

FROM THE AUTHOR OF *RUDE*  
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HER FIRST HAND, EMOTIONAL ACCOUNT  
OF THE FARM ATROCITIES  
IN SOUTH AFRICA



# **PLAASMOORDE**

## **THE KILLING FIELDS**



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# Introduction: Why South Africa?

When people get in touch with me, often by email or on Twitter, it's because they have a problem. The problem I kept hearing about repeatedly, over and over again, was the slaughter of white farmers in South Africa. I was sent long emails by wives whose husband had been killed, by children who had lost their father. By an elderly gentleman who had a blowtorch taken to his body until he revealed the code to his safe. All too often nothing was stolen; these were vengeance attacks.

So I travelled to South Africa to see for myself.

There, I met with Bernard, a white South African farmer. He walked me through the day that he survived a horrific attack on his family.

He had driven home early from church with his father to start up the barbecue for his family. Pottering about inside the house he thought it was strange he hadn't yet smelled the fire from the family cooking pits that his father was supposed to be lighting. So he went outside to look for his dad – and that's when he realised that the black gang was waiting for him in the garage. They had already grabbed his father and beaten him. Now they threw Bernard down in a pool of his father's blood. Bernard's only thought was that his father must already be dead.

But the worst moment was not being beaten as he lay in a pool of his father's blood. The worst moment was hearing his wife's car coming down the driveway, knowing his children were inside and there was nothing he could do.

Bernard heard his sons jump out of the car and run to the front door of the house just like they always did, in competition to see who could get there first. Then he heard a shot ring out. The bullet missed, but the hole in the wall is still there today.

The gang grabbed Bernard and dragged him across the yard – and that's when the real problems began. They tied up his wife with fencing wire, binding her feet and tying her hands behind her back. Then they dragged the two young children into the doorway and made them watch as they beat Bernard. Eventually the attackers went through the house, and then left.

Miraculously, Bernard's father managed to rise from the pool of his own blood on the bathroom floor, where the gang had thrown him, and rescue Bernard. Bernard felt his father's blood dripping onto his hands as his father untied him. Freeing his family was the last thing Bernard's father was able to do for his family. Bernard tells me he tried to get his father to hold on, reminding him that there was so much they still had to do on the farm, in the fields, urging him to remember all their plans.

But his father couldn't hold on; he died as Bernard tried to talk him into staying alive.

Bernard would have liked to take his young sons away from the house. Instead, they witnessed every moment. As a result, their nightmare never ends. They fear the farm on which they live. They fear people.

Bernard's youngest son has become violent. He may be removed from his school because of what he's witnessed and the impact it's had on him. He's become impossible to control. He takes sleeping tablets and antidepressants. Bernard thought the tablets weren't working; his son still wasn't sleeping or getting any better. He went back to the psychologist and said: You know these tablets? They don't work. They're not doing anything for my son.

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The psychologist told Bernard to try the tablets himself. He did – and slept as if he'd fallen into a coma. He told me he'd never slept so long or so hard.

It wasn't that the tablets weren't working. It was that they weren't working for his son because his son's problems were too great.

Bernard's youngest son wants to kill himself. He says he doesn't want to live any more, that he'd rather be with his grandfather. This young boy believes that the bullet shot at him was meant for him, and that if he had died his grandfather would have lived.

Neither boy is able to work on the farm. They are too afraid.

Bernard's puppies and his little dogs play around at our feet as Bernard and I sit on the stoop where his father died, near the wall where his son was shot at, looking out over his fields. Bernard apologises for his puppies rough-housing around and biting at my ankles. He says that the only things he believes in now are his animals, God and the land.

Animals don't let you down, he says. Animals never fail you. If you believe in animals, God and the land, then everything will be okay. He doesn't believe any of this was God's doing; he believes that this happened because the people who attacked his farm don't have God. He believes there some things are written, that there is some kind of destiny, and this enables him to hold onto his faith. He tells me of signs that he's had, even the day after the attack happened, which reassure him that God is looking on.

Bernard is determined he will never leave this land. He looks out over it and tells me how his grandfather turned this farm from bushveld into productive land. Bernard is a poor man. He doesn't have expensive machinery or tools to make work easier; everything requires sweat and blood and tears.

That's a price Bernard is willing to pay. He will not let his grandfather's memory down. He will not leave this land. He tells me he will die for his land. He tells me he will shed his blood for the land.

He says that perhaps it will be tonight that it will be his turn to go. Perhaps it will be tonight that the attackers return and this time it will be the end of him. He and his wife talk about it. They accept it as part of the reality of being white farmers in South Africa in 2018.

I start to think hard about my decision to come to South Africa to document the truths of these farmers. I wonder whether I'm really going to be brave enough to handle all of the sadness I'm going to hear; my security team and I are already in floods of tears. I worry about leaving Bernard when he starts talking about the possibility that his time might be up this very night. I feel stronger when I realise that although this is likely to be the first and last time I ever see Bernard, his story needs to live on whatever happens tonight, or tomorrow, or next week or month – and that's why I'm here, and why I'm telling you this story right now.

Because maybe every time someone hears Bernard's truth, every time we relive his pain, every time I shut my eyes and see that bullet hole in the wall of his bungalow meant for his children, Bernard endures. Whether he remains alive or the black gangs get him in the end, his story lives on. And either way he will have lived his ultimate truth: he will be a man who dies for, and on, his land.



# Chapter 1:

## The crosses of Plaasmoorde

One of the oddest things about travelling across South Africa listening to the truths of the white farmers is the way the mainstream media refuses to believe any of this is true.

The media denies that what I'm seeing and hearing about at first hand is actually happening at all. They want you to believe that violence against white farmers lies only in the imagination of crazy white people, of racists, of people who don't know what's happening on the ground.

Yet here on the ground I'm seeing it for myself. I'm seeing families being torn apart. I'm being shown photos by farmers of the attacks they have suffered, the wounds that have been inflicted upon them, of the implements used to torture them. On a farm in the middle of nowhere, a farmer called Robert shows me the blowtorch used on him during his attack. His wife was shot; later she suffocated to death on the plastic bags stuffed down her throat to gag her. Even as I stand holding the blowtorch used on Robert, the mainstream media is telling you none of this is happening. It's enough to drive you to insanity.

I speak to a journalist who works on one of the biggest newspapers in South Africa. I talk to her about the fact that nobody seems to want to report the murders of white South Africans, particularly farmers. I ask her why her newspaper doesn't want to cover the endless slaughter

of these people, why the sight of often elderly couples whose eyes have been blackened, their faces reduced to a bloody pulp, isn't making the news.

She tells me these stories simply don't get many clicks; people just aren't that interested. The deaths of white people just don't do that well for the paper. I sit there listening and I'm so angry I want to throttle her. I want to grab her by her statistics and her clicks and her how-well-does-this-do-for-my-paper excuse and show her the emotional truth of the victims. How can anyone say, "This doesn't do well for my paper" and imagine that that's the end of the story?

I quote her in an article I write that is published online. I recorded her interview; I had a member of my team with me during the interview. But she contacts me, and it suddenly she seems to want to unspeak what she's said. In the cold light of day her words seem harsh.

This is so typical of the media. They don't want to tell you what's going on if it doesn't benefit them, but they object if you expose them as the frauds they are. When you hold a mirror up to those who are supposed to be reporting the truth of their country, they don't like what they see reflected back at them. And in part this seems to me to be part of my mission here in South Africa: to expose these journalists, these newspapers, these media outlets and lobbyists who refuse to admit that there is a problem.

But there is hope in South Africa, too. There are good men like Dr. Johan Burger, Senior Research Consultant at the Institute of Security Studies, and another man, the General at the Transvaal Agricultural Union. They share their time with me and both of them are very clear that these attacks are growing in number, are targeting white farmers, and they are generating statistical and quantifiable evidence that they will use to help the world wake up to the problem.

The General at the Transvaal Agricultural Union stands in front of a huge wall-map of South Africa. He used to be a commander of troops and forces; he's an enormous guy, well-respected, robust, seemingly invincible. He points to the map, which is covered in pins, some of them in clusters. Each pin represents an attack against a white farmer.

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It's people like this who give me faith that the truth will be heard. People may ignore or refute the words of the white farmers themselves; they may ignore or refute my truth, or the truth of any other spectators or reporters; they cannot refute the pins on the General's map, and they cannot ignore them forever, either.

The General takes me to his office. On the wall is some currency – I think it was from Zimbabwe. It's a worthless currency – even 1,000 notes wouldn't buy you much of anything. The General points at the currency and tells me it's an analogy of the way life is valued here in South Africa: cheaply. When murder is all around, one death more or less is less than significant.

