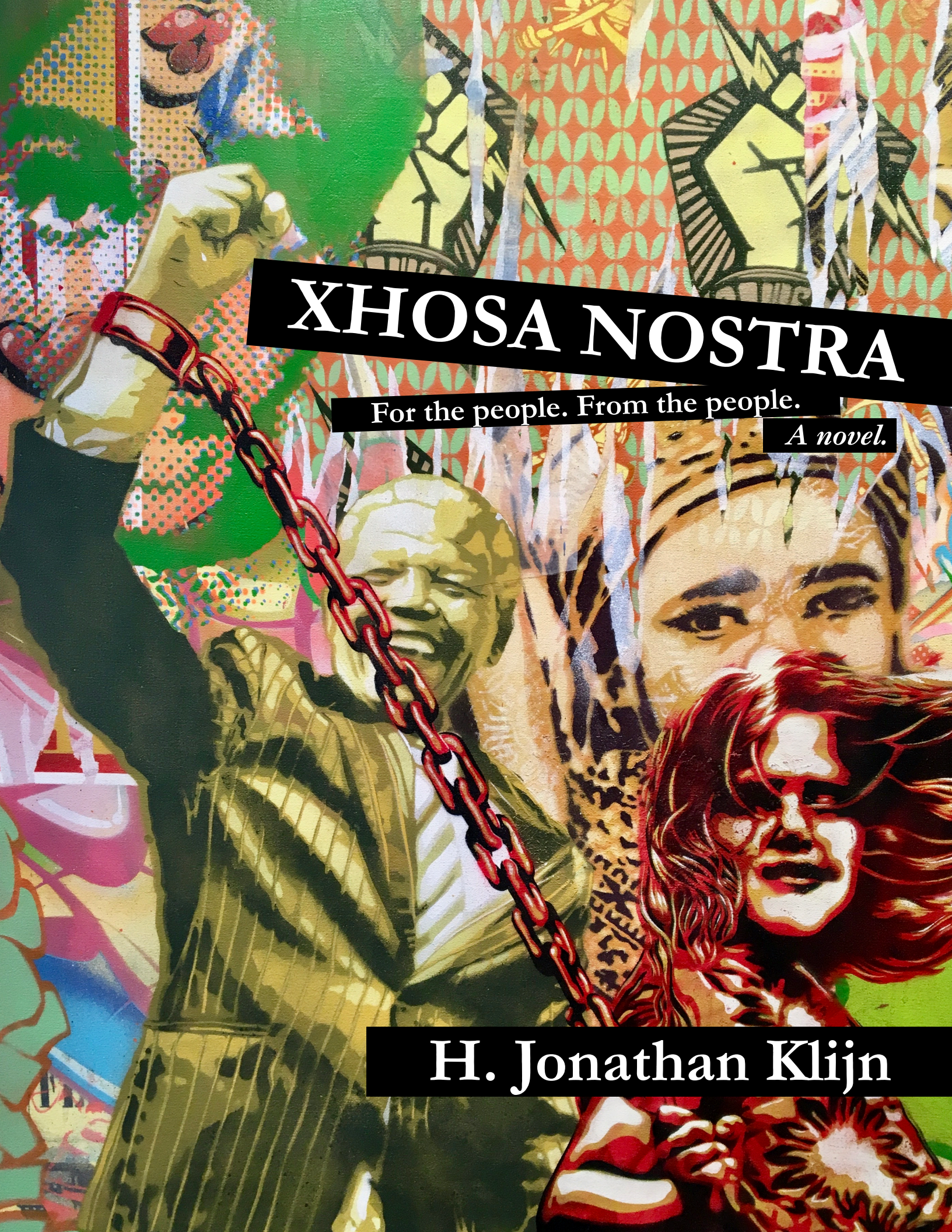
XHOSA NOSTRA
For the people. From the people.
A novel.
H. Jonathan Klijn

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For the people. From the people.

H. JONATHAN KLIJN

Be nice to whites, they need you to rediscover their humanity.

—Archbishop Desmond Tutu
(Quoted in New York Times, October 19, 1984.)

Prologue

Gert and Rita

Tuesday, April 26. 18:00

Beep. "Armed robbery at Craighall in the vicinity of Jan Smuts and Bompas. All available units, please respond." Bib-bib.

Reaching out across the dashboard of the police vehicle, Sergeant Gert Weyers broke the cardinal rule of contemporary policing. He turned off the police radio.

"What do you mean you *think* your mother doesn't like me? She barely knows me." Rita Abrams shot Weyers a look that he knew meant he'd have to stand up down and defend the honor of the girl he'd been dating for nearly a year. He took another sip of coffee from the metal flask he brought with him every day and offered her a pain au chocolat which he had bought from Limnos, a bakery that, despite its Greek name and reputation for baklava and kataifi, also made the best selection of Viennoiserie in the city. She shook her head.

"Rita," he started tentatively, "what are we doing here?." He paused for a moment. "Let me rephrase. Why do you like me? I don't think I'm handsome and, you know, I'm just a cop, but when

I finish my LLB I'll probably join a big law firm here in the city, but, for now I'm just a white guy in a Black country that may be about to blow up." She looked at him and said nothing.

Weyers had been up since before five that morning: when he woke up, he stared at the sleeping girl he'd been dating for six months and thought about the days ahead and the prospect of living in a vastly different place the next day. He thought about how his relationship with Rita would have been unthinkable and illegal just a few years before. Gert wondered if they could ever be truly free from Apartheid's daily challenges and flareups of small displays of aggression that had come to define living in a city such as Johannesburg. He wondered how many generations it would take to fix the country. Really fix it. Not just empty campaign promises, like when the ANC recently suggested that anyone who voted for them will get a free refrigerator, which seems ridiculous, but for days it was all people talked about. That's a lot of free fridges, he thought. And then he wondered if this was really what the country had become. At least, there was Rita. His why.

Weyers had been seeing a lot of Rita over the last six months. In fact, with the exception of that weekend she spent at her mother's for her gran's funeral, he had been with her every day, aside from their hours working together. And then one day, out of the blue, she said something that made him fall in love with her. It was a small rant in Afrikaans about how exhausted she was at not being white and, consequently, how frustrating it was to feel that you never to fit in. And, out of nowhere, Weyers felt a surge to protect this person. He instinctively knew that this was what it meant to be with someone—to protect them and to somehow act as a barrier between life and its challenges, and this person, whom you love.

He knew he'd had to work at the relationship and overcome not-insignificant resistance from some, including his mother. Still, he also knew that over time, they would be fine, that the country would most likely survive this ordeal of its own making, and that he would be able to create some kind of space where Rita Abrams would finally feel seen and accepted. And that could do that. He wanted to do that.

"It's an important thing." Weyers said, a little more insistently. "You are so full of life and you have come to mean so much to me. I just want to make sure. And there's ma, I nearly forgot."

"I will have you know," Rita smiled, "that in South Africa, the way things look now, your mom has better things to worry about than me or the fact that I'm dating her precious boy." She made a face and air quotes on the words "precious boy."

"Ag, shame," Gert Weyers glanced at her and said softly, "you are too sensitive, *bokkie*. I mean, Ma does say the craziest things sometimes, and, you know, she's crazy old-school. They see the world and this election a little differently, and right now, I think she's not doing so well with any of this. They see stuff, you know—her generation… they're not like us. My gran was in the concentration camp at Irene just outside Pretoria during the Boer War, and so they still have this laager mentality. My gran's sister and mother died in that camp and she remembered seeing the English burn the farmhouse down, salt the land, and shoot the animals." He paused for a moment. "She'll come around. She has to." Gert leaned over and pushed a button on the vehicle's police radio. "I'd better figure out how to turn this fucken' radio on again. It's the new model too. I don't know where what is on here—all these buttons. Just now, a thing goes down, and we miss it."

Gert pressed the center dial and a steady stream of voices, static crackles, and beeps signaled levels of reported activity. "I'm so over it." Rita never bothered to disguise her feelings. Gert was uncertain whether she was over the police channel noises or his mother's lack of enthusiasm for the girl he was dating. Or if she was over him. He hoped it wasn't him. Rita felt right—like she may be "the one." He had been working out, trying to transform himself physically. He had also been putting extra effort into being a better lover, and bringing Rita to orgasm now rated as the most important thing when they had sex, partly because when he felt her body respond to him in such a powerful way, he occasionally also felt something new—like a view from above—that made him feel alive in a way he had never thought existed. It made him feel a touch rebellious and a little bit free, as if suspended and weightless. It was, he thought, what happiness felt like.

"It's OK. It doesn't bother me," he said. "In fact, very little bothers me anymore." She nodded and looked at him, unsure if he meant her comment, the police channel alerts, or his mother's attitude. Her eyes lingered on his face. Feeling her stare at him, Gert wondered if Rita was irritated and he made a mental note to call his mom later that evening because his dad needed his outstanding parking tickets squashed. His mom and dad were shaped by 1960s Apartheid paranoia over communism and the implicit danger that the "Black Danger" posed the Afrikaner. Increasingly, over the last few years since the unbanning of the ANC and Nelson Mandela's release from prison, all but guaranteeing the next government to be Black, fear had taken hold that, once elected and unbridled, Black power would unleash a vendetta. That Black South Africans will treat whites as they had been treated under Apartheid for fifty years and the three hundred years before that.

Outside it was getting dark. The early autumn wind shook the Jacaranda branches causing a continuous rain of desiccated leaves. It was an awkward ride, the silence between them constantly interrupted by beeps, static, and crackly announcements.

Beep. "Armed robbery at Craighall in the vicinity of Jan Smuts and Bompas. All available units, please respond." Bib-bib.

"Not for us. We're too far. We won't make that." Gert didn't expect Rita to respond. She was usually happy for him to make the decision and respond, or let the announcement slide.

"Ja," Rita said, her voice barely audible over the radio. "Let's take the next one." She looked at him again, and smiled. Her hair was tied up under her police cap, she wore almost no make-up, and the color of the uniform, which could only be described as correctional gray, drained her face of any color, making her come across as serious—some would say, sullen.

"Families are always difficult." He said. "I'm going to turn down De Korte, and then we head into Braamfontein, OK?" Gert made a gesture that resembled a turn. The other joy Rita had brought into his life was a sense of gentleness, inspired, he thought, by her strength and occasional generosity of spirit. He still thought she could be a bitch, given half a chance, but he liked how she

made him feel, when they got home for example or when they had been working long hours. And at those moments, when they both felt drained and somewhat work-weary—their defenses dropped—they would somehow just click and life would suddenly be better. Rita was wonderful to be with. "I'm happy with you, and I think you are the best person in my life," he said. "And I don't think I can ask for much more in life. If my mom doesn't like it, she can go and fuck herself."

Rita giggled, nodded, and pointed at a sign perched on top of a service station. "Look—another billboard—that's new. With Mandela, of course. That one's even bigger than the others. I'm sure this one wasn't here last week." She felt a little awkward that she didn't know how to respond to Gert, and for a minute, she wondered if she wanted to be with him as much as he claimed to want to be with her. "You make me happy, too," she said. "Your mom and I will be OK."

Nelson Mandela's face was beaming at them, covered with large letters screaming: IT'S TIME. "I see. That thing is as big as the drive-in screen," Gert said. "My fuck. I think it's there because of the university. All those trendy whites."

"Trendy Wendys, as my brother would say." Rita lifted her wrist and made a limp gesture. Gert giggled. It was always funny when Rita used campy gestures and lingo like Betty Bangles or Jennifer Justice, gay slang for cops, as she pointed out when he first met her.

"That just cracks me up," Gert said. "What's the Black version of a Trendy Wendy?"

"Well, firstly I think they're called Natalies in Gayle but Trendy Natalie sounds wrong. And I'm a Clora." She made a little sigh. "I'll have to ask Jerome, my Beulah brother—the drama queen twink."

Gayle originated in Cape Town as a Lavender Lexicon, a way for white and coloured (mixed race) gay men to speak in a coded way. Gayle developed utterly separately from isiNgqumo, a Bantu-based "gay language," due to a linguistic divide caused by Apartheid race laws that also kept English and Afrikaans speakers in one social group, separate and segregated from Bantu language speakers.

"I've heard of Zelda Zulu, before," Gert went on, "there was a show on the other night about being gay in Jo'burg and about the many gay bars and clubs in the city—one, I think, was Connections in Hillbrow—and they had drag queens, some were black or colored. Ruda Landman did the show—*Carte Blanche*—I think, on M-Net. It was very interesting. Ruda really got under these guys' skin, trying to understand their lives and their problems—some of them are homeless, you know. One was this older coloured drag queen or trans woman—I don't now—her name was Grannie Lee, but she used to be a school teacher in Cape Town and now she that she is retired she moved to Johannesburg and she just hangs out at the bars. It was kinda sad. But Ruda created the impression that a lot of these guys have a found hopeful community in what is, otherwise, a hopeless place." Weyers was worried he now sounded too philosophical again.

"Ja. My brother's doing well. He mentioned that show. He was at The Dungeon when the film crew arrived at midnight one Saturday night and he said you just saw drag queens and go-go boys run just in case it was a raid. But our parents have totally accepted him and he's put himself through law school here at WITS, and now he's dating some well-known Black actor. Jerome always says it's much easier to be gay than Black in South Africa." Rita was always secretly worried about Jerome: that he would get into trouble and, of course, that he would get sick, but she'd never let her fears be known. "Jerome did say that at the law firm where he works, he hides both the fact that he is gay AND that he's coloured. We both pass, you know."

Gert raised his eyebrows. "I hate that. Don't you prefer "brown?" I mean, I'm just checking. It feels like coloured should be a bad word."

"It's fine." She smiled. "My father was mixed. And reclassified in the 1950s. My mom didn't care. And it's the Cape. Everyone is coloured."

Gert suddenly swerved, pushing her hard against the seatbelt as she slammed on brakes, barely missing a Land Rover Defender that had appeared from a side alley at high speed. The Landy

turned in the same direction as them and then sped up before making a quick hard right up another street.

"What was that? I couldn't see the driver." Gert said. "That was all so quick."

"Call it in? I saw the passenger—definitely a Black guy—he looked like he could have been drunk—he was leaning against the window. It was dark in that Landy and it happend so quickly—I couldn't see the driver either."

Beep. "We have a protest near the university. Braamfontein. Corner of Jan Smuts and Jorrissen. All available units please respond." Bib-bib.

"10-4. On our way." Gert leaned over and turned on the siren. "That guy in the passenger seat looked out of it. As if we didn't have enough to do tonight. OK, well, maybe Mandela will fix that too."

"So you're going to vote for him?" Rita looked genuinely inquisitive.

"I guess you could say that. I didn't think I cared so much about his race, and I thought I just wanted it to be over." Gert had a vague but definite awareness of the political landscape, and despite his career, which revealed the worst of humanity on a daily basis, no one sector of society was alien to him. He refused to fall into the white Afrikaner mindset, preferring to read *Mail and Guardian* to the Afrikaans conservative press like *Die Vaderland*—the whole concept of "Fatherland" acting more like a trigger for him than anything else, and it had to be said, most other white South African Gen X'ers who were a driving force behind the referendum a few years prior that had set the course they were on now. And besides, Gert viewed policing as one of the true humanist callings.

"You don't worry that a Black fox will be in charge of a white hen house?" Rita giggled at her comment.

"Better the fox than the alternative. I'm just so fed up with Botha's shit and now De Klerk. It feels like we need to move on." Gert stopped the police vehicle at the bottom end of Jan Smuts, a block away from a large protest that had, by now, drawn the attention of riot police in full gear at the

other end of the protest. "This is what F.W. is trying to alarm whites about. Look a them *toyi-toying* and singing, raising their spears and sticks. It's a little unnerving, right? I mean it looks like impi's at Blood River. It doesn't exactly feel encouraging." As if on cue, Gert pointed at a row of posters with large red letters, ONLY THE NP CAN STOP THE ANC, alongside a large picture of President F.W. de Klerk. "I'm nor sure the ANC is particularly good news for the country either. I don't think they like whites very much. But, maybe Mandela can make a difference, you know, live and let live."

Beep. "We have an escalating protest near the university. All units. In Braamfontein. Corner of Jan Smuts and Jorrissen. Please respond. Riot squad on stand-by." Bib-bib.

"This is going to be a long…what the fuck…Gert!…. What the fuck is that?" Rita's voice made Gert's neck hair rise. He looked over to see what she was pointing at. "Do you see it??" she asked again.

From the alley a few feet away, a figure stumbled toward them. "It looks like a man. He's on fire."

Beep. "Despatch, please respond—we have a situation at the corner of De Korte and Jorisssen—it appears to be a necklacing." Bib-bib.

The young man had difficulty keeping upright—he was unable to help himself as his arms were pressed against his body by a gasoline-drenched car tire that some guy had set alight. His clothes started to catch fire; the section of his shirt above the tire went up in flames first. It was clear that, for a minute, the man tried to keep calm and breathe.

Screaming for help, the man tugged at untucked sections of his shirt below the tire but almost instantly, that also erupted into flames, and within seconds the fire had reached his jeans, burning in patterns where gasoline had soaked in.

The burning man dropped to his knees, too exhausted to scream, his face fixed in a grimace as he tried one last time to tear the burning shirt off his chest and arms; he bellowed uncontrollably

when flames started to melt the tire, the heat turning it into liquid tar, boiling and dripping down his arms and legs while strips of skin sloughed off his body.

The man's arms and chest were swollen—and red—he could feel the skin tighten as more and more moisture evaporated; the smell of his burning flesh and the stench of rubber overwhelmed him, and he could hear a hissing sound as bubbles formed on the surface, before they popped, bleeding. Within seconds the man's face and head were on fire and covered in blisters; then he completely collapsed, suffocating in the smoke, while blackened segments of sinew and flesh landed on the ground, still smoldering.

By now, his entire body was seared and singed by fuel and fire; what flesh remained slowly burnt away until he was completely charred—a "kentucky," as anti-Apartheid activists called it because necklacing victims looked like human-sized chicken pieces burnt to a crisp in a deep fryer.

"It's like Winnie said. They're getting their freedom one car tire and one match at a time." Mesmerized, Rita briefly wondered how she would get the smell of burnt rubber and meat out of her clothes.

Yakhal' Inkomo

Akukho sandi silusizi eAfrika

ngaphezu kokukhala kwenkunzi yenkomo, kuxhelwa.

Inkunzi yenkomo eyomeleleyo kufuneka igqume.

Hamba lula.

There is no sadder sound in Africa

than the cry of a bull, slaughtered.

A strong bull must bellow.

Go easy.

Daar is geen hartseerder klank in Afrika

as die kreet van 'n bul wat geslag word nie.

'n Sterk bul moet roep.

Gaan saggies.

36 hours before.

Part One

Monday. April 25, 1994.

1.

Melvyn

Monday, April 25. 15:00

They had a quick coffee that afternoon at Limnos, a Greek bakery on Dunkeld Avenue, not far from his home, that served the most decadent baklava in the city. Honeyed and nutty, there was nothing quite like the sugar rush, and stopping at the bakery on the way home had become somewhat of a habit. It was also a suitable stop for him as his wife never set foot in this part of the city. Anything west of Jan Smuts Avenue was less than convenient for her.

Dudu Nsele was a little anxious. She trusted Melvyn and instinctively felt he was a good man, but the facts of the liaison were stacked against any possibility of it ever working. By now, in the permissive haze of what promised to be the Mandela era, theirs was not a tryst most in this city would frown on; in fact, in some circles, they would very much represent a new social currency. He, the ultra-liberal politician who cautiously positioned himself on the righteous side of history, and she, the part-time anti-apartheid activist who made ends meet as a domestic goddess to the Bernsteins while trying to establish her own fledgling catering business. Dudu Nsele hoped that, over time, she'll do brisk trade making affluent liberal elites appear effortless at hosting.

She was worried about meeting him—the timing felt a little off. Ruth, Melvyn's wife, had organized a cocktail event for Jo'burg's great and good that evening. Although this was by no means a formal event, Ruth loved telling everyone with ears that Dudu was her protege and how she saved Dudu from a life of inevitable servitude while apologizing for the brisket that, she'll claim, is too dry. Ruth's endorsement nonetheless didn't sit well with Dudu since her career as a caterer was in name only, and truth be told, Ruth made her feel like a glorified server albeit in a cocktail dress, as opposed to a maid's uniform. And she did get to rub shoulders with the new Black elite, which she aspired to become herself over time, but still, Ruth Bernstein made everything feel a little loaded.

