

PROTOCOL 5 - EMMA'S FAMILY

EMMA - MOTHER WHOSE SON ABDUCTED AND LATER KILLED

EDNA - GRANDDAUGHTER (WHOSE FATHER IS EMMA'S SON)

RESEARCHER: I want you to tell me about the experience of having your son disappear and his subsequent death in prison. Tell me what happened, how this affected you during and after the incident.

EMMA: What happened is that my son was a general secretary of a civic organisation movement in our townships. This disappearance with two others during 1985 follows incidents that had happened before. He stayed underground for 3 months as the police were looking for him. It was war, since my son and other comrades were fighting with local councillors of that time, who were not looking after the interest of the masses. His car was burnt down by people we don't know, as well as the vice-president's home. The day of his disappearance, he had received a message that he and two other comrades should meet their guest from a certain venue, and this message was from the President of the organisation. So, they went to that venue in 1985, May, I think it was the 8th of May if I still remember. We never saw them till today.

RESEARCHER: And then?

EMMA: I didn't pay attention to this at first thinking that he was in some hideout, as he used not be at home for days. I was alerted by a phone that I received while at work in the clinic as a nurse. The person who phoned did not identify himself, but the words are still clear in my mind terrifying, as he said, 'you'll never see your son again, tell Willie and Kenny that we are going to hunt them as well and do the same thing we did to your son'. Willie and Kenny are the other comrades who sent my son and the other two to the venue of the meeting. So I became aware that maybe he was arrested. I approached the other relatives of the two comrades who had disappeared with him, and we all suspected the arrest. The vice-president of the organisation also confirmed that they are missing and would help in looking for them till today.

I became scared, for my other kids. I would not sleep at home during the night with them. I had concentration problems at work, my health deteriorated and I was going up and down looking for my son. In 1986 to 1987 I filed a case of a missing person with the police who played hide and seek. There was a small hint during this time that a certain witness had seen my son in chains with the two comrades in another police station during 1985, immediately after their disappearance. I went there to trace but police denied this information, in fact denied all this.

When this circulated, my house was burnt down during the night and few victims inside were injured. I was not at home during that day otherwise I would have died myself. My children who are siblings of this missing son were banned from school, as a result one took three years to complete Matric. It was only after twelve years that a security policeman owned up that they killed these people in 1985 already. The way he related it, to me it seems they died cruelly and now are asking for Amnesty after this policeman revealed this, but they are still not speaking the truth.

RESEARCHER: What happened after this revelation?

EMMA: It took another line now, the TRC and the Amnesty. I was approached to make a statement to testify in the TRC. I did that but I didn't testify as my daughter-in-law went to testify without me. Lets not talk about that now, as it is a long story and it caused pain amongst us as a family. So what I'm trying to say, is that I never buried my son and I am not the only person responsible for him, he has his uncles, brothers who also feel that this cloud is still hanging over us since we didn't bury him. I feel through the TRC - a person has come forward and owned up after twelve years that my son was killed in a gruesome way. I'm waiting for the judgement of the judges but as far as I'm concerned there should be no Amnesty for these killers, the law has to take its cause, they should feel that they have done something wrong.

In the same vein I feel much better having knowledge of what happened to my son, as I used to pray to God, alone, without relatives and even the church community seemed to run away but I called to my Lord, 'God let me not die without having knowledge of what happened to my son'. My prayers were answered as I know now and the case has been put to rest. I'll forgive but never forget, and I'm pleased that I'll do the ritual to remove the black cloud (ilifu elimnyama) on behalf of him. Although I'll do the ritual, this still leaves a question mark, because right deep in my heart, I feel these people were never burnt, but put in one deep grave and buried, even if we could know where the grave is, we would find them in one hole. Really! I would forget about this if they could tell me about the whereabouts of my child's bones to fetch them.

Despite all this life has to go on, my general health is deteriorating, my other children are not working at all, I was boarded off from work so one cannot live on that meagre wages. I've applied for social pension fund, but results are not back yet. If you ask me about healing, healing comes from 'living' normally. Even you as you have come to ask this questions you write all what you need as a researcher without doing anything to help. How do I do that when my house needs to be repaired since it was burnt? But there is hope as I am alive and continuing to do voluntary work in the community and community support is overwhelming. One of my daughters has completed a teaching course but she cannot find a job we keep hoping that things will be better.

RESEARCHER: I want you to tell me about the experience of having your son disappear and his subsequent death in prison. Tell me what happened, how this affected you and what you felt during and after the incident.

