

Dr George Tjapaljarri interview
transcript with Peter Bartlett & Smithy
Zimeran

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For : Gallery Gondwana

Translation of audio tape of Dr George Ward Tjapaljarri = GW
PB = Peter Bartlett
SZ = Smithy Zimeran

010 : Testing

015 : Testing

017 : First question where was he born

018 SZ : Asking where he was born

020 GW I was born -- Is that good -

021 SZ : Yes good talk.

022 GW : I was born. They took me past Tjunti. From Tjunti we went to Nyarruri.
They kept me. They were sending out for special tribute meat.
I was lying down at Nyarruri. I was lying down then I got up.
I went to Wanpurrutintja. Yes. That song is to dangerous. I dont want to sing.

034 : Then sings song.

036 : This song that I was travelling. Snake. Death Adder.
They slept. They talked. Talking.

Begins singing song about two snakes.

That was Nyarruri 043

Continues singing song about two snakes talking dreaming - Tingarri. 047

Yessss 48 Stop tape

Start tape

GW : Two men dreaming were sitting at Tjimili and I was born at Wanpurrutintja. 041
They gave me medicinal power at the salt lake Wanpurrutintja.
They opened my body to give me medicinal power. This one !
(Shows birthmark on his stomach.) From Dreaming ! Wanpurrutintja !
They opened me up and chucked it away. See ! 050 Tape stop.

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051 : After they chucked me I was lying there and I became a child.
There my mother got me 054. My mother. No fire. (Mothers name was Waruwiya).
She's there at Wanpurrutintja.

SZ : Wanpurrutintja

GW : Yes, I was born at the sandhill 057 On the edge.
In desert oak country. Salt lake country. 058-9
Salt lake country. Desert oak country. 060

Too much! 060 -1

I got to many salt lake. Wanpurrutintja. 060

PB : Little one. Young Fella

GW : Young Fella

PB : Where did you walk.

GW : Wait. Wait. Wait ! Ha ha! I Was born.

SZ : He said he was born in

GW : He been born . Ya

I was born at Wanpurrutintja 068

I was ther young fella. I was there at Wanpurrutintja.

I became young fella there 071

Man 72

PB : What other places

GW: Yes 073 When little. No. One!. No, No only one !

My place. My own place. Wanpurrutintja !

Born there. Became man there. 076

I was stopping around there 077-8

I was walking around. I was sitting there. I was walking around young man. 079

SZ : He grew up and he became a man around that area.

GW : Yes !. Yeah. Right there. 080

Poor Bugger !

PB : That water is right through ? .

GW : Laughter Ha Ha. Underground Wanpurrutintja !.

No get away. Really deep down the steps of the well.

My place is different 087

Underground ! 088 Whistling Whuhuu.

No get away. No white people get away. Nothing ! 090

SZ : Soakage ?. 091

GW : Yeah. 091

Soakage 092

When I get down 093

When I get down 093-4

When I put the meat outside like a servant man. I put it down and climbed down the ladder (Aboriginal ladder called Tjukalpa made from the main limb of a tree with the protruding branches cut off so as to form steps down a well)

Climbing down

Climbing down 096

I bend down and drink 97-8

I drink water here. 098

I was looking and I could see black under the hole.

Like whiskers. In Wanpurrutintja 100

Big one !

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PB : Big water.

GW : Yeah. Big water

Here it is lying. Its been cracked open here. 104

Its like wiskers 105

PB : In the rock

GW : No! No !

Inside limestone country. Inside !

SZ : Inside limestone country.

GW : Death adder there ! Death adder there ! Ahh

Death adder there. Right here. Yeah.

Death adder there and water here.

I always drink here.

This ones water. Like that. The water is here.

PB : Before white people ?.

GW : Snake

SZ : No white people.

GW : No white people. No white people I saw there.

Only I put a mark. Only I put a mark on the ground. Clear ground.

With a white fella boss from Canberra. To much !.

I didn't see him. Poor bugger. I saw Jeremy Long. That one now.
Jeremy Long Alright. You there.

I will look at it with a helicopter. Poor bugger.

