

Name:	Damien Dogari
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Interviewer/s:	Margaret Embahe [ME], Mavis Manuda Tongia [MT]
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TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW

Time	Transcript
0:00:08	[ME] Before we begin our story, I'd like you to introduce yourself.
0:00:18	Okay, my name is Damien Dogari. I am going to start the story, but the story was, my father told me, I didn't see it with my own eyes. It is only father, daddy told the story in that way. One of our scout leaders, America they got him as a scout. So when the war ended, he was the one who used to tell us the story in the school. Every Wednesdays, sometimes he used to come and tell the story about that, so I got the idea of the story of that. So, in the first place was the Christian headquarter, is Holy Cross [church, in Gona]. Because the Father were there to give the lesson, that is how the Christian religion came. They based on there and the government, they based on Buna, Buna Government Station.
0:01:31	So, they came and they based on there. So, the people were there until the war was about to come, before that Bishop Mr Strong, he sent a message to all the Fathers' outstations. Now we use telephone, like mobile, but before it was a hand letter, they passed the message, so the man can run and pass to the other village, the other can hold it and run to the other village, until they will run and that's how the message used to pass.
0:02:19	[ME] Okay, so what did the bishop or the man that you just mentioned, what message did he send?
0:02:26	He said that 'Japanese were about to come'. So the people must ready, the plane will come. He explained the plane, it is like a bird you will come in the air, and the boat will come it's from the sea you must through your eye, and check the sea. So people they got the idea already, so, from there, okay ... my father, he wasn't a small boy, but a young boy. So, he went to the garden, with the mother and the children. They were digging the yam and digging out the yam, and father was a bit out, and mother and the children were in the garden. They were digging the yam and at the same time the white man came, and that was a real white man but, will I say a ghost or spirit, because those people cannot [believe that] the color white coming. So, that is a picture that came first.

0:03:41	So, that man came and stood at the back and, very small eyes, and light skin, and nose very [unclear] So, he came and stood at the back and watching how they were digging. While they were digging the yam, one turned and saw that man at the back, not far, but very close. All of them, they ran to the mother, they hold the mother, all of them, they just stuck there. They want to get strength from the mother but mother is already, they were staring at her, how she would get out. So, they started calling their brother and our father who was a bit far. From there he came slowly, and said, 'what's wrong?'. When he was about to come out, he saw that person was a spirit. So, when the father came in, and he moved and went slowly, that kunai grass there, he just went in and came out. So, he came and asked questions, and they said we saw something like this, a man came like this, and he dressed up like this. Our father was a wisdom person but he was a small boy, he used the wisdom too. So he said like this, 'okay, pack all the things so we go home.'
0:05:21	[ME] So, how old do you think your father was at that time?
0:05:24	My father was old, his father, he died, and he was the only one with the mother and the small brother. So, how he used to think? I think God gave him gifts, something like that. If anything come, he can pick it up quick. So, at that time, while that man appeared, they were talking about that one, they were talking about the story, and my father got it all. 'Okay, we won't stay here, pack all the things and we go home.' So, they packed their yam in the canoe and pulled the canoe down to the village.
0:06:09	That is in the morning. Mother was trying to cook the yam, father said 'cook the yam', and he climbed up a tall coconut, a very tall one, because he was using his wisdom. He climbed up and all the people did not think about what is coming. All the people were sitting, cooking, and working, anything. Just father went up and saw that from the Joroba, Oro Bay site to the north coast, that is just like another land. From there to there is very black. There is no space. It was coming and my father went up to the coconut. He went up to check that one, nobody did that only himself. He was thinking that there is something black in the sea from there to there.
0:07:38	He came down and said, 'take the yam and put it inside the canoe'. So, they cut the banana leaves and they made a bag and they put the yam there, and all just pop on the canoe. But only mistake, I said this, is to tell all the community. The thing he saw it, he did not say 'community this thing is coming'. He did not say it out. He just came and said okay mummy pack all the things, without knowing others. Only family they moved. After that, okay, the noise came out. While he was moving, the Buka people, okay, they hit the bamboo on the deck. The noise chase all the people. And from there, okay, before that machine gun with the plane, two of them they just ran underneath.
0:08:56	They came and they found the gun, went and after that those people came. Okay all the people they just rush in the bush. But father and the family they went in the bush, like, river, but the bank of the river, Father he got the knife and he dug it, he did underneath because they fire the gun. And they made it like a cave and went inside. So, when the bomb is coming, they went inside the cave, or the machine gun coming with the plane, they went inside the cave. When they passed they came out. They were doing that and after that I think first they came and they settled, then it's just like quiet and people they think that it's finished.