Dudu had spent the early years of her life in Tembisa, a Black township on the eastern part of the Highveld escarpment. In the seventies and eighties, Johannesburg's eastern suburbs and towns had expanded exponentially due to its proximity to the airport and the sheer scope of its industrial growth. The area was at the core of a new post-mining South Africa with local government and councils proud to also be the economic heartbeat of the continent with the greater Johannesburg—should one lump together its many towns and cities, including Pretoria—fast becoming one of the biggest cities in the world.

In 1986, when the Belhar Confession was introduced as a statement of faith for the Dutch Reformed Church, the bedrock of Apartheid, Dudu was 17. She knew little about the Confession, nor did she feel any benefit as a result of it. There was little tangible joy to be had from this small shift in the white Afrikaner worldview, a new perspective that now dared to centralize racism, separation, and suffering, laying blame at the feet of what it was still not quite calling white supremacy. Belhar declared three points—unity, reconciliation, and justice—as core to the survival of the country and the way to redemption for what had become a necrotic version of whiteness.

None of this mattered much to Dudu as career and economic prospects for young Black South Africans in 1986 were still limited, a job in the service industry often seen as ideal and, if

nothing else, a way out of poverty, but barely. Dudu remembered Christmas 1987, a day her father, Solomon Dlamini, had spent, first at the police station where the cops tried to convince him to be their eyes and ears in Tembisa and then at the house of a neighbor who had to be convinced that he could never be—and had never been—an informant.

Solomon Dlamini was silent for the entire Christmas dinner when he finally made it home, then finally, after two glasses of *umqombothi*, homemade sorghum beer, he spoke softly and plainly. "I can hardly tell you kids what to do, but for as long as I can remember, your mother and I got up at dawn and finished the day at eight or nine. Luckily you had Baba to look after you. Your mother and I have never been on holiday. We have never left this city. For once, I want to be done with this. I also want to go to Durban and sit in the sun—like white people. You two need to get out. We need you to get out. And we need get out too."

Over the next few years, Solomon Dlamini expanded his small taxi operation from one vehicle, driven by himself, to a small fleet of twenty that employed several drivers. Solomon drove through protests and violence, past burnt-out cars and, occasionally, dead bodies. At the end of the eighties, the government offered relief deals for Black entrepreneurs, and Solomon signed up for the Tembisa Revitalization Plan. Solomon sold the small family house to a neighbor and then sold his taxi business to a young guy of about twenty-five, Fanie Nsele, a nice Xhosa man from the Eastern Cape who would go on to marry Solomon's daughter, Dudu. Solomon Dlamini was forty-nine; his wife, forty-six. They had spent the best years of their lives in a miserable place with little option of getting out. They were born in a country that saw Black lives less as people and more as working animals. He finally understood that. And with the money he made from selling his business and little house, they moved to Ciskei, a Xhosa bantustan in the Eastern Cape, where he took up making furniture from discarded oak wine barrels. He bought a boat and sometimes went fishing, causing Evangeline Dlamini anxiety on a whole new level as, under Apartheid, few, if any, Black people ever learned to swim. "They don't build us schools—let alone a pool," she would say to Solomon every

time he came home after a day in his boat. It was their greatest pleasure to send the kids to college. Trevor, their son, went to the Red and Yellow School of Advertising in Cape Town and Dudu to the catering school at Johannesburg's Wits Technikon.

Sitting at Limnos, Melvyn felt wistful and tense. Another report of another home invasion left him angry and frustrated, and he hastily drafted a press release that morning explaining that the party's position was unchanged: that goodness was inherent in all men, and a few certainly should not taint the image of the many. He used the phrase "a few bad apples," referred to the "legacy of Apartheid," and made sure to quote his hero Steve Biko: "It is better to die for an idea that will live, than to live for an idea that will die."

After asking his secretary to take the press release to the editorial offices of *The Citizen,* one of the more liberal Johannesburg dailies, he called home. Melvyn knew Ruth would be out. Tennis, or whatever.

Dudu was flattered and a little excited to hear his voice. She knew that with every coffee and every slice—Limnos baklava was just so good—she was getting deeper into something that had no apparent chance of survival and no discernible outline of something that resembled a shared future. She was also a little confused. Was this part of the job description, as he was her employer? Could she even say no? She chose not to dwell on that part. Her gut feeling was that Melvyn was a good man, for a white man in Africa—and that OMG, her father would just die if he found out—and that Melvyn never made her feel as if he was objectifying her. He seemed to genuinely delight in her company, and she could sense that, even in the non-obvious sense, she was great at defusing some of the tension he carried with him. But then there was the issue of Fanie Nsele, her husband.

"Dudu, I have never met anyone like you. What I feel when we are together is almost unbelievable." Melvyn said nothing for a few moments before adding: "You can't really understand what I am saying, I am sure—I mean not that you can't or don't understand—I just mean that you

are so exceptional. It is so rare in my world to find a woman who is so ready to give and receive pleasure, you know, who is beyond all the pleasantries and traps and not put off by a man who is a little older." He was worried that he was rambling. "Many of my friends are a little scared of meeting someone they spend quality time with and prefer no strings." He paused, refraining from elaborating on how most of the men he knew had little—if any—physical contact with anyone and that most of them were crotchety and bitter and lusted incessantly after the exact same pretty Black girls whom they denied the right to vote.

"I see," she said after a silence. "I see what you mean. Do you think these men as capable of change?"

"There's change in the air—so yes—maybe—I hope so."

"So you think things are looking better?"

"Barely," he said solemnly.

"So we are lucky?"

"I was lucky to have met you."

"Me too," she said. "I was lucky too. No one really understands me. Especially him." She raised her eyebrows on the word "him." She took a last sip of coffee. "From the very start, from the day I met you, I thought you were different."

"We'd better go." Melvyn said.

After he settled the bill, a few hours later than she was comfortable with, they headed back to the Bernstein home. The drive was quiet. Dudu was silent. A heady mixture of sugar and guilt. Melvyn had the radio on; the drive-time talk show was interviewing Mandela. *During my lifetime, I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.*

They passed a police van parked at a weird angle, in haste obviously, and two cops were pushing a man against the vehicle. It looked like an arrest. On the ground was a body covered with a blanket. "We live in a harsh place," Melvyn said. In a sense, he was still naive, insulated, and unaware that he was unaware. He added: "I don't like the world we live in." He paused. "It's why I feel I have to try and make it better."

She looked away and said nothing.

He dropped her off a few streets away from the house since he couldn't very well drive past security and into his garage with the maid next to him. What would they think? What would Ruth say? He waived at the guards at the gates and turned left to head to his place. Arriving at the house, he noticed that the door to the courtyard was wide open, and the lock looked a little wonky. He thought it looked a little suspicious, but he didn't worry about it too much as the security guards said nothing when we drove in, and besides the open door, everything looked normal.

He parked the car and went inside. The sound of a man's voice startled him

"Hey, Lwasi, go see if you can find the husband. Where is he now, Madam?"

He felt ice-cold. He thought that this could not be happening, that he must be mistaken.

"What's going on Ruthie?" Melvyn walked into the TV room. "I heard voices."

Ruth ran to her husband, crying. "It's ok Ruthie. I'm here. Let's sort this out." Melvyn looked at the two men. "Gentlemen. How may I help you."

An Apartheid Timeline for a different book.

4th Century

Black migrants from central Africa settle the country,
joining indigenous San and Khoikhoi Bushman..

1480s

Portuguese navigator, Bartholomeu Dias, becomes the first European to travel around the southern tip of Africa. Landing at Mossel Bay, Dias establishes a post-office tree. It is still there.

1497

Portuguese explorer, Vasco da Gama, lands on the Indian Ocean side of South Africa on Christmas Day, naming the coast, Natal.

1652

Jan van Riebeeck, representing the Dutch East India Company (VOC), establishes a refreshment station for the VOC and the Cape Colony at Table Bay.

1795

British forces seize the Cape Colony from the Netherlands.
The territory is returned to the Dutch in 1803; and again ceded to the British in 1806.

1835-1840

Dutch settlers known as Boers (farmers), leave the Cape Colony in the "Great Trek."
They find two new provinces: Orange Free State and Transvaal.

1852

Britain grants limited rights to self-governance to Transvaal.

1856

Natal officially separates from the British-controlled Cape Colony.

Late 1850s

The Boers proclaim Transvaal as independent Boer republic.

1879

Britain defeats the Zulus in Natal.

1880-81

The Boers rebel against the British, sparking the First Anglo-Boer War.
The conflict ends with a negotiated peace and sees Transvaal restored as a republic.

1886

Johannesburg is established on the farm "Vogelstruisfontein" as a result of the discovery of gold in the Transvaal, which triggered a massive gold rush.
Note: Today, by contrast, the city is larger than New York, with over 8 million residents, indeed, the Johannesburg/Pretoria urban area (combined since a robust transport system makes commuting feasible) is the 26th-largest in the world by population, with 14,167,000 inhabitants

1899

British troops gather at the Transvaal border, ignoring an ultimatum to disperse.
The second Anglo-Boer War begins.
The Anglo-Boer War remains the most consequential modern armed conflict in South Africa's history and shaped 20th Century South Africa. It is foundational to Afrikaner identify and it's decision to insulate, under the banner of "never again."
The war marks the apex of Britain's conquest of Black and White South Africa.

1902

Treaty of Vereeniging ends the second Anglo-Boer War.
The Transvaal and Orange Free State become self-governing colonies of the British Empire.

1906

While a young lawyer in Johannesburg, Mohandas Karamchand "Mahatma" Gandhi organizes the first Satyagraha campaign to protest the Transvaal Asiatic ordinance, constituted by the Transvaal

government against the local Indian population. In June 1907, he also holds a Satyagraha protest against the newly launched Black Act.

1910

The Union of South Africa is formed by the former British colonies: the Cape, Natal, and the Boer republics of Transvaal, and Orange Free State.

1913

The Land Act is introduced to prevent Black South Africans, except those in the Cape Province, from buying land outside reserves.

1919

South West Africa (Namibia) comes under South African administration.

1948

The British colonial policy of separation is formalized and named "Apartheid" (separateness).
The National Party (N.P.) takes power.

1950

Population is now classified by race. The new Group Areas Act segregates Black and white. The rise of the Black township as a community, Soweto (South Western Township) being the most famous. The township is often hidden from white view and is chronically under-serviced, becoming food and health deserts.
The ANC launches a campaign of civil disobedience led by Mandela.

1960

Seventy Black demonstrators are killed at Sharpeville, Johannesburg. The ANC is banned.

1961

South Africa exits the Commonwealth, becoming a republic.
Mandela leads the ANC's new military wing, uMkontho we Siswe, which translates as "Spear of the Nation," and it launches a potent sabotage/terrorist campaign.
The "Armed Struggle" commences, leaving behind Gandhi's Passive Resistance Satyagraha.

1964

Nelson Mandela is sentenced to life imprisonment.

1966

Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd is assassinated.

1970s

Over 3 million are forcibly resettled to Black bantustans, known as homelands.

1976

Over 600 are killed when Black protesters clash with security forces during the Soweto uprising.

1983

The Belhar Confession, a group of primarily white Dutch Reformed clergy, declares Apartheid non-viable and suggests whites beg Black South Africans for forgiveness. It is the first step to what would, in 1995, become the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

1984-89

Townships are in a constant state of revolt, a state of emergency is declared by an increasingly desperate President P.W. Botha, who makes the iconic 1985 *Crossing the Rubicon* speech, and, instead of unbanning the AND and releasing Mandela, Botha dug in, and the country nearly burnt down.

1989

F.W. de Klerk replaces P.W. Botha as president.

De Klerk meets Mandela.

Public facilities are desegregated.

ANC activists are freed.

1990

Mandela is released after 27 years in prison.

The ANC is unbanned.

Namibia gains independence.

1991

De Klerk repeals remaining Apartheid laws.

International sanctions are lifted.

Significant escalation of violence between the ANC and the Zulu Inkatha movement.

1993

An interim constitution for South Africa is agreed on.

1994, April 27

The ANC wins South Africa's first non-racial elections.

Mandela becomes the new democracy's president forming a Government of National Unity.

South Africa's Commonwealth membership is restored.

South Africa takes a seat in U.N. General Assembly after its 20-year absence.

1995

Nelson Mandela puts on the Springbok jersey at the Rugby World Cup.

A symbolic gesture, and one that, for white South Africans, becomes the most visible expression of Mandela's Xhosa Nostra image.

2.

Melvyn and Ruth And Mandla And Lwasi

Monday, April 25. 18:00

Early in their marriage, it became apparent to Ruth Bernstein that life as a politician's wife was never going to be easy or strewn with gratitude. Indeed, she was beginning to think they had made a mistake by not emigrating to Australia in the late 80s when everyone else seemed to be packing for Perth. But Melvyn's reinvention as a politician had gone so well, her trajectory within the Women's League was rising, and the kids loved living in Jo'burg, so there was little to be upset about. Hashem will provide, as her father used to say, and so, Ruth carried on. Something, however, seemed a little off to Ruth that night, and, try as she might, she could not precisely say what it was.

At something past four, Ruth decided to check on the progress in the kitchen. Her maid, Duduzile Nsele, was prone to dry out the brisket, and that evening's cocktail event promised to be busy, having invited some of the party elite. If the beef is too dry, as she anticipated it would be, Dudu would have enough time to make brisket and mushroom vol-au-vents, and the more Ruth thought about it, the more that seemed like a better option to her. And everything felt on edge. She just could not put a finger on it. Melvyn had been acting weird for a while now. She was sure she saw him look at Dudu a few times, once for sure; he was staring at her when she arrived late for work

and hastily changed into her uniform in the kitchen, thinking she was alone. Then there was the time Melvyn hugged Dudu on the back patio as she was about to leave, slipping her what was clearly money, and then, aware that they were being observed by his wife, he pulled away somewhat hastily. "I gave her a hundred Rand," he said to Ruth later that night in bed, "because she wants to go and visit her parents in Ciskei. To her, it's a lot of money." He placed his hand on Ruth's shoulder and turned off the bedside lamp. "She's worth it."

Ruth was never sure what her husband meant by that, nor what to do about it, if anything, but she felt herself trying harder for his attention and to at least appear to be a perfect hostess and wife to an influential voice of white allyship. For that evening's event, Ruth, therefore, wore a full-length dress of undulating, layered, slightly sheer lilac fabric, the bodice of which was shaped around her breasts by Pascual, the most reliable of Johannesburg's fashion designers with an international reputation, due primarily to his Spanish heritage. Pascual was, quite simply, "de rigueur, dahling." Jo'burg's answer to Balenciaga during the sanction years, a fact less impressive than Ruth would have liked given that Vogue had recently said it would never launch a South African edition, a decision less to do with the city's capacity for style and more of a reprimand for its reputation as glitzy unrepentant Apartheid edifice. And that was the thing about sanctions and boycotts: the country would churn out replacements as fast as sanctions were slapped on them, rendering embargo somewhat impotent and instead stimulating even more invention and, paradoxically, even greater national (white) pride. No Kodak? Minolta didn't mind. No Levi's? No big deal. Jordache was always there. And for every MacDonalds or Burger King that suddenly grew a conscience, the country would spur an alternative: Bimbo's Burgers (meatier and served with shoestring fries—wholesomeness), Steers (flame grilled and barbecue-spice seasoned) or Nando's (now an international brand themselves.) And it was the same for everything—music groups, candy, coffee beans, plasters, plasters, and, yes, toilet paper. Predictably, conservative Prime Ministers and Presidents such as Margaret Thatcher (UK), John Major UK), and Ronald Reagan (USA) all opposed

sanctions initially. Still, by the end of the 80s, the country was isolated as a pariah, its citizens unwelcome to travel except for places like Israel and Madeira, an autonomous Portuguese archipelago closer to Africa than Portugal itself.

When Ruth Bernstein finally made it downstairs, she felt a chill in the air, and from the gentle draft, she could tell that someone—probably Dudu or Melvyn "always leaving the *verkakte* patio door open," she thought. Although Highveld winters were sunny and relatively mild, homes were generally not heated, except for large fireplaces and portable asbestos heating panels. One had to trap whatever heat one could by keeping doors and windows hermetically shut. They also had to be locked because of constant safety issues that Ruth felt no one ever spoke about for fear of sounding alarmist.

Glancing at the time, she turned the TV on just in case. The 6 O'Clock News showed F.W. de Klerk was at a press conference: "I felt a sense of fulfillment that an action plan, which I'd laid on the table on the 2nd of February 1990, had been fulfilled, had been properly implemented within the time frame which I envisaged." Ruth sat down for a moment. We'll know soon enough, she thought.

Next, the news channel interviewed ANC activist Joe Matthews, who reflected on Mandela's rise: "Many of us thought of him as a kind of Garibaldi, not the thinker, but the warrior, the brave chap who is ready to do anything which has danger in it. This was a fearless man who may not have considered everything."

She glanced at the coffee table where a copy of that morning's *The Star* ran a headline that caught her attention. It reminded its readers that they were living in an African Gotham, a city that had gone too far, too fast, and too deep. The article suggested that Mandela was the closest thing they had to Batman and that he, with much bravery and little rancor toward those who tried to silence him over the years, had responded to a clarion call sent by a desperate country. Will they now heed this man and elect him? And what about the white vote? What will they do?

Again feeling a chill, Ruth looked around.

"Where is the key to the car?" Behind her were two men Ruth had never seen. She felt a chill down her back. "I said, where is the key, Madam? Just give it to me and no-one will get hurt."

"My husband." Ruth said softly. "He has the key."

"And where is your husband?" One of the two men seemed more agitated than the other. "Don't waste my time you white bitch, I can tell when you lie to me." He looked around the room. "Hey, Lwasi, go see if you can find the husband. Where is he now, Madam?"

Ruth was lightheaded. It was hard for her to understand exactly what was happening. The men were not entirely unappealing, physically. One looked a little like a young Sidney Poitier, she thought, and they were both well dressed, and there was almost nothing noteworthy about them except that they were acting like jerks.

Several questions ran through her mind simultaneously. Did the cameras at the gate not tape these men? Did the security guards at the compound's gate not stop to question what clearly did not resemble the members of their community? Did the neighbors, who usually see and hear every goddamn thing, not see or hear these two burly Black men? And, come to think of it… where was Dudu? None of it made sense to Ruth.

"What's going on, Ruthie?" Melvyn walked into the room. "I heard voices." Ruth got up from the sofa and ran to her husband, looking panicked. "It's ok Ruthie. I'm here. Let's sort this out." Melvyn looked at the two men. "Gentlemen. How may I help you."

Lwasi took a step towards Melvyn and, taking a gun which up until now was hidden behind his belt, hit Melvyn against the side of his head with the handle. "I'm not interested in chatting, big boss. Just give me the keys to the car and I won't shoot you—or your wife."

For his part, Mandla waved his revolver around a little. It always helped to do that, he found, as it underlined the threat of getting shot. White people responded better to a little show of force. They had less to say. Less negotiating.

"Lwasi, stop your shit and help the gentleman up," Mandla said, worried that it was getting late and things were about to spiral out of control. They needed another car to make their weekly quota, and this was hopefully the one.

Out of the blue, Lwasi hit Melvyn again. This time, blood gushed and streamed down Melvyn's neck, over his shirt, some splashing on Ruth's arm.

"*Lumka! Lwasi.*" Lwasi was too careless. "*Asifuni kutsala umdla.*" They needed to be careful.

In the background, the TV was still on. Now, footage of candidate Mandela was on the afternoon news. *"He was born Rolihlahla, 'Shaker of Trees.' He became Nelson Mandela and shook the world,"* the narrator said.

Mandla looked at Lwasi and then at Ruth. It was as if time paused, and Mandela's name seemed to lower the temperature in the room. "It means troublemaker. Rolihlahla," Mandla said. "When you just talk."

"Here." Melvyn reached into his trouser pockets and handed the man the keys. "Take it."

"And we won peace standing on our feet, not kneeling on our knees!" Mandela's voice was unmistakable.

"Sharp." Lwasi looked around and briefly considered throwing some stuff into the backseat of the car while they were there and while the people were evidently not going to fight back.

Mandla, who had been quiet for most of the afternoon, walked over to Ruth. "I don't want to hurt you but you have a beautiful Merc, and I have a quota." Mandla nodded at

Lwasi. *"Masihambe,"* Mandla pointed at the door and turned back to Ruth. "But don't call the cops. I'll find you."

Ruth nodded. She expected to get hit as her husband did. But it was over quickly and with as little fanfare as it had started.