I didn't see him. I only visited Ngunyarma, Ngulluntja. They have seen it , people from
Kiwikurra.

Right over there, there through Ngulluntja they went.

My country again.

Tingarri burnt him. Ngullantja. Ngulluntja got burnt and Ngunyarma got burnt down.

For my father and me.

PB : What language does he talk luritja , pintupi , pitjitjinjarra

GW : Yeah Ah burnt it. Not a pitjitjinjarra ! Not a Pitjitjinjarra ! Luritja !

SZ : Pintupi.

GW : Pintupi language. Keeping it for along time.

SZ : Is Walpiri Pintupi

GW : Burnt out area. Inside. Underground. Ngunyarma got burnt.

PB : Really Pintupi ?.

GW : Yeah Yeah. No Ngatinjarra. Ngatinjarra. Mantalanjarra. We talk Luritja.

! keep one language Luritja not Pitjinjarra No Yes Ha Ha.

PB : Whats the difference between Pintupi and Luritja ?.

GW : Yes.

SZ : They talk Pintupi and Luritja. They learn't a lot of Luritja when they went to Papunya.

GW : Yes

SZ : They still use their own language Pintupi

PB : But really true Pintupi

SZ : Yes

GW : Yes me

SZ : Pintupi tribe

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GW : Whole lot, we sit down one language pintupi

PB Thats why those belonging to the art gallery were worrying because they asked him " Do you speack Pintupi " and he answered "I talk luritja".

GW : Me! Me!

SZ : Luritja Pintupi talk these two

GW : These two Luritja, Pintupi.

PB : Okay which one is first. Pintupi first and Luritja ?.

GW : Ah Ah Ah Pintupi first one and Luritja second language after.

PB : When he was growing up ?.

GW : Yes !.

SZ : Yes Pintupi

PB : Yes Pintupi

SZ Second language Luritja

PB : Pintupi first

SZ : Yes GW : Yes

PB And Luritja second

PB : What was it like. They want to know what was life like then long time ago when he was at that borning site. Where he grew up. Before he was -

SZ : Like what ?. White people want to know how you went in the bush when you grew up. Did you have a good life ?.

GW : Me.

SZ : Lively

GW : Yes properly !

SZ : When you grew up

GW : Yes I was living. I was sitting since I was small.

When I was little one I was sitting, sitting.

We used to get goanna and other things

We used to get bush tucker

Tjunma and Kalanpa. Tjunma Kalanpa. Like Mala (Rufus hair wallaby).

I used to get besh tucker when I was a boy. I grew up on those meat.

I grew up on those meat. I used to spear Tarnga (Small kangaroo)

SZ : Tjunma, that one. Tjunma, Tarnga, Kanpi, Mingalpa.

Mingalpa, what do they call the other one

GW : Wallaby, not wallaby whats its name. Putujurru

SZ : Putujurru and whats the other one.

GW : Putujurru, Tjunma, Kalanpa.

SZ : Kalanpa now what is it.

GW : Kuluwarri

SZ : Kuluwarri

GW : See Pintupi say Kuluwarri.

Silent it makes no sound, only like this

SZ Yes.

GW : He makes a camp on the flat ant bed and then sleeps inside the spinnefex.

SZ : I have heard about that Kalanpa

GW : Kuluwarri

PB : Kuluwarri

GW : Yes. In pintupi Kuluwarri.

See only I know it. Holding it.

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I grew up on Kuluwarri, on Windarunya (Large rat like mammal)

On Nyinmyi and on Minni Minni (Mouse) and Nyirringka (Small mammel like rat)

On Kuniya. On Putujurru. Kalantja , Kalanypa. On Tarrnga. On Tarrnga.

I grew up on my own. We used to chase them and get them.

Yes ! For me I grew up and was still getting it , big one now. Ahhhh.

I got bigger boy. I used to chase kangaroo and get them.

Kangaroo !. To Much kangaroo.. Tyuu Tyuu (Making sound like bullet or spear)

PB : What about with a spear ?.

GW : Yes, with a spear. I was spearing with a spear. Tyuu Tyuu Umpff.

