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PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: MS. MIGNON DU PREEZ

SPEAKER	TRANSCRIPTION
DR. MALKA (INTRODUCTION)	Hello, I'm Dr. Amaleya Goneos-Malka, welcome to 'Womanity – Women in unity'. The show that celebrates prominent and ordinary African women's milestone achievements in their struggles for liberation, self-emancipation, human rights, democracy, racism, socio-economic class division and gender based violence.
DR. MALKA (GUEST SYNOPSIS)	Joining us on the line today from Pretoria in South Africa is Ms. Mignon du Preez, who is the current Proteas Captain of South Africa's ladies cricket team. Welcome to the show.
MS. DU PREEZ	Thank you very much for having me.
DR. MALKA	When did you first become interested in cricket?
MS. DU PREEZ	I started actually playing cricket at a very young age, like four years old. My dad was my brother's under seven mini cricket team's coach and I always just went with and watched my brother play, but when I attended the games I always made sure that I was in the right attire so I had a little white shorts and a white tee shirt on and one day of the boys didn't make it in time and my dad actually asked me to fill the spot and at the end of the day I was the best [?] for the day I think that's what started me for the game.
DR. MALKA	So it was part of the influence from your dad, your brother and peers and getting involved into the sport?
MS. DU PREEZ	Yes, definitely, definitely all of them, if it wasn't for them I would definitely not be where I am today.
DR. MALKA	And what are we, that's probably about twenty-five years ago?
MS. DU PREEZ	I turned twenty-seven recently.
DR. MALKA	Okay.
MS. DU PREEZ	So twenty-three years ago.
DR. MALKA	And can you tell us who your favourite sports heroes are?
MS. DU PREEZ	I think on the cricket side of things, Sachin Tendulkar I mean, he's just one of the cricket legends, but what really stood out for me was he always had the type of presence when he walked to the crease and even though he was an amazing cricketer he always stayed humbled and he never got too big for the game. Then another one, I think is our Ab de Villiers, we all know him currently, I think as a super hero, he just simply makes batting look easy, but what I admire most about him he's just, how he enjoys the game of cricket and how you can see the passion he has for the game. And then lastly I've got Charlotte Edwards, who's a women's cricket legend and she was really crucial to help professionalize women's sport or

	women's cricket globally. So those are the three that I would like to mention today.
DR. MALKA	So a great mixer looking at it on the international scale and also between South Africa and having men as well as women within your heroes space. Can you tell us about one of your most memorable games?
MS. DU PREEZ	I snook a bond quickly and one of my most memorable games definitely has to be the 2014 ICT T20 Cricket World Cup when we played against New Zealand in the final group game. There's actually like a quarter final because we had to win that game to ensure a place in the semi-finals, but up until that stage, we've never beaten New Zealand in the T24 match before. So it was a very crucial game. The night before the game, we actually walked into the hotel and when we got to the lobby we saw that the New Zealand girls had their bags packed and they were ready to go all the way through to the semi-final and I think that actually just got under the skin of our girls, and we thought, and you know, and we decided that we're definitely going to rock up the next day and make sure that we're going to put up a fight and at the end of the day, we came out on top and we won the game which was the first time ever and that also meant we secured a space in the semi-final. And so that was really something special and to top it off I was Player of the Match, I scored a 50 and that was really just one of the most memorable games that I cherish for a lifetime.
DR. MALKA	It sounds like a fantastic memory and a very special moment to celebrate and continue to recap. You've just shared with us one of your most memorable games, can you please tell us what would you say has been your proudest moment on the pitch?
MS. DU PREEZ	Wow, that's a difficult one but I think the one that really stood out for me was captaining my first ever test match and then also scoring my maiden 100 in my test match in India, I definitely think that was one of the proudest moments I've had in my career so far.
DR. MALKA	And you've just mentioned in terms of captaining the team and I think that being a captain holds a tremendous role of responsibility. Can you tell us a little bit about your duties, what that entails because it's not just about being there representing the team, but it's building the morale, making sure that the team all comes together?
MS. DU PREEZ	Yes, for me I think for me it's the team, I have to lead, I always try to be there for others and not wanting to be served, I think one of my key areas, was to try and lead by example, so through my value systems and I always wanted to be an example, on and off the field but some of the responsibilities of the team ... on the team is that you have to make the deckled decisions when you're out in the middle, and who's going to bowl the final over and sitting of the coach, making, coming up with game plans and strategies and analysing the opportunity, make sure that you're one step ahead and media responsibilities. So there's quite a few things to keep you busy with, not always just on the field but I think most of it actually happens before you set out onto the park.
DR. MALKA	And you mentioned aspects of your value system, can you tell us a little bit about what that entails?