0:10:07	They came one by one. And they were trying to cook, they killed their pigs and food and they want to cook and eat. Then the real war came. Another real war started, they rushed in the bush. So, in the first place how they ran, my mother [Honar Dogari] told you already, now we are wearing the long trousers with pants, but during that time they wear the tapa cloths so, when they went in the river the tapa came out, because it's heavy, when it's wet it's heavy. So, they were frightened and they were running, they didn't think about the tapa cloth. So, it's loose, they were naked. All of them they did that. Some they went with the canoe with the tapa cloths, with their clothes, there is female clothes, okay, that one is nothing. They went naked.
0:11:21	So, during that time they went and they stayed there. Mother already told you that there was no food there. Because frightened, you don't think about the food, but you can eat very small ones that is enough with you. Because, in the first place, these local people they never see the noise sound like that. So, when they heard that one, that one is only small food they eat, they satisfied. Until that one person, he mentioned it already, Koriwaba, his name is Jason, he is from Buna. He stayed for long and said 'I must go and get my yam in my garden, but it's too far'. But he said okay you want to eat, so him and his wife, they just walk out now. They leave the group and they walk out. They walk all the way to that Ango side and the place they call, ahhh, from Ango side that's a road, one from Ango and one from Buna, Kareko, the place called Kareko.
0:13:03	The garden is there but the garden house was there too and they used to keep the yam in the garden. They harvest it and they used to keep it there and sometimes they used to cook and eat. So, they end together and they went. Wife and husband they went. Americans they came and they based at that garden. But, they already knew that some people are coming so all of them they just hide themselves, just like nobody there. So those two they just marched and they came, and they saw their garden house and they end together, so they just ran. They came and boss was at the road side, so he got up and said 'hey, you people stand'. OK so those two they just stand, okay, they made with the action, you know, and said 'Buna?' and they said 'yes Buna'. He pointed like this, because he based there and came, so he said 'Buna'.
0:14:26	After that all the people they just, the boss said get up, all the people they just came out, all Americans. From there, okay, they came back to the base and he said like this 'I am coming with a man'. Then all the people there, the Buna people, they ran in the bush. They think that he was coming with the Japanese. Because Japanese treatment is different from Australians and Americans, so they ran away from the bush. So, from there, after that he said 'I am coming with a man', So, people came out. They headed there. One by one they came out, all the people, they came together. There is one man, he was I think in school before. He's a medical, so only himself, he knows English. And our father – our stepfather, not our real father, name by John Bald, was with him. Two of them they came out. They gave the food, and all the people were eating. Feel hungry so they show their stomach, very naughty. They gave all the food to them and they were eating.
0:16:08	Okay, they were eating, that fellow, John Bald, he said, 'can you tell us, you two, where Japanese is?' So those two they said, 'the Japanese are here, they are here'. So, Americans said 'you must lead us, you are our scout'. And the other one they said 'okay, you are our scout'. Just one group but they make it two now. So, our