Right through. Killed them all.

Around Kulkuta. Around Karrku. Around Maya.

Around Kaarrin and around Wanpurrutintja.

North going to Jupiter Well. Kangarro I used to spear.

I grew up. I was eating kangarro and got middle aged.

Yeah ! Around Jupiter Well. It's there in the bush. (Big laughter)

I got a special hair string around my. neck and ceremonial club. Yes !.

SZ : After sitting around Jupiter were you living around Kiwwikurra.

GW : Yes for a long time I was wandering around .

North. There around, around Runkarratjunku and around Yunala.

I really grew up around Ynala.

Wandering around ! grew up, around Yunala. Yes !.

On my own country I became man. At Wanpurrutintja. I am here.

SZ : East side

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GW : West. Yes. On my own country.

At Wanpurrutintja , right here I became man.

PB : Where there lots of aboriginal people look after --

SZ : Where there plenty of aboriginal people.

GW : To much ! To much ! To many like leaves.

Big mob sat around. People from everywhere.

From the ridge country. They have all gone to Jigalong. Hmmm

Lots of them. Big mobs sitting. In the bush.

Revenge warriors used to go after each other. Twuuuu. (Makes sound of spear)

Revenge warriors. Oh nooo !

All the Pintupi revenge warriors go up to each other and spear each other.

They used to go to the north. Poor bugger. On the side of the sand dunes.

There another one at Irrimatitja.

Ahhh! All the naked people used to go after each other. (Big laugh)

SZ : From there you lived around Kiwiikurra.

GW : I always been living there until I got old.

SZ : Around Karrku

GW : I was living around Kiwiikurra.

SZ : Yes

GW : Yes ! Wait, wait wait !. Around Wala Wala.

Around Yunala. Around Karrilwarra and around Winparku.

Yumarri to, all along there. Right up Karrku.

SZ : Pinarri

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GW : Pinarri. Around Pinarri , Marrpurri around.

Starts to sing song. Tingarri about Marrpurri

SZ : Through Parrayirpil.

GW : Yes! Through Parrayirpil I was walking around little one.

Me win.

All through Pitjinjana country, Special ceremony. Me there.

I went across through Tika Tika. Through Patjarr.

When I was a child. Yes !. When I was a little one. Poor bugger.

! hunted anything. All sorts of bush tucker I gathered.

Tjalinpa, Tjalyi (Small mammal and bird) and bush seeds (Big laugh)

SZ : Cool drink.

GW : Grass seeds. Grass seeds I used to eat everything.

Something like bush gooseberry. Bush tomato. Bush sultana.

See ! Everything ! Bush tomato and bush gooseberry and bush plum.

I grew up. Yes, thats all !.

PB : Were you hungry all the time

GW : Yeah Yeah.

SZ : Did you live hungry in the bush.

GW : No ! We used to have plenty of food. Grass seeds, bush tomato, bush gooseberry and bush plums.

All the way we ate along. Even in cold weather.

Bush tomato and bush gooseberry.

Bush tomato and bush gooseberry and honey ants. (Big laugh)

We used to have lunkunpa, tjipirrinpa, minyina, lunkunpa.

(Nameing acacia seed trees. Minyina = Acacia adsturgens)

Every thing ! Wangunu, Kalparri. Everything we used to eat !.

See !. After eating good tucker we grew older. Hmmm. Yes!.

SZ : After that ?.

GW : After that back to Jupiter Well. Hey Back to jupiter Well.

I stayed from Nguti. We got up and went this way and we heard.

" Ha ! Somebody is makeing a noise. Might be white fella " !.

We sneaked up and saw. Here they are sitting around.

That one there is a real white man and that one there is someone else.

Good day. G, day. G, day.

One bloke got up and ran towards us.

He came and took us to the camp.

He said in Luritja. Paltjal Jagamarra. He was feeding them. Yes !.

And took us and showed us how to cook damper. Finnish !.

He's there. You mob. All the family. All you Pintupi people.

Right there. There's a rope.

PB : What about where he was made man

SZ : Where were you made man.

