

THE GENERAL

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SCENE 1

When the play opens, it is night. A figure – Suspect - darts across the stage, looking furtively behind him, then exits. Johan Britz, a plainclothes policeman runs on stage, gun in hand, chasing after Suspect. He stops, out of breath, looks around, pointing his gun, but sees no-one. He relaxes, then, satisfied that no-one's around, he holsters his gun. He takes out his radio, and speaks, still breathing heavily:

JOHAN: Fani...I lost him. *(looks around)*

(As a voice over, muffled as per radio, Fani asks "Where are you?")

JOHAN: *(into the radio)* Corner Kruger and...*(checks himself, smiles wryly)*
Corner Slovo and Hani.... I'll wait here.

He takes out a packet of cigarettes and lights one. He catches his breath and takes long drags on the cigarette. Suddenly, from the side, Suspect runs in and crash tackles him to the ground. We don't see Suspect's face; he could be wearing a balaclava or a cap. They wrestle. Suspect gets the upper hand, and sits on Johan. He takes out a knife, raises it and stabs downwards. He is about to do it a second time when a shot rings out. Suspect collapses on Johan, knife still in hand. Fani Ngwenya, Johan's police partner, emerges from the shadows, from the opposite direction from which Johan entered, gun ready to shoot again.

FANI: *(anxiously)* Johan...are you alright? *(Beat)* Johan?

Johan lifts Suspect off himself and throws him to the side. Fani helps him up. Johan has blood all over his top. They look at each other. Then Johan looks at Suspect on the ground.

JOHAN: Fuck...!

Johan goes up to Suspect and starts kicking him viciously, letting out anguished cries as he does so, aware that he could have been killed. Fani pulls him away.

FANI: Johan, no!

JOHAN: *(emotionally)* Fucking bastard!

FANI: *(wryly)* The fucking bastard has rights *(makes as if he is about to kick Suspect)*...unfortunately.

JOHAN: He was going to stab me....

FANI: Are you bleeding?

JOHAN: No...

FANI: Take off your shirt...

JOHAN: What?

FANI: His blood...it may be contaminated...

JOHAN: *(realizing what Fani is saying, takes off shirt quickly)* Fuck, Fani!

Fani meantime is taking off his jacket to give to Johan. Then he radio's to the control centre.

FANI: Control...come in...Suspect down...

JOHAN: *(anxiously)* Fani...

Fani turns around to face Johan.

JOHAN: *(holding his shoulder, collapses to his knees)* I'm bleeding....

Fani goes quickly to Johan and helps him to sit down.

FANI: Sit down...don't move. *(takes out his handkerchief)* Hold this on the wound...slow the bleeding. *(Beat)* You're going to be okay...*(On radio)* Control, officer down! Send an ambulance...Corner of Kruger and Steyn....

Suspect groans. Fani turns on him sharply, puts the radio away.

FANI: *(kicking the figure on the butt)* Shut the fuck up!

Suspect groans again. Fani kicks him again.

FANI: Just now, you were only a car thief! Now you're an attempted fucking murderer! *(Kicks Suspect again)* And a policeman nogal! And not just any fucking policeman...my partner! *(Kicks him again)* Vark!

Suspect moans louder, cries "Eina! Eina!"

JOHAN: Fani....leave him.

FANI: He could have killed you!

JOHAN: You gave me good advice. Leave him.

FANI: Fuck, Johan, you know what's going to happen. He'll get bail. Then he'll be out on the streets again. Maybe the next person won't be as lucky as you.

JOHAN: So what do you want to do?

FANI: He tried to kill you. I saw it. That's good enough for me.

Fani draws his gun and stands over the Figure, aiming at his head. All through the next sequence, Suspect makes pleading noises and tries to beg for his life with his body language.

JOHAN: He's just a kid, Fani...

FANI: Did he think about your kids when he stabbed you?

JOHAN: You'll get into deep kak.

FANI: *(becoming increasingly agitated)* And Mari? She could've been just another policeman's widow! *(Kicks Figure)*

JOHAN: Fani...they'll suspend you.

FANI: Small price to get rid of this rubbish!

Ambulance siren. Fani stands ready to shoot Figure. Beat, Beat, Beat. Siren gets louder.

FANI: Fokken vuilgoed! *(kicks Figure one more time, then holsters his gun)*

Siren gets louder. Lights fade. Music.

SCENE 2

Bolla Davids is in the dock, accused of housebreaking. Sizwe Motaung is the Prosecutor. Anna Meintjies is the lawyer acting for Bolla.

SIZWE: You are lying...

BOLLA: *(clearly uncomfortable and with speaking English)* No, sir.

SIZWE: Two witnesses say they saw you entering the house.

BOLLA: It weren't me, sir.

SIZWE: So are you saying *they're* lying?

BOLLA: No, sir.

SIZWE: So you're not lying and they're not lying....

BOLLA: They could've made a mistake...

SIZWE: Then how do you explain why two different people, on separate occasions, both picked *you* out in the identify parade as the person they saw breaking into Mrs Potgieter's house?

BOLLA: I don't know, sir.

SIZWE: Mr Davids, you've been arrested before for housebreaking....

ANNA: Objection, Your Worship, just because he did it once – or even three times – doesn't mean he did it *this* time.

BOLLA: (*quietly*) Yes, sir, I were arrested once before...

ANNA: (*to Bolla*) Praat Afrikaans Bolla...jy sal meer gemaklik voel.

BOLLA: (*proudly, dropping his conveniently subservient tone*) He can speak English...I can speak English.

SIZWE: (*Beat*) And, Mr Davids, you've also been convicted on a charge of intent to do grievous bodily harm.

BOLLA: I were only defending myself sir.

SIZWE: (*raised voice*) Against the person whose house you were breaking into?

BOLLA: He wanted to hit me with a cricket bat.

SIZWE: (*checking his paper for the facts*) But you hit him first...with a tennis racquet.

ANNA: Objection, Your Worship, I don't see the relevance of this line of questioning.

SIZWE: I'm trying to show that the accused has a history of housebreaking and violence.

BOLLA: I didn't do it, sir.

SIZWE: The police wouldn't just come to your house and arrest you if you didn't do it!

BOLLA: They did, sir.

SIZWE: We heard testimony from Inspector Nissen that they found *your* fingerprints on various items in Mrs Potgieter's house.

BOLLA: Yes, sir, but *they* took me to Mrs Potgieter's house.

SIZWE: Where you were just a few hours before...

BOLLA: (*excitedly*) No sir, I weren't there before.

SIZWE: Then how did your fingerprints find their way onto the DVD player?

BOLLA: Inspector Nissen asked me to put the DVD on top of the TV.

SIZWE: (*Beat*) Are you accusing a senior detective of framing you?

BOLLA: I didn't do it...

SIZWE: Did you know Inspector Nissen from a previous encounter?

BOLLA: (*not understanding the last part of the question*) Can you repeat the question?

ANNA: Het jy Inspector Nissen tevore ontmoet?

BOLLA: Ja...

SIZWE: How did you meet?

BOLLA: He arrested me the first time for housebreaking....

SIZWE: Indulge me here...

BOLLA: (*not understanding the expression*) Sorry?

SIZWE: So Inspector Nissen is faced with a problem. There's a housebreaking. Everyone's worried about crime. The politicians.

The community. The police top brass. Inspector Nissen has to deliver results. To make the community feel safer. So he looks in his little black book and he sees...Bolla Davids. Previously arrested for housebreaking. So he picks you up, plants evidence against you, and here you. Everyone feels a lot safer now! (*Beat, then derisively*) Is that your defence? (*to Anna*) Surely you can do better than that!

BOLLA: Inspector Nissen wanted me to pass on information about gangsters in my area, but I said no...

SIZWE: (*sarcastically*) I see, and so he thought he'll teach you a lesson.

BOLLA: I didn't do it, sir....

SIZWE: (*angrily*) And you expect the court to believe this? To take the word of a convicted criminal against that of a decorated police officer?

Music. Lights fade.

SCENE 3

In this scene, the dynamics of three married relationships are reflected: Johan and Mari, Sizwe and Anna and Fani and his wife who's based in Limpopo.

Scene 3.1

Johan and Mari are at their home. Johan is getting dressed into a brown uniform, the kind used by private security firms. Mari is helping him, ironing his shirt and chatting to him at the same time. A romantic Afrikaans ballad by a male singer plays in the background.

JOHAN: How much is it?

MARI: (*checking invoice in her pocket*) R2036.47.

JOHAN: Fuck!

MARI: Johan! The kids are still awake! (*gives him his shirt*)

JOHAN: Sorry...(beat). R2000...to service a car!

MARI: It's a lot of money....

JOHAN: Fokken crooks...(sees Mari's disapproving face) sorry, sorry.

MARI: Your body's the temple of God, Johan...you can't swear like that and pray with the same tongue!

JOHAN: The temple's a little stressed at the moment, honey. I'm holding down two jobs to pay the bills...

MARI: *(hugging him)* I know...I worry about you!

JOHAN: Maybe I should've been a mechanic....

They start to dance gently to the music.

MARI: I can go back to work.

JOHAN: Lourens is still too young. He needs his mother.

MARI: All three children need their father. They hardly see you.

JOHAN: What can I do? Police pay is so...*(whispers)* kak!

MARI: Your wife needs you too.

JOHAN: I'm scared to be with my wife.

MARI: Why?