It took a few minutes for Melvyn to compose himself. He washed the blood off his face and threw the blood-soaked shirt in the bathroom vanity sink, covering the shirt in cold water. Dudu will take

care of that, he thought. He stared at his reflection in the mirror as the full complexity of what had transpired settled in. He took a few moments then walked to his dressing room, selecting a colorful shirt for that evening's dinner, lest a gray or dull shirt revealed some of the tension he was feeling due to the afternoon's events.

He walked downstairs and poured himself a brandy. "Can I get you one?" Ruth nodded. "By the way, I left my shirt in the basin, in our bathroom—for Dudu. She'll know what to do with it." He handed Ruth a snifter, and then took a small sip of brandy. "Now what?"

Ruth walked to the patio door, checked that they were locked and then made sure the windows were closed and secure. "I don't know, Melvyn. I'm frankly as shocked as you are." She looked around. "How did they get in?"

"Ruth, we have to think before our guests arrive. I have to get my story lined up." Melvyn was increasingly unsettled and worried that Ruth might have her spin on how to make this all go away. "I am the leader of the most liberal party in the country. We are on the eve of what is frankly the biggest important electoral decision this nation has ever made. I cannot go in front of our kids, the press, our neighbors, or this country, and tell them that the one thing they fear most just happened to the man who keeps telling them that this very thing won't happen."

Melvyn felt himself inching closer and closer to what felt like some kind of breakdown. "Two Black men gained access to our gated community, our home, surprised you, assaulted me, threatened you with rape, stole our car…fuck, Ruth. And it's Friday dinner." Melvyn took another sip of whiskey. "What if it doesn't get better? What if this just spirals further and further out of control? What if we wake up with an AK-47 pointed at our faces. What if they raped you?"

"Where was Dudu?" Ruth was sitting on the edge of the sofa. "I just don't know, Melvyn. Why was she not here? Did she know? Did she help them gain access? I know she is a big fan of Mandela and her parents were both members of the communist party."

"I think you're overreacting Ruth." Melvyn was eager for the conversation to end. "We need to move on. I cannot afford to get dragged into anti-Black blame nor appear to be critical of the Black community. It could be detrimental to any form of negotiated settlement not to mention my stature as I campaign for human rights."

"Whatever you say, Melvyn. But you just remember one thing, Mandela is not a God. He won't save us." Ruth felt unsure of the best way to continue the conversation with her husband. "And one of them took my Mandela Bobblehead. You know, the cute one, that dances."

"I'm back, Mrs. Bernstein." Dudu's voice seemed to snap Ruth back to reality. "We ran out of cream for the vichyssoise—can you believe it?"

"Hardly. How long have you been there, Dudu?"

"I just got back. I'm going to finish that soup. It still needs to be puréed."

"Thank you, Dudu. Our guests will be here soon." Ruth was tired and wanted to move on. "And by the way, one of Mr Bernstein's shirts are in the basin upstairs. He got some blood on it. You know how clumsy he can be."

]

3.

Isaac & Jerome

Monday, April 25. 21:00

Beep "All units in the vicinity of Zoo Lake. Possible 921." Bib-bib.

Sergeant Johan Botha was unsure what to do when the dispatch came in. It had been a long day, and Botha was tired. The last few weeks had been a nightmare with constant reports of protests and disturbances, and he had grown increasingly worried about the election. The weather wasn't helping, and the prolonged summer meant more people were out looking for trouble late at night. Warm weather in Johannesburg was always more dangerous. "Ill stick you for a Bimbo's burger." Botha tried to sound upbeat. "There's a good one just around the corner, and their chips are the best. You know, they're so stringy and crispy. Offer going…going…"

"Shall we respond to this call first?" Human immediately wished he hadn't said anything as a burger would have been so good, and now, because he couldn't keep his mouth shut, he knew Botha would feel compelled to respond to the call for fear of being thought of as a lazy slob.

"Ja." Human tried to sound more enthusiastic. "I'll step on it. It's not far from here," he nodded and took a quick right in the direction of Zoo Lake. "Unit 33—on our way What's the address?"

Beep. "18 Cardiff. Over." Bib-bib.

"On our way—over."

Human could tell Botha wasn't exactly thrilled about the callout. "We'll wrap it up quickly. It's probably nothing. Just a parked car. You know how these people get in this neighborhood these days."

Tell me about it. So paranoid." Botha felt relieved that Human was in high spirits. Maybe he'll even buy him some extra chips at Bimbos on the way back to the precinct. "I'll take Newport down to Crescent, and we should be there in a few."

Crossing Bolton Road, a colossal ANC billboard of Nelson Mandela's face had been covered in graffiti. WINNIE'S STILL IN THE POOH, the large hostile sprayed letters read, an insult—and pun—inspired by Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, likely next South African First Lady. Madikizela-Mandela's reputation never recovered since she was found guilty in 1991 for the kidnapping of 14-year-old Stompie Moeketsi Seipei in 1989. Seipei's battered body was found in a field near Soweto, his throat slit, his murder over time becoming a permanent stain on Madikizela-Mandela's carefully curated image as possible first lady of democracy and, one can only imagine, a strain on her marriage. It was also—unfortunately for her—far from the only murder and kidnapping Madikizela-Mandela was allegedly connected to. "Fucken' bitch," Botha said, "him I can still deal with, but Winnie?" He shook his head. His was a view held, and frequently expressed, by many. "I'm pretty right," he said, for no apparent reason, "so they'd better watch their step." He paused for a moment. And I'm not alone."

Since being lumped together by the department, Botha has always suspected Human of being a lefty, but a favorable moment to bring it up and maybe explain a little more about his position and history never came up.

"As long as you are happy, man." Human said in a low voice. "And as long as you don't do harm."

"Happy." Botha snorted a little. "What is happy anyway? It's hard to find in ourselves and pointless to try and find in others. What makes you happy? I'd love to know." He lit a cigarette and rolled down the window.

Human had no intention of continuing the conversation. It seemed to him to be of the utmost importance to just get along and not cause waves. "Truth." He couldn't stop himself from sounding a little accusatory. "I believe in truth. And doing the right thing. That makes me happy." Human paused for a moment and wished he had instead just kept quiet. It was easier to just not talk about this stuff. "It's a different world out there. We have to keep our eyes open and not get caught in a stupid situation. I think we'll have to watch our step from now on."

"Yes. We certainly will!" Botha took a drag from his Gitanes. "I don't know if I was born like this, you know, or if it's just the effect of policing and where I come from." Human nodded. He thought knew what Botha meant, but he couldn't be exactly sure. Something about what Botha said felt a little like he was trying to say something but that he didn't know how. Botha took another quick drag. "One imagines what others will be like, and that once you got to know them they'll accept you you'll both realize that you have a lot in common. But then reality is a little different."

Although they were raised in different parts of the country and there was somewhat of an age difference, fundamentally, they came from the same place, and it was a place white Afrikaners could reject, denying its grip, or—the easier option—they could just go with it. For Human, it was the former.

"At the time Apartheid came into power, it wasn't that bad, you know." Botha blew a few smoke rings, took a last drag, and flicked what remained of the cigarette out of the window. He cleared his throat. "Separate Development gave non-whites autonomy, you know, their own schools and hospitals. Besides, our people were done with being told what to do, first by the Dutch and then the English, and it sure as hell wasn't going to be the Blacks. And they were dangerous." Botha raised a finger as if to stress the importance of that point. "They were uncivilized—rough—and

without much education at that point. We were sharing the land, but we just had to make what happens on it. We did nothing wrong. Nothing."

"But to not have a say? On land that, just a few generations ago, was yours?" Human stopped himself from saying more. It was better in certain situations to keep quiet and not inflame the discussion for fear of eliciting a response that, quite frankly, he did really want to have at that very moment. He wondered if his keeping silent was signaling Botha a green light. But what was the alternative? Human was always somewhat allergic to the innocent routine, trotted out so readily by those with blood on their hands, metaphorically at least. There was, however, no changing Botha's mind and so, it would be a waste of time to afflict a made-up mind with facts. Human knew that to Botha, there was no shame in Apartheid, nor the role white South Africans played in it, nor was there contrition. But it was early days for democracy and against all expectations, in the near future, white shame and contrition would characterize Archbishop Desmond Tutu's Truth and Reconciliation hearings and make them so remarkable.

But here, in 1994, in the eve of an election, the voyeuristic mechanisms of white spectatorship coupled with an almost epistemic anti-Black prejudice had produced Black suffering that was largely ignored, denied, and swept under the rug of—God-given, they claimed—white righteousness. At the same time, that very Black suffering was viewed as nothing more than an abstraction, an expression of someone denied the basic human need to be recognized and counted. And so, by the end of the 80s, Black South Africa—and Indian, and coloured—having been denied social context and any form of agency, had become communities constructed of tropes.

"I remember my mom telling me about one of Dr. H.F. Verwoerd's first speeches around Apartheid in the late fifties. He was still Minister of Bantu Affairs and the government printed a booklet that she managed to get one from somewhere. Anyway, Verwoerd compared separate development to a tree that government had given Black South Africans, and that it was going to be up to them to nurture that tree slowly until, over time, it would grow powerful, and strong." Botha

raised his finger again. "And now, look. Mark my words. The moment whites vote for Mandela tomorrow to be their leader and to be equal, will be the very moment Blacks in this country start to think that they are better than those very whites who gave them that democracy—that tree. There is no such thing as equality."

Human leaned away and watched the endless rows of policy posters on all the lampposts, each promising the same thing. A few minutes later, they turned onto Cardiff. "I'm not going to turn the siren or lights on and scare off any intruders," Human said. "Just in case they get away." A new silver Audi convertible was parked under a Jacaranda. The street was deserted, appearing like any other upscale Johannesburg neighborhood, albeit with more extensive gardens and higher walls to keep riff-raff out.

"I'll hop out and see what's going on." Botha was quick, and Human decided to call in that they had arrived and seen the vehicle that had been reported as suspicious by a neighbor. "Unit 33—I have eyes on the vehicle on Cardiff near Zoo Lake."

Beep. "10-4, 33." Bip-bip.

Botha walked as close as he could to the high perimeter wall. Walls, burglar bars, and elaborate security systems had become a hallmark of any South African home—anything to keep "unwanted elements" out. The "neighborhood watch" had taken off a few years before, and as the name suggests, mainly consisted of neighbors—communities— looking after themselves, and was born out of the fact that the South African Police Services could barely keep up with significant crime, let alone patrolling the suburbs. But the "watch" soon developed a more sinister side, encouraging and enabling ordinary folk to keep track of each and report activity that could be seen as pro-ANC or anti-government. It gave ordinary places extraordinary powers of surveillance.

Botha tried to avoid any street lights wanting his appearance on the suspected crime scene to be a total surprise. From their outlines against the streetlights, he could tell there were people in the car while the streamed-up windows and sporadic movements suggested he was about to interrupt a

sexual encounter or some form of debauchery, at least. Maybe drugs. Coke even. He tapped on the passenger window to no response, and he knocked again.

The window rolled down two inches. Botha, now adjusting to the dim light, noticed the driver, who looked vaguely familiar. Botha couldn't quite put his finger on it, and he had seen the face before, but try as he liked, Botha generally had difficulty recognizing Black men. He looked at the passenger, who smiled at him.

Human had by now joined Botha at the car and walked around to the driver's side. He knocked on the window. "Can you please step out of the car, sir?"

Botha watched as the muscular man opened the door and stood beside the car. It was apparent that his zipper was down, his belt still undone. "Officer, we were just getting back to my friend's place," the tall man said.

"You're the actor." Human said. "What's that show again?"

"Isaac Molefi." The man reached out his hand to Human. "I'm on *Enoch, Prophet of God*, on SABC 2."

"I don't watch SABC shows so much anymore. Mostly M-Net." Human, for a moment, thought that he sounded dismissive, but the truth was that he never watched anything except satellite television. Certainly, he would not watch a Xhosa show on the national broadcaster. "Mind stepping with me to the vehicle, Sir?" Human asked. Molefi looked back into the car before allowing himself to be led away.

Botha wondered why Molefi looked back inside the car with such concern. It may have been a weapon of some sort or drugs. It's always one of the two. He looked at the man in the passenger seat. "Mind stepping out of the vehicle?" The man nodded and got out of the Audi. He was tall with light hair and, Botha felt, was trying too hard to avoid eye contact. "Are you ok?" The guy nodded.

"Turn around and face the vehicle." The man complied and looked in the direction of Molefi, who, by now, was leaning over the police car. Botha patted down both legs, then frisked the man's back, starting at the top and working down to the buttocks, then the arms and his chest. His right hand darted quickly between the suspect's legs, and he pulled back as he felt a fleshy outline. "What the fuck…?" Botha felt a little panicked and dirty. And outraged. The firmness of the man made him a little excited in turn. "What's your name?"

"Jerome Abrams, sir."

"I should have put one and one together sooner." Botha could detect a hint of cologne and a whiff of soap. "Isn't this the cruising place? Zoo Lake, I mean?"

"That's my house, officer," Jerome replied, pointing at the house behind him. "I live here."

Botha looked at the wall. "Your house, right? You don't say. Big wall. For keeping things in, or keeping people out?" He pointed at Molefi. "Is that your boyfriend?" Botha paused. "Do you generally go for Black dick?"

"Yes. My boyfriend… I mean." Jerome looked in the direction of the police vehicle. Isaac was leaning against it while Human was talking on the radio transmitter. Neither were looking in Jerome's direction, hidden as he was in the shadows of the Jacarandas.

Botha felt himself go hard. He clumsily pulled down Jerome's shorts and underwear with one hand while covering his mouth with the other. "I'll show you what you are missing out on. Maybe this will sort you out." Botha pressed against the man's body. There was something slutty about him. Botha closed his eyes and felt a dizzying rush. He would come if he wasn't careful, since he thrusted so forcefully and had been so remarkably turned on by the guy, he didn't have the time nor the inclination to put on a condom.

For just a moment, one mad second, Jerome pushed back, rolling his eyes back in his head. He couldn't explain it. It wasn't that he enjoyed it, but for the shortest of moments, he let go. His eyes locked with Isaac's, who was still at the car.

Botha suddenly remembered he had forgotten to use a condom. He didn't feel a bolt of fear; instead, he felt a little annoyed that despite all those campaigns warning everyone of AIDS, they didn't really work for him. He went a little limp, nonetheless. Besides, feeling a man respond physically like this, wanting him, still made Botha uncomfortable. In this setting at least.

Jerome quickly pulled up his shorts.

"You'd better shut the fuck up—about this—unless you want people to find out about you and your Black boyfriend."

Sergeant Human and Molefi had finished the ID verification process at the patrol car and walked toward them. Molefi put his arm around Jerome. "Come. Let's go inside." They turned around and walked to a large iron gate.

The night had turned a little hot and muggy. Human looked at Botha. "What the fuck was that?" he asked.

"Hey, back off man, I don't know what you think you saw. Just a routine frisk and search." Botha pulled a face. "Fucking *moffies*."

"I'm not sure what just happened there," Human said. He didn't feel like saying anything more. At that moment, he felt vaguely conscious that he was at a junction in his life, simultaneously an end and beginning. Either way, he felt he needed to make a change.

Botha walked away and shrugged. "Whatever, dude. It doesn't matter anyway."

Notes on Mandela for that book that isn't *this* one.

1.

Born in 1918 into the AbaThembu, an isiXhosa-speaking Nguni tribe,
Nelson "Rolihlahla" Mandela. "Troublemaker." That would become his telos.
Troublemaker is the origin story of Mandela, the terrorist, and Mandela, the mythology.
And maybe, being a troublemaker is the point and his brand of good trouble
—saint or bête noire—is what we emulate. And invoke.

2.

Mandela attends Johannesburg's University of the Witwatersrand in 1943.
The only Black student, he faces significant prejudice. Reacting against pressure from hostile white students, Mandela voices support for the British, a risky move as the Afrikaner was/is still raw from the wounds of the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899 - 1902) during which Britain invented the concentration camp and embarked on a Scorched Earth policy, which left Afrikaner farms burnt to the ground, the land left salted and fallow. Mandela joins the African National Congress (ANC).
He works to expand the ANC into a robust youth league (ANCYL).

3.

South Africa—white S.A. anyway—votes in 1948 and elects
Dutch Reformed Cleric and fervent nationalist D.F. Malan.
White voters feel threatened by the ever-increasing, more radical Black political class.
They demand a policy of enhanced racial segregation that would touch all aspects of living.
Nationalists name the existing system of social control, the one introduced by Britain,
the same one that incapacitated non-whites: Apartheid—separation.

4.

Britain invented Apartheid.

Britain invented Apartheid.

Britain invented the system that would come to be known as Apartheid.

British colonial history in South Africa is bloody and brutal. After prolonged tension between the Dutch and English, British sovereignty is forced on the country in 1902 and in 1910, the Union of South Africa is launched. The British allow some Afrikaner self-governance yet, crucially, do not allow Black South Africans a say in elections or the running of the country. Winston Churchill, then Under-Secretary of British Colonies, proposes that Afrikaners be awarded self-rule. Churchill admits Afrikaner self-rule would exclude Black South Africans for the foreseeable future. The new Afrikaner parliament—reporting to London—embarks on a process of passing broad segregation laws. Many segregation laws are mere augmentations of existing British pass rules, and land acts designed to keep Blacks South Africans from traveling unencumbered, gaining employment, or acquiring land. And so, foundations for what would be termed "Apartheid" are already in place and part of soft discourse when the National Party wins the 1948 election on an "Apartheid" platform.

Britain invented Apartheid.

5.

Mandela is elected national president of the ANCYL.

He studies the work of Marx, Lenin, and Zedong.

"I found myself strongly drawn to the idea of a classless society which in my mind, was similar to traditional African culture where life was shared and communal."

- Mandela, Nelson. *Long Walk to Freedom.* Abacus, 1995.

6.

Inspired by Zedong and Che Guevara, Mandela forms “Umkhonto we Sizwe” or “M.K.”

(Spear of the Nation), the armed military wing of the ANC.

7.

M.K. executes 57 bombings in December 1961 alone.

8.

The CIA, fearing Mandela’s communist leanings, tips off South African authorities.

Mandela is arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment in 1964.

He spends 18 years imprisoned on Robben Island in a 2.4 x 2.1-meter cell.

Mandela is transferred to Pollsmoor Prison, located in the Cape Town suburb Tokai, in 1982.

He is allowed a roof garden. And he may receive 52 letters per year. One for every week.

In 1985 Mandela is offered release from prison by President P.W. Botha.

His potential release is on condition that he renounces violence as a political tool.

Mandela declines.

9.

1989. President P.W. Botha suffers a stroke.

Botha survives, but F.W. de Klerk replaces Botha as State President.

De Klerk believes Apartheid is non-viable for the future of the country.

Mandela is released in 1990. Unconditionally.

10.

The beatification of Mandela commences.

4.

Nurse Poppie Weyers

Monday, April 25. 21:00

It was just after nine when Nurse Poppie Weyers finished her rounds and decided to call her son. He had been uncharacteristically quiet lately, and she suspected that, like her, he had seen an increase in criminal activity and behavior that could only be linked to a greater sense that society was somewhat unhinged.

Are you sleeping yet?"

"No, Ma. I'm not that old." Gert didn't dare tell his mother that he was kneeling in front of Rita, parting her with his lips.

"I thought I'd call. My shift only ends later, it's nice and quiet now."

"It's fine Ma. How are you?"

"This line is a little muffled. Are you having dinner? Don't speak with a mouth full, my boy. How did I raise you?" Poppie looked around the smoking section of the canteen, her eyes resting on a modest election poster. IT'S TIME. She wondered what it would be time—the whole thing did not

make sense to her. She took another drag of her cigarette. "No, I'm fine, thank you. You're quiet these days. Probably the run-up to this election. Or is that girl keeping you busy?"

Gert hoisted himself onto the sofa. "We're busy at work, Ma. Things are wild. Everyone's a little anxious. You know. It must be bad there too?"

"And that girl?"

"Rita, Ma. Her name is Rita." Still naked, Rita snuggled against Gert, her head on his thighs. He covered the mouthpiece. "It's going to take a while. She's bored at work."

"Just leave me out of it. I know what she thinks of me." Rita rolled her eyes. She got up and pulled on her panties. "Do you want some tea? I'm going to make some. Rooibos. Tell her that."

"Yes please. Sorry Ma. I was chatting to Rita. She is making rooibos tea."

"That's nice. So she's there? A little late in the evening for a tea party." She sounded somewhat taken aback. "I wish you would find yourself another girl. Many fish in the ocean my boy. And no need to get stuck with the wrong one."

"Leave it Ma. Rita and I have plans." He made big eyes at Rita who looked back at him with a her mouth open, feigning surprise.

There was a pause. "Is she pregnant?"