MS. DU PREEZ	For me, firstly I'm a Christian and just the way I was brought up I think for me it's always to show some of the fruits of this, to be kind to others and doing things and always be willing to go the extra mile and being hard working and committed and being honest for your value systems and respecting the opposition, the game play and our management staff and our fans and supporters.
DR. MALKA	And it must be quite challenging trying to respect the opposition when you're in the competitive game because you're out there to compete and second place, no-one wants to hold second place.
MS. DU PREEZ	Yes, definitely but I think, there's at least a ... as I was just saying, cricket it's a gentleman's game so we do try and keep it as clean as possible. And then from my side, I just feel that good sportsmanship is also one of the areas I'd like to proud myself in and I think there is definitely room to be fearless and aggressive on the field but still being in high spirits after all.
DR. MALKA	I agree with you though, those are the attributes which come through and they all build and contribute to the team's spirit. And now, in terms of representing South Africa on the international circuit, you've mentioned Bangladesh, you've mentioned India, how do you feel representing our country?
MS. DU PREEZ	It's an amazing honour, it's actually really hard to put it into words, it's one of those things that you dream about since you were a girl when I started playing at the age of four. It was always a goal to one day play for my country and now I'm actually captaining it, captain of the country, so it's really something special and something I'll cherish for the rest of my life.
DR. MALKA	And I'm sure that playing the game has taken you across the globe, how have you found that as, almost as an added benefit on being able to experience different cultures?
MS. DU PREEZ	It's amazing, I think I love being around people and meeting new people. Cricket really gave me that opportunity to get involved, also to sometimes give you perspective on life, I think when you go to countries that are not as fortunate as we are you just seem to realise that the little things we sometimes take for granted, other people save for, that was really something that stood out, something as simple as that we can open the tap and drink water but when you go to India, there's not even running water, you have to wash or brush your teeth with bottled water to be safe. So I think that is sometimes the little things that make me just to be thankful for what we actually have and to just see how fortunate we really are.
DR. MALKA	That's an insightful view on looking at those factors that we appreciate what we have and try not to take them for granted.
MS. DU PREEZ	Ja, definitely.
AD BREAK	
DR. MALKA	In the previous section of our discussion Mignon shared with us how she came into being interested in cricket at the tender age of four years old, taking us through some of her legends and sports heroes as well as her memorable games and proudest moments on the pitch. I recently came across a quote from an American basketball player called Gaby Williams and she said, "We make it

