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Transcript of an interview with
Thembi and Ischia Brooking

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STATE LIBRARY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA - ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 2023

INTERVIEWER: Kris Marano

TRANSCRIBER: Centre for Stories

DURATION: 39 min., 58 sec.

REFERENCE NUMBER: OH4742/2

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Brooking

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THEMBI & ISCHIA BROOKING TRANSCRIPT – GAME CHANGERS COLLECTION

INTRO [LUISA]: *Welcome to GAME CHANGERS, a podcast about trailblazing West Australian women and their contribution to the wonderful game of soccer. This collection was produced and developed by the Centre for Stories and the State Library of Western Australia. Together, we are sharing stories that reflect our state's rich heritage, diversity and history.*

The interviews you're about to hear were recorded on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar, and we pay our respects to their elders, traditional custodians, and knowledge-keepers, who are the first storytellers of this place.

In the lead up to Perth hosting some of the games for one of the world's largest sporting tournaments, the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia & New Zealand 2023, we hear stories from local women who rose up against inequality and stereotypes to champion the game of soccer as far back as the 1970s.

We hear from elite athletes past and present considered to be the best in the game, both locally and globally; and we hear from community role models who are courageously making soccer more accessible and equitable for future generations of women, young girls and newcomers of all genders to the game.

Sports media journalist Kris Marano sat down and heard why self-belief, sacrifice and strength is what it takes to become champions of soccer. In today's episode, Kris talks to a family for whom soccer runs through their veins. Thembi Brooking and her daughter Ischia Brooking both play soccer, while Thembi's husband coaches. Thembi started out playing soccer in an area of Perth where there was less opportunity for young girls to play and is now proud to see that changing for her daughter, Ischia, who is playing at an elite level with the Junior Matildas. Enjoy.

THEMBI: My name is Thembinkosi. That's my full name, Thembinkosi Brooking. And I was born in Bulawayo in Zimbabwe, which is the second largest city in that country. And I was raised by a single father of five girls.

KRIS: Wow.

THEMBI: Five girls. Can you imagine? Oh, he was a very quiet guy. He was very strict, very, very quiet. We didn't know what he was thinking. And very strict. He wanted us to be good people. He never drank, never smoked. We always went to church every weekend. That one, you can't miss, you gotta go to church. Like a proper Christian, you know? But as you keep growing and become a teenager, you go like,

oh God, do I have to? You know, that type of thing. You're seeing your friends having fun and there you are dressed in a dress and socks up to your knee, going to church. And all your friends are just giving you a wave, a little wave. But I feel like that was a really, really good upbringing when you think of it now, you know, just being kind. And he used to work hard and he was a truck, he used to drive, you know, the beam trucks. It wasn't a big job but he managed to take us to school and, you know, we went to local schools. Then I moved to my grandmother's house. I think he was going through some stuff. So, we moved to my grandmother's house. And then I moved with my other sisters, but my other sisters were taken by their mother. So, we all got different mothers. So, they went and lived with their mother, and I miss them so badly. Oof. It was so hard for me at my grandmother's house. But then my auntie, which is my dad's sister, used to work in South Africa. And every month she used to send groceries and stuff. One day she brought us a, it was a ball, like a soccer ball. Oh. I was in love with that thing. Oh my God. Played with all the boys on the street. Like I used to just destroy those boys. I loved that ball so much. It kind of made me forget about my sisters. And then we went back to my dad's house, took that ball with us, and then I met with my sisters again. And we just played every single day until that ball was just like - that's it. There was no color on that ball. You know, when you are poor over there, you don't really see how poor you are until maybe you come here and then you go like, oh, oh God. But then the fun that we had over there, you don't really see how poor you are.

KRIS: What was it about playing football that captured you? Like why did you love that ball so much?

THEMBI: I think I learned how to be creative. Everyone is trying to chase the ball, but you're trying to run away with that ball and you're trying to score. 'Cause we used to put two bricks there. That was our goals. And just being creative and saying, okay, if that one is coming, I should turn that way. You know, all that. It was just like, the adrenaline as well, 'cause boys are really fast. And back then I used to be fast! Just the fun, the laughs. We used to, you know, talk like, you know, how do you guys call it, you know... That girl there, [she] just talks crap. It's nothing personal!

KRIS: When did you come to Perth and when did you start playing in a women's team here?

