.

means later when he went away from Perth as a young man and suddenly came across Indians in
 Carnarvon he was shocked and ran into the police station. See also p.93.

MA. Where was that?

AD. In Carnarvon, yes.

MA. Oh this was years later?

AD. Yes, yes. Afterwards. There was a heap of them up there then.

MA. This was when you were about eighteen was it?

AD. Yes, that's right Mike, yes.

MA. Yes I remember you mentioning that.

AD. There was about twenty of them, or thirty of them sitting on this....outside a settler's joint there, all with turbans on.

MA. In Carnarvon?

AD. Yes, they had camel teams there.

MA. Yes with the camel teams.

AD. You know I didn't know this about this. I thought they were still further up in Port Hedland, and God damn when I saw this I ran into the police station. You know, God damn it, they would have killed them, they'd have grabbed me and killed me. Yes, oh frightened hell of me, dinkum. I was really, you know, shook up.

Oh well then we had to wait then Mike, to go over to [Australia]. This is a bit transpiring, you know, as I said, about the trying to get me back to....me to stop there and bring my sisters back. They didn't [worry] about my sisters they wanted me to stop there you see. Well this is when the time is recorded when all the money was paid over to Dickie Haynes.

MA. Yes but that would have been a bit later wouldn't it?

AD. Oh later, yes. A bit later, yes.

MA. But tell me at this stage....

AD. We never left Karachi Hospital until we came over from there on the boat. And we were escorted there on the boat with a heap of soldiers too, to come, bring us over. Yes, we had soldiers all round us, jundiwallahs.

MA. Do you remember anybody in particular on that voyage back?

AD. No Mike I can't remember anyone....I remember being surrounded when we were on our walk, just had to have them on the boat as well, they surrounded me just the same. About three or four of them, you know, all there, the same as on in India in the hospital.

MA. British soldiers or....

AD. British soldiers, yes.

MA. British?

AD. No, no, they were British, no. I mean they were Commonwealth....

MA. Conscript?

AD. Yes. Jundiwallahs, the dark police they were. Yes they were dark police.

MA. I see, so they were Indians were they?

AD. Yes, Indians, yes.

MA. I see. Sent over to escort you.

AD. Yes that's right. No they had come from there. They went back to India, back to India, after. Yes back to India, they went back after, yes.

MA. So they actually came over to escort you?

AD. Escort, that's all then, yes, that's right, yes, escort. And then when we lobbed here we were taken to the Children's

Court. You see we went up to 32 Trafalgar Road first, up there where my sister.....

MA. Which number?

AD. 32 Trafalgar Road.

MA. 32 Trafalgar Road.

AD. Yes, yes, yes.

MA. And you went there....

AD. That's because my grandmother was there and my uncles were there, see. They took us from there, that's where my uncles, should have looked after us Mike, and my people. But no, we were chucked[out]. We went in then to the Children's Court, Children's, you know, to sign on, oh we had to go there I mean and sign up and go to the orphanage, you know.

MA. The girls went....

AD. Went to the Girls' Orphanage and I went to the Swan
17 Orphanage. Yes, thrown in there.

MA. Good Lord. So the Grigo's....

AD. Yes.

MA. I'm surprised that the Grandmother....

AD. Yes.

MA.she didn't look after you.

AD, Yes well she put on a hell of a protest about it to my uncles, to try and get me out of there, all of us. "No, no, no," they said, "we can't look after them. They'll be better off in the orphanage." They were bad people to us, you know, the bloody Grigos. This is the fellows that killed my father, too, you know. Billy and bloody Harry, see, in this house, bloody mongrels.

MA. They'd come down from the north then?

AD. The battery, yes, and I put all my things forwarded to me in Perth. I went down to 11 Grey Street, South Fremantle.

MA. Grace Street?

AD. Grey Street, G R E Y, Grey Street. 11 Grey Street, Fremantle.

MA. What did you do buy a house or stay with friends?

AD. No, no I stopped there with my cousin.

MA. Which one?

AD. Anne, Anne. Anne Holt her name was, Anne Holt.

MA. And she was previously a Grigo was she?

AD. Yes she was a Grigo once.

MA. She was a Grigo.

AD. Yes she was a Grigo one time, yes. She followed my mother's name, Anne Charlotte Grigo, and that was the first born out of all my uncles, that was named after my mother.

MA. So that was Anne Charlotte Grigo?

AD. Yes Anne Charlotte, same as my mother's name, yes.