Gert looked around the room, his eyes rested on the small stack of pregnancy manuals Rita had bought since they found out. "We'll still talk, Ma. It's late. I don't want to start a whole thing now." He wished he didn't answer the call. Not with Rita watching and listening, anyway.

"That girl isn't one of us, my child. You'd better not start something here. Get yourself a good Afrikaans girl. Maybe at church. Or ask around. But you can definitely do better."

"Rita speaks Afrikaans at home, Ma."

"Really, Gerhardus. Are Rita's people from the Cape?" It was a loaded question. And a coded one, the Cape Province being the historic home of mixed race or Coloured—the preferred term by the group themselves—since the Dutch settled the country in 1652.

Indeed, the whole question of language bothered Rita a lot. Even as a kid, the pressure was immense to use two versions of the language; one version of Afrikaans—or Afrikaaps as some called it—was best reserved for home or within the Coloured areas like Mitchell's Plain or Athlone, where she grew up and where her mother was a soprano with the Eoan Group, an opera company consisting entirely of Coloured singers but who was denied the privilege of performing at the state-funded Nico Malan Opera House on the Cape Town foreshore. Instead, the Eoan mounted productions of operas such as La Traviata and Tosca in the grand, purpose-built Joseph Stone Auditorium in Athlone, a brutalist building surrounded by a tarred parking area and a total absence of landscaping. Few whites, if any, ever set foot in the building.

Afrikaaps was a leftover from the country's settler past, developing since the 1500s and taking shape as the Dutch, English, South-East Asian, and Portuguese started encountering indigenous Khoi and San Bushmen. The language was first taught in madrassas and written in Arabic script.

Afrikaner nationalism preferred a more refined version of the language, its vocabulary, and structure reflecting its Dutch provenance only, as opposed to the roughness of its non-white kitchen version, and so, in 1925, Afrikaans was formally recognized. It has since flourished as an indigenous South African language.

"You and your mom call these koeksisters," Tina once remarked, pointing at the syrupy, deep-fried cake-like confection loved across the country. "We call them koesiesters. And we make them differently, too." She went on to tell Karel about the frustrations of living in a place where your version of something is overlooked and replaced with an adjusted—often defanged and less complex—version. She touched briefly on how, if someone wanted to hurt her and her people, all they needed to do was talk in a negative way about their language. Like Karel's mother did. She tried to explain how much of her identity was wrapped up in that version of the language they shared.

That she *was* her language. And that, until they could take pride and comfort in how they spoke, they could feel no pride in themselves, and comfort would be hard to achieve. "Will this election change that? Will electing Mandela bring me acceptance? Blacks don't love my version of Afrikaans either, but at least, I hope, I won't have to feel ashamed of existing anymore," she said. "Hopefully, after all this, I'll have my voice. As a woman and as a non-white South African. I'll no longer have to be silent."

"She's from Kempton Park, Ma. We've already talked about this. Some of her cousins went to *Jeugland High School*." It wasn't worth explaining that Rita had recently relocated to the Johannesburg area, nor that her family was vast, with half classified white and half not.

"I find that hard to believe. *Jeugland*. Really? That's in Magnus Malan's ward. He'd probably die if he knew there was a "hotnot" in one of his schools. In my day she wouldn't have dropped a pencil." Poppie was referring to the many practices used by the Apartheid regime to reclassify ordinary people as Non-European. Having a pencil get stuck in a full head of hair was as close to immediate reclassification as it got.

"Leave it, Ma. And "hotnot" is a pretty bad term. I would prefer you didn't say that." He was relieved that Rita had gone back to the kitchen, out of earshot.

There was a long silence.

"Have you seen what's happening in Zimbabwe? White farmers are killed on their farms by the Blacks. Women are raped and then hanged through their breasts with meat hooks."

"I don't believe it, Ma. It's just paranoid political shit."

"The Blacks are also taking their farms in Zim. Just watch. It'll happen here too. It's probably already happening."

"We're ok, Ma. Things will work out."

"You'll probably vote for that Black."

"Mandela, Ma. And yes. I'm going to vote for Mandela. Things must change. We can't go on like this any longer." Gert glanced at the kitchen wall. An election poster was prominently positioned next to the fridge. He smiled. He thought about the day he took it from the notice board at the police station because any form of sloganeering was verboten, He still got a good feeling every time he looked at the poster. He liked how this felt. It was a considerable departure from the doom and gloom of the Nationalist posters and leaflets, which, despite the anti-sloganeering rule, littered the canteen warning of impending doom as the country approached Election Day.

"Your grandfather is turning in his grave. His entire family was killed in the Anglo Boer War. And now this. I see a lot of good here in the casualties. Build a nation with these people…"

"I have to go, Ma."

"Ok my boy. Listen. Do your dad a favor. Squash his traffic ticket please? And come visit." She paused for a moment. "Bring the girl with you."

5.

Sergeant Johan Botha

Monday, April 25. 23:00

Instead of going to bed, Botha decided to brave the streets of Hillbrow—a short walk from his place on Soper Road in Berea—and get Fontana to go. He wasn't really in the mood for roasted chicken, but Fontana was delicious—iconic in the city—and honestly, the way things were going, he wasn't sure Hillbrow or Fontana would be around much longer, so he might as well just go and have it while it was still there. Botha ordered a roasted quarter-leg with extra peri-peri spice and decided to eat it at one of the banquettes at the back of Fontana where the "druggies 'n trannies" as he called them, usually hang out, especially after eleven when all the nightclubs were open. He ripped the chicken pieces apart, ravenous, its skin fatty and red with chili powder, the bits near the bone somewhat too translucent and gelatinous, he thought, but at least it seemed cooked. It was, all in all, somewhat disappointing and not deserving of the praise bestowed on it by the inebriated masses. He got up and decided to walk off the fatty chicken feeling.

After a few minutes walking down Pretoria Street, he suspected that everything of filth ever produced by the human race was gathered on the 3 kilometers of the densely populated sidewalk in

anticipation of the big day. There was an exciting frisson in the air he couldn't quite get into, but it was nonetheless a refreshing change from the creeping angst one normally sensed on these busy streets. From practically every lamp post and on every conceivable surface, the face of a smiling Mandela added to the general feeling of optimism and cheer. It felt, to Botha, like Christmas. But better. And without any ersatz shine or hollow jadedness that seems to accompany the festive season in warm climates.

He passed the underground gambling club that operated on a special license, an astounding fact, since gambling was illegal in the profoundly Protestant country. Still, here it was, slots and sluts just looking for a gullible trader or lonely daddy from the suburbs. Botha walked by small pods of singing Hare Krishna devotees who, saffron-robed and shaved, were beating Khol drums and tinkling little kartals while handing out copies of *The Higher Taste*, imploring bystanders to "Hari Bol." Having declined to "chant the name of Hari," and shook his head at the recipe book, Botha crossed the street and considered briefly going into *Three Sisters* or *Garbo's*, but he wasn't quite up to dealing with campy waiters, handsy patrons, and dismissive drag queens. Nor was he—it was past ten, after all—up to *Summit Club Skyline Bar*, where go-go boys in g-strings danced in suspended cages over the dance floor, and the owners were rumored to put poppers in the air-conditioning which would explain the orgiastic excesses of the pitch-black backroom. Not that Botha, only an occasional tourist to the delights of Sodom, would know, of course.

The twinkly lights of the Café Kranzler and Café Wien, a few doors further on, caught his eye, and he suddenly felt an intense craving for Café Wien's Mozart Kaffee. Café Wien was celebrated for knowing their *Kaffee Obermayer* from their *Überstürzter Neumann,* all made with Julius Meinl dark roast beans. The coffeehouse was plush, deliberately silent, and primarily white, both in decor and clientele. Sometimes, when they had too much to drink, old German men would sit in small groups and complain about the state of the country while they hoped no one asked when they immigrated to Africa or what they did during the war. South Africa was the perfect place for other

people from naughty countries—finger pointing was strongly discouraged. Glass houses, and all. But everywhere one went it did feel as if the party was about to end.

A young Black girl was seated on the lap of an older gentleman who was quiet, for a moment, Botha thought he was dead—the older man jolted into animation when the girl got up to fetch another drink. It was unclear if they arrived together or if, perhaps, she was employed by Café Wien as a waitress. She returned from the bar with two small glasses—Amarula or Bailey's, Botha suspected—and positioned herself between the older man's legs. He looked flush with pleasure. And Botha heard her calling him "oupa." She looked over at him and winked, and feeling a little embarrassed, he went to the counter to pay for his coffee and cake. Botha suspected that he'd seen one of "oupa's" last true pleasures, and, truth be told, it was somewhat sad. He suspected that the beautiful girl merely indulged the older man and, in fact, that she was in control. Botha thought how fast things were changing and that things seemed less innocent than they did.

On the way down Pretoria Street, he decided to pop into *The Summit* after all. He made his way to the private lounge on the second floor, where younger guys congregated near the entrance and made eye contact with visiting men escorting them to the bar or the plush red sofas where they could get to know each other a little better. It was obvious that everyone was here to fuck and that most discussions were a waste of time—a means to get close for a moment or two and gauge the level of submission being offered while making sure the man's breath wasn't too bad.

Botha was greeted by a muscular Black guy who smiled at him and took his hand, leading him to an empty sofa near the bar. "Where are you from?" Botha asked. "Jo'burg?"

"Zim," the guy said. "My name is Alex." Guys from Zimbabwe are always so sexy, Botha thought. It was a common thing for white South Africans to think more highly of Zimbabweans—from either the Shona or Ndebele groups—than any of the Black tribes of South Africa. He shook the guy's hand, introduced himself, and ordered a drink.

The man on the sofa right next to Botha's smiled at him. "Nice," he said, winking at Alex. "Black men can be so beautiful. Racism is such an ugly thing. And really, it has no place in our community. All this hostility."

Botha was slightly alarmed at the thought that he was assumed to be part of "the community," but, at the same time, his sexual orientation was becoming an undeniable fact and one that he felt increasingly conflicted over.

"What's really at stake here is neither political or economic. Or cultural," the guy on the next sofa continued. "It's basic and primal. It's about a nice boy to fuck." Botha smiled and looked away, a little embarrassed at the guy and hoping that Alex didn't think he shared the guy's views. At that moment, the waiter returned with their drinks, and Alex got up to fetch an extra serviette to wipe the table. "Nice choice," the guy next to Botha said, admiring Alex as he walked to the bar. "There's something horny and slutty about him. But very butch." Alex came back and started wiping the table. For a moment, Botha felt bad that Alex immediately assumed his role to be that of cleaner, or general factotum or willing flesh to lecherous men like the guy on the sofa. "Pity that they created all this fascism in their ultra-leftist stupor for us to try and sort out. And then lied about fascism being far right."

"See, this is the problem with false arguments and the greatest legacy of the Apartheid regime, the way they turn meaning around and how they lie. I mean, it makes everything one can possibly say sound pointless. You see, fascism is always anti-left. I may not know a lot, and I may just be a dumb kid from the buffer against the Blacks that is white middle-class South Africa, but I do know this. That the type of fascism preached by Botha and their government was built on a fundamental rejection of anything left and the most basic values we could possibly hold on to." Botha continued in a calm and friendly tone that hid his frustration over this issue. "This nationalist fascism was supposed to be a show of unity to suppress liberals and their laissez-faire capitalism, not

to mention any mention of socialism, while having the audacity to call one of the least free countries in the world a democracy. It would be funny if it were less tragic.

"Are you scared?" the guy asked, after a prolonged pause, looking at Botha. "You sound scared. If you are scared you are right to be. I don't think we're out of the woods. In most of Africa, the whites are really not welcome, am I right?" he nodded at Alex, "and all over the continent, we see sporadic attacks against white farmers and their families, their farms burnt down or taken over. I think we are still headed for a civil war." By now, he was frothing a little at the mouth. "This will all be settled with pangas and AK-47s."

"Look, I don't care," Botha said, annoyed that the guy was taking over the conversation and, by extension, getting in the way of what should have been a quick fuck with a hot guy. "I'm probably just a naïve white guy—what do I know, right—but I think things are looking better. We just all need to get back to normal. All this negativity in the country has been like a cancer and we cannot go on like this." He wasn't sure exactly who he was talking to anymore. Part of him wanted to let the Black guy next to him feel welcome, while another part wanted to hit the guy on the sofa next to them, and yet another part just wanted to go home.

"Well, you just have a great evening. Make this boy get on all fours and show you his ass—we're all pink on the inside." Botha shot the guy a look and nodded at Alex. It was time to leave. The sourness, the willful negativity—the sheer lack of humor—the man had made his point or tried to anyhow. Botha wasn't too upset at the guy or how the conversation turned, he was sure he wouldn't remember most of it, but he was aware of how he felt, looking at a horny, broken, older, white man in Africa for whom life, as he had known it, had come to an end and the prospect of the new country about to be revealed was a place of dread. It was easy, Botha thought, to have your little opinions, be all negative, and pretend that somehow you understood something more profound about life. Still, here, in the absence of love in a space filled with transactional sexual promise,

somehow, they were already living the new democracy. Alex took his hand. He would, for a few hours at least, make Botha happy.

Part Two

Tuesday. April 26, 1994.

6.

Captain Mouton

Tuesday, April 26. Noon.

Sergeant Karel Human woke up later than he anticipated. The air conditioning of his small rental apartment made a low buzzing noise, and although his headache was gone, he still felt under the weather. He was relieved that it was his day off, and with the election looming, he needed a break and the opportunity to regroup a little, especially after the events of the previous evening.

He made a decision to drop in at the precinct unannounced that afternoon for an off-record talk with the commanding officer. For now, however, his primary mission was to find a pair of clean jeans, which proved harder than expected, the jeans not in the usual pile of daily stuff he wears around the house and for minor errands. He wondered, first, if the new maid forgot to do the laundry, then if she even *did* laundry, and that maybe everyone was right: good help was just getting harder to find. He checked the empty bin when he found his neatly stacked laundry in the wardrobe; he vowed to himself to be less suspicious and less prone to conclusions.

After getting dressed and putting mousse in his hair, Human walked over to the window and opened the blinds fully. From the thirtieth floor, the view of the city was exhilarating. Yet, here and

there were pockets of decay. There seemed to be fewer Jewish grannies around despite the fact that Temple Israel, the oldest progressive shul in South Africa, was just down the road. The same Temple Israel that was, incidentally, designed by Hermann Kallenbach, the alleged lover of Mahatma Gandhi when he lived in Johannesburg.

A sense of righteousness floated around Human, and most of the other drivers seemed in high spirits. The Black drivers, mostly younger men he noticed, were uncharacteristically gracious as if the promise of a new republic caused them to be considerate and generous when sharing the road. Human was grateful as he had gone to bed angry at Botha and, as a result, slept poorly, waking up with a headache; in addition, he had a cold sore starting on his lip, and he was apprehensive about that evening's shift. Something felt off. He was sure that a casual conversation with the commanding officer would help.

On his way out, he passed his neighbors' open door. Christie and Joey seemed to be in good spirits, excited about the election, and, as members of the monied class—both were daughters of university professors—they had little in the way of hang-ups about the country's future. Instead, much like him, they were more conflicted about their past and heritage and had developed a certain kowtowing quality in the hope that "others" felt more comfortable around them and, perhaps, would see the Afrikaner less as a monolith.

Joey was covered in what looked like red hives. "Yes, I was mosquito food last night," she said with a frown.

"I have some lotion for that. Calamine or something. I have an extra bottle. Want me to get it?" Human asked.

"I'd love that. Thank you. Anything to make the itching stop, but let me quickly get you some coffee."

The coffee was instant. And mostly chicory—*Koffiehuis*—you could tell, from that alone, that this was once a Commonwealth country, Human thought. "Let me get that lotion quickly." He got

up, taking his mug of hot chicory with him. Back at his place he poured it down the sink before grabbing the lotion and heading back. He gave Joey the lotion and told her she could keep it—his mom always sends him more.

"Are you ready for the next twenty four hours?," Joey asked.

Human nodded. "Just another night really. This city does get wild most evenings."

Joey looked a little disappointed with his answer. "The paper said they expect it to be exceptionally peaceful and that most people are tired of the ongoing violence. It even called this a period of optimism, and they used the word renaissance. I mean. I know we are at this crazy place in our history, but it feels like Mandela has made everyone want to be better people." She paused and looked at him to gauge whether he was at least somewhat in agreement.

"I want to agree with you, of course, and with the paper, but I have seen some things and some people use Mandela as an excuse to do some fucked-up things." Human was aware that he should turn the tone of the conversation around. "I'll just say two things. That with some people you get the feeling that Apartheid will forever remain their excuse for the shit they do. Like a kid that refuses to grow up. The other thing is that the country is lucky to have a figure such as Mandela. and because of him, there is a lot of goodwill in the world towards us. Every country wants to reward us for making better choices. We're not Germany after the war. We fucked up, we tried to do better, and we gave the world a set of role models they can get behind. De Klerk, Tutu, Mandela, I mean, it doesn't get better than that."

Indeed, as the country was preparing to end a violent era and embark on a more peaceful and prosperous one, it was also discovering what it meant to have a global presence. Much of the Western world saw the new South Africa as well situated to play a pivotal role on the continent. Since De Klerk took over from P.W. Botha, a man widely disliked for his demeanor as much as for his conservative policies, the country was already viewed as a model of conflict resolution, economic development, and the torch-bearer for democracy and human rights.

And yet, while building up to the renaissance that would be Mandela, the country seemed slow to deliver on the massive promise others seemed to attach to it. The country's continental primacy was at risk of being made redundant by its reluctance to lead, as if it had never learned how to do just that, especially in the face of African hostility to Pretoria's possible economic expansion and widespread doubt over the country's newfound commitment to democracy. In addition, it had to be asked whether South Africa truly represented Africa in a global setting. It didn't take a genius to be realistic about the internal challenges faced by the Mandela administration nor question how it would tackle the profound inequality left in Apartheid's wake, coupled with the fact that the country's military was by now neutered and performative rather than muscular and robust. To say nothing of the pressures on internal collaboration that would require to move out of what was essentially a gridlocked and fragmented quarrel of a country, likely to affect how sub-Saharan Africa would function for the foreseeable future.

It was all hinging on the next day and the man on the poster—the face of freedom. And how he would harness the received power and goodwill that comes from being the dominant force on the continent. It would be up to Mandela to explore the country's complex and tenuous bonds with Africa in a post-Apartheid setting while examining the ways in which the county may translate his considerable diplomatic weight into tangible policy and a sustainable way out of the mess it was in.

But the one thing Mandela—South Africa—had, as it teetered on the edge of democracy, was the possible rediscovery of what Africa once was: a free place, inventive, with enormous capacity for good; it was confident and embraced, in a holistic way, its diversity, nature, and spirituality. It was what Thabo Mbeki, vice-President under Mandela, would describe as a "rediscovery of our soul," and Mbeki would influence Mandela by referring to the South African renaissance as a "journey of self-discovery and the restoration of our self-esteem." And so, on the eve of the election, this was a country at a crossroads. It was deciding how to deal with recent

memory. It had an ambition to be reborn as an untarnished site of knowledge, to rediscover old customs that were discarded and undervalued by an uncaring regime. On the eve of Mandela's election, the country was ready to develop a shared oral and visual memory as a Rainbow Nation. A place that could.

When Human got to the precinct, the assistant to Captain Mouton asked him to wait for thirty minutes or so. "Have a coffee. Come back now-now." Human understood now-now to indicate a lapse of time greater than 5 minutes, which would be called "now" and roughly half of "just now," which could mean an hour or never. Unless her now-now was short, the time of his return felt like a thirty-minute thing either way. "That's a shiner." She was referring to his cold sore, which had started to bloom over the last hour and was now feeling dry with a hint of burn. "I get those too. Try some Zambuk ointment—it's nifty stuff. It works for everything; I can let you dab your pinky in mine to try it."

"That would be nice, thank you. Let me have a quick coffee first."

"Good idea. The Zambuk will make the coffee taste like camphor."

The coffee from the canteen was revolting, watery, and virtually undrinkable. Again. There was a little table in the corner staffed by two people who looked suspiciously lefty. "Hey, were are here to encourage all personnel to vote tomorrow. It's ok, we aren't here representing any particular party. We just want to make sure people know that every vote counts."

"Thank you, I am definitely voting," Human replied.

The voting girl nodded enthusiastically. "Human rights, and voting rights are incredibly important." She was so quick with her answer that Human wasn't sure she understood exactly what she was saying, but she was so earnest, he thought, that it didn't really matter. It was good enough to know that, as far as he could tell, everyone he'd spoken to, were going to vote.