JOHAN: Everytime I spend time with her, a baby pops out nine months later. *(Laughter)* Then I have to work harder.

MARI: Maybe it's time for a vasectomy.

JOHAN: *(pushing her away playfully, and holding his crotch)* Eina!

Lights cross fade to next scene. Music down.

Scene 3.2

Lights come up on Bolla in an orange uniform in a cell. Throughout the next few sub-scenes, he is lit – even faintly - and the audience is aware of his presence in the cell. He goes through a series of sequences: boredom, exercising, doing karate, etc.

Scene 3.3

Spotlight comes up on Fani talking on his mobile phone, animated.

FANI: *(in Xhosa and Afrikaans)* (Xhosa) And how was Thando's first week at school? Really? (Afrikaans) And Lindiwe? She was like the big sister...yes. Did you take photos? Send me an mms. Hai, man. Ask Thando to show you how. (Xhosa) No, things are fine. Ja, Johan's fine. I'll be home the weekend. No, not this weekend. Next weekend. (Afrikaans) I miss you too, sweetheart!

Scene 3.4

Anna and Sizwe dancing an expansive waltz across the whole stage to soft music. As they do so, Willem, in tuxedo, makes a speech, as at their wedding three years ago. He is self-effacing, jovial.

WILLEM: *(Afrikaans)* It seems like only yesterday that we were sitting around the dinner table and Anna was up at the farm for the weekend. She told us that she had fallen in love. With a prosecutor! My parents were very happy because Anna was living in Johannesburg on her own, and they were very worried about her safety. They were delighted that she would have a man to look after her. When she told us that the prosecutor was Zulu, we thought she was joking. Until we remembered that Anna doesn't have much of a sense of humour. Two weeks later we met Sizwe, and we saw that opposites really do attract. He had enough humour for both of them. He told us that the only reason he was marrying Anna was to avoid having to pay labola.

Lights and music fade.

Scene 3.5

Spotlight on Fani again.

FANI: How's Moeketsi? *(half-serious, half-smiling)* Tell that brother of mine to sort out the land claim...it's been six years! Then I can come home and be a farmer and not be a migrant labourer anymore! No, don't worry about me. Things are better. Crime's getting better. *(Spotlight fades)* *(English)* Serious, you must see the latest statistics....

Spotlight fades.

Scene 3.6

Lights fade up on Johan who is now fully dressed in his brown uniform. He is cradling a baby wrapped in a blanket in his arms, walking around, rocking him to sleep. Enter Mari with his bulletproof vest.

MARI: (*exchanging the vest for the baby*) I wish you could get another job. I never know if you're going to come home.

JOHAN: I love my job.

MARI: Why don't you recruit Fani to work as your partner in this one too? It would make me feel better.

JOHAN: You know I can't do that. If police management find out that I'm moonlighting, they'll fire me.

MARI: Don't you trust Fani?

JOHAN: I trust him with my life. But these things have a way of slipping out...I must go. (*pecks the baby on the head*)

MARI: Wait. (*closes her eyes and prays, still rocking the baby. Johan bows his head*) Dear Father, thank you for Johan. Thank you for blessing us by giving him this work. Please look after him while he looks after us all. And bring him back safely to his family. Amen.

JOHAN: Amen.

Johan places his hand on Mari's bum and pecks her on her forehead.

Lights fade.

Scene 3.7

Lights up on Willem, standing between Sizwe and Anna on their wedding day. He is continuing his best man speech. They all have champagne glasses.

WILLEM: (*English*) Sizwe says that they chose to get married today, Youth Day, for symbolic reasons. Unlike 28 years ago...(to Sizwe) how old were you then?

SIZWE: Six.

WILLEM: Ja, Anna was only three, but she was already giving me a hard time. (*Anna and Sizwe laugh*). Anyway, Sizwe says that unlike in 1976, today he's choosing to learn Afrikaans. Of course, on the farm, we spoke Tswana from the day we were born...(in Tswana) so we look forward to him becoming an Afrikaner. (*Afrikaans*) For those who don't speak Tswana, I said my parents are looking forward to having a lot of brown Afrikaner grandchildren. (*Laughter*)

At the ceremony earlier, Dominee Laubscher said that being Christians, no matter the colour of our money or our skin, we're already brothers and sisters in Christ. But on behalf of the Meintjies family, I'd like to officially welcome Sizwe as a brother and as a son. (*raises his glass*). To Anna and Sizwe.

They all drink. Anna and Sizwe beam at each other.

Scene 3.8

Bolla in his cell with pen and pad.

Bolla: (*writing*) Hello Ma. Vandag issit twee jaar. Net nog drie, dan is ek weer uit. Ek's oraait. Ek het baie vrinne gemaak. Onthou Ma vir Vingers? Hy was op laer skool met my. Sy ma het hom ook Joburg toe gestuur om weg te kom van die gangsters in Atlone. Maar nou is hy nogal ook hier. Wannere kom Ma weer? Bring iets lekker.

Lights fade and Bolla exits.

Scene 3.9

Only Willem without Anna and Sizwe, making an announcement.

WILLEM: (*Afrikaans*) By the way, if any of you are policemen, please behave. Sizwe is now a Director at the Independent Complaints Directorate. He couldn't handle being a Prosecutor and being married to the Defence. So Anna may not give him hell in court anymore, but she'll certainly do it at home.

SCENE 4

A body is lying upstage right, covered by a sheet, as if in a street. Johan – wearing surgical gloves - is on his haunches, next to the body, lifting up the sheet on the one side, away from the audience. Fani is cordoning off the area with police tape. Fani and Johan are very at ease with each other. Their service revolvers are clearly holstered.

JOHAN: Have a look.

FANI: No thanks.

JOHAN: You *must* have a look.

FANI: I'm still trying to recover from the two of yesterday.

JOHAN: It's procedure, Fani. Maybe you'll see something I don't.

FANI: *(shaking his head)* This can't be good for us. We see one of these every second day.

JOHAN: Still beats being in uniform and getting called out to taxi accidents. At least here the body parts are all together.

Fani sighs, reluctantly comes closer to the body. He lifts the sheet.

FANI: Eish!

Johan lifts up the sheet higher for Fani to look. Fani looks away.

JOHAN: *(looking at the body)* Still young...

Fani gets up fast, holds his hand to his mouth and runs back. He vomits. Johan smiles, takes out his Dictaphone.

JOHAN: *(speaks into the device)* Caucasian male. Under thirty. Bullet wounds in the chest. Trendy clothes. No wedding ring.

Fani comes back to the scene. Johan continues to examine the scene.

FANI: Remind me not to eat Chinese food again.

JOHAN: *(Smiling)* Since when do McDonalds burgers qualify as Chinese?

FANI: *(wryly)* Everything's made in China nowadays...even the burgers.

Fani begins to look around for other kinds of evidence.

JOHAN: After all these years, you still don't have the stomach for this job.

FANI: It's easy for you. You come from a police family. You've got dead bodies in your blood!

Johan lights up a cigarette.

FANI: That stuff's going to kill you.

JOHAN: Please don't tell Mari...

BOTH: *(imitating Mari playfully)* Your body is the temple of God...!

JOHAN: *This is the ultimate expression of our new democracy... (holding up the cigarette) the right to take your own life rather than (nodding to body) have someone else take it from you. Democracy means shit to this poor fucker now.*

FANI: *(talking into his recording device, checking area around the body) Skid marks. (Bends down)*

JOHAN: Still has money in his pockets...couldn't have been a robbery.

FANI: If there's money in his pockets, maybe there's an i.d.?

JOHAN: *(searching the pockets) Good point.*

FANI: *(into his Dictaphone) Second set of skid marks...two different cars. Possible hijacking.... (looks at skid marks) One set for the stiff's car...the other for the getaway car.*

JOHAN: *(holding a driver's licence) Fok!*

Afrikaans ballad that played earlier during Johan and Mari's scene plays quietly under the following sequence.

FANI: What?

JOHAN: Do you know who this is?

Fani looks at him expectantly.

JOHAN: *(reads) Arnold Smit....*

FANI: Rugby player?

JOHAN: Calls himself Arno Smitten....after he came runner-up in Afrikaans Idols. I bought his CD for Mari's birthday...

Fani shrugs. The name doesn't ring a bell.

FANI: Knock, knock....

JOHAN: What now?

FANI: It's an English joke. You're supposed to say "Who's there?"...Knock, knock.

JOHAN: *(playing along reluctantly) Who's there?*

FANI: Arno...

JOHAN: Fok, Fani, (*wry smile*) you have no respect of the dead!

FANI: Ah no, another dead guy! (*laughs at his own joke*)

JOHAN: (*Beat*) It's not just ordinary people anymore. It's the rich and famous too...

FANI: Maybe it's a new kind of affirmative action...

JOHAN: (*wry smile again*) You are sick....

FANI: It's black humour. You wouldn't understand....

Lights fade slowly as conversation tapers off.

SCENE 5

Lights come up on the kitchen of the farmhouse of brother and sister Willem and Anna Meintjies. Anna is seated at the table, Willem is walking around.

WILLEM: I'm not going to sign that.

ANNA: You don't have to sign it now.

WILLEM: I'm not going to sign it...ever!

ANNA: You haven't even read it.

WILLEM: I don't have to. You've told me what's in it.

ANNA: (*Beat, beat*) This is not just *your* farm, Willie.

WILLEM: And neither is it just yours.