	<p>father, he got another troop and the other, John Dow he is from Dogura, not Buna ... sorry, Solomon, he's from Solomon. So, he's a medical, okay, he got the other troop and that's one river Buna river was coming down. And they came down and that Solomon John Dow he got a troop and he just followed the side from the river and they came down.</p>
0:17:32	<p>The other, our father got another troop and he just cut in the middle at the back of the river, it's faraway, but he just shortcut. So, Dow is following the river. And they came down and the Japanese base at Buna. From there to here, Japanese boat already came and occupied, they went inside the river, they put their anchor down here where that small barge is. They came and they went on the water and said, 'how many are they?', 'Plenty, now we are young and we saw the boat all here, but it's finished, lasted and finished. All the boats finished now. But, if you want to go around there, you will see the friends there, Buna and there, and war plane too'. Then they came down to the place called Sigori. A Japanese scout was up in a big tree. And he always spies the people who come in, and he used to fire the gun. All the Japanese they fire the gun.</p>
0:19:01	<p>All the people, it is very hard to get in there. American, Australians they came, but that guard was very good at spying people. So, it is very hard to come in. But, at the time like those two battalions, they went. That fellow was up there, those two went. One came and stopped, and one just came right on the guard. So, they first shot the guard, and he fell down. After that they got the place. First they got the position and second they shot the guard. Okay, that guard, he falls down. Third, the Japanese they know the noise and Japanese from the side, and Americans from the side. But, the person, the name by Rubisky, he is one who got our stepfather, and he said 'you just sleep here', because that is really worse taking place. So, they went to the base so, you know, when they fire the bullets it runs everywhere. So, he said 'okay he sleeps first, I will sleep on top'. But, that one is something like small mountain there, they defend on that.</p>
0:20:57	<p>But, the other fellow he went and there is a tree trunk, he hide there. So, they were fighting. Japanese bullets just came straight and the other brother got on the chest, and the other died. The other brother named Rubisky, got up and said to father John Bald 'brother, he stays here, don't move'. He went and got all the bombs and what was on his body [he took the ammunition and things off the body of the dead man and put them on his own]. He died, so he got all the things he put on his body. He just swim across Buna, very wide and very speed. It is running down very speed but, because of his brother died, so he swim across. At the same time these people were firing. Americans were firing. At the same time he was going, so all the Japanese they just went down to the house. So, that time he swim across, while they were firing, they pretend to firing. Rubisky went to another side, then while they were firing, he saw that fellow swim across. He went and from there, he just fight them, all the Japanese. From there, all these bombs, he got it, this grenade, he told the other fellow, only the grenade he throw inside the house.</p>
0:22:52	<p>And while these people firing, they went down. He just went and threw the bombs. He went and he got a big gun. That is only the big gun that they used to turn around and fire. So, during that time he went. He went with gun. Those Americans, all of them swim across, they finished the big headquarter there, that one is finished. Then they went to that side. The man, Rubisky, I think, he shot five hundred soldier there, himself. So, because his brother died, he get angry and went across, he shot</p>

	five hundred people. So, he got revenge. Okay, just now I think maybe four years ago, he came back to Buna. He saw the place and said 'oh this is the place here. I stand here and I fired the gun here'. Only himself came and explained to us and he said 'I am the one, I did it. I came with a one man, he is our scout, the man is John Bald. John Bald is a good scout'. So, he did it and Americans win the war. John Bald and John Dow, two of them, local people, they make the way. This hard time, should be hard time, but these two guys, they make the way.
0:25:00	So, another local people helped the Americans and Australians, something like this story I said, they were good scouts. Because, they know the way they know how to go and meet the Japanese, they explain them and they lead them. And the war was win by the Americans during that time.
0:25:30	[ME] So, all these stories were told to you by your daddy?
0:25:34	Yeah, my daddy and that scout is the one, in the school, the teacher invite, because he want us to know the story about that. So, in the school, they used to come together and tell the story about that time. Everybody says, in the classroom, the other classroom, he used to do that. Father told us that, and that scout man, he told us that. So, we know that story. He know, I know all the people from Buna, they know, my age, they know.
0:26:22	[ME] They know this story?
0:26:24	Yeh, he goes that the man, John Bald, he is the scout, but other people, I think the small boys like Morris, he is my brother here, I think he don't know but during my time and his time, we know the story about the father John Bald.
0:26:48	[ME] Thank you so very much. That was about the war, but let me ask you some personal things like, you just told the story about the war which was told to you by your daddy. Okay, you been the second born?
0:27:13	Third born.
0:27:14	[ME] Third born in the family. What are you doing at the moment? You are from Sanananda? Okay, so what are you doing at the moment, you know, your means of survival? If you can just tell a little bit of the story about yourself being in the village.
0:27:53	Okay, at this time, this moment to survive myself. Now we are working for tourists, and the other one is I used to survive myself from my things that I plant like betel nut. I used to plant that one and I used to make money, and I survived myself on some other hard side when it comes to me. That's the one I sell and get the money, and survive myself from that side. And from our family side, like this tourist side, we survive ourselves from anything like money or what, we are getting some toys from the, but not other things.
0:29:00	[ME] This building that we are sitting down and telling stories, I believe it is a resort. What's the name of the resort? And who owns it?
0:29:08	Okay, this resort here, we are the owners. We own this, but our plan is to, not like this but we want to make it good but, like a permanent building and all this, but there is no support. You see the chairs now you are sitting down here. No government, government didn't help us, but ourselves we used to do it. There is no permanent building here, that's only ourselves we used to do it, because the aim I said is how we are going to get money.