"It's funny," he said, "when people talk about human rights, I sometimes wonder exactly they are talking about? What does it mean? Or do they really mean civil rights? And what is the difference?" She didn't respond, and although it was clear that she perhaps had some options on the subject, years of thought control under the Apartheid regime made people reticent to speak out about issues that could get them reported.

"We are not affiliated to a certain party. So I can't really say." The girl shrugged.

After the pause started to feel a little long, Human put down the undrinkable coffee. "Well—maybe Mandela can organize us better coffee. I mean, this chicory stuff…just can't get away from it."

He decided to check with Mouton's assistant. Maybe her now-now had turned into a now. "Oh hey. He's ready for you," she said as she slipped him a small container. "I had an extra one. The Zambuk. Sort me out next time," she winked.

Captain Mouton was seated at his desk. "Good afternoon Sergeant Human." He didn't get up, instead waving Human in the direction of the two available chairs at the desk. "Please sit down. How may I help you?"

Human extended his hand and sat down. Behind Mouton was a collection of framed photos. Human couldn't help but stare. All but one showed rows of perfectly lined up school kids—all white—in white athletic wear, caught mid-motion doing some form of group exercise, each kid looking excited and proud to be part of the event.

"Me," Mouton said, pointing at one of the pictures with his much younger version shaking hands with a man in a dark fedora, "with General Magnus Malan. It was the greatest day of my career. He came to the local school, Edleen Primary, to attend their first gymnastrada. Do you know what that is, son?"

Human shook his head. "No sir."

"The way we did it—I was one of the organizers—the entire school lined up in rows on the rugby field from the shortest in the front to the tallest in the back. As you can see, girls and boys, all mixed. And to the sound of the high school marching band, they jumped and marched and created tableaus—all in unison. It was magnificent. Magnus Malan could not stop talking about it." Mouton paused for a moment, unsure if Human was keeping up. "You must recognize the General?"

"It looks very impressive, sir." Human was concerned that his lack of interest would show, and more than that, his dislike of Magnus Malan was immense. "Is it gymnastics, sir?" Human didn't care what a gymnastrada was or what the hapless participants got up to—nor their skill levels—he just needed to mask his dislike of the man in the gray fedora. Magnus Malan was the originator of "total onslaught" paranoia, had spent eleven years as South Africa's Minister of Defence, and was instrumental in sending South African troops to Angola to fight in a war that had nothing to do with Pretoria except for a vague communist threat, and most problematic of all, Malan sent troops into Black townships to press pause of unrest and intimidate protesters. Malan was on record as saying, as late as 1986, that political self-determination was not a motivating cause for Black South Africans.

"I do recognize General Malan, sir. He came to our school every year for a cadets inspection." The cadets program was a mechanism of pride, bent on instilling a hive mentality in young minds. Cadets would spend a few periods a week marching mindlessly on the rugby field, getting shouted at and called *moffies*—faggots—by aggressive seniors and teachers, while some schools even offered rifle-shooting, using .22 caliber rifles. Cadets wore "Hitlerjugend meets the *Braunhemden*" khaki-brown uniforms: shorts, shirts with epaulets, brown knee-high socks, brown boots, and a brown beret, all government-issued and supplied on the first Wednesday of the school year. Cadets were an extension of the white male conscription system that fed the South African Defence Force, and while some (especially English schools) pretty much ignored the sinister subtexts of what was the soft militarization of the school system, the Calvinist Afrikaner schools dialed the "Hitler Youth" potential to the max. Afrikaans kids were encouraged to wear the

excrement-shaded uniform with a breathtaking blend of pride and ignorance, marching as a mass display of indoctrination and mentally preparing to morph into a more malevolent, lethal, and menacing force as soon as they graduated school. This was the domain and source of pride for men such as Magnus Malan. And it made Human uncomfortable, triggering a hint of panic within him.

"Excellent, Human. That program is so good for young minds! It would be a great pity if we lost that, you know, after tomorrow. I don't think the Blacks will approve of how we do cadets. Not without AK-47s anyway." Mouton laughed at his joke.

"I'll just get to the point Captain." Human said. "There was an incident last night involving Sergeant Botha when we were out on our rounds."

Captain Mouton nodded and indicated that Human continues.

"We called out to a suspicious vehicle near Zoo Lake and, well, the guys in the car turned out to be, well, only two guys and I think they had been making or having… some type of sex," Human felt embarrassed telling the story and unsure of what words to use for fear of saying the wrong thing. "It was really nothing, sir." Human paused again. "I walked the one guy to the patrol vehicle. It was Isaac Molefi, sir."

"The actor?" Mouton seemed taken aback.

"Yes sir."

"And he was with a man in the car, right?"

"Yes Captain. A younger man, by the name of Jerome Abrams, sir."

"Sounds like he's coloured."

"I think his sister is with the police as well, different precinct I think. But Sir, Botha got a little rough with the guy while I had Molefi. He thought we couldn't be seen under the Jacaranda but it was pretty obvious. I am sure he tried to have sex with the guy." Human sighed. It felt good to get the stuff off his chest.

"Sergeant. I want you to think carefully about what you saw last night." Mouton nodded at Botha, who was about to walk into the building. "Botha is a good cop. I think you were mistaken. He was probably just roughing up some *moffie*, fresh from sucking dick at the park. Are you sure you want to make this about Botha?"

"I thought I needed to say…."

"Karel," Mouton responded after a moment's silence. Human flinched a little at the Captain's using his first name. "What do you think you really saw? And why does it matter to you so much?"

It was a good and fair question. Human cleared his throat a little.

"You don't have to answer immediately, son," Mouton said gently. "I have a question for you. Do you ever go to the opera? I went to see *Elektra* at the the State Theater in Pretoria last night —the wife got us tickets. Marita Napier was back as Chrysothemis and Astrid Varnay was Klytemnestra. You have to go, if you are interested in opera or the music of Richard Strauss, at all."

Human nodded, worried that he looked like a fool. He knew nothing about opera, classical music, or art, for that matter.

"You would love it, Sergeant Human. It tells you so much about people. More than any opera, Elektra uses psychology on such a deep level, creating truly fascinating characters, and as each new level is revealed it replaces what you thought you knew with some new bit of information. It is the perfect mixture of the pleasure of discovery and the satisfaction of recognition. I mean, you can quibble that Strauss is sometimes deliberated too long—Baron Ochs for example—or that indeed everything after *Elektra* and *Salome* sound too tame and more romantic than adventurous, and of course, many think he was a Nazi, but let's not point fingers right?" Mouton laughed at his joke. "But what matter here is that sometimes we do what we do. And it gets ugly—you know, like making sausage—but we also have to choose our battles. And right now, son, our battle is not about what Sergeant Botha does with his dick."

Captain Mouton got up and walked over to the window from where he could see the parking lot with all the patrol vehicles. "Speak of the devil. Botha. He's early. You supposed to be on tonight?"

"Yes sir."

"Thank you Sergeant Human. Take a few days. I'll assign someone to drive with Botha tonight while you go home and reconsider your report. I don't need a story about a Black guy who got a blowjob. This country is about to blow up. They cannot be trusted. And you need to think about it a little more, son. Go home. And reconsider."

On his way out of the building, Human bumped into Botha. "Hey—you're early. See you at the car at six?"

"Not tonight. I'm taking a few days." Human realized that his headache was back. He felt a sense of anxiety gnawing at him. Maybe he needed a drink before heading home

7.

Lwasi and Mandla

Tuesday, April 26. 15:30

When they finally met up that afternoon, there was more than a hint of tension in the air. Mandla had long been the voice of reason in their business arrangement. Still, recently Lwasi had taken a definite step to becoming more unpredictable and he acted with an attitude of impunity as if the election of Nelson Mandela would somehow inoculate them from from someone possible prosecution.

Mandla had spent most of the day preparing the paperwork he needed to present when he handed over the car they stole from the Bernstein's the night before. As per the agreement, the registration plate would be replaced with a new one—Swazi in this case—and a complete set of license discs with supporting paperwork: anything to ensure that the car gets into Swaziland with as few issues or delays as possible. From there, it may end up in Mozambique or anywhere on the continent really since the market for a clean, upmarket vehicle from South Africa was booming.

Lucky for Mandla and Lwasi, the project needed little in the way of investment of substantial upgrades, operating as they did from a warehouse in the sprawling Alexandria township

on the eastern side of Johannesburg, with most of the vehicles needing minor adjustments only. Once in a while, they would get a contract from some white boy in the Northern suburbs of the city who needed his car to be "stolen" and then set on fire near one of the townships, clearing the way for him to claim the total value from insurance and pay them a handsome fee for making it happen. Still, for the most part, they were employed by Nigerian cartels. Volatile and violent, the cartels had no desire to end up on the front page of the paper nor be linked to the assault—or death—of any of the people whom the cars were "collected" from, which made Lwasi's hitting Melvyn Bernstein all the more worrying.

"Hey." Lwasi walked in and threw himself on the sofa next to an open window from where he had an unobstructed view of the entrance gate, just in case uninvited characters showed up.

"You're late, brother. I suppose I should be grateful you showed up at all."

"Had some things to do this morning, you know, house stuff. And I had to wait for the taxi at the downtown terminus. It took a long time today." Lwasi felt annoyed that Mandla questioned him and the last thing he felt like this afternoon was the third-degree. "Sorry I am late."

"What was that last night Lwasi? We need to be careful, the Nigerians don't want a car that's linked to a police docket. You cannot do shit like that. If anything goes wrong…." Mandla rolled his eyes and made a little whistle sound. "And you need to be here on time, to help me. I can't do all this by myself. I had to run to the shop twice this morning to get screws and tape—and then to make copies—and that also means locking up and setting the alarm. It would help if you get here earlier." Mandla paused and looked at Lwasi. It was getting late, and would have to pick up the discussion some other time. "But the car is ready. It's looking good. I'll drive it to the collection point. I have the new registration plates in the back."

"Ok man. I'll take a taxi or just hitch a lift to get back."

The tensions of the last few years had weighed on both Mandla and Lwasi, and living with an obsessive sense of fear did not fade or let up, and, if anything, it had increased over the last few

months as the election drew nearer. On a daily basis, there were more reports of people suspected of being government informants getting necklaced in townships. Others were stabbed or shot, young girls were raped as a warning to their parents and to teach them a lesson if it was suspected that they were lesbians, and homes were attacked daily with Molotov cocktails. The press—especially the reactionist and alarmist Afrikaans dailies—were relishing in the chaos, albeit in their cold, clinical way. Reading any of the country's media immediately painted the picture of a once-idyllic place now slowly descending into civil war. But, given the gravitas of the election, nothing would stop Nelson Mandela. His was a fait accompli. There was a reckoning underway, and while the country was ill-equipped to deal with the spiraling levels of violence, white guilt kept most whites quiet, and therefore, publicly at least, a veneer of optimism was obligatory. And what were they going to do about it anyway? Years of far-right ideology and white power delivered them to this desperate place with no political capital left to show for it. Slowly, a sense of normalcy had returned since 1990, with shops carrying international goods again, and the country prepared to welcome the world to the Rugby World Cup planned for 1995. A reward for well-behaved rugby-loving whites.

And so, despite some retail improvements, the social decay he witnessed had Lwasi more concerned by the day. He, like Mandla, was worried about getting home too late and possibly getting attacked when he walked from the bus station. Driving was out of the question as the car would be stolen immediately, with him inside, if he wasn't careful. And as counterintuitive as it may have sounded to anyone, Lwasi liked hitching rides with white drivers as the likelihood of them killing him—or stealing his money—was nowhere as high. He thought about getting a gun. He had several contacts. But he wasn't really part of the scene, and although he was deep into a scam with Mandla, neither saw themselves as big-league criminals. To calm his nerves, he recently moved to Bezuidenhout (Bez) Valley, a diverse community that, since the end of the 90s, had emerged as a viable alternative for Black home ownership. Bez Valley was also relatively safe. There were few--if any—assaults, and it seemed as if the neighbors looked out for each other. When Lwasi moved in, at

least thirty people came over to say hello, and most offered whatever assistance he needed. He did notice that there were no Afrikaners in the area, and that suited him too since most of them were too suspicious and surly. He also noticed that, in most cases, the small A4 posters on trees that announced a missing dog or cat were in Portuguese. It was the language of the newest Mozambican or Angolan immigrants, who, like him, felt that the townships were too violent and prone to xenophobic attacks, and therefore looked to live in previously all white suburbs. It made Lwasi feel good to live in an area that had something unique to offer with people who chose to be in the neighborhood.

Nevertheless, the crime situation forced both Mandla and Lwasi to reconsider getting at least some form of firepower, and Mandla offered to consult a contact—Jaxxi—who promised to get back to them quickly and was frankly surprised that they weren't packing already. The contact returned with two pieces, stolen, cleaned up, and untraceable for a reasonable price, including a not-inconsiderable amount of ammunition. "Just clean these regularly—you know—so it doesn't jam on you when you need it," Jaxxi said when he delivered the two pistols. Mandla and Lwasi talked about the gun thing again, and Mandla, once more, expressed his concerns over the need for the pistols in the first place. "I just don't care for it," he said, "I don't know if I have it in me to pull the trigger." He shook his head. "No. It's not me. You know, my father is a Rabbi—I grew up in a small community just outside Makhado—he would not be happy with how my life had turned out," he pointed at the stolen Bernstein car, "and he would disapprove of my shooting a gun. It's not the Lemba way."

Even just thinking about it made Mandla uncomfortable. Curiously, he was not concerned for his own sake but rather for his father and family, knowing how hard it was for them to be accepted. "You know, my people, the Bubha clam of the Lemba, are found from Ethiopia and into Zimbabwe down to the Limpopo here in South Africa—we are part of the tribe of Levi. And although we lost the Book on the journey, we keep to the rules as it laid it out: we do not eat pork,

we do not combine forbidden foods, we wear a cap, and recently my father opened a small synagogue in an old barber shop—some Israelis sent us a menorah—and slowly but surely the old stories and prayers my ancestors have kept alive as they drifted south, don't seem as far removed from something bigger than us."

The roughly 80 000 members of the Lemba tribe put a Star of David on their graves while their prayers are delivered in a blend of Arabic and Hebrew. Their Ark of the Covenant, the "ngoma lungundu," is claimed to be 700 years old—made from the wood of Noah's ark—the name means "thundering drum." The Bubha line of Lemba calls themselves Kohanim—priests—and they believe themselves to be the product of a liaison between King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba—who converted to Judaism—and was sent back to Ethiopia with their child, some Hebrew servants, and a few Levitical priests. Over time, as Jews were fleeing Babylonian and Assyrian aggression, some made their way down East Africa since it was known that "Solomon's Jews" were living there.

Thinking about all this more clearly and feeling that he was dishonoring the legacy his father was trying to establish, particularly at this point in history where the nation was about to be led by a leader who, to Mandla and his father, embodied the very spirit of a Moses-like figure, leading his people out of what amounted to slavery an into the utopia of a promised land. "It's not right, Lwasi," he said.

"What do you mean?"

"None of this. It feels wrong. And last night, hitting that man with the gun. It felt we had gone too far and we need to try harder to be part of the new country. That was old South Africa stuff. It feels like we should do better."

"Do you want to stop working for the cartel?" Lwasi was getting a little tired of Mandla's attitude. He always seemed to have some little problem with everything, and when he couldn't find a problem, he made as if he was some fucken rabbi to create a new problem where one didn't exist, to begin with. "Or what do you want to do? Just tell me."

It was getting dark in the warehouse, and soon the silver Benz would have to be delivered to the cartel so they can get it sold to some rich Swazi WaBenzi, as the Benz-driving elite was jokingly called. Mandla turned on a desk lamp and sat silent for a moment.

"For most of them, I feel nothing," he said. "I don't feel any guilt. I don't feel sorry. These whites are all the same. They are all pigs at the same trough and some may squeal that things must change and how bad they feel for how whites have treated Black people for four-hundred years but they still live like kings, with their expensive cars, and high walls, and maids, and gardeners. They don't do a thing to make life better—they just cry 'Mandela, Mandela' and wear T-shirts with his face on it without understanding the real price that we paid. And now their time is up. It's over."

Lwasi looked at Mandla in silence.

"But I just need a few days, maybe a month. I need to go to my family. I need to pray, and forget the blood that ran down that man's head where your hit him. It was too much. I'm not saying it's over. I just think we need a break."

Lwasi nodded.

"Later, I'll drive the Benz and take it to the cartel. I'll take Abel Road and then go past the back of the Chelsea, and avoid the crowds in Hillbrow where it's going to be crazy for the next few days." Mandla thought for a moment and then continued: "You grab the bus and then hitch a ride like you always do. I'll call you when I get back from Makhado."

"I'm still not sure. Maybe I'm stupid but I'm a little worried about the next few days. It's probably a good thing that we give it a break."

"I think you'd better give me that gun. We'll hide it here." Lwasi handed Mandla his gun. "It's going to be ok. Mandela will help us all. But for now, let's focus on not getting killed tonight."

Notes on Truth and Reconciliation, for a book or article that may, one day, be written.

1.

South Africa voted overwhelmingly for its first democratically elected president in 1994. It was the official birth of a new era in African politics, specifically in how the dynamic between white occupiers and the formerly-subjugated black majority would play out. A nation founded on astounding human rights violations—steeped in willful re-authoring and re-invention of its very history—is bound to be predictably clumsy on the new moral foundations required by transitional justice mechanisms. It is, however, implausible to get a firm grip on the textured realities around the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and its decidedly mixed bag of results without understanding the prevailing politics around its establishment.

2.

The TRC's raison d'être lies in the friendly negotiated settlement, which concluded a prolonged transition from an authoritarian state to a democracy founded on a well-conceived constitution. Immediately following the first free and fair South African election of 1994, Dullah Omar, the newly installed Minister of Justice—joined by key figures in the human rights arena—embarked on the process of balancing the need for amnesty in some instances, with the demand for restorative justice, a solution that would not blindly favor perpetrators of heinous crimes while the country was in its honeymoon haze. Instead, Omar was convinced that national healing and reconciliation could only be attempted when the needs of victims of racially-charged violence and politically motivated terror were adequately addressed. Foundational to the thinking was that a lateral commitment to full disclosure of motivations and corresponding actions was vital in rehabilitating victims—and the country. In doing so, the seething resentment that could follow from

an amnesiac approach to ciliation would lead to informal acts of retribution on a collective level and, more importantly, escalate violence in a county already besieged by bloodshed.

3.

An interesting textural detail is that the TRC was committed to a version of the "future self" by actively inserting a vision of the new democracy at the center of reconciliation as opposed to grounding the entire exercise in a constant evaluative process where the historical aspects alone would be of any importance. This idea of balance was heavily favored by not just the outgoing government and its hordes of employees (many of them white) now having to work in a wholly new dispensation relishing in the spoils that have gone to the elected victors. To this end, the TRC was motivated by documenting human rights abuses committed under the Apartheid regime and equally geared towards the prevalence of individual dignity. The goal was to build the South African democracy on transparency and a culture of human rights.

4.

But to view the TRC as a restorative justice panacea—an isolated one—would have been to set it up to fail. It was one of many initiatives to achieve justice retrospectively and establish fertile ground for a meaningful détente. The Human Rights Commission redressed a range of human rights issues, while the Gender Commission focused on various legacy issues surrounding gender expression and inequality in South Africa. The Youth Commission was vital in engendering a shift in the focus of the younger demographic from the confrontational nature of its engagement since the 1950s to a position of political negotiation. The Land Claims Court was saddled with land reform, rectifying years of land annexation by white settlers and occupiers, often without financial compensation.

5.

The TRC in South Africa was not without tension and strife. Traditionally rightwing parties—including the ousted last white government—viewed the reconciliation process as a thinly veiled "Nazi-hunting party," hellbent on prosecuting and alienating whites. At the same time, the Inkatha Freedom Party, longtime Zulu adversaries of the Xhosa, was sustained in its accusing the TRC of bias, frequently taking it to court to inhabit its work. Consequently, an Achilles heel—possibly a failure—of the TRC was its natural inclination to appease critics to secure their commitment to the process. So fraught with acrimony was the process that the TRC failed in its vigor to deal with the previous regime that it failed in getting the National Party to admit complicity as the prime architect of Apartheid, especially viewed through the lens of crimes against humanity.

6.

The strength of the TRC was in its committee—the people who had to make moral, ethical, and political distinctions that took into account the scope and directionality of the victims and perpetrators on every side of every conflict. Testimony was given not just to the committee but via live television to the citizens of South Africa. The impact of the public proceedings had a perceptible influence on the nation. It still does. No TRC ever works in isolation by necessity proceeds within a political context that cannot be undermined or ignored. To this end, the South African iteration of the reconciliation process while actively engaging in a seismic transitional shift was a notable success.