THEMBI: So, I came here in 2005. And I came here on a Thursday. Thursday afternoon, 12:00 PM. My husband – back then, he was like a boyfriend – took me to Subiaco that night for a Futsol game. I never played Futsol! And the shoes weren't the right shoes. I remember one of the shoes came off. I'm trying put this shoe on; but that was a very, that was like, oh wow. Alright, this is another level here. It was really fun though. I was like, oh, oh my God, people here play like this. Oh God. Alright. I gotta, you know, I gotta switch on. I gotta switch on.

And then one day we were driving around Subiaco and then I saw the women's play there. I said to my husband, oh, make me join that team, please. He said, are you serious? I said, yeah, I wanna go and play. One day we registered. Boom. I was in that team. I remember I played in the same team with the Fremantle Mayor. We were on the same team. Yes. For those women, it's passion, you know? It's really a passion. That's like for a lot of women, football has been a passion. It's never really about, oh, it is a job. But right now, for these younger ones, maybe it's becoming a job.

And then that's how I started. Started playing there for what, two seasons. And then I met an African brother from my country, Richard. He used to coach with my husband. 'Cause my husband was my coach, can you imagine? And then we moved to Belmont. One of my African clubs there, Sporting Warriors. Played there for maybe two seasons as well. And then from there I went to Windmills and then I went to Freo.

KRIS: So, Ischia, do you have memories of your mum playing when you were growing up?

ISCHIA: Definitely. That's really all I can like think about when I grew up, because me and my brother will just be sitting on the sideline with a ball watching mum, watching dad coach. And that's like really all we did. Football was daily for us. Like, that's what we grew up with. And we would travel. We went to Barcelona, we went to, where else did we go? Italy. We went to visit the Barcelona - what is it called? Barcelona FC Stadium. At the time I was like, what's this? I don't even know what it's called. But now I realize like Lionel Messi's played, Ronaldo's probably played there. On the sidelines, me and my brother would verse each other. It would always be competitive. But my first actual match or session would be with Mark Lee, he was a one-on-one training session guy. He did camps with little kids and everyone thought I was a boy because I had like short hair. Oh, that boy's so good!

THEMBI: The boy with the pink shoes.

ISCHIA: And then I got into the older age group for Mark Lee. And then I just kept on playing, playing, playing. And then my mum signed me into like a club. I dunno what my first club was. UWA. And I stayed there for a year with Judd.

THEMBI: the American coach. Shout out to Judd.

ISCHIA: I stayed there for a bit. And I moved to Subiaco. I went to Floreat. I went to so many clubs, like, I don't know.

KRIS: So how old were you at this time?

ISCHIA: I was around seven, six-ish. And I just kept on moving, moving. But I kept on getting better, which I was like, I was pretty happy about. I just kept on training, training, training. And then at a point I got into Stirling Lions for under-tens, I think under 10-to-11, or something. And that's when I was like, wow. Like, look, I'm already 10-11. Like, and then I got the news a couple of weeks later after I joined Stirling, I got into the Interschool State team, under-12s. And I think I was 10 at the time. I was like, whoa, what am I doing? Like, I could actually make a living out of this.

KRIS: Like you had that feeling already at that age?

ISCHIA: Yeah. I was like, if I'm going all the way over to Canberra to play, I'm like, I've made it. Football West was kind of with the state team at the time and then, my mum saw in a newspaper article that NTC was doing trials. NTC stands for a National Training Centre. So, it's like, it's a pathway for girls to get into Junior Matildas, young Matildas, the Matildas. So, the Football West coaches are trained by Football Australia to get what they want to go to an international team. And then I got into NTC under-13s, next year I went into 14's. Next year I went in the 15s. Now I'm in the under-18s NTC coach by Ben and Fernando.

KRIS: And how old are you now?

ISCHIA: I am 14 years old.

KRIS: 14. Congratulations. That's a huge, huge achievement.

THEMBI: Very quickly. It's like, oh, we are just like running around, enjoying it; you know, at UWA it was really fun. 'Cause the girls after that, they'll be, you know, doing cartwheels and having fun and having a sausage and then all of a sudden, it's like, oh, you're traveling that way. You're traveling that way. It's like, guys, hold on, hold on!

ISCHIA: It's been definitely a great experience. But I've definitely been like present in the experience. Oh, I played at Subiaco. I remember where I came from. I'm never gonna forget it. And it's just been an amazing experience. Like, I can't believe I'm here at 14, but I'm definitely, I'm proud of myself. Definitely.

