

Memory and the afterlives of images:  
*Jacqueline Quin and Leon Meyer, Maseru, 20 December 1985.*

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## ABSTRACT

### **Memory and the afterlives of images: *Jacqueline Quin and Leon Meyer, Maseru, 20 December 1985.***

This thesis takes as its starting point three photographic images of the bodies of Jackie Quin and Leon Meyer laid out in a mortuary in Maseru, following their assassination in a cross-border raid into Lesotho by South African security force operatives in December 1985. In their afterlives the images, first circulated in news media, have inspired a novel and a song, been used to illustrate a poem and an educational text and repurposed in publications, documentary films, exhibitions, and on social media.

Drawing on oral history dialogues with photographers, journalists, writers, artists activists, archivists and exhibition curators, and on literature on the intersection of visibility, psychology, narrative and memory studies, the thesis aims to track the way the images have been remembered, misremembered or forgotten over a period of almost four decades.

Interlocutors were asked to focus on, and speak about, the images as they came into view in memory, rather than on a printed surface or a digital screen. This highlighted the complex entanglement of visibility, affect, narration and memory. An analysis of the dialogues suggest that the images live on in memory as objects of affect rather than for their indexical status. Interlocutors remembered their encounters with the images in precise detail, but their memories of the event with which they were associated were vague. Speaking about remembered images blurred the boundaries between past and present, the self and other, affect and cognition, raising into consciousness deep-seated vulnerabilities, anxieties, grief, and regrets that might otherwise have remained unsaid.

The dialogues also highlighted the stark differences between the images made by photographers and those encountered in the atemporal and subjective domain of memory, constantly susceptible to embellishment, erasure or reconfiguration. Listening and watching as interlocutors recalled the images, and described them in language and gestures, offered insights into the way in which the conscious and unconscious collude to shape and frame images seen in the mind's eye.

This thesis argues that oral history dialogues produce intangible traces of the images of Jackie and Leon, as well as other remembered photographs and mental images. These vestiges constitute a complex archive that loops between past/present, personal/political, and individual/collective memory and brings into consciousness the almost unthinkable, unseeable, unsayable and unrepresentable.

## DEDICATION

To my Quin cousins and their families, with love.

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Jo-Anne Duggan

April 2025.

## ACRONYMS *TRC SPECIAL REPORT*

ACTAG	Arts and Culture Task Group
AFP	Agence France-Presse
ANC	African National Congress
ANC DIP	African National Congress Department of Information and Publicity
AP	Associated Press
ARD	Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
AWB	Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organisation
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BDAF	British Defence and Aid Fund
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CIC	Co-ordinating Intelligence Committee
DACST	Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology
DAC	Department of Arts and Culture
DISA	Digital Innovation South Africa, University of KwaZulu-Natal
DSAC	Department of Sport, Arts and Culture
IDAF	International Defence and Aid Fund
ILEA	Inner London Education Authority
ITN	Independent Television News
IPI	International Press Institute
LNLA / LLA	Lesotho Liberation Army also referred to as the Lesotho National Liberation Army
MFA	Master of Fine Art
MK	uMkhonto we Sizwe
NARSSA	National Archives and Records Service of South Africa
NLSA	National Library of South Africa
NPA	National Prosecuting Authority
NBC	National Broadcasting Company
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PANA	Pan African News Agency
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SA	South Africa
SAA	South African Airways
SAM	South African Museum
SAAN	South African Associated Newspapers
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SACP	South African Communist Party
SACTU	South African Congress of Trade Unions
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SAMA	South African Museums Association
SAPA	South African Press Association
SAP	South African Police
SSC	State Security Council
STRATCOM	Strategic Communications
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation
TRC	South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission

UCT	University of Cape Town
UDF	United Democratic Front
UFH	University of Fort Hare
UFS	University of the Free State
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UWC	University of the Western Cape

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MAP



**Caption:** A poster from a portable exhibition, *Apartheid's War Against Africa*, 1984, produced by the Anti-Apartheid Movement (London) and the Holland Committee on Southern Africa in co-operation with the United Nations Centre Against Apartheid. Several of the images mentioned in this thesis were used in this exhibition.

**Credit:** Mayibuye Archives

# INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

I have held the memory of a photograph of the bodies of my cousin Jackie Quin and husband Leon Meyer<sup>1</sup> lying side by side, on the floor of the mortuary in Maseru, in my mind since I first encountered it in the *Sunday Times* almost four decades ago.

The photograph is strangely beautiful, almost baroque, in its theatrical composition. The brightly illuminated bedsheet that partially covers the couple has been pulled back roughly, revealing Leon's smooth torso and Jackie's dishevelled nightdress. Jackie's pale face glows whitely in the artificial light, her half-closed eyes gaze unseeingly towards the camera, and the unseen photographer crouching low behind it, viewing the couple at a distance. Leon's shadowed face is turned away, his eyes closed, as if resisting the gaze of the camera, even though, in death, his power to refuse it has been negated. As I write, shifting attention between the image I see in my mind and the words I need to describe it, I wonder if some viewers chose not to look at the photograph, while others, having seen the headlines alongside the image, scanned it curiously, observing the blood-smeared wound on Jackie's cheek, and the small band-aid plastered on Leon's forehead in a poignant attempt to assuage his mortal injury. Jackie and Leon could be sleeping, but they are not. They are dead and their bodies lie brutally exposed to view, on the cold mortuary floor.

### Motivation

Jackie Quin, her husband Leon Meyer, and seven other people Nomkhosi Mini (MK name Mary Thabethe), Joseph Mayoli (MK name Themba), Vivian Matthee (MK name Trevor), and Lulamile Dantile (MK name Morris Seabelo) were killed in a cross-border raid into Lesotho on the night of the 19<sup>th</sup> of December 1985.<sup>2</sup> At the time, the attackers were suspected to be South African security force operatives. This was confirmed in 1996 during the trial and sentencing of Colonel Eugene de Kock, the commander of the undercover counterinsurgency unit, known as Vlakplaas, for *other* crimes committed under his direction.<sup>3</sup>

As described in Chapter Three, further information relating to the planning of the attack, the actions taken by the attackers, and the aftermath of the incident was uncovered in hearings into the Raid conducted by the Amnesty Committee of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) between 1996 and 2001. Eight of the people implicated in the Raid applied for amnesty. Seven were granted amnesty, but not for the killing of the two women, Jackie Quin and Nomkhosi Mini because the Amnesty Committee was not satisfied that the

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<sup>1</sup> The couple's first names are used to retain a sense of intimacy.

<sup>2</sup> There is confusion about the identity of the victims. Names cited here are listed in the errata to Volume Two, *TRC Report*, Volume Six, 784.

<sup>3</sup> In May 1994, Eugene de Kock was charged with 112 counts, including murder, conspiracy to commit murder, and kidnapping. Arguing in mitigation of sentence he provided a detailed account of his involvement in operations, including the Maseru Raid, complaining that those who had issued the orders had avoided censure.

circumstances under which they were killed was covered by the requirements of the Act. One application was refused amnesty on the grounds that he had not made a full disclosure.<sup>4</sup>

In 2014, when de Kock applied for parole, Jackie's sister, Jane Quin, penned an angry opinion piece which was published online by the *Daily Maverick*,<sup>5</sup> and widely shared on social media. Spurred on by this piece, and the discussion it generated, I wrote a short reflection for the *Archival Platform*<sup>6</sup> website about the photograph, described above, that had been published in the *Sunday Times*<sup>7</sup> on the weekend following the Raid. While researching this piece, I had brief conversations with Trevor Samson, the photographer, and with Jenny Hobbs, whose novel *Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary*<sup>8</sup> was inspired by the photograph.

These conversations piqued my curiosity, and I embarked on a deeper and more considered investigation which revealed the existence of two more images of the scene in the mortuary. As my research journey continued, it became evident that these images had rich afterlives beyond their immediate iteration as news images, and that they live on vividly in the memories and minds of many who have encountered them. This thesis is the culmination of that journey.

### Central research question and sub-questions

The main question this thesis addresses is: how have the photographs of Jackie Quin and Leon Meyer in the mortuary in Lesotho in December 1985 been encountered, remembered, misremembered, or forgotten over the last four decades?

In framing a response to the research question, and tightening the focus of the thesis I have woven together four strands of enquiry, asking:

- How have the images been encountered and remembered by the people who made or worked with them?
- How have the meanings and values of these images shifted as they have been brought into view or sequestered from sight over the past four decades?
- How might the disjuncture between the images made on film and the images recalled and seen in the mind's eye, as described in oral history dialogues, be explained?
- How have the conscious and unconscious minds colluded to produce the visual memory traces that

---

<sup>4</sup> Six of the seven applicants were granted amnesty for their role in the killing of seven Raid victims, but not for the killing of the women, Jackie Quin and Nomkhosi Mini. One applicant was refused amnesty. See Chapter Three.

<sup>5</sup> Jane Quin, "Op-Ed: De Kock ordered my sister's killing – and no, his debt is not paid," *Daily Maverick*, 27 June 2014, accessed February 2022, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2014-06-27-op-ed-de-kock-ordered-my-sisters-killing-and-no-his-debt-is-not-paid/>.

<sup>6</sup> Jo-Anne Duggan, "Jacqui Quin and Leon Meyer: The Life of a Photograph," *Archival Platform*, August 7, 2014, accessed February 2022. [http://www.apc.uct.ac.za/apc/projects/archival\\_platform/jacqui-quin-and-leon-meyer-life-photograph](http://www.apc.uct.ac.za/apc/projects/archival_platform/jacqui-quin-and-leon-meyer-life-photograph).

<sup>7</sup> Cas St Leger, Shaun Harris and Denyse Armour, "Jackie a girl they all loved," *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg) December 22, 1985.

<sup>8</sup> Jenny Hobbs, *Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary* (London: Michael Joseph, 1989).

interlocutors brought into view – through words and, body language, and gestures in oral history dialogues, as well as memoirs – when recalling images of Jackie and Leon.

### Chapter outline

**Chapter One** introduces the three photographic images that form the subject of this thesis and the concept of the photographic encounter which has framed the research process and analysis. It outlines three modalities of encounter with photographic images: the picture-making encounter, the encounter with the material image, and the encounter with the remembered experience or image in the mind's eye of the viewer/witness/observer. It references literature relating to photography, psychology, memory studies and history which has informed the analysis of the photographic encounters.

**Chapter Two** sets out the research objectives, indicates the range of archives in which copies of the images are held and explains the value of using two complementary methodological approaches, object biography and oral history, to respond to the research questions. It argues that the constitution of object biographies makes it possible to track the images as they travel across temporal, geographic, discursive, and institutional boundaries, and to identify the contexts in which the images have been used and the individuals with whom they interacted. It explains how oral history dialogues provided the means to access the memories, thoughts, and feelings of those who encountered the images, and it reflects on the research process. The Chapter concludes with a description of the conceptual frameworks that informed the analysis, discussions and findings of this research.

**Chapter Three** situates the images of Jackie and Leon broadly in time and place, within the sweeping narrative of oppression, resistance and transformation in South Africa over a period of almost four decades. It opens with a reflection on the events that shaped 1985, a pivotal year in South African history, when the images were made, circulated, and encountered for the first time. It notes the constraints placed on the media by the State of Emergency declared in 1985. It concludes with a discussion on visual coverage of three interrelated incidents of politically motivated violence in the closing weeks of the year: the Messina landmine, the Maseru Raid and the Amanzimtoti bomb blast. This Chapter is followed by a Timeline which sets out the moments at which the images of Jackie and Leon discussed in this thesis came into view in relation to broader developments in the public sphere.

**Chapter Four** reflects on the encounter described by Sontag<sup>9</sup> as the picture-taking event, and by Azoulay<sup>10</sup> as the event of photography. It draws on oral history dialogues with photographers Trevor Samson and Ismail Lagardien, journalist Deon Deport and television crew members, Tewis Brink and Sam Msibi, who documented

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<sup>9</sup> Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin Books, 1977), 11.

<sup>10</sup> Ariella Azoulay, "What is a photograph? What is photography?" *Philosophy of Photography* 1, no.1 (2010), 13.

the scene in the Maseru mortuary on 20 December 1985, to consider how the picture-making encounter with Jackie and Leon in the mortuary has been described and remembered. It identifies and describes some common threads that run through the somewhat incoherent narratives of the interlocutors, and argues that, although the encounter lives on in their memories in all its sensory richness, the experiences of the actual picture-making encounter remain largely unassimilated or unstoried. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the ‘other’ images brought into view as the interlocutors remembered and struggled to speak about the picture-making encounter in the Maseru mortuary.

**Chapter Five** considers how the photograph made by Samson, intended to show the world the atrocious actions of the apartheid state, took on a life of its own – far beyond the picture-makers expectations as they were encountered, remembered and repurposed to support the broad anti-apartheid agenda in the late 1980s. It describes the way in which novelist Jenny Hobbs and musician Warrick Swinney reacted to the photograph when they first encountered it in the *Sunday Times*, and examines their subsequent responses, the creation of a novel and a musical composition, intended to mirror the message implicit in the photograph. The afterlives of the photograph in these different forms, and in a photomontage used as an illustration for a poem and an educational resource, raise questions about intertextuality and multimodality. Furthermore, they suggest that the re-presentation of the photograph in other modalities veils the image itself, rendering it almost inaccessible to memory and shifting attention from the image to the creative product and so changing the nature of the encounter.

**Chapter Six** tracks the afterlives of the images of Jackie and Leon as they travel across temporal, spatial, discursive and institutional boundaries in the 1990s and were used to explore or expose South Africa’s then-recent past. It discusses the debates surrounding the inclusion of Lagardien’s photograph in a temporary exhibition at the then South African Museum (SAM) in Cape Town in 1993, the reuse of the footage made by Brink and Msibi in the SABC’s *Truth Commission Special Report series (Special Report)*, and the display of Samson’s photograph in the Apartheid Museum exhibition in Johannesburg between 2001 and 2019. It reflects on dialogues with two survivors of cross-border incursions, Comrade AB<sup>11</sup> and Albie Sachs, about the public display of images of victims of South Africa’s violent past. The chapter concludes with a discussion on ‘difficult knowledge’ to consider how decisions made by the curators and documentary film producers framed visitors’ encounters with the images. Taken together, these sections: offer a close reading of the photographic encounters; detail how and why the images of Jackie and Leon were consciously and deliberately used to disseminate the unspeakable, unsayable truth about the apartheid past in the public domain; describe how the photographs have been remembered; and support the argument made in the thesis that speaking about

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<sup>11</sup> Anonomised interlocutor.

remembered images blurs the boundaries between past and present, the self and other, affect and cognition, articulating and raising into consciousness that which might otherwise have remained unsaid.

**Chapter Seven** explores the afterlives of the images of Jackie and Leon in a digitally connected age. Following on from the discussion in the previous chapter, it tracks the encounters events, activities and publications sparked unintentionally by a single online post about Samson's photograph, and the shifts in meaning and significance that occurred as the photographs moved from the purview of news or public display into the public domain, and the academy. It asks if and how the detachment of the image from the context of news or current events affects the way in which it is encountered, and concludes that, while the image may be veiled by its designation as an object of study and reflection, it retains its affective agency.

**Chapter Eight** concludes the thesis by tracking the material, digital, affective, and unconscious traces of the photographic encounters surfaced through archival research and oral history dialogues. The Chapter argues that archives, while commonly considered as places of preservation and reimagination, may also be construed of as sites of loss and destruction as a consequence of interventions made by archivists in the processes of selection, arrangement, and description of material. The Chapter considers the impact of digitisation and the release of material onto the World Wide Web, with reference to the appropriation of images from *Special Report* on various social media platforms. Alongside these tangible traces, the Chapter also notes the ephemeral traces of affect and the mutable traces that may exist in memory and are raised into consciousness when the images of Jackie and Leon are spoken about. The concluding discussion considers the meaning or significance of other remembered images that came into view in the when the images of Jackie and Leon were recalled in the dialogues.

Collectively these chapters support the contention that oral history dialogues offer insights into how the conscious and unconscious collude to shape and frame the way the images of Jackie and Leon have been remembered, misremembered or forgotten. They also suggest that the intangible traces of the images and afterimages (the remembered photographs and other mental images) produced in the dialogues constitute a complex archive that loops between past/present, personal/political, and individual/collective memory and brings into consciousness that which is otherwise almost what would otherwise remain unthinkable, unseeable, unsayable and unrepresentable.

# CHAPTER ONE

## UNSETTLING ENCOUNTERS

*Jackie Quin and Leon Meyer are dead, but the images of their bodies in the mortuary live on. They have been brought into view in a wide range of publications, documentary films, exhibitions, and activated on divergent social media platforms. The images endure in other forms too, deeply etched in the minds of many who have encountered them, surfacing unexpectedly to unsettle the present, bringing the almost unsayable, or difficult to articulate into view.*

## CHAPTER ONE: UNSETTLING ENCOUNTERS

This Chapter introduces the three photographic images that form the subject of this thesis and the concept of the photographic encounter which frames the research process and analysis. It then outlines three modalities of encounter with photographic images: the picture-making encounter, the encounter with the material image, and the encounter with the remembered experience or image in the mind's eye of the viewer/witness/observer. Finally, it references literature relating to photography, psychology, memory studies and history which have informed the analysis of the photographic encounters.

### Introduction

The photograph described in the Introduction to this thesis was made by Trevor Samson whilst working on assignment for *Agence France-Presse* (French International News Agency – AFP) and is one of three images tracked in this study. The other two images, a black and white photograph made by Ismail Lagardien, a 'stringer'<sup>12</sup> for the *Sunday Tribune*, and video footage made by Tewis Brink and Sam Msibi for *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Association of Public Broadcasting Institutions of the Federal Republic of Germany – ARD), showing the same scene are described below.

There is no need to unpack folders or open any files to write the descriptions that follow. The images are always there in my mind, tucked safely out of view for the most part, but rising unbidden into view now and again to disrupt the present.

I remember the jolting shock of recognition I felt when I first encountered Lagardien's photograph at the University of the Western Cape -Robben Island Museum Mayibuye Archives (Mayibuye Archives). Unlike Samson's dramatic and carefully composed photograph, this starkly lit black and white image is almost forensic in its cold, gut-wrenching detail. Seen from above, one senses the photographer towering over Jackie and Leon, pointing his lens downwards to frame their wounded heads and chests so closely that it feels as if they are within touching distance of the viewer. From this perspective, Jackie and Leon are turned away from each other, even as their bodies butt intimately up against each other. Jackie lies on the left, her chin tilted slightly upwards and her eyes partly open, as if staring out of the frame. The violence inflicted on her is evident, even in the black and white photograph. There's a gash on her cheek, her hair is and slick with blood, and her bloodstained striped vest appears to have been roughly pulled up, exposing a nursing brassiere.<sup>13</sup> Leon, on the right, lies with his head slightly bent, his chin nestling almost protectively against his shoulder. His eyes are shut, and his brow furrowed as if he were frowning, even in death. The bandage, visible in Samson's photograph, has been ripped

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<sup>12</sup> A freelance journalist or photographer.

<sup>13</sup> Jackie and Leon's daughter, Phoenix, had just turned one and was still being breastfed.

off, exposing a large gash on his high forehead, his dark shirt is pulled open, revealing the bloodstains that mar his otherwise smooth chest. As with Samson's photograph, Lagardien's feels still and silent, but for the spectre of the invisible viewer looming large over the photographer's shoulder, hand clapped over mouth, stifling an exclamation of horror, too transfixed to look away.

The third image is taken from a 2.5 second clip from the footage made by Brink and Msibi for ARD.

Remembering this image, I am confronted again by the horrors that played across the screen when I first viewed the unedited footage found in the UCT Special Collections: an encounter that made me retch, rage, and weep. Unlike a photograph, which freezes the moment, the video clip flashes by on the screen, offering little opportunity for contemplation. Unlike the images made by Samson and Lagardien, this short clip shows the scene in full colour, drawing the viewer into the actions of four unidentified men as they move almost casually through the heavily shadowed room. In the unedited sequence from which the broadcast footage was clipped, the scene opens to the sound of a loudly whirring fan as the camera scans the scene, swinging abruptly between Jackie and Leon and the bodies of the other victims lying haphazardly on the floor, zooming in unsteadily on their bloody wounds. The camera shifts again to an oblique view of a man in a muted tweed jacket looming large over the mannequin-like figures of Jackie and Leon, under a grubby pink sheet on the bloodstained concrete floor. The man reaches out tentatively, bending low to finger a paper label pinned to the salmon-coloured cloth that half covers the bodies lying at his feet, turning it over curiously before straightening up to walk away. A second man edges into view from the right, leaning over inquisitively as if to establish what the first is looking at. A third man, wearing a bright yellow cap enters through a doorway near the back of the room, turning his body slightly to acknowledge the maroon-clad guard at the door. Apart from the tweed clad man on whom the camera is trained, the other men appear to be going about their daily business, seemingly unconcerned by the presence of the bodies and the camera crew. Watching this, even writing about it, makes me tearful. I know that the man in the tweed jacket is Jackie's father, my uncle, formally identifying his daughter for the record, although this was never disclosed to viewers.

### **Uncertainties, ambivalences and bias**

Readers may wonder why I have withheld the photographs of Jackie and Leon from sight. I have done this deliberately, bringing the images into view veiled through memory, and in words, in the anticipation that readers will recall the images they formed in their minds as they read these descriptions when they encounter the actual photographs in Chapter Four.<sup>14</sup> This is central to the logic of my research methodology, the production of

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<sup>14</sup> After I described Samson's image to him, David Cohen commented that as I had been speaking, he had conjured up an image in his mind – the death scene from *Romeo and Juliet*.

particular forms of oral history storytelling, and my analysis thereof.<sup>15</sup>

This choice is not unprecedented in writing about photographic encounters.

In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes muses at length on a photograph of his mother as a child, referred to as “Winter Garden Photograph”<sup>16</sup> but does not reproduce it, arguing that “it exists only for me. For you [the reader], it would be nothing but an indifferent picture, one of the thousands of manifestations of the ‘ordinary’”<sup>17</sup>

In *The Terrorist Album*, Jacob Dlamini similarly refuses to reproduce an image of a dismembered body, offering instead a sensitively observed description of it.<sup>18</sup> His decision not to reveal the image was inspired by scholars who “decry what is too often an easy and uncritical depiction of mutilated black bodies.”<sup>19</sup>

The images of Jackie and Leon, encountered on their own, without the elucidation of contextualising texts are, in many ways, ambivalent, timeless, enigmatic, even cryptic. They offer impassive evidence of an atrocity but do not explain it. The camera is a silent witness that records without interpreting; it is not always immediately evident what is being seen,<sup>20</sup> or what the viewer is being shown. In the absence of captions, the viewer may be baffled and unsure how to respond.

At first sight, the images could be read as the tragic consequences of a family murder/suicide, or as a couple slain at home in their sleep.<sup>21</sup> Viewed in conjunction with the captions, news reports, and commentaries that were published alongside the images when they were first brought into public view, the context, cause of death and identity of the victims become clearer. Yet, while the captions and commentaries establish the cause or nature of the couple’s death, the ambiguity persists. It is not clear what the photographer’s intentions were, or why news editors selected those specific images for circulation. In the accompanying newspaper reports, Jackie and Leon are framed variously as political refugees, terrorists, members of a banned organisation, an incongruous mixed-race couple, parents of a small child, and martyred heroes or victims of the struggle against apartheid.

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<sup>15</sup> Although I have chosen in other publications and forums not to reproduce or even show the images of Jackie and Leon made in the mortuary I have included them in this thesis to support and provide empirical evidence to support the argument I have made about the different contexts in which the images have been used.

<sup>16</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982), 67.

<sup>17</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, 73.

<sup>18</sup> Jacob Dlamini, *The Terrorist Album: Apartheid’s Insurgents, Collaborators, and the Security Police* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2020), 253.

<sup>19</sup> Dlamini, *The Terrorist Album*, 352.

<sup>20</sup> An acknowledgement to John Berger, the cultural theorist for whom ‘looking’ was always a political act, and for whom *what* the viewer saw was always determined by *when* and *how* it was seen.

<sup>21</sup> Several of the people with whom I engaged in dialogues assumed that the couple were lying in their own bedroom.

If, as Roland Barthes argues, “the press photo is a message,”<sup>22</sup> the meaning conveyed by these images, in their incarnation as press photos veiled in the words of others, leaves the viewer to wonder whether to applaud or mourn their deaths. The identification of an image as ambivalent is, as Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley argue, “often the first sign of trouble, pointing, in part, to the basic promise and the effect of the photograph, between its ostensible truth claims and its unstable outcomes.”<sup>23</sup> The truth of these photographs is mutable, and contingent on the circumstances of context in which they are encountered.

The same ambivalence is not immediately evident in the media coverage of other incidents of violence around that time. Examples include the victims of the Messina landmine incident, which occurred three days before the Maseru Raid, and the Amanzimtoti bomb blast, four days later, as described in Chapter Three. In these instances, as with others where the victims were predominantly white South Africans, readers were inundated with photographs of grieving mourners or proudly smiling portraits drawn from family photograph albums, showing the victims as they were in life. In Samson and Lagardien’s photographs, Jackie and Leon are shown as they were in death.

This prejudice towards white people in mixed race relationships, or those who were members of anti-apartheid organisations, is evident too in the mainstream media’s ongoing preoccupation with Jackie,<sup>24</sup> and the relegation of Leon, described as “her coloured husband Joe,”<sup>25</sup> to a secondary status, unworthy of the same level of attention. It is also starkly evident in the lack of attention given to the other South African victims named by the Lesotho authorities as Themba Albert Mthembu, Glen Darries, Nomsa Mthethwa and Morris, and the Basotho citizens named as Makaelane Mohatle, Boema Tau and Amelia Lesenyeho.<sup>26</sup>

Reflecting on similar instances of prejudice in other places and contexts, Judith Butler contends that people whose lives are seen as having value are considered deserving of public avowals of sorrow and loss. These people are named in the media, their faces are shown, and their stories are told. They are likely to be familiar, or identifiable by most assumed readers or viewers as “one of us,” and ideologically or physically proximate.<sup>27</sup> Butler goes on to contend that those deemed to be of less or no value are not accorded the same attention, or dignity.<sup>28</sup> These factors play a critical role in shaping the responses of viewers to the encountered images,

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<sup>22</sup> Roland Barthes, *Image. Music. Text*, essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press. An Imprint of Harper Collins Publishers, 1977), 15.

<sup>23</sup> Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley, eds. *Ambivalent: Photography and Visibility in African History* (Athens Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2019), 2.

<sup>24</sup> The focus on Jackie is evident too in the coverage of the TRC more than a decade later, in a very different socio-political context.

<sup>25</sup> The caption refers to “Jackie Quin and her coloured husband Joe,” *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), December 22, 1985).

<sup>26</sup> Many activists adopted new names when they went into exile. The names listed here were, according to news reports, on the false passports used by the victims to enter Lesotho.

<sup>27</sup> Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso, 2009), 38.

<sup>28</sup> Butler, *Frames of War*, 36-38, and Penelope Papailias, “(Un)seeing dead refugee bodies: mourning memes, spectropolitics, and the haunting of Europe,” *Media, Culture and Society* 4 no. 8, (2019), 5.

especially when they appear in media reports.

### Unsettling encounters

“Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*.”<sup>29</sup>

This study builds on well-established theorisations of the ‘photographic encounter’ as a framework to track where, when, and how the images of Jackie and Leon described above have been brought into view, how they have acted on or affected viewers, and how viewers have, in turn, used, responded to, remembered, mis-remembered or forgotten them.

The photographic encounter has been defined broadly to include two modalities. The first is the picture-making encounter that takes place in front of the camera and includes the photographer, the photographed person/s, witnesses, and spectators. This encounter results in a photograph, a moment frozen in time, that lives on, “conferring on the event a kind of immortality.”<sup>30</sup> The second modality is the infinite series of encounters that loop backwards and forwards across temporal, spatial, institutional and discursive boundaries, bringing viewers face-to-face with the photographic image, while also weaving the past into the present and drawing distant events, well beyond original intentions of the photographer, into the ambit of viewers. Although sight is arguably considered to be the primary sense at play,<sup>31</sup> photographic encounters are also embodied, multi-sensorial, deeply affective, and evocative. In the case of multivalent photographs like those of Jackie and Leon, that have to do with politically motivated violence, the encounters may trigger discomforting emotions, unsettling memories, or anxious thoughts.

Formulations of the photographic encounter usually assume the presence of a picture in material or digital format. This study goes further, incorporating afterimages or images seen in the mind’s eye, which include remembered photographs and related imagery such as dreams, nightmares and flashbacks. As with material images, viewers encounter both consciously – through emotions, sensations, thoughts, and perceptions – and unconsciously through memories thoughts and feelings that may have been repressed because they cause distress, pain, or shame.<sup>32</sup>

### Picture-making encounters

On 21 December 1985, the morning after the Raid, local and international media dispatched reporters to

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<sup>29</sup> Gilles Deleuze, quoted in Simon O’Sullivan, *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought beyond representation* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 1.

<sup>30</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*, 11.

<sup>31</sup> Kelann Currie-Williams argues that, although photography is positioned within the “realm of the visual”, it goes beyond this categorization because it “evoke(s) feelings and sensation that stand separately from seeing.” Kelann Currie-Williams, “Afterimages and the synthanasia of photographs” *Philosophy of Photography* 12 nos. 1-2 (2022), 111-127.

<sup>32</sup> This formulation draws broadly on Sigmund Freud’s theory of the conscious, pre-conscious/sub-conscious and unconscious.

Lesotho to cover the story. In Maseru, government officials accompanied the journalists to sites associated with the attack. One of these sites was the mortuary, where they photographed the bodies of Jackie and Leon, set out on the floor. Unlike a more public event, participation in this picture-making encounter was limited to the journalists, photographers and film crews who recorded the scene, the 'unidentified' man viewing the bodies, the unnamed officials, and the friends who later described the scene in words.<sup>33</sup> Also present in some sense were the implied and unknown future viewers – the newspaper readers and television audience – and those who might repurpose the images in other times and places far removed from the picture-making encounter. The picture-makers are the players whose actions come under scrutiny when the images are studied, yet their voices are largely silenced, leaving the interpretation of the picture-making event open to subjective reconstruction or conjecture.

As victims of the Raid, Jackie and Leon take centre stage in the picture-making encounter, but they are mute, divested of the personhood and the agency they had in life, and crudely exposed to public view. It is impossible to know exactly what Jackie and Leon might have to say about these images, but it is fair to encourage viewers to reflect on how they themselves might feel if they, or their loved ones, were exposed in this manner.<sup>34</sup> And to ask whether they would want to be pictured and remembered as they were in death, rather than in life: as mortally wounded victims, rather than vibrant living beings. See reflections on the dialogues with Albie Sachs and Comrade AB in Chapter Six.

Although many cultures deem the mortal remains of the dead to be deserving of respect, they are not always afforded the same rights to dignity and privacy as living persons. This is especially the case when deaths are the

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<sup>33</sup> See Charles Nqakula, *The People's War: Reflections of an ANC Cadre* (Johannesburg, Mutloatse Arts Heritage Trust, 2017), 176 and Mzwakhe Ndlela, *For the Fallen: Honouring the Unsung Heroes and Heroines of the Liberation Struggle* (Sandton: KMM Review Publishing Company, 2013), 85 and 91.

<sup>34</sup>In recent years, the publication of photographs of women who have fallen victim to violent attacks has been challenged in the courts. In 2000, the family of Brenda and Kia Fairhead challenged the broadcast of mortuary photographs of their battered bodies, which had been presented as evidence in court and subsequently shown on an SABC news programme. As a family member said, "Everyone is in agony and pain because the images were so shocking and disgusting. It was insensitive to broadcast the horrific pictures and is definitely not the way Brenda and Kia would have liked to have been remembered among friends, family and the rest of South Africa." David Macgregor, "Fairheads in agony over TV pictures," *IOL*, 16 June 2000, accessed June 2022, <https://iol.co.za/news/south-africa/2000-06-16-fairheads-in-agony-over-tv-pictures/>. Conversely, Barry Steenkamp, whose daughter Reeva Steenkamp was murdered by Oscar Pistorius, urged the media to publish the vivid photographs of her wounded body arguing that, "What I would like the world to see are the wounds inflicted on Reeva and the pain that she must have gone through, so that the world can see this and distract [sic] people who are thinking of this type of deed in future." Alex Hogg, "Barry Steenkamp's macabre request that says so much about Oscar Pistorius," *BizNews* 15 June 2016, accessed June 2022, <https://www.biznews.com/oscar-pistorius-trial/barry-steenkamps-macabre-request-that-says-so-much-about-oscar-pistorius>. Similarly, Chris Hani's daughter Lindiwe writes about the impact of the photographs of the body of her father Chris, lying in the driveway of their family home after he was assassinated in 1993, but chose not to reproduce these in her memoir. See Lindiwe Hani and Melinda Ferguson, *Being Chris Hani's Daughter* (MF Books, Johannesburg, 2017) vii. In contrast, Liza Smit writes extensively about the photographs of her parents, Robert and Jeanne Smit, murdered by an unknown person in their home in Springs in 1977, and includes reproductions of the images in her memoir. See Liza Smit, with Raquel Lewis, *I am Liza Smit* (Jacana: Auckland Park, 2018), 83, 175, 250-251.

result of politically motivated violence and crimes or deemed newsworthy.<sup>35</sup> What the picture-making encounter may do, then, is to extend the brutality already enacted upon the dead persons – a form of visual violence that extends beyond representation<sup>36</sup> – and raise moral and ethical questions about the rights of the victims to dignity and respect.

As Sontag argues, it is a violation to show the victims as they have never seen themselves,<sup>37</sup> stripping them of any vestige of dignity, and in so doing turning them into “objects that can be symbolically possessed.”<sup>38</sup> Arguing similarly, Miriam Deprez, contends that dead bodies may be “rendered into powerful visual symbols of both suffering and solidarity.”<sup>39</sup> In the case of Jackie and Leon, this reduction of individuals to symbols is especially evident in the instances where Samson’s photograph has been repurposed to spur outrage against the apartheid regime, demonstrate the violence of the regime, or to incite hatred of perceived enemies.<sup>40</sup> As symbols, their humanity is lost, they are reduced to nameless enemies, victims – or perhaps martyrs – of the struggle, and are thus less likely to be identified as being people ‘like us’ and thus grievable.<sup>41</sup>

Susie Linfield, tracing the genealogy of photographic criticism, contends that early theorists – including Susan Sontag, Roland Barthes and John Berger – viewed photojournalists and documentary photographers with distrust and suspicion. She argues that the tendency to vilify both the photographers and their images persisted into the next generation with post-modern critics like Martha Rosler suggesting that “documentary [photography] is a little like horror movies, putting a face on fear and transforming threat into fantasy.”<sup>42</sup> Abigail Solomon Godeau contends similarly that photography commits a “double act of subjugation,” inflicting further violence on photographed victims.<sup>43</sup>

Arguing in defence of photojournalists and documentary photography, Linfield cites the potential of the images to catalyse social change with a more personal outcome. She suggests that photographers, by bearing witness to suffering, produce photographs that expand conceptions of the cruelties that “shatter our very sense of what it means to be human,”<sup>44</sup> and surface personal vulnerabilities. Information shared in the oral history dialogues conducted as part of the research for this thesis supports Linfield’s contentions: the sense of profound

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<sup>35</sup> Rule 113 of the Geneva Convention of 1949 states that “Each party to the conflict must take all possible measures to prevent the dead from being despoiled.”

<sup>36</sup> Miriam Deprez, “Visual Necropolitics and Visual Violence: Theorising Death, Sight, and Sovereign Control of Palestine,” *International Political Sociology* 17, (2023), 1-23.

<sup>37</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*, 14.

<sup>38</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*, 14.

<sup>39</sup> Deprez, “Visual Necropolitics and Visual Violence,” 13.

<sup>40</sup> As described in Chapters Five and Eight, Samson’s photograph was used as a tool for activism by organisations associated with the liberation struggle, and to incite hatred by right wing extremists.

<sup>41</sup> Butler, *Frames of War*, 36-38.

<sup>42</sup> Susie Linfield, *The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 10.

<sup>43</sup> Abigail Solomon Godeau, quoted in Linfield, *The Cruel Radiance*, 9.

<sup>44</sup> Linfield, *The Cruel Radiance*, 39.

vulnerability engendered by the almost unspeakable callousness of the killers unsettled most, if not all, of the interlocutors involved in this research. Okwui Enwezor argues similarly in support of photojournalists and documentary photographers working in South Africa in the 1980s and early 1990s, suggesting that photographs, “laid down claims, as evidence for prosecution of apartheid ideology.”<sup>45</sup> While Enwezor’s assessment is valid, it points to the broader social and political purposes the photographs served during this period, rather than their impact on individual viewers.

Taking a more encompassing view of the picture-making encounter, Ariella Azoulay emphasises the political ontology of photographs associated with politically motivated conflict, and the role they play in enabling an understanding of state violence and civil resistance. Framing the action of the camera’s shutter as a potent device, she contends that when a photograph is taken it draws “three dividing lines: in time (between a before and an after), in space (between who/what is in front of the camera and who/what is behind it), and in the body politic (between those who possess and operate such devices and appropriate and accumulate their product and those whose countenance, resources, or labor are extracted).”<sup>46</sup> She argues that looking at a photograph of a situation where an injury has been inflicted is not an exercise in aesthetic appreciation, but a civic skill which assigns specific roles and concomitant responsibilities to all participants in the photographic encounter. In her formulation, photographers take photographs, often on instruction from those who have commissioned them, to record an event, as a proxy for viewers who are not present. They have a duty to ensure that the photograph advances justice for the photographed persons, even though they cannot be held accountable for “what might be reconstructed from it.”<sup>47</sup> The designation of the photographer as a proxy brings in the unseen potential viewers, and the role that they play in shaping the photographer’s approaches to the photographed persons. Azoulay accords photographed persons minimal agency, arguing that they have no control over the camera, little control over the photographer (beyond their capacity, in some circumstances, to agree or refuse to be photographed), and none whatsoever over the circulation or use of images. Nevertheless, those being photographed are expected to trust the photographer and potential viewers to understand their situation and possibly be moved to respond to it.

Azoulay designates viewers as witnesses. She tasks them with responsibility for reconstructing the photographic situation, taking into consideration the wider social and political relations between those present, and recognising that they, as witnesses, are obliged to take action to alleviate suffering or rectify injustice.<sup>48</sup> Her systematic analysis of the dynamics of the photographic event, especially in the context of what she terms

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<sup>45</sup> Okwui Enwezor and Rory Bester, *Rise and Fall of Apartheid: Photography and the Bureaucracy of Everyday Life* (New York: International Centre of Photography, 2013), 36.

<sup>46</sup> Ariella Azoulay, *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism* (London: Verso, 2019), 5.

<sup>47</sup> Ariella Azoulay, “What is a photograph? What is photography?” 12.

<sup>48</sup> Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography* (New York: Zone Books, 2008), 85-136.

“regime made disaster”<sup>49</sup> offers a powerful and compelling tool for social justice. Yet, the rigidity of her definition of roles and responsibilities constrains a more nuanced reading of the photographic encounter, deflecting attention away from the affective agency of images and their capacity to transcend their immediate political context.

In theorisations of the encounter, the camera, as a mediator between the photographer and the photographed persons, plays an ambivalent role. On the one hand, it is tasked with bearing witness, of being a weapon in the struggles against injustice. As apartheid era South African photographer Peter Magubane said, “I did not want to leave the country to find another life. I was going to stay and fight with my camera as my gun. I did not want to kill anyone, though. I wanted to kill apartheid.”<sup>50</sup> On the other hand, the camera is accused either of being complicit in the violence already enacted on photographed persons, or of subjecting them to further pain. Sontag, by way of example, framed the picture-making encounter as an act of symbolic violence, likening the camera to a “predatory weapon”<sup>51</sup> and contending that it – and by implication the photographer – asserted its prerogative to “to interfere with, to invade, or to ignore whatever is going on”<sup>52</sup> through making pictures.

Even the potential presence of the camera or the photographer may be considered as an opportunity or a threat.<sup>53</sup> There are many including Sontag,<sup>54</sup> Azoulay<sup>55</sup> and Patricia Hayes<sup>56</sup> who argue, as did the South African Deputy Minister of Information in 1985,<sup>57</sup> that the mere presence of a camera on a scene alters the dynamic of a situation, whether it is used or not, because it suggests greater public visibility and an outside audience. This concern was echoed by photographer Kevin Carter, who asked after witnessing several violent deaths, “would those people have been necklaced if there was no media coverage?”<sup>58</sup> Carter was troubled by both the photographer’s moral responsibility toward vulnerable photographed persons, living or dead and by the constant tension between his drive to make award winning photographs and his impulse to help photographed

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<sup>49</sup> Ariella Azoulay and Tal Haran, “A tour of the museum of Regime Made Disasters,” *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 4, No. 3 (2013), 346.

<sup>50</sup> *The Guardian*, “To fight with my camera, to kill apartheid’: Peter Magubane – a life in pictures,” *The Guardian* (London), January 12, 2024, accessed June 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/gallery/2024/jan/12/to-fight-with-my-camera-to-kill-apartheid-peter-magubane-south-african-photographer>.

<sup>51</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*, 14.

<sup>52</sup> Sontag, *On Photography* 11.

<sup>53</sup> I summarise that Jackie and Leon were positioned in a way that invited photography: their bodies were not heaped haphazardly on the floor with the others.

<sup>54</sup> Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 10.

<sup>55</sup> Azoulay, “What is a photograph? What is photography?” 12.

<sup>56</sup> Patricia Hayes, “Political Funerals in South Africa: Photography, History and the Refusal of Light (1960s-1980s)” in *Love and Revolution in the Twentieth-Century Colonial and Postcolonial World: Perspectives from South Asia and Southern Africa*, eds. Arunima Gopinath, Patricia Hayes and Premesh Lalu (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2021), 302.

<sup>57</sup> According to Louis Nel, Deputy Minister of Information, “The mere presence of television crews make actors out of demonstrators, often leading to atrocities committed specifically to the advantage of film recording.” John McLennan, Political Correspondent, “BLACK OUT – Township Turmoil: Now you’ll never see the truth as the state clamps down on media,” *Sunday Tribune* (Durban), 4 November 1986.

<sup>58</sup> Marietta Kesting, *Affective Images: Post-Apartheid Documentary Perspectives* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2017), 48.

persons.<sup>59</sup>

Hayes, reflecting on the experiences of photographers in South African townships in the 1980s, asks what effect bearing witness to violent deaths had on them, and why this question has not been addressed in the literature?

<sup>60</sup> She makes a valid point; there is a dearth of specific studies on this issue, but the voices of the photographers, and their accounts of troubling picture-making encounters are nevertheless present in the literature. Vilho Shigwedha,<sup>61</sup> for example, includes substantial excerpts from interviews with photographers in his studies of the iconic photographs of the 1978 Cassinga Massacre.<sup>62</sup> Photographers and filmmakers Greg Marinovich<sup>63</sup> and Joa Silva,<sup>64</sup> Msibi,<sup>65</sup> and Lagardien<sup>66</sup> have also shared their experiences of working in South Africa and other conflict zones. Their accounts shift attention from the photographs to the picture-making encounter, offering insights into the context in which many unsettling photographs were made, and the impact this experience had on them as individuals. As Marinovich and Silva acknowledge, the process of writing their memoir, *The Bang-Bang Club: Snapshots from a hidden war*,<sup>67</sup> was difficult. They were challenged by their “reluctance to revisit what was a very difficult time,”<sup>68</sup> when all they had “was knowledge, a collection of jumbled images, smells and sounds buried deep inside.”<sup>69</sup>

Sontag describes photography as a “defence against anxiety.”<sup>70</sup> Franz Kafka is similarly reported to have said that “we photograph things to drive them out of our minds.”<sup>71</sup> Marinovich and Silva counter this. They maintain that “the camera was never a filter through which we were protected from the worst of what we witnessed and photographed. Quite the opposite – it seems like the images have been burnt on our minds as well as our

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<sup>59</sup> John Long, “Do I put the camera down, or do I remain an observer,” *News Photographer Magazine*, February 2010, accessed June 2024, <https://nppa.org/magazine/article/9037>.

<sup>60</sup> Patricia Hayes, “Political Funerals in South Africa,” 316.

<sup>61</sup> Vilho Shigwedha *Enduring suffering: the Cassinga Massacre of Namibian exiles in 1978 and the conflicts between survivors' memories* (PhD Thesis, University of the Western Cape, 2011), accessed June 2024, <https://etd.uwc.ac.za/handle/11394/1711> and Vilho Shigwedha, *The Aftermath of the Cassinga Massacre: Survivors, Deniers and Injustices*, (Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2017).

<sup>62</sup> ‘Cassinga’ is sometime spelled as ‘Kassinga.’ I use the spelling preferred by Vilho Shigwedha whose study on the Massacre is referenced above.

<sup>63</sup> Greg Marinovich, *Murder at Small Koppie: The Real Story of South Africa's Marikana Massacre* (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 2017) and Greg Marinovich, *Shots from the Edge: A photojournalist's encounters with conflict and resilience* (Cape Town: Penguin Random House South Africa, 2019).

<sup>64</sup> Greg Marinovich and Joao Silva, *The Bang-Bang Club: Snapshots from a Hidden War* (London: Arrow Books, 2001). See also Sharon Sliwinski, “Shooting in the Dark: A Note on the Photographic Imagination,” in *Photography and the Optical Unconscious* eds. Shawn Michelle Smith and Sharon Sliwinski (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017), 321-338.

<sup>65</sup> Sam Msibi with Nontobeko Mzilethi, *The Accidental Frontline Journalist, memoir of multiple award-winning South African cameraman Nkosini Samuel Msibi, as told to Nontobeko M. Mzilethi*, (Johannesburg: Porcupine Press, 2020).

<sup>66</sup> Ismail Lagardien, *Too Coloured to be White. Too Coloured to be Black. On the search for home and meaning* (Cape Town: Melinda Ferguson Books, 2022).

<sup>67</sup> Greg Marinovich and Joao Silva, *The Bang-Bang Club: Snapshots from a Hidden War* (London: Arrow Books, 2001).

<sup>68</sup> Marinovich and Silva, *The Bang-Bang Club*, xiii.

<sup>69</sup> Marinovich and Silva, 267.

<sup>70</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*, 8.

<sup>71</sup> Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 53.

films.”<sup>72</sup>

Samson, Lagardien, Brink and Msibi’s accounts of the picture-making encounter in the Maseru mortuary, and in the houses where the victims were attacked, are recorded in this thesis, and elsewhere, but the scenes would undoubtedly have been documented by others, including the Lesotho police.<sup>73</sup> It is probable too that the perpetrators would have recorded the killings, as they did on other occasions. But, de Kock admitted to the TRC, he and his men often left the scene so hurriedly that “I did not even have the opportunity to use the pocket camera which I had with me.”<sup>74</sup> The chilling admission that the security police’s camera was present is sufficient to bring the potential picture-making encounter into view in the imagination, to situate the reader in the place of the perpetrators, seeing the scene through their gaze.

What, one wonders, would de Kock have photographed and why? Might he have recorded the bodies of the victims as evidence of the ‘success’ of the operation, proof that a ‘dangerous threat’ had been subverted?<sup>75</sup> Might he have used the images as a cynical ploy to prove the merit of his unit to justify and secure additional funds, as with the killing of the Gugulethu Seven a few weeks later?<sup>76</sup> Might he have paraded photographs of the victims that “mimicked the big-game safari shot” as was also done with the Gugulethu Seven?<sup>77</sup> Or, would these photographs have been filed with the records of other covert operations, and illicitly destroyed in later years to prevent them from being used as evidence by a future state?<sup>78</sup> Would de Kock have felt pride or shame as he clicked the camera button, and would he later regret this action as Lagardien did?<sup>79</sup> Although he did *not* photograph the scene, it is probable that it lives on in the de Kock’s memory. But, one wonders, does it return unexpectedly to haunt him, or does it lie dormant, behind his impassive demeanour, a bloody record of just one among many of the atrocities he perpetrated?

It is possible that images of Jackie and Leon in the mortuary exist that have not entered the public domain, either because they are under embargo, hidden, or lost or because the film on which they were made has not

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<sup>72</sup> Marinovich and Silva, xiv.

<sup>73</sup> Inquest records for the Raid are not available - in many countries, inquest records are destroyed after 10 years. The reliance on the use of photographs as evidence during inquiries of this nature is evident in the reports on inquests conducted in South Africa during the same period..

<sup>74</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, “Amnesty Committee Hearing. June 6, 2000,” *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, accessed December 2022, <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/2000/200606pa.htm>.

<sup>75</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, “Amnesty Committee Hearing. June 6, 2000.”

<sup>76</sup> Beverley Roos-Muller, *Hunting the Seven: How the Gugulethu Seven Assassins were exposed* (Jeppestown: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2024), 212-216. Roos-Muller concludes that the seven were killed so that their bodies could be filmed as trophies for a video detailing Vlakplaas “successes” to be presented to President PW Botha and the Cabinet as motivation for increasing the unit’s budget.

<sup>77</sup> Roos-Muller, *Hunting the Seven*, 164. See also Nicky Rousseau, “Death and Dismemberment: The body and counter-revolutionary warfare in apartheid South Africa”, in *Destruction and Human Remains: Disposal and concealment of genocide and mass violence* eds. Elisabeth Ansett and Jean-Marc Dreyfus (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 209.

<sup>78</sup> Verne Harris, “‘They should have destroyed more’: the destruction of public records by the South African state in the final years of apartheid, 1990-1994,” Paper presented at the Wits History Workshop: The TRC; Commissioning the Past, 11-14 June 1999, accessed June 2024, <https://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/server/api/core/bitstreams/81eaedef-2eb5-4c58-813d-49131630b145/content>.

<sup>79</sup> Lagardien, *Too White to be Coloured*, 113.

been processed.<sup>80</sup> Hayes, framing unprocessed photographs as “images that did not cross the boundary into the light,”<sup>81</sup> asks whether images that “only communicated with each other and not the world”<sup>82</sup> might constitute a “kind of historical unconscious of apartheid.”<sup>83</sup> Could the same reasoning apply to images that exist solely in the mind and are spoken into visibility by those who have encountered them?

### Encounters with images

Images may be encountered in many formats, material and immaterial, physical and digital, tangible or non-tangible. In this chapter I distinguish between encounters with images of two types. Firstly, images that are external to the viewer, i.e. photographic prints, projected films or videos, or digital images accessed via electronic devices. Secondly, images that are internal to the viewer's mind and come into view in words, memory, dreams, traumatic flashbacks or imaginings. This thesis focusses specifically on images of atrocity, loss, and suffering associated with politically motivated violence. While the content is relevant, the primary question this thesis considers is the work these images perform in encounters.

### Context

Samson's photograph was printed in the *New York Times*, on 21 December 1985, and in the South African *Sunday Times* the next day. Snippets from the ARD video footage were broadcast by television stations in Europe and the United States of America around the same time. As objects that exist in multiples and in easily transportable or transmittable formats, the images have been encountered by thousands of people across the world in publications, exhibitions and films and on social media platforms.

Viewers encountering the images of Jackie and Leon in 1985 would not have seen them in isolation. Apart from the contextualising texts or commentaries, those interested in knowing more about the Raid may have looked at other publications too, encountering photographs of the bloodied bath in the couple's home,<sup>84</sup> the burnt-out hulks of the vehicles used by the attackers,<sup>85</sup> solemn-faced officials,<sup>86</sup> images of the couple as they were in

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<sup>80</sup> Richard Vokes addressed this issue in relation to narratives of silences around the thousands of unprocessed negatives associated with the Idi Amin years in Uganda. See Richard Vokes, “{Re)sounding photographs: The politics of silence and cacophony of memory from Idi Amin's Uganda,” *Visual Anthropology Review* 41, no1, 2025, accessed online, September 2025, <https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/var.70012>

<sup>81</sup> Hayes, “Political Funerals in South Africa,” 303.

<sup>82</sup> Hayes, “Political Funerals in South Africa,” 303.

<sup>83</sup> Hayes, “Political Funerals in South Africa,” 303.

<sup>84</sup> Sapa, Associated Press, Reuter, “Lesotho blames SADF for killings in Maseru,” *Saturday Star* (Johannesburg) December 21, 1985.

<sup>85</sup> *Sunday Times*: Denyse Armour and Shaun Harris, “ANC CLAIM SHOT WHITE GIRL ‘ONE OF OURS’” *Sunday Times: Extra*, (Johannesburg), December 22, 1985.

<sup>86</sup> See for example, Michael Acott, “ANC activities: SA warns border states,” *Cape Times* (Cape Town) December 21, 1985. which carries a photograph of then president P.W. Botha.

life,<sup>87</sup> their infant child Phoenix with her grandmother,<sup>88</sup> and the ANC flag-bedecked coffins flanked by grieving family members and sombre comrades at the mass funeral held in the Maseru Stadium.<sup>89</sup> They may also have associated the images of Jackie and Leon with those related to other cross-border incursions or incidents of politically motivated violence published in the media or circulated in publications emanating from the liberation movements or aligned organisations.<sup>90</sup> Encounters with the images of Jackie and Leon, when they were first circulated, were framed too within the context of the draconian restrictions on the South African press under the State of Emergency<sup>91</sup> discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

While the motivation behind the *Sunday Times*' decision to publish Samson's photograph is not clear,<sup>92</sup> the work of media theorists who have considered the use of images of politically motivated violence in the South African press provide some useful insights. Catherine O'Dowd's study of photographs of politically motivated violence selected for publication in South African newspapers between 1990 and 1994,<sup>93</sup> draws on interviews with key decision-makers to reflect on thinking in newsrooms during the period under review. Personal memoirs by various news editors active in the 1980s offer similarly useful insights.<sup>94</sup>

Christine Ullman, in contrast to O'Dowd, draws on interviews with readers rather than decision-makers, to inform her study on how photographs published in the South African English language press between 1976 and 2002 shaped public perceptions. Commenting on the absence of photographs of acts of violence by the security forces in the press, and the omission of references to the "oppressive system of apartheid"<sup>95</sup> in interviews with white South Africans, she concludes that it seemed as if "the torture, the deaths in detention, the hit squads, and the many massacres of protestors by heavily armed policemen had just not happened."<sup>96</sup> Marietta Kesting

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<sup>87</sup> Foreign News Service, "Killings followed SA warnings – Lesotho," *Sunday Star* (Johannesburg), December 22, 1985.

<sup>88</sup> The attackers left Phoenix, Jackie and Leon's one-year-old daughter, unharmed in her cot. Cas St Leger, Shaun Harris and Denyse Armour, "SPARED: First picture of the baby who lived through the Massacre of Maseru," *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), December 22, 1985.

<sup>89</sup> Denyse Armour, "The day they buried Jackie Quin," *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), January 12, 1986.

<sup>90</sup> See for example *Unity in Action, A Photographic History of the African National Congress, South Africa 1912-1982* (London: African National Congress, 1982) and *Apartheid's War Against Africa*, a portable exhibition produced by the Anti-Apartheid Movement (London) and the Holland Committee on Southern Africa in co-operation with the United Nations Centre Against Apartheid, 1984.

<sup>91</sup> Republic of South Africa. "Proclamation No. R 208, 1985: Amendment of Regulations under the Public Safety Act, 1953." *Government Gazette* no. 3896. (Government Printer, Pretoria, November 2, 1985).

<sup>92</sup> In an informal discussion, Ken Owen, a former editor of the *Sunday Times* suggested that there was a degree of ambivalence in the decision – it might have been intended to elicit support or sound a warning – and because the image was taken beyond the country's borders, the publication of it may have passed legal scrutiny.

<sup>93</sup> Catherine Francis O'Dowd, "An examination of the factors underlying decision-making about selection and presentation of photographs of political conflict in South African Newspapers," (MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1996).

<sup>94</sup> See for example: Anthony Heard, *Cape of Storms: A Personal History of the Crisis in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1990); Max du Preez, *Pale Native: Memories of a renegade reporter*, (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2003); John Matisonn, *God, Spies and Lies: Finding South Africa's future through its past* (Cape Town: Ideas for Africa in association with Missing Ink, 2015), Len Kalane, *The Chapter We Wrote: The City Press Story, Media and politics in a changing South Africa* (Johannesburg and Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2018).

<sup>95</sup> Christine Ullman, "Black Peril White Fear: Representations of Violence and Race in South Africa's English Press 1976-2002 and Their Influence on Public Opinion" (PhD Thesis, University of Cologne, 2005.), 63.

<sup>96</sup> Ullman, "Black Peril White Fear", 342.

argues similarly that the state's attempts to control visibility created an unsettling disjuncture, citing an interviewee in a documentary film who explained, "What you saw during the day on the street, and what they screened at night on the SABC news, it was two completely different worlds."<sup>97</sup> In this context, it is unsurprising that the exceptional nature of the images of Jackie and Leon made a deep impression on those who encountered them.<sup>98</sup>

Much of the scholarship relating to images made in South Africa in the 1980s deals with the socio-political context in which the images may have been encountered. Darren Newbury,<sup>99</sup> Okwui Enwezor and Rory Bester,<sup>100</sup> for example, offer overarching studies contextualising photographic practice and images in relation to the politics of the time, protest actions, mass mobilisation, political funerals, police brutality, and the everyday lives of people living under the apartheid. These studies provide a broad overview of images of the time that might have been encountered in the news, other publications, and exhibitions in South Africa and abroad alongside those of Jackie and Leon. The work of Vilho Shigwedha, Kylie Thomas, Patricia Hayes and Jacob Dlamini, is however of specific relevance to this thesis because they closely examine issues of history, trauma, memory and the quest for justice. Although he makes no mention of the photographic encounter as a theoretical construct in his studies on the iconic images of the Cassinga Massacre, Shigwedha includes extracts from interviews with photographers,<sup>101</sup> eyewitnesses, and survivors<sup>102</sup> that foreground both the picture-making encounter and subsequent encounters with the photographs.<sup>103</sup>

Kylie Thomas,<sup>104</sup> like Shigwedha, uses images associated with specific individuals, events, or issues to address broader questions of photography, history, memory, mourning and remembrance, and the insistent presence of the past in the present, contending that,

"... photographs open an aperture in time. They disrupt linear conceptions of history through their insistent return of the past in the present. In this way these photographs call on those of us who view them to resist the violent and triumphal erasure of the trauma of the past and instead to recognise the wound that the history of apartheid remains."<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> An unnamed woman quoted in a documentary film *Don't Shoot*, by Lucilla Blankenberg, cited in *Affective Images: Post-Apartheid Documentary Perspectives* by Marietta Kesting, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2017), 191.

<sup>98</sup> While Kesting makes passing mention of the concept of the photographic encounter, the distinction she makes between images that depict politically motivated violence, and those that are "transgressive and violating ... both to the eyes of the spectator and to the depicted person(s)," acknowledges the wounding impact of the encounter on the viewer and the photographed person. Marietta Kesting, *Affective Images: Post-Apartheid Documentary Perspectives* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2017), 30.

<sup>99</sup> Darren Newbury, *Defiant Images: Photography and Apartheid South Africa* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2009).

<sup>100</sup> Enwezor and Bester, *Rise and Fall of Apartheid*.

<sup>101</sup> Shigwedha, *Enduring suffering*, 41,42, 87.

<sup>102</sup> Shigwedha, *Enduring suffering*, 78-80.

<sup>103</sup> Vilho Shigwedha, *The Aftermath* 63-69.

<sup>104</sup> Kylie Thomas, "Exhuming Apartheid: Photography, disappearance and return," *Cahiers d'études africaines*, (2018), 429-454; and Kylie Thomas, "'Remember Marikana': Violence and Visual Activism in Post-Apartheid South Africa," *ASAP/Journal* 3 no. 2 (2018), 401-422.

<sup>105</sup> Kylie Thomas, "Wounding Apertures: Violence, affect and photography during and after apartheid," *Kronos* 38, no.1 (2012), 218.

While the preceding comment specifically to photographs of a victim of politically motivated violence made by Gill de Vlieg, they apply more widely. In a similar vein, writing about images associated with the activist Ahmed Timol<sup>106</sup> in an online archive relating to his life and murder, Thomas argues that these photographs serve a purpose beyond commemoration by contributing to the ongoing “struggle for justice in the aftermath of apartheid.”<sup>107</sup>

Jacob Dlamini’s account of the creation of the album of ‘mugshots’ compiled by the security police, *The Terrorist Album: Apartheid’s Insurgents, Collaborators, and the Security Police*, includes moving descriptions of activists’ encounters with photographs of their younger selves. Dlamini writes “asking individuals to make the album speak entails directing them to look at photographs last seen while they were in detention or going through unspeakable torture.”<sup>108</sup> The importance of these activists’ reflections is that it is “through them that the album is made to speak in this book – through them that we are able to listen to what the mugshots have to say about the past.”<sup>109</sup> As with Thomas, Dlamini’s evocative and often poignant writing captures the spirit of the era, complementing his consummate interrogation of archival sources and his intense interactions with many of those included or implicated in the album. This enables a temporal weaving between the context within which the images were created, and the contemporary context in which they are encountered.

Like the scholars mentioned above, Hayes,<sup>110</sup> focusses closely on the relationship between history and photography. Her work on colonial photographs, the conflict in Namibia and southern Angola, and her texts on documentary photography in the 1980s, specifically her work on images of political funerals, locate Southern African photographs and photographic practice within the current discourse on photography and raise provocative questions, as noted elsewhere in this chapter.

### *Images of atrocity*

The images of Jackie and Leon fall broadly within the genre referred to as atrocity images. The study of this genre was driven initially by the publication of images of cruelties inflicted on the Congolese under Belgian King

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<sup>106</sup> *Ahmed Timol*, Accessed June 2024, <https://www.ahmedtimol.co.za>.

<sup>107</sup> Kylie Thomas, “Digital Visual Activism: Photography and the Re-Opening of the Unresolved Truth and Reconciliation Cases in Post-Apartheid South Africa,” *Photography and Culture*, March 2021, 1.

<sup>108</sup> Dlamini, 19.

<sup>109</sup> Dlamini, 19.

<sup>110</sup> See for example other papers by Patricia Hayes: “Vision and violence: Photographies of war in Southern Angola and Northern Namibia,” *Kronos* 27, no. 1 (2001); “Other Lives of the Image,” *Kronos* 46, no. 1, (2020); “Political Funerals in South Africa: Photography, History and the Refusal of Light (1960s-1980s),” in *Love and Revolution in the Twentieth-Century Colonial and Postcolonial World: Perspectives from South Asia and Southern Africa*, eds. G. Arunima, Patricia Hayes and Premesh Lalu (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2021).

Leopold,<sup>111</sup> early American lynching photographs,<sup>112</sup> the Spanish Civil War,<sup>113</sup> and later by the array of images associated with the Holocaust,<sup>114</sup> the Vietnam War<sup>115</sup> and the genocide in Rwanda.<sup>116</sup> It has been spurred on over the past two decades by the widespread dissemination of images relating to the 'War on Terrorism' in Afghanistan, the invasion of Iraq,<sup>117</sup> acts of terrorism perpetrated on civilians, the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centre,<sup>118</sup> the Boston Marathon bombings,<sup>119</sup> the refugee crisis in and around Syria<sup>120</sup> and the persecution of Palestinians in Gaza.<sup>121</sup> Although studies in this field focus mostly on the depiction of civilian victims, a handful explore images that position terrorists as the victims of violence, as exemplified in the

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<sup>111</sup> In the late 19th and early 20th centuries photographs of mutilated and murdered Congolese people were published in newspapers and projected as slides in magic-lantern shows across Europe by human rights activists in a campaign to bring an end to the cruelties inflicted by Belgian King Leopold. See Linfield, *The Cruel Radiance*, 48-49.

<sup>112</sup> In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, photographs of the mutilated bodies of black Americans killed by white mobs in racist terror lynchings were circulated in the United States of America. Roberta Smith, "An Ugly Legacy Lives on, Its Glare Unsoftened by Age" *New York Times* (New York) January 13, 2000, accessed June 2023, <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/library/arts/011300lynching-exhibit.html>.

<sup>113</sup> Photographs of the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939, taken by photographers Robert Capra, Gerda Taro, and others, were published widely in European newspapers. These images, which illustrated the extreme brutality of the repressive regime, provoked intense discussion about how viewers might be driven to act in response to them. Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*, (London: The Hogarth Press, 1938).

<sup>114</sup> There is an extensive body of scholarship associated with photographs of Jewish and other prisoners held captive, or killed, in Nazi Concentration Camps across Europe during World War II (1939-1945). and the ethical dilemmas associated with the recirculation of these in the present. Erica Lehrer, Cynthia E Milton and Monica Eileen Patterson, eds. *Curating Difficult Knowledge: Violent pasts in public places* (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

<sup>115</sup> Michael Griffin argues that scholarship on photographs of the Vietnam War tends to perpetuate an idyllic view of "personal, independent and uncensored reporting and image making, seen as a journalistic ideal by some, and an obstacle to successful government conduct of the war by others" and challenges this narrative claiming that the photographs are "compliant and nationalistic." Michael Griffin, "Media Images of War" *Media, War & Conflict* 3, no. 1 (2010), 7-41.

<sup>116</sup> In 1994, nearly a million people were killed over a period of 100 days in Rwanda. As with other late 20<sup>th</sup> century genocides, images of dead and mutilated victims made by news photographers and civilians were widely circulated. These are located within the broader genre of 'atrocities photographs' in several studies. See for example, Liot Zylberman and Sánchez-Biosca, Vicente "Reflections on the Significance of Images in Genocide Studies: Some Methodological Considerations", *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 12, no. 2, 1-17.

<sup>117</sup> See for example, Michael Griffin, "Picturing America's 'War on Terrorism' in Afghanistan and Iraq Photographic motifs as news frames," *Journalism* 5, no. 4 (2004), 381-402.

<sup>118</sup> Ethical debates relating to the dissemination of photographs taken during and after the destruction of the Twin Towers in New York in a 'terrorist attack' on 11 September 2001 have been covered in a wide range of academic papers and publications, and in the media. See for example, Renee Martin Kratzer and Brian Kratzer, "How Newspapers Decided to Run Disturbing 9/11 Photos," *Newspaper Research Journal* 24, no. 1 (2003), 34-47; Sonia Baelo-Allue, "9/11 and the Psychic Trauma Novel: Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*," *ATLANTIS Journal of the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies* 34, no. 1 (2012), 63-79; Rob Kroes, "The Ascent of the Falling Man: Establishing a Picture's Iconicity," *Journal of American Studies* 45 (2011), Graley Herren, "Flying Man and Falling Man: Remembering and Forgetting 9/11," *Exhibit Faculty Scholarship*. Paper 3 (2014); and Tom Junod, "The Falling Man," *Esquire*, 1 September 2003, accessed June 2023, <https://classic.esquire.com/article/2003/9/1/the-falling-man>.

<sup>119</sup> See, for example, Mette Mortensen, "Conflictual Media Events, Eyewitness Images, and the Boston Marathon Bombing (2013)." *Journalism Practice* 9, no. 4 (2015), 536-55.

<sup>120</sup> Thomas Olesen, "Memetic protest and the dramatic diffusion of Alan Kurdi," *Media, Culture and Society* 40 no.5 (2017), 656-672; Papailias, (Un)seeing dead refugee bodies, 1048-1068; Yasmin Ibrahim, "The Unsacred and the Spectacularized: Alan Kurdi and the Migrant Body," *Social Media + Society*, October-December (2018), 1-9; Maria Mattus, "Too dead? Image analyses of humanitarian photos of the Kurdi brothers," *Visual Studies* 35, no. 1 (2020), 51-64.

<sup>121</sup> News and social media platforms have been inundated with photographs of mortally wounded or injured citizens, and devastated urban environments, since the outbreak of hostilities between Israel and Hamas in October 2023. While some of the images have been made by news photographers, the majority of images being posted on social media emanate from 'citizen journalists'. See, Gabby Sherwood, "The Ethics of Graphic Images in Coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," *Media Ethics* 36, 1 (2023) accessed June 2024, <https://staging.mediaethicsmagazine.com/index.php/browse-back-issues/221-fall-2023-vol-36-no-1/3999427-the-ethics-of-graphic-images-in-coverage-of-the-israeli-palestinian-conflict>.

analyses of images of prisoners incarcerated by American military forces in Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib.<sup>122</sup> Scholarship associated with necropolitics and with the concept of 'othering',<sup>123</sup> especially in relation to people labelled as perpetrators or terrorists is useful in understanding the mixed reception accorded these, as this relates to the photographs of Jackie and Leon circulated in the media at the time of the Raid.<sup>124</sup>

While the literature relating to atrocity images covers a range of concerns, what is of special relevance to *this* thesis is the role that these images play, or the work that they do, in the photographic encounter. In the case of the images of Jackie and Leon, this is complicated by the multivalent nature of the images. As news images, they offer evidence of the actions of a repressive regime, as well as of individual attempts to resist this regime, evoking conflicting emotions of pride, fear, anger, guilt and shame. Because they are images associated with politically motivated violence, they may trigger thoughts of unimaginable violations - genocide, persecution and torture. Although they are not quite family photographs in the traditional sense, the intersection of personal tragedy and public spectacle may invoke memories of domestic tragedies, surfacing deeply personal regrets or grief. Viewed in retrospect and in different contexts, they may do what Michael Roper describes as the unconscious work of history,<sup>125</sup> bringing into view the emotional hold of the past as it is interpreted in the present.

Images of atrocity, such as those of Jackie and Leon, bring viewers into face-to-face encounters with the victims of cruel and inhuman acts perpetrated by one person or group on another, precipitating reflections on death, the precarity of life, and vulnerability. Imagined encounters between the viewer and the photographed persons have been a topic of writers since the advent of photography. Walter Benjamin, for example, writing about the early history of photography, mentions that some viewers were afraid to look too long at daguerreotypes,<sup>126</sup> fearing that "the little, tiny faces of the people could see out."<sup>127</sup> Reflecting on face-to-face

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<sup>122</sup> See for example, Susan Sontag, "Regarding the Torture of Others," *The New York Times Magazine* (New York), 23 May 2004; Judith Butler, "Torture and the Ethics of Photography," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 25 (2007); Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso, 2009); Julie Gerk Hernandez, "The Tortured Body, the Photographs, and the U.S. War on Terror," *Literature and Culture* 9, no. 1 (2007); and Joey Brooke Jakob, "What remains of Abu Ghraib?" *Digital Photography and Cultural Memory*, *Visual Studies* 31, no. 1 (2016); Connal Parsley, "the Exceptional Image: Torture photographs from Guantánamo Bay and Abu Ghraib as Foucault's Spectacle of Punishment", in Desmond Manderson, ed. *Law and the Visual: Transitions and Transformations* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2016).