NATURAL MEANING UNITS

ESSENTIAL THEMES

1 Emma: what happened was that my son was a general secretary of a civic organisation in our township. Their disappearance with two others during 1985 follows incidents that happened before. He stayed underground for three months as the police were looking for him. It was war, since my son and other comrades were fighting with local councillors of that time, who were not looking after the interests of the masses. His car was burnt down by people we don't know as well as the vice-president's house. The day of his disappearance, he had received a message that he and two other comrades should meet their guest from the airport, and this message was from the president of the organisation. So, they went to that airport in 1985, May, I think, it was 8 May if I still remember. We never saw them till today.

Emma explains the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of her son.

RESEARCHER: And then?

2 Emma: I did not pay attention to this at first, thinking that he was in some hideout, as he used not to be at home for days. I was alerted by a phone that I received while at work in the clinic as a nurse.

Emma never focussed herself on her son's disappearance thinking that he was hiding for a few days until she received a telephone call at work.

3 The person who phoned did not identify himself, but the words are still clear in my mind, terrifying, as he said, 'you'll never see your son again, tell Willie and Kenny that we are going to hunt them as well and we will do the same thing we did to your son'. Willie and Kenny are the other comrades who sent my son and the other two to the venue of the meeting. So I became aware that maybe he was arrested. I approached the other relatives of the two comrades who had disappeared with him, and we all suspected the arrest.

Though the person who phoned Emma concealed his identity, the terrifying words in the call made her think that he was arrested. This suspicion was shed by the relatives of his comrades.

NATURAL MEANING UNITS

- 4 The vice-president of the organization also confirmed that they are missing and would help in looking for them till today.

- 5 I became scared for my other kids, I would not sleep at home during the night with them. I had concentration problems at work, my health deteriorated and I was going up and down looking for my son.

- 6 In 1986 to 1987 I filed a case of a missing person with the police who played hide and seek. There was a small hint during this time that a certain witness had seen my son in chains with the other two comrades in another police station during 1985, immediately after their disappearance. I went there to trace this information but the police denied all this.

- 7 When this circulated, my house was burnt down during the night and four victims were injured. I was not at home during that day otherwise I would have died myself. My children who are siblings to this missing son were banned from school, as a result one took three years to complete matric.

- 8 It was only after twelve years that a security policeman owned up that they killed these people in 1985 already. The way he related it, to me, it seems they died cruelly and now are asking for Amnesty after this policeman revealed this, but they are still not speaking the truth.

ESSENTIAL THEMES

- While confirming the comrades' arrest, the vice president of the organisation promised to help in finding them.

- Emma lived in fear as she ran away from home during the nights, experienced health problems but kept looking for her son.

- Emma filed a case of a missing person with police who, she believes did not take cognisance of her plight. A hint by a witness about the missing comrades proved to be futile when Emma followed up as the police denied this information.

- While Emma escapes death due to her absence at home while her house burns down, four other people are injured. She also believes that her children were prevented from completing their studies.

- Emma learns after twelve years about the death of her son through information revealed by a security policeman. She believes that her son and others died in a cruel manner but is surprised that the polices' plea for Amnesty when they have not been truthful.

RESEARCHER: What happened after this revelation?

- 9 E: It took another line now, the TRC and the Amnesty. I was approached to make a statement to testify in the TRC. I did that but I didn't testify as my daughter-in-law went to testify without me. Let us not talk about that now as it is a long story on its own and it caused pain amongst us as a family.

 - 10 So, what I'm trying to say is that I never buried my son, and I am not the only person responsible for him, he has uncles, brothers who feel that this cloud is still hanging over us since we didn't bury him.
- According to Emma events changed as she was approached to testify in the TRC about her story, which she never managed to do as her daughter-in-law testified instead. She finds it difficult to talk more about this, as it caused pain in the family.

 - Emma emphasizes the concern of the whole extended family about their inauthentic sense of feelings with regard to her son's death.