ANNA: I prepared this document for both of us to sign.

WILLEM: I told you...I'm not signing it.

ANNA: So what are you going to do?

WILLEM: (*Beat, beat*) I know you're embarrassed about being Afrikaans Anna....

ANNA: *(shocked)* What...?

WILLEM: You're so ashamed of what Afrikaners did in the past, you'll do anything to wipe out your guilt! But I didn't think you would do this *(gesturing to the paper Anna wants him to sign)* to the memory of our parents!

ANNA: I'm trying to keep their memory alive!

WILLEM: By giving away their farm?

ANNA: I am not giving away....

WILLEM: *(waving the piece of paper in front of her)* Today it's an acre. Tomorrow, it's two acres. And next year, it's the whole bloody farm!

ANNA: Either we do it this way, or we lose the whole farm.

WILLEM: *(angrily tearing up document)* I am not signing this! And we are not losing this farm! Not one square metre!

ANNA: *(just as angrily)* Wake up and smell the coffee, Willem!

WILLEM: Get back to the city, Anna! You don't belong here!

Tense silence.

ANNA: *(quieter, trying to reason with him)* Willie, there's a land claim on our farm.

WILLEM: So what?

ANNA: We have to be strategic in how we deal with it!

WILLEM: *(picking up a part of the torn document)* By giving away 15 percent?

ANNA: I met with the community that has a claim on the farm. They agreed to withdraw the claim if the eleven farms in the area each gives up a percentage.

WILLEM: You don't just give up without a fight, Anna! This farm has been in our family for three generations now!

ANNA: And how do you propose we fight? This isn't Angola, Willem!

WILLEM: Fuck Angola! This isn't some propaganda wank! This is about our land!

ANNA: So answer my question...what are we going to do?

WILLEM: *You're* the lawyer! At least put up a bit of a fight for what is ours!

ANNA: Other people say it's theirs!

WILLEM: Fuck them!

ANNA: If we give away some of it, we might not lose all of it.

WILLEM: You and fokkin FW!

ANNA: Open your eyes Willie! Have we ever been this well off?

WILLEM: Because of our blood, sweat and tears! Not because of some handout! Now you just want to give it away! *(Beat)* Over my dead body!

ANNA: Over my dead body!

WILLEM: Exactly!

ANNA: You're not moving!

WILLEM: That's what I said!

ANNA: That's what they said....

WILLEM: Who?

ANNA: The people who lived here fifty years ago.

WILLEM: *(putting up his hand to stop her)* Anna....

ANNA: And you know what Willie? There were dead bodies. But they were moved. And we got their land.

WILLEM: That's in the past.

ANNA: Well, the past is knocking at the front gate. *(Beat, then almost pleadingly)* Willie, we can draw a laager around ourselves and resist any kind of change. Or we can see how our world is

changing and be part of changing it for the better...for ourselves and for others. There's enough land for all of us, Willie.

WILLEM: Give them land, and the next thing we'll have a huge squatter camp right next door to us.

ANNA: If we share our skills and resources, we could build a thriving, integrated community that could show what this country can be like if we work together!

WILLEM: You're so naïve Anna!

ANNA: (*frustrated*) And you're so...stubborn!

WILLEM: I'm not giving up any land....

ANNA: Then I'll give up 30% of my share.

WILLEM: Not without my signature, you won't!

ANNA: I can do what I like with my share of the farm.

WILLEM: Only if I agree!

ANNA: People are getting impatient.

WILLEM: Me too!

ANNA: There's a lot of anger out there!

WILLEM: Here too!

ANNA: There's talk of land invasions!

WILLEM: (*getting up suddenly*) Let them come! (*turns the kitchen table on its side sending Anna scurrying away, and then plucks out the rifle hidden on the underside of the table top*). I'm ready for them!

Willem uses the table as a shield and points his rifle towards some imaginary enemy. There is a momentary, tense silence. Then Anna bursts out laughing, making Willem very awkward.

WILLEM: (*a little sheepishly*) What?

ANNA: Look at you. And you all *me* naïve! (*laughs*) Look everyone...Willem Rambo Meintjies!

WILLEM: Fuck you, Anna Hensopper Motaung!

Another moment of quiet tension.

ANNA: What happened to you Willie? Where's the brother I could talk to? Reason with? Where's the Willie that wanted to go to the TRC to ask PW and Magnus why they sent him to war? Why his friends Paul and Riaan and Jakob came back in body bags...for nothing? What happened to the brother who helped to build a library in the community? Who coached the township rugby team? Where's that Willie? I want him back....

WILLEM: *(emotionally, slowly)* You can stand here...in this kitchen...*(gritting his teeth in anger)* and you can ask what happened? But of course, Hensopper Anna wasn't here! *(grabs her by the arm and pulls her roughly around the room while she tries to release herself)*. So let me take you on a tour! Again! *(pulls her to a particular point)* This is where I found Pa, his body burned with a hot iron, and Fokken hacked to death! *(pulls her to another point)* And here is where I saw our mother's naked body for the first time, *(close to tears with anger and emotion)* her throat slit like a pig's! Where were you Anna? Where were you? You were in the city...*(angrily)* defending the...animals that do this kind of thing! How can you...! *(Beat)* If they thought that slaughtering our parents would intimidate us, would get us...me...to leave, they don't know us! They just strengthened my resolve to stay!

SCENE 6

This scene comprises two restaurant scenes. Scene 6.1 is Johan and Fani in a cheap, Wimpy type restaurant having a coffee break. Scene 6.2 is Sizwe and Anna having a wedding anniversary lunch.

Scene 6.1

At one level, the conversation is about a statement written by Johan in English. For Johan though, the conversation is about asking Fani for a loan, which makes him feel awkward, anxious and he relates to the other conversation superficially. They are drinking coffee.

FANI: *(reading a statement written by Johan)* "There was two bullet wounds. One are to the chest, and two are to the chest also".

They laugh. Johan's leg is nervously going up and down.

FANI: “The identity of the victim who are a male Cork Asian...”(to Johan)
Cork Asian?

JOHAN: Caucasian! (*laughs*)

FANI: (*snorts, shakes his head*) “The identity of the victim who are a male Caucasian (*laughter again*) are Arno Smit, a pop singer of romantics ballets”. (*to Johan*) You mean “ballads”.

JOHAN: If the captain wants us to use only English for official police work, this is going to be my way of protesting. (*laughs*) I want to ask you something....

FANI: (*continuing the other conversation*) Fok, Johan, you’re still fighting the Anglo-Boer war...

JOHAN: English is not the captain’s first language. It’s not even *your* second language.

FANI: It’s my fourth language.

JOHAN: Exactly! Your Afrikaans is better than your English. So why should *you* have to write all your reports in English? You’ve always written them in Afrikaans.

FANI: If I wrote them in Venda, *you* wouldn’t understand.

JOHAN: 99% of the guys at the station wouldn’t understand. You’re the only fokker who speaks Venda!

FANI: But if you want to write in your language, surely I should be able to write in mine?

JOHAN: We’ve always used English or Afrikaans, Fani. Everyone at the station can speak and write in Afrikaans or English. All of a sudden some poes bureaucrat says English is now the official police language. Why?

FANI: Why? Because 75% of the guys here don’t speak English or Afrikaans as a first language...

JOHAN: Fani, *no-one* at any police station in Gauteng speaks English as a first language. If you want to find an English-speaking policeman, you’ll have to go to Durban! And it will be an Indian!

FANI: That's why it's a good policy. We're all using a second or third language. That way, everyone's language is prejudiced.

JOHAN: Why pull down my language? Why not pull up all the other languages?

FANI: You don't speak any language except Afrikaans and English.

JOHAN: I don't need any other language. I can dream, and think and make love in Afrikaans. And I can watch cricket and shit in English.

FANI: 90% of crime happens to black people, Johan.

JOHAN: So?

FANI: So don't you think you could serve the community better if you knew a black language?

JOHAN: Fok, Fani, I'm too old for that. And anyway, I've got you. We haven't had a problem with language in all the years we've been partners. *(Beat)* So you think it's a good policy?

FANI: I think it has some merit. *(Beat)* Is that what you wanted to ask me?

JOHAN: What?

FANI: Just now...you said you wanted to ask me something.

Mari enters. Fani sees her first.

FANI: Oh look, there's Mari.

Fani waves at Mari. Johan and Mari see each other, and both are surprised to see the other.

Lights fade cross fade down on this scene and up on Scene 6.2

Scene 6.2

Sizwe and Anna are holding hands across the table. A candle burns in the centre of the table. Their eyes are closed and Sizwe is praying.

SIZWE: For what we are about to receive, make us truly thankful. For Christ's sake.

ANNA: *(opening her eyes)* Amen.

SIZWE: *(continuing to pray, Anna looks around, a bit embarrassed)* And dear Lord, thank you for Anna. Thank you for sparing us these three years of marriage. Bless us with many more. For Christ's sake. Amen.

They smile at each other.

ANNA: *(lifting her glass)* To three years...

SIZWE: *(clinking Anna's glass with his)* Feels like yesterday...*(bit sadly)* and yet, so much has happened....Your parents....

ANNA: I don't want to talk about that now. This is our anniversary. Let's keep it happy...for us.

SIZWE: Sure.

They hold hands in silence, looking at each other, smiling.

ANNA: *(smiling)* I think I'm ready.

SIZWE: For what?

ANNA: To have children.

SIZWE: *(excited)* Really?