<sup>123</sup> Judith Butler, "Precarious Life, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Cohabitation," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26, no. 2 (2012), 134-135.

<sup>124</sup> See for example, Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003); Gillian Rose, "Who cares for which dead and how? British newspaper reporting of the bombings in London, July 2005," *Geoforum* 40 (2009); Derek Hook, "The racist bodily imaginary: The image of the body-in-pieces in (post)apartheid culture" *Subjectivity* 6, (2013); Nicky Rousseau, Riedwaan Moosage and Ciraj Rassool, "Missing and Missed: Rehumanisation, the Nation and Missing-ness," *Kronos* 44 (2022); Penelope Papailias, "(Un)seeing dead refugee bodies: mourning memes, spectropolitics, and the haunting of Europe," *Media, Culture and Society* 1, no. 21 (2018); Louise Bethlehem and Norma Musih, "Between emptiness and superfluity: funeral photography and necropolitics in late-apartheid South Africa", *Photographies* 15, no. 1, (2022).

<sup>125</sup> Michael Roper, "The Unconscious Work of History." *Cultural and Social History* 11, no. 2, (2014), 169–193.

<sup>126</sup> An early form of photograph created on a sheet of copper plated with a thin coat of highly polished silver.

<sup>127</sup> Walter Benjamin, "A Short History of Photography", reproduced in *Screen* 13, no. 1 (1972), 8.

encounters with the pictured other, Paula Horta, writing about photographic portraits made by Jillian Edelstein,<sup>128</sup> at the time of the TRC, argues differently that the “the face urges first the photographer, and then the viewer, to adopt an active stance,”<sup>129</sup> asserting that, “in this Other’s presence we cannot remain indifferent, we are summoned to an ethical responsiveness.”<sup>130</sup>

While Horta presents a compelling argument, the way in which the photographed other is portrayed plays a significant role in shaping the encounter. Lilie Chouliaraki and Tijana Stolic, framing photojournalism as an encounter, argue that encounters with photographs that depict actions taken *on* the photographed persons cast them as “suffering bodies in need,” entrench the divide between “us,” the potential providers of assistance and “them,” the needy recipients.<sup>131</sup> This imposes a political commitment on “us” to address “their” needs, whether this be for humanitarian aid or justice. Conversely, encounters with images showing actions taken *by* the photographed persons as they go about their everyday lives are essentially existential. They confirm a sense of shared humanity and affirm the agency of the photographed persons framing them as “irreducibly human,”<sup>132</sup> and “like us,” inviting empathy, and exciting activism.<sup>133</sup>

This argument holds true in relation to encounters depicting suffering victims, but what happens when the viewers are brought into face-to-face contact with victims who are no longer alive, as in Samson’s photograph, where Jackie’s unseeing eyes give the impression of looking towards the camera. Barbie Zelizer argues that images like this, showing evidence of certain death, are encountered differently to images associated with impending, presumed, or possible death.<sup>134</sup> The knowledge that the person or persons depicted are irrefutably dead negates the possibility of rescue, redemption, or recovery: these images do not bring the photographed persons metaphorically back to life as other images might. They render the viewer powerless; nothing can be done to change the situation and there is no hope for an alternative ending to the narrative. And yet, the sense of impotence that draws the viewer in – wanting to do something, anything, and wanting to know more – may allow for a degree of freedom for personal reflection rather than reactive protest or action, thereby explaining the impact of these images.

In her reflections on images that bring the presence of the dead into view, Penelope Papailias invokes Jacques

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<sup>128</sup> See portraits on her website, Jillian Edelstein, *Truth and Lies*, accessed March 2023, <https://www.jillianedelstein.com/truth-and-lies>.

<sup>129</sup> Paula Horta, “The Ethics in Post-Apartheid Photograph Practice: An alternative route for considering violence in photography,” *Photographies* 6, no. 1 (2013), 73.

<sup>130</sup> Horta, “The Ethics in Post-Apartheid Photograph Practice,” 77.

<sup>131</sup> Lilie Chouliaraki and Tijana Stolic, “Photojournalism as political encounter: western news photography in the 2015 migration ‘crisis,’” *Visual Communication* 8, no. 3 (2019) 315-318.

<sup>132</sup> Chouliaraki and Stolic, “Photojournalism as political encounter,” 3.

<sup>133</sup> Chouliaraki and Stolic, 3.

<sup>134</sup> Barbie Zelizer, *About to Die: How News Images Move the Public* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 68.

Derrida's writings on spectrality and hauntology to describe how images blur the binaries between "presence and absence, life and death, self and other."<sup>135</sup> Although Derrida<sup>136</sup> argues, like Barthes,<sup>137</sup> that there is a melancholy aspect in *all* photographs because they all exist as traces of a person who is alive but will one day die, photographs – such as those of Jackie and Leon – that unequivocally document death draw viewers into profoundly unsettling encounters with their own mortality and vulnerability, alongside personal experiences of grief and loss. As Featherstone argues, images of bodies have presence; encounters with them affect viewers "in inchoate ways that cannot be easily articulated or assimilated to conceptual thought."<sup>138</sup>

I cite a personal example here, the black and white photograph of victims of the 1985 attack on Gaborone, Botswana, mentioned by Comrade AB, as described in Chapter Six, which shows a bullet-riddled body, so mutilated that it is almost unrecognisable as a person. It is, as Achille Mbembe says, a dehumanised "body-thing."<sup>139</sup> Of all the images I have encountered during research, it is the only one that truly horrifies, repels, and frightens me. I avoid looking at reproductions of it, when I encounter them, and when it rises into view in my mind's eye, I shut it down, look elsewhere. I try to forget it, but I cannot erase it from memory. It pains me because I cannot conceive how one person can inflict such damage on another, or that a person who has lived, loved, and been loved, can be rendered unrecognisable, reduced to a lump of blood and tissue. I am ashamed that I am repulsed by this image and by my own lack of empathy for the victims and those close to them, but still the image haunts me.

### *Iconic images of atrocity*

Unlike many other atrocity images that live on in the minds of those who encounter them, the images of Jackie and Leon are not iconic.<sup>140</sup> They do not, for example, signify the Maseru Raid in collective memory in the way Sam Nzima's photograph of Hector Petersen signifies the 1976 Soweto uprising.<sup>141</sup> Nevertheless, scholarly

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<sup>135</sup> Papailias, 1052.

<sup>136</sup> Derrida argues, with reference both to a photographed ruin and an image of it, that, "Each signifies death without saying it. Each one, in any case, recalls a death that has already occurred, or one that is promised or threatening..." See Jacques Derrida, *Athens Still Remains: The photography of Jean Francois Bonhomme* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 2.

<sup>137</sup> In *Camera Lucida*, Barthes muses at length about the inscription of death into every photograph, whether the subject is alive or dead, suggesting on page 9 that the "rather terrible thing which is there in every photograph: the return of the dead." And referring on page 97 to the revelation of the "has-been" through the photograph which "contains this imperious sign of my future death."

<sup>138</sup> Mike Featherstone, "Body, Image and Affect in Consumer Culture," *Body and Society* 16, no.1 (2010), 195.

<sup>139</sup> Achille Mbembe, *On the Post-colony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 26-27.

<sup>140</sup> Darren Newbury, writing about the "relative lack of iconicity" of photographs of the Sharpeville Massacre made by Ian Berry cites the photographer's contention that there is no single image that distills the essence of the event and that the "significance of the event outweighs the images." Darren Newbury, "Picturing an 'Ordinary Atrocity': The Sharpeville Massacre," in *Picturing Atrocity. Photography in Crisis*. eds. Geoffrey Batchen, Mick Gidley, Nancy K. Miller and Jay Prosser (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), 209-223.

<sup>141</sup> Nzima's photograph of Hector Petersen, first published in *The World*, a Johannesburg newspaper has been reproduced and reworked in different forms for commemorative purposes or to catalyse public debate, shifting in meaning as its indexical value has become subsumed by its symbolic status. See *The World*, (Johannesburg) 16 June 1976. See also Ruth Simbao, 'Unpacking how an image of Mbuyisa Makhubu carrying Hector Pietersen in his arms became iconic', *The Conversation*, 15 June 2021, accessed June 2024, <https://www.news24.com/life/arts-and-entertainment/arts/unpacking-how-an-image-of-mbuyisa-makhubu-carrying-hector-pietersen-in-his-arms-became-iconographic-20210615>.

reflections on iconic photographs are of value in understanding why the images of Jackie and Leon are *memorable* and how they are associated with the personal archives of iconic images brought into view in the dialogues undertaken for this thesis.<sup>142</sup>

Jessica Fishman implies that there is no way to predict what effect a particular image may have on viewers, or how they will respond to it.<sup>143</sup> Opinions on the nature and impact of encounters with iconic images coalesce around two opposing positions. On the one hand, Barbie Zelizer argues that iconic photographs reduce public events to “heart-rending moments of intense personal fear and dread,” circumventing critical thought and deliberation,<sup>144</sup> as with the image of the body of Alan Kurdi, the Syrian child washed up on a Turkish beach.<sup>145</sup> On the other hand, Robert Harriman and John Louis Lucaites contend that iconic photographs are “signposts for collective memory”<sup>146</sup> and crucial resources for critical reflection,<sup>147</sup> as, images of Mgcineni Noki, ‘the man in the green blanket’ killed at Marikana have proved to be.<sup>148</sup>

Akiba Cohen, Sandrine Boudana, and Paul Frosh argue that these positions are both based on assumptions rather than substantive evidence. Citing their study on iconic images in public memory,<sup>149</sup> they conclude that images that are remembered are associated with themes which evoked a strong emotional response: conflict, trauma, and triumph. Asking similarly what qualities iconic photographs of the Vietnam War era share, Angela Lovelace identified the commonalities as “emotional outrage, the portrayal of innocence, and the sense of powerlessness.”<sup>150</sup> These studies suggest that iconic photographs – and others that live on in individual or collective memory – are remembered because they resonate personally at an unconscious level, rather than for their indexical status. But the opposite might also hold true: photographs that share the qualities described above may also be forgotten, disremembered,<sup>151</sup> or repressed as a defence against painful memories, deep wounds, or vulnerabilities.

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<sup>142</sup> These are mentioned individually in the accounts of encounters in the chapters that follow and brought together in Chapter Eight.

<sup>143</sup> Jessica M Fishman, *Death Makes the News: How the Media Censor and Display the Dead* (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 15-16.

<sup>144</sup> Zelizer, *About to Die*, 24. This resonates with Barthes, and Sontag, amongst others, who suggest that remembering photographs simply as representations of an event, rather than the events with which they are associated, may eclipse and displace other forms of memory and understanding. See Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 91; and Sontag, *Regarding the Pain*, 79-84.

<sup>145</sup> Thomas Olesen, “Memetic protest,” 656-672.

<sup>146</sup> Robert Harriman and John Louis Lucaites, *No Caption Needed: Iconic photographs, public culture, and liberal democracy* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 52.

<sup>147</sup> Harriman and Lucaites, *No Caption Needed*, 24.

<sup>148</sup> See Leon Sadiki’s photograph of Mgcineni Noki ‘the man in the green blanket,’ killed, together with 33 others, when police opened fire on striking miners in Marikana in 2012. Also, Kylie Thomas, “Remember Marikana” 401-422.

<sup>149</sup> Akiba A. Cohen, Sandrine Boudana and Paul Frosh, “You must remember this: Iconic News Photographs and Collective Memory,” *Communication* 68 (2018), 453-479.

<sup>150</sup> Angie Lovelace, “Iconic Photos of the Vietnam War Era: A Semiotic Analysis as a Means of Understanding,” *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications* 1, no. 1 (2010), 43.

<sup>151</sup> It is beyond the scope of this study to locate the ‘disremembered’ images of the Raid. Nevertheless it would be interesting to see these and to consider if, or how, they might be used to construct a counter narrative. See Erica Payet, “The Unseen Gulf War, Disremembered Images and Method,” *Miranda*, (2022), Issue 25.

### *Affect, activism, and apathy*

The question of why some images may be remembered while others are forgotten, is closely aligned with the question of what they *do* in the encounter with viewers. As Joan Schwartz enjoins, “Stop thinking of photographs as nouns, and start treating them as verbs, transitive verbs. They **do** things We need to ask not only what they are **of**, and what they are **about**, but also what they were created to **do**.”<sup>152</sup> Jill Bennet differentiates similarly between the “aboutness”<sup>153</sup> and processes of images. Taking a cue from Schwartz and Bennet, this thesis asks how the photographs of Jackie and Leon have been remembered, and what they have done, as they have been encountered in different contexts and forms over the past four decades.

Scholarly reflections on the work of photographs like these vary significantly: there are no absolutes, the complex encounter between images and viewers is subjective, shaped by the nature of the image itself as much as by the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of the viewer, and the time, place, institutional and discursive context. Nevertheless, encounters with images of atrocity described in the literature follow a remarkably similar trajectory: a precise recall of the context, an initial affective response – feelings of shock or horror – followed by a passionate call to action on behalf of the victims, a deep sense of powerlessness, or an apathetic turning away. Describing her first encounter with images from the Bergen-Belson and Dachau concentration camps, at the age of 12, as a revelation<sup>154</sup> Sontag writes, “when looking at those photographs something broke. Some limit had been reached, and not only that of horror. I felt irrevocably grieved, wounded, but a part of my feelings started to tighten; something went dead; something is still crying.”<sup>155</sup> Like Sontag, many scholars use a plethora of words to describe affective responses relating to pain or discomfort when describing their encounters with images of atrocity, declaring that these images provoke outrage,<sup>156</sup> anxiety, anger, and indignation, elicit

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<sup>152</sup> Joan M. Schwartz, “The Archival Garden: Photographic Plantings, Interpretive Choices, and Alternative Narratives” in *Controlling the Past: Documenting Society and Institutions: Essays in Honor of Helen Willa Samuels*, ed. Terry Cook (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011), 105-106.

<sup>153</sup> Jill Bennet, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma and Contemporary Art* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015), 9.

<sup>154</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*, 19.

<sup>155</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*, 20.

<sup>156</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1938); Susan A. Crane, “Choosing Not to Look: Representation, Repatriation, and Holocaust Atrocity Photography,” *History and Theory* 47, no. 3 (2008).

feelings of horror, revulsion, grief, shame or pity,<sup>157</sup> surface traumatic memories,<sup>158</sup> or traumatise viewers.<sup>159</sup>

While the responses listed above describe the way in which images of violence may affect viewers, there is an assumption that the horror, and the deep sense of woundedness, provoke those who encounter them to speak out and demand an end to conflict or suffering. On this point, Carolyn Dean acknowledges that “it is not clear how, other than a metaphysical displacement, witnessing the pain of others leads to action.”<sup>160</sup> Nevertheless, the assumption that a photographic encounter has the capacity to catalyse a response or action of some kind is pervasive. It threads through the work of Virginia Woolf, writing in the late 1930s, about photographs of the Spanish Civil War. It is echoed in the work of Berger, who, in the 1970s, maintained that there were only two ways to respond to photographs of the war in Vietnam, despair and indignation, both of which drove the viewer to protest.<sup>161</sup> It resonates with the commitment of Afrapix<sup>162</sup> photographers working in South Africa in the 1980s, and with the intentions of photographers who photographed Jackie and Leon, as detailed in Chapter Four, to use their cameras to draw the attention to the brutal actions of the apartheid government<sup>163</sup> in the hope that this would spur the world into action. It is implicit too in the motivations of the writers, artists and exhibition curators detailed in Chapters Five and Six. The same sentiment continues into the present in commentary on photographs of atrocities in Gaza, as referenced earlier in this chapter.

It would be imprudent to suggest that depictions of atrocity affect viewers in the same way. Reflecting broadly on this matter, Barthes, suggests that some, but not all images, prick, pierce, sting, bruise, or wound<sup>164</sup> while others shock or “shout,” but leave no lasting impression or mark on memory.<sup>165</sup> Other scholars describe the

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<sup>157</sup> Sharon Sliwinski, “A painful labour: responsibility and photography,” *Visual Studies* 19, no. 2 (2004); E.A. Kaplan, “Global trauma and public feelings: Viewing images of catastrophe,” *Consumption, Markets and Culture* 11, (2008); and Linfield, *Cruel Radiance*; Erica Lehrer, Cynthia E Milton and Monica Eileen Patterson, eds. *Curating Difficult Knowledge: Violent pasts in public places* (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Michalinos Zembylis, “Theorizing ‘Difficult Knowledge’ in the Aftermath of the ‘Affective Turn’: Implications for Curriculum and Pedagogy in Handling Traumatic Representations,” *Curriculum Inquiry* 44, no. 3 (2014); and Roger. I. Simon, “A shock to thought: Curatorial judgement and the public exhibitions of ‘difficult knowledge’,” *Memory Studies* 4, no. 4 (2011).

<sup>158</sup> Ulrich Baer, *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma*, (Cambridge Massachusetts and London, England: The MIT Press, 2005); Robert Harriman and John Louis Lucaites, *No Caption Needed: Iconic photographs, public culture, and liberal democracy*, (London: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Lorie Novak, “Photographic Interference” in *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis*. eds. Geoffrey Batchen Mick Gidley Nancy K. Miller and Jay Prosser eds., (London: Reaktion Books, 2012); Laurence Petit and Aimee Pozorski, “Photography and Trauma: An Introduction,” *Polysemes* 19, 2018; Charles I. Armstrong and Unni Langås, eds. *Terrorizing Images, Trauma and Ekphrasis in Contemporary Literature* (London and Boston: De Gruyter, 2020).

<sup>159</sup> This raises a question. Can photographs truly traumatise viewers, or do they disturb or unsettle them. In this thesis, I take the cue from Caruth, holding the position that trauma is non referential, referring to a memory that is unprocessed rather than an event.

<sup>160</sup> Carolyn J. Dean, “Atrocity Photographs, Dignity and Human Vulnerability,” *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 6, no. 2 (2015), 241.

<sup>161</sup> John Berger, *Understanding a Photograph*, edited and introduced by Geoff Dyer (London: Penguin Books, 2013) 31-32.

<sup>162</sup> Afrapix, a collective and photographic agency was established in 1981. Omar Badsha, Lesley Lawson and Paul Weinberg amongst others were founding members.

<sup>163</sup> Kylie Thomas, “History of Photography in Apartheid South Africa,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of African History*, 2021, 2, accessed January 2023, <https://oxfordre.com/africanhistory/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-706> .

<sup>164</sup> Barthes, 26.

<sup>165</sup> Barthes, 41.

impact of the latter as dulling the senses, leaving viewers cold and unresponsive, overwhelmed, numb,<sup>166</sup> or indifferent.<sup>167</sup> Like Barthes, Sontag grappled with explaining why people responded so differently to images of violence or suffering. In her early writings she attributed apathy and indifference to “compassion fatigue”, or the over exposure of viewers to images of atrocity.<sup>168</sup> Linking affect and cognition, she insisted that “what determines the possibility of being affected is the existence of a political consciousness,”<sup>169</sup> a sentiment that resonates with the concept of critical reflection embraced by scholars like Bennet and Eric Lehrer. In the absence of this, Sontag contends, “photographs of the slaughter-bench of history will most likely be experienced as, simply, unreal or as a demoralizing emotional blow.”<sup>170</sup> In her later writings, she retracted her initial proposition, suggesting instead that people may be indifferent because they feel disempowered by their inability to alleviate the suffering they witness in the images, or simply because of the manner and medium through which the images are circulated. In this thesis, I argue that the indifference may also result from the way in which the images are veiled in the texts and commentaries that sit alongside them in publications and exhibitions, and the ideological or intellectual purpose to which they are put. The inclusion of Samson’s photograph in various montages, as discussed in Chapters Five and Six significantly reduces its impact, while its designation as an object of study, as discussed in Chapter Eight, suggests an analytical curiosity rather than an approach based on feelings.

The failure of images to affect viewers or catalyse action has also been widely ascribed to the aestheticization of images of violence,<sup>171</sup> and to the passage of time.<sup>172</sup> On these related issues, James Sey argues that images like those of Jackie and Leon lose their power when they are “transformed into a spectacle by a longer historical view.”<sup>173</sup> While Sey’s statement may have some veracity, it is not true in all cases. As Roberta Smith contends in a review of historical photographs of lynching in the United States of America, “These images make the past present. They refute the notion that photographs of charged historical subjects lose their power, softening and becoming increasingly aesthetic with time.”<sup>174</sup> The same may be said of Samson’s photograph. As mentioned earlier, it may be that its classical baroque composition and dramatic lighting invite the viewer’s gaze and imbue

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<sup>166</sup> Jessica M Fishman, *Death Makes the News: How the Media Censor and Display the Dead* (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 21.

<sup>167</sup> David Campbell, “Horrible Blindness: Images of Death in Contemporary Media,” *Journal for Cultural Research* 8, no. 1 (2008); and Robert Harriman and John Louis Lucaites, *No Caption Needed: Iconic photographs, public culture, and liberal democracy*, (London: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

<sup>168</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*, 20.

<sup>169</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*, 19.

<sup>170</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*, 19.

<sup>171</sup> Uli Linke, “Body Shock: The Political Aesthetics of Death,” *Social Analysis* 54, no. 2 (2010) 80–98; Linfield, 10; James Sey, “Photographing a South African form of sudden death,” *Critical Arts: south-north critical and media studies*, 29, Supplement 1 (2015).

<sup>172</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*, 16.

<sup>173</sup> Sey, “Photographing a South African form of sudden death,” 108.

<sup>174</sup> Roberta Smith, “An Ugly Legacy Lives on, Its Glare Unsoftened by Age” *New York Times* (New York) January 13, 2000, accessed June 2023, <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/library/arts/011300lynching-exhibit.html>.

the image with a sense of timelessness. But, as is shown in the analyses of encounters throughout this thesis, this does not necessarily reduce its impact.

Taking a slightly different position on the issue of temporality, Papailias, argues that “in interrupting the present, a photograph can ‘touch’ viewers across time, opening a zone of recognition and responsibility.”<sup>175</sup> This resonates with Smith’s conclusion that, “Horrific as they are, these photographs are a kind of gift, the gift of knowledge, the chance for greater consciousness and caring. That they were made so openly reflects the unquestioning presumption of white supremacy but also preserves that presumption in all its brutality for us to know anew.”<sup>176</sup> This suggests, as this thesis demonstrates, that images may evoke responses beyond those envisaged by the photographers who made them, and in so doing transcend time, place and circumstance. Their value lies not simply in their referential status, but in their affective power too.

For much of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the debate about the purpose of circulating photographs associated with politically motivated violence focussed quite bluntly on affect and whether or how encounters with images of atrocity might shock viewers into taking action to put an end to politically motivated violence.<sup>177</sup> More recently, in the face of intractable global conflict, and the proliferation of images online in real time (as described in Chapter Eight and Chapter Nine), the discourse has shifted to a more nuanced consideration of how encounters might promote empathy and critical reflection.

### ***Empathy and critical reflection***

It is clear from the interviews conducted for this thesis that encounters with the images of Jackie and Leon evoked a sense of affinity with the victims or their loved ones for interlocutors. This is evident in expressions such as, ‘she could have been my daughter’ or ‘those could have been my parents’ and ‘it could just as easily have been me’. Dismissing responses of this nature as a form of “crude empathy” that is, “*feeling for* another insofar as we can image *being* that other” Jill Bennet advocates for a different form of empathy, “a *feeling for* another that entails an encounter with something irreducible and different, often inaccessible” which promotes critical reflection. This formulation of empathy, she argues, is characterised by “a distinctive combination of affective and intellectual operations,”<sup>178</sup> and constitutes an appropriate response to images of suffering.

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<sup>175</sup> Papailias, 1052.

<sup>176</sup> Smith, “An Ugly Legacy Lives on.”

<sup>177</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1938); Susan A. Crane, “Choosing Not to Look: Representation, Repatriation, and Holocaust Atrocity Photography,” *History and Theory* 47, no. 3 (2008); Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin Books, 1977); Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (London, Penguin Books, 2003); Sliwinski, “A painful labour”; Frances Guerin and Roger Hallas eds. *The Image and the Witness: Trauma, memory and visual culture* (London and New York: Wallflower Press, 2007); Batchen, Gidley Miller and Prosser: *Photography in Crisis*, Jill Bennet, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma and Contemporary Art* (Stanford: California: Stanford University Press, 2015); Susan A. Crane, “Choosing Not to Look: Representation, Repatriation, and Holocaust Atrocity Photography”, *History and Theory* 47, no. 3.

<sup>178</sup> Bennet, *Empathic Vision*, 10.

Like Bennet, other scholars have raised concerns about the way in which empathy is conceptualised and understood in relation to trauma, suffering, or loss. Michalinos Zembylas counsels against “empty empathy” which he says, “resorts to a sentimental discourse on trauma and vulnerability that evokes pity for the other sufferers rather than compassionate action.”<sup>179</sup> Roger Simon warns against “voracious empathy” which he says, “risks being an exercise in emotional tourism, an ahistorical sentimentalised and romanticised ‘feeling good about feeling bad’.”<sup>180</sup> Dominick LaCapra, cautions similarly against overidentification with the plight of another, arguing that this might result in “vicarious victimhood.”<sup>181</sup> His conception of “empathetic unsettlement,”<sup>182</sup> the capacity to put “oneself in the other’s position while recognizing the difference of that position,” is cited by Bennet as a means to counter the challenges of emotional overidentification. Gayatri Spivak, arguing that witnesses to suffering or atrocity may assimilate or repudiate the experiences of others, proposes a similar mode of ethical listening and seeing that supports and tolerates difference.<sup>183</sup>

While neither LaCapra nor Spivak address the issue of photographs directly, their formulation of the responses of witnesses to atrocity adds another layer to the understanding the encounters with images addressed in this thesis. The distinction LaCapra makes between primary memory, that is the memory of a person who has lived through events and secondary memory, that is the memory of an “analyst, observer or secondary witness”<sup>184</sup> has proved useful in understanding the stark differences between the memories of the picture-making event detailed in Chapter Four and encounters with the images described in subsequent chapters.

Much of the literature relating to encounters with images of violence, suffering, loss and atrocity, as described above, reflects on the affective power of images, and the interaction between the viewer and the photographed other. But what of the internal encounter with images that reside in memory or the unconscious? What work do these images do, what is done to them, and how are they brought into view? These questions which are considered explored in subsequent sections, are central to this thesis.

### Encounters with afterimages

Kelann Currie-Williams suggests that one outcomes of an encounter with an image is an afterimage, a trace that is present in the absence of the original, arguing that “In their ability to stay and linger, the persistence of afterimages is as striking as the powerful, imagistic force that grabs our attention in the first place.”<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Zembylis, “Theorizing ‘Difficult Knowledge’,” 403-405.

<sup>180</sup> Roger Simon, cited in Steven High ed., *Beyond Testimony and Trauma: Oral History in the Aftermath of Mass Violence* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 197.

<sup>181</sup> Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History: Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 47.

<sup>182</sup> Dominick LaCapra, “Trauma, Absence, Loss,” *Critical Inquiry* 25, no. 4 (1999), 699.

<sup>183</sup> Bennet, 105.

<sup>184</sup> Dominick LaCapra, *History and Memory After Auschwitz* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), 21.

<sup>185</sup> Kelann Currie-Williams, “Afterimages and the synthanesia of photographs,” *Philosophy of Photography* 12 nos 1-2, (2022), 124.

Intangible and ephemeral images like these are also described in the literature relating to visual studies, psychology or anthropology as ‘images seen in the mind’s eye’ or ‘mental images’ and used broadly across disciplines to describe remembered images, experiences, dreams, nightmares, visions, hallucinations and other imaginings, and traumatic flashbacks. These images, which may be deliberately recalled or spring unbidden into view, do work that is different to that of images encountered in material or physical form. As Mark Reinhardt argues “they can work on or into us, becoming parts or extensions of ourselves or haunting us, taking possession, in ways that exceed language and analytical grasp of instrumentalism.”<sup>186</sup>

In cognitive neuroscience, the term mental image is used specifically to describe an internal representation, resembling something that has been seen, in the absence of the original stimulus, making it possible to re-experience a version of the original. The use of the word resembling infers that the remembered image does not necessarily correlate with what has been seen, pointing to the complex entanglement of perception and memory – people do not remember what they see, they remember what they perceive – and acknowledging the fluidity of memory as an ongoing process rather than a simple storage system.

Currie-Williams similarly describes an afterimage as a “memory or trace of an image”<sup>187</sup> that exists in the absence of the original, but positions afterimages beyond the realm of the visual as multisensorial manifestations, declaring that “what lingers is not simply the visual impression of the photographic image, but the affective, sonic and haptic registers that have sustained over time.”<sup>188</sup> There is an affinity between Currie-Williams’ analysis and Barthes’ contention, that to “see a photograph well, it is best to look away or close your eyes”<sup>189</sup> to “allow the detail to rise of its own accord into affective consciousness,”<sup>190</sup> both downplay the supremacy of the visual in memory.

Analysing the differences between his encounters with a photograph of his grandmother, and his mental image of her, Siegfried Kracauer explains that, unlike a photograph which captures the external surface at a particular moment in time, the memory-images retain only that which is significant for the viewer.<sup>191</sup> Photographs, he explains too, are fixed in time, while memory is atemporal, subjective and malleable, subject to embellishment or erasure. This is evident in the intriguing disjuncture between the actual photographs of Jackie and Leon, and the descriptions offered by those who remember them, an observation which raises questions about the work that images do, and the way in which they may be processed in memory.

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<sup>186</sup> Mark Reinhardt, “Theorising the Event of Photography - The Visual Politics of Violence and Terror in Azoulay’s *Civil Imagination*, Linfield’s *The Cruel Radiance* and Mitchell’s *Cloning Terror*,” *Theory and Event* 16, no. 3 (2013), unpaginated.

<sup>187</sup> Currie-Williams, “Afterimages”, 112.

<sup>188</sup> Currie-Williams, 111-124.

<sup>189</sup> Barthes, 53.

<sup>190</sup> Barthes, 55.

<sup>191</sup> Siegfried Kracauer, “Photography”, translated by Thomas Y. Levin, 1927, republished in *Critical Arts* 19, no. 3 (1993), 425.

### *Mis-memories*

Reflecting on this question, Tina Campt cites her encounter with a mugshot of a young man who had shot and killed a policeman after being wrongfully arrested. Recalling the photograph she remembers “a beautiful brown-skinned boy with wavy hair and hazel eyes.”<sup>192</sup> This image, she says, “feels like it was seared into my memory like one of those select few images one recalls involuntarily and usually with visceral effects.”<sup>193</sup> Years after she first saw the image, Campt embarked on a search for it. When she found it, she says, “it was nothing like I remembered it. It was not a mugshot. It was a black-and-white newspaper photo of a tearful and desperate fifteen-year-old in handcuffs and a jumpsuit in the back of a police car on his way to jail.”<sup>194</sup> Describing her recollection as a “(mis)memory” Campt muses that the mugshot she remembered so vividly, was “a creation of my emotional and affective attachment to a boy whose short life shaped much of my political consciousness.”<sup>195</sup> Reflecting on how the photograph had been reconfigured in her mind, Campt explains that she had “transfigured the only image I remembered of him into evidence of his conviction.”<sup>196</sup>

Barbara Lefcowitz likewise recounts searching for a remembered photograph of herself as a child, only to find that it did not exist. Arguing that memories are malleable,<sup>197</sup> and subject to distortion and constant revision, she explains that what she had done was to edit her memory of an image, transposing her own face on that of the original subject,<sup>198</sup> in much the same way that Freud describes in relation to dreams.<sup>199</sup>

### *Flashbacks, nightmares and the optical unconscious*

Cathy Caruth ascribes the intrusive flashbacks, or traumatic memories, that trouble the present to the “the absolute inability of the mind to avoid an unpleasant event that has not been given psychic meaning in any way.”<sup>200</sup> Trauma, she contends is not characterised by an event which may or may not be catastrophic but by the “structure of its experience or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one who experiences it.”<sup>201</sup> Following a similar line of thought, Ulrich Baer likens traumatic memory to the workings of a camera, explaining that both record without registering

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<sup>192</sup> Tina M. Campt, *Listening to Images* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017), 103.

<sup>193</sup> Campt, *Listening to Images*, 103.

<sup>194</sup> Campt, 103.

<sup>195</sup> Campt, 114.

<sup>196</sup> Campt, 106.

<sup>197</sup> Barbara Lefcowitz “Memory and Photography,” *Southwest Review* 96, no. 2 (2011), 233.

<sup>198</sup> Lefcowitz, “Memory and Photography,” 231.

<sup>199</sup> Describing how in a dream he transposed the face of his friend and that of his uncle, Freud explains that the resultant image looked like a ‘composite photograph’. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, translated by A. Brill (Ware: Wordsworths, 1997), 49.

<sup>200</sup> Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 59.

<sup>201</sup> Cathy Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1995), 4.

experience,<sup>202</sup> fixing a moment in time, that persists in different temporalities. Reflecting on the credibility of flashbacks as source material, Caruth raises questions about referentiality, arguing that flashbacks cannot be thought of as representations, citing Lacan's theorisation that they represent "waking rather than 'seeing.'<sup>203</sup> Similarly, on the subject of historicity, Caruth argues that flashbacks may be considered as "referential but not historically experienced,"<sup>204</sup> suggesting that the flashback is always experienced in the present, without reference to what came before or after it. She makes a valid point, but I argue that flashbacks associated with the encounters described in this thesis have a place in the multisensorial multi-modal archive, alongside other mental images that transcend/straddle/extend over time.

As with flashbacks, the status of images encountered in dreams is debateable, but I argue that these too may constitute traces of an unconscious archive associated with the picture-making encounter, or an encountered image of some kind. Describing dreams as "images that our bodies produce without our will and without our awareness,"<sup>205</sup> Belting asserts that they arise from personal experiences, including encounters with images seen in a waking state. This link is well illustrated in an incident relayed by Marinovich and Silva. In their memoir, they describe how, after a harrowing picture-making encounter, where Carter witnessed a brutal necklacing, he was plagued by recurrent nightmares. In these, Carter told his friends, he found himself lying on the ground, unable to move and near death, as a "television camera with a massive lens zoomed closer and closer in on his face"<sup>206</sup> until he would wake up screaming.<sup>207</sup>

Commenting on this passage, Sliwinski contends that, although the incident that preceded the nightmares was not recorded on film, it left an indelible impression on Carter's mind. She reflects on how far the photographic encounter might stretch and whether images like those described by Carter should be "added to our catalog[sic] of image-work."<sup>208</sup> Citing Sigmund Freud and Benjamin as setting precedents in this regard, she argues that photography expands the realm of the visual and, like dreams, offers glimpses of "diverse aspects of reality not given to sight,"<sup>209</sup> concluding that there is still much to discover about the way photography animates the unconscious. In this thesis, I argue that speaking about photographs, listening and watching the way in which they are brought into view in words and gestures, and in association with other remembered images, contributes to the process of discovery Sliwinski alludes to.

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<sup>202</sup> Ulrich Baer, *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma* (Cambridge Massachusetts and London, England: The MIT Press, 2005), 8.

<sup>203</sup> Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 115.

<sup>204</sup> Caruth, 116.

<sup>205</sup> Belting, 48.

<sup>206</sup> Marinovich and Silva, 70.

<sup>207</sup> Freud argues that the nightmare does not consist only of the experience within it, but also the moment of waking itself, suggesting that what one returns to in flashbacks is not the near-death experience, but the fact of surviving it. See Caruth, 64.

<sup>208</sup> Sliwinski, "Shooting in the Dark," 332.

<sup>209</sup> Sliwinski, "Shooting in the Dark," 333.

With Shawn Smith, Sliwinski builds on Benjamin's conception of the "optical unconscious," and his notion that the camera brings into sight, and thus into consciousness, that which is not visible unaided to the human eye<sup>210</sup> suggesting that both the camera and psychoanalysis uncover what is "disavowed or otherwise unavailable to consciousness."<sup>211</sup> In so doing, they argue, photographs become a "key medium for the circulation of culture's unconscious desires, fears, and structures of defense[sic]."<sup>212</sup>

Explaining the significance of this for historiography, Gregory Paschalidis, citing Benjamin and Kracauer, contends similarly that encounters with photographs bring the "systematically unseen, disregarded dimensions of our cultural environment into full view."<sup>213</sup> Extending these theorisations, and referencing Jacques Derrida,<sup>214</sup> I argue that encounters with the vestiges of photographs that exist in memory, and are surfaced in speech, bring into view traces of unconscious feelings and anxieties that are otherwise unseeable, unsayable, and unrepresentable.

## Conclusion

The images and afterimages of Jackie and Leon in the mortuary live on in the archive, and in the minds of many who encountered them over the years. While these encounters may have been unsettling, disruptive, and the cause of anxiety or distress,<sup>215</sup> they have also catalysed creative responses, "ways of seeing and thinking the world differently."<sup>216</sup> And, while the images may not be deemed iconic, or represent the Raid in collective memory, it is clear from the dialogues with those who have encountered them (as described in Chapters Four to Seven), that they do another kind of work: they haunt the mind's eye, merging personal and public pasts in the present, through encounters that raise into consciousness the deep vulnerabilities, anxieties, grief, and regrets that might otherwise lie buried beneath the banal surface of everyday life.

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<sup>210</sup> Smith and Sliwinski, eds. *Photography and the Optical Unconscious*, 4.

<sup>211</sup> Smith and Sliwinski, 4.

<sup>212</sup> Smith and Sliwinski, 9.

<sup>213</sup> Gregory Paschalidis, "Images of History and the Optical Unconscious," *Historein* 4 (2004), 42.

<sup>214</sup> Derrida contends that archive and memory, like photographs and the unconscious, constitute genres of the trace, i.e., the presence, in the present, of that which is absent, which points to, and is supplemented by, something beyond itself. See Jacques Derrida, *Copy. Archive. Signature*, edited and with an introduction by Gerhard Richter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

<sup>215</sup> This term is used broadly by Donna West Brett and Natalya Lusty eds., in *Photography and Ontology: Unsettling Images* (New York and London: Routledge, 2019) to describe ways in which the re-use and interpretation of photographs unsettles perceptions of the image. Other scholars frame these images similarly as "disturbing," see Uli Linke, "Body Shock: The Political Aesthetics of Death," *Social Analysis* 54, no. 2 (2010); "unnerving and upsetting," see Susan A. Crane, "Choosing Not to Look: Representation, Repatriation, and Holocaust Atrocity Photography," *History and Theory* 47, no. 3 (2008); "troubling", see Roger. I. Simon, "A shock to thought: Curatorial judgement and the public exhibitions of 'difficult knowledge'," *Memory Studies* 4, no. 4, (2011); "disrupting", see Tim Fawns, "Photography and the disruption of memory and meaning," *Ubiquity: The Journal of Pervasive Media* 3, nos. 1-2 (2014); and "alarming", see Jessica M. Fishman, *Death Makes the News: How the Media Censor and Display the Dead* (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 19.

<sup>216</sup> Simon O'Sullivan, *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought beyond representation*, (New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 1.

## CHAPTER TWO

# RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

*It is possible to find copies of the images of Jackie and Leon in multiple repositories and in different formats across the world. It is relatively simple, using this information, to construct a biography that tracks the travels of the images as they move through time and space and across institution and discursive realms. It is more challenging to access the thoughts and feelings of the people who encountered, were affected by, and acted upon, the images, and to envision how they are remembered. Unlike material traces of the past, these memories are a-temporal, mutable, fragile, fluid, and contingent.*

## CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

This Chapter sets out the research objectives and indicates the range of archives in which copies of the images are held and explains the value of using two complementary methodological approaches, object biography and oral history, to respond to the research questions. It argues that the constitution of object biographies makes it possible to track the images as they travel across temporal, geographic, discursive, and institutional boundaries to identify the contexts in which the images have been used and the individuals with whom they interacted. It explains how oral history dialogues offer the means to access the memories, thoughts, and feelings of those who have encountered the images, and includes a reflection on the research process. The Chapter concludes with a description of the conceptual frameworks that informed the analysis, discussions and findings of this research.

### Introduction

My<sup>217</sup> initial research proposal set out to trace the life stories of the three images mentioned in Chapter One. I began by engaging in dialogues with photographers and journalists who had documented the scene in the mortuary, and with writers, exhibition curators, and archivists who had encountered the images subsequently in the course of their work. I had assumed that the dialogues would yield the contextual information I needed to track the travels of the images over time, to demonstrate how they had crossed temporal, geographic, discursive, and institutional boundaries, and to offer insight into the impact they had made on the people who made, used, or viewed them.

Like other exhibition curators, I have used images for their indexical value, alongside explanatory texts, on the assumption that people would respond to, and remember them, in association with key themes or storylines. My initial research for this thesis overturned that assumption. After engaging with a handful of people, it became evident that the images of Jackie and Leon stand alone in memory, in an intimate and unsettling encounter with the viewer. The Raid as a historical event, the context in which it was initiated, and the broader consequences of it, were barely remembered or mentioned in the oral history dialogues.

As I continued to explore the contexts within which people encountered the images of Jackie and Leon, a pattern emerged, confirming the realisation described above. People remembered their subjective encounter with an image of Jackie and Leon in precise detail, but their memories of the broader context – the publications, exhibition, or archive in which they had encountered the image – were often vague. They could describe their initial reaction with great clarity and reflect thoughtfully, in retrospect, on why they had responded as they did when they first encountered the image/s. In some cases, they even explained, without prompting, why they

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<sup>217</sup> In this chapter I make use of the pronouns 'I' and 'my' to indicate my own subjective agency in this process.

might respond differently in the present. Many mentioned that the photographs were unforgettable.

They could describe the *remembered* images in vivid detail, but, in most cases, these differed significantly from the images they had *seen*.

I was intrigued by these differences and wondered what it said about the nature of the encounter with images in memory. Every dialogue also brought into view at least one other photograph that had similarly impressed itself on the memory the speaker. Curating these images into a gallery in my own mind, I wondered what meaning they held as an assemblage, whether they may be deemed to constitute an intangible archive and what this might signify, beyond collective memory.

This thesis is motivated, then, in part by the need to make sense of the ways in which the discussions about the images unsettled my assumptions, and in part by the challenge of understanding the encounter with images seen in people's mind's eye when the photographs or video clips of Jackie and Leon were spoken about or remembered in oral history dialogues.

### **Research objectives**

As discussed in Chapter One, scholars of photography have reflected at length on the nature and meaning of the photographic encounter, especially as this pertains to images of politically motivated violence. While it may sometimes be implicit in their writings, few of them deal specifically, or at length, with the encounter as an intersection of memory studies, psychology, photography, and archival work. The objective of this thesis is to explore that encounter, with reference to the three images of Jackie and Leon, and to consider what happens and what it means when they are remembered in retrospect or brought into view in the mind's eye rather than in physical or digital form.

### **Contribution**

This thesis makes four primary contributions to the existing scholarship on encounters with images of politically motivated violence in South African.

As a longitudinal study of three South African images, it tracks the lives of a single set of images of the same scene as they have travelled and been encountered across temporal, spatial, discursive, and institutional boundaries over almost four decades.

By attending closely to the voices of the people through whose hands the images have passed, this thesis moves beyond broad generalisations about the impact and affect of images to explore individual, often deeply personal, responses to – and memories associated with – specific images.

By focussing on the images as they come into view in the mind's eye, rather than on a printed surface or a

digital screen, this thesis expands the notion of the photographic encounter to include memory and the individual unconscious.

Finally, the thesis suggests that oral history dialogues create intangible traces of the images of Jackie and Leon, as well as other remembered photographs and mental images. These vestiges constitute a complex archive that loops between past/present, personal/political, and individual/collective memory and brings into consciousness the almost unthinkable, unseeable, unsayable and unrepresentable.

## **Research Design and Methodology**

This thesis takes the form of a qualitative longitudinal case study of three specific images and the memories of people through whose hands they passed over four decades. It draws on archival sources to trace various manifestations of the images over time. The complementary approaches of object biography and oral history provide the framework for tracking the photographic encounters across temporal, geographic, discursive and institutional boundaries. Drawing on these intersecting approaches and taking cues from the scholarship on the intersection of photography, psychology, memory and social sciences, this thesis uses five framing devices for its analysis and findings: the mirror, the veil, the screen, the projection and the kaleidoscope to reflect on or account for the way in which the conscious and unconscious minds collude to shape the encounter with the images in the mind's eye.

Each of the elements of my research methodology are outlined below.

### ***Archival research***

News photographs, as multiples, may exist simultaneously in many collections or repositories, but they may also be lost or destroyed when they are inadvertently or deliberately excised from the printed page, categorised for filing, or assigned an inappropriate key word.<sup>218</sup> Chapter Eight notes that the only known first-generation print<sup>219</sup> of Samson's photographs is held in the library of the *Sunday Times* holding company, Times Media, now Arena Holdings. The only known print of Lagardien's photograph, a wirephoto, is held by the University of the Western Cape's Robben Island Museum Mayibuye Archives. The original cassette with the video footage made by the ARD television is held in the University of Cape Town's Special Collections Library. The ARD collection had not been digitised at the time of the devastating fire in April 2021 that destroyed the building in which it was housed and the status of the collection at the time of writing is uncertain.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> In the Times Media Library, for example, clippings relating to the Maseru Raid were stored in filing cabinets labeled "Blacks" and filed under "Conferences and Congresses: ANC."

<sup>219</sup> This is the only known print made from a negative, rather than rephotographed from a copy of the *Sunday Times*.

<sup>220</sup> Because the original cassette was in a format that is no longer accessible without highly specialised equipment, the footage was digitised, at my request, before the fire, and I have a copy of it in my research archive.

Copies of the edition of the *Sunday Times* in which Samson's photograph was published were accessed in legal deposit libraries, including the Cape Town Campus of the National Library of South Africa, the Johannesburg Public Library, and the Msunduzi Municipal Library. Digital copies of the newspaper are available via the Sunday Times Archive hosted online by Newsbank.<sup>221</sup> Other newspaper titles referenced in this thesis were accessed similarly in hard copy or on microfiche in the legal deposit libraries mentioned above.

Contextual information was located in news clipping collections compiled by various individuals and organisations which are held in: the University of Cape Town (UCT) Library's Special Collections Library; the Mayibuye Archives; the Historical Papers Research Archive at the University of the Witwatersrand; the ANC Archive at the University of Fort Hare (UFH), the SA Media Collection held by the University of the Free State (UFS), and now available in digital format through Sabinet and in digital format in the currently defunct ANC Online Archive.<sup>222</sup> Descriptions of video footage broadcasts in 1985 are to be found online in the archives of the relevant television news stations. Copies of the *Special Report* series broadcast in the 1990s, which included excerpts from this footage, are available via the SABC channel on YouTube, the South African History Archive (SAHA) *Truth Commission Special Report* website portal. Many of the records of the proceedings of the TRC, including submissions made by organisation and transcriptions of public hearings, are available online on the *Official Truth and Reconciliation Commission Website*,<sup>223</sup> hosted by the South African Department of Justice and Constitutional Development and the *Truth Commission Special Report* website,<sup>224</sup> developed by SAHA and the SABC. The records of the TRC have been transferred to the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (NARSSA), although many other documents were still, in 2024, under embargo, and unavailable to researchers. I was, able to access copies of news clippings referenced in one of the Amnesty Application Hearings, because these were not deemed to be confidential.

Publications produced by organisations associated with South African liberation movements provide a different perspective on the information published in the mainstream media. Although there is no single comprehensive collection of any of these titles, it is possible to track down individual copies in the libraries of the institutions listed above, or in online repositories such as Digital Innovation South Africa (DISA). Copies of *Sechaba*, *Rixaka*, and *Dawn* are held in digital repositories, including the *Struggles for Freedom: South Africa* collection and *IStor*, and in the collections of anti-apartheid movements held in institutions in South Africa, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and the United States of America. Copies of the images and associated information distributed on social media were tracked through extended online searches of personal websites, Facebook, and X (formerly

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<sup>221</sup> A commercial newspaper archive available to subscribers for an annual fee.

<sup>222</sup> Hard copies of the ANC collections can be consulted in person at the University of Fort Hare.

<sup>223</sup> *Official Truth and Reconciliation Commission Website*, accessed December 2024, <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/>.

<sup>224</sup> SABC / South African History Archive. *Truth Commission Special Report*. Accessed December 2024. [https://sabctr.saha.org.za/..](https://sabctr.saha.org.za/)

Twitter) accounts between 2014 and 2024.

Jackie and Leon's comrades Charles Nqakula,<sup>225</sup> Mzwakhe Ndllela,<sup>226</sup> and Marion Sparg<sup>227</sup> have shared their recollections of the attack, and its after-effects in their memoirs, as has Phyllis Naidoo, a close friend of the couple.<sup>228</sup> As discussed in Chapter Seven, Ismail Lagardien, Sam Msibi and Jenny Hobbs have published memoirs since we first communicated. Other interlocutors, including Warrick Swinney, James Sey, and Duncan Miller, have written about their encounters with the images in ways that both complement and complicate the information shared with me. Reading these, alongside the transcripts of the dialogues that formed part of my research, it is evident that interlocutors were more willing to share their deeply personal thoughts and feelings in conversation, while their accounts in writing were limited to a more factual description and presented in a more tightly structured narrative.

As evident above, the material and digital archive associated with the Raid and with the images of Jackie and Leon is patchy, fragmented, and partial, and scattered across institutions. Although these limitations mean that information about the distribution and repurposing of images is in some measure incomplete, I have made every effort to identify as many different instances of this as possible to ensure that the study is broadly representative of the uses to which these and similar images might be put.

### *Object biography*

Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart argue that photographs are both images *and* material objects; they exist physically in time and space, and in social and cultural experience, and are “enmeshed with subjective, embodied and sensuous interactions.”<sup>229</sup> As such, their meanings extend beyond content to incorporate materiality, the ways in which they are presented and circulated, and the purposes to which they are put over time.

Conceptualising images as material objects presents the opportunity to move beyond methodologies that favour the visual, and to explore approaches adopted in other disciplinary fields. Object biography – sometimes referred to as artefact biography – is an approach grounded in the notion that objects have multiple lives, afterlives or other lives which are shared with people and can be tracked, recorded, interpreted, and presented in the form of a life-story.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Nqakula, *The People's War*, 174 -180.

<sup>226</sup> Ndllela, *For the Fallen*, 79-91.

<sup>227</sup> Marion Sparg, *Guilty and Proud: An MK Soldier's Memoir of Exile, Prison and Freedom*, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2024), 130-135.

<sup>228</sup> Phyllis Naidoo, *Footprints Beyond Grey Street* (Phyllis Naidoo, 2007), 13-29.

<sup>229</sup> Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, *Photographs Objects Histories: On the materiality of images* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 1.

<sup>230</sup> Although this approach does not accord images the same degree of personhood as Mitchell does, as discussed in Chapter One, it does imply that objects have a degree of agency in their interactions with people, i.e. they are not inert.

This biographical approach was first posited in relation to objects of material culture by anthropologists Arjun Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff,<sup>231</sup> who contend that commodities (objects of value) are culturally constructed entities with social lives. They suggest that it is possible to construct a biography of 'things' in very much the same way as one constructs the biography of a person.<sup>232</sup> Such a biography, they argue, would examine not just the production and use of an object at a single point in time, but the changes that occurred in the way it was understood, or used, over time, and the individuals and events with which it was associated.<sup>233</sup> What is missing from the literature described above, though, is memory.

Unlike object histories, which focus on the long-term evolution or circulation of artefacts and technologies, object biographies attend closely to the dynamic interplay and complex relationships that exist between people and things<sup>234</sup> and encompass affect.<sup>235</sup> In the case of photographs and other objects which exist in multiples that live on in the world indefinitely, and operate simultaneously in different contexts, distinct but parallel biographies may be required.<sup>236</sup>

As a methodology, object biography has been used across a wide range of disciplines<sup>237</sup> to track the way meanings and values accumulate, shift, or transform as objects travel through time and geographies, and are encountered in different contexts. The approach has been extended, in respect of images, to encompass the shifts that occur from the moment the intention to produce it is formed in the mind of the creator to the moment it is discarded, destroyed, or preserved and retained in circulation. These have been tracked through close attention to changes that occur in relation to: activity or processes,<sup>238</sup> formats or platforms,<sup>239</sup> events and ideas

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<sup>231</sup> Arjun Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff, *The Social Life of Things* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 66.

<sup>232</sup> Appadurai and Kopytoff, *Social Life of Things*, 66-68.

<sup>233</sup> Appadurai and Kopytoff, 66-68.

<sup>234</sup> Elizabeth Edwards, "Objects of Affect: Photography beyond the image," *Annual review of anthropology* 41, no. 1 (2012), 222.

<sup>235</sup> The thinking of art critic William Mitchell aligns loosely with theorists working in the field of object biography. See Chapter Three.

<sup>236</sup> Theopisti Stylianou-Lambert, "Photographic Ecosystems and Archives," *Photographies* 12, no. 3, (2019), 275-294.

<sup>237</sup> See Donna Lee Brien, "Object biography and its potential in creative writing," *New Writing* 17, no. 4, (2020), 378-380.

<sup>238</sup> Appadurai and Kopytoff's approach was extended by John Tagg (1988) to incorporate the way in which photographs moved through the phases of production, distribution, circulation, and consumption. Similarly, Lister and Wells (2011), building on the 'circuit of culture' defined by du Gay (1997), contend that the moments of production, circulation and consumption contribute differently to the accumulation of multiple meanings.

<sup>239</sup> Rory Bester (2015) frames his analysis of David Goldblatt's photographs around the moments of witnessing, translation and archive, arguing that the multiple lives of Goldblatt's photographs "accumulate in public life in different iterations through the acts of translation, rumination, circulation, repetition and visibility." See Rory Bester. "Writing photography's archive of apartheid: theories and methods for understanding the work of David Goldblatt." (PhD Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 2015). Litheko Modisane similarly analyses the extended public lives of black centred films in South Africa in the contexts of production, circulation, appropriation, and engagement. See Litheko Modisane. *South Africa's Renegade Reels: The Making and Public Lives of Black-Centred Films*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

associated with a particular time or period or place,<sup>240</sup> and changes in status,<sup>241</sup> as the image moves from one set of hands into another.<sup>242</sup> As Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzers note, “. . .photographs keep developing in unforeseen directions when they are viewed and reviewed by different people in different presents. In ‘liquid time’ they are not fixed into static permanence, rather, they remain dynamic, unfixed, as they acquire new meanings in new circumstances.”<sup>243</sup>

While the scholars cited above offer useful insights into ways of tracking images across multiple environments, my approach is more closely aligned with the methodological framework developed by Sarah Awad to track the social life of images. This involves four moves: situating the images within their temporal, spatial, sociocultural, historical and political contexts so as to understand how they relate to broader developments and discourse in the public domain, in this case the transition from the apartheid regime into a new democratic order that impacted on all spheres of society;<sup>244</sup> identifying the actors who interacted with the images, in this case photographers, exhibition curators, activists, scholars, archivists and others detailed in Chapters Four to Eight;<sup>245</sup> documenting stages in the life of the images as they were circulated, received, interpreted or transformed across temporal, geographic, discursive and institutional boundaries, in this case tracking the lives of the images in relation to news, resistance, public history, academic study and reflection, and in the archive;<sup>246</sup> and considering their symbolic power to influence public discourse across these realms.<sup>247</sup>

In structuring the biographies of the images of Jackie and Leon in relation to key encounters people had with them, I was cognisant too of Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s conceptualisation of the moments when silences are encoded in the production of history. Namely, “the moment of fact creation (the making of *sources*); the moment of fact assembly (the making of *archives*); the moment of fact retrieval (the making of *narratives*); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of *history* in the final instance).”<sup>248</sup> These moments may

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<sup>240</sup> Christopher Pinney tracks the changing role of the social life of Indian portrait photographs from colonial through postcolonial times. See Christopher Pinney. *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). Pamela Kea uses information about the production, exchange, and reception of family photographs to track transnational kinship relations between Gambian parents and their children resident in different countries. See Pamela Kea, “Photography, care and the visual economy of Gambian transatlantic kinship relations.” *Journal of Material Culture* 22, no. 1 (2016), 51-71.

<sup>241</sup> Caswell adapts Trouillot’s framework to include the ‘moment of commodification’ in her analysis of the lives of photographs of prisoners once incarcerated in Cambodia’s notorious Tuol Sleng prison. See Michelle Caswell, *Archiving the Unspeakable: Silence, Memory, and the Photographic Record in Cambodia* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 2014), 136-156.

<sup>242</sup> Various frameworks have been posited to understand the social lives of objects and their interactions with other elements within the environments in which they operate or circulate. While these are generally useful and of interest in understanding the wider circulation of images, and may constitute a topic for future research, they relate peripherally to the central focus of this thesis, which is the encounter with the images in memory.

<sup>243</sup> Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, *School Photos in Liquid Time: Reframing Difference*, (Seattle:University of Washington Press, 2020), 13.

<sup>244</sup> Sarah H Awad, “The social life of images,” 29-30.

<sup>245</sup> Sarah H Awad, 31.

<sup>246</sup> Sarah H Awad, 31-35.

<sup>247</sup> Sarah H Awad, 35-36.

<sup>248</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 26.

also be usefully applied when tracking shifts in relation both to encounters and visibility: building an understanding of how and when the images came into view or were sequestered from sight.

The images of Jackie and Leon were made to be used in news reports. In this thesis, I use the terms ‘afterlife’ or the alternative ‘other life,’ proposed by Patricia Hayes and Iona Gilbert,<sup>249</sup> to describe the way in which the images have been used beyond the photographers’ original intention, or in other iterations.

The object biography approach provides a methodology for tracking the movement of the images across temporal, geographic, discursive and institutional boundaries, and for identifying individuals who had interacted them. It does not afford access to the thoughts, feelings and memories of these individuals; that requires an altogether different methodology, based in the field of oral history.

### *Oral history*

Tracking the ways in which viewers encountered these images and remembered, misremembered, or forgot them, required a different set of skills and resources to studying the biography of the photographic images.

Unlike material traces of the past, people’s memories and feelings are mutable, fragile, fluid, and contingent, difficult to access, record, or preserve. While information gathered through archival research was useful in constructing biographies of the images, oral history dialogues made it possible to access, record, and preserve the otherwise intangible thoughts and feelings of those who had encountered the images. Although the veracity and credibility of oral testimony has been questioned, historians – including Trouillot – acknowledge oral history as a valid source of “fact creation”<sup>250</sup> in the production of history, arguing that “history begins with bodies and artifacts, living brains, fossils, texts, buildings.”<sup>251</sup> Nonetheless, he points out that, in the case of “oral transmission, the moment of fact creation is continually carried over in the very bodies of the individuals who partake in that transmission. The *source* is alive.”<sup>252</sup> While this statement may be construed as cautionary, it should also be taken as an exhortation to embrace the complexities of doing oral history.<sup>253</sup> This is the option I have chosen to take.

Linda Shopes defines oral history as “a self-conscious, disciplined conversation between two people about some aspect of the past considered by them to be of historical significance and intentionally recorded for the record.”<sup>254</sup> Donald Ritchie contends that, although historians have conducted interviews “to gain insight into

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<sup>249</sup> Patricia Hayes and Iona Gilbert, “Other lives of the Image,” *Kronos* 46 no.,1 (2020), 46.

<sup>250</sup> Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 29.

<sup>251</sup> Trouillot, 29.

<sup>252</sup> Trouillot, 162.

<sup>253</sup> This term is used in the title of a foundational text on oral history in Donald A Ritchie, *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010)

<sup>254</sup> Linda Shopes, “What is Oral History?” *History Matters: The U.S. Survey on the Web*, accessed October 2023, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu>.

great events”<sup>255</sup> for at least the last 3 000 years, oral history as an academic discipline first emerged in the United States of America in the 1950s as a way of gathering information from “political, economic and cultural elites.”<sup>256</sup> In the mid-1960s, oral history was adopted in Europe and the United Kingdom by leftist political movements focussing on the histories of the “overlooked or oppressed.”<sup>257</sup> This “renaissance of memory as an historical source”,<sup>258</sup> as Alistair Thomson terms it, resulted in the proliferation of projects aimed at collecting the hidden, or neglected histories, of marginalised groups including women, workers and ethnic minorities.<sup>259</sup> Writing in 1978, Paul Thompson argued that the use of oral evidence represented a fundamental shift in the way history was “written and learnt”<sup>260</sup> because it transformed the “‘objects of study’ into ‘subjects.’”<sup>261</sup> This, he asserted, made for “a history which is not just richer, more vivid and heart-rending, but truer.”<sup>262</sup>

In South Africa the leftist position which resonated with the re-emergence of popular resistance was embraced enthusiastically by some historians and activists in the late 1970s and 1980s, as is evident in the many projects associated with workers, trade unions and other topics aligned with ‘people’s history’ during this period.<sup>263</sup> While these projects differed in many ways, they shared an intention to recover history or address silences by giving ‘voice to the voiceless’ and bringing the lives of ‘ordinary people’ into view by ‘capturing their memories.’ Many of these projects were also touted as ‘filling the gaps,’ with transcripts being ‘mined’ for information to supplement the ‘biased apartheid archive.’<sup>264</sup> These projects were applauded by activists, but oral historians in South Africa, as elsewhere, faced stiff opposition from positivist historians who cited the fallibility of memory and the subjectivity of interlocutors, and researchers, to argue its unreliability as a historical source.<sup>265</sup>

Notwithstanding these reservations, oral history was adopted wholeheartedly in the late 1990s by the post-apartheid government,<sup>266</sup> and especially national and provincial archival services, as a means to fulfil their mandates to “collect non-public records of enduring value” and to “document aspects of the nation’s

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<sup>255</sup> Donald A Richie, *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 3.

<sup>256</sup> Richie, *Handbook of Oral History* 3.

<sup>257</sup> Richie, 3.

<sup>258</sup> Alistair Thomson, “Four Paradigm Transformations,” *Oral History* 34, no. 1, 59.

<sup>259</sup> Shopes, “What is Oral History?”

<sup>260</sup> Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past* (London: Oxford University Press, 1978), 72.

<sup>261</sup> Thompson, *Voice of the Past*, 99.

<sup>262</sup> Thompson, 99.

<sup>263</sup> Among these were the History Workshop at the University of the Witwatersrand, The Western Cape Oral History Project (WCOHP) – which later became the now defunct Centre for Popular Memory at the University of Cape Town, and the Natal Worker History Project at the University of Natal (Durban). Sean Field, “Turning up the Volume: Dialogues about Memory Create Oral Histories,” *South African Historical Journal* 60, no. 2, (2008) 175-194.

<sup>264</sup> I have deliberately used these terms to give a sense of the rhetoric of the time.

<sup>265</sup> Some of these debates are articulated in Isobel Hofmeyr, *We Spend our Years as a Tale That Is Told: Oral Historical Narrative in a South African Chieftdom* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 1993).

<sup>266</sup> “In 1999 the then Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) was mandated by Cabinet to conceptualise and implement the National Oral History Programme (NOHP). The Oral History Association of South Africa (OHASA) was established subsequently in 2005, under the auspices of the National Archives and Records Service to continue the work begun by this programme. See Oral History Association of South Africa, *About*, accessed June 2024, <https://ohasa.org.za/organisation/>.

experience neglected by archives repositories in the past.”<sup>267</sup> In this guise, and in the interests of inclusivity, oral history was embraced as a panacea, a form of redress, to restore the dignity of people marginalised by colonialism and apartheid rule, and to add value to the burgeoning interest in indigenous knowledge systems.

Beyond the remit of the national archival system in South Africa, oral history took a slightly different path, with a focus on the creation of community histories. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) gained prominence as a way of documenting individual experiences of oppression and resistance as a contribution to healing and the recovery or creation of struggle biographies. As Sean Field argues, “the turn in oral history methods in post-apartheid South Africa, especially since 2000, is laudable in its intention to record, interpret, archive and disseminate the stories of people who suffered the abuses of pre-apartheid and apartheid south Africa.”<sup>268</sup> More recently oral history has been embraced as part of a broader academic endeavour to ‘decolonise’ history. While this approach is honourable, there are concerns that the absence of critical awareness, coupled with the headlong dash to ‘fill gaps,’ means that the inherent value of oral history may be compromised, undervalued, or ignored. The opportunity to dig beneath the surface, to practice deep listening, i.e. listening for meaning rather than facts, and to respond to interlocutors in a way that enables reflexivity rather than a recitation of facts, is often lost.<sup>269</sup>

Alessandro Portelli’s 1979 analysis, *What Makes Oral History Different*,<sup>270</sup> framed as a response to positivist historians who dismissed oral sources as being subjective and unreliable, merits attention here, because it sets out the qualities that make oral history “intrinsically different, and therefore specifically useful.”<sup>271</sup> This is of special relevance to this thesis because it addresses questions of memory, and the communication of memories in dialogues between researchers and narrators. At the heart of the analysis is Portelli’s framing of memory as the “active process of creation of meaning,”<sup>272</sup> rather than “a passive depository of facts.”<sup>273</sup> Thus, he argues, the value of oral sources lies “not so much in their ability to preserve the past, as in the very changes wrought by memory”<sup>274</sup> which, he says “reveal the narrators’ efforts to make sense of the past and to give a form to their lives.”<sup>275</sup> Portelli ascribes these changes in memory to shifts that might have occurred in the “narrators’ personal subjective consciousness,” their socio-economic status, political opinions or personal

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<sup>267</sup> Republic of South Africa, *National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act, No. 43 of 1996*, as amended, 3(d).

<sup>268</sup> Field, “Turning up the Volume”, 181.

<sup>269</sup> Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki, “Only Human: A Reflection on the Ethical and Methodological Challenges of Working with ‘Difficult’ Stories,” *The Oral History Review* 37, no 2, (2010), 199.

<sup>270</sup> This paper, first published in 1979, is included in Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 45-58.

<sup>271</sup> Portelli, 46.

<sup>272</sup> Portelli, 54.

<sup>273</sup> Portelli, 54 .

<sup>274</sup> Portelli, 54.

<sup>275</sup> Portelli, 52.

circumstances.<sup>276</sup> Although he does not address the issue of temporality in any detail, Portelli does observe that some narrators are able to articulate past attitudes, even if these attitudes are no longer current in the present.<sup>277</sup>

Essentially, Portelli asserts that oral history “tells us less about *events* than about their *meaning*” for the narrator.”<sup>278</sup> And that meaning is created not just through the information that is shared, or the stories that are told, but also through the manner of the telling. The tone, cadence, inflection, volume and tempo of the spoken words, the pauses between them, and digressions in the storyline reveal the ways in which an experience is remembered, and how it has affected the narrator, conveying meanings that cannot be communicated in the same way in writing.<sup>279</sup>

Portelli explains, too, that oral accounts are essentially narrative in nature, and that narrators may reveal, conceal, misrepresent, or gloss over parts of the story, and embroider, or downplay, their own role in it. Understanding this, oral historians do not claim that their sources are objective. On the contrary, they acknowledge their subjectivity and inherent status as “*artificial, variable and partial.*”<sup>280</sup> This does not make the narrative less true, Portelli argues, because “the errors and even the lies reveal, under scrutiny, the creative processes of memory, imagination, symbolism and interpretation that endow events with cultural significance.”<sup>281</sup>

Reflecting on the creation of oral sources, Portelli maintains that they are the product of a shared endeavour: the dialogue between researcher and narrator, and always a work in progress, subject to change.<sup>282</sup>

Summarising the fundamental shift Portelli brought to the practice of oral history, Steven High notes that, “Instead of mining for data, oral historians now approach the interview as a life story narrative”<sup>283</sup> contending that we “try to see the past through the eyes of someone else – coming to an understanding of ‘their truths.’”<sup>284</sup>

Portelli’s analysis has been embraced by other oral history scholars referred to in this chapter including Lynn

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<sup>276</sup> Portelli, 52-53.

<sup>277</sup> Portelli, 53.

<sup>278</sup> Portelli, 50.

<sup>279</sup> Portelli, 48.

<sup>280</sup> Portelli, 53.

<sup>281</sup> Portelli, 51.

<sup>282</sup> Portelli, 55.

<sup>283</sup> Steven High, “What can oral history teach us” *Active History*, accessed January 2024, <https://activehistory.ca/papers/what-can-oral-history-teach-us/>, unpaginated.

<sup>284</sup> High “What can oral history teach us.”

Abrahams, Sean Field, Michael Frisch,<sup>285</sup> Luisa Passerini, Linda Shopes, Alistair Thomson, and Valerie Yow.<sup>286</sup> It has informed the work of many others in the field, and remains a seminal text, but it does not address the intersection of oral history and the visual: the kaleidoscope of images that pass through the mind of the narrator as they speak.

### *Remembering with photographs*

Affirming the close relationship of the visual in relation to memory and the construction of narratives, Alexander Freund and Alistair Thomson explain that it is a common practice for oral historians to use photographs as mnemonic devices to “stimulate the narrator to remember,”<sup>287</sup> in their quest to solicit information about events or experiences. They surmise that this approach arises from a limited understanding of photographs as mere “containers of facts about past events or experiences”<sup>288</sup> whose verisimilitude is not questioned. Calling for deeper engagement with the use of photographs in oral history dialogues, they explain that, “Oral history and photography intersect at important epistemic points: evidence, memory, and storytelling. Both are used as forms of evidence; both require memory work; and both are forms of storytelling.”<sup>289</sup> Arguing that photography is a reflexive medium, they contend that photographs “not only trigger but shape memory” and are in turn “seen or read through memory.”<sup>290</sup> And, that the use of photographs in oral history dialogues enriches and adds texture to narratives, evoking a “different kind of life story.”<sup>291</sup>

These views concur with those expressed by Douglas Harper, who suggests that “photo elicitation mines deeper shafts into a different part of human consciousness than do words-alone interviews,”<sup>292</sup> explaining that “remembering is enlarged by photographs”<sup>293</sup> leading to “deep and interesting talk.”<sup>294</sup> This may also have the opposite effect; encounters with photographs may surface unsettling memories that cannot be easily expressed in words, rendering the narrator speechless, which result in silences, pauses and disjointed narratives. Richard Vokes, describing a project in Uganda where photographs were used to “strengthen intergenerational memory” about a difficult period in the country’s history by generating shared narratives of the Idi Amin years, observes

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<sup>285</sup>Michael Frisch argued in 1990 that memory was the subject, not just the source, of oral history, and that, as a methodology, oral history offered a way to understand “how the past becomes part of the present and how people use it to interpret their lives and the world around them.” See, Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority, Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 88.

