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PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: BUKIWE NONINA – WORLD BOXING FEDERATION CHAMPION OF THE BANTUMWEIGHT DIVISION

SPEAKER	TRANSCRIPTION
DR. MALKA	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	Joining us on the line today is current World Boxing Federation Champion of the Bantamweight Division; Bukiwe "The Anaconda" Nonina. Welcome to the show!
BOKIWE NONINA	Thank so much Dr. Amaleya for having me in the show, I'm feeling honoured to join the show today.
DR. MALKA	And we welcome you being here because this is our series where we're doing a focus on ladies in sport. To begin with, you made your boxing debut in 2011; went on to win South Africa's Best Female Boxing title in 2012, which you successfully defended for five consecutive years; currently you are the World Boxing Federation Champion in the Bantamweight Division, which you won in 2017 from a bout against Germany's Alesia Graf; what an accomplishment!
BOKIWE NONINA	Sjoe, it was a short career that time, I thought it was just a funny thing but then I went so long to be here today and boxing to be honest was not my favourite sport as I was playing soccer at the age of twelve until my father decided to take me to boxing in 2010 as an amateur when we turned professional together, so it's when I was fully focused and I was disciplined in a way.....I won all these things that I'm having today
DR. MALKA	And what attracted you to go in the direction of boxing?
BOKIWE NONINA	As I just said earlier it was my father because my father was a former boxer....
DR. MALKA	,,,really?....
BOKIWE NONINA	...my three big...yes...my three big brothers they were boxers, my big sister was a boxer too and my younger sister was the only one in the family who was not into boxing then. I was forced in a way, I was forced by my father because he knew that I loved sports but I always...my career when I said I quit soccer and he wanted me to move on with any sports that I'm comfortable with but then he was boxing at home so it's when I joined boxing.
DR. MALKA	So boxing sounds almost as though it's the family business.
BOKIWE NONINA	Ja, it is, even my mom was like okay if you're quitting boxing that...if you're quitting soccer that means you must join in your fathers team in boxing, so like..... that so I never had another support besides the family saying join boxing and I was the only that succeeded in boxing because the rest of them quit boxing then they.....on the school so it's when I succeeded because they fully supported me after they quit boxing.
DR. MALKA	But that's such an important aspect of having family support, for you to follow through on your dreams and given that it was also part of their dreams, you've got a solid backing.
BOKIWE NONINA	Ja a solid...as in when I started dating...the person I was dating...the person I am dating...I started dating since so it's when I...she was part of the boxing family, she didn't know much about boxing but she fall in love with boxing until we met then she was...she was also supporting me in boxing so

	I got full support from my family, my friends and my community.
DR. MALKA	Now tell me where does the “Anaconda” alias come from?
BOKIWE NONINA	Eh, that name...from my father because the time I was an amateur I didn't have an opponent, I was too tiny all other...and the females, you know the females they are not much in boxing so I had to fight people who are bigger than me and I won with a knock-out almost every tournament. So it's when my father was like you are.....an Anaconda so I will call you Anaconda.
DR. MALKA	Your dad's got a very strong influence in your life.
BOKIWE NONINA	Ja, sjoe, my father sjoe, even now he's still part of me, he's even since I left him in 2013, I went to Limpopo to join another team because I had to attend school after my matric at Limpopo. Then I went to a new coach inbut still when I'm going to fight like big fights I make sure he's in my corner because he understands me better than my coach, he understands me and he trained me boxing for the first time, he understands me as his child so he knows me better than anyone.
DR. MALKA	Can you tell us about some of the milestones in your career; I know for instance you've gone through, you won and you're currently holding the title of World Boxing Federation Champion in the Bantamweight Division. I heard that recently you were in Denmark and but you were competing outside of your weight division, so could you give us....
BOKIWE NONINA	...outside my division, ja....
DR. MALKA	...could you tell us a little more about that detail?
BOKIWE NONINA	In my division in South Africa I've fought with them all in Africa, I've fought with them all so I wasn't active the way we wanted to be active so we decided to you know what, I came with the idea, you know what coach I want to challenge myself because I never had a challenging opponent in the ring. I want to challenge myself to go to another weight, at least add my weight with 3kg's, that's when I was fighting to another weight, now that was a challenge, I wanted to learn something new. I wanted to see...I wanted to see myself when I'm under pressure, it's when we take the decision because I'm...every day when I wake up I want to challenge myself. If I train more than...more than two hours, the following day I want to add more and see how far I will go. So it's when we went to Denmark and challenged the idea of intercontinental titles to a bigger weight. It wasn't easy because it was the first time I was fighting to a big crowd and outside my country and with a different weight, so it was harder until I was.....in the ring until the referee decided to disturb me and take me out of the fight, that's when I lost the fight, in fact I didn't lose that fight but I lost it because of the challenges I faced in the ring, that now I came back home to fix them, to fix that when I'm irritated by something I can't control myself.