NATURAL MEANING UNITS

- 11 I feel through the TRC, a person has come forward and owned up after twelve years that my son was killed in a gruesome way. I'm waiting for the judgement of the judges but as far as I am concerned there should be no Amnesty for these killers, the law has to take its course, they should feel that they have done something wrong.
- 12 In the same vein, I feel much better having knowledge of what happened to my son, as I used to pray to God, alone, without relatives and even the church community seemed to run away but I called on my Lord, 'God let me not die without having knowledge of what happened to my son'. My prayers were answered as I know now and the case has been put to rest.
- 13 I'll forgive but never forget and I am pleased that I will do the ritual to remove the black cloud on behalf of him. Although I'll do the ritual, this still leaves a question mark, because right deep in my heart, I feel these people were never burnt, but put in one deep grave and buried, even if we would know where the grave is, we would find them in one hole. Really! I would forget about this if they could tell me about the whereabouts of my child's bones to fetch them.
- 14 Despite all this life has to go on, my general health is deteriorating, my other children are not working at all, I was boarded from work so one cannot live on that meagre wages. I have applied for social pension fund, but results are not back yet.

ESSENTIAL THEMES

Emma believes in the TRC's breakthrough as she was informed about the gruesome death of her son and expects the law to take its course as she feels strongly that the police should be denied Amnesty.

Emma says that she feels better since she knows about the outcome of her son's disappearance. She sees these revelations as answers in her spiritual meaning and explanations.

Although Emma is determined to do a ritual that will befit her son's death, she is sceptical about the way his body was disposed of. Her will to forgive and forget about what happened seems to be founded on her being able to locate her son's remains.

Emma is determined to continue living despite all the hardship she and her family experience.

NATURAL MEANING UNITS

- 15 If you ask me about healing, healing comes from 'living' normally. Even you, as you are asking these questions, you will write down all that you require for your research. How do I do that when my house needs to be repaired since it was burnt? But there is hope as I am alive and continuing to do voluntary work in the community and the community support is overwhelming. One of daughters has completed a teaching course but she cannot find a job. we keep hoping that things will be better.

ESSENTIAL THEMES

Emma believes that healing can only be achieved if her life returns to what it was before and continues to find meaning in her voluntary community work. However, she questions how the researcher can provide help.

**EDNA - EMMA'S GRANDDAUGHTER
(HER FATHER IS EMMA'S SON WHO DIED IN PRISON)**

RESEARCHER: I want you to tell me about your experience of having your father abducted and his subsequent death in prison. Tell me what happened before, and how this affected you and what you felt during and after the incident.

EDNA: To tell you the honest fact is that this is like a story from the book for me. Firstly I was younger when this happened but I learnt about this when I was told by my grandmother (Emma). I think I was fourteen or fifteen years when she told me. So, I cannot say how I felt when younger but I know exactly how I feel now especially with what has been going on with police in the TRC, testimonies from different people who mentioned this incident. Since my grandmother told me, I have also followed these events, reading each and every paper but I have been worried by all what happened to my grandmother.

I mean, these police treated her badly, I feel for her and wonder how she managed to escape during the nights when her house was attacked. What makes me angry is for her to be seen as one who is against the authorities when it was actually my father who was involved in these activities.

I think the most painful realization is that I don't have a father, it is difficult for me to have money to go to school, unless his brothers who are my uncles try and help. This becomes a constant worry as a result, since the TRC hearing began I have had nightmares, bad dreams as if people are trying to surround my house to kill my family. It's frightening and my work at school is not good at all.

RESEARCHER: Meaning?

EDNA: I am performing poorly really, I think my concentration is not focussed well since I am following the events of the Amnesty applicants who were involved in my father's death. I so wish for my grandmother's sake that my father's body could be located so that we bury him. At least I'll be relieved and I know my grandmother has made peace with some of the tormentors who were involved.

RESEARCHER: And you?

EDNA: I respect my grandmother and all her wishes but I am angry, may be I don't understand things yet as my grandmother does. I want to have that peace with these people, but I was robbed of my father, that is a difficult situation.

I am in high school now hoping to go to a university but when I think how will I do that, I become powerless. Hopefully, if the family gets something from whatever fund set up by the government, I will see that day. My mother does not have money as she does part-time domestic work and my grandmother lives on pension. Something has to be done by this government.

RESEARCHER: I would like you to tell me about the experience of having your father disappear and his subsequent death in prison. Tell me what happened, how this affected and what you felt during and after the incident.