<sup>286</sup>Valerie Yow, notes that the acknowledgement of subjectivity represented a paradigm shift in oral history and urged researchers to reflect more deeply on the interaction with their subjects. See Valerie Yow, “Do I like them too much? Effects of the oral history interview on the researcher and vice-versa,” *Oral History Review* 24, no. 1 (1997).

<sup>287</sup>Alexander Freund and Alistair Thomson, eds. *Oral History and Photography* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 3.

<sup>288</sup>Freund and Thompson, *Oral History and Photography* 3.

<sup>289</sup>Freund and Thomson, 2.

<sup>290</sup>Freund and Thomson, 6.

<sup>291</sup>Freund and Thomson, 13.

<sup>292</sup>Douglas Harper, “Talking about pictures: a case for photo elicitation,” *Visual Studies* 17, no. 1, (2002), 14.

<sup>293</sup>Harper, “Talking about pictures”, 23.

<sup>294</sup>Harper, 23.

that it is not only the memories that come into view through the use of images, but also the ‘silences’ in the photographic archive. He attributes these silences to the paucity of images, which he argues is associated with the archive’s “general silence on all of the great suffering, torture, and violence that Uganda experienced at this time.”<sup>295</sup>

Although existing scholarship on oral history, photographs and memory contains much that is of value, it does not address the interface between photographs and mental images. It also does not respond to the question that underlies this research project; how and why specific images may be remembered, misremembered or forgotten, and what comes to mind when those images are recalled. Nor does it respond to a conceptually aligned question posed by Field, who asked “how can oral historians interpret the mental snapshots taken by the mind’s eye?”<sup>296</sup> This is a challenge I have addressed in my approach to the dialogues, outlined below, which emphasises the need to watch attentively, as one listens to the words that are spoken.

### *The oral history dialogues*

An oral history dialogue is the central element of a process that begins with the identification of potential interlocutors and extends well past the recorded interaction. As Bilgin, *et. al.*, note, the interview is a phased encounter that begins with the first communication between the researcher and the interlocutors and continues through the interview to the communications that follow subsequently.<sup>297</sup>

From the outset, I defined potential interlocutors broadly as, people through whose hands the images of Jackie and Leon had passed, that is, the photographers, filmmakers, journalists, archivists, exhibition curators, historians, scholars, writers, and artists, listed in the References. Family members, friends, and comrades were specifically excluded. Jackie’s mother gave this project her blessing but said that she did not want to talk about that time at all, explaining tearfully that it would be “too difficult to have to relive.” For this reason, I chose not to expose those close to the victims to further pain. This does not mean that their voices have been silenced: where appropriate, their thoughts or feelings as expressed in publications, broadcasts, and on publicly accessible social media platforms, have been cited.

All interlocutors were invited, in writing, to engage in a dialogue. Emails initiating this described the nature and the purpose of the research, explained how and why the participant had been identified, and spelt out my

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<sup>295</sup> Richard Vokes, “{Re)sounding photographs: The politics of silence and cacophony of memory from Idi Amion’s Uganda,” *Visual Anthropology Review* 41, no1, 2025, accessed online, September 2025, <https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/var.70012>.

<sup>296</sup> Sean Field, *Oral History, Community and Displacement: Imagining Memories in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 141.

<sup>297</sup> Bilgin Ayata, Cilja Harders, Derya Ozkaya and Dina Wahba, “Interviews as situated affective encounters: a relational and processual approach for empirical research on affect emotion and politics,” in *Analyzing Affective Societies: Methods and methodologies*, edited by Anje Kahl (London and New York, Routledge, 2019), 69.

personal, professional and academic interest in the images of Jackie and Leon. With three exceptions, those I contacted were agreeable to sharing the story of their personal encounters with the images: one person, who seemed amenable at first, subsequently refused, apologetically informing me that it would be too difficult to bring up the past. Two others, who expressed their reluctance when first approached, contacted me unexpectedly at a later stage, setting up meetings at short notice, and providing profoundly moving explanations for their hesitancy.

Dialogues were conducted at venues identified by the interlocutors. While a handful chose to meet in the seclusion of their offices or places of work, most favoured public spaces. The challenges this presented to the production of high-quality recording were outweighed, in my opinion, by the benefit of putting interlocutors at ease. Although professional recording equipment was used in the earlier interviews, the presence of the device seemed to unsettle or discomfort interlocutors and I chose in later discussions to use a voice recording app on my i-phone, positioned unobtrusively on the table.<sup>298</sup>

I took a gradual approach to the interviews, engaging in conversation at the start of each interview. Where I was acquainted, this provided an opportunity to catch up on news and activities. If I was meeting an interlocutor for the first time, this allowed for a broader introduction than had been possible by email, and provided an opportunity for me to respond to any questions they might have had.

Generally, interlocutors were eager to share their memories, and when it became clear that they were ready to do so, I would stop the preliminary conversation and ask permission to begin recording, signalling the start of the research dialogue. I chose not to show the interlocutors copies of the images when we met, hoping that this would allow them to focus their attention fully on the recalled images.<sup>299</sup> While a couple of the interlocutors expressed some anxiety about this, explaining that they were not sure that they could recall the images clearly, most spoke confidently about the image they remembered, or in some cases misremembered. Observing this, I wondered whether the absence of the material image liberated them in some way, allowing them to think and express themselves more expansively than they might otherwise have done.

Although each interaction was different, they followed a similar pattern. Interlocutors would share stories about their initial encounters with one or other of the images. Generally, they focussed on their personal or professional situations to contextualise the encounter, spoke at length about how the image had affected them when they first saw it, and made mention of it as being 'unforgettable'. Once this narrative was exhausted, they seemed to feel that they had given me what I wanted to hear. But memories are non-linear and may be difficult

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<sup>298</sup> I use two i-phones, simultaneously, taking care to position these differently to ensure that the recordings were audible, no matter how intrusive the background noises were.

<sup>299</sup> I carried copies of the images with me, lest any of the interlocutors express an interest in viewing them, and shared these only after the dialogue had been concluded.

to structure into a tidy story, and on many occasions the narratives segued seamlessly into a deeper reflection on their personal circumstances. Even then, the images of Jackie and Leon served as a touchstone for interlocutors who continued to reference aspects of the images, and the associated story, as they sought to make meaning of the fears and anxieties they evoked.

Two of the interlocutors offered carefully guarded responses, demonstrating a lively intellectual interest in the images while remaining emotionally detached from them. Sometimes, when interlocutors hesitated, but clearly wanted to say more, or were confounded by the limitations of language, a little gentle probing on my part opened a floodgate of emotion, an outpouring of memory, or an extended silence. Sometimes, and only if it had not already been done, I asked interlocutors to describe the images or to tell me what they 'saw' in their mind's eye when they remembered the image, introducing this question quite casually, hoping to receive a spontaneous response. Admittedly, it is not possible to 'see' the images conjured up in the mind's eye in conversation, but the clues are there, if one *listens* and *watches* attentively.

As the dialogues progressed, so the methodology I applied evolved. I learnt to pick up on other clues, both verbal and non-verbal: the choice of words used to describe the remembered image; language that denoted imagery and mentions of other senses, like sound and smell that signalled an experience that went beyond the visual; the silences, pauses and hesitations in the narratives as speakers grappled with the challenge of describing the images visible only to themselves, or the haunting flashbacks which, unmoored from their historical contexts, seemed to stand alone as intimate and unsettling encounters; references made to other photographs that lingered sharply in the minds of interlocutors; gestures and the body language, observing when interlocutors leaned in towards me, sat back, clasped their hands together or wiped the tears from their eyes; the moments when interlocutors broke eye contact to stare unseeingly into the distance as their minds focussed on images visible only to themselves. The longer we spoke, the more profound the dialogues became, looping backwards and forwards in time as one memory set off another and new connections were formed in the minds of the interlocutors, adding another layer to their narratives or bringing other images into view.

All interlocutors were asked to sign interview consent or release forms and offered the option of using a pseudonym to mask their identities. Although this was not requested, some information has been redacted or otherwise rendered unidentifiable to protect certain individuals. In one case an individual mentioned a family member's death, and the fear that it had been suicide, rather than an accident; another shared incriminating information about a former colleague; a third shared personal information that might have proved damaging to an intimate relationship had it been exposed. In each case, the information was generalised in the discussion, where relevant, or omitted, and redacted from the transcripts. All recordings and transcripts have been safely stored in hard copy and digital format in my research archive and will be lodged in the UCT Library, as required,

in due course. To preserve confidentiality – and personal information – interlocutors were given the option of making these accessible or place them under embargo for a set period.

I have tried, following a deep engagement on the issue with one interlocutor, to give back something to each person who I have engaged with. To this end, I have *inter alia*, organised for the papers of one writer to be lodged in a national repository, peer-reviewed a publication, purchased and donated copies of a book to a local library, and made contributions to NGOs.

### *Remembering together*

An oral history dialogue often feels like a ballroom dance or duet: a carefully choreographed interaction between two people that segues seamlessly into an uncharted improvisation.<sup>300</sup> As with any dance duet, one partner takes the lead and sets the pace, but as the dance progresses there are moments of give and take, moments of anxiety when one partner is out of step with another, and flashes of synergy as they come together to co-create something new and unexpected.

Although this study is not framed as auto-anthropology, and I do not consider myself a participant-observer, the familial connection to Jackie required that my engagements with others be navigated with particular care, especially given the evocative and sometimes wounding nature of the images. Nevertheless, my personal connection facilitated a degree of mutuality, situating me, alongside interlocutors, as someone who had, like them, been affected by the images.<sup>301</sup> Similarly, being acquainted with, or having worked alongside, several of the interlocutors in a professional or academic capacity, and having established relationships of respect and trust, I had privileged access to people's personal reflections. My status as an older woman also made it easier, I felt, for individuals to share thoughts and feelings they may have felt less comfortable divulging to an unknown or younger researcher. Nevertheless, I was mindful that the experiences and feelings of others might differ from mine,<sup>302</sup> I needed to guard against allowing my own perceptions and opinions to deflect attention away from, unduly influence, or dilute their narratives. My experiences resonate with those described by Bilgin Ayata, *et al*, who frame such engagements as "situated affective encounters"<sup>303</sup> and contend that feelings and emotions, as well as the interactions between both parties, are integral to the process, and should be documented and analysed alongside transcriptions of the spoken word.<sup>304</sup>

For several interlocutors, the dialogue presented an opportunity to articulate and engage with troubling issues

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<sup>300</sup> Theresa Edlmann who having read an early draft of this chapter commented that my description of the dialogue reminded her of a dance.

<sup>301</sup> Sean Field, "Critical empathy through oral histories after apartheid," *Continuum: Journal of Cultural and Media Studies* 3, no. 5 (2017), 664.

<sup>302</sup> Field, "Critical empathy", 664.

<sup>303</sup> Ayata, Harders, Ozkaya and Wahba, "Interviews as situated affective encounters, 65.

<sup>304</sup> Ayata, Harders, Ozkaya and Wahba, 69.

that they had not addressed previously. For some, simply putting the hitherto unbearable, unspeakable, into words came as a relief, however difficult that proved to be. Although I worried about how they would process this on their own after the interview. Listening, as interlocutors exposed their personal fears and vulnerabilities, was hard. My immediate instinct was to reach out, to offer consolation, but as a researcher I knew I needed to maintain a professional distance, connecting empathetically without overstepping boundaries, while at the same time honouring the academic imperative for critical reflection.<sup>305</sup> I was aware always of the tension between taking the lead, posing the difficult questions needed to advance my research, and following them, listening and observing the unspoken clues without interrupting or intruding. I was aware too of the burden of expectations – both mine and theirs.

Although in theory a dialogue is co-created, and the notion of shared authority embraced by oral historians including Michael Frisch<sup>306</sup> is laudable, it is generally understood that the researcher, who initiates the dialogue and sets the agenda, wields more power in the interaction. I felt obliged to engage ethically, to listen, observe, and record, and document the encounter fully, to interpret, analyse and reflect on what was said in a scholarly manner, and to ensure that the dignity and privacy of the interlocutor and others mentioned in the dialogue was not unduly compromised.<sup>307</sup> Although it was never stated explicitly, I expected that interlocutors would speak truthfully, and hold back information that may wound others, or compromise themselves in one way or another. This was not always the case. I have chosen to redact some information from the interviews, as explained above.

I am deeply grateful for the candour with which people generously shared their memories and touched by their willingness to expose some deeply personal wounds and vulnerabilities. Many of the interlocutors were overcome with emotion at some point, some wept unashamedly, others struggled to hold back their tears or steady their voices. Holding them quietly in that space without intruding, without compromising their dignity or pride, and steering them gently back into the conversation once they had regained their composure, required enormous reserves of empathy on my part, and a rock-steady resolve on theirs.<sup>308</sup> Several interlocutors thanked me afterwards for giving them the opportunity to unburden themselves.

My personal interest and investment in the research made the process emotionally taxing, as did re-encountering the images through the eyes of others. Some of the dialogues have weighted heavily on my heart and mind. There is always a degree of anxiety present when one engages in an oral history dialogue, always the

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<sup>305</sup> This point is central to Sean Field's approach to oral history. See Field, "Critical empathy" 660-670.

<sup>306</sup> Frisch *A Shared Authority*, xx-xxii.

<sup>307</sup> Researchers are required to ensure that information shared in interlocutors does not compromise the right to personal privacy as defined in the *Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013* (POPIA).

<sup>308</sup> I am grateful for the support provided by my supervisor, Dr. Sean Field, in our many discussions about the emotional weightiness of the oral history dialogues, and for the guidelines provided in his perceptive Chapter, "What Can I Do When the Interviewee Cries?": Oral History Strategies for Containment and Regeneration," in *Oral History in a Wounded Country: Interactive interviewing in South Africa*, eds. Philippe Denis and Radikobo Ntsimane, (Scottville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008), 144-168.

worry that the interaction will not deliver what one yearns to hear or gain from it: that it might stymie the project in some way. But there were moments of exhilaration, as the dialogues brought flashes of insight or pointed the way to new paths of exploration. It has been a privilege to have had the opportunity to reflect so intensely, and in the company of others, on the images that have haunted me for almost four decades. Many of the dialogues ended with interlocutors questioning me closely about my own encounters with the images and listening in solidarity as I spoke in what felt like a moment of deep connection. When asked how I managed to retain such a degree of emotional equilibrium in the dialogues, I explained that I screened my very precise memory of the images of Jackie and Leon in the mortuary with a happier one: a feisty, rosy cheeked toddler clomping around a rustic farmhouse in oversized wellington boots, calling loudly for her grandfather, her voice echoing his commanding tone.

### **Conceptual framing devices: the mirror, the veil, the screen, the projection, and the kaleidoscope**

As the dialogues proceeded an intriguing disjuncture between the material images of Jackie and Leon and the descriptions offered by those who encountered the photographs in memory came into view. Taking cues from the scholarship on the intersection of photography, psychology, memory and social sciences, this thesis proposes five framing devices: the mirror, the veil, the screen, the projection, and the kaleidoscope to reflect on or account for the way in which the conscious and unconscious minds collude to frame the encounter with the images in the mind's eye.

The devices are described below, for reference purposes and signalled in the chapters that follow.

The **mirror** is used in this thesis as a metaphor for the perceived truth or verisimilitude of photographs, ascribed to their denotive, referential, or indexical value, in recording an event, person, landscape etc., 'as they were' at a particular moment in time,<sup>309</sup> to reflect a moment of the past in the present. Writing when the discipline of photography was in its infancy, Oliver Wendall described the new technology as "mirror with a memory,"<sup>310</sup> because it captured and made transportable a moment in time in a format that defied temporal and spatial bounds and, since photographs captured and reflected what they 'saw' without interpreting the moment. Photographs are described similarly by Sontag as, "certifying experiences"<sup>311</sup> and by Barthes as evidence of that which has been.<sup>312</sup> Circling back to Holmes, Simone Natale, uses the term, "mirror with wings"<sup>313</sup> to

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<sup>309</sup> By contrast, the connotative quality of an image refers to the underlying message encoded in the image or the symbolic system that gives it meaning.

<sup>310</sup> Oliver Wendell Holmes, *Atlantic Monthly* in 1859, cited in, Olga Shevchenko, "'The mirror with a memory' placing photography in memory studies." Anna Lisa Tota and Trever Hagen, *Routledge International Handbook of Memory Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 272-287, 273.

<sup>311</sup> Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, 9.

<sup>312</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982), 77.

<sup>313</sup> Simone Natale, "A mirror with wings: Photography and the New Era of Communications" in *Photography and Other Media in the Nineteenth Century* eds. Nicoletta Leonardi and Simone Natale (Pennsylvania, Penn State University Press, 2019) 36-48.

describe the plethora of images communicated electronically in digital format, that bring the world beyond temporal and spatial barriers instantly within reach.

Lagardien's photograph of Jackie and Leon was presented in 1993 partially obscured, by a sheet of tracing paper, so as not to unsettle museum visitors. In the present, social media platforms like Facebook, similarly conceal disturbing content behind a digital veil.<sup>314</sup> Taking a cue from these precedents, the **veil** is applied in this thesis as a device to reflect on ways in which the photographs of Jackie and Leon are or have been obscured or partially concealed from view, perception, and memory.

The veil, the most used metaphor in this thesis, has long been utilised as a visual, material or metaphysical device by artists to suggest concealment or to point to a truth that lies beneath the surface and has yet to be exposed. The veil has also been employed across a range of other disciplines to suggest partial concealment or separation, that changes the way in which the veiled subject is perceived: W.E.B. Du Bois uses the term “veils of colour”<sup>315</sup> to describe racial segregation, structuralist theorists conceive ideologies as “veils” that conceal the desires and emotions of historical subjects, while Joan Scott and other scholars argue that the veils worn by Muslim women make them visible in a way that is different, rather than rendering them invisible.<sup>316</sup> Reflecting on language, and this is pertinent to the juxtaposition of words and images, Ben Stoltzfus argues that it serves as an “opaque veil” through which the world is apprehended,<sup>317</sup> adding that “from a Lacanian point of view representation is fantasy (*méconnaissance*) because every conscious discourse veils an accompanying discourse that is unconscious.”<sup>318</sup> Johannes Fried cautions historians against the “veil of memory” when using sources based on recollection, arguing that with every act of recall, the brain selects, deconstructs, and reconstructs memory, adapting it to known narratives or current expectations.<sup>319</sup> While the thinking of the theorists mentioned above may be applied to identifying and analysing the ‘veils’ that obscure photographs, Victor Burgin suggests, that photographs themselves may be construed as device of concealment or obfuscation arguing that, “to look at a photograph beyond a certain period of time is to court a frustration; the image which on first looking gave pleasure has by degrees become a veil behind which we now desire to see.”<sup>320</sup> Although the term “mask” is sometimes used interchangeably with “veil” to suggest concealment, Peter Baehr<sup>321</sup> argues that it serves a different function. The mask, he says, invokes the idea of removal, of exposing

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<sup>314</sup> Meta Transparency Centre, *Violent and Graphic Content: Policy Rationale*. Accessed June 2024, <https://transparency.meta.com/en-gb/policies/community-standards/violent-graphic-content/>.

<sup>315</sup> Peter Baehr, “The image of the veil in social theory,” *Theory and Society* 48, no. 4 (August 2019), 546.

<sup>316</sup> Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 3-5.

<sup>317</sup> Ben Stoltzfus, “Lacan, Robbe-Grillet, and Autofiction,” *The International Fiction Review* 19, no. 1 (1992), 8.

<sup>318</sup> Stoltzfus, “Lacan, Robbe-Grillet, and Autofiction”, 8.

<sup>319</sup> Johannes Fried, *The Veil of Memory Anthropological Problems When Considering the Past*, The 1997 Annual Lecture, German Historical Institute, London, 16.

<sup>320</sup> Victor Burgin, ed., *Thinking Photography* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 152.

<sup>321</sup> Peter Baehr, “The image of the veil in social theory,” *Theory and Society* 48, no. 4 (August 2019), 535-558.

duplicity and debunking hypocrisy, or exposing falsehoods, whereas the veil “gestures towards knowledge and especially its limitations.”<sup>322</sup>

The **screen** is used in this thesis as a device to suggest the internal, intuitive, unconscious processes used to protect or defend conscious memory from that which is wounding or unbearable, evidenced in the memories of at least two of the people through whose hands the photographs of Jackie and Leon have passed. In an essay written in 1899, in which he reflects on the nature of memories of early childhood, Freud asks why it is that sometimes seemingly inconsequential or banal scenes and events are recalled vividly, while apparently more significant ones are not. He suggests that this discrepancy arises from the psychic engagement between two opposing forces; one aimed at remembering, the other at resisting something objectionable. He argues that these forces, “do not cancel each other out,”<sup>323</sup> nor does one “overpower the other,”<sup>324</sup> instead a compromise is arrived at whereby what is recorded in memory is “another psychological element closely associated with the objectionable one.”<sup>325</sup> This results in the repression and displacement of the objectionable element with one that is more tolerable: a screen memory that acts as a defensive mechanism, concealing the wounding element from conscious awareness, while retaining its affective intensity.<sup>326</sup> Although screen memories may be temporally or spatially associated with the original event, they are not always contiguous. In some cases, they may also be retrogressive; formed long afterwards to defend against, conceal or divert attention from an earlier experience.<sup>327</sup> The screen memory may, Freud asserts, seem, “unintelligible because we would like to see the reason for its retention in its intrinsic content, when in fact it resides in the relation between this content and another, which has been suppressed.”<sup>328</sup>

Reflecting on public responses to exhibitions at the United States Holocaust Museum and Memorial in the aftermath of 9/11, Michael Bernard-Donals suggests that an apparent conflation of memories, which involves the viewer making “impossible connections” between events that are not spatially or temporally related, also serves a screening function. He argues that this conflation “empties them [images] of their historical particularity,” and reduces them to “historical vestiges that can be held at arm’s length.”<sup>329</sup> This, screening, he

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<sup>322</sup> Baehr, “The image of the veil”, 554.

<sup>323</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Screen memories”, J. Strachey, trans., *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. III, (London: The Hogarth Press, 1953), 306.

<sup>324</sup> Freud, “Screen memories” 306.

<sup>325</sup> Freud, 306.

<sup>326</sup> Dimitrios Mellos, “A psychoanalytic exploration into the memory and aesthetics of everyday life: Photographs, recollections, and encounters with loss” (PhD dissertation, City University of New York, 2014), 33.

<sup>327</sup> David L Smith, “The Mirror Image of the Present: Freud’s Theory of Retrogressive Screen Memories,” *Psychoanalytische Perspectieven*, no. 39 (2000), 7.

<sup>328</sup> Freud, 306.

<sup>329</sup> Michael Bernard-Donals “Conflations of Memory: or, What They Saw at the Holocaust Museum after 9/11” *CR: The New Centennial Review* 5, no. 2 (2005), 97.

asserts, allows the viewer to avoid an unpalatable present.<sup>330</sup> While the concept of the screen as a defence mechanism is usually applied to memory, it may also be applied to other modes of being. Charlie Smith and Eda Ulus, for example, cite Anna Freud's contention that intellectualism is a strategy to overcome affect, arguing that "our collective overreliance on intellectualism may shield us from confronting directly the emotional pains experienced by us and/or our colleagues."<sup>331</sup>

The **projection** is used in this thesis to describe the way in which viewers create meaning by their own experiences, thoughts and feelings to bear on their memories of images. In Freudian terms, projection is a subconscious defence mechanism whereby an individual unconsciously attributes their own thoughts, feelings, or impulses to another, to avoid recognising or confronting them in themselves.

The concept of projection is also used in this thesis to describe false, or mis-memories, attributed to "feature importation" or "content borrowing," concepts used by memory theorists including Linda Henkel to explain processes that occur when narrators incorporate elements or features not present in the original image into their descriptions of it, to sustain or support their own memories or interpretations.<sup>332</sup>

The **kaleidoscope** is mentioned in this thesis as a device to suggest the mutability of memories which are shaped and reshaped with every instance of recall. As with memory, the "momentarily stable"<sup>333</sup> but constantly transitioning patterns created by the multiple fragments within the kaleidoscope are ephemeral and unpredictable, morphing into or reconstructing new but similar patterns, while retaining an essential sense of cohesion. The kaleidoscope may similarly be used to illustrate the way in which individuals bring their personal perceptions and points of view to bear to make sense of the same set of information or visual elements. Finally, the metaphor of the kaleidoscope serves to describe changes in meaning and significance that occur when the images of Jackie and Leon are presented or seen in an array with others that collectively shape a narrative.

These devices are used lightly in the Chapters that form the body of the thesis and drawn together in the conclusion to consider the forces that have shaped the way in which the images of Jackie and Leon have been remembered.

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<sup>330</sup> See also Madelon Sprengnether, "Freud as Memoirist: A Reading of 'Screen Memories'" *American Imago* 69, no. 2 (2012) and Melvin R. Lansky, "Screen Memories and Screening Functions" *American Imago* 72, no. 1, 2015.

<sup>331</sup> Charlie Smith and Eda Ulus, "Who cares for academics? We need to talk about emotional well-being including what we avoid and intellectualise through macro-discourses," *Organization* 27, no.6 (2020), 847.

<sup>332</sup> Linda A. Henkel, "Photograph-induced memory errors: When photographs make people claim they have done things they have not," *Applied Cognitive Psychology* 25 (2011), 78.

<sup>333</sup> Andre A Fingelkurts, and Alexandra A Fingelkurts, "Present moment, past and future: mental kaleidoscope," *Frontiers in Psychology* 5 (2014), 2, accessed June 2024, <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00395/full>.

## Conclusion

This chapter sets out an approach to research that draws on archival research, object biography and oral history as complementary approaches to record and reflect on encounters with the images of Jackie and Leon. It argues that object biographies, constructed from archival sources, bring into view the movement of the images as they travelled across temporal, geographic, discursive, and institutional boundaries. Oral history, as a complementary approach, facilitates access to memories and feelings about encounters with the images, and, to some extent, to images seen in the mind's eye or arising from the unconscious. Used together, these complementary methodologies enable the constitution of the research archive on which the following chapters draw, which is, like all archives, shaped through processes of selection and exclusion, skewed by subjectivity, and occasionally marred by erasure.

## CHAPTER THREE

### CONTEXT

*On the evening of Thursday 19 December 1985 a group of armed men crossed the border from South Africa into Lesotho under cover of darkness. Once in Maseru, the men split up. One group made their way to Maseru West, where they shot and killed seven people attending a party. The second group went to the nearby suburb of Ha Hoohla, where they shot and killed Jacqueline Quin and her husband Leon Meyer, leaving Phoenix, their infant daughter, unharmed and alone in her cot. Having accomplished their mission, the attackers returned to the banks of the Caledon River where they set their vehicles alight before wading back into South Africa through the swollen river. Lesotho accused South Africa of the Lesotho accused South Africa of the killings. The South African government denied responsibility.*

## CHAPTER THREE: CONTEXT

This Chapter situates the images of Jackie and Leon broadly in time and place, within the sweeping narrative of oppression, resistance and transformation in South Africa over a period of three decades. It opens with a reflection on the events that shaped 1985, a pivotal year in South African history, when the images were made, circulated, and encountered for the first time. It notes the constraints placed on the media by the State of Emergency declared in 1985. It concludes with a discussion on visual coverage of three interrelated incidents of politically motivated violence in the closing weeks of the year: the Messina landmine, the Maseru Raid and the Amanzimtoti bomb blast. This Chapter is followed by a Timeline which sets out the moments at which the images of Jackie and Leon discussed in this thesis came into view in relation to broader developments in the public sphere.

### Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter Two, Awad argues that “Images cannot be understood in isolation of place and time; their meaning and power come from within certain temporal, social cultural, historical and political dynamics.”<sup>334</sup> And, she argues, that to understand the social life of images, it is necessary to consider how, where and when they are brought into view alongside other images and in relation to broader public discourse implicit in associated texts and images.

### 1985: The year apartheid’s “chickens came home to roost.”<sup>335</sup>

From the standpoint of the present, 1985, the year in which the images of Jackie were made and brought into view in the public domain for the first time, marks a pivotal point in South African history. Changes to the parliamentary system, the consolidation of grassroots and worker organisations which facilitated mass mobilisation, a hardening of positions by political leaders on all sides of the political spectrum, together with growing pressure from the international community, set in motion a spiral of violence, precipitating the country into a critical state, and ultimately a change of regime within the next decade.

Reviewing 1985 in his column in the *Sowetan*, published hours before the story of the Raid broke, Joe Thloloe, reflected that, “It was a bloody year. A year in which hundreds of people lost their lives. The year of the state of emergency. The year of death. The year of frustrations. The year of survival.”<sup>336</sup> Mono Badela, *City Press* Political Writer, described it similarly as, “a year of turmoil, repression, courage, broken promises, massacres, mass funerals, ‘reforms’ and consumer boycotts.”<sup>337</sup> Writing for the *Sunday Times*, on the day in which the Raid

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<sup>334</sup> Sarah H Awad, 31.

<sup>335</sup> Paul Bell, “Chickens came home to roost,” *Business Day* (Johannesburg), December 31, 1985.

<sup>336</sup> Joe Thloloe, “Let ’86 be a year of new hope,” *Sowetan* (Johannesburg), December 20, 1985.

<sup>337</sup> Mono Badela, *City Press* Political Writer, “Twelve Months of Mayhem,” *City Press* (Johannesburg), December 22, 1985.

featured on the front page, Alan Paton pronounced 1985 as “the unhappiest year of them all,”<sup>338</sup> while columnist Martie Meiring described it, in the same edition, as having been a “harrowing, gut-wrenching roller-coaster ride.”<sup>339</sup>

The changes to the parliamentary system that came into effect in early 1985 were initiated two years earlier, when the ruling party proposed a constitutional amendment<sup>340</sup> calling for a parliamentary system that included three chambers: a House of Assembly, a House of Representatives and a House of Delegates, comprising members elected by South African citizens classified respectively as ‘white’, ‘coloured’ or ‘Indian.’ People classified as ‘Natives’ (Black or African), who made up over 70% of the country’s population were excluded from exercising political power within this system of government because they were deemed to be citizens of one or other of the ten self-governing ‘homelands’.<sup>341</sup>

The United Democratic Front (UDF), launched in August 1983 to oppose these proposals, grew rapidly, quickly bringing together a range of civil society organisations; trade unions; and faith-based, sports, youth and women's organisations to fight for a non-racial, united South Africa.<sup>342</sup>

Violence escalated sharply as the state’s disinformation campaign aimed at crippling, criminalising, and demonising the UDF took hold. Inside the country,<sup>343</sup> security forces employed ‘legitimate’ measures including banning, banishment, detention without trial, judicial executions and public order policing,<sup>344</sup> while also engaging in clandestine covert operations, torture, kidnappings, and extrajudicial killing<sup>345</sup> to suppress resistance and quell opposition to the state.<sup>346</sup> Mass resistance shifted towards open insurrection as militant protestors defiantly chanted African National Congress (ANC) slogans and flaunted ANC flags at mass gatherings, including funerals.<sup>347</sup> Security forces stepped up their response, opening fire indiscriminately on unruly crowds and

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<sup>338</sup> Alan Paton, “1985. Doesn’t it qualify as the unhappiest year of our lives?” *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), December 22, 1985.

<sup>339</sup> Martie Meiring, “Battered and bruised but still waiting for the really good news,” *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), December 22, 1985.

<sup>340</sup> These proposals sparked widespread protest. In May, MK operatives detonated a bomb in Church Square, Pretoria, killing nineteen people and injuring over 200 others. Three days later, the SADF, in an act of retaliation, attacked ANC offices in Maputo, Mozambique, killing six people.

<sup>341</sup> The Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act no. 26 of 1970 stripped black South Africans of their citizenship, allocating them to one of the self-governing homelands. Keith Breckenridge, “The Book of Life: The South African Population Register and the Invention of Racial Descent, 1950–1980,” *Kronos* 40, no. 1, (2014) 225–240, accessed March 2023, <http://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/kronos/v40n1/10.pdf>.

<sup>342</sup> The UDF, launched in 1983, aimed specifically to oppose the constitutional proposals and more generally at bringing about a non-racial, united South Africa. Sylvia Vollenhoven, “South Africa at the Crossroads,” *Third World Quarterly*, April 8, no. 2, (1986), 488 and *United Democratic Front, Declaration, 20 August 1983*, accessed March 2023 [https://www.saha.org.za/udf/declaration\\_of\\_the\\_united\\_democratic\\_front\\_2.htm](https://www.saha.org.za/udf/declaration_of_the_united_democratic_front_2.htm).

<sup>343</sup> Iris Tillman and Alex Harris, eds. *Beyond the Barricades: Popular Resistance in South Africa: Photographs by Twenty South African Photographers* (London: Kliptown Books, 1989), 131.

<sup>344</sup> *TRC Report*, Volume Two, 165.

<sup>345</sup> *TRC Report*, Volume Two, 165.

<sup>346</sup> Rousseau, “Death and dismemberment,” 204–225.

<sup>347</sup> Tillman and Harris, *Beyond the Barricades* 131.

targeting activists for 'elimination'. Tensions between black consciousness organisations and the UDF erupted in vicious confrontations. Vigilante groups emerged across the country, attacking suspected *askaris*,<sup>348</sup> collaborators, and informants. Among these was Maki Skosana, whose death was broadcast on national television in 1985 after she was set alight by an angry crowd that who accused her of being an informer.

In December 1985, the formation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the subsequent alignment of unions and 'grassroots' organisations added significant weight to mass mobilisation campaigns, bringing coherence to the worker stayaways, education, rent, and consumer boycotts that characterised the late 1980s.

The violence extended beyond the country's borders too. Openly hostile Frontline States<sup>349</sup> offering support or sanctuary to political refugees and freedom fighters from South Africa came under attack from the apartheid government. The South African Defence Force (SADF) and police,<sup>350</sup> their agents, or surrogates,<sup>351</sup> crossed borders with impunity on counterinsurgency or special operations involving assassinations, ambushes, abductions, sabotage, arson, and large-scale military attacks.

Tensions heightened further as leaders in the state and the liberation movements hardened their positions, refusing obdurately to yield to any form of compromise. At the end of January 1985, President PW Botha offered to release Nelson Mandela from prison on condition that he "renounces violence and violent protest as a means of bringing about change in South Africa."<sup>352</sup> Mandela categorically rejected this offer. In a response, read by his daughter, Zindzi, at a public rally in Soweto a month later, Mandela proclaimed that it was only "when all other forms of resistance were no longer open to us, that we turned to armed struggle," and asked rhetorically, "What freedom am I being offered while the organisation of the people remains banned . . .?"<sup>353</sup>

Four months later, in June 1985, Tambo called on delegates to the ANC's Consultative Conference in Kabwe, Zambia, to intensify the "four pillars" of the struggle – international pressure, armed struggle, the underground, and mass resistance. Delegates agreed that apartheid could not be reformed and should be destroyed, resolved to support the efforts of the masses to make the country ungovernable and intensify the armed

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<sup>348</sup> The term 'askari' refers to a "'turned' UmKhonto We Sizwe soldier serving in the South African police force, especially in operations against the ANC." The Dictionary Unit for South African English. *South African Concise Oxford Dictionary*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 2002, 63.

<sup>349</sup> These were Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

<sup>350</sup> As Nicky Rousseau explains, it was largely the police structures that engaged in extra-judicial killings beyond the borders of the country, either through trusted operatives or units which, "although not officially authorised, included such senior personnel that they can be regarded as 'unofficial-official.'" Rousseau, "Death and dismemberment," 206.

<sup>351</sup> Surrogate forces like the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA) were key components of South Africa's regional counter-mobilisation strategy. *TRC Report*, Volume Two, 16.

<sup>352</sup> "Address by State President P. W. Botha, August 15, 1985," *O'Malley: The Heart of Hope*. accessed December 2022, <https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/index.php/site/q/03lv01538/04lv01600/05lv01638/06lv01639.htm>

<sup>353</sup> Nelson Mandela, *I am not prepared to sell the birth-right of the people to be free*, 10 February 1985, Nelson Mandela accessed December 2023, [http://www.mandela.gov.za/mandela\\_speeches/before/850210\\_udf.htm](http://www.mandela.gov.za/mandela_speeches/before/850210_udf.htm).

struggle.<sup>354</sup> Announcing this decision Tambo explained that intensifying the struggle meant that, “the difference between ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ targets is going to disappear.”<sup>355</sup> This, and the call to “take the struggle to the white areas,”<sup>356</sup> effectively shifted resistance from an externally driven campaign to a full scale ‘people’s war’.<sup>357</sup>

P.W. Botha retaliated on 20 July 1985 declaring a partial State of Emergency in 36 districts.<sup>358</sup> Political meetings were forbidden, the movement of people was limited, police were granted sweeping powers of arrest and detention, and stringent restrictions were placed on the media.<sup>359</sup> Weeks later, Botha’s opening address to the National Party’s Conference – the so-called ‘Rubicon Speech’<sup>360</sup> – outraged liberation movements. Although Botha had been expected to announce significant reforms, he chose instead to adopt a hard line, insisting that his government would press on with their own ‘reform’ programme despite pressure from within the country and the international community. Tambo’s response was unequivocal, “The armed struggle must and will be stepped up. The masses of our people against whom the Botha-Malan regime has declared an all-out war must and will escalate the popular offensive to destroy the apartheid organs of government, to make the criminal racist system unworkable and to make South Africa ungovernable.”<sup>361</sup>

Botha’s speech precipitated an economic crisis, tipping the country into a financially precarious position. The foreign exchange value of the rand plummeted to such an extent that government temporarily closed the stock exchange and the foreign exchange market, and suspended interest payments on its foreign debts.<sup>362</sup> Calls for disinvestment from South Africa increased substantially. Over a hundred business corporations withdrew from

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<sup>354</sup> Thula Simpson, *History of South Africa: From 1902 to the Present* (Cape Town: Penguin Books, 2021), 273.

<sup>355</sup> “Let’s act together says President Tambo,” *Sechaba*, (Dar es Salaam), August 1895, 15.

<sup>356</sup> This involved, *inter alia*, strengthening worker organisation, extending the consumer boycott, demonstrations, forming underground units to commit acts of sabotage and disrupt of energy, communications and transport systems, attacks on the army and security forces, and the acquisition of arms. African National Congress, “Further Submissions and Responses by the African National Congress to Questions Raised by the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation,” May 12, 1997, accessed December 2023, <https://sabctrc.saha.org.za/documents/submit/56410.htm>.

<sup>357</sup> Tillman and Harris, 132.

<sup>358</sup> Republic of South Africa. “No. R 120, 1985. Declaration of a State of Emergency.” *Government Gazette* no. 9876 (Government Printer (Pretoria), July 21, 1985) and Republic of South Africa. “No. R121, 1985. Regulations in Terms of the Public Safety Act, 1953.” *Government Gazette* no. 9877. Government Printer (Pretoria), July 21, 1985.

<sup>359</sup> The partial State of Emergency declared in July 1985 covered 36 magisterial districts in the Eastern Cape and the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area. In October, it was extended to include parts of the Cape Province, giving the police the powers to “detain, impose curfews and control the media” and shortly thereafter to impose restrictions on mass funerals. But, as the South African History Archive (SAHA) argues, the “draconian law enforcement against the majority Black, Coloured and Indian population of South Africa proved a focal moment in the struggle against apartheid, as the international condemnation of the apartheid regime and other internal factors contributed to the rejuvenation of the grass-roots resistance inside and outside the country.” SAHA “Partial State of Emergency, 20 July 1985” accessed December 2022 <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/partial-state-emergency-july-1985> and SAHA, “State of Emergency – 1985,” accessed December 2022, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/state-emergency-1985>.

<sup>360</sup> “Address by State President P. W. Botha, August 15, 1985,” *O’Malley: The Heart of Hope* accessed December 2022, <https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/index.php/site/q/03lv01538/04lv01600/05lv01638/06lv01639.htm>

<sup>361</sup> African National Congress, “ANC Press Statement Presented by Oliver Tambo Lusaka, August 16, 1985,” *O’Malley: The Heart of Hope*, accessed December 2022.

<https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/index.php/site/q/03lv03445/04lv04015/05lv04016/06lv04025/07lv04026.htm>.

<sup>362</sup> Philip I Levy, “Sanctions on South Africa: What did they do,” Discussion Paper, Economic Growth Centre, Yale University, 1999, 6.

South Africa and its traditional allies, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and West Germany were driven to impose limited trade and financial sanctions,<sup>363</sup> heightening South Africa's status as a 'pariah' state.

### *Restrictions on the free flow of information*

As the ANC claimed, in its submission to the TRC "Control of the media was one of the most important tools in the apartheid arsenal, and a battery of censorship legislation undoubtedly played a role in helping to ensure the survival of the regime – in particular, in ensuring ongoing support from its key constituencies by keeping them in the dark."<sup>364</sup> This was achieved through a combination of measures aimed at encouraging self-regulation, coopting the media into acting in the 'national interest', and introducing restrictive legislation.<sup>365</sup>

These efforts were intensified from the late 1970s,<sup>366</sup> reaching a peak in the mid-1980s, as government sought to shield citizens from the extent of the resistance to apartheid and to promote the image of the country actively beyond its borders.

Alongside restrictive legislation, the free flow of information was controlled or subverted by the state through the establishment of structures including STRATCOM<sup>367</sup> and the Bureau for Information,<sup>368</sup> both of which were set up in 1985. Government also sought surreptitiously to establish or take ownership of key publications, to exercise direct control over the narratives communicated in the public domain.<sup>369</sup> Collectively these measures limited what people living in South Africa could see, hear, and read,<sup>370</sup> – and by extension what they might remember.

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<sup>363</sup> Levy, "Sanctions on South Africa," 6, and Tillman and Harris, 132.

<sup>364</sup> African National Congress, *ANC Submission on Media to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, September 30, 1997, accessed December 2022, <https://new.anc1912.org.za/trc-african-national-congress-submission-on-media-to-the-truth-and-reconciliation-commission/>, unpaginated.

<sup>365</sup> Keyan Tomaselli, Ruth Tomaselli and Johan Muller, *Narrating the Crisis, Hegemony and the South African Press* (Johannesburg: Richard Lyon and Co., 1987), 102.

<sup>366</sup> In 1980, PW Botha established a Commission of Inquiry into the Mass Media (the Steyn Commission), to determine whether the conduct of the media met the needs and interests of the country. The Commission recommended measures aimed at tightening control over the media. This was understood by many as an attempt to co-opt the media into the 'total strategy,' the suite of policies, actions and entities devised by the security forces to counter the 'total onslaught,' i.e. the perceived threats posed to the country by the Soviet Union and its allies and associates, including the ANC, Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and allies. Les Switzer, "Steyn Commission 1: The Press and Total Strategy," *Critical Arts* 1, no.4 (1981) 41-45.

<sup>367</sup> STRATCOM or 'Strategic Communication' was set up by the State Security Council in January 1985 to conduct disinformation campaigns, creating and spreading false narratives aimed at discrediting activists who opposed the National Party government. See, Stephen Ellis, "The Historical Significance of South Africa's Third Force," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 24, Number 2, 1998, 273-274.

<sup>368</sup> The Bureau for Information was established in 1985, in accordance with the 'total strategy' devised by PW Botha and his ministers, see above. One of its first actions was to engineer the banning of cameras (print, movie and television) in the areas declared to be under the State of Emergency. Tomaselli, Tomaselli and Muller, *Narrating the Crisis*, 103.

<sup>369</sup> *The Citizen*, an English-language newspaper, was established in Johannesburg in 1976 to counter the impact of the *Rand Daily Mail*, which opposed government's position. During the same period, government attempted, through a front-man to buy the *Washington Star*. Ruth Elizabeth Teer Tomaselli "The Politics of Discourse and the Discourse of Politics: Images of Violence and Reform on the South African Broadcasting Corporation's Television News Bulletins – July 1985 – November 1986" (PhD Thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1992), 44.

<sup>370</sup> Under the State of Emergency declared in June 1985, the Bureau for Information was mandated as the only legal source of information about the security forces.

As the TRC argued, this created a “cloud of cover”<sup>371</sup> that made the commission of gross human rights possible, whether this was done deliberately in collusion with government, or by omission, i.e. the failure to speak out forcefully against injustice.

In the case of cross-border incursions, guidelines for photographic coverage set out in the SADF plans for “Operation Reindeer”<sup>372</sup> are instructive, offering some insight into the way in which the visualisation of these operations was framed to shape the perceptions of the viewers who encountered them. These instructions are quoted in full below.

“Photo cover must feature: i) military features, for example, weapons, ammunition, communications, headquarter buildings; ii) any dead must have weapons alongside them; iii) any photography of civilians must reflect humane treatment, e.g., being provided with food. Civilians should, however, be avoided altogether; iv) documents captured must feature prominently to add credibility to subsequent disclosures.”

<sup>373</sup>

It is evident, from an analysis of media coverage of subsequent cross-border incursions that the instructions were strictly adhered to by the SADF and mainstream media.<sup>374</sup>

Restrictions imposed on the movement of journalists under the State of Emergency first declared in July 1985 were tightened dramatically from November,<sup>375</sup> making it illegal “make, take, record, manufacture, reproduce, publish, broadcast or distribute, or take or send to any place within or outside the Republic, any film . . . photograph, drawing or other representation, or any sound recording” of “any public disturbance, disorder, riot, public violence, strike or boycott, or any damaging of any property, or any assault on or killing of a person” or of those present, including members of the security forces.<sup>376</sup>

These restrictions were imposed ostensibly because the state believed the media to be fuelling international campaigns against the country,<sup>377</sup> and because the media were witness to, and could provide evidence of, the brutal actions of security forces. That said, there were also well-founded suspicions that some journalists were either in the pay of the police or were police officers posing as photographers gathering information to assist in the identification of activists.<sup>378</sup> While the full extent of the security force’s infiltration of the media is not known,

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<sup>371</sup> *TRC Report*, Volume Four, 165.

<sup>372</sup> “Operation Reindeer” was the codename given to the SADF’s military operation on two South West Africa People’s Organisation (SWAPO) bases in Angola in 1978.

<sup>373</sup> *TRC Report*, Volume 2, 48-49.

<sup>374</sup> See, for example the *Sunday Times* coverage on the earlier attack on Maseru, December 12, 1985.

<sup>375</sup> Republic of South Africa, *Government Gazette*, Volume 245, number 10004, November 2, 1985, (Government Printers: Pretoria).

<sup>376</sup> *Government Gazette*, Volume 245, number 10004.

<sup>377</sup> Eleanor Singh and Jacob Ludwig, “South Africa’s press restrictions: Effects on press coverage and public opinion towards South Africa,” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1997, Volume 51, 315-334, offers an interesting analysis demonstrating that the imposition of restrictions did not shift public opinion in the international community.

<sup>378</sup> Gavin Stewart, “Intimidation and prosecution of journalists: A preliminary checklist of cases occurring between September 1984 and 16 June 1986,” *Index on Censorship*, 7/86, 24-40 and Jacob Dlamini, *The Terrorist Album*, (Massachusetts and London, Harvard University Press, 2020).

in 1996, John Horak, testifying to the TRC, “reported that half of the newsrooms of South Africa’s newspapers were populated by informers working for the old South African government,”<sup>379</sup> creating a climate of uncertainty and unease. As I was told confidentially and off the record in an oral history dialogue, “one was always looking over one’s shoulder, never knowing who could be trusted.”<sup>380</sup>

Explaining this type of restriction in more philosophical terms, Barthes, notes that, photographs establish a consciousness of “*having-been-there*... offering stupefying evidence of *this is how it was*,” giving the viewer insight into something from which they may otherwise have been sheltered.<sup>381</sup> In the case of the images of Jackie and Leon, the shocked responses of viewers, as expressed in the dialogues, suggest that these images, unlike others published at the time, explicitly exposed the brutality of the apartheid regime.

Despite the measures taken by government to hobble the media, the *World Press Review* rated political violence in South Africa as one of the top ten news items in the world in 1985. Roger Williams, *Cape Times* Chief Reporter, commenting on this, writes

“Waves of shock reaction were reported around the globe as day after day and night after night, television audiences encountered close-up footage of angry crowds in the townships, of ubiquitous police Casspirs, of stone-throwing youths, burning barricades and a series of mass attendance funerals – and of suspected police informers being burnt and beaten to death ... and of police resorting to shot-gun and sjambok in their attempts to restore order – and to mass arrests under the emergency laws ...”<sup>382</sup>

Restrictions on what could be broadcast or published meant that South Africans saw far fewer of these images in the daily news than overseas audiences did, making it difficult to construct a coherent picture of the conflict.<sup>383</sup> In this context, it is not surprising that Samson’s photograph of Jackie and Leon made a deep impression on readers.

Threading through November and December, a stream of reports about the persecution of journalists and photographers<sup>384</sup> made 1985 the year the journalists made the news. In the week of the Raid, the South African Press was declared the “most restricted in the democratic world” by the International Press Institute (IPI).<sup>385</sup> At the same time the IPI lauded the decision of Tony Heard, editor of the *Cape Times* to defy government

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<sup>379</sup> SAPA, “TRC told of spies penetrating journalism under apartheid,” September 16, 1997, accessed October 2024, <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/media/1997/9709/s970916f.htm>.

<sup>380</sup> An off the record response from a journalist when asked how it felt to work in a newsroom in the 1980s, alongside a colleague who might have been an informant.

<sup>381</sup> Roland Barthes, *Image. Music. Text*, essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press. An Imprint of Harper Collins Publishers, 1977), 44.

<sup>382</sup> Roger Williams ‘SA riots among major news events of 1986’, *Cape Times*, (Cape Town), December 27, 1986.

<sup>383</sup> Stewart, “Intimidation and prosecution of journalists”, 24-40. Despite restrictions, many of the images sent illicitly out of the country by collectives like Afrapix, came into view locally through publications such as *Grassroots*, *Learn and Teach*, and *Staffrider*.

<sup>384</sup> Stewart, 24-40. Stewart’s checklist includes 14 incidents for December 1985 alone. These include court proceedings, arrests, detentions, confiscation of equipment and film, journalists being ordered out areas not covered by emergency legislation, and having teargas fired at them.

<sup>385</sup> John Battersby, “SA Press the most restricted in Free World,” *Business Day* (Johannesburg), December 18, 1985.

prohibitions on quoting banned persons by publishing an interview with ANC President Oliver Tambo,<sup>386</sup> alerting receptive readers to the way in which the truth about events around them was being concealed, suppressed or denied.

### **The Maseru Raid – An Unfolding Story**

Historian Thula Simpson has assembled evidence about the Raid from multiple sources, including news clippings, constructing a chronological account of the circumstances leading up to the event, the attack itself, and its aftermath.<sup>387</sup> Investigative journalist Jacques Pauw has similarly assembled a chronological account, based largely on his own investigations<sup>388</sup> and evidence submitted to the TRC.<sup>389</sup>

Rather than focussing on a chronological account of the Raid itself, this Chapter offers an account of the way in which words and images in the South African media in the days and years following the Raid have gradually shaped unfolding narratives about its meaning and significance. The intention, in tracing the evolving narrative, is to identify how, when, where, and by whom, the images of Jackie and Leon were brought into view in the public domain, framed by distinctive texts or voice-over commentaries and encountered over almost four decades. It also touches on the work of investigative journalists, government appointed inquiries, judicial proceedings, and the TRC. This approach is also intended to suggest what might have been deemed sayable and showable at specific moments in history, and whose voices were privileged, silenced, or marginalised during an extended period of social upheaval and political change.

This Chapter does not comprise a discourse analysis. It does not dissect the political or ideological differences in the production of news or the criteria by which stories were deemed newsworthy<sup>390</sup> by different publishing houses, publications or editors. Nor does it consider the perceived interests of potential audiences or the way in which they received the news. Notwithstanding this disclaimer, a concise contextual overview of the broad media environment is merited to contextualise the often-contradictory positions evident in media coverage of the Raid.

### ***Media landscape of the 1980s***

While government controlled the national broadcaster, the SABC, and utilised it unabashedly to support its own

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<sup>386</sup> Own Correspondent, "IPI hails *Cape Times* editor," *Business Day* (Johannesburg), December 15, 1985.

<sup>387</sup> Thula Simpson, *Umkhonto we Sizwe: The ANC's Armed Struggle* (Cape Town, Penguin Books, 2016), 355-366.

<sup>388</sup> Jacques Pauw, *Into the Heart of Darkness: Confessions of Apartheid Assassins* (Jeppestown, Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2017), 71-72

<sup>389</sup> Applications for amnesty made by the security operatives provide detailed accounts of the operation.

<sup>390</sup> Tony Harcup and Deirdre O'Neill, building on decades of earlier studies on taxonomies of news values list 15 criteria for newsworthiness, the top five are: *exclusivity*, i.e. stories generated directly by news organisations through interviews, etc; *bad news*, i.e. stories associated with death, injury, defeat and loss; *conflict*, i.e. controversies, fights, insurrections; *surprise*, i.e. stories that are unusual; and *audio-visuals*, i.e. stories with arresting photographs, etc. All these factors are present in the news coverage of the Raid. Tony Harcup and Deirdre O'Neill, "What is news? News values revisited (again)," *Journalism Studies* 18, no. 12 (2017), 1470-1488.

agenda,<sup>391</sup> newspaper ownership was largely in the hands of white capital,<sup>392</sup> and represented its interests.<sup>393</sup> For media scholars, the key determinate differentiating the nature of the mainstream newspaper offering in the 1980s was language rather than political affiliation.<sup>394</sup> Broadly speaking, the Afrikaans-language press, dominated by Nasionale Pers<sup>395</sup> and Perskor,<sup>396</sup> was considered to be an integral part of the broader support system that kept the apartheid regime in power, and was unashamedly pro-government in its coverage of current events.<sup>397</sup> The English-language press, dominated by South African Associated Newspapers (SAAN)<sup>398</sup> and the Argus Printing and Publishing Group,<sup>399</sup> was widely assumed to espouse liberal leanings; support the position of opposition parties; and practice self-censorship rather than engage in confrontations with the state over what may or may not be published.<sup>400</sup> As with the Afrikaans press the English-language press focussed largely on issues of interest to white South Africans. The concerns of the Black majority were marginalised:<sup>401</sup> political activity beyond the confines of the parliamentary system was barely mentioned; and the voices of those associated with the liberation movements were muted or ignored, as were the lived experiences of Black South Africans.<sup>402</sup> This approach, together with the tendency to criticise government while not actively calling for change beyond a reform of the parliamentary system,<sup>403</sup> suggests that the English-language press also played a significant role in maintaining the hegemony of the apartheid regime. Beyond these groupings and on the

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<sup>391</sup> Tomaselli, "The Politics of Discourse and the Discourse of Politics", 1.

<sup>392</sup> Ownership of the press was vested strongly in business. In the case of the English-language press, shareholders included Angle American and Johannesburg Consolidated Investments.

<sup>393</sup> Guy Berger, "New barons of the press," *Index on Censorship* 3, (1995), 127.

<sup>394</sup> William A. Hatchen and C. Anthony Giffard, *The Press and Apartheid: Repression and Propaganda in South Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984); Edward Bird and Zurelda Garda, eds. "The Role of Print Media During the Apartheid Era," *Media Monitoring Africa* May 1997, accessed June 2024, <https://www.mediamonitoringafrica.org/images/uploads/trc.pdf>; Keyan Tomaselli, Ruth Tomaselli and Johan Muller, *Narrating the Crisis, Hegemony and the South African Press* (Johannesburg: Richard Lyon and Co., 1987); Puleng Thetela, "Critique, discourses and ideology in newspaper reports: a discourse analysis of the South African press reports on the 1990 SADC's military intervention in Lesotho," *Discourse and Society*, 2001, Volume 12, 3, 347-370.

<sup>395</sup> In 1985 Nasionale Pers publications included: *Die Burger* (Cape Town), *Die Volksblad* (Bloemfontein), *Beeld* (Johannesburg), *Oosterlig* (Port Elizabeth), and *Rapport*, owned jointly with Perskor, and *City Press*, a newspaper with a predominantly black readership. Nasionale Pers was rebranded as Naspers in 1998.

<sup>396</sup> In 1985, Perskor publications included: *Die Vaderland* and *Die Transvaler* (Johannesburg), *Hoofstad* and *Oggendblad* (Pretoria), *Rapport*, owned jointly with Naspers and *The Citizen*, an English-language newspaper set up covertly with government support.

<sup>397</sup> *TRC Report*, Volume Four, 177-178; African National Congress, *ANC Submission on Media to the TRC*.

<sup>398</sup> In 1985, SAAN publications included: *Cape Times* (Cape Town), *Eastern Province Herald* (Port Elizabeth) and the *Evening Post* (Port Elizabeth), the *Sunday Times*, *Sunday Express*, and *Business Day*.

<sup>399</sup> Argus Group publications: *The Argus* and *Weekend Argus* (Cape Town), *The Star* and *Saturday Star* (Johannesburg), *Pretoria News* (Pretoria), *Sowetan* (Johannesburg), *The Friend* (Bloemfontein), *Diamond Fields Advertiser* (Kimberley) and Natal Newspapers, publishers of *The Natal Mercury* (Durban), *The Daily News*, *Sunday Tribune* (Durban), Illanga, *The Post* and *The Daily Herald*.

<sup>400</sup> The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) deliberately downplayed the violence. Ruth Elizabeth Teer Tomaselli "The Politics of Discourse and the Discourse of Politics: Images of Violence and Reform on the South African Broadcasting Corporation's Television News Bulletins — July 1985 - November 1986" (PhD Thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1992), 1. Some publications deliberately limited coverage. Naspers, for example, issued a directive to the editorial staff of *City Press* shortly before the State of Emergency was declared, instructing them to "reduce unrest reporting by 50%." (Teer-Tomaselli and Tomaselli, 1987), 57.

<sup>401</sup> *TRC Report*, Volume Four 173-177.

<sup>402</sup> Edward Bird and Zurelda Garda, eds. "The Role of Print Media During the Apartheid Era," *Media Monitoring Africa* May 1997, accessed June 2024, <https://www.mediamonitoringafrica.org/images/uploads/trc.pdf>.

<sup>403</sup> This is evident in editorials which, while being broadly 'reformist' at times, seldom recognised extra-parliamentary calls for the unbanning of political organisations, the release of political prisoners and the establishment of a democratically elected government.

periphery of the mainstream, a small number of independently owned and managed newspapers,<sup>404</sup> known as the 'alternative' press';<sup>405</sup> community owned newspapers; and the Black-owned press challenged government. As a result they were subjected to ongoing harassment, threats of closure, bans and hostile takeover bids.<sup>406</sup>

The ideological positions of individual publications are evident in the selection of stories considered to be newsworthy. They are also evident in the headlines which summarise key information in a way that overtly attracts the attention of potential readers and covertly manipulates opinion.<sup>407</sup> In this chapter headlines are quoted extensively as a framework for structuring the narrative; to signal the mix of opinion; to evoke a sense of immediacy; and to reflect the disjointed nature of the words and images encountered in the public domain, and the difficulties readers might have had in making meaning of these as the story unfolded. The use of headlines is also intended to foreground the work of the journalists who brought the story into view fragment by fragment over an extended period, never knowing what might be revealed next, or how the bits may eventually be pieced together. As veteran journalist Allister Sparks<sup>408</sup> argues, while conventional historical writing is always retrospective, shaped by hindsight, news reports present a different kind of history, a contemporaneous version, that shows what the past "looked like at the time when the future was anything but obvious."<sup>409</sup> Spark's sentiments resonate with Phillip Graham's<sup>410</sup> oft-quoted aphorism about the media's "inescapably impossible task of providing every week a first rough draft of history that will never really be completed about a world we can never fully understand."<sup>411</sup>

### ***The leadup to the Raid: 15 - 20 December 1985***

This period, 15 to 20 December, describes media coverage of the Messina landmine incident, which was alleged, at the time, to have precipitated the Raid on Maseru. It demonstrates ways in which politically motivated violence affecting white South Africans was communicated in news media and provides a context for the framing of the Raid a few days later.

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<sup>404</sup> In 1985, these included the *Daily Dispatch* (East London) and *The Natal Witness* (Pietermaritzburg).

<sup>405</sup> In 1985 these included the *Weekly Mail*, established in 1985, and *Grassroots* established in 1980.

<sup>406</sup> Guy Berger, "New barons of the press," *Index on Censorship* 3, (1995) and Less Switzer and Mohammed Adhikari eds., *South Africa's Resistance Press: Alternative Voices in the Last Generation under Apartheid*, (Ohio: Centre for International Studies, Ohio University, 2000).

<sup>407</sup> Puleng Thetela, "Critique, discourses and ideology in newspaper reports," 347-370.

<sup>408</sup> Alistair Sparks was editor of the *Rand Daily Mail*, a publication closed during 1985 because it had adopted a position critical of government. In the same year, Sparks was awarded the Inter Press Service international journalism award for his reporting on the "injustice and suffering caused by apartheid." Sapa/AP, "Sparks given top Press award, *Weekend Argus* (Cape Town), December 14, 1985.

<sup>409</sup> Alister Sparks, *First Drafts. South African History in the Making* (Johannesburg & Cape Town, Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2009), xi.

<sup>410</sup> Phillip Graham (1915-1963) was publisher, and later owner, of the *Washington Post*.

<sup>411</sup> Sparks, *First Drafts*, xi.



Figure 1: *Beeld*, December 17, 1985.  
Credit: Arena Holdings / NLSA



Figure 2: *Sowetan*, December 18, 1985.  
Credit: Sowetan / UCT Libraries

On Sunday 15 December, five days before the Raid, six people, four of whom were children, were killed and five injured when the vehicle in which they were travelling on a farm road near Messina detonated a landmine. Coverage of the incident in *Die Vaderland* exemplifies both the tone and the content of media across the language divide. A report, “TERREUR,”<sup>412</sup> tells the story of a tragically disrupted family outing. Overleaf another report, “ANC: Dis ons,” [ANC: It’s us]<sup>413</sup> explains that the ANC had claimed responsibility for the incident while a related report “Zimbabwe tjoepstil”<sup>414</sup> claims that the terrorists had entered South Africa from Zimbabwe. These reports are accompanied by photographs of the wrecked vehicles; the crater in the road; and portraits sourced from family photograph albums, showing the victims and survivors as they were in life. A report published in *Beeld* on the same day, “Oorlewende se gru-verhaal,” (Figure 1),<sup>415</sup> carries similar information, but the photograph of a local farmer’s wife and her son that dominates the page has a monumental quality to it, sending a message of strength and resilience, much like Anton van Wouw’s sculpture on the Women’s Memorial in Bloemfontein. Unlike the publications mentioned above, the *Sowetan* chose to use a dramatic black and white drawing to illustrate the landmine attack, (Figure 2).<sup>416</sup>

<sup>412</sup> Johan Verster en Gerard van Niekerk, “TERREUR,” *Die Vaderland*, (Johannesburg), December 17, 1985.

<sup>413</sup> Verster en van Niekerk, “TERREUR.”

<sup>414</sup> Verster en van Niekerk.

<sup>415</sup> Riaan Louw, Jan Taljaard and Lucas Opperman “Oorlewende se gru-verhaal,” *Beeld* (Johannesburg), December 17, 1985.

<sup>416</sup> “Only a generally acceptable solution to our problems can bring an end to this kind of tragedy,” *Sowetan* (Johannesburg) December 18, 1985

A day later a report in *The Citizen* “DON’T AWAKEN TIGER” sounded a warning to Tambo from the husband of one of the deceased, “If you mess with Afrikaner volk then you are messing with people who can hurt you.”<sup>417</sup> Photographs of wounded survivors in their hospital beds and pall bearers carrying flower laden coffins published later in the week sent a clear message to readers that these lives mattered and that the victims were grievable. By the weekend, newspapers were linking the incident to the Raid on Maseru, asserting boldly, even triumphantly, “Killings ‘a reprisal for Messina landmine’ – Lesotho Government. ‘SADF assassins,’ (Figure 3).”<sup>418</sup>

### *The Raid and its aftermath: 20 December 1985 - September 1986*

This period outlines and contextualises the narrative that unfolded in the public domain at the time of the picture-making encounter described in Chapter Four, and subsequent encounters with the images circulated in news reports described in Chapter Five.

News of the Raid was broken early on the morning of Friday 20 December through an official announcement by the Lesotho government on Radio Lesotho.<sup>419</sup> This was relayed by southern African broadcasters, including the SABC and other news stations elsewhere.<sup>420</sup> In Johannesburg, local and international correspondents alerted to the news chartered an aeroplane to travel to Maseru as fast as possible.<sup>421</sup> Information gathered by these journalists and others on the scene was wired by news-gathering services, including the South African Press Association (Sapa), Associated Press (AP), AFP, and ARD, to subscribing publications and broadcasting stations around the world. Samson’s photograph of Jackie and Leon was published in the *New York Times* the next day and in the South African *Sunday Times* a day later. Short clippings from the video footage showing the houses where the victims were killed; the bodies of the victims in the mortuary; the burnt-out vehicles abandoned on the riverbank; and interviews with bystanders and officials, were broadcast by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC),<sup>422</sup> Independent Television News (ITN) Independent Television News (ITN),<sup>423</sup> the National Broadcasting

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<sup>417</sup> Erik Larsen, “DON’T AWAKEN TIGER,” *The Citizen* (Johannesburg), December 20, 1985.

<sup>418</sup> Deon Delpont, “Killings a reprisal for Messina landmine - Lesotho Government ‘SADF assassins,’” *Weekend Argus*, (Cape Town), December 21, 1985.

<sup>419</sup> These broadcasts are referred to as a source of information in several early newspaper reports. See, for example, *Cape Times*, December 21, 1985, and *The Natal Mercury*, December 21, 1985.

<sup>420</sup> Copies of the BBC *Summary of World Broadcasts* which include records of radio coverage relating to the Raid are filed with newspaper clippings in the IDAF collection in the Mayibuye Archives.

<sup>421</sup> Dialogue with Trevor Samson, Cape Town, July 24, 2015.

<sup>422</sup> Getty Images, BBC News Archive ‘Lesotho funerals / African crash victims’, December 29, 1985 object 363-85-03EC, accessed March 2023.

<sup>423</sup> Getty Images, ITN Archive, “South Africa / Lesotho,” December 20, 1985, accessed March 2023, <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/video/a-lesotho-tms-lounge-down-to-pool-of-blood-below-news-footage/721191297?adppopup=true>; Getty Images, ITN Archive ‘South Africa / Lesotho’, December 20, 1985, accessed March 2023, <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/video/a-lesotho-tms-lounge-down-to-pool-of-blood-below-news-footage/721191299?adppopup=true>; Getty Images, ITN Archive, ‘South Africa,’ December 29, 1985, accessed March 2023, <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/video/chanting-funeral-procession-r-l-downhill-l-r-to-funeral-news->

Company (NBC),<sup>424</sup> and other international stations.

Media coverage of the Maseru Raid suggest a divergence from government's communications strategy in respect of cross border operations, as described earlier in this chapter, although it was not clear at the time what this signalled. The Raid was *not* followed by an SADF statement claiming responsibility and the release of additional information and photographs of the scene of the attack to the media.<sup>425</sup> Instead, the SADF categorically denied responsibility for the attack, as did police spokesmen and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Pik" Botha, sowing confusion and lending credence to allegations that a shadowy 'death squad,' may have been responsible for it.<sup>426</sup>

The Late Final edition of *The Argus* report "**9 shot dead in Maseru. Five women among slain 'refugees': SA Defence Force denies raid claim,**"<sup>427</sup> which cites Radio Lesotho, an unnamed police officer, SADF, and ANC spokespersons as sources, details much of what was known and surmised about the Raid by the end of the day. The report noted that nine people, said to be South African refugees, had been shot dead in two houses in Maseru, between midnight and 1.00 am by attackers suspected to be South African security force operatives, an allegation categorically denied by the SADF. Although neighbours had heard shots it seemed that "the raiders were able to strike unseen and get well away before the bodies were found,"<sup>428</sup> but there was no information about where they come from or where they had gone. This report named Jackie, identified her as a 'white woman' from Cape Town and Joe as a 'coloured man' and stated that they were the parents of a nine-month-old child who had survived unharmed. Similar accounts were carried on the front page of at least two other afternoon newspapers, *Die Vaderland*,<sup>429</sup> and *Die Volksblad*.<sup>430</sup> In these reports, little information is provided about the victims beyond the statement that "a coloured man and a white woman, tentatively identified as Miss

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footage/721945515?adppopup=true; Getty Images, ITN Archive, 'South Africa', January 5, 1986, accessed March 2023, <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/video/border-countryafrica-gv-wreckage-of-pick-up-truck-by-news-footage/721129679?adppopup=true>; ITN Archive, 'South Africa', January 5, 1986, accessed March 2023, <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/video/border-countryafrica-gv-wreckage-of-pick-up-truck-by-news-footage/721129681?adppopup=true>.

<sup>424</sup> Getty Images NBC News Archive, "Black Activist Winnie Mandela Released after arrest for ignoring banning order", December 21, 1985, accessed March 2023, <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/video/production-unit-nightly-news-media-type-aired-show-news-footage/1276233548?adppopup=true>; Getty Images NBC News Archive, 'Anti-apartheid activists Blackburn, Bishop die in car crash', December 29, 1985, accessed March 2023, <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/video/production-unit-nightly-news-media-type-aired-show-news-footage/1275943384?adppopup=true>.

<sup>425</sup> In June 1985, 12 people were killed in Operation Plexi/Plecksey in Gaborone, Botswana. This attack was followed by an elaborate propaganda campaign orchestrated by Craig Williamson, who was exposed as a security police spy in 1980. *TRC Report*, Volume Two, 150.

<sup>426</sup> See for example, "Maseru 'hit squad' riddle," *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), December 22, 1985, and "Who runs the death squad?" *Evening Post* (Port Elizabeth), December 23, 1985.

<sup>427</sup> Argus Africa News Service, "9 shot dead in Maseru", *The Argus* (Cape Town) December 20, 1985.

<sup>428</sup> Argus Africa News Service, "9 shot dead in Maseru", *The Argus* (Cape Town) December 20, 1985.

<sup>429</sup> Gus Cluver, "Ses van SA in Lesotho geskiet," *Die Vaderland*, (Johannesburg), December 20, 1985.

<sup>430</sup> Sapa and Reuter, "Nie gemoied, se SAW: Raaisel oor dood van 9 uit SA in Lesotho," *Die Volksblad* (Bloemfontein), December 20, 1985.