Anna nods.

SIZWE: *(standing)* Okay, let's go!

ANNA: Where?

SIZWE: To make children!

Beat. Laughter, then Sizwe sits down.

ANNA: That's why I love you....

SIZWE: Why?

ANNA: You make me laugh.

SIZWE: I love it when you laugh.

ANNA: You make it sound like I don't laugh much.

SIZWE: You didn't when I first met you.

ANNA: Really?

SIZWE: It was like you were carrying the whole world on your shoulders.

ANNA: Maybe I was. *(Beat)* Thank you.

SIZWE: For what?

ANNA: For liberating me....

SIZWE: Liberating you?

ANNA: From my past...from the burden of... history.

SIZWE: Come on, that's far too serious conversation for an anniversary lunch.

ANNA: Okay, so what do you want to talk about?

They sit for a moment, holding hands and just looking at each other, smiling.

SIZWE: Er...how many do you want?

ANNA: What?

SIZWE: Children.

ANNA: Well, there's five in your family. We have two. Maybe something in between.

SIZWE: Three-and-a-half?

ANNA: *(laughs)* Your mom will be happy.

SIZWE: She will be! All my siblings have kids. Maybe she was beginning to doubt my African prowess!

ANNA: Your mom wouldn't think that!

SIZWE: She's been very understanding. She said I mustn't put you under pressure...that I must give you time to recover from your parent's

deaths....I'm going to pray that we have at least one boy and one girl...so they can carry your parent's names.

ANNA: (sadly) Another Willem....

Lights cross fade down on this scene and up on the Wimpy scene.

Scene 6.1

*Johan and Mari are standing a little way from Fani who's sitting at the table still.
Johan and Mari are arguing under their breath.*

JOHAN: What are you doing here? Where's Lourens?

MARI: I left him with Elsie.

JOHAN: You left our child with the maid so you could go out to a restaurant?

MARI: I'm not going out to a restaurant....

JOHAN: So what are you doing here? You're spending the grocery money in a restaurant....

MARI: What are *you* doing here? Spending money on lunch when I pack you a lunch?

JOHAN: I was buying coffee.

MARI: I make you a flask everyday.

JOHAN: Sometimes I want fresh coffee...

MARI: We can't afford it, Johan.

JOHAN: So what are *you* doing here?

MARI: I've come to look for a job.

JOHAN: What? (*grabs her by the arm and leads her outside*) You are not going to work here!

MARI: Johan, we need the money!

JOHAN: I can handle it!

MARI: You already have two jobs!

JOHAN: Go back to Lourens.

MARI: I'll just work in the mornings....

JOHAN: I don't want to talk about this now! Go!

Lights cross-fade to scene with Sizwe and Anna.

Scene 6.2

SIZWE: Ek is verlief vir jou.

ANNA: Op jou...

SIZWE: Ek is op jou verlief.

ANNA: (*laughing*) No, ek is verlief op jou.

SIZWE: Ek is verlief op jou.

ANNA: Or you can say "ek is lief vir jou"

SIZWE: But you can't say "ek is verlief vir jou"

ANNA: It's different "ver's"....

SIZWE: Ek is lief vir jou.

ANNA: Again....

SIZWE: Ek is baie lief vir jou.

ANNA: Okay, now with meaning....

SIZWE: (*in Zulu*) I love you....

ANNA: (*in Zulu*) I love you too.

SIZWE: You're much better at languages than I am...

ANNA: (*smiling*) I just don't want you talking about me in a language I can't understand...

SIZWE: So what languages are we going to teach our three-and-a-half children?

ANNA: What a dumb question...Afrikaans!

SIZWE: You know like at my church, people sometimes speak in tongues...like different languages and someone interprets?

ANNA: That never happens in the NGK!

SIZWE: Do you think that somewhere in the world, God speaks to a church in Afrikaans?

ANNA: I don't know...but there's bound to be an Afrikaner to interpret.

Cross-fade, lights down on this scene and up on 6.1

Scene 6.1

Mari has left. Fani and Johan are back at the table. Johan is a bit more agitated than before.

FANI: Are things okay?

JOHAN: Ja, things are fine.

Silence for a few beats.

FANI: What were you going to ask? Just now...

JOHAN: Nothing...

FANI: I've been your partner for three-and-a-half years. It's not nothing.

JOHAN: Forget about it.

FANI: You want me to write all your reports in English?

JOHAN: No.

FANI: You want me to ask the captain to change the language policy?

JOHAN: Ja....

FANI: Okay.

JOHAN: *(Beat)* Actually...

FANI: What?

JOHAN: Nothing.

FANI: What's your problem?

JOHAN: *(takes a deep breath)* I need to make a loan....

They sit in silence and stare at each other momentarily.

FANI: You need money?

JOHAN: *(awkwardly)* Not a lot...

FANI: How much?

JOHAN: Andre's going to a different school and they have higher fees....

FANI: How much? You don't have to explain what it's for.

JOHAN: Two thousand.

FANI: Two thousand?

JOHAN: Or as much as you can spare....

FANI: What about one-thousand...

JOHAN: *(cutting in, embarrassed)* That's fine!

FANI: I mean one-thousand today and one-thousand tomorrow...my ATM's daily limit is a thousand.

JOHAN: Fani, you're a lifesaver!

FANI: Ag, that was three years ago!

JOHAN: I'll pay you back at the end of the month.

FANI: Whenever...*(Beat)* Where's Andre going to school?

JOHAN: John Edwards...

FANI: An English school?

JOHAN: We thought he needs to learn to speak English better. Then if he can't get a job here, and goes to England, at least his English will be good.

FANI: How old is Andre now?

JOHAN: Thirteen...

FANI: Thirteen already.

JOHAN: Jaco's going to be nine on Saturday.

FANI: What you going to get him?

JOHAN: Probably just a gun. Jaco still loves to play with guns.

Cross-fade, lights down on this scene and up on Scene 6.2.

Scene 6.2

ANNA: How were your chops?

SIZWE: A bit...rare.

ANNA: You should have sent them back.

SIZWE: I didn't think about it till you asked....And your pasta?

ANNA: The sauce was quite rich...

SIZWE: But?

ANNA: It was delicious!

Willem enters, angry. He goes straight to Anna, and engages with her, ignoring Sizwe completely.

WILLEM: You went behind my back, Anna!

ANNA: Willem...

WILLEM: You went to speak to the other farmers....

ANNA: How dare you just walk in here...?

WILLEM: Tell me you didn't talk to the other farmers!

ANNA: *(completely taken aback)* This is our anniversary....

WILLEM: Did you talk to them? Yes or no?

ANNA: You didn't want to listen to me, maybe you would listen to some of them.

WILLEM: You've divided us! We were all standing together....

SIZWE: *(touching his arm, quietly)* Willem....

WILLEM: *(pulling his arm away, not even acknowledging Sizwe)* Now some of them want to give up some land....

ANNA: *(sharply)* There's no reason to be rude to Sizwe!

WILLEM: *(grabbing her by the arm)* I am talking to you!

SIZWE: *(grabs Willem's arm)* Willem!

WILLEM: *(pulls away)* Leave me! *(stares icily at Sizwe)* Don't you ever touch me again!

SIZWE: Then leave my wife alone!

WILLEM: She's my sister!

ANNA: I...am...Anna! Willem, you're an embarrassment! Get out!

WILLEM: I am not done yet!

ANNA: *(looking to an imaginary waitron)* Can you please get your manager and security and have this man removed....

WILLEM: Anna...

ANNA: Now!

Willem pulls out a revolver. He waves it around at everyone. Anna doesn't move, she stands there, almost daring him to shoot. Willem points the gun at her, then at Sizwe, then Anna, then Sizwe who is visibly nervous. Finally he walks backwards, exiting the restaurant, still pointing his gun.

Sizwe hugs Anna. She bursts into tears. He cries too.

Lights fade.

SCENE 7

Lights fade slowly on previous scene as sound comes up of children singing "Happy birthday". When it comes to "Happy birthday dear Jaco" just after Jaco lights fade up on Fani with his back to the audience. Bolla, a seasoned gangster, is holding a gun to his head. He is agitated, nervous.

BOLLA: Put your hands on your head. Now!

Fani slowly lifts his hands onto his head.

BOLLA: If you try anything, I'll kill you.

Bolla reaches inside Fani's holster, and takes out his gun.

On another part of the stage, lights come up on a coffin or a small table..

Bolla places Fani's gun in the back of his pants. He reaches under Fani's jacket, looking for extra magazines of bullets. Fani's hand loosens from behind his head. Bolla threatens him.

BOLLA: *(hitting him)* Keep your hands on your head!

Bolla takes the magazines of bullets and puts them in his pocket.

Johan enters the light on the coffin or table, and carefully, mournfully drapes a South African flag over it. Strains of the national anthem begin to play softly.

Fani's radio sparks into life. "Fani, come in. It's Johan. You can pick me up now."

BOLLA: *(more agitated)* On your knees!

Fani goes down on his knees.

Radio: Fani, come in....

Bolla takes the radio and throws it away. He begins to back away, still pointing the gun at Fani. Bolla stands for a second. He then gives Fani the gun that he, Bolla, was holding up Fani with.

BOLLA: Thanks for your gun. You can have mine.

Fani looks at Bolla, not sure what he's up to.

BOLLA: *(holding the butt of the revolver towards Fani)* There! Take it!