	look easy on the court because we practise until we cannot get it wrong anymore." What do you think about that statement?
MS. DU PREEZ	I actually really agree with that, I think especially as an athlete it's the unseen I've been training and the finals behind the scenes that really allow us to achieve success on that day. So for me, I also agree completely, I think co-operation is everything, you have to practise like you want to play one day so it all builds down to that it's unseen hours and the training that you have to do when nobody is watching.
DR. MALKA	And when you're talking about the practising component, can you tell us how much of your time is spent training and practising?
MS. DU PREEZ	I think a typical day for me, it ranges ... it depends on what is up on the programme for the day, but it can be anything between three to five hours for the day. Basically, what a day would consist of, I'm a batsman for the team so I have to do some batting skills, working on one on one, from technique specific to match specific then I try two to three times to do some visual skills and that is a lot of hand eye co-ordination and that helps me with fielding and then we've got the fifth component which is one of the crucial parts of our game and we currently have a programme where we do two sessions a day, which one would be gym related and then the other one would be some sort of conditioning, working on some speed, agility and just making sure that we're ready when the tour come so that is what a typical day consists.
DR. MALKA	And with that, that's a lot about the physical preparation, is there also an element of mental preparation?
MS. DU PREEZ	Definitely, I think actually, where we're at the moment, field can only get that far at the international stage where your mental prep is extremely important and just to find ways that works for you, I don't think it's the same for every individual, some people like to visualize and do things before the time but you have to definitely be mentally strong and to compete at international level where you play.
DR. MALKA	And what would you say, at the international level are the one or two things that differentiates you from your competitors?
MS. DU PREEZ	One, we've discussed it slightly earlier I think it's my value system and then secondly I think, I am an Honours graduate, I studied marketing at the University of Pretoria and so I have a degree behind my name as well, so I'm not just a cricketer, I've got something to fall back on one day when my body won't allow me to play cricket anymore.
DR. MALKA	So you've spoken about yourself as an individual on what distinguishes you from a team point of view as South Africans, as a competitor say for instance competing against the New Zealanders, what would you say are ... of the South African strengths, the differentiators?
MS. DU PREEZ	I think one of our biggest finds is the diversity that we have in the team, we're very fortunate to have people from all spheres of life, different cultures, we've got whites, we've got blacks, we've got coloured girls, we've got Indians, we have got literally the whole rainbow nation and I do think that is something special, not a lot of countries have that and that is

	definitely one of our strengths and also just to show how, as others come together for one unified goal and that is to represent our country and to hopefully win that World Cup, to be history makers in South Africa.
DR. MALKA	And with the team, it means that we're on a national team in particular, it means that people are not necessarily all in one place. The reality is they live across different countries and they're quite scattered geographically. How do you galvanise and bring everyone together, is it through camps so that you can contain that team spirit, in enthuse and support the team?
MS. DU PREEZ	Yes, I think firstly camp is the place that we'll start first and usually we try and get together once a month or at least once every second month and then before we go on tour we'll have a longer camp where we spend a lot of time together training, but we've been very fortunate that over the past three years in the off season we had a National Academy in Pretoria, where we had the opportunity to spend about six weeks together and then wait for two weeks and come back and spend another four or five weeks together, this has helped and we've seen how much it has changed women's cricket in South Africa and how we now compete at international level.
DR. MALKA	And I think another difference is the South African men's team is a professional team whereas the South African women's team is not a professional team, it's amateur, so you're not paid, are you?
MS. DU PREEZ	Over the past three years, we actually got a sponsor on board, Momentum, so for the past three years, we have been in contact and we're very fortunate to have fourteen girls contracted and there's three levels of Contract, there's A, B, and C. So we won't be fully professional yet but we're definitely getting there and for [once cricket] is also something that she can hopefully in the near future do it as a career option. We definitely work towards that and making cricket fully professional in South Africa. We're very fortunate in women's cricket, it's definitely heading in the right direction.
DR. MALKA	So having a sponsor that's dedicated and I mean we see it, we've got momentum, in terms of the ladies Proteas, we've got Sasol with regards to Banyana, Banyana our ladies national soccer team, having a corporate sponsor, and the who's there for the long haul is a big contributor to success for the teams.
MS. DU PREEZ	Yes definitely, it opened up doors and playing opportunities so the better you get, so I guess it's been a major factor in [the success of the women's cricket team just] recently.
DR. MALKA	Now when we hear about successful people, sportswomen like yourself, there's often a tendency to think that the achievements that they've occurred, have taken place overnight but in reality we're really witnessing the end result of years of hard work and disciplined dedication which you've invested into your chosen path and additionally, behind the scenes, there's usually a tremendous support structure which backs the individual. Can you give us your opinion on the role of support systems to contribute to success?
MS. DU PREEZ	I definitely think that support structure is any sports person's success. I've been very fortunate to have a very strong support structure, I've got my