Quinn,<sup>431</sup> were killed in one house, where a nine-month old baby was left unharmed, and that “seven black people – four men and three women” were killed in another. The issue of race, evident in the above, ‘colours’ reports of the Raid from the outset. As Independent Newspapers admitted in its submission to the TRC, reports like these, which enumerate victims by race or gender, were commonly used to describe Black victims or casualties in accordance with its policy at the time, which was to publish the names of white victims and to mention Black victims as statistics.<sup>432</sup>

*The Natal Mercury*, headline “**We killed nine in raids, claims Liberation Army**,”<sup>433</sup> uses a direct quote to lend the credibility to Sapa’s contention that the Lesotho National Liberation Army (LNLA) had claimed responsibility for the attack. This is juxtaposed with a second report, “**Neighbours get new warning on ANC aid**”<sup>434</sup> quoting the State Security Council’s (SSC)<sup>435</sup> statement that “The South African government has a duty to protect the country’s boundaries and the security of its citizens by all appropriate means,” and cautioning neighbouring states about the consequences of harbouring “terrorist elements”.<sup>436</sup> The *Pretoria News* proclaimed, “**Lesotho Minister rejects LNLA role RAID : SA BLAMED.**” The *Cape Times*<sup>437</sup> and the *Pretoria News*<sup>438</sup> also lead with headlines, apportioning blame, with the latter quoting the Lesotho Minister of Information Desmond Sixishe’s dismissal of the LNLA’s claim as “all lies” explaining that “eyewitnesses[sic] saw white Afrikaner soldiers shoot people dead.”<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>431</sup> Jackie’s surname, ‘Quin’, is incorrectly spelled as ‘Quinn’ in many of the newspaper reports and in some of the records of the TRC.

<sup>432</sup> Independent Newspapers, “Independent Newspapers’ Submission to the TRC, 1997,” accessed December 2022, <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans/submit/inc.htm>, unpaginated.

<sup>433</sup> Sapa, “We killed nine in raids, claims Liberation Army,” *The Natal Mercury* (Durban), December 21, 1985.

<sup>434</sup> Mercury Correspondent, “Neighbours get new warning on ANC aid,” *The Natal Mercury* (Durban), December 21, 1985.

<sup>435</sup> According to Pdraigh O’Malley, the SSC “controlled a totalitarian national network which reached into every part of the country, identifying anti-apartheid activities, formulating a continuous national security profile, and making decisions on action at national and local levels which could then be implemented by the formal law enforcement structures backed by legislation, or by other structures acting covertly.” Pdraigh O’Malley, “Historical Background ‘Total Onslaught,’” *O’Malley: The Heart of Hope* Accessed June 2024, <https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/index.php/site/q/03lv00017/04lv01495/05lv01506.htm>.

<sup>436</sup> Michael Acott, “ANC activities. SA warns border states,” *Cape Times* (Cape Town), December 21, 1985.

<sup>437</sup> Sapa-Reuter-AP, “Lesotho blames SA for raid,” *Cape Times* (Cape Town), December 21, 1985.

<sup>438</sup> “Lesotho Minister rejects LNLA role. Raid: SA Blamed,” *Pretoria News* (Pretoria) December 21, 1985.

<sup>439</sup> “Lesotho Minister rejects LNLA role. Raid: SA Blamed”



Figure 3: *Weekend Argus*, December 21, 1985.  
Credit: Independent Media / NLSA



Figure 4: *The Star*, December 21, 1985.  
Credit: Independent Media / NLSA

The front page of the *Weekend Argus* of 21 December brings together three stories that collectively suggest a state at risk taking firm action against dangerous dissidents. “SADF Assassins,” (Figure 3),<sup>440</sup> as noted above, alongside thumbnail portraits of Jackie and Phoenix, notes that the Lesotho government believed the killings to be a reprisal for the Messina landmine. A second report, accompanied by two photographs which dominate the page, refer to the bomb hurled into a minivan in Durban, and a third, to the arrest of Winnie Mandela for defying the banning order that restricted her to her home in Brandfort. Coverage on the Raid on Saturday 21 December centred on speculation about the identity of the attackers, human-interest stories, and political commentary, suggesting a scramble for credible information. The front page of *The Star* carried an unusual mix of news and opinion. Below the headline, “Lesotho blames SADF for killings in Maseru,” (Figure 4),<sup>441</sup> and a full colour photograph of a shoe abandoned in a blood-streaked bathtub, an opinion piece, “The killing is remote — until your shoes are bloody,”<sup>442</sup> speaks directly to the writer’s visceral response to the scenes at the houses where the victims were killed. In contrast to the bland news report, this vivid gut-wrenching piece, a departure from journalistic convention, makes the experience of the writer, pictured alongside the text, rather than the event on which he is reporting, the subject of the story. The picture painted in words by the reporter arguably conveys

<sup>440</sup> Deon Delpot, “SADF Assassins,” *Weekend Argus* (Cape Town), December 21, 1985.

<sup>441</sup> Sapa, Associated Press, Staff Writer, “Lesotho blames SADF for killings in Maseru,” *Saturday Star* (Johannesburg), December 21, 1985.

<sup>442</sup> John D’Oliviera, “The deaths are remote until your shoes are bloody,” *Saturday Star* (Johannesburg), December 21, 1985.

the horror of the scene more effectively than the garish photograph that dominates the page, conveying the multisensory horror of the experience. As D'Oliviera writes, "You can see the blood, your nose picks up its musty smell. If you are not careful, you step in it – and your stomach turns in the knowledge that this is not animal but human."<sup>443</sup>

*The Natal Witness* report "**Former city head girl killed in Maseru raid**"<sup>444</sup> was the first to focus almost exclusively on Jackie and her family, as expected, given that she went to school in the city in which the publication is based. The report describes how, "Mr Quin told a neighbour that his wife had been murdered by the 'boers' before he himself died from gunshot wounds."<sup>445</sup> This description together with reports that the attackers had been speaking Afrikaans, identified them in the minds of readers, as white South Africans.

Other reports that followed in the weekend papers, based elsewhere, which centred largely on Jackie and her extended family, provide further evidence of the critique that newspapers of the time accorded stories about white people preferential treatment and that, generally speaking, reports in the mainstream media reflected a "white world view".<sup>446</sup> The impression this created, the ANC argued in its submission to the TRC, was that "white lives are more important than black lives,"<sup>447</sup> this "cheapened black lives and reinforced the apartheid notion of first and second-class citizens."<sup>448</sup> Similarly, although some newspapers mentioned that the ANC had confirmed that the victims were members, they did not carry the full statement made by the organisation or that of Organisation of African Unity's (OAU) which condemned the Raid as "a classical [sic] example of savagery,"<sup>449</sup> further evidencing the propensity of the press to tell "one side of the story" while disregarding the other.<sup>450</sup>

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<sup>443</sup> John D'Oliviera, "The deaths are remote until your shoes are bloody."

<sup>444</sup> *ANC Submission on Media to the TRC*.

<sup>445</sup> This was first included in a Pan African News Agency (PANA) bulletin broadcast in English at 14:10 GMT on Saturday December 21, 1985. BBC, *Summary of World Broadcasts*, December 23, 1985.

<sup>446</sup> *ANC Submission on Media to the TRC*.

<sup>447</sup> *ANC Submission on Media to the TRC*.

<sup>448</sup> *ANC Submission on Media to the TRC*.

<sup>449</sup> Statements made by the ANC and the OAU were quoted in PANA bulletins, on Saturday 21 December 1985, *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, December 23, 1985.

<sup>450</sup> *ANC Submission on Media to the TRC*.



Figure 5: *Sunday Times*, December 22, 1985.  
Credit: Arena Holdings / Msunduzi Municipal Library



Figure 6: *Sunday Times Extra*, December 22, 1985.  
Credit: Arena Holdings / NLSA

On Sunday 22 December, the Raid was featured across the first two pages of the *Sunday Times*. The front-page report “**SPARED!** First picture of the baby who lived through the Massacre of Maseru,” (Figure 5),<sup>451</sup> focusses on the story of the white teacher Jackie Quin, her “coloured husband” known only as Joe, and their one-year-old daughter Phoenix, left unharmed in her cot. The report notes that two burnt out vehicles had been found on the banks of the Caledon River, the border between South Africa and Lesotho, suggesting that the attackers had either waded through or crossed the river from Lesotho to South Africa by dinghy. The large full-colour photograph on the far right of page, showing Patricia Quin holding Phoenix, her granddaughter, vies for attention with one of the wife and child of a SADF soldier killed in Angola, and another of Rozanne, daughter of then President PW Botha playing a guitar, (Figure 5).

<sup>451</sup> St Leger, Harris and Armour, “SPARED!”



Figure 7: *Sunday Times*, December 22, 1985.  
 Credit: Arena Holdings / Johannesburg City Library

The photograph made by Samson was printed on page two<sup>452</sup> above a report, “Jackie: A girl they all loved,” (Figure 7).<sup>453</sup> This report details information provided by eyewitness Richard Macaskill, who described the attackers as uniformed, Afrikaans speaking men and names other victims as “Mary”, “Teddy”, and “Tembo.” A second report on the same page “Maseru ‘hit squad’ riddle”<sup>454</sup> outlines the claims made by the LNLA and speculates about its links to the SADF, calling it a “surrogate of the South Africans.”<sup>455</sup>

The Raid was also featured on the front page of the *Sunday Times Extra*, “ANC CLAIM SHOT WHITE GIRL ‘ONE OF OURS,’” (Figure 6).<sup>456</sup> which extends the focus on the political affinities of the victims, while the report “Baby escapes as nine are massacred”<sup>457</sup> delves deeper into the lives of the Quin family, noting their denial of the ANC’s claim that Jackie was a member. The focus of the report in the *Extra* exemplifies the way in which news

<sup>452</sup> Former editor of the *Sunday Times*, Ken Owen, told me informally that it is likely that Samson’s picture was printed on page two because, “it didn’t pass the breakfast test”. He explained that it was considered inappropriate to publish photographs that might cause readers to be put off their breakfast on the front page.

<sup>453</sup> The front-page story above, is continued overleaf as “Jackie: A girl they all loved,” *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), December 22, 1985.

<sup>454</sup> *Sunday Times* Reporters, “Maseru ‘hit squad’ riddle,” *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), December 22, 1985.

<sup>455</sup> *Sunday Times* Reporters, “Maseru ‘hit squad’ riddle.” The LNLA also known as the LLA was the armed wing of the Basutoland Congress Party which was opposed to the rule of Chief Leabua Jonathan. The LNLA is alleged to have received funding from the South African government, which opposed Jonathan’s support for the ANC.

<sup>456</sup> Uncredited heading above photographs illustrating the report listed in the footnote below, *Sunday Times Extra* (Johannesburg), December 22, 1985.

<sup>457</sup> Denyse Armour and Shaun Harris, “Baby escapes as nine are massacred,” *Sunday Times Extra* (Johannesburg), December 22, 1985.

was “ghettoised” by the media, reinforcing racial divisions: supplements like this were created to present news reports or articles deemed to be of relevance to Black readers in various parts of the country in a separate section of the newspaper.<sup>458</sup> So, for example, this edition of the *Sunday Times Extra* includes reports on the soccer teams Orlando Pirates and Kaiser Chiefs, based in Soweto, which would not have been included in the main section of the newspaper.

A *Sunday Tribune* report “**SA tipped Maseru on ANC ‘blitz,’**”<sup>459</sup> (Figure 19), written by Deon Delpont, whose memories of the visit to the mortuary are discussed in Chapter Four, reports that the Lesotho Ministerial Press Secretary stated that Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan had received a telex from the South African Government, two days before the Raid, claiming there was evidence members of the ANC would strike South Africa over Christmas. The Lesotho government had responded to this message the following day, asking for proof of the allegation.<sup>460</sup> A subheading on the same page, below small portrait photographs of Jackie and Phoenix, “**The toddler who saw her parents slaughtered,**”<sup>461</sup> is continued on page 2 under the headline “**Lesotho believes attack was reprisal for Messina landmine deaths.**”<sup>462</sup>

Like the *Sunday Times*, the *Sunday Tribune* focussed on the Quin family, with photographs of Jackie, and Phoenix. As with other publications mentioned above, photographs relating to the Raid are juxtaposed with others associated with political violence. In this case, two images relating to the bomb placed under a minivan in Pine Street in central Durban earlier in the week, which injured 13 people, sending an implicit message about the reality of ‘terrorist’ action, (Figure 19). The *Sunday Star*, while carrying much the same information as the other Sunday newspapers, included an image of “Joe Quinn (sic) with baby daughter Phoenix” from a family photograph album, on the front page, bringing him into view for the first time as a family man, rather than as a faceless ‘terrorist’.

Apart from Jackie, only Leon was accorded any attention in the mainstream media. In the week following the Raid, *The Star* announced that “**‘Mr Quinn’ was Leon Meyers,**”<sup>463</sup> and, like the *Daily Despatch*,<sup>464</sup> *Evening Post*,<sup>465</sup> and *The Argus*, carried reports based on interviews with Meyer’s family, detailing his early life in East London and his activities as a member of the ANC in exile. Other victims were regarded as being of no consequence or interest to newspaper readers.

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<sup>458</sup> Tomaselli, Tomaselli and Muller, 73-74,

<sup>459</sup> Deon Delpont, “SA tipped Maseru on ANC ‘blitz,’” *Sunday Tribune* (Durban), December 22, 1985.

<sup>460</sup> Delpont, “SA tipped Maseru.”

<sup>461</sup> Carolyn McGibbon, “The toddler who saw her parents slaughtered,” *Sunday Tribune* (Durban), December 22, 1985.

<sup>462</sup> Mc Gibbon’s report, referred to above, is continued overleaf as “Lesotho believes attack was reprisal for Messina landmine deaths,” *Sunday Tribune*, December 22, 1985.

<sup>463</sup> Sapa, “Mr Quinn was Leon Meyer. Maseru victim was self-exiled political activist,” *The Star*, (Johannesburg), December 26, 1985..

<sup>464</sup> Dispatch Reporter, “Maseru blast victim an EL man,” *Daily Dispatch* (East London), December 25, 1985.

<sup>465</sup> Sapa, “Maseru raid victim was from EL,” *Evening Post* (East London), December 26, 1985.

Much of the weekend coverage is based on the first-hand accounts of journalists who visited the scene or interviewed family members. Further coverage after the initial drama of the event had subsided was derived from news agencies, particularly Sapa,<sup>466</sup> which was edited and headlined to suit the agenda of a particular title.

On 23 December, the Monday following the Raid, seven people were killed, and many injured in a bomb blast in a busy Amanzimtoti shopping centre, an event described emotively by the press as a horror,<sup>467</sup> an atrocity<sup>468</sup> and carnage.<sup>469</sup> A front page report in *The Star* the following day “Police vow to bring bombers to justice,”<sup>470</sup> reminded readers that 13 people had died in bomb blasts in South Africa within 10 days and that the ANC had claimed responsibility for the Messina landmine incident, but had not commented on the Amanzimtoti bombing.<sup>471</sup> This assertion was repeated in a report in the *Sunday Tribune*, “ANC DIVIDED: Switch to soft target signals a gulf between militants and old guard say experts.”<sup>472</sup>



Figure 8: *The Natal Mercury*, December 24, 1985.  
Credit: Independent Media / NLSA

<sup>466</sup> The South African Press Agency, Sapa, was established by major newspapers / newspaper groups in 1938 to facilitate the sharing of foreign and domestic news. It ceased operations in 2015.

<sup>467</sup> Argus Correspondent, “Shopping horror,” *The Argus* (Cape Town), December 23, 1985.

<sup>468</sup> Janet Moore, Willie Louw, Don Bayley, Stovin Hayter and Deven Moodley, “Bomb atrocity,” *The Natal Mercury* (Durban), December 24, 1985.

<sup>469</sup> Mercury Reporter, “Toti recovers after carnage,” *The Natal Mercury*, (Durban), December 25, 1985.

<sup>470</sup> Own Correspondent, “Police vow to bring bombers to justice,” *The Star* (Johannesburg), December 24, 1985.

<sup>471</sup> Newspapers including *The Argus*, *The Cape Times* and *Die Vaderland* carried reports of Winnie Mandela’s arrest and appearance in court for contravening her banning orders alongside front page reports of the Amanzimtoti bomb.

<sup>472</sup> Arlene Getz, “ANC DIVIDED: Switch to soft targets signals a gulf between militants and old guard say experts,” *Sunday Tribune* (Durban), December 29, 1985.

In the days following the bomb blast, readers were subjected to a stream of images, following much the same pattern as those associated with the Messina landmine incident: photographs of victims seen in happier days; wounded survivors, often in the care of emergency workers; shattered shop fronts; blood-stained floors; grieving mourners; and funerals, interspersed with the occasional thumbnail portrait of sombre faced officials, including government ministers. These are evident in the *Natal Mercury Report*, “**Bomb Atrocity**,” (Figure 8).<sup>473</sup> While there was some speculation in the media that the bombing might be a reprisal for the Raid on Maseru, this was not confirmed until mid-1986, when Andrew Sibusiso Zondo, was brought to trial, sentenced and executed for his role in the attack.<sup>474</sup>

As the Amanzimtoti bomb blast displaced the Raid from the front pages, attention shifted from the human-interest story to the question of blame and government’s confusing communications that simultaneously denied responsibility for or justified the Raid, suggesting a disjuncture between the positions of the security establishment, foreign affairs and the information service.<sup>475</sup> While the *Sowetan* noted that “**‘SA WARNED LESOTHO’ Govt hinted it had the right to protect itself – Lesotho.**”<sup>476</sup> *The Citizen* warned, “**Questions raised on the role of Black States and ANC,**”<sup>477</sup> quoting the South African government’s stern warnings to its neighbours.<sup>478</sup> Reports like these give weight to the critique that it is a misnomer to describe the English-language press as an opposition press. As journalist and editor Moegsien Williams told the TRC, “the English press was an opposition press in the sense of white sectarian politics only: They did not support the ANC, never articulated ANC policies, never wrote about the aspirations of the vast majority of South Africans, about their views, what they wanted, their need for a vote. Nothing happened outside white parameters.”<sup>479</sup>

Undeterred by South Africa’s insistent denials, Lesotho called on the United Nations (UN) to censure the country for its actions.<sup>480</sup> A *Business Day* report, “**De Cuellar slams Maseru killings**”<sup>481</sup> notes that the UN Secretary-General condemned the attack. Subsequent reports track the progress of this process: “**SA denies part on**

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<sup>473</sup> Moore, Louw, Bayley, Hayter and Moodley, “Bomb atrocity.”

<sup>474</sup> See references to evidence presented at the trial of Andrew Sibusiso Zondo later in this Chapter.

<sup>475</sup> Tomaselli, 85-86.

<sup>476</sup> Sowetan Correspondents, “SA WARNED LESOTHO’ Govt hinted it had the right to protect itself – Lesotho,” *Sowetan* (Johannesburg), December 23, 1985. See also, Richard Walker, “Botha accuses Lesotho,” *Cape Times* (Cape Town) December 31, 1985.

<sup>477</sup> Sapa-Reuter, “SA neighbours don’t knowingly allow attacks. Questions raised on role of Black states and ANC,” *The Citizen* (Johannesburg), December 23, 1985.

<sup>478</sup> Sapa-Reuter, “SA neighbours don’t knowingly allow attacks.”

<sup>479</sup> *TRC Report*, Volume Four, 175.

<sup>480</sup> In 1985, the United Nations condemned the imposition of the state of emergency, the killing of activists in Crossroads, the execution of ANC member Benjamin Moloise, demanded the withdrawal of charges of treason instituted against members of the UDF, the June attack on Botswana and the December attack on Lesotho and adopted the International Convention Against Apartheid in Sport, continuing its decades long condemnation of the apartheid state.

<sup>481</sup> Richard Walker, “De Cuellar slams Maseru killings,” *Business Day* (Johannesburg), December 23, 1985.

Lesotho attack,"<sup>482</sup> Lesotho goes to UN over killings,"<sup>483</sup> "Lesotho shootings: Delegation leaves for UN,"<sup>484</sup> "UN meeting on Maseru dead,"<sup>485</sup> "SA Veroordeel Lesotho by VV"<sup>486</sup> [South African condemns Lesotho at UN], and "Pik slams Lesotho for UN attack."<sup>487</sup> The use of the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs nickname<sup>488</sup> gives government a human face, while the reiteration of words like 'slams,' 'denies' and 'blames' accords the minister or government agency and a position of power. This saga concludes with a report headlined "Resolution deplores Lesotho killings; UN Condemns SA for premediated violence"<sup>489</sup> which explains that the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) had unanimously approved a resolution condemning the killings and "acts of unprovoked and premediated violence against Lesotho." In the face of international censure, *Die Volksblad* lamented, "Weste bly doof"<sup>490</sup> [West remains deaf] to the threat of terrorism, playing into world-wide concerns in a week when terrorists mounted attacks on airports in Rome and Vienna.<sup>491</sup>

As government and SADF spokesmen continued to deny involvement, speculation about a covert death squad mounted. An *Evening Post* editorial asked "Who runs the death squad?"<sup>492</sup> suggesting that as the SADF had denied involvement, and the LNLA's claims had been ruled out, that there was a "sinister possibility" that the Raid may well have been the work of a "sophisticated death squad." An editorial published in *The Natal Witness* asked, "Who's the boss?"<sup>493</sup> suggesting that South Africa's foreign policy was controlled by the military rather than the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Similar views were expressed in *Pretoria News*,<sup>494</sup> *The Argus*,<sup>495</sup> and *Sunday Star*.<sup>496</sup> The *Sowetan* editorial "Maseru deaths: Questions but no answers,"<sup>497</sup> gave further weight to the growing concerns, positioning the text above a dramatic drawing of shadowy gunmen, (Figure 9).

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<sup>482</sup> Argus Correspondent, "SA denies part in Lesotho attack," *The Argus* (Cape Town), December 24, 1985.

<sup>483</sup> "Lesotho goes to UN over killings," *The Star* (Johannesburg), December 28, 1985.

<sup>484</sup> Sapa, "Lesotho shootings: Delegation leaves for UN," *The Citizen* (Johannesburg), December 28, 1985.

<sup>485</sup> Sapa, "UN meeting on Maseru dead," *Cape Times* (Cape Town), December 28, 1985.

<sup>486</sup> Johan de Wet, "SA veroordeel Lesotho by VV," *Beeld* (Johannesburg), December 31, 1985.

<sup>487</sup> Roelof Frederik 'Pik' Botha was Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1977-1994, serving in this capacity under Presidents BJ Vorster, PW Botha and FW de Klerk. Sapa, "Pik slams Lesotho for UN attack," *The Citizen* (Johannesburg), December 31, 1985.

<sup>488</sup> RF Botha, was nicknamed 'Pik,' an abbreviation of the Afrikaans word for pikkewyn (penguin).

<sup>489</sup> The Star Bureau, "Resolution deplores Lesotho killings. UN condemns SA for 'premeditated violence,'" *The Star*, (Johannesburg) December 31, 1985.

<sup>490</sup> Editorial, "Weste bly doof," *Die Volksblad* (Bloemfontein), December 31, 1985.

<sup>491</sup> Sapa-Reuter, "Airport massacres: Terrorists hurl grenades, shoot wildly at travellers," *The Natal Mercury*, (Durban) December 28, 1985, and Politieke Redacteur, "Brittanje en Wes-Duitsland teen geweld. Nog lande geskok oor terreurbom," *Beeld* (Johannesburg) December 18, 1985. This is illustrated by two photographs, the first showing the bodies of victims, taken from an acute angle to render them unidentifiable, and the second, the one of the perpetrators, with his face in full view, shot dead by police.

<sup>492</sup> Comment, "Who runs the death squad?" *Evening Post* (Port Elizabeth), December 23, 1985.

<sup>493</sup> Editorial, "Who's the boss?" *The Natal Witness* (Pietermaritzburg), December 23, 1985.

<sup>494</sup> Editorial, "A very curious kind of killing," *Pretoria News* (Pretoria), December 23, 1985.

<sup>495</sup> Editorial, "Maseru raid: who is to blame?" *The Argus*, (Cape Town), December 23, 1985.

<sup>496</sup> John D'Olivera, "Maseru massacre enigma," *Sunday Star* (Johannesburg), December 29, 1985.

<sup>497</sup> Special Correspondent, "Maseru deaths: Questions but no answers," *Sowetan*, Johannesburg, December 30, 1985.



Figure 9: Sowetan, December 30, 1985.  
Credit: Arena Holdings / UCT Libraries

A week after the Raid, the Lesotho government released the names used by the six ANC members when they entered the country. Days later, a *Sunday Times* report, “Raid victims linked to SA terror,”<sup>498</sup> published on the day of the mass funeral in Maseru, claimed to have ascertained the “true identities” of the victims,<sup>499</sup> noting that the names of four of the six South Africans listed had been confirmed by an ANC spokesperson in Lusaka. In the eyes of the media, the endorsement of the victims as members of the ANC established their status as ‘terrorists,’ effectively demonising them,<sup>500</sup> and rendering them pariahs. In their submission to the TRC, Independent Newspapers, noted that while many black journalists were irked when their white colleagues referred pejoratively to “liberation movement cadres as ‘terrorists’”<sup>501</sup> some white journalists “felt quite strongly that they *should* have been called ‘terrorists’, because they committed acts of terror against innocent people.”<sup>502</sup>

<sup>498</sup> Stephan Terblanche, “Raid victims linked to SA terror,” *Sunday Times*, (Johannesburg), December 29, 1985.

<sup>499</sup> This report uses names supplied by Lesotho authorities, who described the South African victims Leon Meyers, Jackie Quin, Themba Albert Mthembu, Glen Darries, Nomsa Mthethwa and Morris as members of the ANC, and names the Lesotho nationals as Makaelane Mohatle, Boema Tau and Amelia Lesenyeh. The *Sunday Times*, drawing on their own sources, names the victims as: Leon Lionel Meyer, Jacqueline (Jackie) Quin, Joseph Mayoli, Nonkosi Mini, Ngwenduna Wanda, and Siphon Gumed. The ANC spokesperson quoted claimed to have no knowledge of Wanda or Gumed, naming the other two victims as Harold Lulamile Dentile and Midian Nhlanhla Zulu.

<sup>500</sup> *TRC Report*, Volume 4, 175, and Henrietta J. Lubbe, “Comparative analysis of the reportage of the Gugulethu 7 events in the South African press in 1986 and 1997,” *Critical Arts* 21, no. 1 (2007), 160.

<sup>501</sup> “Independent Newspapers’ Submission to the TRC.”

<sup>502</sup> “Independent Newspapers’ Submission to the TRC.”

As the year ended, the media<sup>503</sup> sought to make sense of the deadly spiral of violence implicit in the three attacks: The Messina landmine incident, the Maseru Raid and the Amanzimtoti bombing. *The Citizen* editorial, “**More Violence**,”<sup>504</sup> makes a distinction between the Messina landmine incident and the Maseru Raid, condemning the landmine as “an act of war . . . the most reckless and indiscriminate form of attack” while justifying the Raid because it was “aimed at specific targets.”<sup>505</sup> *The Citizen* too justified the Raid, arguing that, “If the South Africans carried out a pre-emptive strike in Maseru, then the Durban bomb blast shows that information that the ANC intends make terror attacks over the Christmas period is spot on.”<sup>506</sup> *Evening Post*, asserting that “**Terror tactics cannot succeed**,”<sup>507</sup> condemned the ANC as a terrorist organisation “prepared to kill and maim in an effort to force its enemy to capitulation,” while the *Cape Times* editorial “**Messina, Mamelodi, Maseru, Amanzimtoti**”<sup>508</sup> warned ominously that, “the country appears to be sliding steadily down the slope of military rule and mindless violence.”<sup>509</sup> Observing, in retrospect, that “incidents arising from the ANC’s landmine campaign were often followed by brutal security force operations,”<sup>510</sup> Nicky Rousseau argues that micro-chronologies like this demonstrate the “‘deadly tango’ between the state and liberation movement,”<sup>511</sup> situating the Raid within a chain of linked events rather than as an isolated incident.

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<sup>503</sup> As with the local press, international media linked the events. See, for example ITN Archive, “South Africa, January 5, 1986, which focussed on attacks directed at the civilian population and showed footage related to the Messina landmine incident, the Maseru Raid and the Amanzimtoti bomb blast, accessed December 2022, accessed March 2023, <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/video/border-countryafrica-gv-wreckage-of-pick-up-truck-by-news-footage/721129679?adppopup=true>.

<sup>504</sup> Comment, “More violence,” *The Citizen* (Johannesburg), December 23, 1985.

<sup>505</sup> “More violence,” *The Citizen*, 6.

<sup>506</sup> “More violence,” *The Citizen*, 6.

<sup>507</sup> Comment, “Terror tactics cannot succeed,” *Evening Post* (Port Elizabeth), December 26, 1985.

<sup>508</sup> “Messina, Mamelodi, Maseru, Amanzimtoti,” *Cape Times*.

<sup>509</sup> Editorial, “Messina, Mamelodi, Maseru, Amanzimtoti,” *Cape Times* (Cape Town), December 27, 1985.

<sup>510</sup> Nicky Rousseau, *Itineraries, a return to the archives of the South African Truth commission and the limits of counter-revolutionary warfare*, (PhD thesis, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, 2019), 92.

<sup>511</sup> Rousseau, *Itineraries*, 92.



Figure 10: *Sunday Times*, January 12, 1986.  
Credit: Arena Holdings / Johannesburg City Library

The intense media focus on the Raid ends with reports of the funeral of the victims on 29 December 1985. A double page spread in the *Sunday Times*, “The day they buried Jackie Quin. And a king, a prime minister, a foreign minister, several diplomats and the comrades of the ANC turned it into an anti-South African jamboree,” (Figure 10)<sup>512</sup> which describes the event as “a bizarre combination of guerrilla-style military funeral and a state ceremony.”<sup>513</sup> This is evident in the images carried both in the *Sunday Times* and in footage broadcast on NBC<sup>514</sup> and other television stations<sup>515</sup> which show Jackie’s sister Jane, and others bearing her coffin on their shoulders, uniformed ANC cadres standing guard between flag-draped coffins. The report includes excerpts from messages received from Tambo and Mandela, interviews with members of the Quin family, and a heartfelt assurance from Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan that “his country would continue to give

<sup>512</sup> Armour, “They day they buried Jackie Quin.” This report stands in stark contrast the *Beeld* report on the funeral of the victims of the Messina landmine, “Diplomate nie by die grafte: Landmyn se slagoffers kry ‘n afjak. [Diplomats not at the graves: landmine victims scorned], *Beeld*, December 19, 1985.

<sup>513</sup> Armour, “They day they buried Jackie Quin.”

<sup>514</sup> Getty Images, NBC News Archives, “Anti-apartheid activists Blackburn : Bishop die in car crash” December 29, 1985, Accessed December 2022 <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/video/production-unit-nightly-news-media-type-aired-show-news-footage/1275943384?adppopup=true> .

<sup>515</sup> Getty Images, ITN Archive, “South Africa,” December 29, 1985, accessed December 2022 <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/video/chanting-funeral-procession-r-l-downhill-l-r-to-funeral-news-footage/721945515?adppopup=true>.

asylum to South African refugees.”<sup>516</sup> As with other coverage by the *Sunday Times*, the meaning of these reports is obtruse. It is not clear whether the publication is condemning the violence visited on the ANC or sounding a warning of the consequences of consorting with the enemy.<sup>517</sup> This ambiguity is telling, given the rumours that the editor, Tertius Myburgh, was an unpaid agent of the state,<sup>518</sup> using his position to block reports that showed the government of the day in a negative light, and choosing to frame the ANC, and other liberation movements, as ‘terrorists’ that threatened the security of the state. Maz du Preez who worked as a political editor on the *Sunday Times* until late 1985 offered another reading of Myburgh’s position asking whether Jackie’s death might have become “more important,” to readers because she was white. Maybe, he suggested, the message Myburgh wanted to convey was, “we can’t all be evil as a white race, because one of us was part of the struggle.”<sup>519</sup>

On 1 January 1986 the South African government blockaded the Lesotho border, cutting off the movement of people and supplies,<sup>520</sup> which shifted media attention to the political consequences of the Raid.<sup>521</sup> Tensions between the countries escalated until 15 January when Lesotho Prime Minister Chief Leabua Jonathan was ousted in a military coup lead by General Justin Lekhanya, Head of the Army.<sup>522</sup> Lekhanya’s government reached an agreement with South Africa that “neither would allow its territory to be used for the planning or execution of acts of violence nor terror.”<sup>523</sup> The blockade was lifted on 25 January 1986, after at least 60 ANC members – described as “black guerillas”<sup>524</sup> had been forced to leave Lesotho.

Months later, in September 1986, news coverage of the trial of Andrew Sibusio Zondo, sentenced to death for detonating the Amanzimtoti bomb, brings a tragic encounter with an unreferenced photograph of Jackie into view. The weekend after Zondo was executed, a *City Press* report, “**ZONDO! ‘Toti bomber tells his own story’**”<sup>525</sup> drawing heavily on Professor Fatima Meer’s then soon-to-be-published book,<sup>526</sup> quotes Zondo’s explanation that the bomb was a retaliation for the attack on Maseru. Explaining the choice of location, Zondo

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<sup>516</sup> Sapa, “Lesotho pledge on refugees,” *Cape Times* (Cape Town), December 30, 1985, See also, Sapa, “Lesotho keer nie SA ‘vlugtelinge,’” *Die Burger* (Cape Town), December 20, 1985.

<sup>517</sup> The day before the funeral, anti-apartheid activists Molly Blackburn and Brian Bishop were killed in a car crash. They had received numerous death threats because of their support for other activists.

<sup>518</sup> John Matisonn, *God, Spies and Lies. Finding South Africa’s future through it past* (Cape Town, Ideas for Africa / Missing Ink, 2015), 205-208 and Stephen Mulholland, “In defence of Tertius Myburgh” *Politicsweb*, 1 December 2015, accessed June 2023, <https://www.politicsweb.co.za/opinion/in-defence-of-tertius-myburgh>.

<sup>519</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez, Kalk Bay, January 14, 2025.

<sup>520</sup> Michael Sparks, “Border guards delayed us, Quin’s parents claim,” *The Natal Witness* (Pietermaritzburg), January 1, 1986.

<sup>521</sup> Sapa-Reuter, “Entry curbs implemented to counter increase in terrorists, say officials: Govt clamps down on Lesotho border traffic,” *The Star*, January 4, 1986.

<sup>522</sup> Tony Stirling and SAPA, “Coup welcomed in Lesotho,” *The Citizen* (Johannesburg), January 21, 1986.

<sup>523</sup> Sapa Reuter, “Traffic flows as 60 ANC leave Lesotho: Open again,” *Weekend Argus* (Cape Town) January 25, 1986.

<sup>524</sup> Erik van Ees, “South Africa Lifts Blockade of Lesotho,” UPI January 25, 1986, accessed June 2024, <https://www.upi.com/Archives/1986/01/25/South-Africa-lifts-blockade-of-Lesotho/8160507013200/>.

<sup>525</sup> S’bu Mngadi, “ZONDO! ‘Toti bomber tells his own story,” *City Press* (Johannesburg), September 14, 1986.

<sup>526</sup> Fatima Meer, “The Trial of Andrew Zondo,” (Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1987). On page 164, Meer draws on reports published in the *Sunday Times* on December 22, 1985, to reconstruct an account of the Raid.

told the court,

“I found myself at Sanlam Centre and went to ‘Toti Restaurant to buy something to eat. I stood outside and ate. While I was eating, I saw people reading a newspaper which carried a picture of a woman shot in Lesotho, the mother of a nine-month-old baby. I bought the newspaper myself. On returning home, I decided to go and put the mine in the centre.”<sup>527</sup>

It is not possible to know which photograph Zondo saw. Although he mentions being in the Centre on the Saturday after the Raid, local newspapers did not carry portraits of Jackie and Phoenix on that day. It may be that he remembered a photograph published the following day. The fact remains that, in his mind, the encounter with the photograph of Jackie influenced his decision on the placement of the bomb.

The “spiral of retribution,”<sup>528</sup> which for Zondo began with the Church Street bombing,<sup>529</sup> continued beyond his execution: two other people suspected of being involved in the Amanzimtoti blast were acquitted, but later killed by Security Branch operatives, one of whom was in turn killed, allegedly by an MK combatant.<sup>530</sup>

### *The Raid in media associated with the liberation movement, 1986*

This period outlines and contextualises the narrative shared largely out of the sight of South Africans, in publications produced by the liberation movements in exile. These publications were circulated beyond the country’s borders and illicitly within, in defiance of banning orders. It offers further context into the encounters with the images described in Chapter Five and Chapter Six.

Although South African newspapers focussed almost exclusively on Jackie and Leon, other victims were acknowledged in publications associated with the liberation movement in the months that followed. Delivering the organisations traditional 8<sup>th</sup> of January message from the ANC National Executive Committee, “**Attack, Advance, Give the Enemy No Quarter,**” published in full in *Dawn*<sup>531</sup> and *Sechaba*,<sup>532</sup> Oliver Tambo paid tribute to Nomkhosi Mini, Jackie Quin, and Leon Meyer, amongst other slain comrades.<sup>533</sup> He acknowledged the Frontline States who “stood firm in the face of growing threats and actual acts of aggression and destabilisation carried out by the Pretoria regime against them.”<sup>534</sup> And he declared 1986 to be “The Year of Umkhonto We

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<sup>527</sup> Zondo contradicts himself, telling Meer that he saw the “South African Airways (SAA) mark outside the travel agency” and, because he associated SAA with the government, decided that “this is the place I’m going to use for retaliation.” Fatima Meer, “The Trial of Andrew Zondo, 108.

<sup>528</sup> Fatima Meer, *The Trial of Andrew Zondo*, 164.

<sup>529</sup> In 1983, MK combatants detonated a bomb in Church Square, Pretoria, killing 19 people. Three days later, the SADF launched an attack on Maputo, where Zondo was living, killing 64 people, causing Zondo to volunteer for military training, in the belief that “violence was the only option for changing the lives of black people in South Africa.” Rousseau, *Itineraries*, 93.

<sup>530</sup> Rousseau, *Itineraries*, 94 and *TRC Report*, Volume Two, 171.

<sup>531</sup> “Attack! Advance! Give the Enemy No Quarter! Message of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress on the occasion of 8th January 1986, delivered by Comrade President OR Tambo” *Dawn* (London), Volume 10 No. 1, 1986, 3.

<sup>532</sup> Attack! Advance! Give the Enemy No Quarter! Message of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress on the occasion of 8th January 1986, delivered by Comrade President OR Tambo” *Sechaba* (Dar es Salaam), Volume March 1986, 2-12.

<sup>533</sup> “Attack! Advance!” *Dawn*, 8.

<sup>534</sup> “Attack! Advance!” *Dawn*, 29.

Sizwe – People’s Army” arguing that “The continuing stubbornness of the racist regime and its resort to even greater and more brutal violence has made it a matter of extreme urgency that we launch a most determined military offensive.”<sup>535</sup> Chris Hani, similarly, in his address to MK, published in *Dawn*, paid tribute to combatants whose “exemplary and courageous performances contributed into making the country ungovernable and the system of apartheid unworkable,”<sup>536</sup> mentioning Morris Seabelo, Leon Meyer, and Joseph Mayoli,<sup>537</sup> amongst others.

that same system is all right, all it needs is a whitewash job.

**No Surrender, No Going Back**  
Since the June 16th Uprisings fighting between the Blacks and the regime escalated. Student-police and army confrontations became commonplace and the annual marking of the Uprising became a focal point of organisation for both students and parents, trade unions and mass organisations. With each passing anniversary of the Uprising, student leaders were being detained and killed, but more came forward, the demands of the students grew and the numbers



Joseph Mayoli a commander in the Mmadinoga Detachment. He came from Eastern Cape and fell in the Maseru attack by commando units of the SADF on 20 December 1985.

of those involved multiplied. The regime banned virtually all the organisations involved with the Uprising, 18 of them on the 19th of October 1977, but could not put down the fire. Other organisations were formed quickly thereafter, the Azanian Student Organisation (AZASO), the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), more militant, better organised involving even more people. Like the proverbial fool, the enemy has shot himself in both feet.

**Death in Elsies River**  
It was however to be in 1980 that the most widespread school boycotts among the Coloured and Indian communities were to take place. The enemy having had his plans to shunt the Coloureds and Indians into his schemes as junior partners frustrated, poured his venom on their children setting that sector of the population

alight too. From Elsies River in the Cape, Coronationville, Lenasia, Bosmont to Eldorado Park in Johannesburg. Indian and Coloured students boycotted classes joined by students from universities and colleges demanding an end to apartheid itself. Everywhere the enemy was shooting and baton-charging the students, killing many.

By this time there had been a change of guard in Pretoria. Botha and his brass hats had taken over and were trying to whip every sector of the society into line to dance to their music. They were jealously eyeing the Coloureds and Indians as cannon-fodder for their schemes to entrench apartheid and devastate Southern Africa to create a haven for it. With amazing speed they managed to antagonise the whole people of South Africa and build the strongest unity ever seen among the oppressed. The so-called elections failed one after the other. Their tri-cameral parliament was doomed to failure. It is however in the educational field that the results of the last ten years can be seen.

**BCM 10 Years After June 16th**  
Many political currents came into the organisations which have come to be known as BCM, be they Black People’s Convention (BPC), South African Student Organisation (SASO), South African Student Movement (SASM), National Youth Organisation (NAYO) or Soweto Student Representative Council (SSRC). Some of the members of these organisations were staunch ANC members, some African right-wing nationalists, African liberals with a strong bias towards moralising, intellectuals strongly influenced by the Afro-American Civil Rights Movement, PAC and other influences. In the words of Dan Motsitsi, a former leader of SSRC, “You would find all shades of opinion in the SSRC. The point was at that stage the issues were an affront to all irrespective of whether you were Black Consciousness or not. That enabled us to work together. But as time went on, we were aware of the different trends, when the contradictions between BC and progressives intensified. But progressive students were there in the SSRC – it was only a question of profile.”

As the struggle intensified, so did the differences in BCM. The ANC stepped up the armed struggle infusing into the situation its experience, matured political outlook and tactics. That section among the BC whose outlook has

## Obituary

On December 19, 1985, the murderous agents of the Pretoria regime massacred our comrades and Lesotho nationals in Maseru. One of the people who was butchered that day was Nomkhosi Mini, known to many as Mary Thabethe or Bally. She was a cultural worker of unflinching determination, a founder member of the Amanda Cultural Ensemble.

Nomkhosi Mini, also known as Mary Thabethe, was born in Port Elizabeth on July 16, 1958. With her death in December 1985, the ANC and the youth of our organisation lost a real fighter who had dedicated all her young life to the overthrow of the apartheid system. She had yearned to see People’s Power in her lifetime.

She began school at the age of seven at Kama Lower Primary School where she did her sub-level education. From here she went to New Brighton Higher Primary School where she did her Standard Three to Standard Six. After passing Standard Six, she went to Cowan High School and completed her Junior Certificate level.

At the time she was doing her Form IV in 1977, student uprisings had spread through the length and breadth of South Africa. She was arrested for participating in a student demonstration against Bantu Education, together with several other students. They were taken to New Brighton Police Station in Land Rovers where they were brutalised by police through the liberal use of batons and samboks. She described her treatment there, how they were beaten “as if we were dogs.” They were deprived of sleep for days on end and given the water treatment. She was singled out for brutal treatment because the police interrogators were certain that she was “hiding” the truth. They were released after six gruelling days.

She was a member of the South African Students Movement (SASM) which was banned in 1977. She was detained under the draconian and all-embracing Suppression of Terrorism Act (Section Two). She was



MARY THABETHE

both politically and culturally active in the ranks of our movement. When called upon by the movement to perform her tasks in Amanda Cultural Ensemble, she did that without question or doubt. Within the Ensemble, the organisation once again called upon her to take charge of the political affairs of our women’s section. She was also the political spokesperson of this section.

As one comrade in Amanda describes her: “She was more than a comrade. She was a sister and a friend to all of us. Politically, she was more than the word good.” The other actor and dancer who happens to have participated closely with her in the show says: “In all the missions we undertook since 1980, we managed to score victories, thanks to the political maturity of comrades in the calibre of Mary.”

Nomkhosi Mini impressed everyone with her industriousness. She prided herself in doing all sorts of work. To her there were no divisions. Brave to a fault, she once confided to one member of Amanda and said: “My turn will come. I will be amongst those to go first and the last to leave – and no bullet will be on my back.”

This is how Vuyisile Mini’s daughter was. She never succumbed to police bribery and intimidation. She withstood police torture the way her father, Vuyisile Mini, did. As Mini had sung for freedom to the galleys, so had Nomkhosi to her death.

The ANC is honoured to have had such a cadre in its ranks.

AMANDLA!  
LONG LIVE NOMKHOSI!

rixaka 25

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Figure 11: *Sechaba*, 1986 no. 6.  
Credit: ANC / JSTOR

Figure 12: *Rixaka*, 1986 no. 3.  
Credit: ANC / JSTOR

Mayoli,<sup>538</sup> Nomkhosi Mini (Mary),<sup>539</sup> and Harold Lulamile Dantile (Morris)<sup>540</sup> were profiled in *Sechaba*,<sup>541</sup> (Figure 11). Mini, also known as Mary Thabethe, was accorded a full-page obituary in *Rixaka*, (Figure 12),<sup>542</sup> praising her contribution to cultural activities, mentioning her father, Vuyisile Mini, one of the first MK combatants to be executed by the apartheid government,<sup>543</sup> and explaining that she had been “butchered” by the “murderous

<sup>535</sup> “Attack! Advance!” *Dawn*, 29.

<sup>536</sup> “Attack! Advance!” *Dawn*, 29.

<sup>537</sup> Chris Hani, “The Demand of Time,” *Dawn* (London) Voume10 No. 2, 6.

<sup>538</sup> Solly Moeti, “Ten Years of Soweto Uprising,” *Sechaba* (Dar es Salaam), June 1986, 4.

<sup>539</sup> Moeti, “Ten Years of Soweto Uprising,” 7.

<sup>540</sup> “The soldiers who will never die or fade away,” *Sechaba* (Dar es Salaam), August 1986, 5.

<sup>541</sup> Moeti, 2-10.

<sup>542</sup> “Obituary,” *Rixaka* (Lusaka) no. 3 (1986), 25.

<sup>543</sup> The obituary mentions that Mini was the daughter of Vuyisile Mini, one of the first MK combatants to be executed by the apartheid government.

agents of the regime.” The use of the term ‘butcher,’ a term usually applied to the brutal killing of animals, demonstrates the writer’s opinion of the attackers far more effectively than the use of a more neutral word, like ‘killed.’<sup>544</sup> In addition to the acknowledgement of the slain cadres, a short report published in *Sechaba*, “**UmKhonto we Sizwe attacks**,”<sup>545</sup> describes the intensification of the armed struggle, noting that the number of MK attacks in 1985 was more than double the figure for the previous year, and explaining that actions such as “the killing of more than 1000 people in South Africa and 9 others in Maseru in December 1985 strengthened the resolve of our people to make that country ungovernable.”<sup>546</sup> A more extensive report in *Dawn*, “**MK IN COMBAT**”<sup>547</sup> made mention of the Messina landmine attack, the hand grenade hurled at a minivan in central Durban, and the bombing of the shopping centre in Amanzimtoti.

### *Breaking the silence: the death squads coming into view, October 1989 - December 1994*

This period outlines and contextualises the narrative that unfolded as South Africa entered a period of transition and negotiation. It provides some context for the encounters described in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven.

In June 1989, a report in the *Sunday Times*, “**Mother’s novel cries out against violence**,” (Figure 23),<sup>548</sup> explains how Jenny Hobbs’ novel, *Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary*,<sup>549</sup> was inspired by Samson’s photograph, as described in Chapter Five. Although it raised the spectre of the unknown death squads, it was not until four months later that credible information about the nefarious death squads broke in the public domain.

In October 1989, on the eve of his execution for the murder of a white farmer, former security policeman Butana Almond Nofomela<sup>550</sup> made an affidavit in which he claimed to have been a member of “Security Branch’s assassination squad” responsible for eight killings of people connected to the ANC in South Africa, Swaziland, Botswana and Lesotho.<sup>551</sup> Published in the *Weekly Mail*, under the headline, “**Death-row policeman tells of SB hit-squad**,”<sup>552</sup> the report conceded that, while Nofomela’s claim may be “a well-hatched plot to escape the noose,” if it were shown to be true, it would constitute the “first major lead to emerge from the series of political

<sup>544</sup> Thetela “Critique, discourses and ideology in newspaper reports,” 347-370.

<sup>545</sup> “UmKhonto we Sizwe attacks,” *Sechaba* (Dar es Salaam), February 1986, 16-17.

<sup>546</sup> “UmKhonto we Sizwe attacks,” 16-17.

<sup>547</sup> “MK in combat,” *Dawn* (London), Volume 10 No. 1, 1986, 21.

<sup>548</sup> Charis Perkins, “Mother’s novel cries out against violence,” *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), June 4, 1989.”

<sup>549</sup> Jenny Hobbs, *Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary* (London: Michael Joseph, 1989).

<sup>550</sup> Butana Almond’s surname is spelt variously as ‘Nofomela’, ‘Nofamela’ and ‘Nofemela.’ For the sake of consistency, the spelling here, unless directly quoted, is the former, consistent with the spelling used in the record of the November 1991 decision of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of South Africa.

<sup>551</sup> For a fuller account of Nofomela’s affidavit, see: Terry Bell and Dumisa Ntsebenza, *Unfinished Business: South Africa, Apartheid and Truth*, (Observatory: RedWorks, 2001), 12; Les Switzer and Mohamed Adhikari, *South Africa’s Resistance Press. Alternative Voices in the Last Generation under Apartheid*, (Ohio: Centre for International Studies, University of Ohio, 2000), 429-433; and *George Bizos, No One to Blame* (Cape Town: David Philip/Mayibuye Books, 1998), 171-173.

<sup>552</sup> Ivor Powell, “Death-row policeman tells of SB ‘hit-squad’”, *Weekly Mail* (Johannesburg), October 20-26. 1989.

assassinations in recent years.”<sup>553</sup> Although police and government officials denied the claims, Nofomela was granted a stay of execution pending the outcome of a departmental inquiry headed by T.P. McNally, Attorney General of the Orange Free State, and Lieutenant General A.B Conradie, head of the SA Police’s detective branch, a move decried as insufficient by the opposition and some members of the legal fraternity.

A month after the publication of Nofomela’s affidavit, *Vrye Weekblad* published an exclusive five-page exposé, “**BLOODSPOOR VAN DIE SAP**”<sup>554</sup> by investigative journalist Jacques Pauw. The exposé, which draws on information provided by Captain Dirk Coetzee, a former Vlakplaas commander, confirmed Nofomela’s testimony, describing the work of the Vlakplaas-based unit and its involvement in the killing of the apartheid government’s political opponents in gruesome detail. A follow-up report, “**n Askari vertel...**,”<sup>555</sup> offered a similar account of hit squad’s activities by David ‘Spyker’ Tshikalange, another former Vlakplaas member. Although the head of the SAP public relations division rejected Coetzee’s claims as “untested and wild allegations,”<sup>556</sup> McNally and Conradie, whose investigation into Nofomela’s allegations was already in progress, were directed to study the new revelations too.

McNally’s report was handed to the then President FW De Klerk in early December 1989. De Klerk refused to release this to the public, or comment on its findings, but his announcement that several actions that had been taken in response to the allegations, is telling: five policemen, including de Kock were suspended, as reported in the *Cape Times*, “**FW Acts on ‘hit squads.**”<sup>557</sup> The media, legal experts, and civil society activists hit out at De Klerk, “**FW accused of cover-up**”<sup>558</sup> arguing that he was attempting to conceal the chain of command that directed the alleged hit squads, and demanding that an independent commission of inquiry be established to investigate the allegations. De Klerk refused this, but by late January 1990 had been persuaded to change his mind. As *The Natal Witness* report, “**Judicial probe into hit squads**”<sup>559</sup> notes, the decision was confirmed the day before an ANC press conference at which Coetzee was scheduled to speak.

On 2 February 1990, in his opening address to parliament, as reported in the *Sowetan*, “**What FW told the world**”,<sup>560</sup> de Klerk announced the unbanning of the liberation movements, notably the ANC, Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and South African Communist Party (SACP); a moratorium on the death penalty; the release of

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<sup>553</sup> Powell, “Death-row policeman tells of SB ‘hit-squad.’”

<sup>554</sup> Jacques Pauw, “Bloodspoor van die SAP,” *Vrye Weekblad*, (Johannesburg), November 17, 1989.

<sup>555</sup> Jacques Pauw, “n askari vertel...,” *Vrye Weekblad* (Johannesburg), November 24, 1989.

<sup>556</sup> Fred de Lange, “Top probe of hit squad claims,” *The Citizen* (Johannesburg), November 18, 1989.

<sup>557</sup> Barry Streek, “FW acts on ‘hit squads,’” *Cape Times* (Cape Town), December 8, 1989.

<sup>558</sup> Own Correspondent, “FW accused of cover-up,” *Pretoria News*, (Pretoria) December 9, 1989.

<sup>559</sup> Wyndham Hartley, “Judicial probe into hit squads,” *The Natal Witness* (Pietermaritzburg), February 1, 1990.

<sup>560</sup> “What FW told the World,” *Sowetan* (Johannesburg), February 5, 1990.

political prisoners; and the lifting of the nation-wide State of Emergency imposed in 1986.<sup>561</sup>

In November 1990, a full year after it was first handed to him, de Klerk released the McNally Report. As the *Sunday Star* headline, “**Hit squad claims untruthful**”<sup>562</sup> asserts, the report found that the claims made by the three ex-policemen, were “untruthful” and “unreliable.”<sup>563</sup> Furthermore, *The Sunday Star* notes that McNally did not follow up on allegations about raids into Lesotho, Swaziland, and Botswana because the terms of reference precluded cross-border investigations. The report of the Harms Commission, made public less than a fortnight later, concluded similarly that there was no evidence of a police death squad.<sup>564</sup>

Media reports on the death squad claims give voice to the perpetrators who confessed to their actions in grim, and often gory detail. This contrasts markedly with the impassive remarks of those higher in the command chain and the heads of the two judicial commissions who dismissed the claims as implausible and the spokespeople who doggedly continued to deny the existence of the death squads despite mounting evidence to the contrary. Also given voice are the investigative journalists who brought the claims into public view, despite personal and professional risks, and the lawyers who assisted in the process. Except for an occasional quote, the voices of family members, friends and comrades are, during this period, painfully absent from the record.

### ***Eugene de Kock's criminal trial May 1994 - October 1996***

This period outlines and contextualises the narrative that unfolded as the process of calling perpetrators to account played out through legal action, exposing information that was brought to the TRC in the following years. It relates closely to encounters described in Chapter Six.

Former Vlakplaas commander Eugene de Kock was arrested in May 1994 and charged with 112 counts including murder, conspiracy to commit murder, and kidnapping. As the prosecution prepared for his trial, affidavits were taken from former Vlakplaas colleagues, including Warrant Officer Willem Albertus Nortje. In December of that year, a *Sunday Times* report, “**Affidavits of horror**”<sup>565</sup> noted that “Nortje’s affidavit included details of the 1985 cross-border raid into Lesotho for which the Vlakplaas operatives were awarded Silver Cross

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<sup>561</sup> While emergency regulations governing the media were lifted, de Klerk announced that provision would still be made “for effective control over visual material pertaining to scenes of unrest.” The clause prohibiting the publications of visual material of ‘unrest, security actions, etc.’ excluded from Proclamation No. R. 86, 1989, was reinserted into Proclamation No. R. 18, 1990, published on 3 February 1990.

<sup>562</sup> Norman Chandler, “Hit squad claims untruthful,” *Sunday Star* (Johannesburg), November 11, 1990.

<sup>563</sup> Special Correspondent, “Hit men are liars, says report,” *City Press* (Johannesburg), November 11, 1990.

<sup>564</sup> While McNally and Harms discredited the claims made by the ex-policemen, but Judge Kriegler ruling in the defamation case filed subsequently against the *Weekly Mail* by General Lothar Neethling found the claims to be plausible. Kriegler’s ruling was overturned by the Appeal Court. The matter was returned to the Supreme Court where damages were awarded to Neethling.

<sup>565</sup> Marlene Burger, “Affidavits of horror,” *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg) December 11, 1994.

Medals for Bravery.”<sup>566</sup> In August 1996, de Kock was found guilty of 89 of the 112 charges.

In his autobiography, de Kock explains that, angered at having been betrayed by his superiors who he had assumed would have protected him from the courts, he decided when arguing in mitigation of sentence, to “let rip, pointing my finger firmly in the direction of PW Botha, Louis le Grange and the generals . . . who had given me my orders.”<sup>567</sup> This outburst is captured in a report in *The Star*, “**Inscrutable De Kock recalls his chilling life as state’s ‘top assassin’.**”<sup>568</sup> A second report, on the same page “**He alerted police that murdered couple’s child was alive**”<sup>569</sup> concluded that de Kock had “provided vital new evidence about the planning and execution of the raid.”<sup>570</sup> It notes that he had implicated PW Botha, the former president, Brigadier Willem Schoon of the Security Branch, police commissioner Johan Coetzee, and Security Branch head Johan van der Merwe, in authorising the Raid.<sup>571</sup> It states that de Kock told the court the baby, Phoenix, had been left in a locked room, with a child-minder, and that he had called the Maseru police station to alert them to her plight. The report also explained that, while de Kock claimed to be opposed to the killing of women and children, Jackie had been shot because she grabbed the barrel of the gun of the operative who knocked at her door. These admissions were unexpected, given that the Raid was *not* one of the offences for which de Kock was being tried.

In October, de Kock was sentenced to two life sentences plus 212 years for his crimes.<sup>572</sup> The *Sunday Times* argued correctly, that “**Eugene de Kock has been abandoned by his masters,**”<sup>573</sup> although another headline on the page, “**A last glimpse of Prime Evil,**”<sup>574</sup> was premature, given that de Kock had applied for amnesty earlier that year.<sup>575</sup>

### *Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Humans Rights Violations Committee Hearings, 1996 -1997*

This period outlines and contextualises the narrative that unfolded in the print and broadcast media during the public hearings conducted by the TRC. It offers further context into the encounters with the images described in Chapter Six.

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<sup>566</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, “Amnesty Committee Hearing, March 1, 2000,” *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, accessed December 2022, <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/2000/200301pt.htm>.

<sup>567</sup> Eugene de Kock, as told to Jeremy Gordin, *A long night’s damage: Working for the Apartheid State* (Johannesburg: Contra, 1998), 273.

<sup>568</sup> Robert Brand, “Inscrutable De Kock recalls his chilling life as state’s ‘top assassin,’” *The Star* (Johannesburg), September 17, 1996.

<sup>569</sup> Robert Brand, “He alerted police that murdered couple’s child was alive,” *The Star* (Johannesburg), September 17, 1996.

<sup>570</sup> Brand, “He alerted police.”

<sup>571</sup> Sapa, “de Kock applies for amnesty,” March 11, 1996, announced that de Kock, who was on trial for 121 charges including eight of murder had applied for amnesty from the TRC, accessed June 2023, <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/media/1996/9603/s960311a.htm>.

<sup>572</sup> Sapa, “de Kock applies for amnesty.”

<sup>573</sup> Charlotte Bauer, “Eugene de Kock has been abandoned by his masters,” *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg) November 3, 1996.

<sup>574</sup> Charlotte Bauer, “A last glimpse of Prime Evil,” *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg) November 3, 1996.

<sup>575</sup> Sapa, “de Kock applies for amnesty.”

The South African TRC was established by the Government of National Unity in 1995. It was intended to uncover the 'truth' about human rights violations committed under the apartheid regime, and contribute to reconciliation, healing, social cohesion, and nation building. In respect of victims, the Human Rights Violations Committee was required to: foster public awareness; gather and process statements and other information; liaise with stakeholders; and conduct public 'victim hearings', theme hearings, and institutional hearings. The Reparations and Rehabilitation Committee was tasked with making recommendations regarding appropriate reparation measures to the President. In respect of perpetrators, the Amnesty Committee was required to gather, analyse and process applications for amnesty, submit these for public hearings or consideration in chambers, and make recommendations on whether applications should be granted or refused. Decisions on amnesty applications were based on three primary criteria: perpetrators were required to make a full disclosure, to prove that their actions were undertaken with political intent, and that they acted under instruction from a political group or leader. Where amnesty was not granted, cases were to be referred to the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) for prosecution.<sup>576</sup>



Figure 13: The Quin family, *Special Report* Episode 4, May 12, 1996.  
Credit: SABC

Photographs published during this period include: the often tearful, sometimes stoical, victims or their family members who testified about the gross abuses of human rights that they had suffered, (Figure 13); stony-faced perpetrators who had submitted applications for amnesty; dated portraits of members of the former government

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<sup>576</sup> *TRC Report*, Volume One, 267- 293.

and security forces who had been complicit in or responsible at the highest levels for instigating the abuse; acts of reconciliation and forgiveness – meetings of perpetrators and victims; and the empathetic enraged or cuttingly analytical officials of the TRC – the commissioners, investigators and translators immersed in the process.

Human Rights Violations hearings were conducted in 1996 and 1997, at a time when many people, still in a state of post-election euphoria, were receptive to the concepts of reconciliation, forgiveness, and healing espoused by President Nelson Mandela and his government. The hearings, covered widely in the media “captured the imagination of the public and attracted both praise and criticism,”<sup>577</sup> as mentioned in Chapter Six.



**Figure 13:** *Sunday Times*, May 12, 1996. Candice van der Linde (left) “lost her mother to an ANC bomb,” Phoenix Quin (right) “lost both her parents at the hands of SA security forces.”  
**Credit:** Arena Holdings

Of particular interest to this thesis are the shifts in the tone of media coverage as newspapers and television stations embraced the notion of transformation. This is particularly evident in the use of language: there are few references to race or colour and those formerly described as terrorists or pejoratively as ANC members have been recast as freedom fighters or operatives. Conversely, members of the security establishment, previously framed as protectors and defenders are recast as perpetrators. This shift in tone carries through to the visual coverage too, with a close focus on the humanity of the victims of violence in images used to evoke empathy

<sup>577</sup> *TRC Report*, 1998, Volume Five, 7.

rather than fear; and on naming individuals rather than reducing them to anonymous statistics as evidenced in the reports described below.

A *Sunday Tribune* report, “**Mothers killers were given bravery medals,**”<sup>578</sup> published after members of the Quin family had testified on 8 May 1996,<sup>579</sup> shared information gathered from interviews with the family, as well as from their testimonies to the TRC, as did a *Sunday Times* report, “**A one-year-old witness to her parents slaying,**”<sup>580</sup> and “feature, “**Through the eyes of two CHILDREN OF THE WAR,**”<sup>581</sup> (Figure 14). The testimonies of other family members, including Leon’s sister Dawn Botha<sup>582</sup> and his brother Christiaan Peter Meyer,<sup>583</sup> also indicate<sup>584</sup> that their accounts were not covered in the print media. It is worth noting here that about 21 000 people submitted victim statements but only 2 000 were invited to share their stories in public hearings and<sup>585</sup> only a tiny fraction of these were reported on in the media.

As described in Chapter Six, the SABC provided the most comprehensive media coverage of the hearings during this period. Between 21 April 1996 and 29 March 1998, the *Special Report* series presented weekly reviews of the hearings, contextualising excerpts from testimonies with interviews from commissioners, researchers and others. The series also brought the full horror of the violence inflicted by the apartheid regime into view through archival images, many of which had not been published nor broadcast when they were first made, because of the stringent restrictions imposed by the media. Several of the 87 episodes of *Special Report* refer to cross-border killings, including the 1985 raid on Maseru which incorporate clips from the footage made by Brink and Msibi in the mortuary and at the homes where the victims were killed, as described in Chapter Six.

### *Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Amnesty Committee Hearings and Decisions, 2000 - 2001*

This period contextualises the decisions made by the Amnesty Committee, and the subsequent calls for justice.

Eight of those involved in the planning and execution of the Raid applied for amnesty. These were General Johannes Velde van der Merwe, second in command of the Security Branch at the time of the Raid; Brigadier Willem Frederick Schoon, Head of Security Branch Group-C, as well as those directly involved in the Raid,

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<sup>578</sup> Toni Youngusband, “Mothers killers were given bravery medals,” *Sunday Tribune* (Durban), May 12, 1996.

<sup>579</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, “Human Rights Violations Committee Hearing, Quin family, May 8, 1996,” *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, accessed December 2022, <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans/hrvdurb1/durban2.htm>.

<sup>580</sup> Craig Doonan, “A one-year-old witness to her parents’ slaying,” *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), May 12, 1996, 3.

<sup>581</sup> Michael Schmidt and Craig Doonan, “Through the eyes of a child: CHILDREN OF THE WAR,” *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), May 12, 1996.

<sup>582</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, “Human Rights Violations Committee Hearings, Dawn Georgina Botha. August 13, 1996,” *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, accessed June 2023. <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans/pretoria/botha.htm>.

<sup>583</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, “Human Rights Violations Committee Hearings, Christian Peter Meyer. June 11, 1997,” *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, accessed June 2023. <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans/hrvel2/meyer.htm>.

<sup>584</sup> Leon’s sister Dawn Georgina Botha testified on 13 August 1996, and their brother Christian Peter Meyer on 11 June 1997. Maria Carolissen, mother of Vivian Matthee, testified on 15 October 1996.

<sup>585</sup> *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, Accessed January 2025, <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/>.

Vlakplaas Commander Eugene de Kock; Warrant Officer Nicholaas Johannes Vermeulen; Sergeant Willem Albertus Nortje; Sergeant Izak Daniel (Steve) Bosch; and Almond Nofamela. The two men alleged to have killed Jackie and Leon did not apply for amnesty: Lieutenant Anton Adamson was deceased and Sergeant Joe Coetser refused to testify. Among higher level officials implicated were Niel Barnard, former head of the National Intelligence Service; Neil van Heerden, Deputy Director General in the Department of Foreign Affairs; Lieutenant General Basie Smit, former Deputy Commissioner of Police; askaris Letsatsi Thabiso and Gregory Radebe; Captain Fouche of the Ladybrand Security Branch; Louis Le Grange, former Minister of Law and Order; Roelof Frederik (Pik) Botha, former Minister of Foreign Affairs; and former President Pieter Willem Botha. Several of those implicated were subpoenaed to appear at the Amnesty Hearings, as was Elvis Macaskill, the South African informer then resident in Lesotho who set up the gathering at which the victims were killed.

Hearings held in March and early June 2000 focussed on high-level planning: who was responsible for authorising the Raid; who knew about the Raid before and after it was executed; how ‘targets’ for elimination had been identified; and the mandate of the attackers. On the first day, *The Star* reports “**I ordered raid on ANC, says van der Merwe**”<sup>586</sup> and “**Amnesty applicants say PW knew of raid plan,**”<sup>587</sup> detail this admission and explain that former President PW Botha, and former Minister of Law and Order, Louis Le Grange, together with 11 others, participated in meetings of the SSC and of the Coordinated Intelligence Committee (CIC) chaired by Niel Barnard, where the attack had been discussed, planned and authorised. He testified that the attack had been carried out by eight members of Vlakplaas, acting on information supplied by informer Elvis Macaskill. According to van der Merwe, no record of the discussions of the SSC had been kept, and the matter had not been discussed at meeting of the SSC meeting the day after the Raid. Van der Merwe explained subsequently that the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, ‘Pik’ Botha had warned the Lesotho government that an attack was being planned on South Africa, as reported on the IOL website, “**Pik warned Lesotho not to shelter ANC.**”<sup>588</sup> Under cross examination, Botha admitted that he had sent a ‘diplomatic note’ to Lesotho, but claimed to have no knowledge of the Raid, as reported online by IOL, “**I did not know about Lesotho raid – Pik.**”<sup>589</sup> While transcripts of the hearings provide a great deal of information about the planning and authorisation of the Raid, this went unreported, unless high profile public figures testified, accepted responsibility, or denied claims that they were implicated.<sup>590</sup>

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<sup>586</sup> Sapa. “I ordered Raid on ANC, says Van der Merwe,” *The Star* (Johannesburg), February 29, 2000

<sup>587</sup> Motshidisi Mokewena and Sapa, “Amnesty applicants say PW knew of raid plan,” *The Star* (Johannesburg), 28 February 2000.

<sup>588</sup> Sapa, “Pik warned Lesotho not to shelter ANC,” IOL, February 29, 2000, accessed June 2024, <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/pik-warned-lesotho-not-to-shelter-anc-29664>.

<sup>589</sup> Sapa, “I did not know about Lesotho raid – Pik,” IOL, March 2, 2000, no longer available online.

<sup>590</sup> Transcripts of Amnesty Committee Hearings are available online. Truth and Reconciliation Commission website, accessed June 2024, <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/index.htm>.

# Informer sold out his friends for R2 000 a head – De Kock

7.6.00

JACOLINE PRINSLOO

PRETORIA CORRESPONDENT

A security police informer who "sold out his best friends" for R2 000 a head took "every blood-drenched rand" after they were killed in a cross-border raid into Lesotho by members of the Vlakplaas death squad in 1985.

Testifying before the TRC's amnesty committee in Pretoria yesterday, the hit squad's former commander, Eugene de Kock, referred to the informant, Elvis Macaskill, as a "Judas Iscariot".

Elaborating on the biblical analogy, he said: "Macaskill did receive remuneration. Judas Iscariot works for money or for ambition or a combination of the two, nothing else. Mr Macaskill sold out his best friends for R2 000 a head."

His distaste visibly apparent, De Kock added: "Judas Iscariot sells out those closest to him because they sell at the best price."

Referring to six of the dead as "terrorists", Macaskill admits in his statement to the amnesty committee that he received the money and deposited it in a Volkskas Bank account in Ladybrand under the name



"Judas" ... Elvis Macaskill, who "sold out" his "best friends".

Elvis Adams.

Nine people died in the raid. The only survivors were a babysitter and the 1-year-old daughter of activists Jackie Quinn and Leon Meyer.

The victims were lured to their deaths by Macaskill, who arranged a party to bring them together so that they could be killed. The money for the party was provided by the Vlakplaas unit.

For much of the testimony, Macaskill sat with his head bowed, his right hand raised covering his face from the view of spectators and the glare of television lights.



Can't take it anymore ... Lydia Mayoli breaks down as she hears Eugene de Kock describe how he shot her husband, Joseph.

In his statement, Macaskill states: "I did arrange the party as instructed ... There were about 10 people at the party. I excused myself under the pretext that I was going to fill my car with petrol ... so that I could go and meet De Kock and his men at the post office."

De Kock and five of his men had crossed the border hours before the attack, which was delayed when Macaskill told the assassins that his brother and other family members were at the party. De Kock told him to return and get them out. Once this was done, the death squad moved in.

As De Kock spoke of the first person to die in the raid on the night of December 19, a relative of one of the victims, Lydia Mayoli, broke down – a low wail of grief punctuating his tersely worded account of the attack on the "target" in Maseru.