0:29:58	[ME] Do you have many tourists and guests coming to use your resort?
0:30:04	Yes, they used to come in. That report my brother will give it to you, but I just tell you one of these. You will see all this Buna are here, they were using the tourists and mainly they got money from the tourists, and other things just small, like betelnut and some other things, but most they get money from the tourists. But, this record from Girewo, there is no boat coming around here, but first it came to Buna, Peter Barter [businessman in Madang], the boat came to Buna and Girewo, every time it used to come here every year. So, all the Sanananda people used to come here and gather to welcome, and how many Peter Barter... He did a program for the schedule or like that, that's why the boat used to come here. So, we are here but any time the boat comes here. Now I think it is three times. They came with plenty tourists like thirty six, thirty, before this only Australians, they came, but after that is mixed with Asians, and they came mixed.
0:31:44	Just now, so you see the posts there [at the front of the guest house], that's we make the forms for them. Just now they went. So, the tourists here is like Australians, and America is only one, one used to come here and go back like, name by [unclear]. But Australians are plenty, they used to come and go. Some other guesthouses – we have three guesthouses now from Sanananda, but the three of them are moving [operational].
0:32:35	[ME] So, how long have you been operating?
0:32:48	Ahhhh, we start from 2004, then come.
0:32:58	[ME] You have any government support? That kind of things?
0:33:03	Sometimes we used to, how we are going to get it. It is very hard. We can write to get it, but only ourselves we live on our own strength. You see all these guesthouses are here. I think few months we are going to take this one now, we are going to build it up. But we need support, but we didn't get support. It's an important area to Buna, Gona, and coming this way, an important area but we didn't get support from the tourists. The tourists is flowing but there is no support. The governments, I think, make money with tourists, but they did not support us.
0:34:08	[MT] I heard that your sister Gilda and her husband are also involved in this guesthouse, is that correct?
0:34:18	Yes
0:34:20	[MT] So, Gilda and the husband, are they supporting you brothers in any way at all?
0:34:36	Now, the husband is away from us. The wife is with us, with her brothers, and now it's okay. Now what we are doing is, we are doing it. It will come later. We were talking about this one, Joachim [Gilda's husband] at this moment is away. Gilda's husband, Gilda and her husband, they are doing the work now.
0:35:13	[ME] One final question, one last question I would like to ask is, because the Japanese came during the war and they spoiled all this, your coast line. So, if they have heard that the locals down at Buna Sanananda are trying to do, you know, business, like putting up resorts and putting up guest houses, do you think they should try and help the locals? What do you say?
0:35:51	Okay, that's a good point. Sometimes they used to come here, we used to tell them, we used to eat and we used to make friends. Sometimes they said that, okay, we are going to report to our government, then they go and they go, nothing happens.

	<p>But, Japanese, I think how many years, I think one, last year they came, the ambassador, he want to see this place and he came and he went back, and he gave us the forms. Said, do this. So, we filled the forms and sent them across to the ambassador. But, still we are here, still waiting. Waiting. So we talk about this one here because Japanese come they sleep here, Australians come they sleep here. The story I said about how war came and how we did, it's not good. They used to come and we used to make food, and they are our friends so we used to do that. They should help us too.</p>
0:37:29	[ME] So, you think that the Japanese should help?
0:37:33	<p>The Japanese should help. Japanese, I think two times I request that, they went and after that they came to get the bombs that remain. So they came with the ambassador and the ambassador said, 'I'll just see you people and go, but these people will sleep here, the workers will stay here'. Ambassador, he came and just left the form and went back. And the form, we filled it all and we plan to build this all, this one. So, we just gave the amount, okay, and it went out [the form they sent]. But we are waiting and waiting, and now we are still waiting.</p>
0:38:38	[ME] Thank you so very much for your time, thankyou.
0:38:45	Thank you very much.