Fani stands up slowly, takes the gun. Bolla moves away from Fani, out of Fani's reach. Fani suddenly points the gun in his hand at Bolla. Bolla acts surprised.

BOLLA: What are you doing?

FANI: Give back my gun!

BOLLA: *(playing with him, backing away)* But I gave you my gun....

FANI: I'm counting to three...One,

BOLLA: *(counting with him)* Two, three!

Fani shoots. Nothing happens.

BOLLA: *(taking out the gun from behind his back and pointing his gun at Fani)* You think you're fucking clever because you can count to three...but you're such a fucking stupid kaffir, you can't see that's a toy gun!

FANI: You'd better run far away, because we're going to get you.

BOLLA: Once a kaffir, always a kaffir. It doesn't matter how high they promote you...

FANI: When we get you....

BOLLA: You're not going to get me.

FANI: You do this to a police officer, even a kaffir policeman, and we make sure we get you.

BOLLA: Maybe others will get me. But not you.

FANI: You'll be sorry.

BOLLA: You won't get me. Not you.

Bolla points the gun at Fani. There is a shot. Fani collapses. .

BOLLA: Fokken stupid!

Johan carefully places a photo of Sizwe's smiling face, with police cap, and in police uniform on the coffin. The national anthem plays louder as Johan stands to one side. As the national anthem subsides, Johan finds it difficult to hold back a tear.

SCENE 8

Anna and Sizwe are sitting on two chairs facing the audience. They are in trauma counseling, talking as if to a therapist. There's a clear undercurrent of tension between Anna and Sizwe.

ANNA: I didn't think he would shoot us. I know Willem.

SIZWE: I work with the police. I see a lot of people under stress. And to me, he looked like he could shoot us.

ANNA: How did I feel at the time? *(Beat)* I felt a lot of things. Anger. Humiliation. Those were probably the biggest feelings.

SIZWE: For me, it was helplessness. We were staring down the barrel of a gun and we could do nothing. *I* could do nothing. I was powerless.

ANNA: Now Sizwe wants to buy a gun.

SIZWE: *(a bit embarrassed that he's been exposed)* I said I was thinking about it...

ANNA: *(icily)* Same thing....

SIZWE: That doesn't mean I'm actually going to do it.

ANNA: I won't let you.

SIZWE: You won't let me?

ANNA: We have enough violence in this country. Guns are a major problem...

SIZWE: Three days ago, I would have agreed with you. After what happened, I'm not so sure. I don't want to have that feeling again...of having my life in the hands of someone else. Of my wife possibly being shot, and I can do nothing about it.

ANNA: *(smiling)* You could pray.

SIZWE: It's not a joke, Anna.

ANNA: I'm not joking.

They look tensely at each other, and then to front as the therapist asks them what led to the situation.

SIZWE: Anna's parents were killed on their farm about two years ago. Willie found their bodies. And he's been completely traumatized since.

ANNA: I just hated the way he completely ignored Sizwe...as if he didn't exist. And before my parents were murdered, they had a good relationship.

SIZWE: I can understand that...the guys who murdered your parents were black.

ANNA: So all blacks are murderers....

SIZWE: I'm sure there's like an unconscious transference...*(to therapist)* isn't there?

ANNA: Like all white Afrikaners are racists...so why did you marry me?

SIZWE: I'm not saying that's how I see it. But maybe for Willie...I can understand....

ANNA: *(in response to therapist's question)* No, he hasn't been for therapy. *(Beat)* Not anymore. He started beating her, and she left him about nine months ago.

SIZWE: *(sideways to Anna)* So I don't know how you can say that you knew that he wouldn't shoot us. Did you *know* that he wouldn't beat Magriet?

ANNA: *(ignoring Sizwe and continuing to answer the therapist's question)* There's a land claim on our farm and I proposed that the farms in the area give up 15-20% each to settle the land claim and help to build an integrated community. Willem is angry at me for getting some of the other farmers to agree.

SIZWE: That's not the only reason...

ANNA: Why else...

SIZWE: Tell her, Anna...

ANNA: (*genuinely confused*) About what?

SIZWE: (*to the therapist, now “exposing” Anna*) Anna met with her parent’s killers...

ANNA: That has nothing to do...

SIZWE: ...no, after they were jailed.

ANNA: Why? I needed to find out why. I needed closure. So I could move on with my life.

SIZWE: (*sarcastically*) Anna forgave them.

ANNA: (*to Sizwe*) I don’t understand why you have a problem with that?

SIZWE: (*raising his voice*) They murdered your parents!

ANNA: And for that they are got life sentences. Which they deserved! How many whites who murdered black people in the struggle got off absolutely free through the TRC process?

SIZWE: (*defensively*) That’s different.

ANNA: Is it? Black people were asked to forgive us for what we did to them, and what have we done in return? (*Beat*) And why do you have such a problem with forgiveness? You’re a Christian, Sizwe?

Beat.

SIZWE: (*uncomfortable, now coming back at Anna*) That’s another reason why Willie is angry at Anna...for meeting her parent’s killers.

ANNA: (*quietly*) Willem doesn’t know...

SIZWE: What?

ANNA: I never told him. (*Beat*) This was between me and them. (*to Sizwe*) So that I could move on...in my relationship with you.

Lights fade slowly. Music.

SCENE 9

Willem pointing a rifle Moeketsi's head. Moeketsi is wearing a cap and is kneeling.

WILLEM: You have the audacity to come onto my farm?

MOEKETSI: I am not here to talk about the land.

WILLEM: How dare you just walk in here?

MOEKETSI: You still blame us for your parents' murders!

WILLEM: I hold you responsible. You and other leaders of your community incite people against the farmers in this area!

MOEKETSI: We organize our community, yes. We tell them their rights. We act to represent their interests, but we do not incite them!

WILLEM: You give them false hope that they are going to get land in this area!

MOEKETSI: Mr Meintjies, you know that government has earmarked land for us to return to. The land claim has been going on for six years. People are restless. If it weren't for us keeping the lid on things, who knows what would have happened by now?

WILLEM: So I should be thankful to you that only my parents have been murdered so far?

MOEKETSI: Your parents were good people.

WILLEM: And that didn't matter one bit to the animals who murdered them!

MOEKETSI: Those young men have brought great shame onto our community. It has never happened before.

WILLEM: You thought it was going to scare us. To drive us away so you could just take over our land....

MOEKETSI: We knew those murders would drive a wedge between the community and the farmers. That's why....

WILLEM: What?

MOEKETSI: That's why we mobilized the community to come forward with information that led to their arrests in less than 24 hours. And by

the time the police came to arrest them, they had nearly been beaten to death by the community. They were so angry.

Willem lowers his gun. There is silence for a while.

WILLEM: What do you want?

MOEKETSI: I want to buy a sheep.

WILLEM: For what?

MOEKETSI: For a funeral.

WILLEM: Who's died now?

MOEKETSI: My twin brother.

WILLEM: The policeman?

MOEKETSI: *(quietly)* Yes.

WILLEM: I'm sorry...

MOEKETSI: *(having held it together till now, breaks down)* They just shot him. In the head. In cold blood! At point blank range! What kind of human being does that?

Willem looks awkward at first. Then, puts down his rifle.

Lights fade.

SCENE 10

Sizwe and Johan seated on opposite sides of a desk. Sizwe is questioning Johan about Fani's death. There is a tape recorder on the table. There is tension between them.

SIZWE: So he dropped you at home.

JOHAN: Yes.

SIZWE: While you were supposed to be on duty together.

JOHAN: It was just for half-an-hour. *(Beat)* Do you mind if I speak Afrikaans?

SIZWE: I might not understand everything...and since this is an official inquiry...I'll repeat my questions if you don't understand.

JOHAN: It's just that I talk better in Afrikaans.

SIZWE: English is also my second language, Inspector.

JOHAN: (*resentfully*) Fine.

SIZWE: Was this a common practice...to go to your home?

JOHAN: We sometimes would go there for tea.

SIZWE: And this time?

JOHAN: I invited him in but he said no.

SIZWE: Why?

JOHAN: It was Jaco's birthday...my second son. Fani said it was a family occasion and he didn't want to impose.

SIZWE: He obviously knew your family well. Why would he not come in...at least to say happy birthday to your son?

JOHAN: His family lives in Limpopo. He also has young children. When he sees my children, he misses his. He could hardly ever make their birthdays.

SIZWE: Did you know where he was going?

JOHAN: He said he was going down the road...to the café.

SIZWE: And when was he going to pick you up?

JOHAN: Half-an-hour later.

SIZWE: What time was that?

JOHAN: He dropped me at about five-to-three, and I was supposed to radio him when I was ready.

SIZWE: And did you radio him?

JOHAN: Yes.

SIZWE: What did he say?

JOHAN: He didn't respond.

SIZWE: So what did you do?

JOHAN: I waited another ten minutes, and when he still wasn't responding, I took the family car and drove to the café. I saw our vehicle...and then I saw people behind the café...that's where he was. (*Beat*) How much longer will this be? It's very difficult for me....

SIZWE: Not as difficult as it must be for Inspector Nevuthalu's wife and children...

JOHAN: Yes....

SIZWE: You do realise the seriousness of the situation, Inspector?

Johan looks at him, not understanding.

SIZWE: If you had been together, Inspector Nevuthalu would probably still be alive today.

JOHAN: What are you saying?

SIZWE: An officer has been killed. I don't need to tell you how many police officers are killed every year.