I see his point. When the number of murders is so high and the number of dead is so great, each death becomes less newsworthy. It's the same logic applied by the newspapers: death is too commonplace to cover or to care about; it doesn't sell.

I went to a memorial called Plaasmoorde, where white metal crosses have been hammered into the hard stone of the hillside, row upon row upon row. Each cross represents a white farmer killed on his land by a black gang. Each one represents the death of a farm, the heartbreak of a widow, children without a father. And, more than this, as I saw at first hand: when one man dies it's not just one life that is lost – the hope and the future of all the people involved in the attack are lost, too. Little boys are left wanting to kill themselves when fathers are beaten, and grandfathers are killed.

I walk up the hill passing white crosses and my heart breaks. This place is truly Biblical at times — not in a religious way, but in terms of epic proportions. The landscape, with its countless crosses, goes on for miles and miles and miles. The raindrops here are big, fat, warm and heavy; sometimes when it rains it feels like this whole goddamn place is crying.

Among these crosses I can really see what the General was talking about. When there are so many murders, each individual tragedy somehow gets lost. Here on the hillside, these rows of crosses somehow merge into one massive white cross. Individual names, along with

their associated faces, laughter and lives, get lost. I decide this is an important part of my mission: to bring to life the people behind the crosses. To illuminate each life behind each death. To find the human faces behind each cruel attack.

Surely if we meet some of the surviving victims in person, understand them as people, relate to them as fellow humans, we can stop each cruel act from being just another pin on a board, another number on a chart, another statistic, just another story that doesn't do well for the newspapers. Each person is a mum, a grandmother, a father, a brother or sister. They could be ours. We should be fighting to help save them.

And so I set off on this epic journey around this Biblical country to find the faces of the white farmers of South Africa. With my security team in two cars, we drive the distance-equivalence of the east to west coast of America to find the truth not being told about them. Every time you hear their story, every time you re-tell what you hear, by reading the words on this page right now, you are helping them. Bernard said he would die in his boots for his land; by reading this, you are helping to keep his legacy alive. You are part of the solution.

## Chapter 2: Left for dead — twice

Marietta is a special lady. She is a white farmer and an incredible force, living as she does alone on her farm with her animals, eking out a living from the South African soil. Black gangs have repeatedly tried to drive Marietta from her land. One day she was slowly driving down the driveway out of her farm when a black gang member with a shotgun leaned through her car window and fired a shot. Marietta lurched backwards, saving her own life, but the bullet blew away her bottom jaw. Half her face is now missing.

She was treated cruelly in hospital. Because of the political climate created by the African National Congress (ANC) and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), black hospital workers have been taught that white people are the enemy. Marietta was refused a blanket, pain relief or any proper treatment. When they did eventually operate on Marietta's face, they left shrapnel in the wound. For months Marietta could feel and smell her face rotting away. She was unable to eat and had to try to find a way to get food down her throat – all the while without a lower jaw.

She was all alone, but for a black farm worker who considers Marietta like a mother to her. She cooked for her, tried to help her eat, to get food down her throat, to attend to her wounds as best she could.

When I speak to them they are sitting together on a bench, like sisters, two farmworkers. One is black and one is white, but otherwise they seem just the same, kindred spirits working the land together, helping each other survive.

Marietta shows me her calf, where they took skin to help rebuild her face. I hold her leg in my hands and I'm ashamed to say I am uncomfortable holding this flesh from which so much skin had been removed. The muscles and ligaments seem almost raw to the touch. It reminds me of holding meat which I'm preparing to cook. It's lifelike but it's cold, too.

The surgery to rebuild Marietta's face using skin from her leg was not a complete success; one might say the doctors botched the operation. She tells me that sometimes the pain both from her leg and her face was so bad, she wished she could die. She couldn't understand how someone could be expected to endure all of this and not die. She begged for painkillers. She begged to be put out of her misery. But nobody came.

The hairs from Marietta's leg now grow inside her face. She says that when she touches the inside of her bottom lip, she's irritated by the hairs she can feel growing there. She uses a razor and tweezers to try and remove this leg hair now growing inside her mouth. It's an unbelievable situation for any woman to endure.

I ask her if she's angry. She tells me that she was. She tells me that she hated her life and sometimes didn't want to go on living. But now, just like Bernard, she points to her animals and the land and tells me that she's here for her animals, that she will never leave them. There is a determination about this brave woman who has endured so much. She says her purpose now is to live for her animals and her land, and that she too will die still inhabiting this place.

I ask what will happen if they come again, the black gangs, in the night. She replies matter-of-factly: Then my time will be up.

There is another deeply dark element to Marietta's story – which is saying something considering that this is a woman who has had half her face blown off by shotgun, has been mistreated in hospital and whose surgery has left her with a life that is not easy to lead.

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When Marietta called the police about being attacked by a gang on her land, they never came. This is a story I heard from white farmers over and over again. They all speak of calling for help that never comes.

Marietta believes that the police here are part of the problem: they want her off the land as well, and the black gangs know it. Women like her have no protection from the gangs; on the contrary, the gangs operate in a climate in which they believe they have not only protection from the police, but the political support of extreme organisations like the EFF.

And the story doesn't end here. Not only does Marietta live with the results of an attack by a black gang, the police who turned a blind eye, the hospital that didn't want to treat her because she's white and the daily threat of being hunted from her land; she also faces another surprising and unseen enemy: the liberal press.

I've never shared this story before. When I was trying to meet Marietta and arrange to come and visit her, she said, via a contact, that she wasn't interested. That actually she was a little bit sick of meeting press because they had a habit of coming and then leaving again without ever caring. That she didn't really want to tell her story again because she felt she was being used. I was curious about this hostility; it seemed strange coming from a lady like Marietta who lives all alone and who I imagine would feel better by talking about the things that she's gone through.

It turns out somebody was actively working against us. My contact who was arranging the meeting with Marietta was working through a link person, a South African photojournalist. She tells the world the story of South Africa, the land and its people, through the medium of her lens.

What she didn't want was for Marietta's story to be heard, especially not through a vehicle like me. So this educated, morally worthy, left-wing photojournalist sadly told us that Marietta had had cancer, that she had passed away.

She was so desperate to prevent Marietta's truth from being heard in case it damaged her own left-wing liberal agenda, that she told us Marietta was dead.

And I was reminded once again of the lengths people will go to, to stop the truth from being told. Even if that means lying about a death to deny a woman who has already gone through so much from sharing her story.

Marietta is still very much alive. I was thrilled to meet her, to hear her story and to be able to spend some time with her and her friends. Thanks to the Rebel Media team, we were able to go grocery shopping in advance and bought Marietta a stash of goodies for her cupboard so that she could have something to eat, to make her life a little easier over the following weeks. That's one of the things about the farms of these brave men and women in South Africa: many of them are very remote. Help is not just a moment away.

I still speak to Marietta, even back here in the UK. I want to restore her faith in journalists and people like me who come to tell her story. I want her to see that we're not all bad guys who will run away and disappear the minute we get a story. That we can care. I still care. I won't stop caring.

It's fun to speak with her and I'm thrilled that she is still going strong. I do worry that one day I will send her a message as usual and there will be no response. I worry that one day I will say hello to Marietta and she won't reply because she can't.

She always said the black gangs would get her in the end.



# **Chapter 3:**

## **Here, the night monsters are real**

I thought it might be interesting for you to understand a little more about what life is like on the road recording the kinds of documentaries I make. First up, I'll say, it's rough. When you go into these things you know you are signing yourself up for no sleep, no real shower, no regular clean clothes, no guarantee of food at regular intervals, a lot of crying, and a lot of having to improvise bathrooms behind hedges, usually in the company of a team of boys. And South Africa was no different.

Thanks to Rebel Media and our supporters, I had two indestructible vehicles and the world's best security team, fully armed, hostile-environment trained, and mostly ex-Forces. If anyone was going to get at me, they would have to get through these lads first. I didn't really fancy anyone's chances of that.

To be honest, security like this is a complete luxury for me. I usually don't have any security. I prefer to travel alone.

I think many people like to have security because it feeds their ego. I've known a great many other so-called journalists who seldom leave anywhere more intimidating than the local town centre, yet insist on

travelling with enormous numbers of security personnel. I will never forget watching Ben Shapiro, all four foot five of him, scurrying along the corridor at CPAC — the big annual conservative convention in the USA — surrounded by at least eight burly security officers, just to walk down a carpeted corridor, in one of the most secure locations on the planet at that moment.

So usually I'm averse to security. But in South Africa things are different. In order to get to the places I needed to get to and to tell the truths not being told, I needed to go to areas of the country where you are told you can't go. Or that you won't come out of alive. These burly men with their brutal driving machines and weapons training would allow me to do what I needed to do and live to tell the tale.