The first victim was Mayoli's husband Joseph.

"I'm not certain (how many people were killed) because we counted very quickly. We wanted to leave as quickly as possible. I did not even have the opportunity to use the pocket camera which I had with me."

De Kock's men were later awarded a medal for bravery.

Figure 14: *The Star*, June 7, 2000.

Credit: Independent Media / Jenny Hobbs Archive

In the same week, reports published in *City Press* report, "Informer to reveal role in massacre,"<sup>591</sup> and in the *Star* report, "Informer sold out his friends for R 2 000 per head – De Kock," (Figure 15),<sup>592</sup> drew on the affidavit submitted by Elvis Macaskill to the Amnesty Committee to explain his role in the Raid. These reports describe Macaskill's interactions with the security police and the Vlakplaas unit and provide a clear account of his involvement in the planning and execution of the attack. Of interest in these reports is the shift in the way in which Leon is described, while reports at the time of the Raid referred to him pejoratively as Jackie's husband, "a coloured man,"<sup>593</sup> a self-exiled former detainee,<sup>594</sup> and one of a group of "highly trained members of the ANC's military wing," the *City Press* report published 15 years later accorded him a position of respect as an uMkhonto we Sizwe leader."

<sup>591</sup> Dominic Mahlangu, "Informer to reveal role in massacre," *City Press* (Johannesburg), March 5, 2000.

<sup>592</sup> Pretoria Correspondent, "Informer sold out his friends for R 2 000 per head – De Kock," *The Star* (Johannesburg), June 7, 2000.

<sup>593</sup> Argus Africa News Service, "9 shot dead in Maseru," *The Argus* (Cape Town) December 20, 1985.

<sup>594</sup> Dispatch Reporter, "Maseru blast victim an EL man," *Daily Dispatch* (East London), December 25, 1985.



Figure 15: *The Star*, June 13, 2000.  
 Credit: Independent Media / Jenny Hobbs Archive

While the Amnesty Committee interrogated the application of the perpetrators, and subjected them to extensive cross examination, some publications, including *The Star*, focussed primarily on the impact of their actions on the Quin family. An almost full page feature carried three different stories: an account of the hearings, “Apartheid assassins account for 1985 raid in Lesotho”;<sup>595</sup> a feature on Phoenix and her life with her adoptive parents, “My ordeal in adopting my niece”;<sup>596</sup> and her aunt’s response to the evidence placed before the committee, “I hope their killers will never rest easy,” (Figure 16).<sup>597</sup> These reports were accompanied by a photograph of Jackie and Leon with Phoenix made in 1985,<sup>598</sup> and contemporary photographs of Phoenix and her aunt Deborah Quin.

Hearings in June and September 2000 focussed on the amnesty applications of the Vlakplaas members, de Kock, Nortje, Vermeulen, and Bosch, and on Macaskill’s statement, mentioned above. Although media coverage of these is patchy, focussing on the actions of highly placed officers, or dramatic revelations not covered previously, transcripts of the hearing are available online.<sup>599</sup> A close reading of these reveals information not deemed to be newsworthy, but vital nevertheless for an analysis of the actions preceding the Raid and for the

<sup>595</sup> Vivian Warby, “Apartheid assassins account for 1985 raid in Lesotho,” *The Star* (Johannesburg), March 13, 2000.

<sup>596</sup> Vivian Warby, “My ordeal in adopting my niece,” *The Star* (Johannesburg), March 13, 2000.

<sup>597</sup> Vivian Warby, “I hope their killers will never rest easy,” *The Star* (Johannesburg), March 13, 2000.

<sup>598</sup> Although it is not captioned as such, the photograph shows the family on the day Jackie and Leon were married in Maseru, shortly after the South African Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act was repealed, on 19 June 1985.

<sup>599</sup> Department of Justice, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, “Amnesty Hearings and decisions”, accessed November 2024, <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/index.htm>.

construction of a historical account of the event.

Much of the applicants' testimonies went unreported in the media, as did the input from the families of the victims,<sup>600</sup> but the killing of the two women, Jackie and Nomkhosi Mary Mnisi attracted significant attention. As *The Star* reported, "**Policy was not to kill women, De Kock says.**"<sup>601</sup> In his testimony de Kock acknowledged that Jackie was not an "initial target" and insisted that she "may have survived the attack had she not entered the fray."<sup>602</sup> Further justifying his action by adding that "the fact that she was part of the Meyer group exposed her to being\_killed."<sup>603</sup>

Although it is implicit in the news reports, what does not come fully into view, unless one studies the transcripts, are the evasive measures taken by the applicants and the subpoenaed officials to avoid incriminating themselves or others. Several of the applicants claimed not to remember the exact sequence of events, nor by whom and how instructions were given. Van der Merwe claimed that that his recollections were vague so frequently that he was asked by one of the Commissioners whether there was anything "medically wrong" with his memory.<sup>604</sup> He responded defensively claiming that the "many traumatic experiences" he had been exposed to had affected it.<sup>605</sup> Vermeulen argued similarly, and produced a medical report stating that he suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which, he said, impaired his memory,<sup>606</sup> while Nortjie claimed to remember the event very vaguely despite his detailed affidavit and testimony.<sup>607</sup> Van Heerden and others referred to the passage of time, saying that, after 15 years, their memories had faded,<sup>608</sup> a point that Wynand Malan supported in his Minority Decision, arguing that "This incident took place some sixteen years ago and it is to be expected that faulty memory and an inability to furnish exact details about all events prior to the incident would have resulted in some confusion and/or contradictions in the evidence of the various role players."<sup>609</sup>

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<sup>600</sup> Family members of the victims were invited to testify or submit statements to the Committee. Jane Quin appeared on behalf of Jackie. Leon's sister and brother-in-law Dawn and Nico Botha; Nomkhosi Mary Mnisi's brother Xolile Mnisi; Vivien Stanley Mathee's mother Maree Carolissen; Anna Mohatle's sister Mankayele Mohatle; and Monwabise Themba Mayoli's wife Lydia Mayoli also testified. These testimonies were not covered in the media, but transcripts are available online.

<sup>601</sup> Sapa, "Policy was not to kill women, De Kock says," *The Star* (Johannesburg) June 8, 2000.

<sup>602</sup> Sapa, "Policy was not to kill women."

<sup>603</sup> Sapa, "Policy was not to kill women."

<sup>604</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, "Amnesty Committee Hearing, February 29, 2000," *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, accessed December 2022. <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/2000/200229pt.htm>.

<sup>605</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, "Amnesty Committee Hearing, March 1, 2000," *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, accessed December 2022. <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/2000/200301pt.htm>.

<sup>606</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, "Amnesty Committee Hearing, March 1, 2000."

<sup>607</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, "Amnesty Committee Hearing, June 7, 2000," *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, accessed December 2022. <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/2000/200607pa.htm>.

<sup>608</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, "Amnesty Committee Hearing, June 1, 2000," *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, accessed December 2022. <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/2000/200601pt.htm>.

<sup>609</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, "Amnesty Committee Decision. 2001," *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, accessed December 2020, <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/decisions/2001/ac21231.htm>.

Applicants, including van der Merwe<sup>610</sup> and Schoon,<sup>611</sup> admitted to “refreshing” their memories by consulting records such as minutes of meetings, applications and statements made by other involved parties, while Barnard claimed he had been unable to do that because he did not have access to such records, contradicting evidence given by other bureaucrats who insisted that records had not been kept. As Schoon admitted, “the operation itself was verbally planned, and verbal instructions were given to the operatives. There were no written reports left behind.”<sup>612</sup> De Kock, on the other hand appeared to remember the events very clearly, and his account was deferred to on many occasions, with Macaskill, for example, claiming that he changed his statement and testimony because his memory had been “joggled” by de Kock.<sup>613</sup> In the Amnesty decision, the Committee noted that, “Macaskill was not a very good witness and under no circumstances could he be regarded as a truthful witness,”<sup>614</sup> suggesting that he simply aligned his story with de Kock’s to protect himself. It is significant, in the context of this chapter, to note that while applications and witnesses referred to records the most frequently cited source of information appears to be newspaper reports, a compilation of which were included in the evidence file prepared for the Amnesty Committee.<sup>615</sup> These are among the “mountain of press clipping”<sup>616</sup> handed over to the National Archives by the Commission to “form a part of the national memory for generations yet to come.”<sup>617</sup> The press clippings are of interest, but it must be noted that they are only a partial reflection of the media coverage: all photographs or other images were excised when the clippings were processed and filed by SA Media, as described in Chapter Eight. Nevertheless, as Advocate Berger, representing the victims and their families, cautioned in his closing argument, “Just a quick think about relying on newspaper articles for facts, we know from experience before the Committee about STRATKOM<sup>618</sup> and what they were capable of, if we had to rely on newspaper articles, we would still believe that Joe Slovo killed his wife.”<sup>619</sup>

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<sup>610</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, “Amnesty Committee Hearing. February 28, 2000,” *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, accessed December 2022, <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/2000/200228pt.htm>.

<sup>611</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, “Amnesty Committee Hearing, March 1, 2000,” *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, accessed December 2022, <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/2000/200301pt.htm> Truth and Reconciliation.

<sup>612</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, “Amnesty Committee Hearing, March 1, 2000,” *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, accessed December 2022, <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/2000/200301pt..>

<sup>613</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, “Amnesty Committee Hearing. September 6, 2000,” *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, accessed December 2022, <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/2000/200906pt.htm>.

<sup>614</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Amnesty Committee Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa. “Amnesty Committee Decision. 2001,” *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, accessed December 2020, <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/decisions/2001/ac21231.htm>.

<sup>615</sup> These are referenced in the transcriptions, as being included in “Bundle 2” which includes reports from, *Die Burger*, *The Cape Times*, *The Citizen*, *The Natal Mercury*, *The Times (UK)*, *Weekend Argus*, accessed from the SA Media news clipping collection.

<sup>616</sup> *TRC Report*, Volume Six, 113.

<sup>617</sup> *TRC Report*, Volume Six, 113.

<sup>618</sup> Strategic Communications (STRATCOM) was a police unit setup in the 1980s to create and spread false narratives or disinformation campaigns aimed at discrediting opponents of the National Party government.

<sup>619</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, “Amnesty Committee Hearing September 28, 2000,” *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, accessed December 2022. <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/2000/200928pt>. There are some well-known examples of how the media was used by the apartheid state to publish lies and distortion. Many of these relate to character assassinations on leaders of the liberation movements: see, for example, the insinuations made by *The Star* that Joe Slovo had been responsible for the assassination of Ruth First.

Alluding to media bias, van der Merwe referred to *Die Volksblad* as a “friendly” newspaper,<sup>620</sup> while ‘Pik’ Botha suggested that editorials in the more “important newspapers” which stated a point of view on the matter were of more value than news reports. Several applicants referred to the extensive media coverage on the day after the Raid, using this to question claims made by witnesses, including Barnard<sup>621</sup> and ‘Pik’ Botha,<sup>622</sup> that the SSC had no knowledge of the Raid when they met on that date.<sup>623</sup>

De Kock, Nortje, Bosch, Vermeulen, Nofamela and Schoon were granted amnesty<sup>624</sup> for their role in the killing of seven of the victims: the four ANC members, Matthee, Mayoli, Meyer, Seabelo and the three Lesotho nationals, Mohatle, Tau and Leseuyeho. All the applicants were refused amnesty for the killing of Jackie and Nomkhosi because the Amnesty Committee was not satisfied that the circumstances under which they were killed was covered by the requirements of the Act.<sup>625</sup> Three members of the Amnesty Committee lodged a minority decision, arguing that the all the applicants should be granted amnesty.<sup>626</sup> Van der Merwe’s application for amnesty was refused on the grounds that he had not made a full disclosure,<sup>627</sup> as the *Eastern Province Herald* reported, “**Now Van der Merwe may face trial. Ex-police chief ‘denied amnesty for Lesotho Raid.’**”<sup>628</sup>

### *De Kock applies for parole 2014 - 2015*

This period outlines and contextualises the narrative that has unfolded over the last decade, particularly in relation to issues of forgiveness, healing, and accountability. It provides some context for the encounters described in Chapters Seven and Eight, that brought the images of Jackie and Leon into view as objects of study.

The Raid re-entered the public domain in 2014 when Eugene de Kock applied for parole, reigniting debates in the media about accountability and forgiveness. After his application was refused, as *Business Day* noted, “**De**

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<sup>620</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, “Amnesty Committee Hearing, February 29, 2000,” *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, accessed December 2022, <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/2000/200229pt.htm>.

<sup>621</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, “Amnesty Committee Hearing, June 5, 2000,” *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. Accessed December 2022, <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/2000/200605pa.htm>.

<sup>622</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, “Amnesty Committee Hearing, March 2, 2000,” *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, accessed December 2022, <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/amntrans/2000/200302pt.htm>.

<sup>623</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, “Amnesty Committee Hearing, March 2, 2000,”

<sup>624</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, “Amnesty Committee Decision, 2001,” *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, accessed December 2020, <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/decisions/2001/ac21231.htm>.

<sup>625</sup> Republic of South Africa, “The Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act No. 34 of 1995,” accessed December 2020, [https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis\\_document/201409/act34of1995.pdf](https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/act34of1995.pdf).

<sup>626</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, “Amnesty Committee Decision: AC/2001/231B, 2001,” *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, accessed December 2020. <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/decisions/2001/ac21231B.htm>.

<sup>627</sup> The Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act No. 34 of 1995, makes provision for amnesty to be granted to applicants who, “make full disclosure of all the relevant facts relating to acts associated with a political objective.”

<sup>628</sup> Herald Correspondent, “Now van der Merwe may face trial. Ex-police chief ‘denied amnesty for Lesotho raid,” *Eastern Province Herald* (Port Elizabeth), June 20, 2001.

**Kock is challenging parole decision in court.**<sup>629</sup> The High Court ordered Minister of Justice, Michael Masuthu, to reconsider the decision.<sup>630</sup> Shortly thereafter the Minister announced that the decision had been delayed, arguing, as *Business Day* reported, **“Victim input needed on De Kock parole.”**<sup>631</sup>

Responses from victims or their representatives to the parole application was polarised: some believed that de Kock had not been held accountable for all his crimes and should not be released, others felt that he had shown remorse and served his time and was therefore eligible for parole. In an open letter to Justice Minister Michael Masuthu, published initially by the *Daily Maverick*, and republished by several other publications, Jane Quin objected, arguing **“De Kock ordered my sister’s killing - and no, his debt has not been paid,”**<sup>632</sup> making an impassioned plea to government to “charge those who were refused amnesty.”<sup>633</sup>

As the *Mail & Guardian* reported subsequently, **“De Kock denied parole because victims’ families not consulted”.**<sup>634</sup> A week later, on what would have been Nelson Mandela’s 96<sup>th</sup> birthday the Khulumani Support Group,<sup>635</sup> issued a statement, **“Free de Kock as a tribute to the legacy of Mandela,”**<sup>636</sup> arguing that, “First, the selectivity of criminal justice remains problematic. Second, the spirit of the transition demands his release. And third, his expressions of remorse have contributed to revealing the truth about apartheid atrocities long after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission ended its work.”<sup>637</sup>

In late January 2015, a *SowetanLIVE* report announced baldly **“Eugene de Kock granted parole”**<sup>638</sup> but did not give details about the decision. In an opinion piece published in the *Daily Maverick*, **“Considering forgiveness in the light of De Kock’s parole”**<sup>639</sup> Jane Quin commented that “There’s a great difference between the concept of forgiveness, and the necessity of holding those who have committed acts of great hostility to account,” adding that, “I get a sense of ‘victim blaming’ in the current discourse, as though those who don’t ‘forgive him’ are

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<sup>629</sup> Wyndham Hartley, “De Kock is challenging parole decision in court,” *Business Day* (Johannesburg), August 14, 2014, accessed June 2023, <https://mg.co.za/article/2014-07-10-14-de-kock-not-granted-parole/>.

<sup>630</sup> Sapa, “Court tells justice Minister to consider parole for de Kock,” *Mail & Guardian*, May 18, 2014, accessed June 2023, <https://mg.co.za/article/2014-05-28-court-tells-justice-minister-to-consider-parole-for-de-kock/>.

<sup>631</sup> Wyndham Hartley, Natasha Marrian and Franny Rabkin, “Victim input needed on de Kock parole,” *Business Day*, 11 July 2014, accessed June 2023, <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/national/2014-07-11-victim-input-needed-on-eugene-de-kock-parole/>.

<sup>632</sup> Quin, “Op-Ed: De Kock ordered my sister’s killing.”

<sup>633</sup> Quin, “Op-Ed: De Kock ordered my sister’s killing.”

<sup>634</sup> Staff Reporter, “De Kock denied parole because victim’s families not consulted,” *Mail and Guardian*, July 10, 2014, accessed December 2020, <https://mg.co.za/article/2014-07-10-14-de-kock-not-granted-parole/>.

<sup>635</sup> According to its website, the “Khulumani Support Group was originally founded in 1995 by a group of survivors of apartheid human rights violations, to provide support and assistance to people testifying before South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC),” accessed November 2024, <https://khulumani.net/about-us/>.

<sup>636</sup> *Khulumani Support Group*, 18 July 2014, accessed June 2023, <https://khulumani.net/reconciliation/free-de-kock-as-tribute-to-legacy-of-mandela/2014/07/18/>.

<sup>637</sup> *Khulumani Support Group*, 18 July 2014, accessed June 2023, <https://khulumani.net/reconciliation/free-de-kock-as-tribute-to-legacy-of-mandela/2014/07/18/>.

<sup>638</sup> Sapa, “Eugene de Kock granted parole,” *Sowetan Live*, January 30, 2015, accessed December 2020, <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2015-01-30-eugene-de-kock-granted-parole/>.

<sup>639</sup> Jane Quin, “Op-Ed: Considering forgiveness in the light of De Kock’s parole,” *Daily Maverick*, February 3, 2015, accessed December 2020, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-02-03-op-ed-considering-forgiveness-in-the-light-of-de-kocks-parole/>.

socially and/or psychologically maimed and maladjusted, with words like 'holding onto grudges' and 'wallowing' being bandied about."<sup>640</sup> She called, once again, for the state to prosecute those responsible for crimes for which they were not granted amnesty by the TRC. To date her calls have gone unheeded, the perpetrators have not been held to account, and there has been no justice for Jackie and Leon and their comrades.<sup>641</sup>

## Conclusion

This Chapter outlines a broad context of the environment in which the images of Jackie and Leon were first made, circulated and received. It supports Chapter Four that reflects on the picture-making encounter in the Maseru mortuary on 20 December 1985 and the experiences of the journalists, photographers, and filmmakers present in the mortuary that day. It contextualises Chapter Five which considers the creative responses of a novelist and a musician in their encounters with Samson's photograph when it was first published. The Chapter also lays the foundation for tracking the changes in significance and meanings that occurred as the images were encountered as they crossed temporal, spatial, institutional and discursive realms over the next three decades, which is plotted in Chapters Six and Seven.

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<sup>640</sup> See for example Anemari Jansen, *Eugene de Kock: Assassin for the State* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2015), 285.

<sup>641</sup> The reopening of inquests into the deaths of victims of security force violence, including Ahend Timol, Steve Biko and Iman Haron signals an encouraging commitment to holding perpetrators to account.

# TIMELINE

## TIMELINE

This timeline maps the story of the Maseru Raid as it unfolded in news media and through judicial proceedings over three decades, juxtaposing this against the occasions that the images were brought into view in different formats through publications, exhibitions, social media and other platforms, as described in the chapters that follow.

AN UNFOLDING STORY		THE IMAGES COME INTO VIEW
<b>1985</b>		
Six people, four of whom were children, are killed and five injured when the vehicle in which they were travelling on a farm road near Messina detonated a landmine planted by ANC operatives.	15 Dec.	
Nine people are killed by unknown gunmen, assumed to be South African security force members, in a cross-border raid on Maseru, Lesotho.	19 Dec.	
	20 Dec.	Trevor Samson photographs the scene in the mortuary for AFP.
		Ismail Lagardien photographs the scene in the mortuary.
		Tewis Brink and Sam Msibi film the scene in the mortuary for ARD.
	20-29 Dec	Clips from the footage filmed by the ARD crew are broadcast in news reports by the BBC, ITN and NBC and other stations.
	21 Dec.	Samson's photograph is published in the <i>New York Times</i> .
	22 Dec.	Samson's photograph is published in the <i>Sunday Times</i> .
Seven people are killed, and many injured, in a bomb blast in a busy Amanzimtoti shopping centre	23 Dec.	
<b>1986</b>		
Andrew Sibusiso Zondo is executed after being found guilty of planting the bomb in the Amanzimtoti shopping centre. In his testimony to the court he admits that this was done as an act of retaliation for the attack on Maseru	9 Sept.	
	Unknown	<i>The Child is not dead: Youth Resistance in South Africa 1976-1986</i> is published. It includes a fragment of Samsons photograph in a montage, alongside photographs of other cross-border raids. The heading of the accompanying article reads, "The SADF has become a military giant. What is it used for?"

AN UNFOLDING STORY		THE IMAGES COME INTO VIEW
<b>1988</b>		
		Patric Mellet compiles a book of his poems and includes a copy of the montage from <i>The Child is Not Dead: Youth Resistance in South Africa 1976-1986</i> alongside his poem, "Massacre."
<b>1989</b>		
	27 April	Jenny Hobbs' novel, <i>Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary</i> is published. Although Hobbs does not name the photographer or include a reproduction of the photograph, she acknowledges it as the 'impetus' for the novel.
	4 June.	The <i>Sunday Times</i> publishes an interview with Hobbs which describes the origin of her novel, and includes a snippet cropped from Samson's photograph.
On the eve of his execution for the murder of a white farmer, former security policeman Butana Almond Nofomela makes an affidavit in which he claims to have been a member of a Security Branch's assassination squad responsible for eight killings of people connected to the ANC in South Africa, Swaziland, Botswana and Lesotho.	19 Oct.	
	11 Nov.	Kalahari Surfers' album <i>Bigger than Jesus</i> is released. It includes a track, "Gutted with the Glory," written by Warrick Swinney in response to Samson's photograph.
<i>Vrye Weekblad's</i> exposé of the hit squads, drawing on information provided by Captain Dirk Coetzee, a former Vlakplaas commander, is published. This confirms Nofomela's testimony, describing the work of the Vlakplaas-based unit and its involvement in the killing of the apartheid government's political opponents in gruesome detail.	17 Nov.	
<b>1990</b>		
In his opening address to parliament, President FW De Klerk announces the unbanning of the liberation movements, notably the ANC, Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and South African Communist Party (SACP), a moratorium on the death penalty, the release of political prisoners and the lifting of the nation-wide State of Emergency imposed in 1986.	2 Feb.	

AN UNFOLDING STORY		THE IMAGES COME INTO VIEW
<b>1991</b>		
		The International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF) archives are moved from London to the Mayibuye Centre for Arts and Culture in South Africa (Mayibuye Centre) at the University of the Western Cape. The photographic collection includes large prints of Samson's photograph, rephotographed from a <i>Sunday Times</i> news clipping and Lagardien's photograph, rephotographed from a newswire photo.
<b>1993</b>		
	July-Sept.	<i>EsiQithini: The Robben Island Exhibition</i> , is on view at the South African Museum in Cape Town. The exhibition includes a copy of Lagardien's photograph, drawn from the IDAF Photographic Collection at the Mayibuye Centre, and displayed behind a translucent paper veil.
<b>1994</b>		
Former Vlakplaas commander Eugene de Kock is arrested in May and charged with 112 counts, including murder, conspiracy to commit murder, and kidnapping. As the prosecution prepares for his trial, affidavits are taken from former Vlakplaas colleagues. In his affidavit, as reported in the <i>Sunday Times</i> , Warrant Officer Willem Albertus Nortje, includes a detailed description of the Raid.	11 Dec.	
<b>1996</b>		
The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa begins proceedings. Family members including Jackie's parents Philip and Patricia Quin, her sister Jane Quin, Leon's sister Dawn Botha, and his brother Christian Meyer testify at Human Rights Violations Committee Hearings.	16 April 1996 - 25 June 1997	
	12 May	TRC <i>Special Report</i> Episode 4 is broadcast. This covers the Quin family's testimony at a Human Rights Violation Committee Hearing held in Durban. It includes the scene in the mortuary filmed by the ARD crew.
	16 June	TRC <i>Special Report</i> Episode 6 is broadcast. This covers a report-back on the Maseru Raid, exposing the role of Vlakplaas in the killings. It includes the scene in the mortuary filmed by the ARD crew.
	18 Aug.	TRC <i>Special Report</i> Episode 15 is broadcast. This covers the testimony by Dawn Botha at a

AN UNFOLDING STORY		THE IMAGES COME INTO VIEW
		Human Rights Violation Committee Hearing held in Pretoria. It includes the scene in the mortuary filmed by the ARD crew.
Eugene de Kock is found guilty on 89 charges including six charges of murder. Arguing in mitigation of sentence and feeling betrayed at having been abandoned by his superiors, he implicates former President PW Both, former Minister of Law and Order Louis le Grange, and others involved in authorising, planning, and executing the Raid.	16 Sept.	
<b>1998</b>		
	22 Feb.	TRC <i>Special Report</i> Episode 82 is broadcast. This includes background information on several cross-border raids. It includes the scene in the mortuary filmed by the ARD crew.
<b>2000</b>		
	25 Feb.	<i>Prime Evil</i> , a documentary about Vlakplaas Commander Eugene de Kock is released. It includes clips showing the scene in the mortuary used in the <i>Special Report</i> series.
Seven of those involved in the planning and execution of the Raid apply for amnesty; General Johannes Velde van der Merwe, second in command of the Security Branch at the time of the Raid; Brigadier Willem Frederick Schoon, Head of Security Branch Group-C, who issued the instruction for the attack; as well as those directly involved in the Raid, Vlakplaas Commander Eugene de Kock, Warrant Officer Nicholaas Johannes Vermeulen, Sergeant Willem Albertus Nortje, Sergeant Izak Daniel Bosch and Almond Nofamela. The two Vlakplaas operatives alleged to have killed Jackie and Leon did not apply for amnesty: Sergeant Joe Coetser chose not to engage with the TRC and Lieutenant Anton Adamson was, by then deceased. Several former ministers and officials are subpoenaed to appear before the Amnesty Committee.	28 Feb.- 28 Sept.	
<b>2001</b>		
De Kock, Nortje, Bosch, Vermeulen, and Schoon, and Nofamela are granted amnesty for their role in the killing of seven of the Raid victims, but not for the killing of the two women, Jackie Quin and	June	

AN UNFOLDING STORY	THE IMAGES COME INTO VIEW	
Nomkhosi Mini because the Amnesty Committee was not satisfied that the circumstances under which they were killed was covered by the requirements of the Act. Van der Merwe's application for amnesty was refused on the grounds that he had not made a full disclosure.		
	31 Nov.	The Apartheid Museum opens in Johannesburg: Samson's photograph is included in a display on cross-border incursions.
<b>2011</b>		
		The SABC uploads the <i>Special Report Series</i> onto YouTube.
<b>2013</b>		
	21 March	SAHA/SABC <i>Truth Commission Special Report</i> website is launched. This includes links to the SABC/TRC <i>Special Report</i> series.
<b>2014</b>		
In June 2014 Eugene de Kock applied for parole. Jane Quin's impassioned plea to government to charge those who were refused amnesty and to deny de Kock parole is published in the <i>Daily Maverick</i> . Although de Kock's application is initially refused, he challenges the decision, the outcome is delayed so that affected families can be consulted, and he is eventually released in January 2015.	27 June	
	7 Aug.	My post, "Jackie Quin and Leon Meyer, the life of a photograph," written in response to Jane Quin's op-ed is published on the <i>Archival Platform</i> website. It includes a description of Samson's photograph, although the image itself is not reproduced. The post is subsequently cited by James Sey, Jeremy Clark, Duncan Martin, Ismael Lagardien, and Jenny Hobbs. See below.
<b>2015</b>		
	20 Nov.	James Sey's conference paper, "Photographing a South African form of sudden death," is published online in <i>Critical Arts</i> . It includes reproductions of Samson and Lagardien's photographs shared with him by the author.
<b>2017</b>		
	13 Oct.	Patric Mellet digitises text and images from his 1988 poetry collection, including the montage mentioned above, and posts them online on his blog, <i>Poetry Exteriorismo</i> .

AN UNFOLDING STORY		THE IMAGES COME INTO VIEW
		Warrick Sony creates <i>Silencer</i> an installation that includes ambient sounds and silences from the recordings of the TRC hearings into the Maseru Raid.
<b>2018</b>		
	6 June	Jeremy Clark's novel, <i>All that is the Case</i> , submitted as a part of an MA in Creative Writing at the University of the Witwatersrand, is published online. Although it does not include a reproduction of Samson's photograph, the image is discussed at length.
	27 Sept.	Kunu Matima posts on his personal Facebook page and on <i>South African History</i> , a page he co-publishes. This post includes several screenshots drawn from the SABC <i>Special Report</i> series including the scene in the mortuary.
	20 Dec.	Africa Bush Wars tweets a montage of images, including a section of Samson's photograph published in the <i>New York Times</i> , as well as screenshots from the SABC/TRC <i>Special Report</i> series.
<b>2019</b>		
	27 Sept.	Kunu Matima repeats the Facebook post published on the same day in 2018.
	20 Dec.	Africa Bush Wars re-tweets the montage posted on the same date in 2018.
<b>2020</b>		
	27 Sept.	Kunu Matima repeats the Facebook post published on the same day in 2018.
	16 Dec.	Patric Mellet attaches the image of the photomontage used in 2013 to a new Facebook post, which is also shared to the <i>South African History</i> page.
<b>t</b>	<b>2021</b>	
	7 July	Duncan Martin includes a copy of Samson's photography, sourced from Sey's <i>Critical Arts</i> article, in the Groote Schuur Probus Club <i>rettelsweN</i> .
	17 Nov.	Kunu Matima reposts the Facebook post published on 27 September 2018 on his personal Facebook page.
	18 Nov.	Kunu Matima reposts the Facebook post published on 27 September 2018 on the <i>South African History</i> Facebook page.
<b>2022</b>		
	22 March	Ismail Lagardien's memoir, <i>Too White to be Coloured, Too Coloured to be Black</i> , is

AN UNFOLDING STORY	THE IMAGES COME INTO VIEW	
		published. It includes reproductions of his photograph, and Samson's, and makes mention of his and my dialogues.
<b>2024</b>		
	25 May	Jenny Hobbs' memoir, <i>Through A Dragonfly Eye</i> is published. It makes mention of Samson's photograph, the <i>Archival Platform</i> post and our dialogues.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE PICTURE-MAKING ENCOUNTER

*Shortly after the news of the Raid was broken journalists representing local and international news media hurried to Lesotho. In Maseru, government officials accompanied at least two groups to sites associated with the Raid in West Maseru, they documented the bloodied interior of the house in which seven of the victims were killed. At the mortuary, they recorded the bodies of Jackie and Leon lying together, partially covered by a sheet, on the stained cement floor. They watched impassively as Jackie's father identified the body of his daughter before moving to the banks of the river where they filmed the burnt-out hulks of the vehicles abandoned by the attackers before they crossed back into South Africa.*

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE PICTURE-MAKING ENCOUNTERS

### Introduction

This chapter reflects on the encounter described by Sontag as the picture-taking event,<sup>642</sup> and by Azoulay as the event of photography.<sup>643</sup> It draws on oral history dialogues with photographers Trevor Samson and Ismail Lagardien, journalist Deon Deport and the television crew Tewis Brink and Sam Msibi, who documented the scene in the Maseru mortuary on 20 December 1985, to consider how the picture-making encounter with Jackie and Leon in the mortuary was experienced and remembered. It identifies and describes some common threads that run through the narratives of the interlocutors, and argues that, although the encounter lives on in their memories in all its sensory richness, the experiences of the actual picture-making encounter remain largely unassimilated or unstoried. The Chapter concludes with a reflection on the other images brought into view as the interlocutors remembered and struggled to speak about the 1985 picture-making encounter in the Maseru mortuary.

The photographs and video footage of Jackie and Leon in the Maseru mortuary capture and communicate an instant seen by the photographers, journalists, television crew and others at the scene. As the raw, and often harrowing, accounts of the picture-making encounters shared in the oral history dialogues discussed below suggest, these images do not, in any measure, capture or communicate the picture-making encounter in all its sensory and affective complexity. The instant recorded on film is just one of a series of kaleidoscopic fragments that persist in memory for the picture-makers and are brought into view when they reflect on the picture-making encounter.

### Trevor Samson, AFP photographer

Trevor Samson worked as a press photographer for various publications, including the *Sunday Express* and the *Rand Daily Mail*, and as a freelancer for Reuters, before joining AFP, where he covered news across southern Africa. He was, he said, exposed to all sorts of violence. Although he never photographed anyone being killed, he was frequently faced with the bloody aftermath of political violence and developed a way of “blocking things off”<sup>644</sup> to cope with the horrors he had witnessed. Like many other photographers he sought refuge in alcohol to dull his senses. Despite this, he says he still experiences disruptive flashbacks, when intrusive memories “come in and out of my mind.”<sup>645</sup> And, he says, “looking at photographs takes me back too.”<sup>646</sup>

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<sup>642</sup> Sontag, *On Photography* 11.

<sup>643</sup> Azoulay, “What is a photograph? What is photography?” 13.

<sup>644</sup> Dialogue with Trevor Samson, Cape Town, July 24, 2015.

<sup>645</sup> Dialogue with Trevor Samson.

<sup>646</sup> Dialogue with Trevor Samson.



**Figure 16:** The photograph made by Trevor Samson, December 20, 1985.  
**Credit:** Arena Holdings

Samson was very emotional when I first contacted him unexpectedly to ask about the Maseru picture-making event that he had, in his own words, “blocked out”<sup>647</sup> of his memory. Nevertheless, when I sent him a draft document to read after our short conversation, he commented: “Your contacting me and in writing this article has in its own way helped me re-visit that time, which is better than keeping it all inside, thanks for that.”<sup>648</sup> Meeting him face-to-face a year later, I was slightly apprehensive, remembering how vulnerable he seemed when we first spoke. In conversation, he came across as a quiet and gentle man and spoke confidently, and without hesitation, as he told me a bit about his career as a photographer and his personal life. He explained that, when he was quite young, his father died suddenly and that it was then that he had first developed a mechanism to ‘block out’ difficult memories or experiences. This stood him in good stead too when his brother died years later. He wept when he spoke about the losses he had endured, and some of the troubling sights he had witnessed, and admitted quietly that these were things he had not been able to speak about until quite recently, because he had needed help to make meaning of his experiences and to find a measure of peace.

Detailing the circumstances under which the photograph of Jackie and Leon was taken, Samson explained that, shortly after the news alert was received, a group of journalists, including a TV crew, chartered a plane to fly to Maseru. This was done hurriedly, he said, “because it had just happened and obviously you’ve got to get

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<sup>647</sup> Dialogue with Trevor Samson.

<sup>648</sup> Email from Trevor Samson to Jo-Anne Duggan, 3 August 2014.

there. . .”<sup>649</sup> He could not remember much about the journey to Maseru, or the various places he visited in the city that day, saying simply, “I vaguely remember being in the house where it all happened,”<sup>650</sup> pausing for a moment before admitting that, “it might have been two houses.”<sup>651</sup> He also remembered “something about” being in a lounge, surrounded by journalists asking questions, but could not recall where that might have been. Despite this vagueness, he has a very clear memory of driving around the town looking for the mortuary, saying confidently “I could probably take you there now because it’s stuck in my mind.”<sup>652</sup>

Once at the mortuary, Samson was surprised to be allowed in, explaining that, “I was expecting hostility all the way from the police, I’ve been in situations where we didn’t get in at all. But, in fact, it was just the opposite, they brought us in and said, ‘you’ve got to see this stuff.’”<sup>653</sup> While he barely recalls being inside the mortuary, he remembers “a feeling of angst that’s too horrible to describe”<sup>654</sup> and of wanting not to be there. “When I think about it,” he said, “it was the only time I’ve ever been into a mortuary . . . when my brother died, I couldn’t identify his body . . . but this was a situation I was forced into . . . I didn’t want to be there,”<sup>655</sup> adding quietly after a lengthy pause, “It wasn’t nice . . . taking the photograph of dead people is . . . I mean, what do you do?”<sup>656</sup> As the dialogue drew to a close, Samson confided that he had been thinking more about the past, partly because he had “unblocked” some of the barriers he’d built to protect himself, and partly because, “with age you do become more sensitive, you do think more about things . . . When [you’re young] you’re almost bulletproof, you think nothing can touch you . . . [but] when you get older you think of dying and the consequences of dying . . .”<sup>657</sup>

Asked to describe the photograph, which he had not seen since the day he took it, Samson shied away from the question, describing instead the instant he chose to press the button. He explained that he knew the moment was right when the lights used by the television crew were turned on, because it “took some of the harshness out of the scene in a way [pause] and might have made it easier to look at somehow.”<sup>658</sup> Despite this, he admitted that he had not and would not want to see the photograph again. It was, he says, “almost like a nightmare scene that I didn’t want to revisit.”<sup>659</sup> Samson avoids recalling the photograph or the scene in the mortuary, but his memory is triggered, he said, speaking very slowly and sounding almost bewildered. “When I

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<sup>649</sup> Dialogue with Trevor Samson.

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<sup>657</sup> Dialogue with Trevor Samson.

<sup>658</sup> Dialogue with Trevor Samson.

<sup>659</sup> Dialogue with Trevor Samson.

smell Handy Andy<sup>660</sup> now, it takes me back, it just takes me right back, but when I think of it, I don't think of the smell there. So, you know, it's when I wash with Handy Andy, every single time, it takes me back".<sup>661</sup>

While his memories of the visit to the mortuary are fragmented, partial, and haltingly articulated, Samson described a seemingly inconsequential incident on the same day with absolute precision. He explained animatedly, and at length, in words and gestures, how, once he'd got back to the hotel and had to develop his photograph so that he could wire it to AFP, he'd devised a plan to deal with a missing piece of equipment,

"In my haste, I'd packed the dark room and I'd forgotten this panel which, um, I remember now, I got a chair like this [he mimes this with his hands], and I take the head of the enlarger to that and then I raised up the bottom somehow to the right level that I needed and then I put some books, I think it was the telephone directory on a table."<sup>662</sup>

Samson says that he did not think about the photograph once he wired it, and he did not know if or where it had ever been published, although, contradicting himself, he says he remembered vaguely feeling "uneasy that it was in the *Sunday Times* because of the family seeing it."<sup>663</sup> Nevertheless he said, he knew that "what I was doing was right ... because it's something that had to be shown ..."<sup>664</sup>

Samson's photograph was published in the *Sunday Times* on 22 December 1985, alongside a caption that reads,

"THE VICTIMS. They lie side by side in the mortuary their bodies half covered by a hospital sheet, their clothing in disarray: Jackie Quin and her coloured husband Joe. The couple were shot dead by a murder squad which burst into their home in Maseru on Thursday night. Seven other people attending a party at another house were also killed. The ANC claim Jackie Quin to be one of their members. Her grieving parents deny it. The couple's baby daughter Phoenix survived the massacre."<sup>665</sup>

Although Samson knew that the photograph had been published in the *Sunday Times*, he had not heard that it had also been published in the *New York Times*, the day after it had been taken. He was also taken aback to hear that it had been the catalyst for Jenny Hobbs novel, *Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary* and for the Kalahari Surfers' song, "Gutted with the Glory" (both of which are discussed in Chapter Five), or any of the uses to which it had been put in later years.

### **Ismail Lagardien, *Sunday Tribune* stringer**

At the time of the Raid, Ismail Lagardien was working briefly as a 'stringer' for the *Sunday Tribune*, and as a

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<sup>660</sup> Handy Andy is a sharp smelling domestic cleaning product. Abrams, explaining memories that rise unbidden into consciousness cites Marcel Proust who argued that on tasting a madeleine "Undoubtedly what is thus palpatating in the depths of my being must be the image, the visual memory which is linked to that taste is trying to follow it into my conscious mind." Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010), 84.

<sup>661</sup> Dialogue with Trevor Samson.

<sup>662</sup> Dialogue with Trevor Samson.

<sup>663</sup> Dialogue with Trevor Samson.

<sup>664</sup> Dialogue with Trevor Samson.

<sup>665</sup> *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), December 22, 1985.

reporter and photojournalist for the *Weekly Mail* and *Sowetan*. In the 1990s he studied at the London School of Economics and earned a doctorate at the University of Wales. He is a leading political economist and contributes opinion pieces to *Business Day*, *The Daily Maverick*, and *Vrye Weekblad*.



**Figure 17:** The photograph made by Ismail Lagardien, December 20, 1985.  
**Credit:** Ismail Lagardien / Mayibuye Archives

Lagardien has a way with words. Speaking broadly about his life as a journalist and his subsequent career as a political economist he spoke rapidly, flamboyantly peppering his story with acerbic comments about people and situations he had encountered over the years. He was disarmingly open, describing himself at one point as a failure, admitting to being “scared shitless of flying,”<sup>666</sup> and having “huge, huge fears” about mediocrity and unemployment. Regarding the future, he was pessimistic, speaking with a sense of urgency; his words flowed freely, as he gestured emphatically to make a point.

When it came to speaking about his memories of the mortuary, he was hesitant. He spoke slowly and softly, stammered, changed direction halfway through a word or sentence, paused often, and lapsed into silence.

“I remember going into the mortuary. Now, I can’t place the sequence of events. I just know when I went into the mortuary, I thought these are just bodies stacked, where’s the refrigeration, where’s the ... [pause] because they, some people were partially dressed, some people were fully dressed, naked, but they were just bodies on shelves. I went out to throw up. And I walked out of this mortuary ... and I remember, I remember, going back to Yeoville and showering a lot, because that smell stayed with

<sup>666</sup> Dialogue with Ismail Lagardien, Johannesburg, April 2, 2015.

me.”<sup>667</sup>

Lagardien struggled to recall the sequence of events on the day he visited the mortuary but remembered and described in minute detail the inconsequential actions of a police officer standing outside, struggling clumsily to insert a plastic straw into a carton of milk.<sup>668</sup> As with Samson, he mimed the account of this seemingly inconsequential incident. Later in the dialogue a simple question about whether he had taken any other photographs that day triggered an outpouring of memories of his time in the mortuary.

“Yes, I did . . . I, I, shot, um, what I did was I shot from the hip as I walked into the spa . . . into the mortuary. Um, but of them, I think of them, I walked, I walked straight past everyone, and I just took the picture, and I put it [the camera] back and I walked away. I didn’t take any more pictures because [pause] it was all very creepy, scary and, and, smelly and dirty and disgusting, and it was just [pause] the whole thing because [pause] the one thing I do remember, I remember that there were bullet holes in the cupboards [very deliberately]. What they did was they [pause] it was reported, to make sure they got everybody, they fired into the cupboards, into the closets, so I remember, that very well. And I actually think that the one mark on her face was a bullet hole.<sup>669</sup> I’m not sure, when I looked [pause] there was [pause] at one point I thought, ‘Wow, bullet holes are *really* small.’”<sup>670</sup>

The account of the picture-making encounter Lagardien shared in the dialogue differs markedly from the fluent and well considered account offered in his memoir, where, he describes how, having left the room in which the bodies lay, he returned to make the photograph saying, “[I] turned my mind off, inhaled, walked back into the room and unceremoniously, with a cold heart and a face hidden behind a camera, I took a long step over the two bodies that filled the frame with their faces, the gaze of finality away from each other, made the picture and walked out of the room.”<sup>671</sup> Reflecting on his actions that day in his memoir, and on the almost forensic starkness of the photograph he made, Lagardien says, “There is nothing about photographing death that inspires composition, looking for the ways that shadow and light fall in patterns, nor is there any value in searching for meaning on the faces of the dead.”<sup>672</sup>

Asked to describe the photograph he made that day, Lagardien sat silently hunched over the table, looking into the distance seemingly lost in thought, before responding flatly, “The faces of two dead people.”<sup>673</sup> I was tempted to probe, to ask, what he was thinking about in the silence, but I did not, because I sensed his vulnerability, so I asked instead why he choose to shoot just the faces, and he replied softly, without

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<sup>667</sup> Dialogue with Ismail Lagardien.

<sup>668</sup> Dialogue with Ismail Lagardien.

<sup>669</sup> Mzwakhe Ndlela, offers a different reading of the wounds, saying “Like the other comrades he [Leon] too was shot in the head. It was as if the enemy was imprinting a signature and sending a message, brutal and devoid of mercy. It signified the coldness and the desperation of a system that lacked respect for human lives, a system without an iota of legitimacy. It was as if they were saying ‘we can kill at will and we can even choose where to place the bullet.’” Ndlela, 85.

<sup>670</sup> Dialogue with Ismail Lagardien.

<sup>671</sup> Lagardien, *Too Coloured to be White*, 114.

<sup>672</sup> Lagardien, 114.

<sup>673</sup> Dialogue with Ismail Lagardien.

hesitation, "Because they were human after all."<sup>674</sup>

The silence that precedes Lagardien's response to the request to describe the photograph is intriguing. Read against his response to the question about choosing to shoot the faces it could be interpreted as a moment of reflection and remembrance. It was the first and only time in the interview that he touched on the humanity of the victims: the only indication that he was thinking about them, rather than about the experience. The silence might also, as Abrams suggests, indicate that he was searching his memory to find an answer.<sup>675</sup> Reflecting on this silence after the interview I realised that I should have asked Lagardien what he was seeing in his mind's eye.

Months later, I set up a second conversation to do this. Lagardien's response suggests that my assumptions were incorrect; the images in his mind's eye were vivid and sharp. He answered my questions quickly, in an outpouring of multisensory kaleidoscopic impressions,

"This is what I see. I see smells. And I see this Lesotho policemen sipping coke out of a carton. And I remember going outside, being really, really, sick but I was just ... the mortuary was dark ... and these bodies were stacked one on top of each other, that's what I remember."<sup>676</sup>

In the follow-up conversation he also shared some memories about the photograph itself, explaining that,

"I remember ... the thing I remember about that, that photograph is that it wasn't a good photograph. I remember thinking it wasn't a good photograph. And I remember thinking... that I was too close to the faces. And it wasn't an aesthetically good photograph. It wasn't technically good. That's what I remember. That's what I tell myself. I'm not going to give you elaborate stories about any, no, that's what I remember about the actual taking of the photo."<sup>677</sup>

Fred Allison, analysing differences in interviews conducted with the same interlocutor at different times notes that, this enabled researchers, or readers to "understand how veterans' memory works to organize and make comprehensible an event that might not have been orderly or comprehensible in the first place."<sup>678</sup>

Like Samson, Lagardien chose not to revisit his memories of the picture-making encounter in the years that followed, explaining that the 1980s were, "a time of, of madness, of drunken bewilderment, and you know, you get off the job, you go to Jameson's, you drink and you fall over, the next day you're just sober, you're, you're back to the job and it's just going on and on ..."<sup>679</sup> Using an analogy of soldiers at war he said,

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<sup>674</sup> Dialogue with Ismail Lagardien.

<sup>675</sup> Abrams notes that "It is sometimes possible to literally 'see; or hear a person accessing their memory store; when asked a question they are not expecting they will have to search around in their memory to find an answer." Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 104.

<sup>676</sup> Dialogue with Ismail Lagardien. Johannesburg, November 13, 2015.

<sup>677</sup> Dialogue with Ismail Lagardien, November.

<sup>678</sup> Fred Allison, "Remembering a Vietnam War Firefight: Changing Perspectives over Time," *Oral History Review* 31 no 2, (2004), 69.

<sup>679</sup> Dialogue with Ismail Lagardien.

“... they go in there and they just shoot each other. And that is how humanity is, they just shoot each other, and you and your friends try to get the right shot, protect each other, so when we'd go into the townships ... you'd run around, take pictures and [pause] then you'd go back, and you'd process them, and you'd send them in and then you'd move on to the next.”<sup>680</sup>

But still, the political motivation behind his photographs is clear. Mentioning that he was also active in Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO), Lagardien says that he “understood what we were trying to do in the country, but I also accepted that I had a small role to play, and I just did that role straightforward, up and down.” What that meant, he said, was that he needed to “Go out. Take pictures. Get them published. Take the message to people ... Tell people what's happening. That's it. Tell people what's happening in the country.”<sup>681</sup>

Lagardien's photograph was wired to news agencies around the world but appears not to have been published. The slug below the wirephoto reads,

“(JOH= 10) MASERU, Lesotho, December 21, 1985: The bodies of Jacquelin and Joe Quinn, 2 of 9 people killed in a raid on 2 houses in Lesotho's capital Maseru early Friday morning. The Quinn's one-year-old daughter was not harmed. Lesotho blames South African commandos for the raid but they[sic] South Africa denies it. (ddr72130/issy lagardienne/str) 1985.”<sup>682</sup>

Like Samson, Lagardien explained that once he had wired the photograph to Associated Press subscribers across the world, he no longer had any control over the way it was used. He knew only that the *Sunday Tribune* editorial team had declined to publish it, choosing instead, to publish a portrait photograph of Jackie obtained from her sister, as described in Chapter One. Lagardien did not know that a copy of the wirephoto eventually made its way into the collection of the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF) in London or that it had been returned to South Africa in the early 1990s when the IDAF archives were transferred to the Mayibuye Centre<sup>683</sup> at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). He was intrigued to hear that in 1993 the photograph was included in a landmark exhibition, *EsiQithini: The Robben Island Exhibition*, a joint project of the then South African Museum (SAM) and the Mayibuye Centre and, after a fierce debate, displayed veiled behind a sheet of tracing paper, as described in Chapter Six.

### **Deon Deport, *Sunday Tribune* journalist**

Deon Delport is a seasoned reporter, a man who has made his way up the editorial ladder, holding senior positions in the *Independent on Sunday*, the *Sunday Tribune*, and the *Daily News*. Although he did not photograph the scene in the mortuary, he was one of the journalists in the group that travelled with the photographers, and his reports about the Raid were published in the *Sunday Tribune* and *Weekend Argus*.

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<sup>680</sup> Dialogue with Ismail Lagardien.

<sup>681</sup> Dialogue with Ismail Lagardien.

<sup>682</sup> A print of the wirephoto bearing this information was filed in the IDAF Photographic Collection at the Mayibuye Archives.

<sup>683</sup> The Mayibuye Centre was subsequently incorporated into the Robben Island Museum and renamed as the University of the Western Cape Robben Island Museum Mayibuye Archive.

Delport is quietly powerful, but his self-assurance seems to belie a certain softness and a tightly controlled vulnerability. He welcomed me warmly into his office, telling me half-way through our discussion that he had been looking forward to the opportunity to unburden himself “a little bit.” Our dialogue was intense. He spoke easily and at length about his experiences as a journalist: the tragedies he had witnessed, the thrill of getting a world scoop, and the moral requirement of journalists to maintain a balanced point of view. He is a riveting storyteller whose observational powers have been honed by years of reporting, and we were so engrossed in conversation that we did not notice the sky darkening, day turning into night, as we spoke.

Speaking about his journalistic experience, Delport mentioned that he had also covered the June 1985 Raid into Botswana, in which 12 people, including women and children, were killed by SADF troops. It was, he recalled, his “first real experience of, of, that kind of thing and it was a huge learning curve and a huge shock to cover something like that.”<sup>684</sup> As a journalist he explained, “you have to put your emotions in check and you have to get as much detail as you can and be as balanced as you can when you’re putting the story together.”<sup>685</sup> Sometimes, he said, it is easy to do this, because you may have limited sympathy for the subject, but, in the case of the raids, “your sympathy’s unlimited, you know, um, it is just tragic that it happened.”<sup>686</sup> Also, he mused,

“I have a sense of that, you know . . . journalism is history. It’s something that’s in the back of my mind all the time, that we are writing history. Um, which is why we’ve got to try and get it right . . . not just for now, but in fifty-years-time somebody looking at my stories must know that I have done the best that I can to, to get that right.”<sup>687</sup>

For Delport, getting it right meant meeting his obligations to the reader,

“to tell it [the story] in a way that you take your own emotion out of it, and your own feeling, biases, as far as you can, and present the story as best you can for them to make up their own mind how they interpret it. Obviously, you add colour to it, and, and the colour you include is to some extent affected by your own background and, and your emotions and so on, but you still have to try and keep it in check.”<sup>688</sup>

Delport mentioned the challenges of reporting during the State of Emergency, saying, “it was very difficult to find out what was going on and if you did find out you couldn’t say anything about it. . . we were on the phone to lawyers all the time and trying to see how we could get around restrictions.”<sup>689</sup> He remembered,

“the way, that, that, the old apartheid government dealt with, with, information in the press, the idea was to try and manage it and prevent people knowing what was going on. We all saw the result of that. The white minority got a huge shock when they realised what was really happening behind the scenes. And it

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<sup>684</sup> Dialogue with Deon Delport, Durban, May 6, 2015.

<sup>685</sup> Dialogue with Deon Delport.

<sup>686</sup> Dialogue with Deon Delport.

<sup>687</sup> Dialogue with Deon Delport.

<sup>688</sup> Dialogue with Deon Delport.

<sup>689</sup> Dialogue with Deon Delport.

wasn't our fault, you know it was really the way the government handled things at that time."<sup>690</sup>

Asked whether he had any recollection of why the *Sunday Tribune* chose not to publish Lagardien's photograph, Delport explained that putting the report together had been a team effort, and that even though he had written the story, he had no say in the choice of the photograph that accompanied it. He elaborated,

"You let them do their thing and they, let you do your thing, you know. Um, and then one would have allowed them to select the pictures that they thought were the ones that, that, would tell the story but then the news-editor and chief-sub and the editor, at the end of the day would have the final choice about what goes into the paper."<sup>691</sup>

He also explained that "there would have been people working here in Durban. Liaising with the family, getting reaction, all that sort of thing. So, it, it would be absolutely standard procedure for them to get pictures from the family."<sup>692</sup>



**Figure 18:** The report written by Deon Delport, *Sunday Tribune*, December 22, 1985.  
**Credit:** *Sunday Tribune* / Msunduzi Municipal Library



**Figure 19:** The photograph of Jackie supplied to the *Sunday Tribune* by a family member, see Figure 19.  
**Credit:** *Sunday Tribune*

Reflecting in retrospect on the decision made by the editorial team, Delport conceded that "I was a lot more gung-ho then. I might well have thought it is good to show that [photograph] because it shows what has been done to these people,"<sup>693</sup> but admitted that he felt differently about the matter now. Commenting on

<sup>690</sup> Dialogue with Deon Delport.

<sup>691</sup> Dialogue with Deon Delport.

<sup>692</sup> Dialogue with Deon Delport.

<sup>693</sup> Dialogue with Deon Delport.

the *Sunday Times* decision to publish Samson's photograph he said "I think putting it on page two shows a bit of sensitivity. Using the picture of the granny and the baby on page one, to me it makes sense. It's the kind of decision that I would make as well."<sup>694</sup>

Speaking about the report published in the *Sunday Tribune*, (Figure 19),<sup>695</sup> after the visit to Maseru unlocked a flood of memories. While the report focused almost entirely on the politics of the Raid, and who was responsible for it, the story Delpont shared in the dialogue is disordered and personal. His recollections of the logistics, how he travelled to Maseru, and who accompanied the journalists to the sites associated with the event, are as vague as Samson's and Lagardien's. His memories of the houses in which the victims were killed are sharper, but fragmented and out of sequence.

"I went to the places where the people were killed. Um, and, in terms of the couple who were killed, you know, I went to their house. We may have been taken there. I'm, I'm inclined to think that we might have been taken there and walked through there. And I have, I've been thinking about it, knowing that you, you, were coming to see me and I do have pictures in my mind of going into that place, um, into that home, and I mean obviously by then we knew that the baby had not been hurt. Um, but what I can remember is [pause] where the wife was killed, it was I think in the sort of lounge area, um, and the husband [pause] had tried to run, and he ran into the bathroom and I think he was trying to get out of the, the, bathroom window, and that's where he was shot. Um, and the other people in that ... I'm not sure, I do remember this in one of the raids and it might have been in all the raids. But what the, the raiders did is, they would assume that people were hiding in cupboards so they would fire automatic weapons through the cupboards you know, and I have this memory in my mind of bullet holes going through cupboards. Also, in that home there was something, um either a chart or a board, something like that, on the one wall. It was just before Christmas and, um I seem to remember there was some little message about their puppy, um, that was part of it, and I seem to remember there was a kind of Christmassy theme."<sup>696</sup>

Later in the conversation Delpont mentioned other details,

"...there were books, Karl Marx and things like that lying around and you can just imagine, um, a Koevoet or a SADF guy going in there, you know, they would immediately have thought, 'Here are a bunch of communists,' you know. Um, so, but it looked, you know, but they looked more like academics than anything else."<sup>697</sup>

Like the photographers, Delpont remembers being surprised by how eager the officials present in the mortuary were for the journalists to see and photograph the victims. They were "appalled and angry"<sup>698</sup> he explained, as he described how one of the officials "pulled the blankets away so that we could take photographs of the bodies, saying 'Look, look, what's been done to these people. Take photographs of this

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<sup>694</sup> Dialogue with Deon Delpont.

<sup>695</sup> Deon Delpont, "SA tipped Maseru on ANC 'blitz'," *Sunday Tribune* (Durban), 22 December 1985.

<sup>696</sup> Dialogue with Deon Delpont.

<sup>697</sup> Dialogue with Deon Delpont.

<sup>698</sup> Dialogue with Deon Delpont.

to show the world.”<sup>699</sup>

Delport’s account of the visit to the mortuary is similar in most respects to the those of Lagardien and others who visited on the same day, reflecting on this experience, he said,

“I’d been into one or two mortuaries before but that was really, um, I mean those memories sort of stay, stay with you, you know the blood and the gore and the indignity of it all, um, it, and I mean they weren’t the only corpses, there were lots and lots of bodies lining, lining, the side of the mortuary you know, some wrapped in blankets, some not, some in various states of decay, that kind of thing. Um, so as a human being you were confronted with death you know, and it takes... it affects you... seeing the people lying there, you know, and there’s nothing dignified about death, not in those circumstances. You know, it’s just heart breaking.”<sup>700</sup>

When I mentioned Lagardien’s photograph and how intrigued I had been his description of it, and the silence that preceded it, Delport said without any prompting:

“I can tell you now and I would have told you then, that to me it would have been the picture of the couple whose house I’d been into, and whose baby was still alive, but they we dead and I’d seen how they had died. So, it’s not to me just a picture of two dead people, of any two dead people, it’s a picture of a very specific couple. To me that makes a difference. I would have said the same about seeing the bodies of the others because I’d seen how they all died. But they obviously stood out, you know, because they were a couple, and, and the baby had not been killed ....”<sup>701</sup>

Lagardien did not mention the presence of other journalists in his account of the visit, but Delport recalled him and remembered how Lagardien heaved as he exited.

“There was a group of reporters and photographers standing on the grass outside the main mortuary door and this photographer turned around and started heaving, um, with a kind of shock I think, and we sort of, I suppose we gave embarrassed laughs, you know, because in a way you’re trying to keep your *own* emotions in check.”<sup>702</sup>

Delport has a great deal of empathy for news photographers who, he said,

“are recording all these images and the images are often, very, very horrible and the situations that they work in, a, it’s really tough, tough, and [pause] one can understand them breaking down. I mean we’re all people ... You’re dealing with, you’re dealing with, human frailty and vulnerability and all that, and you’ve got a professional job to do, but after you’ve done the job, um, you’ve got to make sense of it all, absorb it all, and you’ve got to carry on living as a human being. You’ve got to go home to your family and, and, be the person that the family knows.”<sup>703</sup>

Towards the end of the conversation, he made a very personal admission,

“I’ve always regarded myself as a Christian, um, not, not a Bible thumping or anything like that, but I do go to Church, um, although at that stage I wasn’t really doing that, but, but um, in my personal belief system life is sacred, you know, and, seeing that, and seeing that at the time, the taking of life, was just tragic and sad

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<sup>699</sup> Dialogue with Deon Delport.

<sup>700</sup> Dialogue with Deon Delport.

<sup>701</sup> Dialogue with Deon Delport.

<sup>702</sup> Dialogue with Deon Delport.

<sup>703</sup> Dialogue with Deon Delport.

and made me angry and frustrated and made me aware of how vulnerable life is, you know, and I still feel the same way today.”<sup>704</sup>

The vivid kaleidoscopic array of images evident in Delpont’s narrative is, like Lagardien’s, striking. Combing through the transcript of this dialogue other visual traces come sharply into view: references to “pictures in my mind” and “memories in my mind”; an admission that, “You can’t get the images of dead people lying in the mortuary out of your head”; and a description of going out with a group of his colleagues at the end of the day in an effort to “blur” the images in his mind.

#### Tewis Brink and Sam Msibi, ARD television crew



**Figure 20:** Screenshot from the footage of Jackie and Leon made by Tewis Brink and Sam Msibi, December 20, 1985.  
**Credit:** SABC

Tewis Brink and Sam Msibi were working for ARD as cameraman and soundman respectively, when they were assigned to cover the Raid. It is evident from the conversations that they had a close working relationship and a deep respect for one another. Brink credits Msibi for saving his life on at least one occasion, and Msibi, in his memoir<sup>705</sup> describes Brink as one of the few white journalists who “perceived their work as something that needed to be done in order to bring about liberation to the black people of South Africa.”<sup>706</sup>

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<sup>704</sup> Dialogue with Deon Delpont.

<sup>705</sup> Msibi, *The Accidental Frontline Journalist*, 169.

<sup>706</sup> Msibi, 169.

Before joining ARD, Brink worked for several other news organisations as a soundman and was promoted to the position of cameraman in 1985. In conversation, he shared his experiences as a youngster growing up in a conservative community, his move to Johannesburg, and his subsequent exposure to political events. He explained, mentioning Shifty Records and Voëlvry<sup>707</sup> that, “I was sort of kind of isolated in my little world, couldn't really talk to anybody except some friends from the music industry. Those guys they were fully aware of what is happening through music kind of protesting.”<sup>708</sup> Music, he says, has driven revolution all over the world and he refers to music often in his conversation. He speaks of his admiration for The Clash, of attending concerts in London, and the Amnesty Concert in Harare.

Describing his experiences recording protests in the townships he mentioned that, “you head for the place where the smoke is the thickest, because that's where the action is.”<sup>709</sup> He said that his identity as a cameraman for foreign news station and his partnership with Sam Msibi, afforded him some protection. The SABC crews, he remembered, were met with hostility, mentioning the 1993 attack in which SABC cameraman Dudley Saunders was critically injured and Calvin Thusago, his soundman, was killed.<sup>710</sup>

Reflecting on the stories he covered, Brink remembers specifically the funerals, “Lots of funerals. Every weekend someone got killed and they would be the people who got killed the week before at the other funeral ... people would go to a funeral and afterwards they start taunting the police and throwing stones and then the police would start shooting ... so next weekend we'd be back in the same place. At another funeral...”<sup>711</sup> He also remembers being present in Munsieville in 1986 when Winnie Mandela made her “matchboxes speech,” saying on that day he felt, “very tense, very white.”<sup>712</sup> But, he says, occasionally he got to cover the good news stories too, like the 1994 elections.

Unlike Samson, Lagardien, and Delport, Brink has clear memories of receiving the call to cover the Raid, of rushing to Lanseria, travelling in a chartered Lear Jet, landing “five minutes later” in Maseru on a rainy morning and “skidding all over”<sup>713</sup> a runway filled with puddles. He wasn't too sure who had organised the itinerary for the visit but explained that he and Msibi were met by Alistair Sparks, the award-winning journalist and former

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<sup>707</sup> Shifty Records and Voelvy were known for their anti-apartheid stance.

<sup>708</sup> Dialogue with Tewis Brink, Johannesburg, December 8, 2015.

<sup>709</sup> Dialogue with Tewis Brink.

<sup>710</sup> Alec Hogg, “Dudley Saunders passing evokes memories: 1993 mob almost killed him, murdered SABC colleague,” *Biznews*, 31 December 2013, accessed December 2024, <https://www.biznews.com/undictated/2013/12/31/dudley-saunders-passing-evokes-memories-of-1993-and-his-murdered-sabc-colleague>.

<sup>711</sup> Dialogue with Tewis Brink.

<sup>712</sup> Dialogue with Tewis Brink.

<sup>713</sup> Dialogue with Tewis Brink.

editor of the *Rand Daily Mail*,<sup>714</sup> who accompanied them to the houses where the victims were shot, the mortuary, and to the site where the burnt vehicles of the attackers had been abandoned on the riverbank.

Brink recalled visiting Jackie and Leon's apartment, where he says, "the ceiling was falling in in places, it looked like a bomb had hit [pause] there was just [pause] bullet holes and it was just, just, chaos."<sup>715</sup> Brink's account had, to this point, been chatty and free flowing, but when reflecting on this scenes he saw that day his tone shifted and he spoke hesitantly, stammering slightly, as he sought to express his memories in words. His account of the visit to the mortuary is sparse. Asked what stands out in his memory he responds quickly, saying "the smell"<sup>716</sup> and explaining at some length that he was convinced he'd picked up a virus there because he was sick for days afterwards. He also remembers, "white bodies, black bodies and taking pictures, zooming in and out to take pictures of the dead bodies,"<sup>717</sup> a recurring feature of the video footage.<sup>718</sup>

Like the other visitors to the mortuary that day, Brink was struck by fact that no-one objected to the presence of the camera crew, explaining that they worked hurriedly, expecting to be arrested at any minute, but suggesting that "maybe the Lesotho guys didn't harass us because they knew we trying to tell the story, because I don't think you could do that here (in South Africa). The cops would stop you from getting those pictures because those are..." Asked what story they were trying to tell he said simply, "that South Africans came across the border and killed those people."<sup>719</sup>

Sam Msibi, who worked alongside Brink as his soundman was born in Newcastle and after leaving school moved to Johannesburg in search of opportunities. In 1983 he joined the SABC as a trainee cameraman, leaving in 1985 to join ARD. He has a strong sense of purpose and explained that "our role as journalists" was to "inform the world of the plight of our people, to cover and depict the suffering they're going through and to give them a voice."<sup>720</sup> He returned, insistently, to this theme throughout the conversation, reiterating the importance of giving voice to the voiceless. Msibi is proud of the work that he has done in "foreign media", and proud that the footage he has filmed has been viewed around the world explaining that "The camera never lies. What you see on the screen is what happened. But journalists tell the story in words, veiling the truth."<sup>721</sup>

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<sup>714</sup> In 1985 Sparks received the Louis M. Lyons Award for Conscience and Integrity in Reporting for his reporting on apartheid and other conditions in South Africa as well as the Inter Press Service International Journalism Award.

<sup>715</sup> Dialogue with Tewis Brink.

<sup>716</sup> Dialogue with Tewis Brink.

<sup>717</sup> Dialogue with Tewis Brink.

<sup>718</sup> Brink's account resonates with that of Charles Nqakula who visited the mortuary on the same day, writing, "A shocking sight confronted me. The bodies had clearly been dropped there by apartheid agents, including the marauding forces that had murdered them, and were strewn about on the cement floor as if they had been dumped by a tipper truck. They were still in their clothes which were bloody and torn, and their bodies were decomposing. There was blood everywhere. The scene was so grotesque that I felt anger spilling out of every pore in my body." Nqakula, 176.

<sup>719</sup> Dialogue with Tewis Brink.

<sup>720</sup> Dialogue with Sam Msibi, Johannesburg May 4, 2016.

<sup>721</sup> Dialogue with Sam Msibi.

In his account of the flight from Lanseria airport to Maseru, Msibi, like Brink, mentioned the bad weather, but his description was more animated, and he used his hands to demonstrate the path of the plane coming in to land and skidding on the runway. Like Brink he described being taken to the house where the victims were massacred saying that “it was full of blood: the bathroom, toilets, lounge, just blood everywhere, and bodies”<sup>722</sup> but, he said, looking around the domestic interior, “you could see that these people they were staying leisurely without knowledge that they will be attacked,”<sup>723</sup> a poignant reminder of the victim’s humanity. Later he admitted to being confused about the bodies, saying that maybe they had already been transferred to the mortuary, although in his mind’s eye he’s sure he sees them in the house. He remembered seeing Leon, describing him as looking “like, a coloured, with curly hair”<sup>724</sup> and recalls being told by someone in the house that he was the “commander, the one they wanted to destroy.”<sup>725</sup>

Msibi recalled filming the scenes in the mortuary, but, like the others, seemed reluctant to speak about his experience, simply reiterating his description of pools of blood and bodies. Nevertheless he did explain why he thought it important to share the horrific sight, saying, “You see, if you’re filming bodies, those bodies that you’re filming because you want to uplift those people that were massacred, slaughtered, if you want to depict the extent of the anger and the viciousness, then you must film those bodies and show them.”<sup>726</sup> From the mortuary he recalled that journalists were taken to the spot on the banks of the Caledon River where the burnt out vehicles used by the attackers were still standing, observing that it was evident that the operation was well-planned because the attackers had destroyed all the evidence before crossing the river back into South Africa.

Msibi admitted to having felt nervous during his trip to Lesotho, “What clicks in your mind when people have been slaughtered, and there was no question that they *had* been slaughtered, you wonder, what can stop those people from coming back to slaughter us, because they know we are going to disseminate the information to inform the world about what is going on.”<sup>727</sup> And he said, mentioning colleagues like Kevin Carter, who committed suicide, and Ken Oosterbroek and Abdul Sharif who were killed in crossfire, the work of a photographer is deeply stressful, “when you’re done for the day, you’re sitting at home, your head goes bananas, thinking about the things that you’ve gone through.”<sup>728</sup> Reflecting similarly in his memoir, he writes,

“Rather than being hardened by these frequent scenes of extreme violence, I found that they ate quietly at something very close to the centre of my own self-esteem. Sometimes, late at night, I felt I could hardly bear

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<sup>722</sup> Dialogue with Sam Msibi.

<sup>723</sup> Dialogue with Sam Msibi.

<sup>724</sup> Dialogue with Sam Msibi.

<sup>725</sup> Dialogue with Sam Msibi.

<sup>726</sup> Dialogue with Sam Msibi.

<sup>727</sup> Dialogue with Sam Msibi.