JOHAN: Too many.

SIZWE: I wonder how many of them are killed because of a dereliction of duty by their partners.

JOHAN: Dereliction....?

SIZWE: You were supposed to be on duty together!

JOHAN: I just popped in to my son's birthday.

SIZWE: Did your station commander know?

JOHAN: It was like our tea time.

SIZWE: The rules are that you are supposed to be together.

JOHAN: Yes.

SIZWE: And Inspector Nevuthalu was alone at the time that he was shot.

JOHAN: Yes.

SIZWE: You had deserted him.

JOHAN: No!

SIZWE: You were not with him?

JOHAN: No.

SIZWE: So you broke the rules.

JOHAN: (*quietly*) No.

SIZWE: Your partner is dead.

JOHAN: It was broad daylight.

SIZWE: It was your duty to be together.

JOHAN: It was half-an-hour!

SIZWE: Five minutes are long enough to kill someone!

JOHAN: He was my partner!

SIZWE: Was...

JOHAN: (*emotionally*) I didn't murder him!

SIZWE: (*angrily*) Maybe you didn't pull the trigger....

They stare at each other

JOHAN: (*standing up*) I'm going now.

SIZWE: Of course...that's what you do. You desert what you're supposed to do.

Lights fade as they stare at each other.

SCENE 11

A street outside Anna's office. Mari is pacing up and down, with Lourens in her arms. She is waiting for Anna to leave her office.

Enter Anna. Mari blocks her path.

MARI: Mrs Motung?

ANNA: Motaung...yes?

MARI: Sorry...I'm sorry to approach you in the street...but I need your help.

ANNA: What kind of help?

MARI: My husband's been suspended at work.

ANNA: Who did you say you were?

MARI: Sorry, my name's Mari...Britz.

ANNA: *(taking out a business card)* Ms Britz, I'm in a bit of a rush. Here's my card. Call my secretary...she'll give you the name of a good labour lawyer. I'm a criminal lawyer.

MARI: I don't need legal help.

ANNA: Then I'm not sure I can help you.

MARI: My husband's a policeman.

ANNA: The police union has good lawyers. I'm sure he can get good representation.

MARI: I know you're in a rush, but let me finish...please.

Anna sees Mari's desperation and has sympathy for this woman with a baby. She relents.

MARI: My husband's partner was shot. They were supposed to be on duty together, but my husband came to our son's birthday party. His partner went to a café and that's where he was shot.

ANNA: How is he?

MARI: *(with difficulty)* He's dead.

ANNA: I'm sorry.

MARI: They weren't just partners. They were close friends. He saved my husband's life once.

ANNA: Why was your husband suspended?

MARI: They say he neglected his duty.

ANNA: Why have you come to me?

MARI: It's your husband who suspended my husband.

ANNA: Now hold on, Ms Britz, whatever the rights and wrongs of your husband's situation, it would be inappropriate for me to get involved in my husband's work.

MARI: I know. But I'm so desperate, I don't know what else to do!

ANNA: What made you think I could help you?

MARI: My husband mentioned that the man who suspended him was married to an Afrikaans woman. And that you were a lawyer. I looked you up in the book.

ANNA: Ms Britz, I can't help you.

MARI: Please, Mrs Motaung, I beg you....

ANNA: What exactly did you think I could do?

MARI: I don't know. Speak to him....

ANNA: It's already done. Your husband's suspended.

MARI: Your husband is a powerful man. I'm not asking that my husband not be punished.

ANNA: What are you asking?

MARI: That his suspension be shortened. Please....Six months without pay...that's punishing his whole family. We have three children....
(she is close to tears).

ANNA: Ms Britz, as difficult as this is for you, it would be highly irregular of me to interfere in my husband's work.

MARI: I beg you, as a woman, as a mother....

ANNA: I wish I could help you....

MARI: Just speak to him...please.

ANNA: *(Beat)* I'm sorry...there's nothing I can do.

MARI: *(looks at her, tears in her eyes)* Thank you for your time. God bless you.

They exit in opposite directions. Anna turns around to look at Mari and then exits.

SCENE 12

Johan is sitting at home at a table, unkempt. He has a half-bottle of Jack Daniels and a glass on the table. His service revolver is on the table too. There are three photo frames on the table with pictures of his children and Mari and one of them as a family. Johan picks up one of the frames, of his youngest child, and shakes his head. He is emotional.

He takes a swig from the bottle. He then puts the gun against his temple.

MARI: *(offstage)* Johan...Johan...

Johan puts the gun on his lap, out of Mari's sight. Mari enters.

MARI: Oh, there you are. *(senses his state)* Are you okay?

JOHAN: *(Under the influence of alcohol)* No! I'm not okay! How can I be okay?

MARI: You're drinking too much, honey....

JOHAN: Don't tell me what to do!

MARI: Johan, darling, I know you're upset...but please don't be mad at me.

JOHAN: I'm not mad at you.

MARI: We'll get through this.

JOHAN: How?

MARI: We will, Johan. We always do....

JOHAN: Not this time, Mari! I'm the son of a decorated policeman! And I'm suspended! For six months, I'm going to struggle to feed my family let alone pay our bills. The bank will take our house. Our car. And my partner...my friend...is dead! (*emotionally*) If I had been with him, he would still be alive! He saved my life...and I let him go his death!

Mari tries to put her arm around him to console him.

MARI: It's not your fault...

JOHAN: (*moving sharply away from her*) Leave me...!

The revolver falls off his lap. He quickly picks it up.

MARI: Johan! What are you doing with this gun?

JOHAN: Nothing....

MARI: (*quietly*) Johan...please give me the gun.

JOHAN: No.

MARI: (*calmly*) I don't think it's a good idea for you to be drinking and to be handling a gun, my darling.

JOHAN: Just leave me, Mari! You're like a mosquito! (*makes disparaging sound like a mosquito*) Nnnnnnnnn.....

MARI: (*hurt*) Think about our children, Johan.

JOHAN: (*pointing to the photos*) That's all I've been thinking about...! What must they think of their father?

MARI: They think he's a great father!

JOHAN: No, they don't!

MARI: They do!

JOHAN: Then they are wrong! Their father's a fuck-up!

MARI: Johan, please....

JOHAN: Everything's fucked up!

MARI: It's difficult, but not impossible.

JOHAN: And I was only trying to be a good father...to be at my son's birthday....*(broken)* what's the point?

MARI: Johan....

JOHAN: *(angrily, points his gun at Mari)* What's the point, Mari!

MARI: Johan, you're making me scared.

JOHAN: Just tell me what's the point, Mari...

Mari backs off, Johan follows her around pointing the gun at her.

MARI: Put the gun down, please....

JOHAN: Some bastard kills my partner in cold blood, and he's still walking free...And *I'm* suspended! What's the point, Mari? What's the point when someone can just come and blow your brains out? Why don't you just do it yourself? *(points gun to his temple again)*

MARI: *(scared, emotional)* Elsie...!

JOHAN: *(imitating her)* Elsie...! Oh, no. No Elsie. Because I sent her home. I told her we can't afford to pay her anymore. That there is no more work for her here.

MARI: Johan, let's talk about this...please....

JOHAN: And then? Blah, blah, blah, blah and then? Will that pay the bond? Will that put petrol in the car? Will that bring Fani back?

MARI: Our children need you to be strong.

JOHAN: Our children...won't need me in heaven....

MARI: Johan, no!

JOHAN: This is hell, Mari. Let's go to heaven...as a family.

MARI: *(emotional and yet, knowing she mustn't lose it)* What are you saying....?

JOHAN: I'm saying, let's leave this hell! Together.....

MARI: Johan, I'm going to pray now...

Mari gets onto her knees and shuts her eyes.

JOHAN: What's the point, Mari?

Johan stands next to her, points his gun at her temple.

MARI: Dear heavenly Father, I call upon you in our time of need. You are the God who made us, who loves us, who gave His Son for us so that we might have eternal life.

JOHAN: Amen!

MARI: Lord, you are looking down upon us right now. You are the giver and taker of life. Let Your will be done in our lives.

JOHAN: Amen!

MARI: Thank you for children, the most beautiful children in the world.

JOHAN: Amen!

MARI: Thank you for my husband Johan, a most loving father and husband....

JOHAN: *(breaks down, lowers the gun, chokes)* Amen....

MARI: Thank you for your many blessings. For the wonderful life that we have had together. *(she is emotional, tears begin to roll down her cheeks)* See us, your children, now in our time of crisis. And come and do your will in our lives.

Johan has turned to face the audience, weeping. Johan points the barrel of the revolver into his mouth.

MARI: I ask all these things in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Mari opens her eyes. She sees Johan with the gun's barrel in his mouth. She gets up slowly, calmly, and walks over to him. She gently takes his hand with the gun and lowers it out his mouth. Then she takes the gun from him and he

willingly gives it. He is in tears. They then hug each other and weep together.

SCENE 13

Sizwe and Anna's home. Sizwe is wearing an apron. He is cooking, cutting up some vegetables. They are having an argument.

SIZWE: So what do you want me to do, Anna?

ANNA: I want you to do what your heart tells you.

SIZWE: I don't deal with the heart. I deal with the law. With what is right and wrong.

ANNA: What is right and wrong sometimes doesn't have to do with the law. You know that as well as I do.

SIZWE: He broke the procedures. His partner is dead. There have to be consequences.