So then I had a good long talk to her and I said, "Listen Anne," I said.....she was barmaid then at the Orient Hotel.

MA. At the Orient?

AD. Yes the Orient. She'd been there for eleven years. At one time she was manageress there, too, for Parrys. A very smart girl, a very handsome looking girl, you know, very attractive, big blonde. And anyway I said, "Look Anne," I said, "I'm thinking about buying a fish shop. I want to speculate my money into something and I'd like you to be the manageress." "Oh yes....."

MA. What made you think of a fish shop?

AD. Well I thought well people have got to eat, see. And

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AD. No, no they were made of concrete things, you know.

MA. Concrete tubs?

AD. And they jump into them and stamp them all the time, you know. Oh a hell of a [job]. He'd have half a dozen boys or more, you know, stamping them along, and stamp all the dirt out of them. Well they sent out a dye and it was the dye that got in the [cuts].

MA. These were blue clothes?

AD. Blue, yes blue, all blue, yes that's right. And to finish up it all, the blue, it got into his cuts see and he died within a week anyway. It was all hushed up nothing was said about it, but that's what really killed him.

MA. Jesus!

AD. Yes oh terrible, yes, oh.

MA. Dusty, I now want to go back to those very early days of your life, those sad days when your father and mother were murdered.

AD. Yes.

MA. Now you remember I gave you some cuttings? ¹⁴⁷

AD. Yes, yes, you gave me some cuttings.

MA. And those cuttings I think through political and racial prejudice, throw a very different light on what was supposed to have happened to what we've already discussed. It seems to me that the paper cuttings indicate that your father had a terrible temper and may even not have really loved your mother. What are your views on that?

AD. Well he probably could have had a temper. I think that

147 Newspaper cuttings from Sunday Times see footnote 9, page 21.

we've all got a bit of a temper too, so it could be so. But I think there's a bit of exaggeration there, where he used to belt up my mother with a strap and all this, because I don't believe that one. Because even my uncles told me that my father was very good to her and also my eldest sister, which was there all the time and she'd have the best view....

MA. That was Lil?

AD. Lil, yes she said, "Oh Mum and Dad were always very happy Arthur." I asked her one day, you know, "How was Dad and Mum?" "Oh they were lovely, happy, oh all the time." I can't really understand this, how this happened, at all. He put rings on her fingers, you know, and always done her up, looked after her.

Oh gee, I don't know, I can't understand it at all Mike, no. And all the ones I know spoke very well of him, even the blacksmith. "By jove," he said, "your father...." I knew him personally too, Andy Hall. He said, "Your [father was] a great man," he said, "your father was." "How," I said, "Andy?" He said, "Well," he said, "he came to Coolgardie there one day and he said, 'I want you to make me forty drays, now straight away. I'll pay you half now and I'll pay you the balance when you [finish]'"

MA. Yes I remember you telling me that.

AD. Yes and he paid him. And he said, "He was right on the knocker." He said, "He was a very fair man and a very good man."

MA. Now Dr Browne....

AD. Yes Dr Browne he was a doctor round there then.

MA. That was at Port Hedland at the time of the murder?

AD. Yes, yes.

MA. He had something to say about your father.

AD. Yes he said to me, well that's what I'm saying. He spoke to me. I met him by accident, you know, yes, a long time after. He said, "I am Dr Browne," he said. "Yes," I said, "yes. Lil was telling me about you, you know, talking about you." She said, "you was a great friend...." "Yes," he said, "I was a great friend of your father's," he said. "He had a Greener gun as a matter of fact and I didn't," he said.

MA. Sorry?

AD. A Greener.

MA. Yes I know.

AD. A Greener, one of the best guns you could use.

MA. I know them, mmm.

AD. "And he used to lend it to me. As a matter of fact him and I used to go shooting together." And then he told me about my father's death. It was very saddening and it gave me a different view of it too, because he said that there was no blood on the floor and he said, "It really was a bad trial, it was a bad trial and he was in the bed when he....there was blood all over the sheets," he said, "and," he said, "the brain was protruding. How he lived for as long as he did," he said, "he didn't know." He said, "I held his tongue out with a pair of forceps to keep him breathing, but I had no chance to make him alive, because," he said, "the blow was too hard on him."

MA. So he was definitely killed in bed?

AD. Yes in bed, yes. He said, "There was no...." That's what he said to me, he said, "The case was all wrong, biased against the dark people," you know.

MA. Yes of course.