DR. MALKA	So you need to have a lot of focus; and....
BOKIWE NONINA	...ja...
DR. MALKA	...can you tell us a bit about the weight's structured; so bantamweight, what is the...what is the range of weights in that and then when you said you had to add 3kg's, do you have to carry weights to be eligible to compete with someone in a higher division?
BOKIWE NONINA	From bantamweight to featherweight I think, ja it's 3kgs because the limit of bantamweight is 53,52, then the featherweight it's 57,92 so the only thing I had to do when I'm adding - I don't know about other boxers but I'm always doing what works for me so I had to eat the certain foods that

	<p>will add my weight but not give me a fat that will give me problems in the ring so I had to eat certain foods that are fatty so what I can eat before I can gain weight. So I did that, even then I didn't make that weight they expected because I only gained 2kg's or 55 comma something because it was short notice, I was fighting in December remember in my fight, in my division I was fighting..... December in my division so I dropped weight to be in my division again so I had to eat twice as to gain another weight to fight to another division. So I had to eat certain new foods to gain that 2kg I gained.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>So there's a lot of body conditioning and science behind what you do to structure your career and be in the ring. In boxing, in order to retain your title you have to actively defend it and you have to take on contenders, if you don't fight you end up losing your title; can you tell us more about this process of remaining active and finding suitable fighters to seek out new titles to win?</p>
BOKIWE NONINA	<p>I will start in my title...no not in my title, any title I will say the SA title, the national title, you will only fight boxers from South Africa. We have ratings in my division, they will say maybe we are five, then there's a number one, number two, number three, number four. For the first time they choose the opponent for you, that means its number one is the one who has to fight you and anyway, then when you are defending your title again for the second time, you are choosing your own opponent with him, okay if there's a number five I think I number five I can beat number five. When you go to number five.....can I have number five I will defend my title, then it's their rules, they will give you number five but for the third time when you are defending they will choose again number one, until you're done, until you decided to go to international, intercontinental, internationally and world. So in SA I'm not sure more about in guys because in females we are few so they doesn't take our titles when we don't defend them because they know we're not active like male boxers but in the world after nine months they take your title if you don't defend it.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>So that makes it...that makes it hard to find contenders if you don't have enough of a population, how...what is...what's happening in the boxing space to increase and grow it for women to participate more?</p>
BOKIWE NONINA	<p>I think I will say even in males, the only thing that is important is the boxer; you don't have to wait our promoters to promote us. You have to promote yourself, you have to talk about yourself, you have to go to radio stations, you have to open the page on facebook and on social media, any social media, you have to promote yourself until everyone they can notice you, you have to promote yourself in the ring. What I did myself, I promoted myself before I was noticed by the promoters, that's when I was active, it's when I won the female boxer of the year two years in a row because I was promoting myself, I was always active because the promoters wanted to see who is this girl, who's this girl because they only knew Noni Tenge....., they only knew Noni Tenge, I just came in and I promoted myself more than her. I made sureif I meet the promoter I talk. Can you please give me five? I don't care if I'm defending my title or it's an eight rounder or it's a six rounder, I promoted myself like that, I talked to people. If I see these people on social media, oh she's the promoter or he's the promoter, I invoked the person, I talked to that person, I introduced myself and who I am. They can give me fight, it's when I showed them in the ring I was not just talking, I was giving you what the fans want.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>So a lot of this is building your personal brand and...</p>
BOKIWE	<p>...yes....</p>

NONINA	
DR. MALKA	...and it's going very proactively and getting your own exposure so that you get a public presence that's known, that you grow a fan base, that you get promoters to pay attention to you because the more exposure you have the more matches....