KRIS: Well, it reminds me of a video. I think it might be on YouTube, but I saw it on your mum's Facebook page. And I think you're at Lourde's. So you were basically out playing against a little boy, dribbling all around him, which even at such a young age, you can see so much talent. And I think you said something like, you know, let me show you what I can do. Or Thembi, you told me that Ischia said that. So, it almost seems like from such a young age that this path was inevitable because you can see your talent in the video. And when you say something like that, the belief you have in yourself. So, can you tell us a bit about what's been rewarding so far and what also has been challenging for you to help other aspiring players understand the journey?

ISCHIA: Just meeting new people. Like I've made so many great friends definitely. And ones that are gonna be with me for a long, long, long time. A big challenge for me is, definitely right now, probably school. School's are like very hard to balance. And I train like two times a day. I get back at like 8:30 or something like that. And like, I don't have time to do schoolwork, I don't have time to do anything like revised study. But luckily my school, John Curtin, has a football program in it. So, the coaches, the staff, they are all very supportive of what I'm doing. And they tell administration that, oh, she's going to the national team, she's going to NTC camp, she's going to whatever, whatever. Like, they're very supportive I think.

Shout out to just Ruby Cuthbert, Harper. All my friends from Junior Matildas, you guys are amazing. They inspire me so much. Especially to be in an older age group. And it's just great to see. 'Cause I just watched them, I idolized them. Not so much, it's not all about idolizing the big players that are making money. It's the smallest people that could really inspire you. Just the way they communicate to me, I love it. She's a great communicator on the pitch, but a hundred percent the best off. She's like, Ischia, you okay today? Are you feeling good today?

KRIS: Thembi, you were saying that you find it really important that Ischia has mentors, outside of the support network that the two of you have?

THEMBI: I feel like you can support her, you know, as a mother and love her and care for her. But then there's other... You know, as an athlete, I feel like that there's things that I don't know that other people might know better. 'Cause when we came to your event in Fremantle, we came with Ruby and her mum. So, she said something that stayed in Ruby's mind forever. And she uses that all the time. Ruby's a defender as well. She said to her if you make a mistake, just forget about it and move on. I think for her, she's been eating herself [up]. You know, I made that mistake... Those words from her to Ruby, she talks about those words every time.

Yeah. I feel like for me, coming from Africa as well, we always have, it's not like mentors, when we were growing up, we have aunties and uncles that kind of looked after us. So, you know, when you are from 10 years of age, when you are about to hit puberty and you know, you're about to get your period, you know, you've got aunties to tell you, you know, periods are coming. Body's changing. So be mindful of this, be mindful of that. You know, all those things. So, I feel like for them, they need those football mentors.

KRIS: What does your mum's support mean to you and how has she supported you?

ISCHIA: It means everything. Like even my dad is also very supportive, but my mum's just, she's always in the car. She's always waiting in the car park. She's always watching my sessions. She's always at the game. It's just... she's like, Ischia, drink your magnesium! Ischia, drink this! Drink that. You can tell she really, really cares. And she wants me to get somewhere and I'm not gonna disappoint her and I'm not gonna let her waste all these years helping me.

THEMBI: Oh, you can change. You can be a teacher if you want to!

ISCHIA: No...

KRIS: What are the moments like for you when you are far away from home? So, you were just in Mongolia playing with the Junior Matildas. What's that experience like?

ISCHIA: Mongolia was my first ever international game overseas. So, it was definitely different because I didn't have any family there. I didn't have anyone, but I also had my friends with me and they were, they're very supportive also. And even though it's a very competitive environment, cause like, we wanna start, we don't wanna be on the bench, but they're all very supportive. And even the coaching staff is. But Mongolia was a big step for me, I think. Very, very big step though. And the weather, the people who we were versing. It's a whole different level, whole different ballgame. Snowing and negative three degrees. Just versing different competitors. Like, not versing, like Subiaco. We got Subiaco, we got Balcatta next week. It's like just different competitors, different languages. We can't go down the street because it's just a dangerous environment there. But it just makes you feel like a professional once you go there.