	<p>husband phoning, and then my parents, my mom and dad, the other sisters, grandparents, everybody that's always there for me and I really think it's absolutely amazing to have people to share your successes with but unfortunately in most sports people's careers they have more failures than successes and it is just nice to know that there is somebody there during those times to support you. But a support structure might mean different things to different people. For someone it might be a family member but to others it might even be a coach or a teacher and it's just for me, I think they play a major role in our success.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>I think you're absolutely there, it's the mental support, it's the physical support, especially in those moments when you're feeling a little low and it can almost be ignited to give you that second breath to move on.</p>
MS. DU PREEZ	<p>Yes definitely, it's always nice to know that there is people, that no matter what you do, they're behind you all the way and root for you, so that definitely helps and it takes the pressure off us from us slightly so it's definitely really something special.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>It's immense positivity. Now we spoke briefly about trying to increase the status and elevate the status of women's sport and the role of corporate sponsorships, from a men's perspective, men's sport has really achieved iconic status, the world over, whether that's in football, in basketball, in cricket, what do you think needs to be done to elevate the profile of women's sports?</p>
MS. DU PREEZ	<p>I definitely think both the media coverage and to getting sponsorships, going hand in hand, and that is what we need. I think as soon as there's more media coverage, sponsors would react, that they would get their return on their investments and hopefully through getting that financial, almost like a financial interest, it would help to create more playing opportunities and then where we might hopefully then see something like a women's IPL, Indian Premier League for instance in cricket. So I definitely think to elevate our sport we just need the girls to be out there, through media coverage and then hopefully more big sponsors on board.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>And looking at things through media coverage perspective and perhaps if I ask you to wear your marketing cap from UP, would you see this in terms of our traditional scope of media, so TV, radio, print, broadcasts or more of a direct coms via social media with individuals posting out and connecting with their fans?</p>
MS. DU PREEZ	<p>That is the thing, there must be a little bit of everything, social media is definitely at the moment trending and one of the biggest sources of the marketing side of things, but I do think, actually playing on television so that the young girls could see what they can do, it's very important and then the radio and newspapers and all of them playing such a big role because there's always different people that you can get an impact with a different type of media so I do think we need little bits of everything and through all of that hopefully getting women's sport the recognition it deserves.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Well, we hope that through our Channel Africa airwaves, we're spreading the word in terms of women's cricket a little bit more to help emphasize that point.</p>
MS. DU PREEZ	<p>Thank you very much.</p>

AD BREAK

DR. MALKA	In our previous segment we spoke about some of the physical and mental endurance that one has to undertake in order to train and practise for the team. We also discussed the involvement of enablers, whether that's family, whether that's coaches as support structures to aid and motivate and we mentioned the role of corporate sponsorships, in terms of being able to promote and support women's sport to elevate its status. Mignon, as an international sportswoman who's reached the top of her game, you're effectively a role model to many young women, not just the younger members on your team but also to demonstrating to many women and girls in South Africa that through hard work and personal sacrifice great things can be achieved. Can you tell us a little bit about your role within the role modelling capacity?
MS. DU PREEZ	I think it's an enormous responsibility but I really feel honoured, I feel we have an opportunity to influence young girls and encourage them that they can also reach for a dream so we can give them hope and that should be something special and I hope that the people that look up to us can really see that we are trying to break through barriers and to leave a legacy that they one day can become and do what they dream of doing.
DR. MALKA	Now our programme, Womanity - Women in unity is all about gender equality which is increasingly a global focus and as such building female leadership capacity is important for the future of women, both in South Africa as well as the rest of the continent and across the world. How do you see female leadership in South Africa?
MS. DU PREEZ	I think ever since gender equality started growing, we definitely started to see a lot more female leaders of life, but I think for us the most important thing that we need to do is to learn to trust women in their decision making. Women leadership is about bringing their nature and friends to any environment and we have to encourage the differences instead of asking women to try and be like men in their leadership role.
DR. MALKA	And I think that's a very important point and that we are rightly so, we're made differently, we have different views and that also speaks to the factors you were talking about, the diversity in terms of how your team's constructed and to have those multiple viewpoints. How do you think we can build on this capability?
MS. DU PREEZ	I think part of the area is maybe to start more leadership workshops, identifying young leaders from the school already and to actually give them, to help them to become better leaders and maybe through internship opportunities have some companies through their corporate social responsibility getting young girls involved and giving them the opportunity to see what it is like in the big world, the business world out there.
DR. MALKA	And in terms of words of advice or encouragement, what would you say to young aspiring athletes?
MS. DU PREEZ	I think for me, if your dream does not scare you, I don't think it's big enough and make sure that you use your stumbling blocks as stepping stones. Failure is just an opportunity to try again but the next time works better so those are the type of messages that somebody once told me and it