On the road you wake up early, 5am or 6am, to get going. All the kit has to be on the wagons before you leave. It's an endless revolving circus of arriving late to accommodations, trying to find your toothbrush in the dark, and getting some sleep before hitting the road again first thing. Somehow you're supposed to create a narrative, find people willing to be interviewed and on camera, and protect the people you're with as well as your own mental, physical and spiritual well-being, while throwing yourselves in and out of vehicles and driving endless hours in a vast country to get between appointments.

Be clear: I'm not complaining. This kind of storytelling is my absolute favourite thing. Some of my fondest memories of the last five years have been from this trip to South Africa to make this documentary. Not just because the brilliant security team helped me every single hour of every single day, but because of all the fascinating people we got to speak to and I got to interview and whose stories I heard. The very idea that these stories will now be told to the world is thrilling.

And there is a funny side to it all. It's quite something to walk into a bar or a restaurant or fast-food joint to get fuel on-the-go surrounded by five guys who are twice your height and width. I was transformed into this strange little white-haired British creature in the company of vast, hulking men, and it was strange. It was like being transformed into a celebrity, perhaps some cute little singer who actually deserved

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this kind of security, rather than what I was: a small white woman scurrying around gathering up true stories to tell.

I'm not that good at doing what I'm told, which I don't think will come as a surprise to many people. I don't follow orders well – as, for instance, when security tells me I'm not allowed to go somewhere, especially not on my own, or that I have to wait at the bathroom until someone comes to collect me. Consequently, being told off by my security detail was a daily occurrence.

But they are a brilliant band of men who I would recommend to anybody thinking of following in my footsteps to South Africa to find out truths for themselves. Please do use the security team that I had, whatever your political agenda or your views. Getting to the heart of the truth is only possible if someone is there to keep you safe. You need these guys at your side.

They never gave up. Not during the 20-hour days, not when we didn't know what we were doing or quite what the plan was, not when we ran out of food, or the needs of the cameraman clashed with the needs of the story or security. They seemed to enjoy it. And they were kind, too. On the way to see Marietta, they made sure that we were able to stop off at a grocery store to fill up the vehicles with essentials to take to Marietta so she had something to put into her cupboards. Sometimes they helped the people I interviewed with security advice for their farms or assisted them with their plans for fencing or new gates.

And in fact they are now creating a support organisation for the farmers. They want to physically make a difference on the ground. As part of this, they will go out to farms to help farmers protect themselves and their family. Not only will they provide physical protection in the form of gates, fencing, cameras and surveillance systems, but they will also provide practical help to farmers' wives and family members in the form of weapons training. Most importantly of all, they will help prepare people with the mindset needed to endure a farm attack.

They will ingrain into farmers and their families what they need to think first, how to set their mind, what mood they need to get into

in order to survive. And more than that: how to defend the thing that matters most, namely their children.

This was a message I saw reinforced on the ground time after time when I visited the farms. Everything was set up so that the last line of defence would be access by the farmer's wife to a weapon, even if she'd been driven back into the bedrooms of the home, so that she had a chance of defending her children when all else was lost. Here in the UK or America or Canada, I don't think we can really understand what that's like. These homes have security gates. They have surveillance cameras. Many mothers use these security systems to check that no one is waiting inside the gate for them when they return home. Once through the gate, they check the security cameras at the front door of the house to make sure no one is lying in wait for them there. To get inside their homes they have to go through more fencing or gates, and there is always an iron gate in front of the front door.

Between the kitchen and the bedroom area of these homes, there's always a metal gate so that even if there was an attack in the kitchen space, the remaining family members could move back into the bedroom area. Attackers would need a welding device to get through these gates.

This is normal life in South Africa.

I do wonder about all this, about what it feels like being a mum in South Africa. It's one of the reasons I wanted to come. I have three children of my own and my youngest son was, until recently, still getting up in the night when he saw a shadow behind his cupboard or heard a bump in the night. For him, night time is when the monsters might come, and my job has been to help him see that there are no monsters.

But in South Africa the monsters are real. And they do come in the night. It's one of the things I learned when I met Marianne Drive, whose husband was shot by attackers in front of her and her daughters. She still lives on the farm, with her daughters and young son. Without their daddy, she has to go around her house at night and show her children that she's locking the windows, that she's pulling the bars down across the doors, that everything is safe and secure – and they

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still struggle to sleep. One daughter sleeps in the bed with her because she can't sleep alone. It strikes me, again, that these farm attackers don't just take away partners, lovers and the mental health of children. They also take children's ability to sleep and to trust. They prove that monsters are actually real.

Living on the road with the security guards, a cameraman and a job to do, I have my rucksack with me at all times, and inside it I have my things organised in plastic bags. One plastic bag holds T-shirts; one holds shorts; another holds bathroom-related stuff and another carries my socks. No matter how little time we have in any accommodation, I can quickly grab whatever I need and turn myself around to be in bed, and then up again, as fast as possible.

No such joy for my lovely cameraman, Oliver, who is a treasured member of the Rebel Media team. Oliver was filming all day, then editing video in the wagons as we drove along on these monstrous journeys across South Africa. But then, arriving at accommodations, while the rest of us were planning or preparing or sleeping, he would be up late into the night and sometimes all night, battling with the wi-fi or email system so as to get his footage uploaded and back to the office in Canada.

Arguably Oliver is the unsung hero in this whole project, right up there alongside the people whose stories we're telling. He worked endlessly and tirelessly on the road, and continued that work back in the office, to put together our documentary. Here's an example of his hard work: he hand-transcribed all the hours of footage we ever shot in South Africa, in order to be as cost-effective as possible. Anyone who works in or near this industry will know the arduous nature of this endeavour.

But Oliver did start out on this journey wearing a blazer, which became a source of great amusement to the security team and me, who were dressed in more rugged attire. So at a certain point in our travels together I grabbed Oliver and took him to an outdoor shop. There we replaced his filming blazer with a rather more appropriate, safari-style, multi-pocketed hunting jacket. We transformed our domesticated cameraman into a safari cameraman, ready for anything.

It has been said by both my critics and my fans that I am quite male in nature. I do look a bit manly at times. I'm not over-endowed in the boob department and it can sometimes be a challenge to tell my front from my back; I sometimes think I need labelling. My point being that being among six blokes for three weeks in South Africa was no big deal for me. I typically find it easier to work with men, and particularly extreme men who all seem to speak a similar language and operate in a similar way. Undoubtedly my own military background has a part to play in this. I like living on the road, and a little on the wild side.

That's why it's not unusual for me to jump out of a wagon along with the guys, crouch down and get on with my bathroom activities at their side while all facing into the hedge.

There was one occasion, back in civilisation, when I failed to remember that this is not normal behaviour for all women, and that my lack of shame doesn't always go unnoticed. I was in the UK, filming in London, and popped behind a bush to complete my bathroom activities. I emerged to horrified faces. Why hadn't I just used a local restaurant if I was that desperate? And I do take the point.

All of this goes to say that this is very much a team endeavour. You may see my face and hear my voice, and it's me leading the documentary, but you should be fully aware, as I am, that this is the result of a team effort, and owes a great deal to the professionalism of my security team, the perseverance and endurance of my cameraman, Oliver, and all of those supporters of Rebel Media who kindly donated to help cover the expenses of this trip to South Africa. To all of these people, I am eternally grateful.

## **Chapter 4:**

# **“If he is a brother, then he will be let go”**

**O**ut of the blue I get an email from a serving senior ranking police officer in South Africa. He wants to speak out about what he has seen inside the South African Police Service. I think back to a conversation I had with Johan Burger, at the Institute of Security Studies, when he told me that although there are still many good policemen in South Africa, there are also a great number of corrupt officers willing to take money in exchange for weapons or for turning a blind eye.

I agree to meet the police officer at the Botanical Gardens in Pretoria. He has very specific conditions for our meeting: his face can't be shown, his voice must be distorted — there must be no way of identifying him.

I see that he is taking a tremendous risk, especially in this country where murder is seen as a solution rather than a crime. He tells me that if he is found out, he and his family will be targeted ask him why he has taken this risk.

He tells me that he joined the police force to work on the side of good. As part of doing the right thing, he says, it is important to speak

the truths of the South African police force that nobody wants to talk about.

With certainty he sets out instances where police weapons have been used in the farm attacks, in exchange for a cut of the money (whether paid by the syndicate bosses or stolen from the white families.