When I first got there, I felt like I was very scared. Very scared. But once... I didn't start in the first game, so I was pretty upset about that. But I was like, we got the second game, so it's okay. I started in the second game, and I was like, just relax, it's all worth it. In the end you go, it's just 90 minutes, 90 minutes of trying to get the ball in the goal. And in the 26th minute I was like, I got the ball. Let me just hit it in the goal. Done, dusted. So, Shelby, shout out to Shelby. She was... me and her usually in the tens, and she just did a square ball to me outside the box, pinged it in, left, bottom-left.

KRIS: How did that feel? That was your first international goal?

ISCHIA: Yes. It just felt amazing. Because one of my friends' mums is a photographer and she caught the whole moment. She just click, click, click! And then she posted on Instagram and I was like, wow. I actually did that.

THEMBI: Yeah. It was really good. 'Cause I had my phone, we were watching on the TV and I had my phone in my hand. I dropped that phone. I was screaming in that house! Me and my husband stood up - [mimics screaming]!

KRIS: So proud.

THEMBI: Yes. That, that was just oof, like, heartwarming. We were just like, oh God, look at this girl.

KRIS: I wanna talk about pre-game rituals. Are there any rituals you use that you're willing to share that ground you no matter where you are?

ISCHIA: I usually have like two- to like, one-to-two hours like by myself with no one. I might call my mum. I'll just be laying down on the bed, just relaxed. 'Cause the main part about football is not to overthink, like play with your heart, not your head. My dad says that all the time. You just gotta relax. Don't think about what's going on on social media. Did anyone tag me? Like, just relax.

THEMBI: Yeah. Just burning sage, just to take all that negative energy and when you're playing with other people, you are mixing with different energies. So, for me it's that burning of sage, just, you know, just to relax and just don't listen to all the negative stuff. 'Cause so many negative people are out there and negative energies.

KRIS: What are you both excited about when it comes to the World Cup and knowing that we have games here in Perth?

THEMBI: We've always been, I've always watched it on the TV all the time. I watched them when they announced that Australia and New Zealand are bringing it here, I couldn't believe it. I was like, really? Here? Wow. And I said, you know what? I don't care who comes to Perth as long as they are women's team and they're here to play. I'm gonna go. I've already bought my tickets. The first batch that came out, I bought every game. Bought every game. I don't care who's playing who, I'm there. Yeah. Just exciting. Like for me, it's for all these women that have played all these years. And this is kind of like a reward kind of, you know, kind of thing, because not everyone can afford to go and watch a World Cup.

KRIS: Who are you most excited to see play?

THEMBI: All my African teams, all of them. Shout out to all of my African teams. Jamaica, you know, I know the obvious ones: Australia, Canada, the US, Germany, Japan, South Korea. But I gotta shout out to all my African teams and the Jamaicans as well. You know, my black people there. Yeah. It's going to be fun.

ISCHIA: It's definitely a surreal moment. There's not much advertising yet for it, but it's good to see like little kids, little boys, little girls just like, like, oh my God, what's this sport? I want to join in. Like, it's definitely good exposure. That's what I think. Exposure for the next generation that's coming. And it's great to see all your favorite players, favorite teams, England play. Very excited for England to play. Shout out to England.

THEMBI: For me, coming from Africa, for my Africans, as I said to you before, they have to see something out there for them to believe that, oh wow, look at that person. They're up there. I can be

that. I feel like a lot of people don't know about this World Cup that is coming here. And I think we have to kind of spread the word out and let people know.

KRIS: Why do you think people don't know that the World Cup is on?

THEMBI: It's not advertised that much. It's not on mainstream radio. A little bit on the TV here and there, but it's not as... I feel like if you, if the World Cup was in in the US, we will know. We would know about that. Even from here, we will know that the World Cup is there. Because you gotta see when, when you see that girl out there, when you see Serena Williams in there, you go like, I wanna be like that. When you see Sam Kerr there, you say, I wanna be like her. Sam Kerr is one of the best in the world. For me, she's the number one woman player. I know there's other people, they say it is debatable, but she is the best in the women's. So, this is her country. This is her town. We should have, we should just flood everything about her over here. 'Cause it's going to take what, another 50 years for that World Cup to come back here? So, for us as Perth, I feel like Perth is in our own, we're our own country. Not even the city. We are our own country. So, we should do it our way and just make it a great experience.

KRIS: Yeah. Let's talk about that a little bit more. So, in terms of the women's game in Western Australia, what does the game need more of?