NATURAL MEANING UNITS

ESSENTIAL THEMES

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | To tell you the honest fact is that this is like a story from the book for me. Firstly I was younger when this happened but I learnt about this when I was told by my grandmother (Emma). I think I was fourteen or fifteen years when she told me. | Edna explains how she got to know about her father's disappearance as she was younger when the incident occurred. |
| 2 | So, I cannot say how I felt when younger but I know exactly how I feel now especially with what has been going on with the police in the TRC, testimonies from different people who mentioned this incident. Since my grandmother told me I have also followed these events, reading each and every paper but I have been worried by all what happened to my grandmother. | Edna explains that she is more aware of her feelings at present than when she was younger but she is worried about how her grandmother endured this incident. |
| 3 | I mean, these police treated her badly, I feel for her and wonder how she managed to escape during the nights when her house was attacked. What makes me angry is for her to be seen as one who is against the authorities when it was my father who was involved in these activities. | Edna believes that her grandmother received harsh treatment at the hands of the police and wonders how she survived these circumstances and is angered by police acts who also targeted her grand-mother. |
| 4 | I think the most painful realization is that I don't have a father, it is difficult for me to have money to go to school, unless his brothers who are my uncles try and help. My grandmother does not have money. | Edna speaks about her painful insights regarding her father's absence. |
| 5 | This becomes a constant worry as a result since the TRC hearings began, I have had nightmares, bad dreams as if people are trying to surround my house to kill my family. It is frightening and my work at school is not good at all. | Edna has relived her frightening experiences in her dreams, thus affecting her school performance. |

RESEARCHER: Meaning?

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 6 | I am performing poorly really, I think my concentration is not focussed well since I am following the events of the Amnesty applicants who were involved in my father's death. | Edna's distracted attitude from her school work seems to be influenced by her interest in the outcome of Amnesty applicants involved in her father's death incident. |
|---|--|--|

NATURAL MEANING UNITS

- 7 I so wish for my grandmother's sake that my father's body could be located so that we bury him. At least I'll be relieved and I know my grandmother has made peace with some of the tormentors who were involved.

ESSENTIAL THEMES

Edna expresses her wish to bury her father which would please her grandmother who has settled for peace with tormentors of her father.

RESEARCHER: And you?

- 8 I respect my grandmother and all her wishes but I am angry, may be I don't understand things yet as my grandmother does. I want to have that peace with these people but I was robbed of my father, that is a difficult situation.

Edna explains her difficulties to be at peace with the amnesty applicants involved and experiences anger at surviving without a father.

- 9 I am in high school now hoping to go to a university but when I think, how will I do that, I become powerless. Hopefully if the family gets something from whatever fund set up by the government, I will see that day. My mother does part-time domestic work and my grandmother lives on pension. Something has to be done by this government.

Edna's dream of university education becomes vivid, and she finds herself helpless, when she considers the realities of her family situation. However, she hopes the government fund towards these families could make her see that day.

SITUATED STRUCTURE

EMMA'S FAMILY

As a mother depicts painfully how her son's disappearance affected her physically, cognitively and emotionally, while her granddaughter came to this awareness as an adolescent. To the adolescent teenager this was experienced as a story from a novel as this is related to her during her teenage period. She does not own how she feels except worrying about how her grandmother survived this ordeal.

Although Emma dismissed thoughts about her son being missing, her awareness of the news turned to a nightmare as she was also subjected to police harassment. Things worsened when she started looking for her son, because she was threatened with death when her house was burnt and her health deteriorated. Despite all this, she filed a case of a missing person, a mystery which became known only after twelve years.

From the revelations of a security policeman who testifies in the TRC hearings, Emma's family understands painfully the cruel manner in which their son, brother and father died. Although

this news seems to bring a sense a relief an incomplete experience of mourning leaves the family in limbo about the rituals that befit the family and their dead son. To them, burying his remains would be more meaningful than the tales of his body burnt away.

Edna, on the other hand, acknowledges the pain of not having a father around and seems to experience terrifying nightmares about her family being killed. This has affected her school performance as she feels distracted at times by the Amnesty testimony of those who killed her father.

All Emma's family is experiencing difficulties such as other children without jobs, without a father which culminates in a helpless situation, the family continues to search for authentic living from spiritual meaning.

There are conflicting ideas about forgiving and peace in Emma's family. Emma, as an adult, has an understanding from her life experiences to be at peace with killers of her son while her granddaughter finds it difficult to do this since she feels deprived of her father through this senseless killing.

The family believes that healing from them can be true 'living of life' which is normal especially if their basic needs are met, hopefully, through a fund that is set up by the government of today for all those families with similar experiences. Emma also questions what help can be provided by the researchers who come and go only to seek information. From Edna's point of view, since her father is dead, her dreams to be educated are thwarted thus inducing a powerless situation for her. She can only hope that a bursary will come from the government resources.