He also explains how police officers will regularly provide a safe house for the money taken during “cash-in-transit” robberies — a crime epidemic in its own right, in which armoured cars are hijacked, or security guards robbed while carrying cash to their vehicle. Clearly, therefore, one of the last places victims will go to looking for assistance in such cases is to police officers; even reporting such crimes, let alone expecting police to recover millions in stolen rand, is naive. He also details specific examples where dockets and records have not just been “lost” but purposely destroyed.

“If he [the suspect] is a brother, then he will be let go,” he says, referring to the general climate of acceptance. I ask him what it means to be a brother, whether that’s a phrase used to describe other black people, or others from the same community? He replies, “No, a brother is being a supporter of the ANC or the EFF.” He reminds me that this is a problem which extends across black and white police officers; he trusts the high-ranking white police officers least of all.

It’s a curious thing sitting listening to a gentleman telling you that the police are complicit in farm attacks. As much as I can see the importance of histories, and what they mean for white farmers in South Africa, I also see that these are truths I don’t necessarily want to hear. There is something soul destroying about hearing that the very people who are supposed to protect and safeguard them are the ones who are perpetuating the slaughter of whites on the ground. And there is something deeply troubling about listening to him tell me that the police are equipping farm attackers, especially when I have sat with victims who tell me that as soon as the attackers left, they phoned the police for help. The police are like the wolf in sheep’s clothing.

I really admire this man’s bravery, and try to find some kind of hope and faith in the fact that he has come forward to share his story —



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there must still be good guys out there in the South African police force, because he's right here speaking to me. Johan Burger's daughter also works in the South African Police Service, so she has to be on the side of good too.

He shows me his police badge, careful to cover his number so he cannot be identified, and he tells me some more hard truths. He tells me that, at the current rate of attrition, there will be no more white farmers in South Africa within two years.

For the first time in modern history, South Africa is a net importer of food.

The current economic situation confirms that South Africa is officially in recession; the agricultural sector in particular shrunk by a shocking 24%. The figures are stark and are surely the inevitable consequence of the government's threat to enact land expropriation without compensation, on top of farm attacks happening on a weekly, if not daily, basis. In April 2018, Cape Town came very close to running out of water — the first major international city to do so. A serving police officer has told me the country is about to hit a food crisis and has no food security. I wonder just how much more damage the ANC is going to be allowed to do to this country.

There is an alarming precedent. Beginning in 2000, the same pattern of murdering white farmers and appropriating their land occurred in Zimbabwe, formerly known as Rhodesia and once celebrated as the breadbasket of Africa. Predictably, within a couple of years, homesteads had been ripped apart, valuable elements had been sold-off for quick and easy money, prime land returned to bushveld, and the animals were gone. Zimbabwe became dependent on foreign aid for food.

But we don't learn. History is set to repeat itself in South Africa. Soon European and American leaders will be asked to send foreign aid to help South Africa feed itself. And the same leaders will undoubtedly comply, overlooking the fact that they sat on their hands and watched as farmers were butchered from the land. No doubt Bob Geldof will organize another celebrity sing-song.

As we drive away from my meeting with the police officer, I'm struck by the enormity of the story I need to tell. I came here to ask mums how they slept at night on farms, knowing that the bedtime monsters might come. I came to witness the raw human story behind the slaughter of hundreds of whites. But the political and economic backdrop is part of the story, too. It's the answer to why these farm attacks happen at all. It explains why black gangs feel they can attack white farmers with impunity — because the political leadership have created a climate where removing whites from the land is seen as accepted policy, and police can curry favour by facilitating attacks on the ground.

One thing has become very clear: Politicians and corrupt police officers are in bed with the farm attackers on the ground. At best, they are creating the environment where they feel they have support for their murderous actions; at worst, providing weapons and stashing stolen cash.

The two main political parties in South Africa supported by black South Africans are the ANC and the EFF. The EFF wear red berets; you may have seen them, perhaps even in the mainstream media: They were the ones who protested H&M stores for selling a T-shirt modelled by a black child, with the wording, "Coolest monkey in the jungle." They ripped stores apart, threatened staff, and forced many stores to close until the protests died down.

They also sing, "Kill the Boer; kill the white man" at their political rallies. And in parliament, the leader of the EFF, Julius Malema, made throat slitting gestures when he talked about removing whites from power.

The ANC may be the friendly and acceptable face of power in South Africa. Cyril Ramaphosa is a polite man in a smart suit who shakes the hands of world leaders, but in my opinion, the EFF are effectively the ANC's terrorist arm. It is ANC political policy to pursue land expropriation without compensation, but the incitement of hate-fueled violence, retribution, and revenge on the ground is delivered by the dancing, chanting, singing leaders of the EFF.

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When you talk to the Boer, the white South Africans, about the future, most shake their heads, unable to imagine one. Many talk about their willingness to make a final stand. Others are making plans.

A survivalist group called the Suidlanders, among others, are training white South Africans to make a last stand. They are preparing for some great final showdown between black and white; they talk of the Battle of Blood River, where 470 pioneers fought against 15,000 Zulu in 1838.

Many whites have retreated to Cape Town, the one place they feel safe. Many of my security team have housed their families there while they are on the road, for this reason. There is a sense that for whites to survive in South Africa, they will need to withdraw to territory they can defend. Instead of building endless fences and gates and shutters around their homes, they will build an almighty wall, a defensible fortress, behind which white South Africans will endeavour to endure.



*South Africa is a beautiful land. But it harbours a dark secret.*



*The Plaasmoorde monument in Ysterberg is a memorial to the victims of farm attacks. Each cross represents one murdered farmer or farm worker.*



*General Chris Van Zyl explains the severity of farm attacks with this map of farm attack crime.*



*Bernard's father was brutally murdered in his own home by a black gang.*



*Marietta had the bottom of her face blown off by a black gang member. Her chin and jaw have been partially reconstructed.*



*Skin and flesh from Marietta's cast was used to rebuild her face, leaving ridges of muscle and ligament exposed.*



*We traveled nearly 3,000 kilometres over the span of two weeks to get as much of the story as possible. Sometimes, that necessitated driving in dangerous conditions.*



*The early rises and late nights wear on you. But we still managed to put our boots on and head out the door each morning.*





*"If he is a brother, then he will be let go."*



*Cyril Ramaphosa, the ANC's leader and president of South Africa, recently implemented a policy to confiscate white-owned farms.*





*A child living in squalor in a slum outside Pretoria.*



*Life in the white slums can be traumatizing.*



*Maria has cared for three generations of people from one family.*



*Weapons training has become standard for farmers - and that includes their wives.*



*Families take incredible precautions to protect herself and her children.*

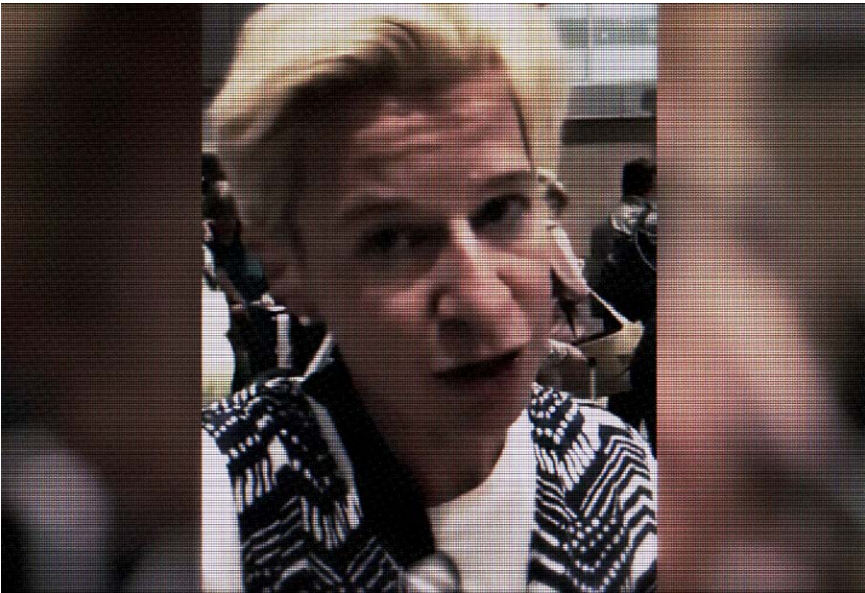


*This South African farm is barricaded by miles of electrified fence.*





*As a consequence of epileptic fits, my arms are easily dislocated. I was treated for one such dislocation just a few hours before I was scheduled to leave South Africa.*



*I was detained while attempting to leave South Africa, held for “spreading racial hatred”. I shot a short video, frightened and exhausted, after my passport was confiscated.*

# Chapter 5:

## Why don't they just go?

“Why don't they just leave? Why don't they just go?”

“If it was me, I would pack up my family and run.”