BOKIWE NONINA	...the more the match you have per year. I think it was 2017, after my birthday, 22 November, 23 I was invited in Western Cape, Knysna, they had a sports week, they saw my video on facebook, I was talking about drugs and alcohol and all that, so they wanted me to go there and talk to kids about that. It's when more people they even noticed me because the SABC was there, most people they even go far to check who's this person? Why is her.....they're invited to different TV stations, because of that I talk, I make sure I talk and when I stand for something I stand for it because I stood for women who are not paid enough. I stood for that, they paid attention, I go far; they paid attention towe saw different, we saw the promoters paying female boxers better. I was impressed and we saw women coming to boxing because my aim was to attract more women in boxing and even though I do attract them in sport but I was concerned about boxing more because we are few in boxing as women.
DR. MALKA	What do you think we need to do to encourage more women into boxing?
BOKIWE NONINA	I think they have to do more workshops where we'll have maybe talk shows, we'll go to schools because I think it will be better if we start boxing at schools, at primary school, at a younger age because I started boxing at...I was old, I was nineteen. We need to start them at the younger age so we can have them to Olympic. After the Olympics it is then we will decide we will be turning them to professional. That is why now when I'm retiring in boxing I want to open my own gym, I don't want professionals, I want aat the age of six because my little brother started boxing at the age of six, he is good, he is on the age of fourteen this year, he is good. That's what I want, I want to start them at the younger age of six. I train them, I teach them discipline because what is important in sport is discipline, it's when we take them from the spirit because I grew up in the location, there are a lot of crime, there are a lot of drugs, there are a lot of things but if we take them at a younger age we will teach them the discipline, we'll always at school check them if they are attending the school, it's when we will attract more females in boxing.
DR. MALKA	So it's not just about the sport, it's about the skills that it teaches people beyond the physical elements like discipline. There's something that I've been thinking about; in this programme we've had a lot of women on the air....
BOKIWE NONINA	...yes...
DR. MALKA	...and confidence and assertiveness are positive traits that many of them have said that girls need to develop in order to succeed in life and in view of this point and also in terms of what you're saying about starting children earlier into the sport; what are your views about introducing boxing into school curriculum, not only to empower girls with physical skills to combat gender violence which is an unfortunate reality in South Africa, but to build confidence as well?
BOKIWE NONINA	Yes because...if I..okay I always confess that I'm a lesbian, most people they are against us. I don't want to teach other girls being a lesbian; be yourself, have the confidence when you go into the street. When the guys are saying something bad about you just laugh and pass because the more we pay attention to what they say it's when we lose our self-esteem. You see a child coming at home in the rain having attitude, you don't know what is happening and it's when it's happening there outside and she paid attention, she let them to take that advantage because she's getting angry,

	that's what I don't want. Don't pay attention when they do that, just pass and move on, just tell yourself I'm beautiful, I'm gorgeous, I have everything I want and I want women focus more to school in a way there will be independence because we lose our self-esteem because we have our boyfriend/husband that are supporting us, they are telling us what to do well while we can say something better than what they say as women, so we have to teach them not only sport but how to live in a community, how to take over being women and being who you are, not being controlled by someone else because they think they have power because they are men, no.
DR. MALKA	And that's the age-old thing that women have had to deal with in South Africa; issues of patriarchy where there's almost a dictatorship in terms of what men say and how they treat women.
BOKIWE NONINA	It's hard, it's hard because we....I think that is killing our women in South Africa, it's our background, we don't want to expose ourselves, our talent besides being used to get money and what we need to do...there's a lot of things that we need to do but what we need to do, we need to never look back to our background that is because our parent's were staying in the house, not working, waiting our fathers to come back home with money, so when we see our boyfriends we think we'll have that, that is why the thing that I hate most about South Africa about our men, it's what they are doing now, they are taking them to other countries to make money about them because they are attract them with money, like I will give you money, I will do whatever you want, I will give you a house or I will give you a car, I have money, after that they drug them, they take them to other countries but if we can give them the idea of a guy that has money but is not working at the early age and warn them what is happening and tell them the reality what is happening outside there because I'm staying in Jo'burg full-time, what I see there, that's not life and those girls that are there are from here, around villages, around locations, they want to see what is happening there or her boyfriend is staying in Jo'burg, he has money and all that, but that's not life. If they go there for school to be educated our females in South Africa will be better.
DR. MALKA	So listening to everything that you're saying, this is about staying in school, getting your education, building your confidence, building self-esteem, ignoring the negativity and staying true on your path and establishing your independence, I think that's the biggest point....
BOKIWE NONINA	...yes, yes...
DR. MALKA	...being independent and being self-empowered.