	really helped me in my career and I hope it can be of some advice to youngsters out there too.
DR. MALKA	I think that's a beautiful expression, if your dream doesn't scare you, it's not big enough. That's wonderful.
MS. DU PREEZ	Thanks very much, yes.
DR. MALKA	And what was the best advice you were ever given?
MS. DU PREEZ	The best advice I was ever given was that a small act of kindness can have an endless ripple effect and it basically is similar to the pay it forward concept where if you have an opportunity to be kind to someone and ask them to repay it one day when they're in this position and hopefully it can have an endless ripple effect and we can change the world for the better.
DR. MALKA	It reminds me of something I heard the other day, when we were talking about laws of abundance, so for instance if you've got a slice, a piece of pie that often there's this view that if we keep taking pieces out of the pie, the pie is going to get smaller but if we can grow the pie, if we'd put it through in terms of acts of kindness or encouragement, in effect we're growing, so its creating more of as opposed to less of and having to reduce the share we can actually increase the amount that's on offer.
MS. DU PREEZ	That's so amazing, I definitely agree.
DR. MALKA	And do you have a particular saying or motto that you live your life by?
MS. DU PREEZ	My motto would be that my talent is God's gift to me and what I do with it is my gift back to God, that's something that really has been one of my main mottos and things I try and live by and I see that it's the area where I am today, playing cricket that I love is because it's my God given talent and just doing the best I can with it is what I want to give back to God.
DR. MALKA	And where would you say that you draw your inspiration from?
MS. DU PREEZ	As mentioned, I'm pretty religious so I get all my own inspiration from Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour.
DR. MALKA	Mignon, we've spoken about the past, we've spoken about where you're at now, what's next, where're you going to ?
MS. DU PREEZ	We actually just completed our four or five weeks at the National Academy on Friday and we've now got a little bit of a break, where we have some active rest and on the 18th of July is the High Performance Centre in Pretoria, where we'll spend another two weeks preparing and then on the 27th of July we're flying out to Ireland for a series against them, where we'll play in T20's and four ODIs, One Day Internationals.
DR. MALKA	Okay, so lots and lots of practice and as we spoke earlier there's nothing like practice to prepare you for the game.
MS. DU PREEZ	Yes.
DR. MALKA	We're unfortunately coming to the end of our conversation today. Can I please ask you as we close the, rather if I can ask you to close the conversation today with a few words of inspiration which you'd like to pass on to other young

	women listening to us on the continent.
MS. DU PREEZ	Okay, anywhere of life, if you ever fail, see it as something that you can't get away from, it's just an opportunity to try again but the next time you have a little bit more experience and always, it's not about how hard you get knocked down, it's how hard you get back up and move forward, that's what it's all about. Those are the type of things, I know are from movie clichés but it's really made a difference in my life and I do hope that it can inspire somebody else out there.
DR. MALKA	Thank you. I think that sharing those learnings are particular pearls of wisdom because it's so easy to give in to a failure, one or two but it's really important to stand up and bounce back and get back on the horse to use that expression.
MS. DU PREEZ	Yes definitely, and as for people who we've heard about, a sports person that's always made it all the way to the top without any failures, I think there's more failures throughout your career and it's just how you deal with those failures that set you apart and make that you are just not good, but you are great.
DR. MALKA	And in a way it's all about turning those failures into success.
MS. DU PREEZ	Definitely.
DR. MALKA	Thank you so much for joining us today, it's been an absolute pleasure to have you on our show and we wish you and the team the very best of luck when you go off to compete in Ireland.
MS. DU PREEZ	Thank you very much, Doctor and thank you for having me, it's been an absolute pleasure to be on the show.
END PROGRAM	