It's an obvious first reaction to news of slaughter in South Africa. And it's a question I wanted to ask too. If you're a white South African farmer and you know you are a target, when your neighbour is attacked and your country's president supports land expropriation without compensation, how on earth can you stay?

But as soon as you arrive in South Africa and travel amongst the white farmers, and see for yourself where and how they live, the answer to that question becomes perfectly clear. In fact, it's almost too naïve to ask it, too blindingly obvious.

They have no choice.

Most of the white farmers in South Africa are incredibly poor. Their main asset is the land. Their cash in the bank is the trees bearing macadamia nuts, or the ripe avocados waiting to be picked. It is the crops still growing, the hope for the harvest that might come. Their wealth is their machinery (if they can afford it), their homestead (such that it is), in any cattle they might own. And most of what they own was bought and underwritten by bank loans.

I received a copy of an email reply from one of those banks, to a white farmer. His farm was on the unofficial list for expropriation without compensation. He asked the bank what he should do about his loan repayments, given that his land was scheduled to be taken from him without compensation.

And you know what the bank replied?

They told him he should keep making the payments — even though this land would no longer be his, and would be taken by the government to give to black workers.

This is the madness of South Africa.

As I walk around the farm of Jaco, a dairy farmer living way up north in the middle of nowhere, it is clear he has nothing. It's almost painful to see how he lives, and suddenly for the first time in this place of burning sun, I feel cold.

He was a victim of a farm attack. The gang attacked in the dairy, then threw his family and workers down on the floor of his home and began shooting. Jacob was shot in the leg. A black farm worker was shot in the testicles. His son had a gun to his head.

Since the attack on his home, his wife and children have moved off the farm, in a small apartment in the town. They couldn't bear to stay. And he couldn't sleep knowing they were at risk again.

It is disturbing to see his shell of a house, still exactly the way it was after the attackers left. He has not tried to fix or repair anything. Cupboard doors still hang from their hinges where the attackers looted his kitchen. There are still bullet holes in the wall.

The floor is bare concrete, and there were no curtains at the windows. Anything broken or damaged by the gang is still just as it was, like some spooky museum to preserving the sins of the past.

Everything feels cold and unloved. This is no place I would call home. Certainly no place to find emotional warmth. This is existing, barely that. He takes me to where he sleeps at night, and it's a functional mattress, with a few blankets. There are no home comforts here. It's

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almost as if the gang took everything he loved and trusted about life, and left him here, in this void.

And pragmatically, I can understand. If you don't repair the damage, and don't rebuild, then the next time the farm attackers come, they will have less to take. When the black gangs return, as they surely will, all they will see is poverty and misery. A lonely man, living alone amongst the broken remains of his life. And this is how he lives. This white farmer in South Africa.

I look around at the scrawny calf cowering under corrugated iron sheeting, trying to keep out of the rain, and some half-feathered chickens, scratching about in the dirt. And in the darkness of the dairy parlour, where this farmer milks six cows at a time, using the sort of antiquated machinery my own uncle used to have on his farm 40 years ago, it would be insulting to ask this man, "Why don't you leave? Why don't you just run?"

Because what he is supposed to run with? How would he fund his journey? What would he live on? Everything he has is here, and he has nothing else. This is the sum total of his life. And where would he run to? There is no land of plenty welcoming him with open arms. Without the money to leave, or somewhere to go, there is no real choice but to stay and exist. So that is what he does.

Aside from not having any money, or anywhere else to go, these brave white farmers don't just work the land and live from the land. They have a deep relationship with the land, too.

They feel that they are connected to it, by something far greater than crops or machines. They watched their grandfathers turn bushveld into productive farms. And they understand its power. It's why they say they will die in their boots.

Looking around at this half-life here in this beaten up shell of a former family home, I see that Jaco will stay no matter what. Even if that means a hard life without comfort and without his family, he will endure his existence here because the land is the only thing that makes sense to him anymore.

Those who do leave their farms find themselves without a home. More than 400,000 white South Africans are thought to live in squalid conditions in slum settlements and squatter camps, with open sewers running through the small tracks between their hovels.

It says a lot about my life of comfort and my own bias that, before I came here, I'd believed only black families live this way in South Africa. I am not proud that I held such a belief.

I visited one white slum settlement just outside Pretoria. It sits back to back with a similar black settlement. The two communities don't mix; there is school for the black children, and another for the white children. Somehow, in this country there is division at every level, no matter where you sit on the social scale.

Black or white, though, there is no electricity or running water, no sanitation or secure structures, and certainly no law or order.

The family I visited were just like my own: mum and dad, their daughter and her three children.

And yet, they live here, in this slum, with nothing. The floor is bare earth. In one small, dark corner, basic cupboards are arranged in an idea of a kitchen. It's almost dystopian. There is a sink and taps in the kitchen corner, but no water to flow through them.

In the bathroom there is a toilet and a bath. But they are not connected to any system or running water. I wonder how these brave souls cope, how they feed three hungry children, how they get clothes clean or make themselves feel better.

There are a lot of tears.

This couple were forced out of their own home when the husband lost his job driving a tow truck. Forced to find refuge here in the white slum, they moved in with their daughter and her children. All six of them live here under one roof without a bathroom, without a kitchen, power, water or light. On the ceiling there are fittings for an old fluorescent strip, but that is long gone, replaced by a curly sticky strip clung to by the sad corpses of 1000 flies.



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In the gloom there is a small bed tucked away under the eaves, belonging to one of the teenage sons. In the small bedroom, there are three more mattresses for the children. The mother shares a mattress with one child. I think of my own children's beds, with their soft pillows and pretty duvets, and feel dreadful.

I feel guilty. Guilty because I didn't realise why people lived like this, and that sounds like a terrible thing to say. I don't mean that I didn't think it would be possible that white people could live like this; I just never seen it before, never seen it presented on the news or the media in the way that we see black settlements and slums. These people live in abject poverty — there are flies everywhere, and the smell of the rubbish dump just outside is overwhelming. You really get the feeling here that these people are not wanted in South Africa. These are the outsiders, the people cast out by the system.

I leave, and the father carefully guides me around a pile of faeces and vomit where someone or something has been horribly ill. He says he is sorry, and I am lost for any words. I am selfish and hideous. And my life is disgustingly easy.

Because of the new rules in South Africa, it is not possible for a white person to be employed if a black person could be employed to do the same task. Companies are penalized if they do not have an equal representation of workers, and cannot secure government contracts unless black workers make up the majority of their business and their senior team.

When people talk about apartheid and how dreadful it was, of course I agree. It was a horrible time and a horrible thing. But apartheid is still here, everywhere. The only difference is that now it's black South Africans who wield the privilege and power. White South Africans are outcasts. They are the ones turned away from the hospitals, thrown out of their homes.

And sitting here in the white slums with families just like my own, I sense this is all about revenge. And it is particularly cruel.



# **Chapter 6:**

## **The biggest threat to the white farmer are his disgruntled workers**

**I** came to South Africa to investigate the plight of the white farmer, who is being hunted from his land by gangs of black farm attackers.

These gangs are coordinated, equipped and organized by syndicates led by dangerous men.

But it doesn't take long to understand that the victims of farm attacks are not just the farmer, his wife and his children, but black farm workers, too.

Living in compounds on the farm, paid a few hundred rand a day (around US\$8 – \$14), they are dependent on the white farmer to survive.

Some farmers are fair men and good bosses, providing homes for workers' families, paying their workers well and helping with healthcare or additional leave.

And some farm workers seem happy on their farms.

Maria is a housekeeper for a white farmer. I am sitting with her on the porch of the farmhouse where she works, watching her cuddling the farmer's child she has brought up as her own. She says she doesn't know how old she is, and is content to have a life not defined by numbers.

She judges her age by the children she has cared for: three generations of one family, from the grandfather to the little girls.

I ask her about the farm attacks and what has happened in a single generation for everything to have gone so horribly wrong. Why do young black men commit these attacks when they know farm workers just like her depend on these farmers to survive?

She tells me they are young and stupid, that they have nothing, and have learned that the quickest way to get something is to take it. They see the farmer's nice house, his fancy clothes, guns and cars, and they want it for themselves.

She reminds me that without interference from outside, black and white people work perfectly well together here on the farm, with its roses along the fence line, a neatly cut lawn and rolling hills of lush grass and crops. But just beyond the white picket fence, the reality of trying to survive here on the farm is stark.

The farmhouse sits behind huge gates and electric fencing. There are cameras and metal grills over every window. Behind the kitchen door the house is one giant safe room – reinforced, alarmed and armed. Even the ceilings are stripped out to give the family a chance to climb up into the rafters and gain advantage over the guns of any attackers.

The farmer's wife says they are not idly waiting to be attacked; they are prepared for the attack when it comes.