<sup>728</sup> Dialogue with Sam Msibi.

it any longer. But the demands and excitements of each day brought fresh resolve, and often the salve of alcohol eased my passage through the night”<sup>729</sup>

The alcohol, he confessed, did not really help because, “it wipes out the memories for a day. But the following day, you will have the same memories coming back again.” He bemoaned the lack of care shown to journalists in the field by the organisations that they worked for, complaining that “we all needed to be given counselling. And I thought that these companies, after they've seen pictures of violence and stuff all over the world, they could have just said, the least we can counsel them.” Nevertheless, he said, “I am happy that I was part of the group of journalists that worked from the 80s up to the freedom of this country.”<sup>730</sup>

Msibi is disappointed that that the contribution of journalists to the liberation of the country has not been adequately recognised arguing that, “MK used to carry a gun, AK47's, to liberate the country, we carried a camera, we liberated the country too. People like Peter Magubane, Alf Kumalo, even Alistair Sparks, have played the role of making this country, a better country and never been acknowledged, not even after 22 years ...”<sup>731</sup> As he writes in his memoir,

“Today's government should be very thankful to the foreign media because we exposed to the world the atrocities that were going on in our country. Had it not been for us, and the risks we took to capture stories for international broadcasting purposes, then the word would have been in the dark about the extent of the oppression and unlawfulness that was happening in South Africa.”<sup>732</sup>

On their return to Johannesburg Brink said he edited the footage and then filed it. He does not have a copy of it, neither does Msibi. Neither knew that the footage had been shown on television stations around the world – although they had hoped that it would be. They did not know that the footage had been used extensively in the *Special Report* series and included in *Prime Evil*,<sup>733</sup> the documentary about Eugene de Kock directed by Jacques Pauw. They would be astonished to hear that, after our dialogues, I had found that screenshots clipped from these productions are still in circulation on social media and horrified to see the use to which they had been put by right-wing provocateurs. While both expressed some regret about not maintaining their own archives, as a record of their professional work, neither wanted to revisit the footage.

## Discussion

The accounts of the picture-making encounter shared in dialogues loop backwards and forwards between the pictured event, that is the visit to the Maseru mortuary in December 1985, and other picture-making events experienced by the photographers in other places and at other times. They also shift between memories of

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<sup>729</sup> Msibi, 70.

<sup>730</sup> Dialogue with Sam Msibi.

<sup>731</sup> Dialogue with Sam Msibi.

<sup>732</sup> Msibi, 174.

<sup>733</sup> Jacques Pauw, *Prime Evil*, accessed January 2025, <https://www.primevideo.com/-/es/detail/Prime-Evil/OIE6KKODAQOK9RT4VOWRC4GP4V>.

other unsettling experiences and images – photographs they made themselves, photographs made by others, and photographs of scenes not made but imprinted on their memories.

The motivation of the photographers and television crew to record the scene in the mortuary for circulation in the public domain is a recurring theme in the dialogues. For the photographers and television crew, the images were intended to act as a mirror that could be held up to show the world the ‘truth’ about the violence enacted by the apartheid regime on those who opposed it, in the expectation that it would ignite action to bring about change. As noted in Chapter One, this was a commonly held view at the time. Vilho Shigwedha, writing with reference to photographs of the Cassinga Massacre, which are also mentioned in Chapter One, contends that “There was a belief that the camera could operate within the formal conventions of documentary photography and photojournalism and provide evidence of the violence of mass civilian death and burial, thereby generating sympathy and stirring a public response that could stall or condemn political violence.<sup>734</sup> But there is a degree of ambivalence in this position: while the photographers and television crew were eager to share the images for the world to see, they shied away from viewing the images themselves, even in their own minds. Each one mentioned a strategy that they had developed to “blur” their memory, or to avoid thinking about the unsettling encounters.<sup>735</sup> When they overcame their reluctance to do so in the dialogues, they chose to screen disturbing elements from view by focussing on relatively inconsequential details. Examples of this include Samson’s precise account of the makeshift equipment he constructed in his hotel room, Lagardien’s description of the difficulties with the drinking straw, and Delpont’s detailed account of the contents of Jackie and Leon’s home.

Neither Samson nor Lagardien were keen to look at their own photographs again, although Lagardien subsequently requested a copy. Delpont expressed an interest in seeing Lagardien’s photographs after the dialogue, because he had not seen it when it was first made, but just glanced at it cursorily before turning away. None of them needed to see the photograph – even in their mind’s eye – to recall their experience: the scene is indelibly imprinted on their memories in all its sensory richness and just a mention of the incident, or a particular smell, is sufficient to bring back the memories. As Delpont said, “You can’t get the images of dead people lying in the mortuary out of your head.” For them, material traces of the event that exist in the small black and white photographs or the individual frames of video footage can only ever be a dim reflection of what they see in their mind’s eye. The material representation can never stand in the place of their memories, and the assemblage of images that exists in their mind’s eye. As Siegfried Kracauer, reflecting on the entanglement of photography and memory, argues,

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<sup>734</sup> Vilho Shigwedha, “Photography, mass violence and survivors,” in *Ambivalent: Photography and Visibility in African History* eds. Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley (Athens Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2019), 164.

<sup>735</sup> Anthony Feinstein argues that many journalists suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and associated conditions like depression and substance abuse. Anthony Feinstein *Journalists Under Fire: The Psychological Hazards of Covering War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 72-88.

“Photography grasps what is given as a spatial (or temporal) continuum; memory images retain what is given only insofar as it has significance. Since what is significant is not reducible to either merely spatial or merely temporal terms, memory images are at odds with photographic representation. From the latter’s perspective, memory images appear to be fragments – not only because photography does not encompass the meaning to which they refer and in relation to which they cease to be fragments. Similarly, from the perspective of memory, photography appears as a jumble that consists partly of garbage . . .”<sup>736</sup>

The fragmentation referred to in relation to memory above, is evident too in the descriptions of the picture-making encounter shared by the photographers, journalist and television crew. Their raw, incoherent, unstructured, disjointed, and unsequenced accounts, marked by hesitations, pauses and long silences, and the evocative jumble of visual fragments mentioned as they speak, suggest that the experiences have not been fully assimilated into memory. Their accounts also bear all the signals of trauma described by Gadi BenEzer<sup>737</sup> and mentioned by Luisa Passerini,<sup>738</sup> Sean Field,<sup>739</sup> and Lynn Abrams,<sup>740</sup> who argue that interlocutors are likely to tell the story of a traumatic experience<sup>741</sup> in a way that differs markedly from the way in which other stories are told. Cathy Caruth argues that experiences which may be deemed ‘traumatic’ are difficult to place “within the schemes of prior knowledge”<sup>742</sup> asserting that trauma is “not locatable in the simple violent or original event but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature – the way it was precisely not known in the first instance – returns to haunt the survivor later on.”<sup>743</sup> The consequent fragmentation of consciousness and struggle to represent the experience in language,<sup>744</sup> may also be ascribed to the way in these experiences are imprinted on the brain as “visual images, olfactory, auditory or kinaesthetic sensations or intense waves of feeling,”<sup>745</sup> rather than as an ordered, linear narrative. This is evident in the repeated mentions of sights that live in their own minds, as Msibi put it so powerfully, the images that “stays in my eyes” explaining that “I see them every day,”<sup>746</sup> and in Samson’s and Lagardien’s references to the smells that trigger flashbacks.

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<sup>736</sup> Siegfried Kracauer quoted in Olga Shevenko, “The mirror with a memory: Placing photography in memory studies,” in *Routledge International Handbook of Memory Studies*, eds. Anna Lisa Tota and Trevor Hagen, (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 272.

<sup>737</sup> BenEzer identifies thirteen ‘signals of trauma’ that may be present in oral narratives. Gadi BenEzer, “Trauma Signals in Life Stories,” in *Trauma and Life Stories, International Perspectives*, eds. K. Lacy-Rogers, S Leydesdorff and G. Dawson. (London: Routledge, 1999), 34-36.

<sup>738</sup> Luisa Passerini, “Memories Between Silence and Oblivion” in *Contested Pasts, the Politics of Memory*, eds. Katherine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone (London: Routledge, 2003), 238-254.

<sup>739</sup> Sean Field, “Beyond ‘Healing’ trauma, oral history and regeneration,” *Journal of the Oral History Society*, Volume 34, Number 1, Spring (2006), 153-164.

<sup>740</sup> Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 104.

<sup>741</sup> I favour the Caruthian definition of trauma as unprocessed experience over a referential approach which links it more closely to the nature of the experience itself. So, for example, a life threatening experience may not necessarily have a long-lasting impact, if the experience is assimilated into memory. One of the ways this may be achieved is through narrative therapy.

<sup>742</sup> Cathy Caruth *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 153.

<sup>743</sup> Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma Narrative and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, 2006), 4.

<sup>744</sup> Michelle Balaev, “Trauma Studies” in *A Companion to Literary Theory* ed. David H Richter (Hoboken, John Wiley and Sons, 2018), 363.

<sup>745</sup> Bessel Van der Kolk and Rita Fisler, “Dissociation and the Fragmentary Nature of Traumatic Memories: Overview and Exploratory Study,” *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1995, 513.

<sup>746</sup> Dialogue with Sam Msibi.

Each of the photographers, journalist and television crew explained spontaneously that they had never discussed their experiences in the Maseru mortuary with anyone else. For them, the dialogue was the first opportunity to narrate their story of that day, to put into words their memories of the unassimilated experience. Caruth, Abrams, Crossley and Guilfoyle, amongst others, have written extensively on the role of narrative in making meaning or sense of the world and communicating this to the self and others. Crossley, citing David Carr, suggests that narrative is an “ordering principle of human life.” “Everything experienced by human beings”<sup>747</sup> she argues is made “meaningful, understood and interpreted in relation to the primary dimension of ‘activity’ which incorporates both ‘time’ and ‘sequence.’”<sup>748</sup> Narratives frame experience and memory coherently, and sequence activity to “define and interpret ‘what’ exactly happened on any particular occasion,”<sup>749</sup> and establish a connection between past, present and future. But sometimes, as Guilfoyle says, “life events resist storying.”<sup>750</sup> Sometimes, “we have experiences so powerful that they eject us from the stories of our lives, overwhelming our narratives’ capacities to organise experience, leaving us lost and bewildered, without the reference points and guidances[sic] stories usually provide.”<sup>751</sup> Writing from the perspective of an oral historian, Abrams, expands the notion of narrative, arguing that it “is not merely the content of the story, but the telling of it. It incorporates not just the sequence of events or facts but emphases, embellishments, cadences, structures, digressions, silences – in short, the arrangement and dramatisation of the story.”<sup>752</sup> But what of images? What role do the images that come into view in the minds of the speakers play? As Marian MacCurdy writes.

“Narrative is the chain that links our moments together, but image is what we see in the dark of night, what we wake up with from dreams, what we remember when we recall those we love. It is image that burns itself into our minds whether we want it or not, and image that can free us from a past if we look straight at the pictures that live behind our eyes and communicate them to others.”<sup>753</sup>

Reflecting on the entanglement of narrative and image, Jenny Hobbs, the writer whose novel<sup>754</sup> sparked by Samson’s photograph and discussed in Chapter Five, said emphatically, “You couldn’t *describe* it. You have to *see* it,”<sup>755</sup> an affirmation of the power of images to communicate in a way that words cannot. Perhaps the best way to describe an image is to invoke another, and perhaps the pauses, in the dialogues point to the moments

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<sup>747</sup> Michele L Crossley, “Introducing Narrative Psychology,” in *Narrative, Memory and Life Transitions* (Huddersfield: University of Huddersfield. 2002), 2.

<sup>748</sup> Crossley, “Introducing Narrative Psychology”, 2.

<sup>749</sup> Crossley, 2.

<sup>750</sup> Michael Guilfoyle, “Storying unstoried experience in therapeutic practice,” *Journal of Constructive Psychology* 31, no.1 (2018), 95.

<sup>751</sup> Guilfoyle, “Storying unstoried experience,” 95.

<sup>752</sup> Abrams, 106-107.

<sup>753</sup> Marian Mesrobian MacCurdy, *Image and Memory in Writing about Trauma* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 53.

<sup>754</sup> Hobbs, *Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary*.

<sup>755</sup> Dialogue with Jenny Hobbs.

when the interlocutor is reaching deep into memory, or as Belting argues, their personal image archive,<sup>756</sup> to surface other images that articulate what they cannot put into words.

The images that came into view in the minds of the picture-makers discussed in this chapter, much like those included in the publications *Beyond the Barricades*,<sup>757</sup> *Defiant Images*,<sup>758</sup> and *Unity in Action*,<sup>759</sup> referenced in Chapter One, may be understood to exemplify the collective memory of apartheid violence including mass funerals, a man placed on the burning roof of his car by an angry mob, Archbishop Desmond Tutu preventing a necklacing in another mob justice incident, the necklacing of Maki Skosana, and ANC and Inkatha members “butchering people”<sup>760</sup> in Thokoza in the early 1990s.

Although most of the images mentioned were associated with Southern Africa, Samson made reference to an iconic photograph of the corpse of Che Guevara by Marc Hutten when it was presented to the media on the day after Guevara was executed.<sup>761</sup> Samson knew Hutten, and had encountered the photograph through the photographer’s personal account of the event, but was nevertheless at a loss to explain the association, saying simply, “the only reason I’m bringing it up is because I don’t know . . . there’s a parallel or something . . .”<sup>762</sup> This photograph was also mentioned by Warrick Swinney, as described in Chapter Five, who found the display of the exposed corpse transgressive, suggesting that it violated the dignity of the deceased, as did Samson’s photograph of Jackie and Leon.

Reflecting more deeply on his personal experience of picture-making encounters Samson mentioned a photograph he made in 1986 as he watched a woman leap out of a moving bus into which the police had fired a canister of tear gas. His photograph catches the woman, arrested in flight between the cumbersome bus and the dusty road. It’s a powerful image that communicates the vulnerability of the slight woman, leaving the viewer to wonder what became of her. Remembering that image Samson told me, took him instantly back to “craziness” of the picture-making encounter on that day, in the same way that the mention of Jackie and Leon triggered memories of his experience in the Maseru mortuary.

Like Samson, Lagardien mentioned another photographic encounter and the image he made, not of a violent incident, but of the trace it left in the landscape. The photograph to which he refers shows a grandmother carrying a baby on her back, pointing to the charred patch on grass where her daughter, the child’s mother,

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<sup>756</sup> Hans Belting, *An Anthropology of Images: Picture. Medium. Body* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), 44.

<sup>757</sup> Tillman and Harris.

<sup>758</sup> Newbury, *Defiant Images*.

<sup>759</sup> *Unity in Action, A Photographic History of the African National Congress, South Africa 1912-1982* (London: African National Congress, 1982).

<sup>760</sup> This incident is also mentioned in Msibi’s memoir. See Msibi, 89-90.

<sup>761</sup> The revolutionary leader South American, Ernesto “Che” Guevara was captured by the Bolivian army, with the assistance of the American Central Intelligence Agency, on 8 October 1967, and executed the following day.

<sup>762</sup> Dialogue with Trevor Samson.

had been burnt to death by necklacing, (Figure 32). As he spoke to the grandmother, Lagardien said, the baby slipped off her back, and he reached out quickly to catch her, securing her firmly in place. In the absence of any contextual information the photograph is unremarkable, but Lagardien's narrative conjures up the unseen horror of the necklacing and his discomfort at being unable to assist the vulnerable survivors in any meaningful way.

For Delpont, speaking about the Maseru mortuary invoked memories of bodies laid out on the roadside after the Westdene Bus Disaster.<sup>763</sup> Describing the scene he still saw vividly in his mind's eye he explained,

"I was there when they were bringing the bodies of the school children out, and these were kids dressed in school uniform so they were bringing the bodies out, they were trying to wrap them in blankets before they were actually brought out and then they were laying them on the side of the road and there were these blankets lying with kids in, with their school shoes sticking out, you don't forget things like that. Um, and it's really [pause] the fact that you're alive and somebody else is dead, that's the most basic part of it, and the way that they've died, it affects you as a human being."<sup>764</sup>

Msibi too mentioned a picture-making encounter which affected him deeply, confiding that it "still brings tears to my eyes."<sup>765</sup> He explained that in 1990 he was filming the aftermath of an incident in which 25 people died and 100 were wounded by unknown gunmen who opened fire on passengers in a train at George Goch Station in Johannesburg.<sup>766</sup> Msibi chose not to describe the tragic scene, but to explain instead how in the absence of any other light source he had used his sun gun<sup>767</sup> to illuminate the victims so that paramedics could attend to them. This he said, presented a dilemma. On the one hand he wanted to assist the victims. On the other he was eager to rush back to the office to file the story before any of the other crews arrived. He decided to stay, he said simply, "because the life of a person is important,"<sup>768</sup> and only left when another film crew arrived and were able to provide lighting.

Samson and Lagardien also mentioned encounters where, in the face of the vulnerability of the potential photographic subjects, they had chosen *not* to make photographs. Describing a funeral in Duncan Village, Samson said, "I have a vivid memory of the procession afterwards, the guy leading the front was carrying the coffin of a child, and I can still ..."<sup>769</sup> He paused for a moment to regain his composure before explaining that

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<sup>763</sup> In March 1985, 42 schoolchildren died when the bus they were travelling in left the road as it crossed the Westdene Dam bridge in Johannesburg. *Westdene Bus Disaster*, accessed December 2023, <https://westdene1985.co.za/>.

<sup>764</sup> Dialogue with Deon Delpont.

<sup>765</sup> Msibi, 89-90.

<sup>766</sup> Dries van Heerden and Lester Venter, "FW on 'sinister force'," and Mandla Tyala, "The Train of Tears" *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg) September 16, 1990, 2 and 11.

<sup>767</sup> A light used by photographers to illuminate indoor areas.

<sup>768</sup> Msibi, 89-90.

<sup>769</sup> Dialogue with Trevor Samson.

he had put his camera down saying, “it was the look on this guy’s face, just complete a complete blank, I don’t know if it was the father or what . . . it was such emotional thing.”<sup>770</sup>

As with Samson, a face-to-face encounter catalysed Lagardien’s decision to put his camera down too. Although this incident was not related to physical violence, Lagardien’s response suggests a refusal to expose a defenceless subject to the public gaze: to show him as he would not choose to be seen, he recalled

“I was in Guyana, and I saw I saw what many photographers would think is the big money shot. There on a corner of a street there was a smouldering rubbish heap, there was a horse, a dog, and a cow foraging in the heap, next to a man. I picked it [the camera] up and he [the man] turned and he looked at me and I saw the brightness of his eyes and I said, ‘I can’t take this picture . . . I just cannot take this picture.’ I lowered my camera and just stood there and realised that everything had changed in my life . . . here was the money shot. Here was the shot that summed up poverty, misery, hunger, need, where a man and dog can forage for the same food on the rubbish heap, and I couldn’t take the picture.”<sup>771</sup>

Explaining why he refused to make the photograph, Lagardien said, “I felt horrified by what I was about to do. I felt ashamed about what I was about to do . . .”<sup>772</sup> In his memoir, he expresses a similar opinion about the picture-making encounter in the Maseru mortuary, explaining that when he saw the photograph again, thirty years after he made it, he “immediately regretted”<sup>773</sup> his action. “You know the way you that you come across something visually stunning, and wished you had a camera to capture what is before you,”<sup>774</sup> he wrote, “This was not like that, This was something I wish I hadn’t done.”<sup>775</sup> For Lagardien the other photographers, journalists, and television crew whose accounts of the picture-making encounter are discussed in this chapter, speaking about these remembered images and encounters in the dialogues blurred the boundaries between past and present, the self and other, affect and cognition, raising into consciousness deep-seated memories, vulnerabilities and regrets that might otherwise have remained unacknowledged and unsaid.

## Conclusion

Dialogues with the photographers, journalist and television crew discussed in this chapter surface the multidimensional nature of the of the picture making encounter, the lasting effect it had on them, and the ways in which the encounter is remembered and narrated. Unlike the encounters with images described in the chapters that follow, the picture-making encounter is complicated by the multilayered accumulation of images that exist in memory: the direct experience of the scene, the representations of it made by the photographers and film crew, and the intrusive flashbacks that continue to trouble their minds. The dialogues highlight the difficulties that the interlocutors had in voicing or articulating their experiences in the Maseru

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<sup>770</sup> Dialogue with Trevor Samson.

<sup>771</sup> Dialogue with Ismail Lagardien, November.

<sup>772</sup> Dialogue with Ismail Lagardien, November.

<sup>773</sup> Lagardien, 113.

<sup>774</sup> Lagardien, 113-114.

<sup>775</sup> Lagardien, 114.

mortuary, suggesting that for them, the experience had not been assimilated into the ongoing stories of their lives but consigned safely out of the reach of consciousness. The analysis also shows how, when words fail, or the limits of language are reached, the interlocutors drew on their memories of other picture-making encounters, photographs, and images in their attempts to make meaning of, and communicate details about, their experience in the Maseru mortuary.

This chapter reflected on the picture-making encounter. The chapters that follow considers how the images made by Samson, Lagardien, Tewis and Msibi, to show the world the atrocious actions of the apartheid state, took on a life of their own way beyond the picture-makers' expectations as they were encountered, remembered, and repurposed in other periods of time, places and contexts.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### TRACES OF RESISTANCE

*On a bright summer's Sunday morning after the Raid, readers of the Sunday Times were shocked to encounter Samson's photograph of Jackie and Leon prominently positioned on page two. Some reacted with anger, demanding to know why this transgressive photograph had been published, others recoiled in horror as the realisation of the violence enacted by the state hit home. A few like Jenny Hobbs and Warren Swinney took action to amplify their responses in the media they knew best: literature and music, extending the reach of the photograph but veiling it in words and sound, while far from home the images were commandeered to illustrate a poem and an educational workbook, alerting the world to the actions of the apartheid regime.*

## CHAPTER FIVE: TRACES OF RESISTANCE

This chapter considers how the photograph made by Samson, intended to show the world the atrocious actions of the apartheid state, took on a life of its own – far beyond the picture-maker’s expectations, as it was encountered, remembered and repurposed to support the broad anti-apartheid agenda in the late 1980s. It describes the way in which novelist Jenny Hobbs and musician Warrick Swinney reacted to the photograph when they first encountered it in the *Sunday Times* and reflects on their subsequent responses – the creation of a novel and a musical composition – intended to mirror the message implicit in the photograph. The afterlife of the photograph in these different forms, and in a photomontage used as an illustration for a poem and an educational resource, raise questions about intertextuality and multimodality. Furthermore, they suggest that the re-presentation of the photograph in other modalities veils the image itself, rendering it almost inaccessible to memory and shifting attention from the image itself to the creative product, and so changing the nature of the encounter.

### Introduction

Reflecting on responses to images of politically motivated violence like those of Jackie and Leon in the Maseru mortuary, Geoffrey Batchen asks, “Do we have a responsibility to respond to the photograph beyond simply reading it? What is the question that atrocity photographs ask of us? What expectations, if any, do they have on our actions or minds?”<sup>776</sup> The activations by a novelist, a musician, a group of educators, and a poet, described in this chapter, demonstrate ways in which the images of Jackie and Leon were used, appropriated, mobilised, manipulated or reimagined to political ends at a time when the state responded to an unprecedented upswell of resistance to apartheid with increasingly oppressive and violent intent. These activations speak to ways in which the encounters with photographs may compel action, and the power of multimodal and intertextual communications to bring images into view through different semiotic systems, obscuring or rendering them invisible, thus changing the way in which they are received and remembered. Accounts of the photographic encounters and the responses described in the chapter support the central argument of this thesis, that *speaking* about *remembered* photographs brings into view multiple traces of the often[almost] unseen, [almost unthinkable] and [almost] unsayable.

Three South African publications sparked similarly by a single photograph, or a set of photographs associated with a difficult past are noted here for their compelling narratives: *Letters of Stone: From Nazi*

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<sup>776</sup> Batchen, Gidley, Miller and Prosser, *Picturing Atrocity*, 15.

*German to South Africa*<sup>777</sup> is Steven Robins' description of his research into the history of his extended family triggered by a photograph of his paternal grandmother and aunts who were killed in concentration camp during the Holocaust. *Everyone is Present: Essays on Photography, Memory and Family*<sup>778</sup> presents Terry Kurgan's evocative reflections on a research journey prompted by a collection of family photographs and a diary kept by her grandfather during World War II; and *The Terrorist Album: Apartheid's Insurgents, Collaborators, and the Security Police*,<sup>779</sup> is Jacob Dlamini's meticulous and thought provoking account of the creation of an album of photographs compiled by South African security forces in the 1980s that draws on archival sources and sensitive interactions with many of those implicated or included in the album. While much of the theoretical discourse on photographs articulates issues and arguments, Robins, Kurgan and Dlamini do something different; they speak eloquently, sensitively, and creatively to encounters with photographs and the journeys they, the photographs, have travelled as they loop backwards and forwards through time into the present.

### Jenny Hobbs, *Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary* (1989)

Jenny Hobbs (b. 1937) is a South African novelist and freelance writer.<sup>780</sup> Her work has been published in many South African newspapers, magazines and anthologies, and broadcast by the SABC and BBC. She has authored eight novels, including one for teenagers, and five non-fiction books, including two collections of quotations on writers and writing, and is a co-founder of the popular Franschhoek Literary Festival. *Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary*, her novel sparked by Samson's photograph of Jackie and Leon, was first published in hard cover in 1989 by Michael Joseph.<sup>781</sup> Although Hobbs does not name Samson, she brings the photograph into view in the dedication to the novel:

"The impetus for this work of fiction came from the tragic photograph in the *Sunday Times* of Jackie Quin and her husband Leon Meyer lying side by side in a Lesotho mortuary, after they were murdered in December 1985 by unknown gunmen.

It is dedicated to Jackie, and to the many young South African women like her who follow their convictions and their hearts through the barricades that so artificially divide us."<sup>782</sup>

Samson's photograph is not reproduced in Hobbs' novel. Curious readers might have difficulty in finding a copy of the photograph, as described in Chapter Eight of this thesis, but a small snippet from it was published alongside a *Sunday Times* article about the publication, "**Mother's novel cries out against violence,**" (Figure

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<sup>777</sup> Steven Robins, *Letters of Stone: From Nazi Germany to South Africa* (Cape Town: Penguin Books, 2016).

<sup>778</sup> Terry Kurgan, *Everyone is Present: Essay on Photography, Memory and Family* (Johannesburg: Fourthwall Books, 2018).

<sup>779</sup> Jacob Dlamini, *The Terrorist Album* (Cambridge Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2020).

<sup>780</sup> Jenny Hobbs, *Home*, accessed June 2021, <https://www.jennyhobbs.co.za>.

<sup>781</sup> *Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary* was first published in hardcover by Michael Joseph, in 1989, and in paperback by Grafton in 1990. It was translated into German and published by Econ Verlag, under the title *Tief im Süden* [Deep in the *im Süden* /Deep in the South] in 1995 and republished in English by Umuzi in 2014 in paperback and on kindle.

<sup>782</sup> Jenny. Hobbs, untitled dedication, *Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary*, unpaginated.

23).<sup>783</sup> In this article, Hobbs mentions her first encounter with the image, saying, “the photograph stopped me in my tracks. I looked at it and thought that could be my daughter lying there.”<sup>784</sup> The report names Jackie and Leon, recounts the story of how they were slain by members of an unknown death squad while their young daughter was spared, and points to the close parallels between the 1985 Maseru Raid and the storyline of Hobbs’ novel.

In our dialogue, Hobbs recalled her first encounter with the “powerful and affecting”<sup>785</sup> photograph, saying,

“We were on holiday, um, down the South Coast, at a place called *umZumbe*. It was Sunday morning, and we opened the newspaper, and there was the photograph. My daughters were slightly younger than Jackie was. And I immediately thought [pause] what *struck* me was [pause] the *appalling* thought was [pause] it could be one of my daughter’s, lying there.”<sup>786</sup>

Hobbs relates her memory of the photographic encounter confidently. It is a story she has shared countless times in writing, in interviews, at book launches, and in her memoir.<sup>787</sup> She speaks more hesitantly when asked to explain why the photograph struck her so forcefully saying, softly, “it’s just so graphic . . . you couldn’t [pause], you couldn’t *describe* the look on that young woman’s face. You couldn’t *describe* it. You have to *see* it.”<sup>788</sup>

Pushed to describe the photograph, Hobbs paused, then responded quite matter-of-factly, saying “There was a young couple lying down covered by bloody sheets. And all you saw was this tragic couple with her face turned slightly towards the camera, and her husband’s face, straight up.”<sup>789</sup> There is a stark difference between the terse spoken explanation, which simply described the subject matter of the photograph, and the poignantly evocative description on the first page of *Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary* that sets a sombre mood and draws the reader into the novel through vivid phrases that engage every sense. As Hobbs stated emphatically at the start of our dialogue, “I hate being put on the nail verbally because you know when you’re a writer, you’re used to choosing your words very slowly and editing them if they sound wrong”<sup>790</sup> adding ruefully, “I’m not as *vlot* [fluent] in my words as I am on the page, I think.”<sup>791</sup> Hobbs’ reflections speak, to some extent too, to the challenges experienced by interlocutors when questions are posed unexpectedly in oral history dialogues. While

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<sup>783</sup> Charis Perkins, “Mother’s novel cries out against violence, *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), June 4, 1989.

<sup>784</sup> Perkins, “Mother’s novel cries out against violence.”

<sup>785</sup> Jenny Hobbs, email to the author, 28 August 2014.

<sup>786</sup> Dialogue with Jenny Hobbs, Franschoek, October 2, 2015.

<sup>787</sup> Hobbs, *Through a Dragonfly Eye*, (Cape Town: Hands-On Book, 2024), 180-187.

<sup>788</sup> Dialogue with Jenny Hobbs.

<sup>789</sup> Dialogue with Jenny Hobbs.

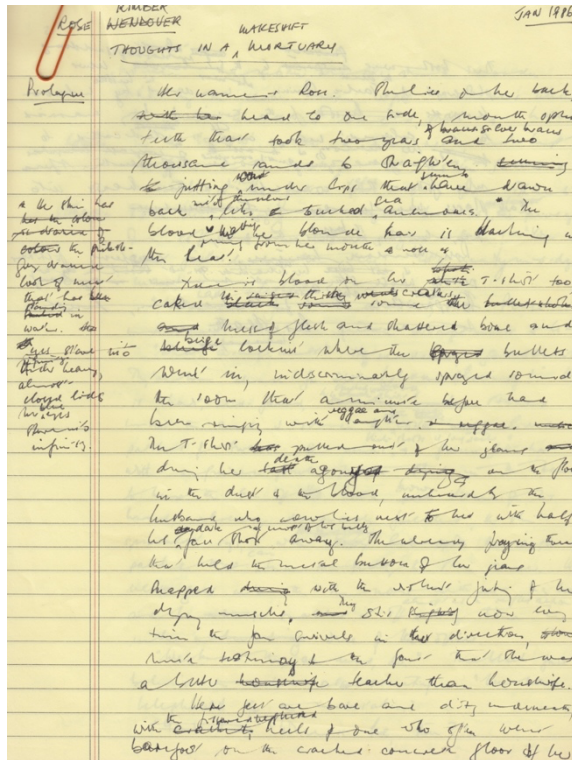
<sup>789</sup> Dialogue with Jenny Hobbs.

<sup>789</sup> Dialogue with Jenny Hobbs.

<sup>790</sup> Dialogue with Jenny Hobbs.

<sup>791</sup> Dialogue Jenny Hobbs. In her memoir, Hobbs says, “It’s hard to make a cogent speech, even briefly, when you’re used to ruminating on every phrase”. Hobbs, *Dragonfly Eye*, 184.

this may be perceived as a limitation, it may also present opportunities to explore the relationship between mental images, speech, and the written word.



**Figure 21:** The first page of the handwritten draft of Jenny Hobbs' novel *Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary*, 1986  
Hobbs' determination to evoke the essence of the photograph is evident in this draft.  
Credit: Jenny Hobbs.



**Figure 22:** *Sunday Times*, June 4, 1989.  
Credit: Arena Holdings/ NLSA

The problem Hobbs signals in her statement, about how to use words to convey the visual, is one that has tested the skills of writers for centuries. Visual studies scholar William J.T. Mitchell argues that a written or verbal representation “may refer to an object, describe it, invoke it, but it can never bring its visual presence before us in the way pictures do.”<sup>792</sup> Gunther Kress, who has written extensively on multimodal communication, argues similarly, suggesting that there is a profound difference between the semiotic modes of image making and a writing process, because “Image is spatial and nonsequential: writing and speech are temporal and sequential.”<sup>793</sup> What this means, in effect, is that an image is seen all at once, as a whole, leaving the viewer to find their own way around and across it, choosing what to focus on and what to skip over, when to pause and where to skim over a detail. A written description, on the other hand, choreographs the reader's experience but leaves them at the mercy of writers who may draw attention to some elements and marginalise others,

<sup>792</sup> W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 152.  
<sup>793</sup> Gunther Kress, “Multimodality: Challenges to Thinking about Language,” *TESOL Quarterly* 34 no 2 (2000), 339.

depending on the writer's own interpretation of, and subjective response to, the image, and their own interests or agendas.

The challenge of representing images in words may best be understood with reference to the concept of *ekphrasis*, a literary device used broadly to describe an intermedial creative process where, as for example with Hobbs, a text is inspired by a photograph. More specifically, the term is used to describe the process through which a visual image is translated into words<sup>794</sup> to evoke or bring it "vividly before the eye,"<sup>795</sup> and to "evoke an emotional response through an appeal to the immediacy of an imagined presence,"<sup>796</sup> as Hobbs does on the opening page of *Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary*, see below. This process, which William Mitchell likens to "verbal conjuring"<sup>797</sup> is aimed at turning readers into viewers through the transfer of an evocative image from the mind's-eye of the writer to the mind's-eye of the reader. Froma Zeitlin maintains this process requires *energeia* (vividness), *sapheneia* (clarity) and *phantasia* (mental image).<sup>798</sup> *Ekphrasis* is based not only on close observation but also on the writer's evocation of the *remembered* image seen in the mind's-eye, in all its layered complexity of context, meaning and affect. *Ekphrasis* re-presents not merely what is seen, but most significantly for this research, what the writer perceived and remembers. The image Hobbs remembers, or sees in her mind's eye, differs from Samson's photograph in one specific respect: she recalls the setting as a hut, rather than a mortuary. Despite the information supplied in the *Sunday Times* caption, she did not realise that Jackie and Leon had been photographed in the mortuary, or that the cabinets in which the dead are housed are visible in the background.<sup>799</sup> In our dialogue, she expressed some doubt about this saying, "There are no lockers in the background of the photograph, they've been photoshopped out or ..." qualifying her uncertainty by admitting that she may have been "so focused on the young couple, and the tragedy of their deaths ... that it's hard, it's hard to think beyond that."<sup>800</sup> As with others whose memories of their encounters with the photographs are described in this thesis, Hobbs remembers the photograph as she perceived it rather than as she saw it.

While Hobbs credits the photograph as being the impetus for the novel, the accompanying texts which described the circumstances of the Raid affected her profoundly too, as she explains,

"It was because of the *tragedy* of it, the *tragedy* of it because she wasn't ANC [African National Congress] as I understand it. It was the tragedy of just being [pause] of opening the door and being shot [pause] in her

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<sup>794</sup> László Munteán, "Phantomogenic Ekphrasis: Traumatizing Images in Michael Cunningham's *Specimen Days* and Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*" in *Terrorizing Images* eds. Charles Armstrong and Unni Langas, (de Gruyter: Berlin, 2020), 86; and Froma Zeitlin, "Figure Ekphrasis," *Greece & Rome* 60, no.1 (2013), 17.

<sup>795</sup> Nigel Krauth and Christopher Bowman, "Ekphrasis and the writing process," *New Writing* 15, no.1 (2018), 11.

<sup>796</sup> Froma Zeitlin, "Figure Ekphrasis," *Greece & Rome* 60, no.1 (2013), 17.

<sup>797</sup> Krauth and Bowman, "Ekphrasis and the writing process," 11.

<sup>798</sup> Zeitlin, "Figure Ekphrasis," 17-18.

<sup>799</sup> The photograph reproduced on newsprint, is quite grainy and the cabinets referred to are easily missed.

<sup>800</sup> Dialogue with Jenny Hobbs.

home. [pause] It was her home. Her refuge. And she was shot as she opened the door.<sup>801</sup> But still, she insists, it is the image that haunts her most, saying, “I couldn’t get it out of my mind”<sup>802</sup> and mentioning that she still carries it around in her head,<sup>803</sup> repeatedly stating that “you can never forget a photograph like that.”<sup>804</sup>

Hobbs was so appalled by the photograph and the story of the young woman assassinated in her own home that she kept the clippings of the *Sunday Times* report, and Samson’s photograph, as well as other articles about the Raid published elsewhere. A few weeks later, back home and compelled by recurring memories of the photograph, she sat down at her desk one evening, wiping away tears as she looked intently at the news clipping, drawing on it closely to describe the scene that opens the novel, the first two paragraphs of which read,

“Her name is Rose. She lies on her back on a woven grass mat, head to one side, mouth open, teeth jutting under lips that seem to have drawn back into themselves like touched sea anemones. Her skin has the grey drained look of meat that has been standing in water. Under swollen lids her dead blue eyes stare at the mud wall of the makeshift mortuary, a thatched hut with a single glass window through which an extension cord dangles. At the end of the cord is an electric fan which turns its whirring head from side to side, languidly redistributing the stifling air.

The blood that has been seeping from her mouth and nose and matting her long blonde hair has congealed and darkened in the heat. There is blood on her T-shirt too, caked in thick craters around the mess of flesh and shattered bone and beige locknit[sic] where the bullets hit, their harsh death-spits silencing the room that a minute before had been noisy with reggae and laughter. The T-shirt was wrenched out of her jeans during her death agony in the floor, in the dust and the blood, her choking cries unheard by her husband who now lies next to her with most of his belly shot away. The already fraying cotton thread that held the metal button of her jeans snapped with the violent jerking of her dying muscles; thread ends stir now every time the fan swirls in her direction.” (Figure 22) <sup>805</sup>

For readers familiar with Samson’s photograph, the opening paragraphs may serve a mnemonic function, recalling it into view. For those who have not seen the photograph, the passage acts differently, triggering an act of imagination rather than recollection.<sup>806</sup> As Hobbs made clear in the dedication, interviews she has given, our dialogue, and her memoir, *Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary* was not intended to be *about* Jackie and Leon. The photograph she explains was the “catalyst”<sup>807</sup> for a work of fiction. Although there are strong parallels,<sup>808</sup> the

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<sup>801</sup> Dialogue with Jenny Hobbs.

<sup>802</sup> Dialogue with Jenny Hobbs.

<sup>803</sup> Dialogue with Jenny Hobbs.

<sup>804</sup> Dialogue with Jenny Hobbs.

<sup>805</sup> Hobbs, *Makeshift Mortuary*, 1.

<sup>806</sup> This point is made in relation to images of 9/11. László Munteán “Phantomogenic Ekphrasis: Traumatizing Images in Michael Cunningham’s *Specimen Days* and Don DeLillo’s *Falling Man*,” in *Terrorizing Images* edited by Charles Armstrong and Unni Langas, (de Gruyter: Berlin, 2020), 85-100.

<sup>807</sup> Jenny Hobbs, *Dragonfly Eye*, 186.

<sup>808</sup> The novel tells the story of a mixed race couple – a young white woman and her activist husband – killed by unknown gunmen while their infant daughter survives.

story, the setting, and the characters are imagined.

Describing in our dialogue how, as a writer, she draws inspiration from real people and events, Hobbs explained that a novel is “sparked by an idea and then it just starts to grow. It’s like an irritant in an oyster, a grain of sand, that accumulates layers and layers of meaning.”<sup>809</sup> In a letter to a friend, Hobbs used a different analogy to describe how the conscious and subconscious collaborate to create a work of fiction writing,

“I was continually surprised at the characters and places and incidents that thrust up out of my subconscious. I think now that writers must operate at two levels: the conscious, observing, fact-gathering level and another on which concepts and ideas, and the characters to flesh them out, grew unbidden, like crystals on a string in a chemical solution. The chemicals are what you put in, and the formation of crystals is the magical process of creation.”<sup>810</sup>

Like some other writers inspired by images,<sup>811</sup> Hobbs responded to the photograph as evidence of a single moment that was or had been, while also drawing on news reports and other sources to construct a historically credible narrative that moves backwards and forwards in time. In so doing, she invokes the age-old practice, of making meaning of the unfathomable, the inexplicable, and the unspeakable through the act of storytelling.

Samson’s photograph “propelled”<sup>812</sup> Hobbs into writing the novel, but it was her utter conviction that “the story needed to be told”<sup>813</sup> that enabled her to complete it, something she had attempted, but never succeeded in doing in the past. This is a topic she returns to frequently throughout our dialogue, saying “I can’t emphasise strongly enough how *strongly* that story needed to be told.”<sup>814</sup> South Africa is, or was then, she argues, “a great nation of blinkered people”<sup>815</sup> and she was determined to bring the atrocious of the actions the apartheid state to attention. As she explains, “It was the horror of the cross-border raids being planned and executed by shadowy men sent by the Nationalist government, and the terrible toll that monstrous policy was taking on innocent people, that drove me on.”<sup>816</sup> Like a stone cast into a pond, Hobbs’ encounter with Samson’s photograph had a ripple effect, transitioning from the deeply personal to the broadly political: from the story of Jackie to the wider narrative of oppression and resistance.

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<sup>809</sup> Dialogue with Jenny Hobbs.

<sup>810</sup> In 2015, I purchased a second-hand copy of *Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary* and found inside it a letter from Hobbs to a friend, “Johns” which included this description.

<sup>811</sup> See for example, Don DeLillo *Falling Man* (New York: Scribner, 2007) and Dan Porat *Boy: A Holocaust Story* (New York: Wang and Hill, 2010).

<sup>812</sup> Jenny Hobbs, *Makeshift Mortuary* (New Edition, 2014), accessed June 2021, <https://www.jennyhobbs.co.za/thoughts-in-a-makeshift-mortuary/>.

<sup>813</sup> Dialogue with Jenny Hobbs.

<sup>814</sup> Dialogue with Jenny Hobbs.

<sup>815</sup> Dialogue with Jenny Hobbs.

<sup>816</sup> Jenny Hobbs, “*Makeshift Mortuary* (New Edition).

Hobbs' collection of clippings, pamphlets, magazine articles, photographs of Lesotho, and other ephemera<sup>817</sup> offer insight into the conscious fact-gathering exercise she mentions as part of her creative process, and her determination to ensure that the novel was as real as possible. Then too, the novel was written and published at a time when access to information was limited and little was known about the covert actions of the state, as described in Chapter One of this thesis and by Hobbs who said,

“Nobody at the time knew who was conducting the cross-border raids, and the general lack of information about the ANC was such that I had to do a great deal of research, including talking to journalists who knew much more than appeared in the newspapers. Heidi Holland who had been to Lusaka and talked with ANC members for her book *The Struggle*, also published in 1989, read the MS for authenticity and the publishers had the MS checked by a lawyer ...”<sup>818</sup>

*Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary* is an *imagined* history, a work of fiction sparked by a news photograph. It is not, and does not purport to be, a historical account of the Raid. But still, Hobbs contends that it “opened many readers’ eyes to the reality behind events glossed over by the censored press,”<sup>819</sup> explaining in her memoir how audiences at book launches reacted in the main with statements like, “I didn’t know all those terrible things were happening in our country.”<sup>820</sup> How does an imagined history draw attention to the reality of the past? Speaking to the roles that history and fiction play in representing the past, Hayden White (citing Michel de Certeau), asserts that the difference is one of intention: history is enquiry directed at the truth while fiction is enquiry directed at giving access to the real.<sup>821</sup> History, he argues, favours the factual or admissible evidence of past events, while fiction presents opportunities to explore possibilities or to imagine what might have been.<sup>822</sup> Contending similarly that “a novel can be as accurate as history ... and should be based on the same kind of research and rigorous analysis of evidence”<sup>823</sup> Richard Slotkin argues that,

“... the distinction and advantage of the fictional form lies in the way it uses evidence and represents conclusions. The truth the novel seeks is poetic rather than historiographical: it sacrifices fidelity to non-essential facts in order to create in the reader a vivid sense of what it may have been like to live among such facts – and also a sense of what those facts mean in some larger sense – and to achieve that in a flash of recognition, rather than as the conclusion to a necessarily laborious argument.”<sup>824</sup>

*Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary* was well received by the public and, although Hobbs says that literary critics were “quite hard on it,”<sup>825</sup> it qualified as a finalist in the 1990 CNA Literary Awards. Jackie’s family had mixed feeling about the novel. Her mother welcomed it initially as the tribute Hobbs intended it to be, indicating in a

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<sup>817</sup> In 2017 I arranged with the Amazwi: South African Museum of Literature to take custody of the files Hobbs kept for all her published novels, so that they could be made available to other scholars in the future.

<sup>818</sup> Jenny Hobbs, email to the author, 3 August 2014.

<sup>819</sup> Jenny Hobbs, email to the author, 4 August 2014.

<sup>820</sup> Jenny Hobbs, *Dragonfly Eye*, 186.

<sup>821</sup> Hayden White, “Introduction: Historical Fiction, Fictional History, and Historical Reality,” *Rethinking History* 9, no 2/3 (2005), 147.

<sup>822</sup> White, “Introduction”, 148.

<sup>823</sup> Richard Slotkin, “Fiction for the Purposes of History,” *Rethinking History* 9, nos. 1-2 (2005), 225.

<sup>824</sup> Slotkin, “Fiction for the Purposes of History,” 225.

<sup>825</sup> Dialogue with Jenny Hobbs.

letter to Hobbs that although she had not read it, “her gesture had been such a comfort.”<sup>826</sup> Jackie’s siblings took exception to the novel, refusing any contact with the author, leaving Hobbs feeling hurt and confused.<sup>827</sup> Mentioning this in her memoir, and alluding to a possible explanation for this she explains that, “The photo had been a catalyst that set off a train of thought . . . it is not a case of ‘using’ another person’s tragedy.”<sup>828</sup>

Looping back to the origins of the novel as a response to her encounter with Samson’s photograph in the *Sunday Times*,<sup>829</sup> Hobbs argues that Jackie family’s anger “should surely be directed towards the editors who took the decision to print the horrifyingly graphic photo for distribution,”<sup>830</sup> bringing *their* encounters with the image into view. Although, as mentioned in Chapter Two, family members have explicitly not been asked to engage with this research, it is fair to say that they were wounded and outraged. This response raises the question of whether information published in the public interest outweighs personal privacy, and the rights of the dead to respect and dignity. When is it appropriate to use an image like Samson’s to mirror politically motivated violence or gross violations of human rights? This is a question implicit in discussions about the encounters described by the exhibition curators and the producers of the *Special Report* series discussed in Chapter Six.

### **Warrick Swinney, *Gutted with the Glory* (1989) and *Silencer* (2017)**

Warrick Swinney (b 1958) also known as Warrick Sony,<sup>831</sup> is a South African musician, composer and sound artist with extensive experience in the music industry. In 1983, he founded Kalahari Surfers, a fictional musical group, which he describes as being “essentially a string of studio projects,”<sup>832</sup> realised through Shifty Records, in which he was a partner with Lloyd Ross.<sup>833</sup> Kalahari Surfers released several vinyl recordings in the 1980s, including: *Own Affairs* (1984), *Living in the Heart of the Beast* (1985), *Sleep Armed* (1987) and *Bigger than Jesus* (1989), all which were openly critical of the apartheid state. Describing these albums as “overtly subversive and uncompromisingly made counter-hegemonic statements,”<sup>834</sup> Michael Drewett contends that,

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<sup>826</sup> Jenny Hobbs, email to the author, August 3, 2014.

<sup>827</sup> Hobbs’ feeling about this are pertinent, because my status as a family member did, to some extent, affect the dialogue. The response of Jackie’s sisters is not unusual, as Sonia Baelo-Allue argues, “when literature tried to draw from real images of 9/11 . . . many reviewers considered the move disrespectful and inappropriate.” Sonia Baelo-Allue, “The Depiction of 9/11 in Literature: The Role of Images and Intermedial References”, *Radical History Review* 111 (2011), 185.

<sup>828</sup> Hobbs, *Dragonfly Eye*, 186.

<sup>829</sup> Hobbs, *Dragonfly Eye*, 186.

<sup>830</sup> Hobbs, *Dragonfly Eye*, 186.

<sup>831</sup> Swinney changed his name to Sony after being discharged from the SADF to make it more difficult for the army to find him for further service. Noah Berlatsky, “The Political Prog of Kalahari Surfers,” *Bandcamp*, accessed July 2021, <https://daily.bandcamp.com/features/kalahari-surfers-discography-interview>.

<sup>832</sup> Shifty Records, “Kalahari Surfers,” accessed February 2021, <https://shifty.co.za/records/kalahari-surfers/>.

<sup>833</sup> Warrick Swinney, “Practices of Listening: (Re)percussions of Sound, Silences and Censorship from (post-) Apartheid South Africa” (MFA Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 2018), 3, accessed December 2020, <https://open.uct.ac.za/items/df8bbe98-4879-4398-893c-4b14dddc1595>.

<sup>834</sup> Michael Drewett, “An Analysis of the Censorship of Popular Music within the Context of Cultural Struggle in South Africa during the 1980s”, (PhD Dissertation, Rhodes University, 2004), 287.

while Kalahari Surfers audiences may not always have understood what Sony was trying to do, they supported him for his political stance and cultural critique as much as for his music.<sup>835</sup>

In 2018 Swinney completed a Master of Fine Art degree (MFA) at the University of Cape Town (UCT), investigating sounds and silences as forms of social control and as resistance. Two of the works discussed in his thesis relate to Jackie's death. The first, a composition, *Gutted with the Glory* (1989), produced in response to the report and photograph published in the *Sunday Times* on 20 December 1985,<sup>836</sup> and the second, *Silencer* (2017), an audio/improvisation/performance piece which includes content – ambient sounds – drawn from the TRC hearings into the Maseru Raid.<sup>837</sup>

Swinney remembers his first encounter with Samson's photograph with absolute clarity. He describes the photograph as “gruesome”<sup>838</sup> in his dissertation. He and Ross were on a retreat on a farm near Machdadorp<sup>839</sup> in Mpumalanga and were very shocked when they saw the photograph in the *Sunday Times* because, as he said, “you don't expect that, you know, on a Sunday morning.”<sup>840</sup> Expanding on this, Swinney said “we saw that picture and that was it. There was no other information, it was just, it was quite shocking that they suddenly had this picture.”<sup>841</sup> He was shaken too by Jackie's unexpected death<sup>842</sup> and the proximity of the tragedy to his own circle of friends, saying, “we wondered what the hell, because . . . around that time, there were a lot of MK . . . you know a lot of our friends were involved and it overlapped with us a lot.”<sup>843</sup> He was taken aback by the publication of the photograph, arguing emphatically that “you *never* did that in those days. You *never* put someone's dead body on the front page.”<sup>844</sup>

Swinney is one of the few people familiar with all three images of Jackie and Leon, and contextualises these in his dissertation,<sup>845</sup> citing Sey's paper, discussed in Chapter Seven, as a source of information.<sup>846</sup> Although he remembers the encounter vividly, he struggles to recall the details of Samson's photograph, confessing that “my memory's clouded now a bit by the fact that I saw Issy's picture and the two merge . . . and the TRC footage, so I've got, a sort of an aggregate which has spoiled the original memory.”<sup>847</sup> Asked what he remembered

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<sup>835</sup> Drewett, “Censorship of Popular Music,” 232.

<sup>836</sup> Swinney, “Practices of Listening,” 26.

<sup>837</sup> Swinney, 46.

<sup>838</sup> Swinney, 26 footnote 38.

<sup>839</sup> Renamed as eNtokozweni in 2010.

<sup>840</sup> Dialogue with Warrick Swinney, Noordhoek, Cape Town, March 2, 2021.

<sup>841</sup> Dialogue with Warrick Swinney. Swinney recalls the image, but not the extensive reports that accompanied it.

<sup>842</sup> In 1985, Swinney was working in Johannesburg with Ross and living in a house in leased by Jackie, whom he met only in passing on a few occasions because she spent most of her time in Lesotho.

<sup>843</sup> Dialogue with Warrick Swinney.

<sup>844</sup> Dialogue with Warrick Swinney.

<sup>845</sup> Swinney, 26 footnote 38.

<sup>846</sup> James Sey, “Photographing a South African form of sudden death,” *Critical Arts: south-north critical and media studies* 29 (2015), 108.

<sup>847</sup> Dialogue with Warrick Swinney. See also Chapter Six, in which a similar response is described and discussed at greater length.

specifically about the photograph he saw that Sunday morning in 1985, his description moves between the memories of what he *saw* and the memories of what he was *thinking* and *feeling*, shifting backwards and forwards in time and seamlessly between the visual and the aural, the photograph itself and his response to it. He recalled feeling that,

“... I was in that room and then, and then this idea of this child, um, in the next room, you know ... always in the background, I imagined the, the audio, because I’m a sound person, I imagined what it sounded like with the kid in the cot. How did that, how that sound [pause] carry? You know, what did the child *do* afterwards? Did it just cry and cry and cry and cry?”<sup>848</sup>

Swinney remembers, too, his own confusion as he viewed the photograph saying, “I couldn’t work out how that came about, how ... okay so you’ve had a raid, these guys have shot everyone up then, how does it, how does it, long did they stay there and was, was that where it happened or were they taken to a morgue, or, you know ...”<sup>849</sup> Focussing on Jackie in his mind’s-eye, Swinney recalled she had “a strange beauty too, you know, in death,”<sup>850</sup> but he was clearly troubled by the memory of her dishevelled clothing and her exposed underwear. As he spoke about this in our dialogue, he crossed his hands over his own chest, moving them soothingly downwards as if he were gently smoothing the creases in a garment. Swinney’s gestures are similar to those of Rita Potenza, discussed in Chapter Seven. Asked afterwards, what was going through his mind as he performed those gestures, Swinney was quite taken aback, seemingly unaware of his actions, and then saying hesitantly, touching his chest again “she was half undressed at the top here and I remember thinking ... that also ... that invasion of privacy and that, that moment of, um, where you can’t control, once, once you die.”<sup>851</sup>

Attempting to put his discomfort into words, Swinney, like Sampson, invokes a photograph of the corpse of Che Guevara<sup>852</sup> displayed to the media after his execution, saying that it, like the photograph of Jackie and Leon, was somehow voyeuristic, a transgression, beyond the bounds of acceptability and explaining that “you know, normally they put a blanket over someone ... you want to cover it up”.<sup>853</sup>

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<sup>848</sup> Dialogue with Warrick Swinney.

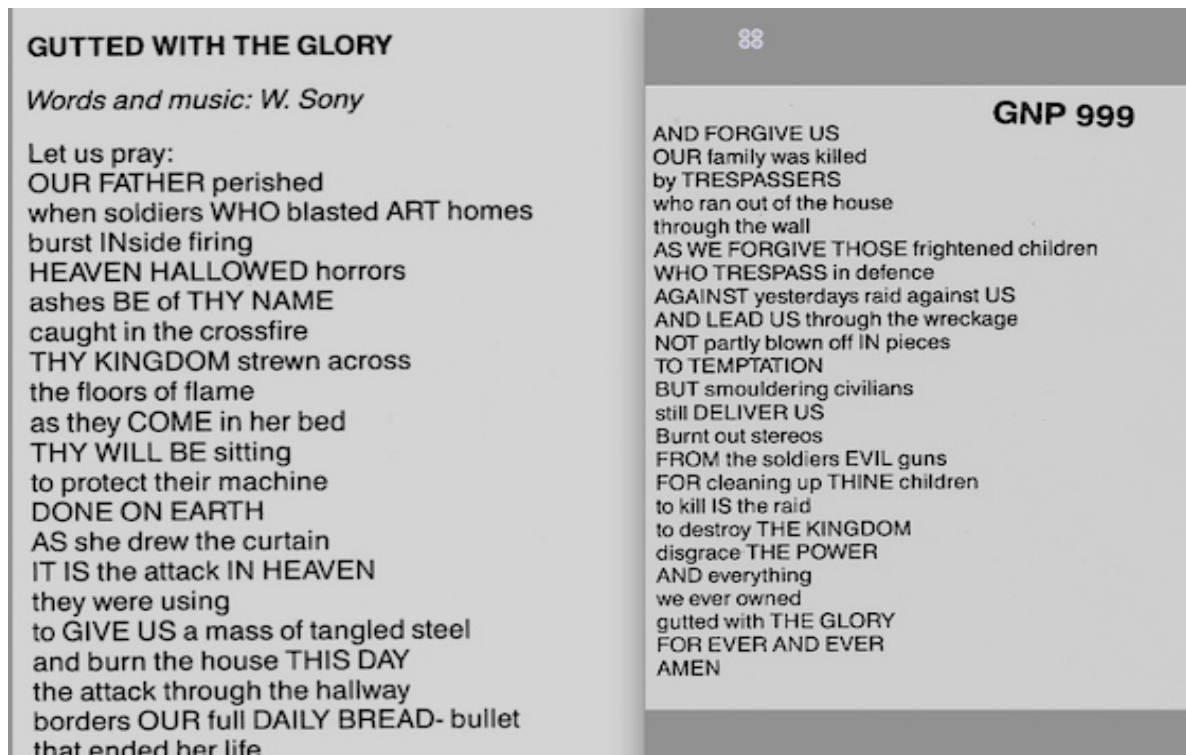
<sup>849</sup> Dialogue with Warrick Swinney.

<sup>850</sup> Dialogue with Warrick Swinney.

<sup>851</sup> Dialogue with Warrick Swinney.

<sup>852</sup> As mentioned in Chapter Three, the corpse of Che Guevara was displayed to the media as proof of his death following his execution in October 1967. See References for links to photographs.

<sup>853</sup> A close examination of Samson and Lagardien’s photographs suggest that the sheets were pulled down to expose the victim’s wounds and that they were made at different times: the band-aid visible on Leon’s forehead in Samson’s photograph is not visible in Lagardien’s.



**Figure 23:** Lyrics for “Gutted with the Glory”, 1989, from the *Bigger than Jesus* album insert.  
**Credit:** Warrick Swinney / Shifty Records

“Gutted with the Glory” (1989), (Figure 24),<sup>854</sup> the piece Swinney composed in response to Samson’s photograph, appeared on the album *Bigger than Jesus*.<sup>855</sup> Describing the composition, he explains that, in the 1980s, he had been experimenting with the cut-up technique pioneered by the writer and poet William S. Burroughs<sup>856</sup> which he said had a wonderfully nonsensical quality that was, at the same time, “sort of terrifying.”<sup>857</sup> Swinney used this technique in *Own Affairs*,<sup>858</sup> his first album that directly challenged apartheid ideology, cutting-up excerpts from speeches by the then president PW Botha<sup>859</sup> to change the meaning subversively. “Gutted with the Glory” was created in a similar fashion, cutting words from the *Sunday Times* report into the “Lord’s Prayer” (also known as “Our Father”). Once he had prepared the text, Swinney says he worked, like a sculptor, to shape the composition bit by bit,<sup>860</sup> reading the lyrics freestyle, in the manner of

<sup>854</sup> Kalahari surfers, *Gutted with the Glory*, accessed January 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHI6Cd-DESS>

<sup>855</sup> *Bigger than Jesus / Beachbomb*, Kalahari Surfers (Shifty Records, vinyl, 1989).

<sup>856</sup> Conrad Knickerbocker “William s Burroughs, The Art of Fiction No. 36,” Paris Review 35 (1965), accessed online December 2024, <https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/4424/the-art-of-fiction-no-36-william-s-burroughs>.

<sup>857</sup> Dialogue with Warrick Swinney.

<sup>858</sup> Local vinyl pressing plants rejected *Own Affairs*, deeming it to be undesirable and Swinney was forced to have it manufactured and distributed elsewhere.

<sup>859</sup> *Own Affairs*, (Shifty Records, co-released with Recommended Records, vinyl, 1989).

<sup>860</sup> Dialogue with Warrick Swinney.

Captain Beefheart,<sup>861</sup> and shifting the pitch of his voice to sound “more ghostly and more scary.”<sup>862</sup> He set the lyrics to a seventeen beat drum cycle to produce an unsettling, staggered rhythm that suggested “the movements of a dancer on an uneven floor, or the stumbling victim of a violent injury.”<sup>863</sup> The addition of some rather “grandiose”<sup>864</sup> orchestral music and a sampled radio announcer voice that repeats the word ‘apartheid’ monotonously every 17 beats,<sup>865</sup> completed the composition. The front cover of *Bigger than Jesus* and the lyrics of ‘Gutted with Glory’ were classified as “undesirable” by the Directorate of Publications,<sup>866</sup> following complaints from a Christian pressure group. This ruling was overturned on appeal in 1990. The lyrics of “Gutted with Glory” were found to be not “undesirable”, but Swinney was ordered to rename the album and amend the front cover to reflect this. The album was subsequently distributed as *Beach Bomb*.<sup>867</sup>

Swinney is fascinated with the concept of silence, both as a noun, referring to the absence of sound, and as a verb associated with censorship and death.<sup>868</sup> “Silence/r”, produced for his MFA, is related in part to his own experience of being gunned down by hijackers outside his home in the 1990s and his reflections on the Raid. One of the first things he thought about after the hijacking, he explained, was the sound of the gunshot. “It was really dulled”<sup>869</sup> he said, it sounded compressed, making a “clack” rather than a bang, and he wondered if the gun had been fitted with a silencer,<sup>870</sup> like the one that killed Jackie. Reflecting on this, he says he was “quite struck with, metaphorically, anyway, the verb of silencing and then this physical silencer and then my musical compressor which is a silencer of sorts.”<sup>871</sup> The work he created is thus an “an interpellation of sound and silence”<sup>872</sup> made by cutting the words out from the recording of the TRC proceedings and arranging the silences

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<sup>861</sup> Captain Beefheart, the stage name of Don Van Vliet, (1941-2010) was an American avant-garde rock and blues singer, songwriter, and instrumentalist whose albums were a major influence on punk and experimental rock. His album, *Trout Mask Replica* (1969), combined eerie slide guitars, unpredictable rhythms, and surrealistic lyrics wailed with fierce intensity. “Captain Beefheart, American Musician,” *Britannica*, accessed October 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Captain-Beefheart>.

<sup>862</sup> Dialogue with Warrick Swinney.

<sup>863</sup> Swinney, 27.

<sup>864</sup> Dialogue with Warrick Swinney.

<sup>865</sup> Swinney, 27.

<sup>866</sup> Michael Drewett notes that, in terms of the Publications Act of 1974, “Music like other publications could be found ‘undesirable’ for various reasons including being religiously offensive, politically threatening or morally problematic (on the basis of sexuality, swearing, nudity of record sleeves and so on).” Drewett, 30.

<sup>867</sup> Swinney, 4.

<sup>868</sup> For discussions about the relationships between photography, sound and silences see also Richard Vokes, “(Re)sounding photographs: The politics of silence and cacophony of memory from Idi Amin’s Uganda,” *Visual Anthropology Review* 41, no1, 2025, accessed online, September 2025, <https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/var.70012> and Darren Newbury, “Pictured exchanges, quiet conversations, and silenced voices: Listening to the US Information Agency photographic collection,” *Visual Anthropology Review* 41, no1, 2025, accessed online, September 2025, <https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/var.70000>

<sup>869</sup> Dialogue with Warrick Swinney.

<sup>870</sup> In his testimony to the TRC, Eugene de Kock explained that Jackie had been killed because she tried to grab the silencer of the gun from the assassin at her door. Robert Brand, “He alerted police that murdered couple’s child was alive”, *The Star* (Johannesburg) September 17, 1996.

<sup>871</sup> Dialogue with Warrick Swinney.

<sup>872</sup> Swinney, 5.

between them – the ambient sounds of people shuffling their feet, the intake of breath, etc., as described in Chapter Six, – to be played on a 64-pad digital instrument interface. This, he argues, creates sound which he describes as “the roar of the unsaid”, likening it to the silences and the omissions in the testimonies delivered to the TRC.

The practice of using sound or musical compositions to evoke the visual has a long history. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, for example, Modest Mussorgsky’s composition *Pictures at an Exhibition*, and Bedrich Smetana’s symphonic poem *The Moldau / Vltava*, use music to evoke the visual: listeners are encouraged to imagine the pictures, or the scenes along the river described in music by the composers. Marta Zarzycka and Tina Campt, working in the 21<sup>st</sup> century apply similar principles, but with a different starting point, asking viewers to imagine the sound associated with images. Zarzycka argues that, in the absence of temporal directionality, photography is perceived as a soundless practice.<sup>873</sup> She suggests that “bringing the notion of sound back to the photographic rendition of war and violence”<sup>874</sup> may change the way in the images associated are received and understood. Restoring the aural or the sonic, she contends, may be achieved by imagining the sounds implicit in the visual traces: the scream suggested by the open mouth of an anguished woman, the gunshots implied in her wounds or the blaring sirens of emergency vehicles rushing to assist wounded victims.

Tina Campt argues similarly that the encounter with images should involve *listening* as well as *looking* or *watching*.<sup>875</sup> Sound, she asserts, can be both heard and felt, it can “move, touch and connect us to the event of the photo”<sup>876</sup> and attune the senses to other affective registers, inviting a more nuanced reading of images.<sup>877</sup> What neither Campt nor Zarzycka consider is how sound may veil the image, although, as Swinney’s work suggests, it amplifies the message implicit in an image and the story with which it is associated, extending opportunities for new and different encounters. These will register differently with new audiences, in other contexts and in other times and places, but they may still resonate with the essence of Swinney’s encounter with the image published in the *Sunday Times*.

### Patric Tariq Mellet, poet, *Massacre* (1985)

In 2021, a *Google* search using the terms ‘Maseru massacre’ produced an unexpected image: a photomontage that includes Samson’s photograph, together with images of three other atrocities attributed to the SADF – the

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<sup>873</sup> Marta Zarzycka, “War in Silence: Photographs, Sounds and the Ethics of Reception,” *Afterimage*, 39 (2011), 15

<sup>874</sup> Marta Zarzycka, “War in Silence,” 15.

<sup>875</sup> Azoulay argues that, “One need to stop looking at the photograph and instead start watching it. The verb ‘to watch’ is usually used regarding phenomena or moving pictures. It entails dimensions of time and movement that need to be reinscribed in the interpretation of the still photographic image.” Azoulay *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 15.

<sup>876</sup> Campt, 9.

<sup>877</sup> This suggests an openness to forms of communication other than the discursive. These may include affect (feelings and emotions), sensory or corporeal registers. So, for example, as described in Chapter Three, for the picture-makers there is a strong link between sensory and affective registers.

1978 Cassinga massacre, the 1981 attack on Maputo, and the 1985 raid on Gaborone – assembled around a map of southern Africa. The individual photographs that make up the photomontage, while not iconic, have been used extensively in various anti-apartheid publications or campaigns and associated exhibitions.<sup>878</sup> Although the source was not credited, the photomontage is similar in style to the illustrations used in these publications and campaigns in the late 1980s.

Patric Tariq Mellet (b. 1956) the self-styled “liberation movement printer”,<sup>879</sup> on whose website<sup>880</sup> the image appears, left South Africa as a young man in 1978 to join MK. After his initial training in Botswana, he was deployed to Lusaka where he joined the ANC Department of Information and Publicity (ANC DIP) and served on the production boards of *Mayibuye* and *VOW*. In 1981, he was sent to the UK to study printing while working part-time for the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) and the ANC. After completing his studies, Mellet was seconded briefly to IDAF and then deployed to the ANC DIP in London. Between 1985 and 1990 he served on the editorial boards of *Sechaba*,<sup>881</sup> *Rixaka*<sup>882</sup> and *Newsbriefings*,<sup>883</sup> all of which covered the Raid in one way or another. He returned to South Africa in 1990.

On his website, Mellet explains that he wrote poetry between the ages of 15 and 40, as his “life went through all sorts of twists and turns associated with carrying out decisions to join the resistance struggle against Apartheid and engage in war.”<sup>884</sup> Many of his poems written in the 1980s,<sup>885</sup> including “Frontline Noise in the Night” (1980), “Katryn” (1984), “No Music” (1985), and “Massacre” (1985), read as laments, powerfully evoking the violent actions of the apartheid state and the grief of activists who suffered at its hands. As suggested in the extract below, these poems give substance to Oliver Tambo’s injunction to use culture as a form of resistance, “to articulate our struggle, our hopes and aspirations”<sup>886</sup> and “cultivate a spirit of revolt.”<sup>887</sup>

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<sup>878</sup> These include: the 1984 portable photographic exhibition, “Apartheid’s War Against Africa” produced by the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the Holland Committee on Southern Africa in co-operation with the United Nations Centre Against Apartheid; the “Apartheid and Resistance” panels developed by the Mayibuye Centre to accompany the exhibition “Anne Frank in the World,” that toured South Africa between February 1994 and February 1995; and “Destabilising the Frontline States between 1975 and 1988” on display at the Apartheid Museum between 2001 and 2017.

<sup>879</sup> “Patric Mellet, “Home,” *Patric Tariq Mellet: Writings*, accessed February 2021, <https://patricariqmellet.home.blog>.

<sup>880</sup> Patric Mellet, “Poetry of the 1980s,” *Poetry Exteriorismo*, accessed February 2021, <https://poetryexteriorismo.wordpress.com/poetry-of-the-1990s/>.

<sup>881</sup> “Attack! Advance! Give the Enemy No Quarter! Message of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress on the occasion of 8th January 1986, delivered by Comrade President OR Tambo” *Sechaba* (Dar es Salaam), Volume March (1986), 2-12.

<sup>882</sup> Nomkhosi Mini obituary, “Obituary,” *Rixaka* (Lusaka) no. 3 (1986), 25.

<sup>883</sup> ANC News Briefing, December 29, 1985, 1-3.

<sup>884</sup> Patric Mellet, *Poetry Exteriorismo*, accessed February 2021, <https://poetryexteriorismo.wordpress.com>.

<sup>885</sup> Patric Mellet, “Poetry of the 1980s,” *Poetry Exteriorismo*, accessed February 2021, <https://poetryexteriorismo.wordpress.com/poetry-of-the-1990s/>.

<sup>886</sup> South African History Online, “Interview with Oliver Tambo by *Rixaka*, 5 January 1985,” accessed October 2021, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/interview-oliver-tambo-rixaka-05-january-1985>.

<sup>887</sup> South African History Online, “Render South Africa Ungovernable! – Message of the National Executive Committee of the ANC on the 73rd Anniversary of ANC by O. R. Tambo, 8 January 1985,” accessed October 2021, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/render-south-africa-ungovernable-message-national-executive-committee-anc-73rd-anniversary>.