7.

Possibly the most vital lesson from the South African TRC is the importance of letting victims tell their stories. Away from judicial chambers and political corridors, the process of recovering and documenting a concealed record of conflict provides a forum for public acknowledgment.

Policymakers, lawyers, and politicians are not needed or wanted—instead, leaving the victim's voices to be delivered clearly, in their own words. The victim is left silent by having counsel or surrogates speak on their behalf. This point becomes even more sharply in focus when considering that the reconciliation process depends heavily on the victim's immense propensity for forgiveness and the need for visible contrition on the perpetrator's side.

8.

Johan and Jerome

Tuesday, April 26. 16:00

Sergeant Johan Botha arrived at the precinct a few hours early. The night before was somewhat of a blur: when Botha finally finished his shift, he was wide awake, and since Human drove straight back to the precinct, Botha still didn't get the Bimbo's burger he had been craving. Human, he thought, acted weird—even more than usual—and so, the tension in the car as their shift ended was heavy and made him question whether this team was a good fit.

On his way into the building, he bumped into his partner and thought he looked pale and distracted. "Why are you here, by the way? The shift isn't until later."

"No worries, man. Had to come and make a statement on an incident from a while back. Hey, got to make tracks—I'll see who they schedule me with for the night. Take care!" Human made a forced smile.

"Sergeant Botha?"

"Yes?" Botha looked around.

A younger man in uniform approached him. "I'm Constable Mchunu. I was assigned with you for the shift tonight. Nice to meet you, Sergeant, I've heard a lot about you."

"Evening, chief. Some of it good, I'm sure. Nearly time to go!" Botha opened the patrol car door and smiled at Constable Mchunu, who had been assigned to him until Human returned. "Going to be a long night—-you know, tomorrow's election." Botha made a point of calling Black men "chief" as, to him, it conveyed a sense of familiarity cloaked in respect; although he never consciously used the term ironically, it was met with some resistance from Black men, who felt disrespected before he even said anything.

"Excited about the vote tomorrow, Sergeant?" Sipho Mchunu had a cheerfulness that was both disarming and a little annoying. A yippity quality that made whites feel as if they could tell him stuff and that he, somehow, may share their view. Little did anyone ever suspect that Sipho Mchunu was from Emachunwini—the place of the Mchunu—in Kwazulu Natal, where he was part of the royal family, a position that provided little in the way of financial gain, the house of Mchunu having been significantly weakened by the effect of non-sympathetic colonial administration but nonetheless gave its members a countenance and bearing that transcended the ordinariness of what they did to earn a living, Sipho, for example, was a business student at the university, his job on the police force, partially funding his studies.

A crowd was forming on certain street corners, partly because the workday was ending and partly because of excitement about the next day's election. Some of the groups looked more peaceful, the mixed ones for sure, Botha thought, looked more sedate and celebratory, while the few gatherings that seemed to be mostly Black looked a little more volatile, he thought, but he might have been wrong. A few groups appeared almost motionless as the patrol vehicle passed; the combination of hopeful election posters with their large slogans and the blank stares of cautiously optimistic young voters looking suspiciously at the vehicle created a sense of quiet tension while

exuding an air of decay as if all was not well in this almost-democracy and that maybe, over time, the country's course may be corrected. But not yet.

Botha pulled into a roadhouse parking area and suggested they have a quick coffee before the evening set in and the expected mayhem commenced. Inside the roadhouse, most of the booths were taken, the customers quiet and staring at the T.V., which showed news updates with a heavy focus on the doings of F.W. de Klerk, the news channel trying to create the impression that despite what everyone thought about the all-but-certain Mandela victory, this was very much still a race with two dogs.

The waitress came over and took their order, her face gaunt and gloomy, she moved nervously from table to table, ensuring everyone was happy, but little about her attitude would have inspired much joy in any of her customers. She looked weighed down, ravaged by what Botha imagined was constant gnawing worry, and it was a look he had grown up seeing frequently in the Afrikaner community. It was as if the hate and paranoia, and constant need to control and protect, also sapped any joy from the body, leaving a husk of a person in its place.

"We have failed." Botha said. "To answer your question from earlier. And we have deserved to fail. We've had great leaders—extraordinary and idealistic—who put the country ahead of their own needs, and one by one they have failed, or rather, we have failed them. Biko was meant to be president."

"I agree." Mchunu looked away and then looked at Botha again. "I'm just surprised to hear you say that. Most whites in South Africa think he was a terrorist. And of course they think he died from a hunger strike after seven days. But I think Biko is the unsung father of the nation that we have fought for and will become tomorrow. Biko invented the slogan *Black is Beautiful*. Did you know that?" Botha shook his head. "So anyway, I grew up hearing a lot about Biko and how he found the Black Consciousness Movement that was so instrumental in mobilizing the pressure that was put on the Apartheid government, and of course, today he is martyr. The other thing that Biko really

believed in was that Black South Africans needed to step up and take charge—whatever the cost—because being subordinate and feeling inferior got us nowhere. The thing that motivated me to become a policeman, actually, while I study, is that Biko died right here in Johannesburg while in police custody. And not from the hunger strike as the Minister of Police announced. He was killed by the police while n detention. The autopsy report revealed that there was no evidence to suggest he was killed, that same report mentioned lots of evidence that Biko was tortured while in custody —it mentions marks on his wrists, brain damage—he was clearly killed."

"You really think we can make a difference?"

"Of course I do! It's why I'm here."

"We'd better get back to the vehicle. It's going to be a busy night."

Driving out of the roadhouse parking area, dispatch called out a domestic disturbance. Botha replied in the affirmative and took the first left in the direction of the reported incident.

Beep. "Gunshots reported at 18 Cardiff in the vicinity of Zoo Lake. All available units, please respond." Bib-bib.

"I know that address," Botha said.

Beep. "Update on 18 Cardiff in the vicinity of Zoo Lake. It is reported to be a domestic situation. All available units, please respond" Bib-bib.

The gate at 18 Cardiff Street was unlocked and Botha, making sure he approached the house in irregular movement patterns, proceeded from tree to tree just in case of a shooter in the dwelling.

The front door was wide open.

Going into the dark house, Botha stepped in a pool of blood that had formed on the marble floor, and he could just about see the outline of what looked like Jerome Abrams lying in a pool of his blood. It was impossible to tell from where he stood if Abrams was alive.

"Unit 33 requesting back-up. We have one down and I suspect another in the vicinity."

Beep "Unit 33 stand by. I'm sending an ambulance and back-up." Bib-bib.

Botha readjusted his grip on his pistol and approached Abrams, who seemed to respond to the beeps of the police radio. For a minute, Abrams seemed unsure where he was, a little drunk maybe, but then he started to look more aware of his surrounding. Outside, in the streets, police lights were now flashing.

"You! Get the fuck away from me," Abrams said in a low voice. "Is this some kind of joke? You want to finish the job? I can't believe this is happening."

"Just calm down. You are ok, are you alone? Is your friend here?" Botha tried to reach out to Abrams, but he pulled away, disturbing the thick layer of blood on the floor around him. The smell of the blood made Botha a little bilious.

"O my God." Abrams' voice sounded tired and hoarse. "Did they really send you?? He looked down. "Fuck." He paused. "What now?"

"We need to get you out of here. Is your friend still here." Botha moved closer to Abrams.

"He's here. I don't know where."

"Did he attack you?"

Abrams looked at Botha and considered his response. What does he say? Does he admit that, yes, Isaac was upset and that, yes, Isaac thought he wanted to get fucked by a hot cop? Does he tell the cop that raped him that his boyfriend thought he wanted it? That he responded by accusing Molefi of being a fraud who would never be what he wanted to be—white. And that he got even angrier and then said to Molefi that he will always be a just fucking kaffir—Mandela or not—and that Mandela is not going to fix this. That Mandela is not going to make Molefi better. And how, as he did and said all that, he hated Botha so much for bringing this pain and this hate into his life. Then, when Isaac Molefi took a knife from the block and stabbed him so many times, he stopped counting after seven; he lost a lot of blood but didn't fight. He really just wanted to die.

"I don't know. He's gone. He probably thought I was dead and ran. But you did this. You."

9.

Lwasi Mashile

Tuesday, April 26. 17:30

In point of fact, Sergeant Karel Human drove off from the police precinct, suspecting that his life was going nowhere. Instead of his meeting with the commanding officer going well and leaving with a greater sense of accomplishment from having stood up for the rights of a civilian, whom he thought, was violated by a civil servant, Human felt betrayed.

Thinking in a more equitable way had recently started to become a habit for Human. He deliberately refrained from mentally drifting toward a "tone," as he understood it. Human had also completed a course in Police Equity Theory at Johannesburg's Rand Afrikaans University, and his decision to apply the snippets of takeaways from the course proved relatively easy and, he thought, even natural. Human was proud that he scored high on the tests, and over the next few months, he learned how to trust his gut feeling when it came to daily situations and interactions. He could tell from a distance when someone jumped to a conclusion or seemed too rigid in their thinking. He recognized aspects of his family life and how he was raised in other people and situations and started to appreciate that, much like Archbishop Desmond Tutu said, we are how we are because of others and how they are: Ubuntu. I am me because of you.

Human started reading Erich Fromm's *The Art of Loving*, and it was predominantly Fromm's take on respect and how Fromm explains respect as rooted in the Italian word *rispecere*, to look at, and that respect was not a fear or scare thing, that started to make sense to him. He started to think that maybe this race thing—this crisis the country was in—was really more about old white men in power who needed to let go of some of their power and angry young Black men who needed to let go and forgive a little more. He was strongly considering either law or psychology when he left the police, which he originally joined as an alternative to forced conscription into the armed services.

Growing up on the East Rand, an hour away from Johannesburg, an area known for working-class values and Human, was raised on the sliding scale of Afrikaner racism that could be categorized by severity and outcome. First, there were dyed-in-the-wool technical white supremacists focused on the chasms in the country based on language and culture alone. To them, it was a quantitive and legislative thing, the physicality of the Black South African just too unwieldy to negotiate around, and so, it was easier just to divide, isolate, incapacitate, and invalidate. Next was the devout follower of the doctrine. Because Jesus. Most did not understand what they were objecting to exactly, but since faith demanded blindness and trust, the more technical among the clergy knew how to weaponize the blind faith of the devout. The complicit racist represented the group that fell into the cracks and, being neither technical nor devout, were prejudiced through association, focusing on the thing they had in common with the people who lived in their town, who resembled them, and with whom they could serve on the school board. Lastly, there was the manipulative "development" type of racist. These were the men of industry and economy, who, standing outside the circles of law, church, or community activities, were consumed with the self-replenishing workforce. The country, founded heavily on mining and industry, depended on a largely docile army of workers.

Any white sympathies with the Black cause were publicly derided and skillfully contextualized so as not to become a model. Still, it did create the appearance of something that

resembled debate or rigorous thought, thereby avoiding the accusation that Apartheid was a knee-jerk thing.

After the Verwoerd Drive junction, the road was noticeably worse, as if the city fathers were subconsciously trying to tarnish the very name of the road named after H.F. Verwoerd, architect—midwife—of Apartheid's current iteration. Potholes, welts, and cracks pockmarked the road, sometimes covering most of the drivable area, forcing drivers of sedans and smaller vehicles to remain alert and ready to swerve.

Human went over a raised welt and felt it scraping the underside of the car. He pulled over to one side of the road and got out of the vehicle to inspect the damage, which seemed minimal, if any, and decided to drive on.

He got back in and slammed the door. This country is so fucked, he thought and looked at the busy sidewalk where the small shops were doing brisk trade, primarily with African immigrants who preferred the option of lay-by—buy now pay later schemes—offered by wiley shopkeepers. It was one of the nodes of the city that most resembled the rest of Africa with its mix of informal trading, late shopping hours, barber shops, and coiffures—"bon coif fur," one proudly displayed on its window—offering styles like the "7-Up" and "The Policeman." for some reason, and of course every conceivable version of the flat-top.

There were small groups of people hanging around at the picnic tables outside Mi-Vami, a small Middle Eastern take-out place that made the best shawarmas in the city with "fried calamari in a pita with salad," was Jo'burg foodies' best-kept secret. Talk of politics and the outcomes of the election dominated every table, and Human thought that as the day was drawing to a close, there was a tension in the air, and it reminded him of the hour or two right before a rugby match when you just had to wait and see. There was no more training to be done. It was a helpless feeling, Human thought, and one had no choice but to wait.

One of the guys—a student by the looks of his Rand Afrikaans University sweater and his stack of books—at the table nearest to where Human stopped was in deep discussion with what appeared to be three fellow students. The student pointed at the Mandela election billboard on the wall across the road and commented that it will take more than just goodwill and optimism to save the country and that "what we need is a Superman."

"But how do you he's not?" One of the girls asked. "I mean, we don't know. You're not supposed to know that the guy with the glasses and the plastic pocket protector is Superman." The rest of the group nodded. "I mean, people forget it's' not just the glasses that makes supposedly "unrecognizable." He slouches as Clark Kent, and so he looks much shorter while his clothes fit loosely, hiding his muscular shape and the fake glasses also changes the color of his eyes while his voice sounds different too. He combs his hair differently and he acts furtive and nervous."

"Exactly. You have to assume that people suspect this guy has a double life. Dont they? I mean, Superman can't just be Superman 24/7. As viewer we know he has another life, but surely others would at least wonder…it's an interesting thing to think about. I know that Superman was raised by humans, and calls himself Clark—I have been let in on the secret. But the people who live in the city or work at the Daily Planet, Lois Lane for example, the just think he's from another planet with lots of super powers. And then they know a guy at the paper, a reported, called Clark. They don't make the connection."

"Good point Liz. Fuck. That shit was so strong. Was it Durban Poison?" The group laughed at how stoned they were, unaware that a cop in plainclothes was listening, sitting in his car a few inches away. Human was so taken by the students that he didn't notice that a guy had approached the car. A polite knock on the window brought Human back. A young Black man indicated that he wished the window to be rolled down further, which Human did. "Can I help you," he said through the three inches.

"Yes Boss." The man was well-dressed and didn't look like a serial killer. "Can you give me a lift?"

"Where are you going? I am heading to the other side of the city. Bez Valley."

"That's great boss. I'll catch a bus from Braamfontein."

"Ok— well hop in. I'm Karel." He reached out his hand.

"Lwasi."

10.

Fanie Nsele

Tuesday, April 26. 18:00

From time to time, Fanie Nsele would wonder what he was doing with his life. He was increasingly aware of a presence in his life that made him feel more and more tense with each passing day. He could not put his finger on it, but it was there.

Dudu, Fanie's wife, had catered a large cocktail reception for the Democratic Party the night before, and as per his agreement with her, he was responsible for clearing venues of debris and detritus after her catered events. Fanie was also in charge of collecting all Dudu's table linens from the Hillbrow venue—she insisted that she supplied matching runners and napkins as long as the host venue could supply a basic white tablecloth.

The buffet the night before was delicious—a perfect combination of African spices and the more traditional South African dishes. There were buttery pastries filled with bang-bang chicken salad and mini *Amagwinya*—savory donuts—filled with mild Cape Malay lamb masala, fruity and a little sweet with a mild chili bite. Fanie was extraordinarily proud of his wife and equally grateful to

her employer, Melvyn Bernstein, for essentially funding Dudu's catering business, connecting her to Johannesburg's great and good.

Collecting the bundle of laundry, the owner of The Chelsea Hotel, Mrs. Steiner, was exceptionally complimentary, commenting on Dudu's skills and way with flavors, "For a Black caterer," Fanie was sure Mrs. Steiner was thinking but being a card-carrying member of the Black Sash, the ultra-liberal women's movement, perhaps Mrs. Steiner was beyond that kind of thing. But you never knew. Besides the glamorous mirrored ballroom, the regency-style Chelsea was also home to one of the cities' punk clubs where, in the bowels of the hotel, young goths from surrounding mining towns gathered every weekend swaying to Siouxsie until one would OD on acid or whatever, and they would carry the pale, limp punk up the stairs and dump them on the sidewalk before they would go back down and carry on.

"Really, Fanie. To think Dudu has those skills." Mrs. Steiner's face clouded somewhat. "I wish she could do this full-time and not work, you know, as a char for Ruth and Melvyn."

He assured her that the Bernsteins were good to Dudu, although Mrs. Bernstein sometimes had a hint of racism around her. It was in how she expressed certain things a little too readily and in the way that made it sounds harsher than perhaps she intended, and some of her inflections and eye-rolls on some words when they chatted. He tried not to view all whites as acting under some kind of constant subtext. Maybe, just maybe, some of when were good and not the white devils that most Black Africans view them as.

Mrs. Steiner shrugged. It was a weird reaction. As if she thought of something but didn't know exactly how to say it. "Well, you have a lovely evening, Fanie. And let's pray that tomorrow's election is fair and well supported."

"Thank you, Mrs. Steiner. I'll get the rest of the boxes. You get home safely." Fanie didn't know what possessed him, but he reached over and hugged her. It felt appropriate. Decidedly, he also felt he was getting old. He was mellowing. And although he had some suspicions about the

woman, she acted kind and seemed to acknowledge the weight of the moment they were living through. "Have a good night."

"Such a strong hug." She blushed a little.

It was strange and a little close, he thought. He waved as she got into her car and drove off.

Sitting in his small van at the hotel's service entrance, Fanie Nsele had the same nagging thought. What was he doing with his life? Was this it?

He turned on the radio. Anthony Sampson, the erstwhile editor of the highly influential "Drum," the magazine that captured the style and energy of Black township life, was being interviewed: *The city life made him feel that he was part of a much larger society who were suffering in a way that he hadn't properly comprehended, or hadn't felt before he came to Johannesburg. So I think it was a combination of the personal humiliations which were almost visible every day, together with the awareness of being part of this bigger scene.*

Fanie thought about Sampson's comment for a moment and decided to take the longer route through the city center to get to the laundry, which was inconveniently located in Bez Valley. It may be good to avoid Hillbrow's craziness, especially this week, so close to the election.

He was about to start the van when a dashboard light alerted him that the vehicle's backdoor was not closed.

The atmosphere between him and Dudu had been a little strained recently. She just seemed too invested in the world of the Bernsteins, and Fanie couldn't help but feel suspicious of their intentions. Violent protests and constant political tensions were by now a familiar part of the South African landscape, and the death toll was exceptionally high. Many of his friends had firsthand experience with intimidation and confrontations between opposing factions that made daily life in the township even harder and so, Dudu's cushy gigs doing catering and even her day job, running the Bernstein household, really was a world away from what was happening just a few miles away. For

their part, Fanie felt, the Bernsteins—like most other white liberals—valued showing off how politically correct they were and just how much they were saving poor Black South Africans—but only the good kind—by giving them the kind of jobs whites didn't want to do, to begin with. Dudu didn't appreciate him pointing this out to her and, for that matter, seemed defensive when it came to the Bernsteins.

"Hey. He wants to get elected," she said, "and I would be well advised to cater the events that will help get him there."

"You're clearly developing a taste for the good life." He said. "And strategy," he added, lest she considers his comment as more loaded than intended."

Fanie picked up the last of the boxes from the sidewalk. Tired from working all day he took the whole lot in one go and then, balancing the stack, he needed to free one hand for opening the door, which proved tricky as the boxes felt a little top heavy. The unstable stack and his fumbling with the door distracted him and, standing at the back of his van, he didn't see Mandla or the Bernstein's Mercedes, nor did he hear the car take the corner too fast, skidding a little, and he didn't notice the Mercedes's high beams had framed him as it was approaching. Only at the last moment did Fanie Nsele know that something was wrong—it was like a bolt of lighting in his body—and it caught him unaware. He looked up, into the eyes of the driver and glanced at the car's Swazi registration plate and nothing quite made sense. "Strange," he said to himself and then he thought of his wife as he steeled himself for the impact.

After hitting the man carrying boxes to the back of the delivery van—it all happened so quickly—Mandla cautiously opened the door, his eyes firmly planted on the man on the ground. "Eish!" he said under his breath as he saw the blood pour from the man's head. Seeing that the man he had hit was seriously injured but alive, Mandla picked him up from behind and loaded the body

into the car's rear seat, but only after looking in the trunk for a cloth or a blanket to protect the seat from blood. He took out his new Nokia and tried to call Lwasi, who had been uncharacteristically quiet all afternoon. Maybe I should make tracks, he thought. Turning around, he looked up and saw another VOTE 4 MANDELA billboard on the Mini Cine's roof opposite the Chelsea service side. For a second, he wondered what Mandela would do in this situation, and Mandla was sure he would not just drive off, leaving a mortally injured man to die on the city streets. Not Hillbrow, at any rate.