When. Not if.

Their two-year-old knows where the panic buttons are. She knows that if she finds herself alone and mummy and daddy are hurt and aren't moving, she must run and press the closest button she can find.

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In turn, the mother knows that if her husband is shot, she becomes the last line of defense for her three little girls, so she is learning how to use weapons to survive.

It's an odd way to try to live a normal family life: Inside a safe house, with panic buttons even the baby can operate.

I wonder about this difficult relationship, living alongside workers who might, under the circumstances, betray your trust. I ask the farmer's wife how she handles it, knowing that the lovely Maria has been with her family for three generations and has shown true love and loyalty over many decades.

"I can't trust any of them," she says. Her voice betrays neither hatred nor prejudice, only the sadness of her reality. "I can't."

I have spent time with these black workers, talking about their lives and how they feel about living in the compound, working hard on the land. And I am uneasy.

I hear them telling me the life is very good, smiling big, broad smiles. One worker tells me that if they stick to the rules there are no problems. No drink, no drugs, no problems.

They have the weekends off, and are here now on a Saturday afternoon organizing their washing, fishing in the dam, listening to music, getting everything in order for the week ahead. They have ten days' holiday a year and send the money they earn back to their wives and families living in townships away from the farm.

Runnik is here to build a swimming pool for his boss. He shows me pictures of his family on his phone, proud of his children and the house he has built for them. He hopes his daughter will be a doctor and travel far from here.

Another housekeeper kindly helps me with my washing, piling up from a week on the road. I wonder how she feels working in the big house on the top of the hill, walking down the long road to the compound every night, to sleep in no more than essentially a concrete box with wooden doors. What are her choices?

In the morning, I watch the workers climbing back up the hill in nearly 100-degree (40 Celsius) heat, up towards the house on top of the hill to work for the man living there with his swimming pool, who owns all the land as far as the eye can see – land filled with trees dripping with macadamias and weighted down by avocados. I wonder how the workers really feel.

You hear stories of “disappearances,” of workers who stepped over the line. Rumours of brutal treatment at the hands of the farmers are rife. This week a farmer’s wife and son have been arrested (the farmer himself has fled, from what I’m told) for allegedly throwing a farm worker into a septic tank and making him drink fecal matter.

The 36-year-old man worked as a mechanic for the farmer and his son he claims tortured him on December 9, 2017, after he failed to switch on the engine of a septic tank pump-machine. The father and son duo allegedly started swearing at the mechanic just before midnight and called him a “useless kaffir.”

The farm worker said:

“His son tightly held my hands behind my back and dragged me towards the sewer hole. His father took a big jug, dipped it in the sewer hole and forced me to drink its contents while calling me a ‘kaffir.’ He did the same thing twice and I was powerless to fight them back.”

So the farm attackers may not be the only monsters on some farms...

And it is easy to see how some black farm workers might feel embittered by their life, or at least by the stark inequalities. By the fact that a life of relative servitude can be okay if you keep your head down, follow the rules and don’t ask questions; if you accept the status quo, that life here in the compound is far better than life in the townships, and safer too.

You can see how easy it is to sow the seeds of dissent among such workers, to fire them up with anger about the impoverished life they lead, and actively recruit those willing to make easy money from farm attacks.

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In a first for the media, I arranged to meet one of these recruiters. He is part of a syndicate responsible for violent crime in South Africa: drugs, corporate theft and farm attacks.

His job is to infiltrate the lives of the farmer and his family, learn their movements and habits, locate their safe and their weapons, identify their weaknesses, and use all that information to prime the gang preparing to attack.

He recruits others to do the same. His syndicate boss dresses him up with a nice watch, gives him money for his wallet, lends him a car, and sends him to lure other farm workers to become informants.

He tells me, wide-eyed, how he sells them the dream:

“Look what you can have if you help us! You have nothing, you are treated like nothing, you have very little wages. The farmer is mean and cruel. If you help us, you can have all this.”

Farm attacks are not the random events they might appear to be. They are coordinated and equipped from the outside. But many, it seems, are set up from within.

And it is a story I hear repeated over and over by the farmers I’ve met. Robert, Marietta and Bernard have all been victims of these attacks. Robert knew the men who came to torture him and kill his wife, Sue. Marietta knew the voice behind the shotgun that blew her face away. Bernard knew the farm worker who sold the information about his dad; his dad was killed — but the worker is still on that farm today, protected by employment law.

It is impossible to reconcile these truths. Black farm workers endure lives of relative servitude for food, a meager salary and safety; some like Maria seem perfectly content with this life.

But the biggest threat to the white farmer is the disgruntled worker paid, housed and fed by his hand.





# **Chapter 7:**

## **“I do this tonight, so that tomorrow night I can sleep safely”**

Sarah has told me that it is “when,” not “if,” she will be attacked. She says she needs that mindset to be ready.

We talk about her daily routine, because I want to imagine what it’s like to be here as a mum in South Africa, and to try and go about your daily business when you know that you are a vulnerable target.

Like a curious dog, I watch her do the school run, my head cocked to one side, thinking about how different her routine is to mine back home. She puts all the children into the car and locks the doors before leaving the house through the full-length three-meter electric gates. And as she is about to drive away, something unusual happens. One of the children forget something, and unlike at my house where you might stop the car, and the child would dash out, run back to the house grab the thing they forgotten and ran back to the car, here things are different.

She turns the car around, drives back through the electric security fence, drives back to the front door of the house and lets her child briefly jump out to grab whatever he forgot and then they set off again.

She drives a different route to school each day, and a different route home so that nobody can follow her movements. And when she stops the car, she checks her mirror and down the side of the vehicle first, in case somebody is crouching there. As she gets out of the car, she takes her car key and wields it like a weapon between her fingers, a knuckle duster of sorts in case she needs to defend herself.

And when she returns home, she pauses outside her electric security gates to check the view on her phone from the surveillance cameras focused in her front door, before driving in.

Once home, she unlocks the metal grid protecting her front door, unlocks her front door, and then quickly unloads her shopping, before checking all doors and gates are locked once more.

This is the reality of life as a white mum in South Africa, living in a country with terrifying rates of crime. As this book goes to press, the country's latest crime statistics revealed that 20,336 people were murdered between April 2017 and March 2018, compared to 19,016 in the previous year. Police minister Bheki Cele said this murder rate, "borders close to the war zone." (Based on 2016 figures, South Africa ranks #10 in the world for intentional homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, out of 219 nations; by comparison, the United States is ranked #87.)

But you know, here with Sarah, the fear isn't necessarily in the big numbers or the endless stories of murder or slaughter. It is in the minutiae of life and in the margins. It's waiting to go out of the gates before you can leave your home. It's having to drive back to your front door because you can't risk letting your child run back alone. It's having to think about protecting yourself before you leave your vehicle, and when you return to it. It's a constant and ongoing feeling of being a target and knowing you must prepare for an attack. Like adding an extra layer of thought on top of the reflex actions of your life.

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I think about the way I live my life, sometimes leaving my front door wide-open whilst I potter about the house;’ often sleeping with windows open; letting my children walk to school alone; popping out to do the school run with my front door unlocked. It’s different trying to be a mum here.

And I think about the amount of mental energy it must consume to always be thinking about the safest route or the best way to keep your child safe. As parents, our greatest fear is that a child should ever be taken from us, or that a child should die before you and the natural order of things be disrupted. It’s a fear that arrives with the birth of a child and never leaves us.

Here in South Africa, it feels more like THE FEAR, in all-caps. For Sarah, her first thought before she acts or moves is how can she be best prepared to protect her child. And that if she fails to think carefully, or move appropriately, her child could be targeted. And you would somehow be culpable by your own failing. Trying to be a white mother in South Africa with white children is an endurance event in itself.

Then there are the dogs. I don’t know if you have ever met a South African Boerboel (also known as the South African mastiff). It gets its name from the Afrikaans word that roughly translates to “farmers dog,” but in truth it is a more like a cross between a lion and a rhino. It is an absolute beast of a dog.

All the farms I visited who could afford them had these gigantic dogs which stood at the height of a small horse, with exceptionally solid looking heads and strong set necks.

Inevitably a smiling farmer will stand on the other side of the fence, telling you to come on in and take no notice of pack of monsters growling at you, ready to eat you alive. And even as a dog lover, I have to say that these things are terrifying. I thoroughly recommend you Google “Boerboel, Giant South African mastiff” and have a look for yourself.

They turned out to be perfectly friendly dogs if you were welcomed and accepted by the boss, but I imagine if you were an enemy or a farm attacker these dogs would end you in a heartbeat. They are bred

to tackle lions and other wild animals. So farm attackers are probably in that league. One of the farmers called his giant dog “Hitler.” I am not 100% sure this is the most racially or politically correct of names, but his “Hitler” certainly appears to be an effective mechanism for defending the farm against attacks.