THEMBI: We need more grounds, more buildings. Like we need buildings where you guys have a space in there. Like the new one in Queen's Park. If they have a room there for you guys to do this podcast stuff and do different things, I know they'll have a gym there. They'll have everything, you know? We need new grounds. 'Cause right now, NTCs, they train everywhere. So, there's lots of driving for parents. And I know this is a footy country. This is a footy country, I understand. So, I guess with soccer we have to be patient and start the conversation and say, you know, we gotta have, we need more.

Can you imagine in that space the girls are training outside, there's a gym, you know, there's a coffee place, there's a space something like this where you guys are just talking to different people? There's the Mikayla's there, doing the sports science. We got, you know, mentors there, chatting with girls. That'll be a beautiful space. Yeah. Cause I feel like it's a win-win for everyone. We get visitors here, they, you know, they will spend money in the city. So, it's a win-win.

So, I feel like we need, I think there's more girls that are playing football or soccer already. We just need to guide them and have great coaches as well, you know, to help them, for those that wanna take it seriously, to train them. 'Cause with Ischia, what we did was, we took her to Shurash, shout out to Shurash. He was a futsal coach. So all the skills that she learned from him, that's all the skills that she's always had in her head. I remember grassroots, it's all parents. So, parents are running the lines. Parents are a referee, parents are doing this and that. You know, and for us, especially for Australia, if Australia has to compete in the world, we have to kind of, you know, get in there and put all the funds [into it].

ISCHIA: Just more... basically what mum said. Just like more grounds, more exposure. When I was younger, I never saw any billboards of women's football. Like zero. All I saw, not even men's, like all I saw was footy, Richmond's playing, West Coast's playing, Dockers are playing. But I just wish it happened with football. But we just gotta be patient. It, we'll get there one day. Definitely.

KRIS: Ischia, I wanna talk about self-belief and confidence because it's a big topic that's come up in these conversations for the series and it is broadly talked about in women's football and sport. Can you tell us a little bit about what confidence means to you?

ISCHIA: Confidence is the whole game. It's how you play on and off the pitch. You're confident on the pitch and you've also gotta be confident off the pitch. But yeah, it's definitely like a personality that scouts and coaches look for in a player, but also definitely off the pitch. It's not hiding away. And like, [saying] I don't want to go to training anymore, my coach shouts at me. I don't want my parents to come watch, they always shout at me. It's just about having that self-belief that I can do this. I don't care who's watching. I don't care what my coaches say. I'm me. I have confidence that I'm a good player.

I'm still working on my confidence. Like I want the sneakers, I want the clothes. Like when I go to school, I need to get these shoes, I need to get these socks. I feel like society now, we're lacking a lot of it 'cause everyone wants to follow someone. Follow each trend. Like trends come and go. It's like, I wanna do this, I wanna do that. And then some people change their personalities just 'cause they want to be like that person, cool. But I feel like someday... A few people are trying to like start their own thing, trying to be themselves. And that's what I'm trying to do.

The people around you are sometimes very judgmental, oh, why are you doing your own thing? Why are you doing this? Why are you doing that? It's like, just let me be me. But definitely confidence, resilience. All my friends are going to, all my friends out of football, are going to parties and *da, da da da*. Like, Ischia, why can't you come? No, I'm training. I can't come. It's just the resilience and like the hard work you like just be determined. You can't stop or else you'll be left behind. There's definitely days where I'm like, oh no, I don't feel like this. But now since I'm more mature, I feel like I just have to keep going 'cause it's what I want to do. Like, it's just something that I've set my mind to and I'm not gonna stop till I get there.

THEMBI: Yeah. I feel like it's, it's very hard for this Gen Z. It's a very different world that has been created for them, because now every child has a phone, a child as young as four years of age. And parents are trying their best. They are trying their best. You know, they're trying to discipline them, but these kids are so... They're consuming too much for their little brains and they're following what's being said there. So, most of them, their confidence will drop because you can't keep up. 'Cause parents have to keep buying. This stuff is not cheap. They're like \$150, some are \$200, all the way to \$3000. Can you imagine as a parent, you're trying to make ends meet and now you're trying to fulfill these Jordans and Air Forces and whatever they were. And I feel like it's so hard, because if you try and pull away from what everybody's like, people won't even talk to you. And then constantly being judged.