ANNA: But did you take the family's situation into account? In a courtroom, we look at mitigating circumstances before we sentence.

SIZWE: He was lucky to get away with six months' suspension.

ANNA: You are placing a family at risk.

SIZWE: What about Inspector Nevuthalu's family?

ANNA: That's tragic. But it cannot be undone. Who knows what tragedies might befall the Britz family?

SIZWE: Exactly! Who knows? We have deal with what we know, not what we don't know!

ANNA: You, Sizwe – more than anyone – should know the stresses that the police work under. Britz isn't a bad person. He and his partner were good friends. He has suffered enough....

SIZWE: This is not simply about suffering. It's about right and wrong. It's about setting an example.

ANNA: I just think that you can temper your disciplining with a bit more mercy. Let's save the punishment for real criminals, not for someone who has made a little mistake.

SIZWE: (*angrily*) His “mistake” led to the death of a good police officer!

ANNA: His mistake was to attend the birthday of his son for half-an-hour!

SIZWE: Half-an-hour too long for his partner.

ANNA: His partner was in the wrong place at the wrong time. It was sheer bad luck. It had nothing to do with Britz.

SIZWE: (*Beat*) I don’t believe we’re having an argument about this.

Beat.

ANNA: (*more restrained*) I was just trying to convey the feelings of a desperate mother, a wife...do you have any idea what it took for her to do what she did? That’s...that’s love! Nothing to do with the law, with right and wrong...

SIZWE: Tell me something...

ANNA: What?

SIZWE: (*Beat, aware of the possible consequences of his question*) If it wasn’t a white, Afrikaans couple, would you be doing this?

Anna looks at him, incredibly hurt. She cannot believe that he has asked her this question. There is incredible tension. A tear rolls down her cheek. Anna walks over quickly and picks up her bag and keys.

SIZWE: Where are you going....?

ANNA: Out!

SIZWE: It’s nearly supper time!

Anna exits.

SIZWE: Anna!

Sizwe walks around in a bit of a daze, not knowing what to do. He sits down on the edge of the table.

SIZWE: Dammit! (*sighs deeply*)

Anna enters, fuming.

ANNA: When are we going to see people as human beings! Not as black or white...or machines who do right and wrong! But as people! Who laugh. Who cry. Who fear, who hope, who have needs...like us? Why does everything have to be reduced to race? Why?

SIZWE: Anna...calm down....

ANNA: Have these last four years together meant nothing to you? That you can ask me a question like that?

SIZWE: *(Beat, smiles)* You're...even more beautiful when you're angry.

ANNA: Fuck you!

Anna exits rapidly.

SIZWE: *(completely shocked)* She...she swore at me...she just swore at me....*(looking in the direction of Anna's exit)* Fuck you too, Anna!

Sizwe begins to take off his apron, his back to the door. He hears a noise, turns around. He sees Bolla who has his arm around Anna's neck, holding a gun to her head.

SIZWE: *(anguished, choking)* Anna...!

SCENE 14

Johan is dressed in his khaki uniform. He is putting on his bulletproof vest. Mari enters with a flask of coffee and a tupperware of sandwiches. She gives it to Johan. They smile at each other.

JOHAN: Thank you.

Johan goes up to her, pulls her towards him and kisses her passionately.

MARI: *(pushing him away gently)* You'd better go now...or I'll keep you here.

JOHAN: I'll see you later.

Exits.

MARI: *(on her knees)* Dear Lord, thank you for all your blessings. Please look after Johan tonight. Bring him back safely to us. Amen.

SCENE 15

Sizwe is seated on a chair. His one arm is bound to one side of the chair and Anna is tying his other arm to the other side of the chair. Bolla is pointing his gun at them.

BOLLA: You must tie him tightly, Miss Meintjies.

ANNA: Take everything you want, Bolla. Please...just don't hurt us.

BOLLA: Don't worry, I'm not going to hurt *you*. (*Beat, tests whether Sizwe has been tightly bound*) I can't believe you married him. (*hits Sizwe with his gun*)

ANNA: Bolla, please! I beg you!

BOLLA: He put me away for five years!

ANNA: It was me...I didn't put up a strong enough defence.

BOLLA: There was nothing you could do. The system needed a culprit. And I was an easy target.

SIZWE: I was just doing my job.

BOLLA: And now I'm just doing mine. (*laughs*)

SIZWE: I only presented the evidence. The Magistrate found you guilty.

BOLLA: Evidence which was planted....

SIZWE: I didn't know that!

BOLLA: I told you! But you didn't bother to find out!

SIZWE: The detective was a senior policeman. I didn't expect him to lie.

BOLLA: But me...there was no way that *I* could be telling the truth! (*hits Sizwe again*)

Anna runs and stands in front of Sizwe to protect him.

ANNA: Bolla, I beg you....

BOLLA: Out of the way, Ms Meintjies.

Anna gets onto her knees, and crawls between Sizwe and Bolla all the time as Bolla circles Sizwe.

ANNA: What do you want?

BOLLA: I want this kaffir to beg for his life.

ANNA: *I'm begging you....*

BOLLA: You sound like my mother...*(to Sizwe)* remember her, kaffir?

ANNA: Please don't hurt him.

BOLLA: That's what my mother said. Please don't send him to jail. No-one listened to her. They didn't believe her or my aunt or my cousins that I was with them at the time of the break-in.

SIZWE: I'm sorry....

BOLLA: *(puts on posh accent)* I don't understand English very good.

ANNA: He's sorry, Bolla!

SIZWE: I'm sorry....

BOLLA: *(hitting Sizwe)* Praat Afrikaans, of hou jou bek, kaffir!

SIZWE: Ek..

BOLLA: Ja?

SIZWE: ...is...

BOLLA: Ja?

SIZWE: ...jammer.

Bolla walks round and round Sizwe. Anna continues to position herself between Bolla and Sizwe.

BOLLA: For what? For breaking my mother's heart? For asking the judge to give me five years for a crime I didn't commit? For accepting evidence that was set up?

SIZWE: Vir alles. Ek is jammer vir alles.

BOLLA: Now you're sorry. Because I'm the one who's in control of your life. But you weren't sorry then...when you had control over my life! You couldn't care! Another case closed. Another criminal sent to jail!

SIZWE: We can have the case re-opened.

BOLLA: (*hitting Sizwe*) Afrikaans!

ANNA: Ons kan die saak weer oopmaak.

BOLLA: (*laughs*) And what? Give me back the last five years of my life? You're scared, aren't you!

SIZWE: Ja.

BOLLA: You should be! (*to Anna*) Miss Meintjies, get out of the way. You're irritating me now.

ANNA: Please don't hurt him.

Bolla grabs her by the arm and pulls her across the room. He pushes her to her knees.

SIZWE: Leave her!

BOLLA: (*turning on him, points gun up his nose*) Or what? Or what, kaffir? (*Beat*) What did you see then? Just another hotnot criminal that society didn't need? You know what I see? I see a scared kaffir! (*laughs*)

ANNA: Bolla, Bolla, please...what do you want?

BOLLA: I came to say thank you.

ANNA: For what?

BOLLA: For the last five years.

SIZWE: Ek is jammer vir jou vyf jaar in prison.

BOLLA: Don't be sorry. It's been the best five years of my life. Out here, I'm fuckall. A nothing. An unemployed working class gangster, with a grade nine certificate, the second son of a single mother whose other child was also the product of rape! Who was never able to get a job. And who now will never be able to get a job. Because

once upon a time it was the time of the boere, hey, Ms Meintjies? Now it's the time of the kaffirs. I was a nothing then. And I'm a nothing now. But inside prison, I'm someone! I worked myself up through the ranks. I'm one of the leaders of a gang. There, people respect me! People fear me! People serve me! They do as I say! So don't be sorry. You've given my life meaning!

ANNA: What do you want from us now?

BOLLA: Not from you...from him.

SIZWE: What do you want?

BOLLA: Because of you I am where I am today. But you can make me go higher. I can become a general.

SIZWE: What do I have to do?

BOLLA: Nothing.

ANNA: *(realizing what he's saying, runs and kneels besides him, holding onto his leg)* No, Bolla!

SIZWE: Nothing?

BOLLA: You don't have to do anything. It is me who has to do something.

ANNA: Please, Bolla, I beg you!

BOLLA: *(drags Anna to her feet and holding her by the chest, pushes her away)* Do you have children?

ANNA: No.

BOLLA: Good!

ANNA: What do you mean?

BOLLA: There is no future for coloureds in this country! And what do you want to do? Make more coloureds! Fok, no! I'm going to do the kids you would have had a favour!

Anna stands to one side. Bolla goes back to Sizwe. As Bolla explains the situation to Sizwe, Anna begins to undress herself, till she is half-naked, taking off her top and her bra, revealing her breasts.

BOLLA: Let me explain the situation to you, kaffir. You are going to be my general stripes. To become a general, I have to kill a policeman and I have to kill a prosecutor.

SIZWE: (*fearfully*) I am not a prosecutor anymore.

BOLLA: It's good enough that you were. There are many people inside who know you...who are there because of you.

ANNA: (*quietly*) Bolla...

BOLLA: (*surprised at her exposed breast*) What now, Ms Meintjies?

SIZWE: (*outraged*) Anna, what are you doing!

ANNA: I am offering myself to you...in his place.

SIZWE: (*screams*) No, Anna, no!