Farmers aren’t taking farm attacks lying down. They aren’t simply waiting. Not only is there a strong personal resilience that accompanies the decision to die in ones boots —the farmers are also working together to defend themselves as a community, forming patrols on foot and by radio to provide a first level of security and safety checks within their own community.

I joined a night patrol one evening. There are two shifts: one from 9pm until 2am, another from 2am until 8am the next morning. The farmers travel in pairs in their vehicles, patrolling the roads and lanes that extend between the farms. They are connected by radio and coordinated by an HQ.

I spent time with a gentleman heading up the patrol HQ and it was fascinating to observe. Each morning at a specified time, he radios around the entire network of farms, each with their own call signs, to extract a response from the farmer.

Working systematically and methodically around the neighbourhood, he is checking that the homeowner on that farm is okay, that they made it through the night without an attack. If he doesn’t get a response, he radios again a short while later. And if there’s no response after a third time, a neighbouring farmer will go to the farmer’s home to check on him.

This is repeated in the evening. It’s a way for the community to look out for each other, but it’s also a clear indicator that each here night is a trial. It is not normal to need to call around a community of farmers in the morning to check that everyone made it through the night.

It’s not normal to need to create community patrols, driving through the night, to secure the safety of farms and provide some reassurance.

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I ask a couple of the farmers why they do this, driving this track at night when they have farms to run and families they love at home, snug in their beds. I know these big men have incredibly busy lives and endless work to do as it is.

One of the farmers on the patrol said something that made the hairs on my arms stand on end;

“I do this tonight, so that tomorrow night I can sleep safely.”

It’s an incredibly touching and powerful moment, sitting in the dark with these gentle men patrolling the streets so their neighbours can sleep more easily. I think about my own neighbours., Some I barely speak to. Others that I strategically avoid so that I don’t have to have a conversation with them. Some neighbours that I actively dislike. And I feel a little ashamed. Perhaps it is because my life is too easy?

Whereas here in South Africa, life is tough and hangs in the balance. Communities work together to try to ensure the safety and protection of the whole. And there is something lovely about a gentleman sitting in his office in his garage calling around the neighbourhood to check that each one of the people he lives amongst are safe and well.

Perhaps it would be a lovely thing if we had a similar system in the UK or the USA. Imagine the comfort for our elderly or lonely, to know they are guaranteed to speak to someone, even briefly, at least twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening before you went to bed. That someone cares.

On the richest farms in South Africa, security is on a different scale. Visiting one was an eye-opening experience. Not only is this land incredibly fertile, with macadamia nuts weighing down the trees and avocados seemingly dropping from heaven, but the need to protect this wealth is evident in the amount of security in place. It reminds me of the high security prison I have visited, home to the most dangerous criminals. Here, it cost upwards of £2 million to build a wall 10 m high and topped with razor wire. There are state of the art security and surveillance cameras across all of this huge farm; a security control centre, staffed by two uniformed guards, is staffed 24-7. There are foot

patrols and vehicle patrols, and a helicopter response service if anyone suspicious is spotted on the farm.

Two things make me a little uncomfortable here on this vast farm, producing produce on an industrial scale. One is the wealth on display, not only in the high-profit crops which seem to drip from the trees, but in the farmer's house and the way in which he lives. He has an infinity pool in his garden, for one thing. And it strikes me that if you are wealthy enough here in South Africa, you can also afford to be secure enough. If you are rich, you are less at risk. The greatest danger that this farmer faces is inevitably from his own live in farmworkers.

Not only that, but where there is significant wealth on display in South Africa, it raises the inevitable question: To what extent wealthy farmers are, in some capacity, in league with the government. It's just a hunch, but one way to succeed in a corrupt system is to pay to guarantee your privilege.

I have seen firsthand that the easiest way to secure your farm and your life in this country is to side with the corrupt politicians and the corrupt police, and purchase your right to continue farming your land with backhanders or bribes.

Despite this farmer being incredibly kind to me and to my security team, allowing us to have clothes washed and ironed for the first time this trip, and graciously showing us around his property, there is something jarring here. And I'm not sure whether it's the fact that he lives in apparent splendour with two lovely pools, overlooking acres of fertile land dripping with abundant crops whilst his black farmworkers live in small concrete sheds in a compound at the bottom of the hill near the dam. Or perhaps it is memories of all of the incredibly poor farmers I have seen, who cannot afford to keep their family safe, for whom there are no such luxuries as multi-million-pound security systems, vehicle patrols, or a helicopter response unit to save the day.

Inequality does not just happen between blacks and whites in South Africa. There is a massive divide between rich white South African farmers and incredibly poor white South African farmers. It is a fact of life here, just as it is at home. Except here people die.

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Personal security is usually affected with a small firearm. Most whites I met in South Africa carry a weapon, and have trained themselves to use it. Most farmers have a number of weapons at their disposal, and many sleep with them loaded, under their pillow.

But the South Africans' right to bear arms is being tested. Licensing laws have become more stringent, and many farmers are finding it difficult to secure them.

In 2001, the South African government passed the Firearm Control Act. Sections of this law were of grave concern to gun owners, whose previous licenses were valid for life. Under the new law license gun owners had to renew their license every five years, within 90 days of the expiration date. If they fail to do so, the license will be considered cancelled, and the gun owner would be in possession of an illegal firearm.

Most recently the highest South African court ruled that anyone possessing a gun for which the license had expired must surrender the weapon to police for destruction.

The South African Hunters Association worries that the law does not provide for the renewal of expired licenses. And it's a massive issue: There are at least 300,000 firearm owners, and any who fail to renew their licenses, whether intentionally or not, will have to hand their firearms in at the nearest police station.

It is not a message I expect farmers to heed. Right now in South Africa, it is no time to be handing over your weapons.

At this stage the police have not announced what they intend to do, but there is a certain feeling that, despite the government's denial, they are becoming more oppressive in its management of white South Africans. That this is just another attempt to disarm civilians, which may not be far from the truth.

Minister of Police Cele requested that parliament enforce a firearms "amnesty" month in September 2018. Given the threat against white farmers in South Africa, I think the South African Police Service will find their collection depots remain empty.

Clearly, security is a major industry in this country, whether you are arming yourself with state-of-the-art systems and helicopter response units, or your first line of defense is your car key protruding from your clenched fist. Rich or poor, if you are a white person in South Africa, you have a target on your head.



## Chapter 8:

# How I became a non-person

As with any good adventure, my trip to South Africa was not without incident.

Of course we had the usual mishaps to contend with. Our kit took quite a battering, and within the first few days we found ourselves without clips to attach microphones to shirt lapels and collars. So we improvised: For the duration of my documentary, the people kind enough to grant us an interview had their microphones attached with a small bulldog clip and double-sided sticky tape, purchased from a stationery store in a small South African town. Not the most professional looking outfit I am ashamed to say, but when you're on the road you have to adapt and overcome.

A temporary team member, hired to watch the vehicles and generally provide additional muscle, had fallen desperately in love. One night he protested that he had a raging sore throat and was unsure he would be able to make it the following day. True to his word, he disappeared into thin air and was duly replaced by someone far more stoic and reliable. We found him a few weeks later shackled up with his new girlfriend. I

quite like the idea that this huge beast of a man was incapacitated by love and a hurting heart.

And of course, we faced the challenge of operating in a country where the left-wing press, the main political parties, and activists on the ground were keen to stop us telling the truth that needed to be told. Trying to keep my arrival in country a secret was a challenge. As part of the planning process, we agreed we would communicate our presence in country a week after we arrive. So effectively, any “news” that came out about my journey would in fact have taken place seven days earlier.

However, one of our contacts in country who is particularly fond of press attention told a national newspaper my actual arrival date, as well as the date of my meeting with him. So the press caught on, the politicians caught on, and it was only by the tiniest margin (as I would later discover) that I was allowed into the country at all. More on that later.

I was probably the biggest problem on the trip. It’s public knowledge that I spent 20 years of my life with chronic epilepsy which is now cured. But because of my violent fits, which can break bones and shake my joints from their sockets, both my arms dislocate very easily. My epileptic fits used to throw my arms from their sockets, and both my left arm and right arm have been dislocated for more than six hours at a time about 52 times.

I think you can see where the story is headed. The day before my time in South Africa was due to come to an end, I was lying underneath a truck, look at the braking system, when one of my lovely giants from security stretched out his hand to help me up off the ground. But unaware of his own strength, and underestimating the weakness of my arm joints, he pulled my left arm straight out of its socket.