I was talking to a friend the other day and since the young girls have started playing, you know, there's a lot of comments and you know, the Twitter hands. The Twitter hands are everywhere, because you can't see them. Like, why would you wanna comment on 14-year-olds that are just starting their journeys? Why are you judging them? Why are you telling them this and that? But you don't say that to boys. So many men are just commenting on young girls a lot. Especially athlete girls. It's like, why are you there? The only people that can comment are coaches and friends and the family of that particular child. You know, even the Matildas there, there's lots of judgment and nasty comments about those girls. As much as they're enjoying, there's someone who is out there saying, nah, you're not good enough. So that's why I think mentors come in there and just say, hey, you gotta keep going. You know, you love this thing and just keep working hard.

KRIS: So, Ischia, I'm just thinking when you said 'dream' Thembi, where does your dream go from here? So, you're applying with the Junior Matildas and NTC. What are you looking towards? What does the future look like for you?

ISCHIA: Probably, obviously, making the Matildas first-in team and just signing for a pro club, getting a contract, getting paid. That's a big dream. Definitely. It's hard to say, but obviously in my mindset, I'll always say I'm close, I'm getting there.

KRIS: And Ischia, are there Matildas or professional footballers that you look up to?

ISCHIA: Oh, there's too many. Like I love Steph Catley. She's just such a kind person and her technique on the pitch is definitely something I would idolize to be. Mary Fowler, she started at such a young age. She's a midfielder. She's one of the youngest in the team like me. Lauren James, she's just an amazing midfielder. She's definitely someone that I aspire to be. And Sam Kerr, she's just the whole package, you know? She's inspired so many people in Australia and hopefully in the world. She's just made this, she's made Perth, like Perth, you know.

THEMBI: I wanna get into her head 'cause I never know how she does it. 'Cause that's just... For her to go and travel all the way to Chelsea, go and play a game, score goals, get on the plane, comes back here, plays for Matildas, scores goals. Like, I haven't seen any men that do that. You have to come here and perform at your highest level. You go back that way and you gotta perform at your highest level. I don't see it. Show me which men out there do that. It's amazing. It's like, wow, these women; wow, wow, wow. And Katelyn Ford, her story, being brought up by a single mother, you know, that's just special.

KRIS: With such a momentous time in history with the Women's World Cup coming, [we're] reflecting on what does it mean to be a woman today?

THEMBI: What it means to be a woman in this day and age? For me, I'm just lucky to be alive. I'm just lucky to be here, really. I could have been in Africa there and be married to some dodgy guy there and have 10 kids with him. I'm lucky to be here. I'm lucky to be alive. I'm lucky that I'm allowed to call Australia my home and... Just being alive really for me, after Covid, I feel like we are just grateful to be alive. There's lots to be done for women out there, but it's getting there. The noise is louder and hopefully it'll change day by day, hour by hour to better women's lives.

ISCHIA: It's great 'cause it's not like my mum never had any experience with football. Like she was, as you heard, she was playing in Africa. She's playing here. My dad's a coach, but it's great that my mum also got to have the experience that I'm doing now.

THEMBI: You always see for other people, you watch Serena Williams in her box there, her mum's there, you know, her sisters are there, and you go like, wow. Look at them supporting her as, you know, the mother daughter. And now she's got her own daughter. Her own daughter is sitting out there, watching mum play. You know, and now it's us here. And yeah, if I'm in a dream, please somebody pinch me and wake me up.

Hopefully Ischia keeps working hard and keeps loving the sport. And we'll keep supporting her. And let's keep loving soccer, girls and boys. Parents, let's keep supporting and let's just stop that hate messages and stuff to young children. Just let them grow and make mistakes. The hate should be removed, there's

too much hate. Soccer should just keep going every day. In Africa, we played every single day. Like every single day we played for five hours non-stop. So, shout out to all my Africans there in Africa. I know in those dusty places, wherever you are, in Bulawayo, in Harare, in South Africa, in Ghana, in Nigeria; just keep playing, something will come up one day. Never stop dreaming. Dreams do come true.

OUTRO: *Thank you for listening. This podcast was produced by the Centre for Stories. It was developed in conjunction with and funded by the State Library of Western Australia. Our organisations believe in storytelling as a way to build more inclusive communities. Head to slwa.wa.gov.au to listen to the rest of this oral history collection, or to centreforstories.com to learn more about our storytelling services. Special thanks to our production team, script editor and executive producer Luisa Mitchell, producer and interviewer Kris Marano, and audio engineer Mason Vellios.*