“Only a printing machine they may say  
 But I say that you’re my AK47  
 Together we fulfil the call  
 That every Patriot be a Combatant”<sup>888</sup>



Figure 24: *The Child is Not Dead: Youth Resistance in South Africa 1976-1986.*  
 Credit: BDAF / ILEA

**MASSACRE (1985)**

Massacre at Matola  
 (at Kassinga, Sabra and Shatila)  
 Maseru, Gaborone  
 Athlone, Uitenhage, Mamelodi  
 Maseru  
 the legacy of Sharpville  
 repeated  
 over and over and over again  
 massacre  
 continuous massacre  
 in the news today  
 out of the news tomorrow  
 villains continue to be wined and  
 dined  
 their lives unaffected  
 villains continue to hold favour  
 airs of respectability  
 the hypocritical capitalist world  
 feigns horror  
 continues to give support  
 to the racist aggressors....  
 yet we are called

..... TERRORISTS



Figure 25: Screen shot from Patric Mellet’s website, *Poetry Exteriorismo.*  
 Credit: Patric Mellet / Facebook

In 1989, Mellet compiled and photocopied a small volume of his poems and prose. His position in the ANC DIP gave him access to the IDAF collections as well as publications produced or circulated by the ANC, IDAF and the Anti-Apartheid Movement, amongst others, and he drew on these resources to illustrate the volume,<sup>889</sup> pasting the photomontage on its own on a page opposite one of his poems.

When asked by email about the source of the photomontage, Mellet, responded, “I have no recollection of where it exactly came from, except to say that the originals or copies thereof were most likely to have come IDAF Photo-Archive<sup>890</sup>... it is likely that it was used in IDAF & AAM mobilisation literature at the time. My memory is

<sup>888</sup> Patric Mellet, “Poetry of the 1980s,” *Poetry Exteriorismo*, accessed June 2021, <https://poetryexteriorismo.wordpress.com/poetry-of-the-1990s/>.

<sup>889</sup> It is evident that the photomontage was clipped from a printed publication: several of captions have been cut off on the left-hand side and the edges of the clipping are visible on the backing sheet onto which it was pasted. The poor quality of the reproduction, specifically the loss of detail, further suggests that it was a photocopy of a published document.

<sup>890</sup> As described in Chapter Eight, a copy of the *Sunday Times* clipping of Samson’s photograph was photographed and filed in the IDAF Photographic Library where it was made available to like-minded organisations to use in activities designed to “keep the conscience of the world alive to the horror that was unfolding in southern Africa.” Horst Kleinschmidt, “The Role of the International Defence and Aid Fund,” (2004) accessed November 2020, <https://disa.ukzn.ac.za/sites/default/files/DC%20Metadata%20Files/GandhiLuthuli%20Documentation%20Centre/2357/16/2357/16.pdf>.

not as great as it once was.”<sup>891</sup> After an intensive search,<sup>892</sup> a possible source was identified, *The Child Is Not Dead: Youth Resistance in South Africa 1976-1986*,<sup>893</sup> an educational resource, compiled in 1986 by members of the British Defence and Aid Fund (BDAF) Education Committee and teachers from the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA). The publication, which includes photographs, illustrations and news-clippings, was aimed at engaging middle school students and their teachers, in thinking critically about apartheid.<sup>894</sup> In this iteration, the photomontage is positioned below a report headed *The military giant*, which focusses on the brutal actions of the SADF and its role as a perpetrator of violence within South Africa and against neighbouring states, (Figure 25). IDAF is acknowledged as the primary source of photographs used in this publication,<sup>895</sup> but it is not clear whether the photomontage was assembled by the team that produced the resource, if it was received from IDAF as a single image or clipped from another publication.

In 2017 Mellet transcribed his poems and digitised the accompanying illustrations to post on his *Poetry Exteriorismo*<sup>896</sup> website. Here the photomontage, containing Samson's photograph of Jackie and Leon, is positioned alongside his poem *Massacre* and is directly above an uncaptioned, untitled, and uncredited photograph. Like the images that make up the photomontage, this one is uncredited, but it is familiar. It shows ANC activist Albie Sachs in the aftermath of the car-bomb that exploded in Maputo in 1988, causing him to lose an arm and an eye, (Figure 26). The image was published in *The Guardian* and has been used subsequently in several exhibitions and publications,<sup>897</sup> as discussed in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight. Mellet has shared the photomontage on Facebook on three occasions. In 2013,<sup>898</sup> he included it in a post, together with three poems based on his experiences in the Frontline States.<sup>899</sup> In 2020,<sup>900</sup> he used it to illustrate a response to a member

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<sup>891</sup> Patric Mellet, personal correspondence with the author, November 23, 2020.

<sup>892</sup> Queries to the Anti-Apartheid Movement Archive in London, and to various individuals and organisations associated with IDAF, drew a blank. An archival search of likely journals published between 1985 and 1990, similarly failed to turn up any clues. After months of searching I found the illustration in a copy of *The Child is not Dead: Youth Resistance in South Africa 1976-1986* on my own bookshelf!

<sup>893</sup> Ann Harries, Roger Diski and Alasdair Brown, *The Child is Not Dead: Youth Resistance in South Africa 1976-1986* (London: British Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa and the Inner London Education Authority, 1986), 36-37.

<sup>894</sup> Anti-Apartheid Movement, *Annual Report of activities and developments, 1986/1987*, unpaginated, notes that “A growing number of requests for materials and information are being dealt with from students and teachers as increasing numbers of schools are including studies on apartheid in their courses,” accessed June 2024, <https://www.aamarchives.org/archive/reports/ar26-annual-report-1986-87/viewdocument/10480.html>.

<sup>895</sup> Harries, Diski and Brown, *The Child is Not Dead*, inner back cover.

<sup>896</sup> Patric Tariq Mellet, *Poetry Exteriorismo*, accessed February 2021, <https://poetryexteriorismo.wordpress.com>.

<sup>897</sup> The photograph shows Albie Sachs after he was severely wounded by a car bomb planted by South African security agents in Maputo on 7 April 1988.

<sup>898</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=10151298242242507&set=a.61448052506>.

<sup>899</sup> 4 people liked the post, 1 person shared it and 7 commented on it, mentioning their own experiences or memories of the events mentioned or others associated with the violent actions of the apartheid regime.

<sup>900</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10157894545912507&set=pb.561597506.-2207520000.&type=3>.

of the public who had expressed doubts about “whether there really was an MK at war” which he also shared<sup>901</sup> on the *South African History* Facebook page.<sup>902</sup>

## Discussion

Hobbs and Swinney were both deeply affected by their encounters with Samson’s photograph and mention the lingering presence of the image in their minds. Hobbs says that she carries the photographs “in her head” all the time, contending that, “you can never forget a photograph like that . . .”<sup>903</sup> For her, this memory is a double-bind. The photograph evokes her memories of her fears for her own daughters, while “talk of apartheid atrocities and news items of brutal attacks on women”<sup>904</sup> trigger memories of the photograph. The worst flashback she has had, she says, was triggered by the sight of Eugene de Kock at the Franschhoek Literary Festival in 2016.<sup>905</sup> For Swinney, as described earlier, the sound of a gunshot, and his personal experience of a violent crime, evoked memories of the photograph and the accounts of Jackie’s death.

Although Hobbs and Swinney expressed reservations about the *Sunday Times* decision to publish Samson’s photograph, Hobbs, who worked as a journalist at the time of the Raid, explained that although she had been told that there had been much debate about the issue in the newsroom, she felt that Tertius Myburgh, the editor, had made the right decision. “I think it had to be published” she said thoughtfully, “I think people had to know that was going on, they had to know viscerally.”<sup>906</sup> Still, there is a degree of ambivalence in her attitude. On the one hand, she argues that the invasion of privacy should be set off against the need to create public awareness about the atrocities. On the other, she says, no family should have to experience the horror of seeing a photograph that shows their loved ones like that.<sup>907</sup>

Like Hobbs, Swinney was concerned about the issue of privacy and the indignity arising from the display of the corpses as a public spectacle, saying, “I actually thought of Che Guevara and that photograph where they’ve actually put him on display, where his head is at this weird, weird, angle and I suppose I thought of that . . . It was um ... voyeuristic.”<sup>908</sup>

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<sup>901</sup> 88 people reacted to the post (63 likes, 12 cares, 9 loves, 2 wows and 2 sads), 49 people shared it and 15 commented, sharing their own experiences or memories of the events mentioned or others associated with the violent actions of the apartheid regime.

<sup>902</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/SA.History/posts/3224963167613373>.

<sup>903</sup> Dialogue with Jenny Hobbs.

<sup>904</sup> Jenny Hobbs, email to the author, 7 March 2018.

<sup>905</sup> Other writers were also affected by his presence at the event and he was asked to leave. Leletu Gxuluwe, “De Kock asked to leave Franschhoek festival event,” IOL, 16 May 2016, accessed October 2024, <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/de-kock-asked-to-leave-franschhoek-festival-event-2021955>.

<sup>906</sup> Dialogue with Jenny Hobbs.

<sup>907</sup> Dialogue with Jenny Hobbs.

<sup>908</sup> Dialogue with Warrick Swinney.

Mellet, while not expressing an opinion on the ethics of publishing the image, observed in a Facebook post that, “the photos in my book of writings as attached were not shown to the SA public at the time.”<sup>909</sup> Several comments on the post support his assertion that restrictions on the free flow of information limited exposure to the truth of apartheid atrocities, and stressed the importance of making images of this kind available in the public domain.

Despite their ambivalent feelings about the publication of Samson’s photograph, Hobbs and Swinney attribute their creative responses directly to their encounters with image, and their conviction that the horror, the violence and the human tragedy behind it needed to be brought to the attention of the world. Their responses highlight the effect of politically motivated violence on specific individuals: Jackie and Leon. This affirms claims made by photographic theorists<sup>910</sup> that images showing the consequence of warfare, atrocity, or gross violations of human rights may galvanise viewers into action.

This is not the case with the creators of the photomontage used by the BDAF and Mellet: The images included in the photomontage were not selected for their affective power. They were not intended to evoke empathy. Instead, they were used for their indexical status, as evidence to support the texts which locate the Raid, and those who were killed, within the broader narrative of politically motivated violence assumed to have been perpetrated by the SADF. This is evident in the cursory captions, which indicate the year and place of the attack but do not name the victims, resorting instead, as did the South African media at the time, to using statistics and generic identifiers like “Namibian refugees” or “members of the African National Congress” to describe them. Although the BDAF and Mellet used the photomontage in similar ways, there is a subtle difference of intent. In the case of the BDAF, the primary motivation was to raise awareness of, or spur resistance to, the oppressive apartheid state. While Mellet’s use of the photomontage aims to do this too, it also signifies a desire to commemorate the deaths of his comrades, affirming this in the Facebook posts<sup>911</sup> to which he attached the photomontage.

But what of the photograph? How did the encounters and the subsequent actions taken by Hobbs, Swinney and Mellet impact on the photograph’s journey through time and space? Admitting to what may be deemed as a “dubious personification of inanimate objects”<sup>912</sup> William Mitchell argues that theorists “talk and act as if pictures had will, consciousness, agency and desires,”<sup>913</sup> and asks “what do pictures want?”<sup>914</sup> Reflecting on

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<sup>909</sup> This is a general observation on the images in the collage. Samson’s photograph was published in a South African newspaper. The other images were not.

<sup>910</sup> See for example Virginia Woolf (1938), Sontag (1977, 2003), Guerin and Hallas (2007), Azoulay (2008, 2012) and Batchen (2012) referenced in Chapter One.

<sup>911</sup> Patric Tariq Mellet, 16 February 2013, Facebook, accessed June 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=10151298242242507&set=a.61448052506>.

<sup>912</sup> William J.T. Mitchell, “What Do Pictures *Really Want?*”, October 77 (1996), 71.

<sup>913</sup> Mitchell, “What Do Pictures *Really Want?*”, 73.

<sup>914</sup> Mitchell, 71.

this, he suggests that, amongst other desires, “pictures may want equal rights with language, not to be turned into language,”<sup>915</sup> and “to be seen as complex individuals, occupying multiple subject positions and identities.”<sup>916</sup>

Mitchell’s view, seen in relation to the responses to Samson’s photograph discussed in this chapter, raise issues of intertextuality and multimodality. Samson’s photograph, as noted in previous chapters and above, has been made available alongside a variety of texts and images. When read together, this produces new meanings. As Walter Werner explains, “Whenever a pictorial image is read in terms of – or through, against, alongside – another image or a surrounding set of images and words, intertextuality is at work; meanings assigned to the image differ from those that would be drawn if it were interpreted in isolation.”<sup>917</sup> The photographs also take on new meanings, or other lives, when they are represented in different modalities or through different semiotic systems – like language or music – changing the way in which they are received and remembered.

Hobbs brings the Samson’s photograph into view through her reference to it in the acknowledgment, which makes it possible for interested readers to locate it in the archive. She also brings it obliquely into view, veiled in words, in her narrated description in the fictional text. Swinney, like Hobbs, also brings Samson’s photograph obliquely into view, veiled, in his work, through music and sound. Although both acknowledge Samson’s photograph as the catalyst for their works, they do not facilitate access to the image itself, veiling it instead in words and sounds that create the potential for encounters of a different kind: mediated through their interpretations and the semiotic systems of their choice. Readers and listeners may *imagine* Samson’s photograph but not see it. They may remember the story, the imagined history, or the defiant song sparked by the photograph, but, unless they actively seek it out, they will not encounter the image itself. Still, their actions memorialise both the 1985 event and the image itself and make it findable to scholars who follow the clues provided.

Unlike Hobbs and Swinney, who bring Samson’s photograph into view obliquely through their creative responses, the BDFA/ILEA educators and Mellet bring the photograph *itself* into view for its evidentiary status through its inclusion in the photomontage, but veil it differently alongside another set of images, situating Jackie and Leon as nameless victims of one of many [assumed] SADF atrocities. As a visual record, and trace of the real, photographs like Samson’s, and others included in the photomontage, offer inefaceable proof that the violent and oppressive actions of the apartheid state took place at a particular moment. But the burden of evidence placed on a photomontage, which brings four separate uncredited photographs together into a single

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<sup>915</sup> Mitchell, 82.

<sup>916</sup> Mitchell, 82.

<sup>917</sup> Walter Werner, “What does this picture say? Reading the intertextuality of visual images,” *Education Resources Information Center*, undated, accessed December 2024, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ718728.pdf>, unpaginated.

graphic, and its use as an adjunct to a powerful text which, in the case of the BDAF focuses on the perpetrator rather than the victims, veils the individual images.

Untethered, literally and figuratively, from their original contexts the photomontage puts the shattered bodies of nameless victims on view with the intention of sending a message about the cruel power of the apartheid state, in the hope of strengthening resistance to it. Deprived of their identities, the victims are unknown and unknowable: their stories are lost, and they are unlikely to be acknowledged as people whose deaths should be mourned. The photomontage does not suggest grief and it does not celebrate the lives of the victims. It reduces Jackie and Leon – and the other victims depicted – to ciphers whilst simultaneously distancing viewers.<sup>918</sup>

In the case of Mellet, as noted above, the juxtaposition of text and image serves a commemorative function, laying bare his grief at the loss of friends and comrades. Like Hobbs who remarked, “that could be my daughter lying there,”<sup>919</sup> and Swinney who conveyed fear for friends involved in MK upon first seeing the photograph of Jackie and Leon, the image became a locus for Mellet’s own fears and vulnerabilities. Seen as an element of the photomontage, alongside Mellet’s poem, “Massacre” (1985), and the photograph of a critically wounded Albie Sachs, Samson’s photograph serves as a *memento mori*, a reminder of the ever-present threat of death that faced those who, like them, actively resisted against the oppressive regime.

As an archival document, Samson’s photograph exists as a tangible trace of the Raid, linking it back in time to a split second when the photographer made the image in the mortuary, taking viewers further back in time to the moments when the killers ended the lives of Jackie and Leon and forwards in time as they explore or imagine the events that followed. It is a “tangible, touchable inheritance for those seeking to understand the past.”<sup>920</sup>

Other often ephemeral traces of the Raid may be found in images, news reports, memoirs, transcriptions, recordings, and video footage made during TRC hearings. The novel, musical compositions, and poetry collections mentioned in this chapter occupy a space that is partly archival, partly a form of oral history and partly about memorialisation. As traces of the event, they serve both evidentiary and commemorative functions of something that was or has been and may be used to make meaning of or reconstruct versions of the past.

But what of the intangible and ephemeral traces that exist primarily in memory, rather than as archival or historical records, but also have a role to play in making individual and collective meaning of the past? Do they have a place in the archive? This is a concern that is explored in the chapters that follow.

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<sup>918</sup> Batchen, Gidley, Miller and Prosser, 63.

<sup>919</sup> Charis Perkins, “Mother’s novel cries out against violence,” *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), June 4, 1989, 7.

<sup>920</sup> Sonya Donaldson, “The Ephemeral Archive: Unstable Terrain in Times and Sites of Discord,” *The Digital Black Atlantic* (2021), 19.

## Conclusion

This chapter affirms Sontag's assertion that "the photographer's intentions do not determine the meaning of the photograph, which will have its own career, blown by the whims and loyalties of the diverse communities that have use for it."<sup>921</sup> In the moments of its afterlife, discussed above, Samson's photograph lives on in different guises, subject to circumstance and the actions taken by those who encountered it when it was first published, or reused it for new purposes in other media and contexts.

In this thesis, I argue that speaking about remembered photographs like Samson's brings into view multiple traces of the events with which they are associated, and the contexts in which the images were encountered. But the encounter in memory also raises into consciousness the [almost] unseeable and [almost] unsayable expressed through thoughts and feelings, as well as vestiges of other images that exist in memory and the mind's eye through narratives that loop between past/present, personal/political, and individual/collective memory.

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<sup>921</sup> Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, 35.

## CHAPTER SIX

### ENCOUNTERS WITH A [DIFFICULT] PAST

*In the 1990s the images travelled beyond the realms of documentation, news and resistance and into the domain of public history. In 1993 Lagardien's photograph was included in a landmark exhibition at the South African Museum veiled beneath a translucent sheet of tracing paper. Between 1996 and 1998 the footage made in the mortuary was used several times in the SABC Truth Commission Special Report series that brought the horror of the past, the grief of family members, and the guarded testimonies of perpetrators into the living rooms of many South Africans. Between 2001 and 2018, Samson's photograph was used alongside a wide selection of others in a display on cross-border incursions at the Apartheid Museum.*

## CHAPTER SIX: ENCOUNTERS WITH A [DIFFICULT] PAST

This chapter tracks the afterlives of the images of Jackie and Leon as they travel across temporal, spatial, discursive and institutional boundaries in the 1990s and are used to explore or expose South Africa's then recent past. It explores the debates surrounding the inclusion of Lagardien's photograph in a temporary exhibition at the then SAM in Cape Town in 1993, the reuse of the footage made by Brink and Msibi in the *Special Report* series, and the display of Samson's photograph in the Apartheid Museum's exhibition in Johannesburg between 2001 and 2019. The chapter reflects on dialogues with two survivors of cross-border incursions, Comrade AB and Albie Sachs, about the public display of images of victims of South Africa's violent past. The chapter concludes with a discussion on 'difficult knowledge' to consider how decisions made by the curators and documentary film producers framed visitors' encounters with the images. Taken together, these sections: offer a close reading of the photographic encounters; detail how and why the images of Jackie and Leon were consciously and deliberately used to disseminate the unspeakable, unsayable truth about the apartheid past in the public domain; describe how the photographs have been remembered; and support the argument made in the thesis that speaking about remembered images blurs the boundaries between past and present, the self and other, affect and cognition, articulating and raising into consciousness that which might otherwise have remained unsaid.

### Introduction

Chapter Five considered the encounters of writers and artists with Samson's photograph of Jackie and Leon, and its afterlife in their creative responses. This chapter tracks the images of Jackie and Leon as they travelled across temporal, spatial, institutional and discursive boundaries in exhibitions and documentaries that explored the South Africa's recent past at a time of dynamic transformation.

The names of Jackie and Leon; Nomkhosi Mini (MK name Mary Thabethe); Joseph Mayoli (MK name Themba); Vivian Matthee (MK name Trevor); and Lulamile Dantile (MK name Morris Seabelo) are among the hundreds of "heroes and heroines who died fighting for humanity and freedom during the major conflicts in South African history,"<sup>922</sup> inscribed on the Wall of Names at Freedom Park (on Salvokop in Pretoria, Tshwane). They are also recorded in the TRC Report, where their status as victims of gross human rights violations is recorded for posterity. Photographs of Jackie and Leon were also included in two exhibitions on display in heritage institutions the SAM (1993) (SAM) and the Apartheid Museum (2001-2019), an SABC television series, and a documentary film. These Initiatives have played a seminal role in framing public memory of the liberation struggle, and the country's efforts to come terms with its past.

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<sup>922</sup> Department of Sport Arts and Culture, accessed January 2025, <https://www.dsac.gov.za/node/90>.

Encounters with the images of Jackie and Leon discussed thus far in the thesis have focussed on individual memories and responses. This chapter considers something different, bringing into view the intersection of personal and institutional memory and representation.

Describing museums like the SAM as “mirrors of power,” Patricia Davison<sup>923</sup> argues,

“Museums like memory, mediate the past, present and future. But unlike personal memory, which is animated by an individual’s lived experience, museums give material form to authorised versions of the past, which in time become institutionalised as public memory.”<sup>924</sup>

Encountered in the contexts of museums and national television at a time of profound societal change so close to the 1994 democratic elections in South Africa, the images of Jackie and Leon may be seen to support a vision of the past, mediated through different curatorial visions, which shared a commitment to exposing the systemic violence of the apartheid regime, with the intention of driving attitudinal change.

### **South African Museum/Mayibuye Centre: *EsiQithini: The Robben Island Exhibition* (1993)**

In his address at the opening of *EsiQithini: the Robben Island Exhibition*, Ahmed Kathrada congratulated the SAM and the Mayibuye Centre co-curators, and emphasised the significance of the exhibition as the first collaboration of its kind between a long-established national museum and a new cultural and historical project:

“We are going through a momentous period in our history; the unfolding of the new South Africa is bound to make a profound impact on all spheres of life, and it is important that we adjust ourselves to meet the new realities. Exhibitions such as these are part and parcel of the transitions to democracy and non-racialism.”<sup>925</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this study to provide a detailed overview of the nation’s psyche at the time of the exhibition: the roller-coaster of elation and uncertainty marked the socio-political transition to democracy and a ‘better life for all’<sup>926</sup> in the ‘rainbow nation’.<sup>927</sup> Nevertheless, to understand the context in which the images were encountered, it is important to expand on some of the issues mentioned by Kathrada. As Timothy Sisk explains, with reference to the state of political negotiations in South Africa in 1993, “Uncertainty peaks as political forces that once had well-defined and predictable political roles seek to define themselves in the new

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<sup>923</sup> Patricia Davison is an anthropologist specialising in southern African material culture and museology. She was Head of African Studies and Anthropology at the South African Museum from 1982 to 1992, when she became Deputy Director, with responsibility for public programmes. She has a doctorate from the University of Cape Town and has published in the fields of African art, material culture and museum practice. In 2001 she was appointed Director of the Social History Collections Division of Iziko Museums of Cape Town. Iziko Museums of Cape Town, Annual Report, 2003-2004, accessed January 2025, [https://www.iziko.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/AR-2003\\_2004\\_0.pdf](https://www.iziko.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/AR-2003_2004_0.pdf)

<sup>924</sup> Patricia Davison, “Museums and the reshaping of memory” in *Negotiating the past: the making of memory in South Africa*, eds. Sarah Nuttall and Carli Coetzee (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1998), 145.

<sup>925</sup> *EsiQithini: The Robben Island Exhibition*, (Cape Town: South African Museum, 1996), 5-6.

<sup>926</sup> The slogan “A better life for all” was widely used in the ANC’s 1994 election campaign.

<sup>927</sup> The term, employed by Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu to describe post-apartheid South African society, was widely used by others including Nelson Mandela.

political environment.”<sup>928</sup> The same moment of redefinition applies to the museum sector, and ways in which development within the broader cultural sector framed the curatorial team’s encounter with Lagardien’s photograph, and the decisions they took.

In 1982, three years before the Raid, ‘cultural workers’ and activists from within South Africa and in exile gathered in Botswana for the *Culture and Resistance Conference*,<sup>929</sup> to mobilise culture as resistance to the apartheid state, the first large-scale initiative of its kind.<sup>930</sup> From the mid-1980’s, as the apartheid government and the ANC began to reach out to each other, albeit tentatively,<sup>931</sup> the focus of cultural activism shifted from driving resistance to preparing to govern in a democratic state. In 1987, the *Dakar Conference*<sup>932</sup> and the *Culture in Another South Africa Festival and Conference (CASA)*<sup>933</sup> affirmed the role of culture workers in the struggle for liberation and the new role of building a “non-racial, non-sexist, unitary and democratic South Africa.”<sup>934</sup> The unbanning of political parties in 1990, and the commencement of negotiations leading up to the transfer of power to a new democratically elected government, gave greater urgency to the task of preparing for change.

The *Zabalaza Festival*,<sup>935</sup> just months after the unbanning was announced, marked what Mongane Wally Serote deemed “a new era of transformation.”<sup>936</sup> It provided South Africans in exile with a platform, and focussed on redressing the legacy of inequities in arts, culture and heritage related skills and resources arising from apartheid policies and practice, through an intensive training and workshop programme.<sup>937</sup> Discussions on transformation within the arts, culture and heritage sector culminated in April 1993, shortly before *EsiQithini* opened, with the *Culture and Development Conference (CDC)*.<sup>938</sup> The CDC aimed to place arts and culture squarely on the agenda of the political negotiations already underway; bringing cultural workers across the political spectrum together; and providing a platform for all stakeholders to contribute to the development of an inclusive, non-sectarian arts and culture policy for South Africa. As Serote, Head of the ANC Arts and Culture

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<sup>928</sup> Timothy D Sisk, “The Violence-Negotiation Nexus: South Africa in Transition and the Politics of Uncertainty,” *Negotiation Journal* 10, no. 1 (1993), 90.

<sup>929</sup> The *Culture and Resistance Conference* held in Gaborone, Botswana from 5-9 July 1982 was organised by the ANC Cultural Desk in collaborations with local arts and culture organisations,

<sup>930</sup> *Looking Backwards, Looking Forwards, Culture & Development Conference April-May 1993*, (Bellville: Mayibuye Books, in cooperation with UNESCO, 1995) 3.

<sup>931</sup> Andries Walter Oliphant, “Acts of Culture: Searching for a national South African identity on the context of arts, culture and heritage diversity,” *MISTRA Working Paper* (2020), 9.

<sup>932</sup> The Dakar Conference was organised under the auspices of the Institute for Democratic Alternatives in South Africa (IDASA) and the ANC in Dakar, Senegal, 9-12 July 1987.

<sup>933</sup> CASA held in Amsterdam in December 1987 was organised by the United Democratic Front’s (UDF) Cultural Desk; ANC’s Cultural Desk; and the Anti-Apartheid Beweging Nederland (Dutch Anti-Apartheid Movement).

<sup>934</sup> Willem Campschreur and Joost Divendal, *Culture in Another South Africa* (London: Zed Books, 1989), 216.

<sup>935</sup> The fortnight long Zabalaza Festival was held in London in July 1990.

<sup>936</sup> Moria Levy, “Zabalaza Festival: The Voice of South Africans in Exile,” *Sechaba* 24, no. 9 (1990), 4.

<sup>937</sup> Levy, “Zabalaza Festival”, 4.

<sup>938</sup> The CDC held in Johannesburg, from 15 April - 2 May 1993 was held in Johannesburg under the auspices of the ANC Department of Arts and Culture.

Desk in London, noted, the event was the culmination of a ten-year process that began with the 1982 Gaborone conference,<sup>939</sup> echoing the call made by Albie Sachs at an ANC cultural forum in 1989, that “we should ban ourselves from saying that culture is a weapon of struggle.”<sup>940</sup> Sach’s call was reiterated by ANC President Nelson Mandela, who exhorted delegates to move away from protest, slogans and rhetoric, and rather embrace transformation and reconstruction,<sup>941</sup> laying down a formal challenge to delegates to engage with and effect change in existing cultural institutions.

Running parallel to the initiatives mentioned above were the hesitant efforts of the South African Museums Association (SAMA), from the mid-1980s and at a time of social and political change,<sup>942</sup> to rethink museology practice in accordance with the ‘new museology,’ a concept that focussed on the role of the museum as an institution in service of society, rather than a repository for artefacts and specimens. While progressive museum workers strove to effect changes in their practice to reflect this approach, their efforts were stymied by the actions of the state to enforce the apartheid ideology of separate development. The enactment of the tricameral constitution in 1984<sup>943</sup> which led to the designation of national museums, as “own affairs” or “general affairs” institutions, created a sharp divide, pitting SAMA members – and museum staff – who supported the system against those who did not.<sup>944</sup> After an acrimonious debate, SAMA adopted the *1987 Pietermaritzburg Declaration for South African Museums*, which stated, *inter alia* that, “all South Africans be encouraged to express openly their views as to how the country’s museums may better serve the interests of all in South Africa.”<sup>945</sup> While members continued to be deeply divided on the issue, progressive forces prevailed, and in 1991 the theme adopted for the annual conference, *New Initiatives: Museums for a Future South Africa*, signalled a degree of acceptance of the changes to come, as did the participation of members in the *Myths*,

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<sup>939</sup> *Looking Backwards, Looking Forwards, Culture & Development Conference April-May 1993*, (Bellville: Mayibuye Books, in cooperation with UNESCO, 1995), 3.

<sup>940</sup> Albie Sachs, “Preparing Ourselves for Freedom: Culture and the ANC Constitutional Guidelines,” *TDR* 35, no.2 (1987), 187-193.

<sup>941</sup> “*Looking Backwards, Looking Forwards*”, 11, 13, 15. According to SAHA, Sachs was echoing “the sentiments of other cultural workers” who thought that “subtlety, complexity and ambiguity” were essential for “effective cultural work” and were anxious to avoid sloganeering and platitudes. South African History Archive, “Images of Defiance: South African Resistance Posters of the 1980s and Beyond”, accessed March 2025, [https://www.saha.org.za/imagesofdefiance/culture\\_the\\_doors\\_of\\_culture\\_shall\\_be\\_opened.htm](https://www.saha.org.za/imagesofdefiance/culture_the_doors_of_culture_shall_be_opened.htm) See also Pitika Ntuli, “Fragments from under a telescope: A response to Albie Sachs,” *Third Text* 7, no. 23 (1993) 69–78, accessed February 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09528829308576416>

<sup>942</sup> Deirdre Stam, “The informed muse: The implications of ‘The New Museology’ for museum practice” in Gerard Corsane (ed) *Heritage, Museums and Galleries: An Introductory Reader* (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2004), 55.

<sup>943</sup> Under the Tricameral System, discussed in Chapter Three, ‘national museums’ were deemed ‘own affairs museums’ administered by departments of arts and culture of each of the three racially segregated houses, or ‘general affairs museums’ administered by the Department of National Education in the House of Assembly.

<sup>944</sup> Under this system, the SAM was classified as a “general affairs” institution because its natural history, archaeology and ethnology collections crossed racial divides. The SA Cultural History Museum, whose collections were associated with ‘whites’ was designated as an ‘own affairs’ institution.

<sup>945</sup> South African Museums Association, *The Museum Profession in South Africa, 1936-2016*, (Cape Town: South African Museums Association, 2016), 11.

*Monuments and Museums: New Premises?*<sup>946</sup> conference hosted by the Wits History Workshop in 1992. Nevertheless, SAMA's engagements with the Department of National Education, towards a national policy for South African museums, a process underway at the time *EsiQithini* was curated, was heavily critiqued, and ultimately rejected, by the ANC's key museum policymaking structure,<sup>947</sup> partly because it failed to mention, "the role that museums can and must play in the reconstruction and future development of South Africa."<sup>948</sup>

In 1992, the establishment of the Mayibuye Centre at UWC injected new energies into the sector and facilitated access to an extensive archive of material associated with the struggle for liberation previously unavailable to most South Africans. Reflecting on this in relation to *EsiQithini*, André Odendaal, co-curator of the exhibition, explained that he had taken up a position in the UWC History Department in the mid-1980s, at a time, when the institution was redefining itself as the 'university of the left' and forging an "open and critical alignment"<sup>949</sup> with organisations committed to the struggle for liberation.<sup>950</sup> It was "an amazing place to be", he said, mentioning the establishment of the People's History Project, and engagements with the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), the People's Education movement, and other organisations. In 1987 the UWC Vice Chancellor, Jakes Gerwel, mooted the idea of establishing a museum and archive on apartheid at the university, and deployed Odendaal to conceptualise this. "Basically" Odendaal said excitedly "in the middle of a revolution, we were thinking of the intellectual project that went with it and how important history was, and how important collecting material was, at a time [when] the system tried to pretend or tried to say, that apartheid was over when we knew how deeply rooted it was."<sup>951</sup> Odendaal travelled to London, where he visited IDAF, established contact with the ANC community in exile, and visited museums in Cuba, the Soviet Union, conceptualising the Mayibuye Centre as a dynamic cultural centre. The initiative he envisaged would aim to collect, house, and make accessible a multi-media archive, would conduct research, develop exhibitions and publications, host conferences and workshops, and implement a wide range of public outreach programmes.

At the same time, changes were afoot at IDAF. When political organisations were unbanned and political prisoners released in 1990, the organisation decided to close its operations in London and transfer its "legal,

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<sup>946</sup> *Myths, Monuments and Museums: New Premises?* was organised by the History Workshop at the University of the Witwatersrand. It brought historians and museum professionals together to discuss the role of public history in the transformation of museums and allied institutions.

<sup>947</sup> This report was critiqued by the ANC Museums Sub-Committee, (CREATE), chaired by André Odendaal, who argued that it failed to emphasise "the role that museums can and must play in the reconstruction and future development of South Africa." African National Congress, ANC Commission for the Reconstruction and Transformation of the Arts and Culture in South Africa, *Working Document: Comment on 'MUSA Intersectoral Investigation for National Policy, (Draft Report, January 1994)* (April 1994), 12.

<sup>948</sup> African National Congress, ANC Commission for the Reconstruction and Transformation of the Arts and Culture in South Africa, *Working Document: Comment on 'MUSE Intersectoral Investigation for National Policy, (Draft Report, January 1994)* (April 1994), 12.

<sup>949</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal.

<sup>950</sup> André Odendaal, "Looking Back: UWC and the redefinition of knowledge production in a changing society," *Signals UWC Research Magazine* 2, March 2021, 18.

<sup>951</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal.

welfare, and informational resources and activities”<sup>952</sup> to South Africa. IDAF staff members Barry Feinberg and Gordon Metz visited South Africa to consider various options, and recommended that resources be transferred to Mayibuye Centre because it was “the only institution with the capacity to house and reactivate the IDAF archives.”<sup>953</sup> By the end of 1991 the IDAF material had been packed up and sent to Cape Town. This included: over 7,000 box files holding personal papers, periodicals, and press clippings; IDAF’s Photographic Collection of about 30,000 negatives, 70,000 prints – including A3 size copies of both Samson and Lagardien’s photographs – 4,000 transparencies, and copies of the printed portable exhibitions produced by IDAF; over 1,000 documentary productions and several hundred hours of raw audio-visual footage from more than 200 film and video projects; over a thousand transcripts or recordings of oral history interviews; and a collection of artworks, murals, cartoons and political posters, and IDAF publications. Odendaal was fascinated by the archive, explaining, “I’d often just go in when I had five minutes just to go through, to skim through to look what there was.”<sup>954</sup>

Odendaal, remembers this period with a great deal of pride, saying,

“From the beginning, it was incredibly productive in terms of trying to publish, trying to do exhibits, collecting materials, having cultural events . . . It was a new way of looking at history, like a living archive, basically. If I look back now, it was the most progressive thing and it came at a perfect time . . . as you know, the then South African Museum and other places, when the unbannings happened, the . . . heritage sector was in a totally depressed state . . . and suddenly everyone wanted to have access to these materials or to change and show the history of everyone.”<sup>955</sup>

In 1993, the team preparing *EsiQithini: The Robben Island Exhibition*, encountered Lagardien’s photograph in a pool of images drawn from the IDAF collection, setting off a heated debate in the curatorial team.

Contextualising this, Patricia Davison, the SAM curator, explained that she and Odendaal met at a dinner party hosted by a mutual friend, and, in discussion, suggested the idea of a collaborative exhibition. The proposal was accepted when she put it to her colleagues, albeit with a degree of caution. As she explained, museum collections had historically been segregated under the Tricameral system and the prospect of mounting a politically sensitive social history exhibition in a museum devoted primarily to natural history and anthropology was quite daunting. But, she says, for the museum the collaborative project offered an opportunity to “attract new audiences, and to show its willingness to participate actively in an emerging discourse on museum practice in post-apartheid South Africa.”<sup>956</sup> Nevertheless, as she writes, “from the start we were aware of the ethical and emotive aspects of the project,”<sup>957</sup> explaining that “the recent history of the island was still raw in the minds of

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<sup>952</sup> Barry Feinberg, *A Time to Tell: An activist’s story* (Johannesburg: STE Publishers, 2009), 127.

<sup>953</sup> Feinberg, *A Time to Tell*, 127.

<sup>954</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal.

<sup>955</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal.

<sup>956</sup> Davison, “Museums and the reshaping of memory”, 155.

<sup>957</sup> Patricia Davison, “A Place Apart.” *Museum Journal*, April (1994), 25.

many, especially former prisoners and their families.”<sup>958</sup>

Given the different histories, constituencies, political positionings and missions of the Mayibuye Centre and the SAM, the collaboration was bound to be challenging.<sup>959</sup> As Odendaal mentioned, “I felt that there was a struggle involved in actually getting across what we wanted to . . . what we represented and how we saw and did things. That was the big challenge for us . . . and I think we took it quite slowly.”<sup>960</sup> One of the first challenges centred on the content of the exhibition. Although Davison described Robben Island as, “the most symbolically charged terrain in the subcontinent, infamous as a site of human suffering and degradation, and since the 1960s, widely recognised as an icon of the political struggle against apartheid . . .”<sup>961</sup> SAM initially favoured a focus on the long history of the Island, including its natural history. The Mayibuye Centre, on the other hand, was determined to showcase its political significance, demonstrate what people had endured under the apartheid regime, especially their resilience, and engage visitors in the debate about the future of Robben Island.<sup>962</sup> As Odendaal asserted, “it was not just a matter of the geography of Robben Island. We wanted to put in the kind of hurt and the kind of things you feel . . .” In its final form, *EsiQithini*, covered the history of Robben Island, with a strong focus on the more recent past.<sup>963</sup> Displays about the Island as a place of incarceration for political prisoners, which comprised a major component of the exhibition, drew substantially on the Mayibuye Centre collections, including the personal papers and possessions of ex-political prisoners, known collectively as the Apple Box Archive,<sup>964</sup> and on the IDAF collections. While this display focussed on the history of political prisoners, at some point the curatorial team decided to add a small section to acknowledge the support offered by women to the men incarcerated there, and the broader role women played in the struggle.<sup>965</sup> Lagardien’s photograph was included in a display case in this section, alongside a small collection of posters, pamphlets and photographs of women activists.

The exhibition was widely celebrated, *Leadership South Africa* described it as “one of the most important cultural exhibitions yet to be held in this country”; *Learn and Teach* hailed it as “unique”; and it was included in *Time Magazine*’s calendar of events. Many of the comments from visitors, retained in the Iziko exhibition file applaud the museum for acknowledging those who struggled for liberation

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<sup>958</sup> Davison, *A Place Apart*, 25.

<sup>959</sup> *EsiQithini* is discussed in several publications on museum transformation initiatives in South Africa: Sarah Nuttall and Carli Coetzee, *Negotiating the past: The making of memory in South Africa* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1998); Anne E Coombes, *History After Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2003); and Leslie Witz, *Museum Times Changing Histories in South Africa* (New York: Berghahn, 2022).

<sup>960</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal.

<sup>961</sup> Davison, *A Place Apart*, 25.

<sup>962</sup> By 1993 most of the political prisoners had been released from the prison on Robben Island, and the future of the Island was under discussion. While many, including the ANC, recommended that it to be retained as a heritage site, some thought it should be designated as a nature reserve, or developed as a tourism destination.

<sup>963</sup> The Timeline featured in the exhibition covered the period from 900 million years ago to the -then-present, 1991.

<sup>964</sup> On release, political prisoners were given cardboard fruit boxes in which to transport their personal possessions including documents which were subsequently lodged with the Mayibuye Archives. Geraldine Frieslaar, “(Re)Collections in the Archive: Making and Remaking the International Defence And Aid Fund (IDAF) Archival Collection,” (UWC PhD Thesis 2015), 193.

<sup>965</sup> Dialogue with Patricia Davison, Cape Town, April 10, 2015.

Detractors note the inappropriateness of a politically charged display in the natural history museum; the focus on the activities of the ANC, and the exclusion of the role of other political movements and parties; and the prominence accorded Nelson Mandela and others still considered by many white South African's to be 'terrorists.'<sup>966</sup>

The inclusion of Lagardien's photograph in the exhibition was arguably the most contentious issue the curators had to deal with.<sup>967</sup> Odendaal recalls his initial response to the image, saying, "it struck me as like an image of this extreme violence the innocence of a kind of ... the transcending imagination and youth was now killed and lying there,"<sup>968</sup> and he said, he asked himself, "how do we then do to justice to what people had been through ... what these particular people lying there had been through?"<sup>969</sup>

Odendaal's response to the image of Jackie and Leon, and his wish to include it in the exhibition, echoes the purposes to which images like this were put by the broad anti-apartheid movement in the 1980s and early 1990s in publications that would have been unavailable to South Africans. Photographs of the victims of cross-border incursions into Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique and Namibia were, for example, included in the 1984 portable photographic exhibition, *Apartheid's War Against Africa*,<sup>970</sup> produced by the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the Holland Committee on Southern Africa in co-operation with the United Nations Centre Against Apartheid; in ANC publications including: *Unity in Action: A pictorial history of the African National Congress South Africa 1912-1982*,<sup>971</sup> IDAF publications such as *Namibia in Struggle: A pictorial history*,<sup>972</sup> and individual memoirs such as *Le Rona Re Batho: An account off the 1982 Maseru Massacre* by Phyllis Naidoo.<sup>973</sup>

Odendaal was determined to include the Lagardien's photograph in the exhibition, explaining that "it was an image of the extreme, systemic violence that underlies everything in terms of institutional power in South Africa."<sup>974</sup> This, he stressed, was central to the exhibition's narrative as well as its imperative to drive behavioural or attitudinal change rather than simply eliciting an emotional response. Gerald Klinghardt, an

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<sup>966</sup> Responses noted here are derived from comments made in wiring by visitors, and retained in the exhibition archive at the SAM. These accord with the findings made by Anne Coombes in *History After Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2003), 62-63. Visitor comments provide useful information about ways in which exhibitions like this are perceived by ordinary people – as opposed to journalists or critics – as noted by Christine R. Nugent, "The voice of the visitor: Popular reactions to the exhibition *Vernichtungskrieg. Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941–1944*," *Journal of European Studies* 44, no 3, 2014, 249–262..

<sup>967</sup> The display of images of victims of politically motivated violence in museums and allied institutions is still a matter of debate. Curatorial teams working on the Matola Raid Monument and Interpretive Centre and Constitutional Hill archives have considered the matter at length, but no formal guidelines exist. Personal communications: Gordon Metz and Steven Gordon.

<sup>968</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal.

<sup>969</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal.

<sup>970</sup> Anti-Apartheid Movement (London) and the Holland Committee on Southern Africa in co-operation with the United Nations Centre Against Apartheid *Apartheid's War Against Africa*, 1984.

<sup>971</sup> African National Congress, *Unity in Action, A Photographic History of the African National Congress, South Africa 1912-1982*. (London: African National Congress, 1982), 141.

<sup>972</sup> International Defence & Aid Fund, *Namibia in Struggle: A pictorial history*, London: International Defence & Aid Fund, 1987. Unpaginated.

<sup>973</sup> Phyllis Naidoo, *Le Rona Re Batho: An account of the 1982 Maseru Massacre* (Verulam: Phyllis Naidoo, 1992), 28, 58, 62 and 64.

<sup>974</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal.

anthropologist and member of the SAM team explained that SAM was reluctant to show the images, fearing that it would disturb or upset visitors who encountered it. “People involved in the struggle had seen that kind of thing,” he said somewhat apologetically, “but ordinary people, ordinary visitors coming into the museum, might not have seen that kind of thing before,”<sup>975</sup> a view shared by Davison. Odendaal, thinking back to the debate, countered that notion, arguing that “at that time there was a need not to just let white Capetonians flock into the SA Museum, [and say] ‘oh very nice jolly good exhibition.’ They had to be, like, impacted on, and that to me was a very important thing.”<sup>976</sup> Davison argued against the inclusion of the photograph for other reasons too, concerned that the display of the image might infringe the privacy of the victims and distress their families. As she said, with some hesitation, grappling for the right words to express her concerns precisely, “the people were completely recognisable ... and I suppose ... I was thinking that they deserve a bit of privacy. I don't know ... it wasn't quite like that ... But, you know, let's say, I *don't* know these people. But if I *did*, I would certainly not want their image to be put up in a public museum.”<sup>977</sup>

Given that Jackie and Leon's families were not consulted about the use of the photograph, there is no indication of how they might have responded. Would they have welcomed the public acknowledgment that Jackie and Leon had paid the ultimate price for their beliefs, or would they have been angered by the loss of dignity and the invasion of privacy implicit in the display of their bodies in a public place? As she reflected on the matter, Davison asked, her voice rising with indignation, “what about their families? What about them ... what, right, does one have to kind of appropriate or to sensationalise ... ?”<sup>978</sup> The debate within the curatorial team points to the broader challenges inherent in exhibitions related to atrocity. How can encounters with photographs like this be mediated in a way that promotes empathy rather than revulsion? And how, if at all, might the imperative to communicate a strong socio-political message that would persuade viewers to think differently about the atrocity be reconciled with the need to respect the sensitivities of individual family members, survivors and visitors?

Acknowledging the tensions implicit in the relationship between the exhibition partners, the SAM and the Mayibuye Centre, Davison admitted that, while most of her colleagues at the SAM “*sort of* agreed”<sup>979</sup> with her, they were not prepared to be “completely hard-line and refuse, because it would have also been out of keeping

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<sup>975</sup> Dialogue with Gerald Klinghardt, Cape Town, April 30, 2015. This point is debatable. By 1993 visitors might have been familiar with: Sam Nzima's photograph of Hector Petersen in Soweto first published in 1976; the last moments of Maki Skosana, whose death in 1985, after being beaten and set alight by an angry crowd, was broadcast on national television; photographs showing the necklacing of Lyndsaye Tshabalala at the Inhlanzane Station, published in 1990; photographs of an unnamed Phola Park taxi driver being stabbed to death by an assegai wielding crowd published in 1990; images of 'vigilante violence' or 'third force' activity on the East Rand published in 1993; and the photographs of the body of Chris Hani published on the front page of at least eleven newspapers following his assassination on 10 April 1993, just weeks before EsiQithini opened.

<sup>976</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal, Cape Town, 4 December 2015. E

<sup>977</sup> Dialogue with Patricia Davison

<sup>978</sup> Dialogue with Patricia Davison.

<sup>979</sup> Dialogue with Patricia Davison.

with the spirit of our engagement with Mayibuye.”<sup>980</sup> Odendaal also acknowledged the degree to which the commitment to a productive collaboration affected the curatorial process. But, he said, he decided not to “take a step back on this one because of the feeling that the violent nature of the past that needed to be put right there if we were going to deal and work together to try and create something new . . .”<sup>981</sup>

While the photograph may have acted as Odendaal expected, Jill Bennett notes Yazir Henri’s argument that “the use of the image of a ‘victim’ as a trigger for an affective response is a violation of the individual depicted.”<sup>982</sup> Such a strategy, Henri suggests, is “presumptuous, even if well intentioned, because it fails to respect the dignity of the subject, reducing him or her to a cipher of victimhood.”<sup>983</sup> This raises once again the question of if, and when, a socio-political imperative outweighs personal privacy and dignity.

Odendaal’s position reflects another curatorial dilemma: how much evidence of violence is enough to make a moral or ethical point, and how much is too much for visitors to bear? The choice to use the photograph of Jackie and Leon responds to this question, given the range of photographs available in the Mayibuye Centre collections. Other, more graphic images, like those showing the horrifically mutilated victims of the 1985 attack on Gaborone, mentioned in Chapter One, may simply have repulsed visitors, causing them to turn away.

For Odendaal too, the display of the photograph had to do with justice, with the acknowledgment of the consequences of politically motivated violence on individual lives, “how else” he asked in a voice trembling with emotion, “do we do justice to what people had been through, those particular people lying there?”<sup>984</sup> He wanted the “visually powerful photograph of this beautiful blonde woman lying dead there, in Maseru,”<sup>985</sup> to be given a prominent place, close to the exit of the exhibition as a “final kind of statement on the violence of apartheid.”<sup>986</sup>

After an intense debate, a compromise was reached. The curatorial team agreed that Lagardien’s photograph would be included in the exhibition, but that it would be displayed behind a veil of translucent tracing paper, with a caption that read quite simply, “Thousands of women and men have given their lives in the struggle against the apartheid system.” Articulating the rationale for this decision, and the intended impact, Klinghardt focussed on the use of the veil as a device to obscure the image saying, that it was necessary “to give people some sort of protection, just sort of cloak it a little bit so people didn’t see the detail quite as finely,”<sup>987</sup> explaining that “even though it was in black and white the injuries were very obvious.”<sup>988</sup> Davison, while agreeing fully with

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<sup>980</sup> Dialogue with Patricia Davison,

<sup>981</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal.

<sup>982</sup> Jill Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 64.

<sup>983</sup> Bennett, *Empathic Vision*, 64.

<sup>984</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal.

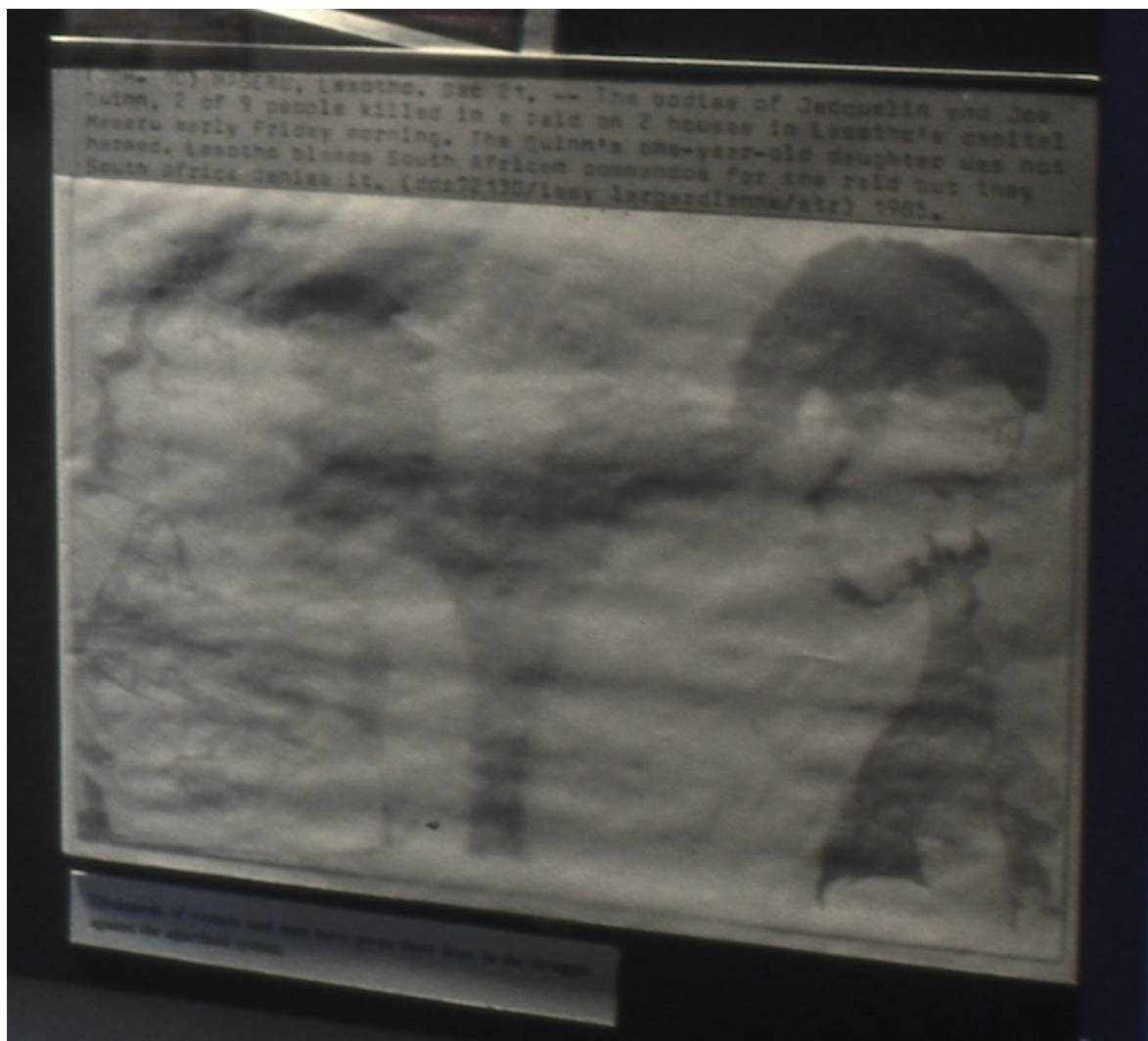
<sup>985</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal.

<sup>986</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal.

<sup>987</sup> Dialogue with Gerald Klinghardt.

<sup>988</sup> Dialogue with Gerald Klinghardt.

Klinghardt's reasoning, said that she had been anxious that veiling the image might provoke curiosity, encouraging people to peer *more* closely at it.<sup>989</sup> Lindsay Hooper, another member of the SAM curatorial team, felt similarly, suggesting that veiling made the image "rather mysterious."<sup>990</sup> She said she had supported the decision to veil the image, not so much to protect viewers, but out of respect for the victims, saying, "the whole notion of exposing, putting up pictures of dead people is abhorrent. And this was *some* device to sort of mitigate it ..."<sup>991</sup> And, she argued, adding an unusual perspective to potential encounters, the content of the image made it, "a thing that one would talk about *quietly* as it were. If it were a conversation, you would not be shouting it, you would allude to it and say that it was brave and terrible altogether."<sup>992</sup>



**Figure 26:** Ismail Lagardien's photograph on display at the South African Museum, 1993.  
**Credit:** Iziko Museums of South Africa

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<sup>989</sup> Dialogue with Patricia Davison.

<sup>990</sup> Dialogue with Lindsay Hooper, Cape Town, May 28, 2021.

<sup>991</sup> Dialogue with Lindsay Hooper.

<sup>992</sup> Dialogue with Lindsay Hooper.

Odendaal welcomed the veiling as “a very thoughtful and sensitive way” of dealing with the curatorial contestation.<sup>993</sup> In retrospect, he said reflectively, with reference to contemporary thinking on the effects of systemic oppression on the black body, “I see that tracing paper as a thing of beauty to sort of shroud this incredibly meaningful kind of image and the body, ”(Figure 27).<sup>994</sup>

The encounter with the image left an indelible mark on the minds of the curatorial team. As individuals they were, with one notable exception, deeply affected by their encounters with it. As museum professionals, the encounters unsettled their ‘liberal’ identities, raised disconcerting questions about the ethics of curatorial practice and challenged them to devise appropriate measure to mediate museum visitors encounter with the image. Given the layered impact of the encounter, it was interesting, in conversation, to find how vague their memory of the “image that caused all the trouble”<sup>995</sup> was: they remembered their encounter with the image with much more clarity than the image itself.

Klinghardt was somewhat bemused by my interest in what he seemed to feel was a rather inconsequential photograph. As a highly qualified anthropologist, his keenly honed observational skills are evidenced in his description of the image,

“It was quite large, an A3 size photograph and it showed two people who’d been shot by South African security forces and um, I’m now talking from my own memory. It was taken in a morgue. It wasn’t actually a site, an on-site picture. And it showed the head injuries, the fatal injuries they suffered very graphically. So it was very obvious that they’d been shot and um, ja, so it showed um, the practical results of violence by the security forces on people involved in the struggle.”<sup>996</sup>

While concerned that encounters with the image might upset museum visitors, Klinghardt, said that he was not personally affected by it, explaining that “as an anthropologist you see imagery like that, and if you’re interested in photography, sooner or later you’ll come across that sort of thing . . . it’s not something that comes at you out of the blue.”<sup>997</sup>

Davison recalls her sense of discomfort about raising objections to the inclusion of the image in the exhibition very clearly, but she has only a vague memory of the photograph itself, saying rather hesitantly, a slight frown creasing her forehead as she struggled to recall the details, that, “It was a young woman and a man, presumably her partner, they seemed to be in bed . . . they were covered by a sheet, so it seemed to me as though they had been shot up while sleeping. There was blood and there were . . .” before admitting

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<sup>993</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal.

<sup>994</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal, December.

<sup>995</sup> Impromptu conversation with André Odendaal, 9 August 2014.

<sup>996</sup> Dialogue with Gerald Klinghardt.

<sup>997</sup> Dialogue with Gerald Klinghardt.

apologetically that “I actually can’t recall it too specifically.”<sup>998</sup>

Like Davison, Hooper admits that her memory of the image is imprecise, and said that she had never given much thought to where Jackie and Leon might have been photographed, saying, “I suppose one might have thought their home, because there’s a sort of intimacy in it, you know”, adding that “they’re not lying in a battlefield . . . like Sharpeville picture[s], the June ’76 picture, sort of in the heat of the scene.”<sup>999</sup> While she may not be able to describe the photograph clearly, Hooper did not remember it as being explicitly violent. She said, “I might be making things up, but I don’t remember that the image *as such* was horrific. I mean, it wasn’t violent or bloody or anguished faces. It was just that sort of calm, if you like, which is a horrible cliché, but with the sort of oblivion of, of, not being there of just being taken away, removed . . .”<sup>1000</sup> Speaking quietly and reflectively, struggling to find the words to express a previously unspoken thought Hooper continues,

“But, at the same time, being two people, looking like a couple, and all that that’s about, it brought home individuals who’d become involved, um, to such a degree um, and, and who still weren’t really sort of political actors, but because they were a couple, that, that intimacy . . . I don’t know if I felt all that at the time or if I’m making it up now thinking about it again. But with that, you know, if I were to think about that image and what it could signify to viewers that, that would be it.”<sup>1001</sup>

Hooper’s admission that her memory might be ‘out’ and her suggestion that her thinking in the present may not accord with her thinking in the past highlights the transience and mutability of memory and the way it shifts and changes over time.<sup>1002</sup> In the exhibition, Lagardien’s image is veiled in paper, in Hooper’s mind its veiled by the passage of time and by her own evolving thinking, and the complex debates on display ethics within the SAM in the years after the photograph was shown. In the absence of a clear and fixed memory, Hooper imagines, from the position of the present, how she might have thought in the past.

Odendaal didn’t offer any description of the photograph apart from his comment on “the beautiful blonde woman”<sup>1003</sup> quoted earlier, but admitted that, “the photo has always been *very* much, in my head, basically, it’s one of those you know, going back to the 80s in particular, where even now, when you think back on it, you just become emotional.”<sup>1004</sup> “It’s a powerful image” he said, the kind that “just sort of grabs you, puts a fist around your . . . grabs your chest . . .”<sup>1005</sup> For him, the subject matter and the form of the image are superseded by the cruel brutality it speaks to, represents and evokes, “the absolute trauma of individual lives”<sup>1006</sup> and the pain of

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<sup>998</sup> Dialogue with Patricia Davison.

<sup>999</sup> Dialogue with Kindsay Hooper.

<sup>1000</sup> Dialogue with Lindsay Hooper.

<sup>1001</sup> Dialogue with Lindsay Hooper.

<sup>1002</sup> This accords with Portelli’s contention that “often narrators are capable of reconstructing their past attitudes even when they no longer coincide with present ones.” Alessandro Portelli, *Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories, Form and Meaning in Oral History* (New York: SUNY Press, 1979/1991), 53.

<sup>1003</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal. ATTEND TO THIS DATE

<sup>1004</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal. ATTEND TO THIS DATE

<sup>1005</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal. ATTEND TO THIS DATE

<sup>1006</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal. ATTEND TO THIS DATE

the institutionalised violence that that enabled colonialism and apartheid.<sup>1007</sup>

Reflecting on images made in the 1980s that affected him similarly, Odendaal mentioned a photograph of Frederick Jansen, a forty-six-year-old white man, necklaced near Nyanga in August 1980.<sup>1008</sup> Describing this photograph as a “nightmare” that unsettled him for a long time after he encountered it, Odendaal said, “the eyes were like vacant but looking there, at you ...”<sup>1009</sup> While his recall of this image is sharp, Odendaal’s description of Lagardien’s photograph as a “beautiful blonde woman, almost a sacrificial angel”<sup>1010</sup> suggests that the image he sees in his mind does not mirror the published photograph.<sup>1011</sup> Instead, it is screened, not to protect him, as one might expect, but to amplify its meaning and enable him to articulate the almost unsayable complexities of his response, resonating with his profound acknowledgment of the humanity of the victims.

Odendaal suggested that the selection of Lagardien’s photograph was, in part, related to its timing, just a few years after the 1980s, when “10s of 1000s of people were being arrested including children, my own students ...”<sup>1012</sup> and to the “sheer violence of early 1990s” while the exhibition was in preparation. By 2001, when Samson’s photograph was used in an exhibition at the Apartheid Museum, discussed below, the context had changed significantly. At the very least, the TRC had completed its work.

### **SABC Truth Commission Special Report series (1996-1998)**

The year after *EsiQithini* was dismantled marked a pivotal point in South African history: 1994 saw the conclusion of negotiations between the National Party and the liberation movements that lead to the country’s first democratic election; the formation of a Government of National Unity; and Nelson Mandela’s presidency setting in motion sweeping changes across all sectors of society.

One of the outcomes of the negotiations was the establishment of the South African TRC. It was a political compromise forged between former enemies who recognised the need to uncover and document the truth<sup>1013</sup> about human rights violations committed by the apartheid regime and, where appropriate, recommend that perpetrators be granted amnesty. In so doing, it aimed to contribute to reconciliation, healing, social cohesion, and nation building.

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<sup>1007</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal.

<sup>1008</sup> Stephen Wrottesley, “Man burnt to death by mobs,” *Cape Times*, August 12, 1980.

<sup>1009</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal, December. The image described by Odendaal differs slightly from the two photographs published in the *Cape Times*, which show Jansen with his head bowed. As these were taken in quick succession it is possible that Odendaal saw another one of the series elsewhere.

<sup>1010</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal.

<sup>1011</sup> The image Odendaal remembers included other bodies, it is possible that he may have seen a photograph taken by another photographer, possibly an ANC representative.

<sup>1012</sup> Dialogue with André Odendaal, December.

<sup>1013</sup> The TRC conceptualised four forms of ‘truth,’ Factual or forensic truth, personal or narrative truth, social truth, and healing or restorative truth. *TRC Report*, Volume One, 110-114.

Ongoing critiques of the TRC suggest that its genesis as a political compromise and the limitations of its legislated mandate and powers were not fully appreciated, and its intentions were not fully realised. In terms of its founding legislation, *The Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act 34 of 1995*,<sup>1014</sup> the TRC's mandate was to consider actions that constituted a "gross violation of human rights." These are defined in the Act as, "the killing, abduction, torture or severe ill-treatment of any person," or "any attempt, conspiracy, incitement, instigation, command or procurement" to do so as "advised, planned, directed, commanded or ordered, by any person acting with a political motive."<sup>1015</sup>

The scope of the TRC was contentiously limited to the period from 1 March 1960 to 5 December 1993, rather than from 1948, when the National Party took power. In his critique of the TRC, written in collaboration with Dumisa Ntsebeza, one of the commissioners, activist Terry Bell describes some of the shortcomings that marred the process and argues that,

"... no serious examination was made of the system that gave rise to some of the horrific, racist engineering of modern times. Instead, there was a concentration on a proportion of the individual victims who came forward and on their immediate torturers, killers and persecutors. This narrowly focussed litany of bloodshed and brutality often obscured more than it revealed."<sup>1016</sup>

Deborah Posel concurs, in part, with Bell and Ntsebeza, arguing that the TRC did not realise its mandate "to establish as complete a picture as possible of the nature, causes and extent of the gross human rights violations."<sup>1017</sup> Instead, she suggests, the "moral truth about wrongdoing, conflict and injustice"<sup>1018</sup> could be represented by a few selected instances which illustrated the collective experience.<sup>1019</sup> While this has been raised as a short coming of the TRC, the tight focus on individual cases that carried through into the *Special Report* series created a compelling narrative about the country's collective past. As Posel suggests, "Enough detail about the fact and prevalence of gross human rights violations has been exposed to debunk any lingering attempts to either sanitise apartheid or romanticise the struggle against it."<sup>1020</sup>

Although the it was granted powers of subpoena, search and seizure, as a transitional justice mechanism, the TRC's legal powers were limited, and it was not mandated to prosecute perpetrators, but merely to refer relevant cases to the National Prosecutions Authority for further investigation and action, effectively delinking

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<sup>1014</sup> Republic of South Africa, *Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act 34 of 1995*, accessed December 2024 [https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis\\_document/201409/act34of1995.pdf](https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/act34of1995.pdf).

<sup>1015</sup> *Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act 34 of 1995*, 1(1) ix.

<sup>1016</sup> Terry Bell in collaboration with Dumisa Ntsebenza, *Unfinished Business: South Africa, Apartheid and Truth*, (Obervatory: Redworks, 2001), 1.

<sup>1017</sup> Deborah Posel, "The TRC Report: What Kind of History? What Kind of Truth," paper presented at the Wits History Workshop conference, *The TRC; Commissioning the Past*, 11 to 14 June, 1999, 1. See also Posel, Deborah. "What Kind of History? What Kind of Truth." In *Commissioning the Past: Understanding South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission* edited by Deborah Posel and Graeme Simpson, 147-172. Johannesburg. Wits University Press, 2002.

<sup>1018</sup> Deborah Posel, "The TRC Report: What Kind of History? What Kind of Truth," 8.

<sup>1019</sup> Deborah Posel, 8.

<sup>1020</sup> Deborah Posel, 28.

'truth' from 'justice.'<sup>1021</sup> While the TRC has been lauded for exposing the brutal truths of the apartheid era, it has been widely criticised for its failure to secure retributive justice for the victims of gross human rights violations and their families.

In a bold move the Commission decided to conduct public hearings, rather than to hear testimonies *in camera*. The extensive media coverage of these hearings made the TRC, as Catherine Coles contends, a media event, "a historic occasion of state that was broadcast as it unfolded in time."<sup>1022</sup> As Andrew Boraine, the Deputy Chair, acknowledged, "The TRC owes a huge debt to the media of South Africa. Without coverage in newspapers and magazines and without the account of proceedings on TV screens and without the voice of the TRC being beamed through radio across the land, its work would be disadvantaged and immeasurably poorer."<sup>1023</sup>

Arguably the most significant coverage of the hearings was provided by the SABC, South Africa's public broadcaster, in regular news bulletins and, from 21 April 1996 to 29 March 1998, through weekly reviews, the *Special Report* series which was presented and produced by Max du Preez and a team of investigative journalists.

Du Preez is a political analyst, documentary film maker, author, and the editor and publisher of *Vrye Weekblad*.<sup>1024</sup> At heart, he is an investigative journalist who describes himself as a "renegade reporter."<sup>1025</sup> Joe Thlooe, who led the SABC Television News team in the 1990s, explained that du Preez was well positioned to produce and present *Special Report* because of the work that he and his colleagues at *Vrye Weekblad* had done to expose "apartheid's murderers."<sup>1026</sup> Du Preez admitted candidly when we met, that "I knew *more* about the atrocities of the past than any other living soul, including the security police ..."<sup>1027</sup> He also said emphatically that, he believed that as a white Afrikaans man, he was well suited to his role; it was important, in the context of South Africa's past, for black viewers to see the violations of the past acknowledged by a white presenter, and easier for white audiences, who identified with him, to adjust to the new reality he brought into view.<sup>1028</sup>

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<sup>1021</sup> Applicants who were deemed to have made a full disclosure and granted amnesty were not subject to prosecution. Those who were deemed not to have told the truth, or made full disclosure were [theoretically] subject to justice.

<sup>1022</sup> Catherine Cole, "Mediating testimony: broadcasting South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission," in *Documentary Testimonies: Global Archives of Suffering* edited by Bhaskar Sarkar and Jane Walker (New York and London: Routledge, 2009), 197.

<sup>1023</sup> Alex Boraine, quoted in Anthea Garman, "How the TRC and the media have impacted on each other," *Track Two* 6, nos 3 & 4 (1997), unpaginated.

<sup>1024</sup> Du Preez was forced to close *Vrye Weekblad* in 1994 incurring substantial legal costs as a result of losing a court case against South African police general Lothar Neethling who denied allegation made by the newspaper that he had supplied the poisons used by the security police to kill activists. This charge later proved to be true. Following the close of *Vrye Weekblad*, du Preez was employed by the SABC,

<sup>1025</sup> See title of his memoir, Max du Preez, *Pale Native: Memories of a Renegade Reporter* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2003).

<sup>1026</sup> Joe Thlooe, "Showing faces, hearing voices, tugging at emotions: televising the Truth and Reconciliation Commission," *Nieman Reports* 52, no 4 (1998), 53-56.

<sup>1027</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez, Kalk Bay, January 14, 2025.

<sup>1028</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez.

Du Preez is a compelling storyteller, he speaks animatedly, using his hands expressively to make a point, and his passion for the work he has done is evident in the intensity of his tone. Explaining his approach to the series, he said firmly, I told the SABC, “you can have a news bulletin, but *we* will tell the stories on Sunday night,”<sup>1029</sup> to “swamp people’s consciousness.”<sup>1030</sup> Du Preez and his team did this to such great effect as a presenter that he soon became, in the minds of the viewers, the public face of the TRC, and would be approached at hearings by the people who wanted advice or simply to talk. In the process, he said they “stopped seeing me as a journalist . . . because I stopped being a journalist. I was a citizen first . . .”<sup>1031</sup> He is justifiably proud of *Special Report*, describing it as “a special kind of documentary made, under huge pressure”<sup>1032</sup> with a very small team.