Arriving at the Hillbrow hospital, Mandla avoided both the front and ER entrances. He decided to head to the back of the building near the hospital's large rubbish containers, not far from an incinerator which some in the area were convinced the hospital used to burn placentas, liposuction fat, and amputated limbs. Once a street dog ran down Hillbrow's high street with a severed arm—hand still attached—and of course, everyone thought the dog stole the thing from the hospital.

Mandla decided to drop the guy on the steps. It was still near enough to be noticed eventually but quiet enough for him to make a quick getaway. He was in no mood to struggle and hoped it would all go smoothly. He opened the back door and pulled Fanie's feet out of the car before placing the bloodied picnic blanket over him. Mandla looked around to see if anyone had seen him. He thought he heard a phone ring, so he jumped back into the silver Mercedes and drove off.

Typical, Nurse Poppie Weyers thought as she took another drag on her Vogue cigarette on the hospital roof, watching the man dump a body on the hospital's steps. It was nothing new. And it was the kind of thing Blacks did all the time.

The sound of her phone made her step back, in case the man saw or heard her.

It was Gert. "Hello my boy," she said and looked up at the city skyline. "How's it with you?"

She listened to her son, who told her that he was fine, that his day went well, and then he asked her how she was.

"Not much going on. Just saw one of the darkies dump a body on the steps if the hospital. At the rate they're going they'll kill each each other before they become too much of a problem, if they don't get AIDS first. So, you know, different day, same shit."

11.

Human

Tuesday, April 26. 18:30

To get to Braamfontein, Human decided to take a few backroads that would get him to the bottom of the university near the Planetarium. It was a reasonably quiet road, not being one of the major arteries connecting the city's center with the white suburbs on the East and West or the sprawling South Western Township (Soweto).

More reassuringly, the road was smooth, devoid of cracks and potholes given the lack of industry on this stretch, the Mandela bobblehead on the dashboard—he bought it at the Rosebank Market a few Sundays ago, darn it, he just had to have it—was happily jiggling along. "M-People," Human said as he slid the CD in. "*Moving on up*, I love it. Her voice is amazing."

Lwasi nodded. "Nice." He was never sure how to relate to white men, having grown up in a society based entirely on total submission to the will of whites while drawing as little attention as possible to what you were doing for fear of retaliation or causing offense.

"So, what did you get up to today? Big day tomorrow, right?" asked Human, putting on the unique tone he reserved for Black people in case they didn't understand English, and delivered at a

slow and measured pace so as to not trigger them. "I mean, this is it, right? The big day." He looked at the guy. "Freedom! I mean. Finally."

Lwasi nodded. He felt compelled to say something, but he could, for the life of him, not think of anything to say that would add to Human's comments.

"Well, kind of." Human continued, a little irritated at the guy's silence. "Love this bit: *Time to break free*," he sang along, his head bobbing to the tune, "man, I love this song, and she is beautiful for a Black girl." He raised his eyebrows in a "wow" way and thought he saw the guy look away, but he may have imagined it.

The comment jarred a little, but it hardly surprised or shocked Lwasi. White people acted weird whenever Black people did anything good or brave or kind. As if Blackness was a "less than" guarantee. As if anything whites achieved in this country on their own, Lwasi thought. He smiled in Human's direction.

Human stopped at a traffic light on the corner at the student travel agency. "You know, everyone thinks dolphins are so cute and kind. These perfect mammals. They're not, you know—they're kinda cunty. They live in these closed groups and have a dominant male that acts in a really aggressive way." Human paused and looked at the poster again. Hold of it was covered by an election poster of Mandela and another one of De Klerk. "They fight to the death." For a second, he thought that dolphin pod-politics were not unlike the current situation in the country, communities coalesced around what they imagined they shared—language and customs—at war with each other, but at least Mandela, the dominant male bringing unity, seems less aggressive. As if his prison time mellowed him out.

"So, yeah, it seemed like things were not going so well for a while there but now, I think, we are looking pretty good!" Human nodded at the little Bobblehead Mandela dancing. "Gotta love him."

Lwasi laughed at the bobblehead. He didn't say anything—he was mesmerized by the dancing figurine. He laughed at it again, pointing. It looked like the Mandela Bobblehead was doing a little curtsy at Human. It was hilarious, Lwasi thought, and so typical of white people. Even the bobblehead bowed at the guy, but the more Lwasi looked at the figure, the funnier it seemed to get.

Human was a little taken aback by Lwasi's giggling and pointing. He wondered if Lwasi was for real. If, possibly, he was just not well in the head. Human was unsure if the guy he had let into his vehicle—into his life—was making fun of him or his political views. He considered the possibility that the guy was on drugs—dagga or buttons—who knew? Human glanced at Lwasi's face, which was kind of glum, but at least his head moved to the Mandela Bobblehead beat. He looked down and saw the outline of a bump in Lwasi's jacket. He went ice cold as he thought he could trace the outline of a gun in the guy's pocket. Something about the entire exchange and the guy's vibe just did not sit well with Human, and the more he tried to ignore it and even reason with it, the less safe he felt.

By now, Human was hot, and with each passing moment, he felt that the man sitting next to him, the very man he agreed to give a ride to, presented a threat of some sort—he wasn't sure exactly what, but the gun in the guy's pocket was a pretty good indication. Human felt his chest closing up a little and wondered if there was enough air in the car. His hands seemed a touch shaky. He hoped the guy wouldn't notice. And he was sure there was something he forgot to do that day—did he turn off the kettle?—and on top of that, he wondered exactly how he got into this situation. He sighed and thought that something about the guy, his attitude, and this very moment just did not feel right. Human's chest began to hurt from the shallow breathing, and for a second, he worried that he might lose consciousness. More than anything, he did not want his passenger to see that his condition was deteriorating, nor that he was panicked or unwelcome, which was weird, he thought, but at that very moment, he could not make much sense of anything.

Human thought about his father. And his threats to disinherit him over the years because of his lefty pinko politics and his disinterest in nationalist activities and groups, his father being of old Dutch stock and a member of the clandestine Broederbond—The Brotherhood—something Human could never get his head around. The Afrikaner Broederbond was a particular thorn in some sides, consisting as it did of the most prominent Afrikaners—professors, lawyers, judges, heads of Government parastatals such as the Broadcasting Corporation—who flexed their collective political muscles to affect changes that would most—asymmetrically—benefit the interest of the Afrikaner. From its inception in 1918, this group of men had a hand in selecting every president and, below that, every significant appointment in the judiciary, local politics, academia, the board of every regional performing arts council, MPs, and those who controlled the lives of Black South Africans through bodies such as the Bantu Administration Boards that prescribed life in Black townships while posing as a form of civil rights service. During World War 2, many Broederbond members openly supported Nazi Germany, despite South Africa officially fighting with Great Britain against Hitler.

It was a schizophrenic moment for the Afrikaner with half of the group supporting men such as Dr. Piet Meyer, longtime Broederbond member, a witness to Berlin's Nazi Anti-Comintern who was even taught the art of skiing by Rudolf Hess, Hitler's chief of staff. Meyer, in turn, fostered chummy bonds between Nazi and Afrikaner youth groups, one of them the highly militarized Nazi-inspired Ossewabrandwag—the Oxwagon Sentinel—and, if that was not enough, Meyer was rewarded by being promoted to chairman of the Broederbond during some of its most Apartheid doctrine-heavy years from 1960 to 1972. And he served as chair of the South African Broadcasting Corporation—the propaganda-based government-sponsored television station. It was the Broederbond that invented the concept of Afrikaner Christian nationalism, the flavor of nativism that became doctrine, and if that was not enough, it was the Broederbond who concocted the idea that South Africa needed to convert from a monarchy to a republic freed from the chains

of the Commonwealth—a move that resonated within the heart of the average stubborn Afrikaner who had still not forgiven the British for the Anglo Boer War.

Human felt a surge of hate for the country. He was living in a place distinguished by the vice-like grip it had on its people for nearly a century. Where ownership and access to anything were measured, weighed, and adjudicated. Where the state, through its willing concubines—church, school, and Neighborhood Watch—observed every move, and in order to counter that, ordinary people lived versions of their lives that would be seen as compliant model Calvinists. But now, tonight, Human felt his time had run out and his patience at breaking point. He looked at the rows of election posters on every streetlamp and fixed to each willing shopfront, all encouraging him to DO THE RIGHT THING, whatever that meant, he thought, and then he considered that perhaps this, too, was just a lie. Some grand deception. And, he thought that, until tomorrow, he could get away with murder. Well, a murdering a Black anyway, he thought.

For his part, Lwasi could see Human looked somewhat tense. He was clinging hard to the steering wheel, and his breathing seemed heavy. For the moment, there was no way out of this, and Lwasi decided that when Human pulled over to pee or stopped at a service station for gas—whatever came first—he would excise himself and make another plan. The man was uncomfortable, and Lwasi didn't know exactly what set the man off or how to make him feel comfortable, so he smiled at the Mandela Bobblehead, pointed again, and laughed. Maybe if he looked happy Human would be less stressed.

To Human, every one of Lwasi's gestures felt like an insult. And every one of his giggles seems like a critique—a finger pointing—at him and his people. His head felt as if it was bursting, and he could feel a vein at his temple throb. More than this, he was convinced the guy had a gun or a knife in his jacket. He was still wondering how he let the guy into his car, it was literally the one thing, as a white man, you never did.

Lwasi smiled at the Mandela figure and, looking straight at Human, he reached into his pocket.

Unnerved by Lwasi's action and with a closed fist, Human hit Lwasi against the side of the head as hard as he could. The man's head seemed to bobble much like the Mandela figurine, Human thought as Lwasi's head hit the window and he slumped forward in the seat, his body leaning sideways and his neck visibly twisted. Blood poured from the open wound where he hit the window.

Everything seemed slowed down, and time felt stretched. A dull thud brought Human back to the moment. Human looked down—eager to see if it was a knife or pistol that the guy was reading for. He looked and looked again, in case he missed something, but no. He wasn't missing anything. There was nothing else on the floor of the car except for a Mandela Bobblehead.

12.

Lwasi & Human

Tuesday, April 26. 18:00

It all came to a head over what Human viewed as Lwasi's maniacal laughing. And his incessant pointing.

Human decided to tackle the bull by the horns, and even while reaching out with his clenched fist, he couldn't really believe he was doing this for a moment; he panicked about how frail life was and how the cord in the ether connecting us to the here and now is so easily tethered and yet he was unable to stop. Time stopped. He saw his hand hit the guy's head—Lwasi, he finally remembered the guy's name—and watched as his head hit the window with such force that his face pulled sideways like a boxer. The only thing that snapped Human back was the thud of whatever it was in the guy's pocket as it hit the Landy's metal floor.

The guy was slumped in his seat. Humans stared at the Mandela bobblehead on the floor. He glanced up at his own Mandela bobblehead, merrily bobbing along on the dashboard. It was interesting, he thought, that they shared a sense of humor, after all. Then he felt a surge of anger

because—just like a typical fucking Black—this fucking guy could have fucking just said fucking something. But no.

He took a moment to pull himself together. He waited for his breathing to return to normal and for his head to stop thinking in swear words. How do I fucking fix this? he wondered.

Human could still feel the heat on his fingers from hitting the guy.

His hand was pulsing a little. He thought about the connection he nearly thought he had with the guy that was now dead in the car next to him. It occurred to Human that he should have just given the guy some money so he could have taken a taxi or perhaps a bus—whatever, that wasn't the point—but if he had just not tried to be so fucking nice and so invested in this new South Africa that was a day away from happening, the guy would not be dead, and he would not have to deal with this. Despite a life of nothing ever really happening, here, in fact, something had just happened.

Human considered ways he could renegotiate the moment.

Undoing it. If only he could rewind and press play for a different outcome. He thought about money and children and how, now, because of this fucking guy, he may have neither. Guys in South African prisons don't make money and certainly do not get a wife. Be someone's bitch yes, he thought. He knew he had to think quickly. He'd never get to work the land on the family farm when the time came, he was sure of that. And the shame. His mother would die of embarrassment because her son murdered and went to jail for the accidental death of a fucking Black guy, a joker, who couldn't stop laughing on the eve of the most significant election in the country's history.

Beep. "We have a protest near the university. Braamfontein. Corner of Jan Smuts and Jorrissen. All available units please respond." Bib-bib.

Beep. "10-4. On our way." Bib-bib.

There was no doubt—the guy would have to go. The body would have to go. Human knew what to do. It was so clear. So poetic. It seemed justified. He started the Landy and turned up the volume on the CB radio. He thought that it might be better to keep up with the flow of the ANC

and Inkatha protestors as their flareups occurred and the seriousness of the violence was reported, and, to top it all, he'd rather not get stuck in a volatile situation with a dead Black man in the passenger seat.

He turned up a sidestreet and then another; the area deserted as expected after 5 in the afternoon and even more so considering the election. He turned again. Looking west as he crossed the next street, he could see protesters, and then, passing an alley, he could see a car being set alight by the warring factions. It occurred to him that getting the guy in a burning car would solve the problem very nicely—the whole thing would, conveniently, just vanish in smoke.

With calculated coolness, Human kept driving until he was a block away from the protesters and made a sharp right into the narrow alley allowing him to get as close to the heart of the action as possible without being observed or disturbed. He was exactly in the sweet spot—one block of negotiated no-man's land—right between the police and the protesters.

He stopped and sat for a minute just in case someone else what in the alley. It was deserted.

Human got out of the car and opened the trunk, carefully pulling out the spare tire. With a crowbar, he whacked the edges of the rubber, prying it loose. Finally, it snapped off and rolled to the edge of the alley, and came to a rest against the wall. He shut the back door of the Landy and pulled the tire along to the passenger door, carefully opening it. He unclicked the seatbelt and nudged the guy, just in case. He grabbed the guy's legs and swung them out of the vehicle, the guy's body now almost upright, leaning against the doorframe of the Landy. Human turned around and grabbed the tire, wedging it over the guy's head, pulling it hard over his shoulders trapping his arms inside. There was little time to waste, and his effectiveness would be significantly enhanced by his speed while taking care not to do anything stupid.

Human looked around for the jerry can of gas and, realizing he'd forgotten it, he ran to the back of the Landy, opened the door, and grabbed a can of fuel he had filled up a few days earlier in

case of emergency or services were disrupted over the following few days. This, he thought, would surely qualify as an emergency—a life-or-death situation.

Taking care to get it soaked, he poured fuel over the tire, getting as much inside it as he could. Human made sure he poured plenty of gasoline on the guy, splashing it all over his body right down to his feet. He pulled the guy away from the Landy as hard as possible and pushed him another few meters further.

Human closed his eyes and felt a lump in his throat. If only the fucker didn't laugh like that, he thought. He took a box of Lion matches and struck a bunch of them against the side of the box, the flame lighting the dark alley. He tossed the burning matches at the tire and watched as it caught fire. He couldn't watch, nor did he want to smell like burning rubber, so he jumped into the vehicle and slid over to the driver's side. The car reeked of gasoline, but he'd rinse it the next day, he thought.

As Human turned on the engine to back out of the alley, he thought he saw movement. It must be the heat, he thought. He pulled the car forward and then reversed, ready to drive out the way he entered. Through the stained passenger window, he looked straight at Lwasi, who was trying to pull the burning tire off his shoulders and arms. Lwasi looked into the eyes of the man who did this to him, who, in turn, looked back at the man he was murdering and drove out of the alley.

Beep. "We have an escalating protest near the university. All units. In Braamfontein. Corner of Jan Smuts and Jorrissen. Please respond. Riot squad on stand-by." Bib-bib.

Looking back in the rearview mirror, Human could see the guy stumbling out of the aley and into the street. He was pulling at the tire and, then, collapsed in the street.

From the alley a few feet away, a figure stumbled toward Gert and Rita in their patrol vehicle.

"It looks like a man. He's on fire."

Beep. "Despatch please respond—we have a situation at the corner of De Korte and Jorisssen—it appears to be a necklacing." Bib-bib.

Lwasi had difficulty keeping upright—it took him a minute to realize that he could not help himself as his arms were pressed against his body by a gasoline-drenched car tire that the guy from the car had set alight. His clothes had started to catch fire; the section of his shirt above the tire went up in flames first. He felt a wave of energy surge through his head that he instinctively knew was panic. He tried to take a deep breath, but it proved nearly impossible, given that the tire around his torso and arms severely restricted his breathing.

He tried to scream for help and then tugged at the untucked sections of his shirt below the tire, but almost instantly, that too erupted into flames, and within seconds flames had reached his jeans, burning in patterns where gasoline had soaked in.

Burning, Lwasi dropped to his knees, by now he was too exhausted to scream, and his face was fixed in a grimace as he tried one last time to tear the burning shirt off his chest and arms; he bellowed uncontrollably when flames started to melt the tire, the heat turning the tire into liquid tar, boiling and dripping down his arms and legs while strips of skin sloughed off his body.

For a second, he thought about the guy and the ride over, and he could still see the Mandela bobblehead, and he thought about Mandla and his parents. He thought he could hear a few notes of *Yakhal' Inkomo*, played by Winston Mankunku and his quartet—it was always his mother's favorite song.

By now, Lwasi's arms and chest were swollen—and red—he couldn't feel his skin tighten as more and more moisture evaporated; the smell of his burning flesh and the stench of rubber overwhelmed him. He could hear a hissing sound as bubbles formed on his skin's surface before they popped open, bleeding. Within seconds, Lwasi's face and head were on fire and covered in blisters. At 18:47, he collapsed—his watch and his burning arm the last things Lwasi saw—and he

suffocated in the smoke while blackened segments of sinew and flesh landed on the ground, still smoldering.

By now, his entire body was seared and singed by fuel and fire; what flesh remained slowly burnt away until he was completely charred—a "kentucky," as anti-Apartheid activists called it because necklacing victims looked like human-sized chicken pieces burnt to a crisp in a deep fryer.

"It's like Winnie said. They sure getting their freedom, one car tire and one match at a time." Mesmerized, Rita briefly wondered how she would get the smell of burnt rubber and flesh out of her clothes. "Maybe Mandela can save us."

"We created this." Gert paused. "A system under which it is completely impossible to live. Mandela has to save us."

Epilogue

Gert & Poppie

Tuesday, April 26. 19:30

"Are you OK, ma?" Gert paused. "I'm just checking in, it's been quite a night on the streets and it's still early. Who knows how crazy it's going to get."

"Ja. Not great. Was just watching one of them drop a dead one off here on the steps to the hospital." She took another drag of her Vogue Slims. "I think the one was dead. He was out of it or shot. I don't know."

"I just saw a necklacing right here near the university. It was a lot." There was a long silence, and Poppie thought she could hear her son's voice crack. It was evident to her that he was stressed and drained by what he had seen. "It's OK, Ma. Tell dad the tickets are squashed. He doesn't have to worry that the Black government will throw whites into prison, or kill them for small things like traffic violations. We'll be OK."

"You can joke my boy, Mandela is good one. The rest, you'll see, are not all that good."

"I don't know Ma. None of us are any good. I think. But maybe he makes us want to do better." Weyers, for that moment, had heard enough. He would never reach her, and he would never change her mind. "OK Ma. I've got to go. Rita and I are going home. The riot squad are here."

It was funny, Poppie thought, that her son called the place he shared with that woman "home." She wasn't sure she'd ever get used to it. It wasn't so much the fact of "that woman" but rather that to Gert, now, home meant something that didn't include her. A "Choose Mandela—For a Better Tomorrow" billboard, a block away, caught her eye. Well, may it will, she thought. Maybe. How much worse can it get?

Driving away from the smoldering man, the lights of the riot squad, the tear gas, and the crowd t running away screaming as they feared a volley of rubber bullets, Gert Weyers looked at Rita.

"It's all going to be OK. Mandela said so."

Appendix 1
Soundtrack for the Imaginary Film, **"Xhosa Nostra"**

https://open.spotify.com/playlist/2NatFsPftEusSyapwZdiAC?si=bab4cf9a12744df1

Yakhal' Inkomo, Mankunku Quartet

In 1968, against increasing political despair, enforced displacement, and worsening segregation, Winston "Mankunku" Ngozi gathered Lionel Pillay (piano), Agrippa Magwaza (bass), and Early Mabuza (drums) to record *Yakhal' Inkomo*, an album that has become a standard for South African jazz. *Yakhal' Inkomo* or Bellowing Bull is a timeless musical statement, recognized for its iconic status and soundscapes not by South African jazz artists but amongst the American greats who inspired it. *Yakhal' Inkomo* is heartbreaking in its simplicity and directness. And its beauty.