I was a white woman in Pretoria, one of the most violent cities in the world, with a dislocated arm, supposed to be flying out of the country in under six hours.

I’m not sure if you’ve ever dislocated a joint, but it is right up there with childbirth. And the advantage of childbirth is that you do actually end up going home with something.

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Fortunately, (and in no small part thanks to the Rebel Media supporters) my super professional security team, headed up by an unflappable Brit, everything was soon under control. They called a private healthcare provider, and a couple of ambulances were dispatched to rescue me.

There are a few things I should note here. And they feel important somehow. Firstly you don't expect the emergency response in South Africa to be better than it is in your home country. (Particularly not in Pretoria). But that was precisely the case. I have waited three hours for an ambulance in London with two dislocated arms. Here in this crazy country, within 10 minutes, two ambulances were with me, complete with a full crew, and a female medical officer able to dispense drugs on scene.

Because of the nature of crime in South Africa, these teams are used to dealing with gunshot wounds, serious knife wounds, or worse. They are effectively operating in a war zone, which explains why their first painkilling drug of choice is not gas and air, as it is in the UK or perhaps the USA. It is medical grade ketamine, similar to that used to treat soldiers on the battlefields of Afghanistan or Iraq. It is the drug of choice for men who have their limbs blown off, and need to be taken quickly out of this reality and suspended in a drug-induced, altogether less painful one.

As I knelt, using the ground to hold my dislocated arm, the paramedic kindly injected me with ketamine. I told her I had a fairly high tolerance to pain relief medications because of my three major surgeries in the last 12 months, and endless trips to Accident & Emergency, to relocate limbs. So she injected me with an extra dose and told me to enjoy the trip. That was the last thing I knew.

For those who aren't active on the drug scene, ketamine is known as a party drug. Users talk about going down a k-hole, meaning they've taken ketamine as part of their entertainment for the evening.

I can say with the benefit of experience and hindsight, I don't see where the fun is. Ketamine takes you to a very, very dark place. It exaggerates the bad thoughts in your head, the fears you have, and the darkest thoughts in the furthest reaches of your mind.

And if you have just spent three weeks with victims of farm attacks recounting their torture, with little old ladies recounting how they were burned with hot irons and grown men weeping for their loss of pride, a ketamine trip off the back of that is definitely not what the doctor ordered.

I was grateful to stagger out of hospital a good few hours later with my arm back in socket.

However the security were a bit concerned about the after-effects of ketamine, which can slow your heart rate and kill you as you sleep. So I was instructed to stay awake and stand in the corner of my room for six hours to help myself stay alive.

I am crystal clear my own mini-drama is inconsequential, particularly when help up against the very real troubles endured by our brothers and sisters in South Africa. In fact I am only sharing this story to illustrate the nature of the mainstream media.

I posted a picture on Twitter of me receiving the medical treatment, on the pavement in Pretoria, and the paramedic injecting pain relief. You could clearly see the needle going into my right arm, the emergency response teams in their red jumpsuits and the ambulance. Nevertheless, the British press went crazy.

“Hopkins collapses after ketamine overdose.” “Hopkins drug overdose in South Africa.” “Hopkins rescued by medics after drug overdose.” “Hopkins collapses on ketamine.” It was all over Sky Mews, repeatedly. “An A-hole in a K-hole,” said the Guardian newspaper, and boy was it proud of itself. The Mirror, the Daily Mail, The Sun, the BBC — all of them screamed out the headline that I was a druggie, and had collapsed after taking ketamine in South Africa.

Not one mentioned my history with epilepsy. Not one mention of my obvious arm dislocation, or that, in the photograph, a paramedic was clearly injecting me in the company of other paramedics. Back in the UK, my husband’s phone blew up and inbox crashed, plagued by journalists for the celebrity pages, asking for a quote or comment about my drug problem.

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And what upset me about this was not that they were lying. I have never taken drugs (other than those prescribed to me for my epilepsy) in my life. I didn't really even mind that they said I had taken ketamine, because it had been administered it by a medical professional. And it didn't necessarily matter that I was branded a druggie in the national press, given I know I am not.

What really angered me to the point of tears was that this was the ONLY story of mine from South Africa they had chosen to cover. Together with the Rebel team, we had been posting daily updates from the field, featuring victims of white genocide, of beautiful ladies weeping over the death of their lovely husband, of victims of gang-rapes, of black farmworkers working side-by-side and hand in hand with a white farmer. And of all these important stories, from the mouths of the people of this land, the first time the international media were interested enough to pick up on anything I was reporting it was to slander me as a druggie.

This is the "truth" of the mainstream media, and it is both desperate and infuriating in equal measure.

The Independent Press Standards Office later declared that the headline which appeared on Mirror Online was in breach of the accuracy rules and the editors' code of practice, and I am grateful to my supporters for lodging this complaint on my behalf. In a final act of malice, The Mirror updated the headline to, "Katie Hopkins banned from leaving South Africa for spreading racial hatred."

And that's not entirely untrue. The true part is that I was, strange as it sounds, banned from leaving South Africa. But I will leave it up to you to decide whether I was spreading racial hatred, or whether reporting on the slaughter of white farmers is actually a legitimate journalistic enquiry.

I was detained at Johannesburg airport whilst trying to leave the country. You'll remember I said that an over-enthusiastic supporter in South Africa confirmed to the press the date I would be arriving.

Fortunately, the African National Congress didn't act quickly enough to stop me coming in, but their official directive to impede my progress

was still logged on my file. South African authorities had also altered details on the file associated with my passport, including my country of birth, which now read, bizarrely, “Netherlands.” Of course, these irregularities flagged my presence at passport control the day we were leaving.

The information on my physical passport no longer matched those on their screen. I had become a non-person, and furthermore the file also included that email from a senior member of the political elite in South Africa, saying that I should be prevented from entering the country, “for spreading racial hatred.” Since it was too late to prevent me from entering (thanks to our intentional evasiveness) the next best thing authorities could do was somehow prevent me from leaving.

A gentleman from passport control took my passport away from me, and left me on the wrong side of security, unable to pass through, unable to catch my flight. I was told that the police were being called to investigate.

I was now a woman at risk.

Having spent three weeks listening to stories about what happens in police custody here, especially to white women, I was genuinely frightened. And I was suddenly frightened for my family back home.

There is a short video clip of me at the airport as I’m being detained, and when I look at it now, I barely recognise the very frightened woman standing there, not knowing what will happen to her.

But, true to form, my security team saved the day. My close protection officer was right there by my side and never left. In a moment’s notice, embassies, employers, lawyers, police contacts and others were alerted and the situation was under some kind of control.

Meanwhile another security team member who happened to be coming to the airport to my defence providing back up. And the security team who we’d said goodbye to two hours before were back in a heartbeat, waiting at the carpark of the airport —with their weapons readied should I be taken away.

## KATIE HOPKINS

It's in moments like these that you see how incredible it is to have support at your side: From the security team who would have risked everything to stop me being taken away by the South African police, to the supporters back home who continued complaining to the press regulator on my behalf, and to those who donated to help cover the expenses incurred on this trip.

If I ever wonder what on earth I am doing, making myself vulnerable in slightly dodgy places, then people like my security team, my supporters and my loyal army of followers remind me why it all matters.

And so I don't believe it's overly dramatic to say that Plaasmoorde: The Killing Fields, is the documentary the South African parliament don't want you to see. The truths of the white farmer, the serving police officer and the farm attacker are the stories they do not want you to hear. But thanks to your support and the honesty and integrity of the white farmers in South Africa and black farmworkers working with them side by side, their stories are now being told.

If I ask one thing of you, it is to share this story. I think back to Bernard, he says he will die his boots. I fear he will be proved right. But through this book and documentary, through your support and his bravery, his words will live on.

**"They can come and KILL ME here, but I won't go"**

**"They started BEATING me and said  
we are to KILL you"**

**"Police weapons have been used"**

**"In the last year, there were about  
84 FARM MURDERS"**

**"South Africa's dark secrets are EXPOSED"**

## About the Author

I am a woman on a mission. I am serious about telling the truths not being told. As an award-winning documentary maker, columnist for national newspapers and radio talk show host, and best-selling author, I have spent over a decade in the media, learning my craft, listening to real people, and helping them share their truths. As a Christian Conservative, I will not stand by and watch people who love their country be oppressed by mandatory multiculturalism, or the narrative we are force fed. The powerful have a script and we are expected to follow it, compliantly.



This mission. This emotional journey seeing firsthand, the atrocities inflicted on these farmers has changed my life. I had to not only get the film out for all to see, these people to be heard, I had to document my account of this in a book for all to read. To expose the truth that has been a dark secret for more than two decades.

**THEREBEL**  
media

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