BOLLA: (*rounds on Sizwe, hits him*) Hou jou bek! (*to Anna*) You love him that much?

All through the next sequence, while Bolla's attention is focused on Anna, Sizwe keeps an eye on them, but struggles to set himself free. When Bolla looks his way, he stops wriggling his arms.

ANNA: Yes.

BOLLA: (*laughs*) Or do you feel so kak about what you did to kaffirs in the past...that you think you have to sacrifice yourself? (*laughs again*)

ANNA: I only ask that you use a condom.

BOLLA: (*running the barrel of the gun between her breasts down to her tummy*) A condom?

ANNA: I have one in my bag....

ANNA: It won't be rape. I am giving myself to you. But then you must leave. Please.

Bolla stands and looks at her. There is a tense silence.

BOLLA: I can have you, and leave. But once I am outside there, I am still a nothing. I have to go back to my community. My people. My ambition is not to have sex with a white woman. My ambition is to

be a general! And he, not you, Ms Meintjies, is my winning lotto number. You have to watch...because it will be your evidence that will put me away for twenty-five years. But you have made me jas....(*picks up her clothes and gives it to her, she puts on her top, not her bra*). Don't take this personally...you're an attractive woman. (*walks to Sizwe, who, by this time, is free but remains with his arms on the side as if bound*) But during the last five years, I have developed a taste for men. And the last pleasure this kaffir will have before he dies, is to have the pleasure of sucking my dick!

He stands right in front of Sizwe, his crotch in Sizwe's face. He starts loosening his jeans. Then, Sizwe lets out an almighty scream and tackles Bolla to the ground.

Bolla drops the gun. Anna sees this and quickly picks it up. Bolla and Sizwe are wrestling.

SIZWE: The panic button, Anna...press it!

Anna runs across the stage, hits the panic button and the alarm goes off.

Sizwe throws Bolla off him and runs towards Anna, grabs the gun from her and points it at Bolla. He goes to Bolla who's on the ground, and kicks him.

ANNA: Sizwe, no!

Sizwe doesn't listen. He kicks Bolla again and again.

ANNA: (*pulling him away*) Sizwe....!

Bolla gets up slowly.

BOLLA: (*laughs*) Thanks Ms Meintjies. Your husband could play for Bafana...he's got a kak kick....(*laughs mockingly again*).

Sizwe is pointing the gun at Bolla, Anna is behind him. He is protecting Anna. Bolla starts walking towards them during the next piece.

SIZWE: Stay where you are...

BOLLA: So what are you going to do now, Mr Meintjies?

SIZWE: Get down on the ground!

BOLLA: Your wife has more balls than you, Mr Meintjies (*spits*).

SIZWE: I'm warning you....

BOLLA: You must maar shoot me. If I go back and I haven't killed you, I'll be demoted. There's nothing for me outside prison. So, do me a favour...(raises his arms) shoot me. Or...(taking a step towards them; they step away) I will have to keep trying to kill you!

SIZWE: I will shoot you....

BOLLA: (walking towards them threateningly, arms raised) So do it...get blood all over your lovely carpets.

SIZWE: If you take one more step forward...

Bolla stops. There is a silent stand-off. Then Bolla lunges forward. Anna screams. Sizwe shoots. There is no sound. The gun is jammed.

Bolla laughs mockingly.

BOLLA: It's jammed. (he reaches behind his back and pulls out a knife)
Now it's my chance again.

Bolla advances on them. Anna jumps in front of Sizwe.

ANNA: If you want him, you have to get past me first.

Sizwe tries to push her out of the way.

BOLLA: I told you she's the one with balls.

Bolla grabs Anna. Twists her round to face Sizwe, with him behind Anna, holding his knife against her throat.

SIZWE: Anna...!

ANNA: Run, Sizwe, run...!

SIZWE: (really torn) Anna....

BOLLA: You run, kaffir...and you'll never see Ms Meintjies alive again.

ANNA: I love you, Sizwe...now go! Go!

BOLLA: Lie down...!

Sizwe stands there.

BOLLA: I'm counting to three...one...*(tightens his grip around Anna)*

ANNA: Go, Sizwe...!

BOLLA: ...two...

SIZWE: *(gets down on his knees, tears on his cheek)* I love you Anna.

BOLLA: Fok, it's like *Days of our Lives*...On your stomach.

Sizwe turns slowly and lies on his stomach. Bolla throws Anna to one side, jumps on Sizwe's back, raises his head to expose his throat and is about to slit it when a shot rings out.

Bolla drops the knife, clutches his arm that held the knife. Johan enters, gun ready to shoot again.

BOLLA: Eina...*(to Johan)* Fokken naai!

Sizwe gets up quickly. He and Johan recognize each other. Bolla sits on the ground, still clutching his bleeding arm.

BOLLA: Ms Meintjies, call an ambulance.

SIZWE: *(to Johan)* Thank you....

Sizwe goes to Anna, who's broken down, weeping with relief, unaware of who Johan is. He hugs her, still looking at Johan. He points to where Bolla's gun is.

SIZWE: He held us up with that gun....

Johan trains his gun on Bolla all the time, while picking up the other gun.

SIZWE: *(to Johan)* Do you mind...I need the bathroom.

Johan nods. Sizwe and Anna exit slowly, their arms around each other.

JOHAN: *(looks at the gun, recognizes it as Fani's service pistol, to Bolla)*
Where did you get this gun?

BOLLA: *(still on floor)* Father Christmas....*(laughs)*

JOHAN: I'm not going to ask you again...where did you get this gun?

BOLLA: Your poes!

Johan grabs Bolla from behind, covers his mouth with his hand so he can't scream, and presses on his wounded arm.

BOLLA: *(struggling, hurt)* Jou ma se poes, jou naaier.

Johan tightens his grip around his neck.

JOHAN: This is my partner's gun. *(angrily)* You killed him! You shot him in the head! In cold blood!

Johan throws Bolla to the ground.

BOLLA: What's happening...Everyone's become a fucking kaffirboetie!

Johan kicks Bolla.

BOLLA: *(spitting blood)* You naaier! I'm going to get you too....It doesn't matter how long it will take me...15 years, 25 years, but I'll get out. Or one of my soldiers will get out. You'll learn not to mess with the General! We'll track you down. Rape your wife. Kill your children. And let's see if you can live...with that.

JOHAN: You don't deserve to live!

BOLLA: *(laughs)* This is the New South Africa, you naai. There's no fokken death penalty. I know my rights!

Johan points his gun at Bolla, shoots. He hits Bolla in the chest.

BOLLA: *(kneeling)* You fokken naai!

Johan shoots again.

BOLLA: Jou ma se poes.

Bolla collapses, dead.

SCENE 16

Bolla's body lies centre stage, lit. Downstage right, are Sizwe and Anna at their house. Down stage left are Johan and Mari at their house. And upstage, centre are Willem and Moeketsi at Willem's farm. The scenes play themselves out simultaneously, two scenes freezing as one plays itself out.

Scene 17.1

Anna and Sizwe each have a glass of wine. They are sitting on a bench, holding hands in silence.

SIZWE: Sometimes I wish for the past.

ANNA: Not for apartheid, surely?

SIZWE: No, for a time when things were much more clear-cut. Right and wrong. Good and bad. Black and white.

ANNA: I know what you mean.

SIZWE: There's too much grey now. It was easier then.

Silence

ANNA: Are you going to tell?

SIZWE: What?

ANNA: That he does part-time work for a private security company?

SIZWE: What do you think?

ANNA: Whatever you decide...I'm going to offer my legal services to him....for free.

SIZWE: *(holding her hand tightly)* That's good.

Silence again.

SIZWE: I need to say three things...sorry...for questioning your integrity. Thank you...for what you were prepared to do for me. And third... Ek is so baie lief vir jou.

She snuggles under his arm, lights fade.

SIZWE: Oh, by the way, Willem called...he wants you to come with the document. He's happy to sign.

Scene 17.2

Lights up on Mari and Johan.

JOHAN: I killed a man, Mari.

MARI: He killed Fani.

JOHAN: That's the first time I killed someone.

MARI: What's going to happen now?

JOHAN: Now they know I work for a private firm. They'll have to fire me.

MARI: We're in the hands of the Lord now.

JOHAN: I'm at peace...I don't want to be a policeman anymore.

MARI: Really?

JOHAN: I don't want to have to kill anyone again.

MARI: You would make me the happiest woman in the world.

Johan takes out his gun and gives it to Mari.

JOHAN: Keep this in a safe place...till I have to hand it in.

Mari sits on his lap. They start to kiss. A baby starts to cry. They continue to kiss. They fall to the ground and will obviously proceed to make love. Lights fade while sound of baby crying fades.

Scene 17.3

Lights come up on Willem and Moeketsi.

Moeketsi has Willem's rifle. He is pointing it straight at Willem's chest, finger on the trigger. Willem has his hands half-raised. There is a moment of silence.

WILLEM: That's good. That's nice and straight. Keep it at that level.

He walks behind Moeketsi, and corrects Moeketsi's stance slightly.

MOEKETSI: I've never held a gun before.

WILLEM: How does it feel?

MOEKETSI: Strong!

WILLEM: You must get a licence. I'll give you a gun.

MOEKETSI: That's good. We must defend ourselves.

WILLEM: You can use my tractors and equipment till you get your own....

Lights begin to fade.

Moeketsi aims and shoots.

WILLEM: Not bad....

They laugh.

Fade to black.