BOKIWE NONINA	Yes.
DR. MALKA	Today we're talking to current World Boxing Federation Champion of the Bantamweight Division; Bokiwe "Anaconda" Nonina.
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DR. MALKA	Today we're talking to World Boxing Federation Champion of the Bantamweight Division; Bokiwe "The Anaconda" Nonina. We would love to receive your comments on Twitter: @WomanityTalk.
DR. MALKA	In the previous segment of the show Bokiwe walked us through her journey thus far in terms of her attraction to the career in boxing, influenced a lot by her family; we spoke about some of the milestones in her career and some of the aspects in terms of looking at women's development particularly from an early age and development of self-esteem and confidence.
DR. MALKA	Bokiwe, when we hear about successful people there's a tendency to think that their achievements happened overnight, but really we're looking at the result of

	years of hard work and additionally behind the scenes there's usually a tremendous support structure backing the individual, you chatted briefly about the influence of your dad and growing up in a boxing family; what is your opinion of the role of support systems to contribute to success?
BOKIWE NONINA	The support is not about money because my parents are not rich, the support is not about money. Don't say when we see rich people outside and being...no, it's from the family they have money and all, no. We....sometimes we slept we were eating only one slice bread, but we know what we want, we sacrificed our time to spend with our families to be away because we want to be better. We have sleepless nights, injuries, but we still focus still and make sure what we want. We lose, I lost in my fighting career, I never give up. I just lost now number four, I'm not giving up, I'm going back to the gym and correct my mistakes because the more you lose is the more you see your own mistakes, that you have to learn from them and change them. We work so hard to be where we are, struggle of being not supported, of being not having sponsors, like I don't even have a sponsor but I'm always pushing to be the person I'm recognised as today. So the support I have to my family is amazing because they show me love. They show me love, they show...they believe in me, they make sure that I wake up every day smiling, I come back from the gym smiling, I go to school smiling, even though I know they are struggling to support me, they are struggling to get me to the gym but still they make sure that I'm happy.
DR. MALKA	It's almost as though the energy of your dreams and for you to achieve your dream is....they're part of that fulfilment process; they want the dream as much as you do.
BOKIWE NONINA	As much as I do and they see my dedication to my dream, to their dream, it's a team spirit, we call it at home it's a team spirit, it's a team spirit; we have our code in our team spirit....if I'm fighting....
DR. MALKA	...team spirit....
BOKIWE NONINA	...ja, it's a team spirit, there's a code, if I'm fighting even if my mum is not there but my dad will be there, if my big brother is not there, my younger brother will be there, if my sister is not there my sister will be there, my sister-in-law will be there, so we have that code, if we can't go but at least one and when I see them I see myself winning.
DR. MALKA	That's a really wonderful picture that I have in my head about the team spirit that when one's not around someone else is always there, always supporting...
BOKIWE NONINA	If we can't afford to transport all of us at least we transport our parents. If our parents are busy, okay let's transport one of us; that's what we do as a team spirit.
DR. MALKA	Our programme is all about gender equality, we talked earlier about you know young girls in school, young girls becoming independent. We spoke about patriarchy as well but I would argue that in terms of achieving gender equality, that building female leadership capacity is important for the future of women in our country; how do you see female leadership in South Africa?
BOKIWE NONINA	I...don't take it otherwise but I had role models before. They had...I won't talk about the politicians.....they had TV shows and all that but what I saw after I was following their TV show, what I saw, they are just showing us what they have, not how they work for it and that thing won't encourage our young females to follow in their steps because they are not showing us how it was done, they're just showing us I have a big house in somewhere an I'm driving this car, I just bought this car, I have a birthday soon and my birthday will be like this. That's not how you build a country when you're already there, we need people who will be ourwe need to put...to have...you saw the talk shows like who will talk about how we have

	to become, like how I have become Bukiwe Nonina, how I have become whoever, whoever but not showing us you're going to Mauritius, you're going...no, we don't want to see that, we want to see you from your background and becoming the person you are, your sleepless nights, your hard work, your sweating every day.
DR. MALKA	The journey that they took.
BOKIWE NONINA	...yes, we want to see the journey of you becoming the person you are today, we are watching you on TV every day, your show, we are watching your show every day, we don't want to miss it, but then you don't show enough what we want. The girls, they are not girls need that, don't showing us your designer shoes, we don't need it. We want to see how you became the person you are, your journey.