GW : Yes!. Over there. Hey Tjapaljarri. Over there. Man.

Over there near Yankaltjunku. (Big laugh)

SZ : On that side. People live that side.

GW : I am talking to here. Yes. I got man over there.

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SZ : And he went back to the Kiwiikurra arca.

GW : We all got man at Yankaltjunku. South.

Thats all. No more !.

PB : Where did he first start to do dreamings. Learning painting not european way, aboriginal way. When he was little or.

SZ : When did you start painting.

GW : At Papunya

PB : No ! Not european way. Aboriginal way.

SZ : Aboriginal way in the bush

GW : In the bush, Yes Yes. In the bush.

SZ : Not painting way.

GW : Not painting way. Another way.

SZ : With down way. Where

GW : Yes with down. Over there in the bush at Wanpurratinja

PB : Who taught you

GW : Haa. When I was in a ceremony, when I was young. Yes. Another way with down. Laugh Yes!. Whole lot. Even Walapai (Tjungarri) there.

PB : Could anyone paint along time ago.

SZ : Did anyone make any painting.

PB : Or really hard law.

GW : Really hard one.

SZ : Only dream time p[aintings on the rock. Circles.

GW : Yes on rock thats all. No painting. Dangerous one. Hmmm

PB : talk From what were they dangerous ?

SZ : Not allowed ? Why didn't you paint. Dangerous ?.

GW : You right. Ill die if I say something.

SZ : Your alright you wont die this is only dreaming.

GW : They make painting like that one on the rock. Paint it Good.

PB : What about if men caught children mucking around. What from. Might be fight or

SZ : Young people never made any paintings . Nothing.

GW : Nothing.

PB : Might be made sick.

GW : Another way. They learnt in ceremonial camp.

SZ :Thats alright. Just leave it

GW : Yes Yes Just leave it.

SZ : Young people can only be taught by the elders. If he learns by himselfe he's going to be a dead person.

GW : Yes !

SZ : Thats why he is asking.

GW : Hmmm When I was young fella. No knowledge. ! used to wander around spinnefex. Yeah True I am telling. I just went around. Yes No anything.

SZ : From there did you first see white men in Jupiter Well

GW : Yeah I saw taht one in Jupiter Well. They kept us when they found us , at my place Jupiter Well. This is now today I have got no brother at Kiwwikurra, I have got no father. Kanya and I. There now all over.

PB : : What was Jupiter Wells Aboriginal name.

GW : No No No No Puntutjarpa. Puntutjarpa. Same place Jupiter Well. Thats it, that's Jupiter Well now. Puntutjarpa Finish. Puntutjarpa

SZ : Puntutjarpa. Nyinmi.

GW : Long way. Thats where that rainbow serpent snake went in.

SZ : thats okay. Puntutjarpa is Jupiter Well and Nyinmi on the easten side.

GW : Nyinmi easten side.

PB : When did tjapaljarri become traditional healer.

SZ : When did you become a traditional healer. Was it in the bush ?

GW Yes Right in the bush I became a traditional healer at Wunpurrutintja from little boy. Yes From little one I became a healer. I had the magical healing power from when I was a little boy. Doctor right here at Wunpurrutintja. You there. See. It became bigger and bigger. Initiated man. That was it

SZ : Healing power.

GW : Healing power. Yes.

GW : If you hit,it it will make a big noise. HmMMM Hit some thing with it. You can hit an evil spirit.

SZ : From Jupiter Wellto East.

GW : Sitting down

SZ White people looked after you.

GW : Sitting down. We got up and went back this way and all the white people followed behind us and we got frightened and ran away through the desert oaks. We camped in the bush and we came back and saew they had put along rope tied to a bucket at the Well and I tried it and I threw the rope down the Well. I chucked the drum with the long rope and got a lot of water. In a big bucket. ! used to get water from the depths that way.

SZ : With a bucket.

GW : With a bucket every thing with a wire. A big bucket. I tried it I tried it. L tried it Thats it . No worries. Got it That's it, its going to eat me.

Crying sound made by GW

Underground !

Crying sound

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