Hey Boy, Via Afrika

Vice in Bombay, Via Afrika

Via Afrika's big hit was "Hey Boy," which, like "Vice In Bombay," had an earthy African feel without being overtly African, both easy to dance to while protesting, of course. Rene Veldsman's vocals are infected with sleaziness while a female voice ululates, conjuring images of dancing around a fire. The work has a definite punk aesthetic and a nod to groups such as Siouxsie & The Banshees.

Hosh Tokolosh, Jack Parow

Parow is a controversial rapper in Afrikaans, providing sharp commentary on cultural, identity, heritage, and language issues as it affects white South Africans, especially the Afrikaners as displaced Europeans, in a post-Apartheid and post-colonial society.

Mais où sont passées les gazelles?, Lizzy Mercier Descloux

Wakwazulu Kwezizulu Rock, Lizzy Mercier Descloux

With 1984's Zulu Rock, Descloux, a rogue poet, artist, and singer-songwriter, flaunted the cultural boycott by presenting a window into a racially divided society. "Mais Où Sont Passées Les Gazelles? (Where Have The Gazelles Gone?)" is her version of a South African Shangaan disco hit that topped the French chart. The songs were recorded at Satbel Studios in Johannesburg and show her love of South African rhythm and the sounds of Johnny Clegg. After her musical career, Descloux became a successful artist.

Vuli Ndlela, Brenda Fassie

Black President, Brenda Fassie

Fassie was an iconic South African anti-apartheid Afropop singer, songwriter, and dancer affectionately called MaBrrr by her fans. She was described as the "Queen of African Pop," or the "Madonna of The Townships." *Vulindlela* is a Xhosa/Zulu word which means "get out of the way." In the context of Fassie's hit, it instructed everyone to "make way you are gossiping neighbors because my child is getting married today." In 1989, the late Fassie released *Black President* to an imprisoned Nelson Mandela. The song was banned from the airwaves, but in 1994 she performed it for Madiba at his inauguration ceremony.

Pata Pata, Miriam Makeba

Click Song, Miriam Makeba

Beware, Verwoerd!, Miriam Makeba

In some ways, Miriam Makeba is all things to all people. Saturday night fun, dancing to "Pata Pata." A renegade, married to a political subversive. Champion of Civil Rights. Anti-Apartheid icon. Symbol of Apartheid's inhumanity. Saint. Mama Africa. Devil incarnate, matched only by Winnie

Madikizela-Mandela—wife of Nelson—for anti-white inflammations. But aside from the frequent shade and occasional hype, she is also somewhat overlooked, showing up as a footnote in readings on Black Power or her husband, Stokely Carmichael. But Makeba's contributions are significant, her presence weaving in and out of Civil Rights, the rise of Black Power, and the fall of the Apartheid regime: Makeba exemplifies the Long 1960s.

Johannesburg, Africa Express

A UK-based non-profit organization, Africa Express facilitates cross-cultural collaborations between musicians in African and Western countries. Damon Albarn, formerly of Blur, helps African musicians break free from some of the stigmas and prejudices around terms such as "world music" while creating an aspirational impression of Africa as a counterpoint to some of the prevailing media tropes that feed on more sensationalized topics such as war, famine, and disease.

Sun City, Artists Against Apartheid

In 1985 Artists Against Apartheid was founded by activist and performer Steven Van Zandt to protest Apartheid and criticize artists who chose to perform at Sun City in Bophuthatswana, a Bantustan a few hours from Johannesburg. Artists appearing on the song included Bruce Springsteen, Lou Reed, Peter Gabriel, Miles Davis, Bob Dylan, Run-D.M.C., Bonnie Raitt, Bono, Melle Mel, Keith Richards, Jackson Browne, and George Clinton. A total of 54 singers contributed.

Burn Out, Sipho "Hotstix" Mabuse

One of the first significant crossover hits in South Africa during the early 1980s, *Burn Out* sold more than 500,000 copies. Over a 50-plus year-long music career, Mabuse has performed internationally while producing legendary artists such as Miriam Makeba, Hugh Masekela, Ray Phiri, and Sibongile Khumalo.

Yebo!, The Art of Noise

Gazette (Kaset), Mahlatini and the Mahotella Queens

Puleng, The Boyoyo Boys

Double Dutch, Malcolm McLaren

Soweto, Malcolm McLaren

Punk it Up, Malcolm McLaren

"Yebo," a Zulu word, translates as "yes," and the sone is about Zulu warriors looking at younger Zulu dancers in tribal gear. In 1983, Malcolm McLaren, the man who invented the Sex Pistols, produced a groundbreaking album, *Duck Rock*. The project blended genres, including the music of Mahlathini and the Mahotella Queens and that of Boy Masaka and The Boyoyo Boys. Although seen as somewhat exploitative, *Duck Rock* was the precursor to "world music" and predated Paul Simon's Graceland. *Punk it Up* refers specifically to the Sex Pistols, while *Soweto* sums up some of the excitement of the large township.

Appendix 2
Reports on necklacing that, once read, cannot be forgotten from a book I'll never write.

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TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

SUBMISSIONS - QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

NIGEL February 4 1997 — Sapa

TRUTH COMMISSION LOOKS AT FIRST "NECKLACE" MURDER

The callous murder of South Africa's first "necklace" victim, Maki Skosana, in the East Rand township of Duduza in July 1985 was examined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's human rights violation committee on Tuesday. SABC radio reported that Evelyn Moloko, the victim's sister told the committee that Maki was killed on suspicion of having been involved in a handgrenade explosion in which some youths were killed in Duduza in 1985.

Moloko said her sister was burned to death with a tyre around her neck while attending the funeral of one of the youths.Maki Skosana was the first victim of the so-called necklacings.Her body had been scorched by fire and some broken pieces of glass had been inserted into her vagina, Moloko told the committee.

Moloko added that a big rock had been thrown on her face after she had been killed.

https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/media/1997/9702/s970204c.htm

EAST LONDON July 30 1996 — Sapa

NECKLACING WAS IN LINE WITH AIMS OF ANC, AMNESTY BODY TOLD

The necklacing of four alleged members of the Killer Boys Gang in Mdantsane in 1987 had been in line with the African National Congress' stated aim of liberating the people of South Africa, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was told on Tuesday.

Testifying before the commission's amnesty committee, Middledrift prison inmate Luyanda Kana said the murders had been carried out by Mdantsane residents in their capacity as members of the ANC. Kana, along with 11 others, has applied for amnesty for the killings on the grounds that they were politically motivated.

"Our action was done as members of the ANC and in furtherance of the political struggled waged by the said organisation," he said in a sworn affidavit.The 12 were originally sentenced to death for what Judge Willem Heath described during their trial as a "gruesome and callous act".

Kana, jailed for 23 years, said the 12 had all been members of a street committee belonging to the Mdantsane Residents' Association, an affiliate of the United Democratic Front - the ANC's internal wing before its unbanning in 1990.

He told the committee the Killer Boys had emerged on the scene in Mdantsane in 1986 and were responsible for a reign of terror including random rapes and attacks on residents with knives and pangas.

"People would not walk in the street after dark. Young children could not be sent to the shops."

Residents believed the gang was an agent of the Ciskei security forces because police appeared to turn a blind eye to their activities. He said the violence of February 1, 1987 had been triggered by the death of street committee member Mkhuseli Jwambi. Following Jwambi's reported death at the hands of the Killer Boys, members of the street committee abducted four gang members from their houses and took them to a scrapyard.

"The people were fed up. Our intention was to beat these people and then take them to the police, but the crowd's anger was beyond control. People were toyi-toyiing and singing freedom songs. There was chaos."

A decision was taken to burn their captives alive and Kana assisted by putting a tyre over the head of gang member Wazina Yekani, who was then set alight.

There other Killer Boys members were similarily dealt with.Kana said following his arrest by Ciskei police, he and several other suspects were ordered to kiss the charred bodies in the police mortuary."They further ordered us to eat pieces of the flesh from the bodies. I had to put as piece of human flesh in my mouth and chew it, but I did not swallow it."

In later testimony before the commitee on Tuesday, five of Kana's fellow applicants all denied taking part in the necklacing, although they admitted to being among the group which abducted the gang members from their homes.

In terms of the legislation governing the granting of amnesty, applicants must make a full disclosure of all the facts and prove that the offence was associated with a political objective.

Committee chairman Judge Hassen Mall recused himself from the hearings of the applicants because he had acted for the defence in the trial.

https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/media/1996/9607/s960730d.htm

MOUTSE December 3 1996 — Sapa

MAN TELLS TRUTH BODY HIS PARENTS WERE NECKLACED BY COMRADES

A couple were "necklaced" by "comrades" during a conflict about planned independence for KwaNdebele, their son told the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in a written statement released on Tuesday.Jan Sipho Mahlangu said his mother Martha, 49, and father Mamakewa, 50, were "necklaced" in September 1986.
He did not turn up to testify at a sitting of the commission at Moutse, Mpumalanga, on Tuesday.In background information provided by the commission, it said: "In response to the brutality which accompanied the attempted implementation... of independence, the 'comrades' and other anti-government groups also turned to violence.

"Alleged actions included murder (including 'necklacing'), looting, destruction of property and arson.

"Generally the targets of such attacks were members of Mbokodo, their families and their properties."

https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/media/1996/9612/s961203e.htm

GEORGE June 18 1996 — Sapa

BOY, 12, WATCHED FATHER BEING NECKLACED, TRC TOLD

Ntsikelelo Marenene on Tuesay told the Truth and Reconcilliation Commission how, at the age of 12, he had watched his father being necklaced by a mob in Bongolethu township near Oudtshoorn in 1985.Patrick Marenene was a community councillor in the township, which was a hot-bed of political actvity in the mid-eighties. All but two of the councillors, Marenene and Alfred Grootboom, had resigned by 1985. It was alleged the councillors were antagonistic towards community organisaions.

According to a statement made by an Oudtshoorn police officer, a group of rioting youths had gone to Patrick Marenene's house on November 20, 1987.They had taken the contents of his house outside and set them and his car alight. Marenene had fled to Grootboom's house. He returned two days later, armed with a pistol, to see what had happened to his children.
"On his way to his house he was noticed by a group of youths in Bongolethu. He was immediately attacked and had to flee despite firing shots," police affidavits said.

"He was followed and on Muller Street in Bridgetown, approximately half a kilometer away, was gruesomely murdered. He was stoned and a burning tyre was placed on his shoulders."

Ntsikelelo Marenene verified the police account of what had happened, saying he had witnessed the necklacing. He told the commission he had run away when members of the mob had idenfied him as the councillor's son.

He had later identified some of those who had been responsible, he said. Three of the mob were sentenced to death and three others to imprisonment by the Supreme Court.Ntsikelelo Marenene said to his knowledge the people responsible had served three years in prison.

He met and talked with them, as he had given dealing with the killing "to God".He asked the TRC to help him get back his father's house, which was occupied illegally after the necklacing. The commission agreed to investigate.

Commissioner Mary Burton said there would be no further repercussions for those who had been convicted and later released.

https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/media/1996/9606/s960618g.htm

EAST LONDON July 31 1996 — Sapa

TRUTH COMMISSION HEARS HOW GANG MEMBERS WERE BURNT TO DEATH

A Killer Boys gang member struggled and tried to flee before he was hurled into a fire and burnt to death as residents of Mdatsane township near East London toyi-toyied and sang freedom songs, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission heard on Wednesday.Thando Kana was sentenced to 23 years' imprisonment for his part in Mpumelelo Mbinqo's death and those of three other gang members who were abducted from their homes on February 1, 1987. They were taken to a scrapyard where they were severely beaten and "necklaced". Necklacing involves placing a tyre around the victim, dousing him with petrol and setting him alight.
Kana told the commission's amnesty committee: "Killing a person is wrong. I did not like what we did. If the family of the deceased is present today I would like to say I'm sorry."

Kana said he had been among the group that fetched suspected gang member Folie Bushula from his home. "We asked his parents where he was. They said they did not know. Then, as we were leaving, his father said "here is the dog, let him die like a dog".

Those responsible for the abductions were members of a street committee belonging to the Mdatsane Residents Association. The association was an affiliate of the United Democratic Front - the former internal wing of the African National Congress before it was unbanned in 1990. Kana said when he arrived at the scrapyard, he found a large crowd, including women and children dancing and singing.

He said the street committee's intention had been to beat the four, who were suspected of involvement in the murder of a comrade, and then hand them over to police. "But there were people who said we must burn them. At the time the anger of the crowd was beyond our control. If I did not agree, they had the power to throw me in the fire as well."

Kana said he dragged Mbinqo to the fire and threw him in. "I also stood guard as others were set on fire. I stood around while the deceased were burning."

The amnesty committee heard earlier evidence on Tuesday that those suspected of involvement in the killings were later arrested by Ciskei police and made to eat their victims' charred flesh.

Kana and 11 other members of the street committee have applied for amnesty on the grounds the killings were politically motivated. In an affidavit presented to the five member amnesty committee, the 12 argued that they had been acting in their capacity as members of the ANC and in line with the organisation's stated aim of national liberation.

The committee adjourned the hearings two days earlier than scheduled after the applicants' legal representative, Viwe Nontshe, said an important witness whom he had hoped to call had fallen ill. It was decided that the evidence would be heard by the committee at its hearings in Port Elizabeth on July 19.

https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/media/1996/9607/s960731e.htm

CAPE TOWN March 11 1997 — Sapa

POLICE NECKLACED ACTIVIST, TRUTH BODY TOLD

A security police hitsquad "necklaced" a Mamelodi, Pretoria activist after first strangling him to death, a former security policeman told the Truth Commission's amnesty committee on Tuesday.
W/O Paul van Vuuren's evidence to the committee followed last week's announcement by the African National Congress that it would submit new evidence to the commission proving that the police were involved in "necklace" murders, in which victims were burnt using petrol-doused car tyres placed around their necks.

The ANC said its submission would also show how the police "manipulated propaganda" in an attempt to discredit the ANC and implicate it in necklace murders. Van Vuuren said the activist was suspected of involvement in petrol bombings, landmine explosions and necklacings.

ANC cell commander Harold Sefola identified the activist as a member of his cell when Sefola was brutally tortured and then killed by police. The amnesty committee heard evidence about the deaths of Sefola and two other activists last year. Van Vuuren testified that former security policeman Joe Mamasela, who often posed as an ANC operative, arranged to meet the activist at a home in Mamelodi.

The man was enticed into Mamasela's vehicle, a station wagon, where van Vuuren lay hidden. "He and and Mamasela spoke in Tswana about irrelevant things. When we were outside the built up area I pressed a gun against his head. I told him I would shoot him."

They met Capt Jacques Hechter, who was waiting for them in a minibus. Hechter has also applied for amnesty. The activist was transferred to the minibus where Hechter throttled him with a piece of wire.

"The purpose was to kill him but if we could extract information from him that would have been a bonus," van Vuuren said. The hit team then drove to a deserted road in Bophutatswana where the activist's body was doused in petrol and a tyre placed around his neck.

"He was then set alight. It was supposed to look as though he had been necklaced. The purpose was not to necklace him. I suspect he was already dead when the petrol and tyre was put on him."

https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/media/1997/9703/s970311e.htm

SEBOKENG July 13 1998 - SAPA

BOIPATONG HORROR RECALLED AT TRC AMNESTY HEARING

The horror of the 1992 Boipatong massacre, in which 46 people including young children and old people were butchered, was recalled at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's amnesty hearing in Sebokeng on Monday.
Victor Mthandeni Mthembu, 29, is one of 16 Inkatha Freedom Party members applying for amnesty for the attack on the township near Vanderbijlpark on June 16, 1992. The applicants were part of an impi of about 300 who launched the attack from the nearby KwaMadala hostel. Apart from the deaths scores more were injured and dozens of houses were ransacked.

Mthembu has claimed the raid was in retaliation for a spate of attacks on IFP members by African ational Congress members who necklaced or burnt hostel residents. During cross-examination by Daniel Berger, for victims and their families, it was pointed out to Mthembu that many of the people killed were children. Mthembu replied that the object had been to attack residents of Boipatong, irrespective of their ages, because they supported the ANC.

The audience, many of whom are survivors or relatives of victims, were shocked and distressed with Mthembu's reply when Berger asked him how the killing of a nine-month-old Aaron Mathope could be seen as an attack on the ANC.

"A snake gives birth to a snake," he said. There were gasps of shock and anger from the audience, who were clearly upset by what they regarded as a callous remark.

Later Mthembu attempted to explain that his use of the term about snakes was an idiomatic expression, but Berger put it to Mthembu that he should not try to run away from his own words. "It was your intention to kill anyone who was present in Boipatong that night," Berger said.

At that stage amnesty committee chairman Judge Sandile Ncgobo intervened and said it had already been established that people were killed regardless of age. But he said there was no evidence to suggest that Mthembu himself killed any children.

Mthembu earlier testified that on the night of the attack he saved the lives of two children. He said he hid them under a bed so they would not be harmed. Berger suggested this had not happened, and that the children were in fact attacked. Berger said the families of the victims he represented had stated that they would not consider forgiving him until he revealed all the details of the attack, including all the names of the people who had been in the

raiding party. The lawyer pointed out that two other children killed that night were Agnes Malindi, 4, and Poppie Mbatha, 5. One of the survivors of the massacre, Mita Moleti who was three at the time, was injured on the night and is now confined to a wheelchair. She has been attending the hearings every day and listens to the proceedings.

"She still wants to know why her skull was hacked with a panga," Berger said to Mthembu, who replied that he could not offer an explanation. Many of the victims were repeatedly hacked and stabbed and one old woman received so many wounds it was impossible to count them. Mthembu was asked why had been necessary to inflict mulitiple stab wounds on people, some of whom were asleep at the time.

"They were not just sleeping, they were sleeping in Boipatong," he replied. He also justified the theft of property from residents on the night of the attack on the grounds that Shaka had confiscated cattle from the people he had defeated in war. He said he had learnt from history that the victor had the right to take the property of the losers.

He said the attackers had taken blankets, televsion sets and two-plate stoves which they would have used in the hostel. But after the attack former IFP Transvaal leader Themba Khoza ordered them to dispose of the booty and to burn all evidence. Mthembu was convicted of murder in 1994 and is serving a lengthy prison sentence. One of the original applicants, Thomas Lukhozi, last week withdrew his application for amnesty. The hearing continues on Wednesday.

https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/media/1998/9807/s980713a.htm

PRETORIA July 10 1996 — Sapa

ANC STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID TARGETED CIVILIANS: DOCUMENT

The African National Congress targeted civilians in the anti-apartheid struggle despite signing the Geneva protocol against such attacks, according to a submission to the Truth Commission. ANC car bombs killed 30 civilians and injured another 535, according to the document, which was compiled by former security police general Herman Stadler at the request of the Foundation for Equality before the Law. He said 12 security force members were killed and 13 injured in the car bomb attacks. The submission was delivered to the Truth Commission on Tuesday and released to the media on Wednesday.
It said the ANC in 1980 signed the Geneva Convention protocol on revolutionary warfare, thereby declaring that its action would only be directed at military targets.

The document said more than 1400 acts had been committed between 1976 and 1990 during the armed struggle against apartheid. "In the course of these, 240 persons were killed and more than 1500 injured... the majority by far civilians," Stadler told reporters in Pretoria on Wednesday.

"A conservative evaluation by the SA Police of the target selection... shows that in terms of the protocols more than 50 percent of the targets attacked can be categorised as civilian." This percentage had risen to more than 85 percent since 1985.

The submission said the ANC had tended to divorce itself from incidents which could have resulted in negative publicity. It cited the car bomb explosion in Pretoria in 1983 which killed 19 people and injured 217 others, most of them civilians. "The ANC only accepted responsibility after a cross-border operation by South Africa into Mozambique as a result of the bomb blast," the submission said. Another example of civilian victims was the murder of people by the "necklace" method. A total of 406 people died in this way. Another 395 were burned to death.

"Who is going to take responsibility for the murder of hundreds of people, some of them the most brutal in the history of mankind?" the document asked. "To put a petrol-soaked tyre around the neck of a human being and set it alight, for that person to slowly burn to death, can only be described as savagery of the highest degree." The submission took note of the ANC's assertion that it had not devised the necklace method, but it accused the organisation of never having condemned it. "On the contrary, from statements by certain executive members, it was clear that they tried to create the impression that it was 'the people's way of dealing with collaborators'," the document said.

https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/media/1996/9607/s960710h.htm