DR. MALKA	Talking about journey's, one question that I ask all my guests on this show is about the factors that have contributed to their success. Some people speak about hard work, other's talk about discipline or a particular person in their life; can you tell us what have been some of the key drivers in your life?
BOKIWE NONINA	The only thing that built me is the failure, I failed..
DR. MALKA	...failure...
BOKIWE NONINA	...I failed so lot of times. I failed even at school I failed but I told...even...I passed my matric at the age of 21 but I told myself I'm not quitting school until I pass my matric. I failed I think four classes; I said I'm not quitting and was not even having a stress that I failed. My friends were in varsity, I was like its fine I will be in high school and finish my school. I failed...the only thing that built Bokiwe Nonina, I failed. I failed in my career, I failed at school to be the person I am today but my failure I changed it to my lesson. I learn a lot, I had a lot of friends going around, I like to play, I like to play around, going around and play and forget that I have to study, I have to be at the gym but then it was when I was like no man, I'm getting older and I'm failing now, I have to change, I have to see my mistake, why I am failing and when I see that I was not a slow learner, it's just that I was lazy. It's just because I was lazy, I was lazy.....myself more than was, like more than. Then I had to you know what learning the focus, work, work, you have to work then I slept less, I focused more, I only...the only thing I was seeing myself...I was seeing myself as Noni Tenge. I was like if Noni Tenge can do this why...what is hard that...what is stopping me and hard that I can't do it. It's when I stepped in the ring with the pride that I can do it. If I have a female can step in the ring with me that means we both can do it, but the best one and the hard worker will win.....
DR. MALKA	...so you...
BOKIWE NONINA	...and I'm the hard worker....
DR. MALKA	...so you have done something which not a lot of people do, is you've held the mirror up to yourself, you've reflected, you've looked at your failures, you've taken every loss as a learning and turned that failure into a success. You've....
BOKIWE NONINA	...ja I did that...
DR. MALKA	...you've used people like Noni Tenge as an example, as a role model to...
BOKIWE NONINA	...ja, she's my role model and remember I was nominated with 2017's female boxer of the year and I took it on like wow, wow! That...those are the things of...that made me like sjoe, you beat your own role model...
DR. MALKAyeah that's a big impact...
BOKIWE NONINA	...of female boxers...

DR. MALKA	...and...
BOKIWE NONINA	...ja, ja...I was not happy that...
DR. MALKA	...and in fact we've....
DR. MALKA	...we've got Noni coming up on the show next....
BOKIWE NONINA	Yes. I was not happy that I won the award, I was happy that I'm working so hard in a way, my own role model taught me to take her award because we were talking now before the fight she's always saidI know, I know you are the best, do it!
DR. MALKA	That's a great sense of achievement.
BOKIWE NONINA	Yes.
DR. MALKA	Now lastly, as we close the conversation today, could you please share a few words of inspiration or wisdom that you'd like to pass on to young girls that are listening to us?
BOKIWE NONINA	You are our younger future, our next Noni Tenge, please...I was always told by my parents first thing is to respect any elder person, any elder person, it's your mom, if you're doing something wrong in this, drugs, if you're with your boyfriend run because you've seen your mom even though it's not your biological mother, so please, if you have respect of that and you respect yourself enough to say no to whatever you know that is wrong, whatever you know that our parents doesn't want, say no with the pride. Don't mind if your friends they are laughing at you that you are slow, it's okay, you know what you want. Just focus, stay focused, respect yourself enough and never leave school because of a career, I will say that with pride. Never leave school because of a career, finish your school, if you can manage doing both but never leave school because of your career, a career is a short thing, especially sport, it can end any time. Please focus, stay focused in your books until you finish it but the school is always there until you reach the goal you want now, until you approach another one, because you can't focus on two goals. Finish this one and go to another one but the only important thing that I knew every day, be proud to say no. Thank you.
DR. MALKA	Thank you, those are very powerful, practical points. Never leave school because of a career because careers can be short-lived, always respect your elders but more importantly respect yourself. Thank you so much for joining us today we really appreciate your time.
BOKIWE NONINA	Thank you so much for having me.
DR. MALKA	And we wish you every success going down in the future to not only defend your title, but also to take on new titles.
BOKIWE NONINA	Ja, that's our plan, we're coming stronger now, we have opportunities because we've been seen outside so we're coming more stronger, thank you so much.
DR. MALKA	Thank you.
PROGRAMME END	