From the outset, Du Preez explained, *Special Report* had two jobs to do, two audiences to reach. The first job they had to do, he said, was to give black South Africans an opportunity to be heard, seen, and acknowledged on national television. He explained, “We had to *show* it . . . We had to . . . let their voices speak, let the people *hear* the stories, because they’d been denied a voice, the victims before, and the survivors . . . and here we were, my cameras were the eyes of the nation, and we were *recording* and *honouring* their memories.”<sup>1033</sup> “They knew,” he recalled, when they saw his cameras,<sup>1034</sup> “that [we] were not talking just to the commissioners, they were talking to the whole nation. *That* was the impact of the TV coverage.”<sup>1035</sup> This is evident in the sensitive treatment of Dawn Botha, Leon’s sister, when the camera focusses intently on her face as she testifies, so that viewers could observe her facial expressions, her body language and gestures, as if in a face-to-face encounter with her, in real time as she paints a graphic picture of the shocking devastation she encountered in the house where Jackie and Leon were killed.

The other job, he said, was to get white South Africans to watch *Special Report* because the Afrikaans newspapers, the National Party and right-wing organisations were all against the TRC. “The National Party’s propaganda machine was very successful” he explained, “all these stories of torture, disappearances, they’re all communist lies, so it was kind of easy for white people, but deep down, they must have known.”<sup>1036</sup>

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<sup>1029</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez.

<sup>1030</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez.

<sup>1031</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez.

<sup>1032</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez.

<sup>1033</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez. A similar point is made in the Publisher’s Note that prefaces Anje Krog’s *Country of My Skull* (Johannesburg: Random House, 1998), viii, “Many voices` of this country were long silent, unheard, often unheeded before they spoke, in their own tongues, at the micorphones of South Africa’s Truth Commissin. The voices of ordinary people have entered the public discourse and shaped the passage of history.”

<sup>1034</sup> Du Preez contends that one of the ways encounters like this were mediated was by briefing people before they testified, explaining that “if you get to a point where you really feel it’s important to make a point that you want heard, look at the camera with a little red light on it. If the red light is on, that camera is recording you. Look into that because it’s far more powerful then, lean forward and look into that camera.”<sup>1034</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez.

<sup>1035</sup> Du Preez quoted in Thloloe, “Showing faces,” 53-56.

<sup>1036</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez.

Expressing a similar sentiment, Mary Burton, one of the Commissioners explained that,

“a commission of truth . . . must gather in stories to reach that truth which is, in a way, already widely known and accepted. But we need to make it legitimate through that process. We need to tell and record and validate that truth. We need to acknowledge the wrongs, not only in terms of justice and hurt, but also of terrible loss.”<sup>1037</sup>

What du Preez and his team did very effectively to achieve this was to bring viewers face-to-face with perpetrators, filming or editing the footage so that viewers would “look into a perpetrator’s eyes.”<sup>1038</sup> As du Preez described both the motivation and the technique used, “we move in this close, into the eyes of our camera,”<sup>1039</sup> bringing a hand hard up against his face so that the viewer can see, “a man pleading for mercy because he tortured and he killed.”<sup>1040</sup> “Whites should see that,” he added, “they should see that for breakfast and lunch and supper . . . it was important to work in such a way these people would *watch* and *see* and not to be able to deny any longer.”<sup>1041</sup> Du Preez’s words resonate with those of Michael Ignatieff who argues that, “All that a truth commission can achieve is to reduce the number of lies that can be circulated unchallenged in public discourse.”<sup>1042</sup> In other countries, like Rwanda and Cambodia, du Preez said, conflicts were followed almost immediately by a period of denial. This did not happen in South Africa because, as he explained vehemently “they *saw* the fucking monsters that came out of our past. They *saw* their faces. They *know* what they did. They *saw* these men beg for mercy and say, ‘and then I took out my pistol and then I shot this man in his head in front of his child.’ And that’s horror.”<sup>1043</sup> Sequences like this affirm the notion of ‘confession’ central to the TRC process, and to forgiveness. But, recalling the episodes I am chilled by the memory of the camera zooming in on Nortje’s impassive face. Many years after I first saw that, I still wonder whether some people are innately evil, unredeemable, a thought that fills me with horror, (Figure 28).

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<sup>1037</sup> Mary Burton quoted in Andre Boraine and Janet Levy , eds. *The Healing of a Nation?* (Cape Town: Justice in Transition, 1995), 122-123.

<sup>1038</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez.

<sup>1039</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez.

<sup>1040</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez

<sup>1041</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez

<sup>1042</sup> Michael Ignatieff, “Articles of Faith,” *Index on Censorship* 5 (1996), 113.

<sup>1043</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez.



**Figure 27:** Screenshot from *Special Report*, Episode 4, May 12, 1996.

Officer Willie Nortje, one of the Vlakplaas operatives whose affidavits offer a detailed account of the Raid. He and the others were refused amnesty for the killing of Jackie, and Nomkhosi Mini.

**Credit:** SABC

"You can't *not* show the horror"<sup>1044</sup> Du Preez said, speaking of the archival footage included in the series, "but you can't do it gratuitously,"<sup>1045</sup> admitting that the team struggled with that issue all the time. The team struggled on a personal level too, du Preez said soberly, sighing as he explained his first team had lasted for two weeks, "It was a job for team of 25, we had five people and four of them had nervous breakdowns . . ."<sup>1046</sup> The next team, he says, included people with longer journalism experience, but they still struggled with ongoing encounters with the violent past. "It freaked us out,"<sup>1047</sup> he said, "it freaked us out because not only do you sit there, in the hall where these people speak . . . but then you go back to the office, and on a screen this big, with your nose this far [as he speaks du Preez mimes the size of the screen and leans forward as to press his face hard up against the screen] and you watch all that footage again and again as you edit it."<sup>1048</sup>

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<sup>1044</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez.

<sup>1045</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez.

<sup>1046</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez.

<sup>1047</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez.

<sup>1048</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez.

Du Preez suffered two heart attacks during the making of *Special Report*, but it was not until a year after the series ended when, on his return from a trip to Rwanda, his wife asked an innocuous question about his experiences there, that “I started crying, and I couldn’t stop crying until the next morning. Not because of Rwanda, because of this shit, my country, the Truth Commission. Your life in this country, this bitter fucking country. To me, it was one of the most bizarre experiences of my life. I cried for every murdered person, tortured person, incarcerated person, and all my ancestors who perpetrated this ...”<sup>1049</sup>

Turning his attention to the scene in the mortuary, and bringing it to mind as we spoke, du Preez turned his head away slightly, squeezing his eyes closed tightly, as he said hesitantly, “on my way here. I was sort of trying to recall it in my mind. I remember ... her lying and with like a ... a metal case or, or something behind ...”<sup>1050</sup> Opening his eyes again as he turned back to face me, he spoke more confidently about the team’s encounter with the image, telling me, “I remember us talking about it, debating the image, whether we should show it at all. And I said, well, white people need to see it. Also, because it was a very dark room, her white arm stood out, it was outstretched if I remember correctly, and I said *that* will stay in people’s minds, you *cannot* not use it ...”<sup>1051</sup> There was always, du Preez conceded, a fine line between “not diminishing the horror”<sup>1052</sup> of the event, and considering the feelings of family and friends, and the team was careful to use scenes like these for a few brief few seconds.

Regarding the context in which the scene was used, du Preez explained that one of the “important tricks” the *Special Report* team used was to intercut footage of testimonies with archival material that showed how events had been represented by the SABC at the time they occurred. “This was shocking”<sup>1053</sup> he said, because “when we told the story through the people who survived it, and then played the SABC’s news bulletin,<sup>1054</sup> it was like, oh my god, it’s from two different planets, which was the point we wanted to make. I think it was very effective.”<sup>1055</sup>

The juxtaposition of gritty archival footage with the poignant or unsettling face-to-face encounters described earlier makes for a compelling viewing. Although the looping backwards and forwards makes for a degree of temporal unsettlement, it is an effective device, reflective of the TRC’s mandate to look back on a difficult past and forward to a more just future. In the series, this technique is used effectively to bring the past into the

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<sup>1049</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez.

<sup>1050</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez.

<sup>1051</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez.

<sup>1052</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez.

<sup>1053</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez.

<sup>1054</sup> Speaking three decades later, du Preez was not able to pinpoint the source of the mortuary footage precisely, explaining that while most of the material was drawn from the SABC archives, it might well have come from elsewhere, because “there was this cozy relationship between the SABC and the police, and the military.”

<sup>1055</sup> Dialogue with Max du Preez.

present very directly, implicating the viewer and affirming that *this* is what happened, *this* is what is worth remembering, showing that *this* is how it affected us and asking, is forgiveness possible in the face of this truth?

Four of the 87 episodes of *Special Report* show the footage made in the mortuary, locating the scene in a kaleidoscopic array of images, issues, emotions and analysis that shifted and changed, sending multiple messages about suffering, past brutalities, restorative justice, forgiveness and reconciliation, and the need to remember and commemorate the past in the present. Episode 4<sup>1056</sup> covers the tearful testimonies of the Quin family, Jackie's parents Philip and Patricia, and Jane's powerfully emotive call for information about the killers, and for justice. Episode 6<sup>1057</sup> breaks the news of Vlakplaas involvement in the Raid, as outlined in Nortje's affidavit (as described in Chapter Three). Episode 15<sup>1058</sup> covers the testimony of Leon's sister, Dawn Botha, who called humbly for reparations for the children of victims before softly and firmly rebuking the TRC for not subpoenaing the Vlakplaas men who had been implicated in the Raid, making it clear that for her and her family truth was not an alternative to justice. Episode 82,<sup>1059</sup> located the Raid within the broader context of South Africa's attacks on neighbouring states.

As du Preez noted in our dialogue, there is a growing body of academic work that points to ways in which *Special Report* shaped the perceptions of viewers, and by implication their encounters with archival footage, including the scene of Jackie and Leon in the Maseru mortuary. Annelies Verdoolaege's systematic study assesses the series in terms of three criteria: sensationalism, partiality, and simplification. She concludes that the series, while trying to be even-handed, was, to some extent sensationalised and biased because it "supported and spread the reconciling message of the TRC."<sup>1060</sup> While her analysis has merit, Thloloe argues that this was the team's intention, saying, "We went beyond just telling the story: we actively encouraged the process of reconciliation . . . We brought victims and perpetrators together in a way the Commission couldn't do."<sup>1061</sup> In so doing, he adds, "We were making the truth a South African burden and taking it into people's homes."<sup>1062</sup>

Catherine Cole argues that the TRC was not just a media event, as suggested above, it was also a performance, "a time-based event that unfolded before an audience assembled in person, as well as spectators who

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<sup>1056</sup> SABC *Truth Commission Special Report* Episode 04, Part 03, May 12, 1996, accessed January 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWdWhZ39nql>.

<sup>1057</sup> SABC *Truth Commission Special Report* Episode 06, Part 06, June 16, 1996, accessed January 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QA-ULEJ0vo>.

<sup>1058</sup> SABC *Truth Commission Special Report* Episode 15, Part 06, August 18, 1996, accessed January 2025, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tH\\_vX2D9hg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tH_vX2D9hg).

<sup>1059</sup> SABC *Truth Commission Special Report* Episode 82 Part 03, February 22, 1998, accessed January 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFITBaHi8X4>.

<sup>1060</sup> Annelies Verdoolaege, "Media Representation of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Their Commitment to Reconciliation," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 17 (2005), 196.

<sup>1061</sup> Thloloe, 53-56.

<sup>1062</sup> Thloloe, 53-56.

witnessed remotely by listening to radios or watching on television; the media constituted simultaneously a representation and a performance in the process, enlisting a larger body politic to also participate in the TRC process.”<sup>1063</sup> Transcripts of the hearings and newspaper reports on these offer insight into the content delivered by those testifying, and may be skimmed quickly, but the hearings, as re-presented in *Special Report*, offer a qualitatively different encounter that is both visual and sonic. Describing the sonic qualities, she writes,

“The hearings became literally *hearings*, something that could be listened to, a sonic experience that communicated through orality: the cadence, inflections, rhythms, volume, accent and grain of the voice. Television and radio transmitted the pauses, hesitations, revisions of sentences, dangling phrases and silences that were sometimes filled with sighs, an inhalation, a wail of grief, or sometimes nothing at all, just silence.”<sup>1064</sup>

The moments described in Cole’s closing line are those that were incorporated into Swinney’s composition, *Silencer* (2017), discussed in Chapter Five.

In his paper on the *Special Report*, Thloloe remarks that, “it was a massive privilege to record our history for our children and grandchildren,”<sup>1065</sup> and expresses the hope that they will be able to “get to the archives and call up the evidence and truly understand what it was like for previous generations to live under apartheid.”<sup>1066</sup> While *Special Report* may have done the work it set out to do, as described by Thloloe and du Preez above, its legacy as an archival resource is lies in its powerful articulation of the how the past – and the future – were imagined and represented in the then present.

### **Apartheid Museum: Destabilising The Frontline States Between 1975 and 1988 (2001)**

In the cultural sector, the transition to democracy spurred a flurry of activity, building on the foundations laid by the initiatives discussed earlier in this Chapter. In 1994, the then Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Dr Ben Ngubane, established the Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG) to make recommendations for a new arts, culture, and heritage policy, through a broadly based national consultative process. Amongst many other issues, the ACTAG Report, handed to the Minister in 1996, argued that the majority of South Africans have been excluded from “our history books” and recommended various forms of redress.<sup>1067</sup> These were entrenched in the *White Paper on Arts Culture and Heritage: All our Legacies, Our Common Future*, 1996.<sup>1068</sup> In the museum sector, this was widely interpreted as a call to focus on activities – research, exhibitions and public programmes – associated with the liberation struggle, social histories and community-

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<sup>1063</sup> Cole, “Mediating testimony”, 199.

<sup>1064</sup> Cole, 202.

<sup>1065</sup> Thloloe, 53-56.

<sup>1066</sup> Thloloe, 53-56.

<sup>1067</sup> South African Arts and Culture Task Group, *Report of the Arts and Culture Task Group presented to the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology*, 1995.

<sup>1068</sup> Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, *White Paper on Arts Culture and Heritage: All our Legacies, Our Common Future*, 1996, accessed June 2024, <https://www.gov.za/documents/white-papers/arts-and-culture-white-paper-04-jun-1996>.

based initiatives, while archivists embraced oral history as a means to fulfil the mandate to “document aspects of the nation’s experience neglected by archives repositories in the past.”<sup>1069</sup>

During the same period, the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) initiated a series of Legacy Projects to commemorate historic events and leaders marginalised by institutions established under the previous dispensation.<sup>1070</sup> Beyond DACST’s ambit, an unprecedented upsurge in community-based and private heritage initiatives played an important role in complementing the work of museums under the control of national provincial and local authorities and the newly established Legacy Projects.

The Apartheid Museum, launched in the wake of the activities described above, was established by the developers of Gold Reef City, Abe and Solly Krok, in response to a stipulation from government that all new applications for casino licences include a ‘social responsibility’ component.<sup>1071</sup> Sitting incongruously alongside the casino and representation of Johannesburg as a “Wild West frontier illusion of fun, camaraderie and equal opportunity for the bold-hearted,”<sup>1072</sup> the displays of the Apartheid Museum speak to the everyday humiliations and the brutal violence inflicted by the apartheid government.

Like Odendaal, Christopher Till, the then Director of the Museum and his team of associates looked closely at Holocaust museums, “because of the obvious parallels with very violent and distressing images of dead bodies piled up dead bodies, dead bodies being bulldozed into graves, naked woman being chased down the street shot ...”<sup>1073</sup> Reflecting on all they had seen, Till explained that the team decided to frame the visitor’s encounter with displays as a “*viscera*/experience.”<sup>1074</sup> This, he suggested, would facilitate their mission to serve not only as a site of memory, but also as a point of departure from which to navigate a more just and equitable future.<sup>1075</sup> With this in mind, they “decided to take the gloves off, and just show the world the horror of what apartheid was and is.”<sup>1076</sup> One of the ways they achieved this, Till said, was to use images, and minimal texts that functioned “as a label, more than anything else, to give the sense of what that moment was,”<sup>1077</sup> a decision he says “gave birth to quite a lot of this quite strong, visual stuff.”<sup>1078</sup>

Just as the curatorial team had planned, museum displays combine photographs, artefacts, audiovisual footage,

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<sup>1069</sup> Republic of South Africa, *National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act, No 43 of 1996*, 3 (d).

<sup>1070</sup> This resulted in the establishment of new ‘national’ museums including Robben Island Museum (1997), Ncome Cultural Museum (1999), Freedom Park (2000), Nelson Mandela Museum (2000), Luthuli Museum (2004) and the Samora Machel Monument and Museum (2006).

<sup>1071</sup> Similarly, the developers of Caesar’s Casino, (now Emperors Palace) built on the site of the World Trade Centre, the venue for the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) established the Ubunye Museum, to tell the story of the negotiations.

<sup>1072</sup> Martin Hall and Pia Bombardella, “Las Vegas in Africa,” *Journal of Social Archaeology* 5, no 1 (2005), 15.

<sup>1073</sup> Dialogue with Christopher Till, Cape Town, February 18, 2016.

<sup>1074</sup> Dialogue with Christopher Till.

<sup>1075</sup> Dialogue with Christopher Till.

<sup>1076</sup> Dialogue with Christopher Till.

<sup>1077</sup> Dialogue with Christopher Till.

<sup>1078</sup> Dialogue with Christopher Till.

interactive elements and installations to create a dynamic and powerfully affective experience. Elizabeth Rankin and Leoni Schmidt, commenting on this, in relation to this museum as well as others dealing with the Holocaust, argue that “contemporary curators aim to involve viewers in more affective experiences: deliberate eliciting of subjectivity deposes apparent objectivity, with history to be perceived not merely as recounting, or even memorialising, but empathising.”<sup>1079</sup> The immersive journey through the exhibition is all consuming. On arrival, visitors are assigned a racial classification and then directed through separate entrances, evoking the apartheid segregation of facilities. The labyrinthine interior is dominated visually by large photographs, some black and white or sepia toned, others in full colour. As Newbury suggests, like the Holocaust museums, the Apartheid Museum is heavily dependent on photographs to convey information and stories.”<sup>1080</sup> It is noisy too, filled with a cacophony of sound emanating from multiple audio-visual productions. This, together with installations such as a room decked out with nooses hanging from the ceiling, offer visitors few, if any, opportunities to escape the intensity or pause for reflection, making for an experience that is shocking, thought-provoking and emotional.

In a niche on the periphery of the main exhibitions, a small, quieter display, *Destabilising the Frontline States between 1975 and 1988*, tells the story of cross-border raids, and other acts of aggression perpetrated by South African defence and security forces. Unlike the other displays, which contain video footage, this one is static and silent, comprising almost monochromatic text and image panels arranged along a timeline, (Figure 29). Some entries on the timeline text explain the nature of the incursion, provide details of the casualties inflicted, and show the damage caused to property. Others simply name or mention the event, relying on the “veracity and authenticity of the photograph, its ability to provide a window through which visitors can see and experience the past.”<sup>1081</sup>

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<sup>1079</sup> Elizabeth Rankin and Leoni Schmidt, “The Apartheid Museum: performing Spatial Dialectics,” *Journal of Visual Culture* 8, no 1 (2009), 77.

<sup>1080</sup> Darren Newbury, “‘Lest we forget’: photography and the presentation of history at the Apartheid Museum, Gold Reef City and the Hector Pietersen Museum, Soweto,” *Visual Communication* 4 (2005), 262.

<sup>1081</sup> Darren Newbury, “‘Lest we forget’” 286.



Figure 28: Trevor Samson’s photograph on display at the Apartheid Museum, 2001-2017.

In this display, Samson’s photograph is incorrectly positioned under the wrong date, 1982, linking it to the earlier attack on Maseru, and a short text which reads, “9 December 1982: The SADF carries out raids on supposed ANC targets in Maseru (Lesotho), in the same month SADF units destroy oil storage tanks in Beira (Mozambique),” while the caption below the photograph reads, “Leon Meyer and Jackie Quinn, 14 June 1982.” In addition to the errors and inconsistencies with the dates, Jackie’s surname is incorrectly spelt with a double ‘n’.<sup>1082</sup> As Till admitted, when this was brought to his attention, the display was a hurriedly prepared afterthought to the main exhibition.<sup>1083</sup> While many of the other exhibition components focus on the effects of systemic violence *in* South Africa, this display is intended to highlight punitive actions taken by the state and its agents *beyond* the country’s borders. Many of the photographs in this display have been mentioned in this thesis and seen previously in association with images of Jackie and Leon. Unlike Jackie and Leon, many of the depicted persons in the rest of this display are not named. Most are unrecognisable: some have been severely wounded or mutilated, others are cruelly heaped in a mass burial or photographed from afar, or at an angle that does not show their faces. In Samson’s photograph, even Leon’s face is turned away from the camera, leaving Jackie as the only dead person who is clearly identifiable and named, a dubious distinction that applies not just to this display but to all the static panels in the museum. Other identifiable victims, like the AWB members killed

<sup>1082</sup> In 2014 I pointed out the errors in the caption and placement of Samson’s photograph, noting that neither the photographer nor the source had been credited. Over a period of fourteen months I sent eight polite emails requesting a response. Finally I penned an irate email and was invited to a meeting with Christopher Till, the then-Director. The exhibition was subsequently reviewed and revised.

<sup>1083</sup> Dialogue with Christopher Till.

in Bophuthatswana mentioned by Sue Krige, below, are only visible fleetingly on the numerous screens devoted to audio-visual coverage of events.

Expanding on the rationale behind the curatorial decision to include images that show the impact of the violence and brutality enacted by the apartheid regime on those who opposed it, Till asked rhetorically, “where do you begin to put together a museum, which describes centuries of abuse and terrifying incidents like the whole, hit squads, and God knows what?”<sup>1084</sup> Till took note of concerns I raised about the cross-border display, as summarised above, and explained that he was planning to re-configure it completely. Still, he was a bit nonplussed exclaiming “it’s extraordinary for me to think that it’s been there for 15 years, but *now* it’s become difficult,”<sup>1085</sup> and wondering why the concerns I expressed had not been raised earlier by others. Nevertheless, he agreed that public perceptions and sensitivities change over time, as does professional practice, and that displays that might have been deemed acceptable 20 years ago, may no longer be considered appropriate in the present. But, he asked, where does one draw the line, should every violent image be removed or just those that show a person “who is identifiable *and* has been identified,”<sup>1086</sup> and wondered whether “the same criteria apply to film?”<sup>1087</sup>

Sue Krige, the historian commissioned in 2016 to re-configure the cross-border display, found many of the images in the display disturbing and expressed her concerns about how visitors, especially those of school-going age might respond to their encounters with them. Also, she said, her words resonating with Davison’s, “it’s disrespectful to the dead,” to be portrayed like this.<sup>1088</sup> The new display, she explained, aimed to “create a sense of them [the victims] as ‘real people’”<sup>1089</sup> and to tell their stories in a way that encouraged visitors to reflect on the consequences of the violence on individual lives. Krige’s words resonate with Odendaal’s intention to frame the visitor encounter to promote empathy and honour the humanity of the victims rather than provoke horror and outrage.

Krige found photographs of the victims on display disturbing, but confessed that what she found almost unbearable, were encounters with images of the “‘about to die’ moment.”<sup>1090</sup> Photographs like that Krige said, are “more terrible”<sup>1091</sup> than those of victims like Jackie and Leon whose “suffering is over.”<sup>1092</sup> Describing specific images that came into mind as she spoke, she said, “I remember there was a woman who was tied to a

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<sup>1084</sup> Dialogue with Christopher Till.

<sup>1085</sup> Dialogue with Christopher Till.

<sup>1086</sup> Dialogue with Christopher Till.

<sup>1087</sup> Dialogue with Christopher Till.

<sup>1088</sup> Dialogue with Sue Krige, Johannesburg, September 14, 2016.

<sup>1089</sup> Dialogue with Sue Krige.

<sup>1090</sup> Barbie Zelizer, *About to Die: How News Images Move the Public*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 28-75.

<sup>1091</sup> Dialogue with Sue Krige.

<sup>1092</sup> Dialogue with Sue Krige.

tree, or something, and the woman's, you know, unbelievably terrified. She knew she was going to die...<sup>1093</sup>  
and the pictures of the little girl running from the napalm..."<sup>1094</sup>

Unlike Kim Phuc, the young girl fleeing the napalm in Vietnam, whose stories have been told and retold in news reports; journal articles; on film; and in her own memoir, with a few notable exceptions, the victims or survivors depicted in the photographs included in exhibitions like those of the Apartheid Museum have not been given voice. While dialogues with the exhibition curators and their colleagues have provided an opportunity for members of the curatorial teams to explain why and how they framed visitor encounters, the voices of the pictured victims have been extinguished. In these exhibitions, Jackie and Leon lie mute, exposed to the public gaze. We, who encounter them through the images, can speak *about* them, but they cannot speak back. Although it is possible to speculate, it is not, and never will be, possible to fathom exactly how *they*—Jackie and Leon—might have responded to the encounter: how they would wish to be remembered

In their absence, and to better understand the tension between the personal and the political: the imperative to show respect for the dignity of individual victims, by *not* displaying their photographs or to do so to evoke an unspeakable past, I turn for inspiration and insight, to two people who survived apartheid atrocities while in exile and whose thoughtful and sensitive reflections I value immensely: Comrade AB and Albie Sachs.<sup>1095</sup>

### **Comrade AB, reflections of a survivor**

[Identifying paragraph redacted]

Comrade AB was living in Gaborone in 1985, when the SADF attacked several houses and offices used by ANC members in the city, killing at least 12 people, including Mnye, and injuring many more,<sup>1096</sup> an event covered by Delpont and Samson, amongst other photographers and journalists. In our dialogue, Comrade AB explained that the security forces struck on the eve of the “ground-breaking Kabwe Conference,”<sup>1097</sup> referred to in Chapter Three, and that while ANC members in the Frontline States were aware that “the Boers were planning an attack”<sup>1098</sup> they did not know where or when to expect it. Comrade AB and others survived, he said, because they took precautionary measures, sleeping in their vehicles on the outskirts of the city rather than in their own homes. Recalling that period, Comrade AB's mentions his feelings of vulnerability and the ever-present sense of

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<sup>1093</sup> “The My Lai Massacre,” Getty Images, accessed November 2024, <https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/the-my-lai-massacre-was-the-mass-murder-of-unarmed-south-news-photo/1371419874?adppopup=true>.

<sup>1094</sup> Time Photo, “The Story behind the ‘Napalm Girl’ Photo censored by Facebook,” *Time*, 9 December 2016, accessed June 2024, <https://time.com/4485344/napalm-girl-war-photo-facebook/>.

<sup>1095</sup> As noted earlier in these chapter, Sachs and Comrade AB both played a profound role in shaping cultural policy in democratic South Africa.

<sup>1096</sup> *TRC Report*, Volume 2, 148, records 12 victims, other accounts differ.

<sup>1097</sup> Identifying reference redacted.

<sup>1098</sup> Identifying reference redacted.

danger of life in exile saying, “we had all expected to sacrifice our lives.”<sup>1099</sup> As a survivor of the attack, Comrade AB argues, “all that we can do about what happened on that day is to remember and cherish so that the spirit of absolutely no surrender must still be with us.”<sup>1100</sup>

Recalling Samson’s photograph, Comrade AB does not mention where or when he first encountered it. Instead, he turns immediately to the encounter in memory with the image which, he says, “has remained forever in my mind.”<sup>1101</sup> “I see two people in a pool of blood, a white couple with this child . . .”<sup>1102</sup> he says, “and I see the child, the bloodied child sitting there trying to wake them up.”<sup>1103</sup> Musing, without any prompting, on his mis-memory of the photograph,<sup>1104</sup> Comrade AB acknowledged that, “the thing that really touched me a lot about that event is the child . . .”<sup>1105</sup> and explained that he recalled reading somewhere that “the child was alone, with these two people, the parents, and . . . she was trying to wake them.”<sup>1106</sup> Sighing deeply he said that “those words, like the photograph, never left my mind, even though I *know* the details, *that* picture won’t go away. It stays there, and I argue with it all the time.”<sup>1107</sup> As he speaks, Comrade AB shifts seamlessly between affect and self-reflective analysis, grappling with the difficult memories the dialogue surfaces. I’m moved by his unguarded responses, aware of the depth of the pain, and am reminded of the many references to memory in the work of one of his peers,

“our eyelids shut, if they ever do,  
and the memories of those you knew,  
flood behind the darkness of closed eyelids  
spiralling into patterns of pain”<sup>1108</sup>

Offering an insight into his own thought processes, the construction of the narrative and the questions that come to mind as he re-views the image in memory, Comrade AB explains, “I’m trying in my head, because you read, you see, to place the remaining people, and wondering what, what, are they thinking, what are they doing?”<sup>1109</sup> And, he says, speaking to the implied presence of the unseen perpetrators, “in moments like this quietly, within you, you always pose a question. What kind of people are producing things like this?”<sup>1110</sup> As he speaks, I feel the weightiness of the past that burdens him still, the sense of profound loss, the sorrow of his

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<sup>1099</sup> Identifying reference redacted

<sup>1100</sup> Dialogue with Comrade AB, Johannesburg, May 4, 2016.

<sup>1101</sup> Dialogue with Comrade AB.

<sup>1102</sup> Dialogue with Comrade AB.

<sup>1103</sup> Dialogue with Comrade AB.

<sup>1104</sup> Jackie was designated ‘white’ under apartheid related identification system, Leon was not, and the child is not in evidence in the photograph.

<sup>1105</sup> Dialogue with Comrade AB.

<sup>1106</sup> Dialogue with Comrade AB.

<sup>1107</sup> Dialogue with Comrade AB.

<sup>1108</sup> Mongane Wally Serote, “When the lights go out,” *Behold Mama, Flowers* (Johannesburg and New York: AD Donker, 1978), 69-70/

<sup>1109</sup> Dialogue with Comrade AB.

<sup>1110</sup> Dialogue with Comrade AB.

memories, the flashes of regret and disillusion and the steely steadfastness of his convictions. Comrade AB has played an influential role in shaping the democratic state and giving voice to the values it espouses, but he carries his power and influence with deep humility and sincerity alongside his grief.

Responding to a question about the display of images of victims of politically motivated violence in the public domain, Comrade AB recalls how, in about 2014 he was invited by the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC)<sup>1111</sup> to serve on a reference group for the development of the Matola Raid Interpretive Centre in Mozambique.<sup>1112</sup> Among the recommendations he made was that photographs of the bodies of the victims should not be shown. It struck him forcefully, he says, that “these people *don't* look like this. They have *never* looked like this.”<sup>1113</sup> Revisiting photographs of the Botswana Raid, in the light of this realisation, he asserted that, “these were people that I lived with, I knew *very* well, and it emphasised something that I must not forget, that there is no *life* in what I'm seeing.”<sup>1114</sup> Affirming his commitment to honouring the memory of his comrades, he adds poignantly, “and of course, coming from MK myself, I said the only spear I can pick up for them is that ... I must find a way to protect them, from being seen lifeless like that. So everywhere I've gone when I see that, I say *remove* this picture. *Remove* it. This is *not* this person.”<sup>1115</sup>

Comrade AB is conscious of the contradictions and ambiguities of his stance and, like others in this chapter, refers to exhibitions about the Holocaust to justify, in some measure, the public display of images of atrocity. As he said “If I go to Washington, and I walk through the Holocaust Museum, my experience says to me look at how human beings can be totally inhuman.”<sup>1116</sup> Nevertheless, suggesting that temporal and spatial distance from the Holocaust changes the way in which he responds to the images, he concedes that, “... the *gruesome* statement that it makes, reminds us that we can degenerate to that level, to do such things. So, I'm saying to you it's a conflict that I have, but still, I hold the position that I will still say to people, you *must* remove that picture.”<sup>1117</sup> Comrade AB's position stands in stark contrast to the positions held by others, as discussed elsewhere in this thesis, who argue that encounters with the images were and are a necessary reminder of the brutality of the apartheid state. They also, in some way, run counter to the views held by Albie Sachs, as discussed below.

### **Albie Sachs, reflections of a pictured survivor**

Albie Sachs is a highly regarded struggle veteran, legal practitioner, and writer. He attended the Congress of The People at Kliptown in 1955 where the Freedom Charter was adopted, assisted with the drafting of South

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<sup>1111</sup> Subsequently reconfigured as the Department of Sports Arts and Culture.

<sup>1112</sup> Department of Military Veterans, *Unveiling of Matola Raid Monument and Interpretive Centre*, September 11, 2015, accessed August 2022, <http://www.dmv.gov.za/news/matola-raid.htm>.

<sup>1113</sup> Dialogue with Comrade AB.

<sup>1114</sup> Dialogue with Comrade AB.

<sup>1115</sup> Dialogue with Comrade AB.

<sup>1116</sup> Dialogue with Comrade AB.

<sup>1117</sup> Dialogue with Comrade AB.

Africa's Democratic Constitution in the 1990s, and served as a judge in the Constitutional Court from 1994 to 2009. In 1988, when he was living in exile in Mozambique, Sachs was critically injured, losing an arm and the sight in one eye, when a bomb planted in his car by a South African agent, exploded. The incident happened in full view of a television crew, in an area where representatives of various international media agencies were resident.<sup>1118</sup>

Within hours, images of Sachs valiantly raising himself from the ground were in circulation, (Figure 26). Photographs were published in newspapers including the *Guardian* (London) and *The New York Times*, and the television footage was broadcast across the world.<sup>1119</sup> The afterlives of these unsettling images have intersected at various times and places with those of Jackie and Leon: copies of the photographs are housed in the IDAF Photographic Collection at the Mayibuye Archives and in the ANC Archive at the University of Fort Hare; excerpts from archival footage is included in the *Special Report* series;<sup>1120</sup> a photograph of Sachs appears below that of Jackie and Leon on Patric Mellet's website,<sup>1121</sup> as discussed in Chapter Five; and the same photograph is included in the section of the Apartheid Museum display dealing with cross-border atrocities discussed in this chapter.

In conversation, Sachs radiates serenity. He is wise, compassionate, and empathetic, and he recounts his reflections with precision, as befits a judge. Although he is reluctant to look at the photographs, or the footage of himself in the aftermath of the attack, he frames his encounters with them, in the abstract, as a source of honour and pride: a symbol of his victory over the brutal violence of apartheid.

The images, Sachs believes, serve an important evidential function, "there is this *record*, and, and I'm part of history."<sup>1122</sup> Although he does wonder whether the attention accorded him had to do with race,<sup>1123</sup> he suggested that there was something healing in being noticed, saying "It is as if the camera is healing me by recording my image."<sup>1124</sup> He goes on to say, "counteracting the terrible hatred contained in the bomb,

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<sup>1118</sup> "It's as though I'd arranged for my assassination, to be covered by, by the media. And I hadn't arranged that. But it just so happened, the place and the space was a very public one, well populated and populated by media people, quite close to . . . so if you're going to be blown up in make sure that you're close to a media station, TV station, and in an area where people have got cameras and can, can record." Dialogue with Albie Sachs, Cape Town, August 26, 2022.

<sup>1119</sup> Excerpts from the footage broadcast on television news stations is included in the documentary, Albie Sachs, *Broken but Unbroken: a Portrait of an Irrepressible Freedom Fighter*, 1998, produced by Erika Edman for SVT/Channel 1 and Edman & Edman Vision.

<sup>1120</sup> SABC, *Truth Commission Special Report Series*, Episode 64 section 2, accessed September 2022. <https://sabctr.c.saha.org.za/tvseries/episode64/playlist.htm>.

<sup>1121</sup> Patric Mellet, "Poetry of the 1980s," *Poetry Exteriorismo*, accessed June 2021, <https://poetryexteriorismo.wordpress.com/poetry-of-the-1990s/>.

<sup>1122</sup> Dialogue with Albie Sachs, Cape Town, August 26, 2022.

<sup>1123</sup> "I sense that in this great Western world the loss of one white arm causes more shock than the loss of four black limbs, or even four thousand. All the more cause for those of us who have exposure to speak about the vast numbers of victims unknown outside their immediate communities, and convey to the world the damage caused to hundreds of thousands, and even millions." Albie Sachs, *The Soft Vengeance of a Freedom Fighter* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990) 190-191.

<sup>1124</sup> Albie Sachs, *The Soft Vengeance*, 136.

declaring implicitly that I must be a worthwhile person, otherwise why would respectable people like the BBC bother to film me?”<sup>1125</sup> This sentiment resonates Judith Butler’s contention that public obituaries humanise victims of violence, “if there were to be an obituary, there would have had to have been a life, a life worth noting, a life worth preserving, a life that qualifies for recognition.”<sup>1126</sup> Sachs’ candour is disarming and inspiring. I listen with rapt attention as his reflections shift between sharp analysis and deeply felt emotion, all the while wondering how Jackie or Leon would have wanted to be remembered.

Reaffirming the validating power of his encounter with the photographs, and imagining the encounters of those who saw them, Sachs argues that “People are not just seeing that *body*. They’re seeing *me*. Almost triumphant. [Saying] the corpse wakes *up* and, and it *lives*. Albie *lives*. . .”<sup>1127</sup> He explained, “I clearly wasn’t aware of being photographed at that stage, of cameras. I was delighted afterwards, that this thing, this horrible thing that had happened to me and I triumphantly survived, was recorded. And, and, and more than that . . . I’m going to *use* my body as part of the struggle.”<sup>1128</sup>

Expanding on this and, like Comrade AB, hinting at the vulnerability of living as an activist in exile, something Jackie was aware of too,<sup>1129</sup> Sachs recalled,

“You’re waiting for it every day. This is also part of the story. It’s not out of the blue. It’s the risk that’s inherent in being in the struggle. Will they come for me? If they come for me, will I be brave, will I get through. And they *came* for me, and I got through, and I’m joyous and triumphant and I’m fighting back. And *my* healing will be part of my country’s healing. So, all of that became the source of, of, positivity.”<sup>1130</sup>

“And,” he continues, “this is my vengeance, my way of fighting back, not by killing others, but by transmuting bad into good using my heart and my brains to project as much as possible a vision of survival, struggle, triumph and humanity.”<sup>1131</sup> Still, referring to the images of himself in the aftermath of the car bomb, he prefers people to see pictures of himself “smiling or writing or doing exercises”<sup>1132</sup> because “I do not want people associating me with violence and horror but with regrowth and happiness, with the quiet victory of recovery.”<sup>1133</sup>

But still, he contends, he found the media coverage accorded him troubling, because of the racial bias it suggested, saying,

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<sup>1125</sup> Sachs, *The Soft Vengeance*, 136.

<sup>1126</sup> Judith Butler, “Violence, Mourning, Politics,” *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* 4, Issue 1 (2003), 23.

<sup>1127</sup> Dialogue with Albie Sachs.

<sup>1128</sup> Dialogue with Albie Sachs.

<sup>1129</sup> “Jaqui knew very well that ‘Juluka’ was married to the ANC and even if she wanted to, she could not talk him out of that marriage. In accepting the status quo, she also accepted the ANC. It also meant that she knew that like all ANC cadres in Lesotho, she was living dangerously.” Ndlela, 88.

<sup>1130</sup> Dialogue with Albie Sachs.

<sup>1131</sup> Sachs, 136.

<sup>1132</sup> Dialogue with Albie Sachs.

<sup>1133</sup> Dialogue with Albie Sachs.

“A feature for me that was poignant and complicated was that, um, my white body counted for more than black bodies. I feel sad even when I mention that now. But /would get in the press. *My* story would be listened to. *New York Times* sent somebody to interview me in hospital in London . . . but so many black people had endured worse. They weren’t being interviewed.”<sup>1134</sup>

Despite this, he argued, a positive outcome of the media coverage was that it “emphasised the non-racial character of the justice struggle.”<sup>1135</sup> Suggesting that “the few white bodies, Neil Aggett and myself, your cousin [Jackie], had a significance well beyond our pure individual contribution. It is a visible example of the non-racial character of the repression, but also the non-racial character of the resistance.”<sup>1136</sup>

Turning his attention to the display of photographs of victims who, unlike him, did *not* survive, and with reference to Comrade AB’s contention that victims should not be represented by images of their mutilated corpses, as discussed above,<sup>1137</sup> Sachs said firmly, “I don’t see it simply as a bloodied body. I see it as somebody who died in the struggle, giving their life for, for, freedom, freedom of others. And, and I see it as very honoured. . . .”<sup>1138</sup> adding later, “they [Jackie and Leon] are fighting back, even dead and bloodied and hit in that way. That image is being used to expose the violence of apartheid.”<sup>1139</sup>

Despite his insistence on the validating power of images, Sachs mentioned thoughtfully that he was glad that some images had not been made or published, citing as an example his memory of a visit to the mortuary in Maputo to view the body of Ruth First after she had been killed by a letter bomb in her office in 1982.<sup>1140</sup>

Remembering this incident four decades later, Sachs speaks slowly, almost hesitantly, his words seem to forming a running commentary on the image as it comes into sight in his mind. Mentioning Ruth’s shapely legs before saying, “my eye moves up, I see her body and it is so much Ruth’s posture, and then there’s no face. It was staggering and stunning and grotesque and horrible.”<sup>1141</sup> There are, he says, some images that you can “suspend your recollections of,”<sup>1142</sup> but, for him, this is not one of those. “It was more than just the death of a person”<sup>1143</sup> he said, “it was the massacre of the part of the person that identifies the person. The most living part, the part you’ve spoken to, and smiled at and felt sometimes the sharpness of the tongue. You know, the *Ruth*, part of Ruth was just like, gone.”<sup>1144</sup>

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<sup>1134</sup> Dialogue with Albie Sachs.

<sup>1135</sup> Dialogue with Albie Sachs.

<sup>1136</sup> Dialogue with Albie Sachs.

<sup>1137</sup> This recalls Comrade AB’s anguished question, “Why don’t they show them as the vibrant living people they were?”.

<sup>1138</sup> Dialogue with Albie Sachs.

<sup>1139</sup> Dialogue with Albie Sachs.

<sup>1140</sup> Ruth First, an academic, journalist, political activist, and a member of the ANC and the SACP was married to Jo Slovo. She was killed by a letter bomb sent to her office at the Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo on 17 August 1982. Apartheid government spy, Craig Williamson and his colleague Roger Ravan were granted amnesty for this killing by the TRC. “Ruth First”, *South African History Online*, accessed February 2025, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/ruth-first>.

<sup>1141</sup> Dialogue with Albie Sachs.

<sup>1142</sup> Dialogue with Albie Sachs.

<sup>1143</sup> Dialogue with Albie Sachs.

<sup>1144</sup> Dialogue with Albie Sachs.

The second image Sachs references is of a memory of the Chris Hani's body in a coffin at his funeral, after he was assassinated in 1993.<sup>1145</sup> Speaking slowly and sorrowfully, in a way that suggests he was re-viewing the image in his mind's eye,<sup>1146</sup> Sachs explains that Hani, whom he had "adored"<sup>1147</sup> and been "very close to in many, many ways"<sup>1148</sup> had been shot in the face, "... and they'd just sewn up the bullet wounds, you know. It wasn't cosmetically covered. And that was so painful for me."<sup>1149</sup> This, he says, is an image that "people shouldn't have to bear."<sup>1150</sup> Although images of Hani in his coffin, as described by Sachs, have been circulated in the public domain,<sup>1151</sup> as have photographs of Hani lying in a pool of blood in his driveway,<sup>1152</sup> the images he refers to here are not photographs, they are the memories etched irrevocably, in his mind's eye: indelible traces of picture-making encounters of another kind.

## Discussion

The dialogues discussed in this chapter build on the argument outlined in the previous chapter, that speaking about the photographs of Jackie and Leon encountered in memory raises into consciousness the [almost] unseeable and [almost] unsayable expressed through thoughts and feelings, as well as vestiges of other images that exist in the mind's eye through narratives that loop between past/present, personal/political, and individual/collective memory. What this chapter adds to the argument is a consideration of the intersections or entanglements of personal and public encounters and memory, and a reflection on encounters that take place in curated interventions in the public domain, all of which potentially engage viewers in encounters with themselves: their own histories, deep anxieties, and dreads.

The exhibitions and broadcasts described in this chapter may be understood within the broader process of memorialisation of the apartheid past in public spaces that began in the early 1990s and continues in the present, and they mark different "transitional moments"<sup>1153</sup> in public history narratives, defining what was important to remember and commemorate at a particular time. *EsiQithini* celebrated the unbanning of political

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<sup>1145</sup> Themisibile Chris Hani, leader of the South African Communist Party and Chief of Staff of MK, was assassinated by Janusz Waluś, a Polish right-wing extremist, in Boksburg on 10 April 1993. Waluś was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder. See Marianne Thamm, "Cold, Cold Heart: Chris Hani assassin Janusz Waluś has no regrets." *Daily Maverick*, January 26, 2025, accessed February 2025, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2025-01-26-cold-cold-heart-chris-hani-assassin-janusz-walus-has-no-regrets/>.

<sup>1146</sup> Field, "Critical empathy," 6643, and Sean Field, *Oral history, community and displacement: imagining memories in post-apartheid South Africa*/2012.

<sup>1147</sup> Dialogue with Albie Sachs.

<sup>1148</sup> Dialogue with Albie Sachs.

<sup>1149</sup> Dialogue with Albie Sachs.

<sup>1150</sup> Dialogue with Albie Sachs.

<sup>1151</sup> Getty Images, accessed November 2024, <https://www.gettyimages.ca/detail/news-photo/and-south-african-communist-party-supporters-light-candles-news-photo/175678484?adppopup=true>

<sup>1152</sup> Sowetan, "Ten days that shook our country," *Sowetan Live* February 24, 2011, accessed November 2024, <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/good-life/2011-02-24-10-days-that-shook-our-country/>.

<sup>1153</sup> Sabine Marschall, "Pointing to the Dead: Victims, Martyre and Public Memory in South Africa," *South African Historical Journal* 60, (2008), 103.

movements and the release of political prisoners from Robben Island, it reminded visitors about oppressive actions taken by colonial and apartheid rulers, while proclaiming the “triumph of the human spirit over adversity, suffering and injustice.”<sup>1154</sup> In this context Lagardien’s photograph, displayed close to the exit, posed a stark reminder of the “Thousands of women and men [that] have given their lives in the struggle against the apartheid system.”<sup>1155</sup> The TRC *Special Report*, while serving as an awareness raising initiative in the 1990s, fulfils a memorialisation and archival function in the present. It provides a record of the stories told by individuals about their experiences and how they thought about and remembered them, expanding information about the lived past in a way that is both easily accessible and understood by a range of public audiences. The Apartheid Museum display is closely aligned with the truth-telling ethos of the TRC but, like *Special Report*, extends the narrative beyond the gross violations of human rights to remind visitors of the everyday humiliations of life under apartheid in South Africa. In this context, Jackie and Leon are framed as two of the many victims of South Africa’s aggressive response to neighbouring states who played a role in the liberation of the country. As this chapter suggests, encounters with the images are seldom aligned with the public and historic memories they represent, speaking instead to personal memory and affect; Jackie and Leon are remembered as victims, but the circumstances of their deaths are not.

While these representations are different in many ways, they share an intention to reflect the unspeakable truth about the state sanctioned violence of the then recent past, and to drive attitudinal change towards a more just future. As Odendaal, du Preez and Till admitted, they *wanted* viewers who encountered the images to feel the visceral shock and the horror of the violence enacted on the victims, but they also wanted them to acknowledge the humanity of the victims and encourage empathy. The kind of response all three initiatives aimed to achieve is implicit in Hooper’s response to Lagardien’s photograph, “it’s really a shock . . . because it isn’t just a sort of *mass* of people who are doing this or that it’s *these* people. And if they’re lying there dead, they’ve lost their lives, people who’ve love[d] them and known them are without them.”<sup>1156</sup>

The tension that exists between the affective and intellectual responses of the individuals involved in curating and editing the initiatives discussed here, and the entanglement of their personal vulnerabilities with the suffering of others, is evident in the dialogues discussed in this chapter and elsewhere in the thesis. On a personal level, encounters with Lagardien’s photograph raised deeply troubling concerns about vulnerability, mortality and violence. On an institutional level, the curators were posed with the intellectual challenge: how, in working towards a more just and equitable future could avoid merely shocking, numbing, repelling or inciting

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<sup>1154</sup> This statement is frequently used by the Robben Island Museum to describe its mission and significance.

<sup>1155</sup> As noted earlier, this was the wording on the text displayed above the photograph.

<sup>1156</sup> Dialogue with Lindsay Hooper.

viewers and instead promote respect and empathy.<sup>1157</sup> As Jill Bennett suggests the shock produced by an image is an insufficient curatorial outcome, asking, “where does the image *take us* once an initial affective connection is established?”<sup>1158</sup> And, as discussed in Chapter One, she advocates for ‘empathic vision’, a way of seeing grounded in the “feeling for another that entails an encounter with something irreducible and different, often inaccessible”<sup>1159</sup> which engenders both an affective *and* intellectual response. The reflections of Davison, Hooper, Odendaal, Sachs, Comrade AB and du Preez quoted in this chapter demonstrate something of the tension that exists between these complementary responses and the force of the convictions that embraced and held safe the consequent contradictions and ambiguities.

The curatorial challenges with respect to the display of images associated with atrocities or gross violations of human rights and the commitment to contribute to the constitution of a more just future, rather than to dwell simply on a cruel and inequitable past, is not unique to South Africa.<sup>1160</sup> As the curators quoted in this chapter have noted, the museological and didactic practice of Holocaust museums has had significant bearing on the representation of politically motivated violence in local museums. In this respect, the work of Georges Didi Huberman, writing about a series of four photographs, taken illicitly in the Auschwitz concentration camp in 1944, is instructive. In his argument that it is essential to display images like this, Huberman argues that their very survival as images refutes the unimaginable<sup>1161</sup> and imposes a duty to remember and that ignoring, or sequestering images from sight becomes a “posthumous act of cruelty against the victims.”<sup>1162</sup> Images like these, he contends, have a role to play too in nurturing the imagination, and bringing the unthinkable, and the unsayable into view, especially when words fail.<sup>1163</sup>

While there is a vast and growing body of literature on the use of images of the Holocaust in the public domain, the concept of ‘difficult knowledge’ first used by Deborah Britzman in 1998<sup>1164</sup> is particularly germane to this thesis. Writing two decades after Britzman first mooted the concept, Roger Simon argues that museums and other cultural institutions were increasingly turning away from triumphalist narratives to “initiate practices of

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<sup>1157</sup> Erica Lehrer, Cynthia E Milton and Monica Eileen Patterson, eds. *Curating Difficult Knowledge: Violent pasts in public places* (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 21.

<sup>1158</sup> Bennett, 64.

<sup>1159</sup> Bennett, 10. This resonates with Derrida’s contention that archives, memory, photographs and the unconscious constitute genres of the trace, i.e., the presence, in the present, of that which is absent, but which points to and is supplemented by something beyond itself.

<sup>1160</sup> Lehrer, Milton and Patterson eds. *Curating Difficult Knowledge*, 193.

<sup>1161</sup> Georges Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All: Four photographs from Auschwitz* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 24.

<sup>1162</sup> Wolfgang Brückle, “Book Review, Images in Spite of All: Four Photographs from Auschwitz,” *Photography & Culture* 4 no. 2 (2011), 226.

<sup>1163</sup> Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All*, 25-26.

<sup>1164</sup> Deborah p Britzman, *Lost Subjects, Contested Objects: Toward a Psychoanalytic Inquiry of Learning*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998).

remembrance related to conflict, violence, loss and death, topics often characterised as difficult knowledge”<sup>1165</sup> for public engagement. He contends that exhibitions that deal with topics like these may be encountered as difficult because they challenge the expectations and interpretive abilities of visitors by offering multiple perspectives or ambivalent narratives that unsettle existing world views. Visitors may also have difficulty encountering displays that induce visceral responses; arouse anxiety, anger or disappointment; or elicit feelings of revulsion, grief, guilt, and shame. Similarly, encounters that result in visitors identifying too closely as victims or perpetrators, or made to feel culpable for, or complicit in, the violence, may be construed as difficult.<sup>1166</sup> Although Simon is writing specifically about the way in which museum visitors encounter exhibitions, the same principles apply to curators, exhibition designers and *Special Report* team members. This suggests a complex entanglement of personal/professional and individual/institutional responses and interests. In the case of *EsiQithini*, the ambivalences and contradictions arising from this resulted in the decision to veil an image used to mirror to reflect the atrocious acts of the state.

Simon’s theorisation of difficult knowledge, when applied to encounters with photographs suggests that it is not images per se that are difficult, but the context of the viewer’s encounter with them, and the meaning constituted through their individual gaze. Theorists of difficult knowledge concur, arguing that ‘difficulty’ in difficult knowledge lies not in indexicality, the who, what, where and when that is depicted, or signified, but in the power of images – what they *do* to viewers, and particularly the way in which they enable or facilitate viewer’s encounters with *themselves*.

As Simon explains,

“difficulty happens when one’s conceptual frameworks, emotional attachments, and conscious and unconscious desires delimit one’s ability to settle the meaning of past events. In such moments one’s sense of mastery is undone and correspondingly one may undergo an experience that mixes partial understanding with confusion and disorientation, the certainty of another’s fear and suffering with one’s own diffuse anxiety and disquiet.”<sup>1167</sup>

What is missing, or inadequately attended to, in the literature about difficult knowledge, affect and the photographic encounter,<sup>1168</sup> is a deeper consideration of the encounter with the *remembered* image as it takes on new meanings and significances as circumstances change in the atemporal and subjective domain of memory. Barthes suggests that, sometimes, in the moment of *seeing* an image, the viewer experiences a psychic prick, a sting, a wound from which they recoil defensively. Maybe, though, the act of *remembering*

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<sup>1165</sup> Lehrer, Milton and Patterson, 193.

<sup>1166</sup> Lehrer, Milton and Patterson, 193.

<sup>1167</sup> Roger I. Simon, “A shock to thought: Curatorial judgement and the public exhibition of ‘difficult knowledge,’” *Memory Studies*, Volume 4, Issue 4, 2011, 434.

<sup>1168</sup> As noted elsewhere in this thesis, the attention of photographic theorists has shifted significantly from the content and form of the image to the nature of the photographic encounter and the complex relationships between the photographer, the subject, the viewer, and the image.

images works differently, lowering the self-protective screen cautiously, bringing a complex, multidimensional unconscious archive into view in the mind. Maybe the vagaries of memory and the passage of time distill<sup>1169</sup> responses to the images, providing the psychic safety that promotes empathy and self-reflexive thinking and frees the imagination.<sup>1170</sup>

Perhaps the act of *remembering* and putting into language the memory of photographs like those of Jackie and Leon elicits deeply reflective responses because they shock but they do not repel: the relatively understated nature of their injuries is disturbing, but it does not repulse or numb viewers in the same way as the photographs of the mutilated victims of the Matola Raid might,<sup>1171</sup> and viewers are not forced to confront the shattered messiness of death, unless they are psychically ready to do so.

Perhaps too, *remembering* photographs like these, that expose the humanity of the victims, provide a cue or a safe space for viewers to imagine and confront the possibility of their own mortality. Jackie and Leon could be sleeping, but we know they are not: Jackie's heavily lidded eyes are open, we gaze into her half-closed eyes, as did Odendaal as he remembered Frederick Jansen,<sup>1172</sup> and Krige as she remembered the unnamed Vietnamese woman.<sup>1173</sup> But they do not look back: we know and can sense the absence where once there was life, as Sachs felt when he viewed the body of First. Essentially then, the images say, this is what happened, this is what *can* happen to you or the people you know and love, propelling the viewer to confront their own lurking fears and vulnerabilities. Reflecting on this, I am reminded of a passage in Damon Galgut's novel, *The Promise*, where, describing a funeral, he writes,

"But in the meantime, there is the body, the horrible meaty fact of it, the thing that reminds everyone, even people who didn't care for the dead woman, and there are always a few of those, that one day they shall lie there too, just like her, emptied out of everything, merely a form, unable even to look at itself. And the mind recoils from its absence, cannot think of itself not thinking, the coldest of voids."<sup>1174</sup>

Galgut's evocatively penned words resonate with the interlocutors' struggle to express themselves in the face of the almost inchoate thoughts and feelings that arose unbidden into consciousness as they encountered the images of Jackie and Leon in memory. Are the intense and sustained forms of engagement proposed or

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<sup>1169</sup> I use the word distill to suggest the way in which, when extraneous details are discarded, memory reduces the meaning to an essence.

<sup>1170</sup> One of the arguments advanced by Holocaust museums is that it is necessary to show photographs as evidence of the atrocity to counter the claims of denialists. Setting aside this argument, Gerard Wajeman points out, that because there are no images of the Auschwitz deaths the atrocity is unrepresentable and unimaginable. This view is contested by Georges Didi-Huberman, amongst others who argue for the role of the imagination in filling the void created by the absence of images. Marc de Kesel, 'Shooting the unimaginable: On the reception of four Shoah photographs', *Metacide* 16, 2010, 168-169.

<sup>1171</sup> Jackie and Leon are both recognisable and named, as Hooper said of Lagardien's photograph, "it's really a shock . . . because it isn't just a sort of *mass* of people who are doing this or that it's *these* people. And if they're lying their dead, they've lost their lives, people who've love them and known them are without them." Dialogue with Lindsay Hooper.

<sup>1172</sup> See the dialogue with Andre Odendaal mentioned earlier in this Chapter.

<sup>1173</sup> See the dialogue with Sue Krige mentioned earlier in this Chapter.

<sup>1174</sup> Damon Galgut, *The Promise* (Cape Town: Penguin Random House, 2021), 10.

suggested above likely to occur in an encounter with photographs on display in an exhibition where images compete for attention with each other, distracting texts and intrusive audio-visual presentations and when visitors are constrained by time? Arguably not. What *is* more likely is that a trace of the shocking images will remain in the mind. As Comrade AB and Odendaal, quoted in this chapter suggest, affirming Jay Prosser's contention, that "after we have seen them, there is also a resonance, a physicality, a haunting quality to atrocity photographs."<sup>1175</sup> Jackie and Leon are dead, but traces of the images of them, live on in the mind alongside vestiges of other "restless, unquiet and demanding"<sup>1176</sup> spectres of and from the past, that return repeatedly to disturb the present,<sup>1177</sup> "to reveal the untold or often unconscionable truth."<sup>1178</sup>

The images of Jackie and Leon live on as afterimages in the minds of members of the exhibition as do the debates around the displays. But the exhibitions themselves have been dismantled: the only trace left of them are a handful of uncaptioned photographs, a few administrative records and a couple of media reports. There are no traces of the debates around the use of the photograph, or the encounters with the images except in the dialogues recorded for this Chapter. Unlike these exhibitions, *Special Report*, which has been available online since 2013, endures in the public domain as a legacy and a resource for people to draw on when they when they explore, research or reflect on South Africa's recent past.

## Conclusion

Dialogues with members of the exhibition teams; the *Special Report* producer and presenter; and survivors of cross-border incursions discussed in this chapter point to the intersection of personal and public memory, and the contradictions and ambiguities associated with this. Like the previous chapter, this one deals with the complexities inherent in encounters with the photographs themselves, as well as with the images in memory. Unlike the previous chapter too, this one includes a consideration of how potential photographic encounters with new audiences might be mediated on an institutional level, in the case of *EsiQithini*, by using the physical veil to obscure the photograph, or in *Special Report* by limiting the length of the clip seen on screen. Like other chapters, this one furthers the argument that remembering and speaking about images of atrocity like these brings into view an unconscious, internal archive comprising that which has been seen and forgotten or put out of mind as well as that which has not been documented, the unthinkable, unseeable, unspeakable spectres that haunt the mind's eye, and the emotions and feelings they engender.

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<sup>1175</sup> Batchen, Gidley, Miller and, 10.

<sup>1176</sup> Nick Peim, "Spectral Bodies: Derrida and the Philosophy of the Photograph as Historical Document," *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Volume 39, Issue 1, 76.

<sup>1177</sup> As Sontag argues, "Let the atrocious images haunt us. Even if they are only tokens and cannot possibly encompass most of the reality to which they refer, they still perform a vital function. The images say: This is what human beings are capable of doing – may volunteer to do, enthusiastically and self-righteously. Don't forget." Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, 102.

<sup>1178</sup> Peim, "Spectral Bodies," 76.

The images of Jackie and Leon sit alongside other images in the archive, and in the minds of those who encountered them, but the thoughts and feelings encoded in the production of the exhibitions and the documentary series, may also be said to constitute an “archive of feelings,”<sup>1179</sup> as defined by Anne Cvetkovich, see Chapter Eight. Maybe this thesis, that tracks the afterlives or other lives of three images of a single scene, can provoke readers to imagine the archives attached to other images, and to think about them differently.

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<sup>1179</sup> Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality and Lesbian Public Cultures*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 7.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# ENCOUNTERS WITH OBJECTS OF STUDY AND REFLECTION

*In 2014 an opinion piece in the Daily Maverick set in motion a chain of events and actions that brought the images of Jackie and Leon into the public domain through the unruly online digital archive. The opinion piece inspired a post on the images on Archival Platform website that in turn catalysed an academic paper, a seminar and a workshop for librarians. In time, the post was cited in two memoirs, a semi-autobiographical novel, and a newsletter for retired professionals, expanding the reach of the images, and their potential for further iterations in their afterlives and other lives way beyond the intentions of the photographers who made them*

## CHAPTER SEVEN: ENCOUNTERS WITH OBJECTS OF STUDY AND REFLECTION

This Chapter explores the afterlives of the images of Jackie and Leon in a digitally connected age. Following on from the discussion in the previous chapter, it tracks the encounters events, activities and publications sparked unintentionally by a single online post about Samson's photograph, and the shifts in meaning and significance that occurred as the photographs moved from the purview of news or public display into the public domain, and the academy. It asks if and how the detachment of the image from the context of news or current events affects the way in which it is encountered, and concludes that, while the image may be veiled by its designation as an object of study and reflection, it retains its affective agency.

### Introduction

As described in Chapter One, this thesis was sparked by Jane Quin's opinion piece, "De Kock ordered my sister's killing – and no, his debt is not paid,"<sup>1180</sup> published online by the *Daily Maverick*. This inspired my post on the *Archival Platform* website, "Jaqui<sup>1181</sup> Quin and Leon Meyer: The Life of a Photograph,"<sup>1182</sup> which outlines the biography of Samson's photograph, as I understood it then, see Appendix 1. I chose not to reproduce the photograph in the post, using instead, the caption from the *Sunday Times* to create a strong graphic. The *Archival Platform* post brought Samson's image to the attention of new audiences, giving rise to new encounters and extending its reach on the World Wide Web. What follows is a selection of these encounters that have come to my attention.

### James Sey, Photographing a South African Form of Sudden Death (2015)

James Sey is a cultural studies scholar. He has written extensively on the visual arts for academic and popular publications. Sey has been a friend of Lagardien's since the early 1980s, but first encountered his photograph of Jackie and Leon when the photographer mentioned our dialogue to him. Sey's curiosity was piqued,<sup>1183</sup> he asked me for copies of the photographs and raised the possibility of writing a conference paper on them. Information in this Chapter is based on my dialogue with Sey, and on the paper he presented subsequently at the *VIAD 2015* conference, *Archival Addresses: photographs, practices, positionalities*<sup>1184</sup> which was in published *Critical Arts* under the title: "Photographing a South African Form of Sudden Death".<sup>1185</sup> Sey's paper

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<sup>1180</sup> Quin, "Op-Ed: De Kock ordered my sister's killing."

<sup>1181</sup> Jane Quin chose to abbreviate her sister's name as "Jaqui" rather than the more familiar "Jackie" for this piece, thinking that it seemed more formal.

<sup>1182</sup> Jo-Anne Duggan, "Jaqui Quin and Leon Meyer: The Life of a Photograph", *Archival Platform*, August 7, 2014, accessed February 2022 [http://www.apc.uct.ac.za/apc/projects/archival\\_platform/jacqui-quin-and-leon-meyer-life-photograph](http://www.apc.uct.ac.za/apc/projects/archival_platform/jacqui-quin-and-leon-meyer-life-photograph).

<sup>1183</sup> Dialogue with James Sey, Johannesburg, April 2, 2015.

<sup>1184</sup> Visual Identities in Art and Design (VIAD) Research Centre, accessed January 2025, <https://www.viad.co.za/re-fashioning-masculinities-1>.

<sup>1185</sup> James Sey, "Photographing a South African form of sudden death", *Critical Arts: south-north critical and media studies*, Volume 29, Supplement 1, 2015.

quotes from my *Archival Platform* post,<sup>1186</sup> which he refers to as a meticulous and compassionate account.<sup>1187</sup> Sey's paper has been cited by Warrick Swinney, as described in Chapter Five and Duncan Martin and Ismail Lagardien, below.



Figure 1: Jacquelin and Joe Quinn. Courtesy of Ismail Lagardien.

they face away from each other. If their eyes were open (they seem closed, the woman's perhaps not fully) they would be looking out of each side of the frame. The photographer, photojournalist Ismail Lagardien, was close, standing almost directly above the couple, unsparring, inviting the viewer to stand in his place and ask the dead bodies to look back, to turn their heads. They will not.

The black and white image is blandly captioned, as befits an urgency to distribute across global press networks. The press agencies and the publications in which this particular image is reproduced each offer slightly different nuances to their captions, depending on their place in an ideological media spectrum, for the meanings of what is depicted.

*Maseru, Lesotho, December 21, 1985. The bodies of Jacquelin and Joe Quinn, 2 of 9 people killed in a raid on 2 houses in Lesotho's capital Maseru early Friday morning. The Quinn's one-year-old daughter was not harmed. Lesotho blames South African commandos for the raid but they [sic] South Africa denies it.*

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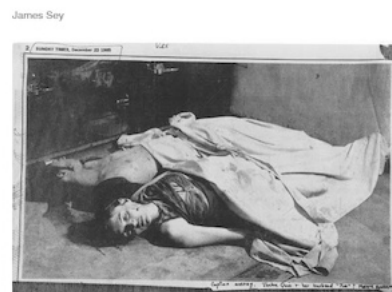


Figure 2: Jackie Quin and her coloured husband Joe. *Sunday Times*, 22 December 1985. Courtesy of Trevor Samson.

Another caption exists, for a different photograph of the same scene (Figure 2). It reads:

*They lie side by side in the mortuary their bodies half covered by a hospital sheet, their clothing in disarray. Jackie Quin and her coloured husband Joe. The couple were shot dead by a murder squad which burst into their home in Maseru on Thursday night. Seven other people attending a party at another house were also killed. The ANC claim Jackie Quin to be one of their members. Her grieving parents deny it. The couple's baby daughter Phoenix survived the massacre.*

Archivist Jo-Anne Duggan (2014) reads this second caption as follows:

This is the caption to a photograph that appeared in the [South African] *Sunday Times* on 22 December 1985. It's a haunting image, starkly dramatic, shot at an angle by a photographer standing somewhere behind and to the right of his subjects, seeing them head first. Joe lies with his head turned to the left, eyes closed; he could be sleeping. Jacqui's head is turned to the right, her eyes are half-open, her lips slightly parted, she could be waking.

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Figure 29: Trevor Samson and Ismail Lagardien's photographs as they appear in Sey's paper, 2015. Credit: James Sey | *Critical Arts*

The paper opens with a detailed description of the two photographs. Describing Lagardien's, which was not mentioned in my post, he writes:

"Two dead bodies, lying side by side, on their backs. Blood from their gunshot wounds is flecked here and there on their faces and torsos, which, in the cropping of the photograph, is all that one can see of the bodies. They lie against a nondescript background, perhaps a dishevelled bed, perhaps a gurney, perhaps a floor. Their clothes are disordered, the man, who lies on the viewer's right-hand side, wears a dark shirt, unbuttoned, revealing a spare frame and hairless chest. The woman, who lies on the viewer's left-hand side, wears a striped top which is raised to reveal her brassiere. The couple's heads are at the top of the frame, and they face away from each other. If their eyes were open (they seem closed, the woman's perhaps not fully) they would be looking out of each side of the frame. The photographer, Ismail Lagardien, was close, standing almost directly above the couple, unsparring, inviting the viewer to stand in his place and ask the dead bodies to look back. They will not."<sup>1188</sup>

<sup>1186</sup> Jo-Anne Duggan, "Jacqui Quin and Leon Meyer."

<sup>1187</sup> Sey, "South African form of sudden death", 108.

<sup>1188</sup> Sey, "104-105."

The description of Samson's photograph is in the *Archival Platform* post, which Sey remarked trumped his own,<sup>1189</sup> is quoted in full,<sup>1190</sup> with some additional comments:

"In this image, by another photojournalist, Trevor Samson, more context is provided in the frame. The upper corner is dominated by cabinets closed with airtight lock handles, which suggests that the scene is shot in a mortuary. The bodies are shot in mid-range, fully exposed in the frame. Here, it is apparent that their bodies are half covered by a sheet. As Duggan suggests, the photographer is behind and to the right of the bodies. The couple's orientation is completely different – the man, 'Joe' (real name Leon Meyer) faces away from the lens into the depths of the frame, his expression and features are not discernible. The woman, Jackie, confronts the camera, her face an unambiguous death mask."<sup>1191</sup>

Sey brings his knowledge of diverse disciplines, including photography and psychoanalysis, to bear on the analysis that follows. He cites Roland Barthes, John Berger and Susan Sontag to locate the images within the broader global discourse around photographs, death, trauma, and truth, and draws on the argument made by Okwuyi Enwezor, that South African photography of the "high apartheid era"<sup>1192</sup> was profoundly shaped by the need to document, record and archive the "trauma of apartheid."<sup>1193</sup> Arguing that photographs like Samson and Lagardien's constitute a "a particularly urgent manifestation of the documentary of suffering,"<sup>1194</sup> he suggests that they may express a "South African form of sudden death,"<sup>1195</sup> that is, "people brutally killed for being opposed to the racist apartheid regime."<sup>1196</sup>

One of the central concerns in Sey's paper is the double register of photographs like these, as both evidentiary and aesthetic, and their tendency to shift, over time, from one register to another.<sup>1197</sup> Citing Berger<sup>1198</sup> Sey argues that the isolation of the moment captured in the photograph "removes the event from duration, and thus from origins, from narrative and from consequences."<sup>1199</sup> This, he asserts, makes the photograph "an unreliable and unstable epistemological site,"<sup>1200</sup> whose claim to "evidentiary truth"<sup>1201</sup> is undermined by its "seemingly inevitable propensity to frame the event as an aesthetic documentation."<sup>1202</sup> Similarly, drawing on the writings of Barthes,<sup>1203</sup> he contends that the "removal of the image from time and from history"<sup>1204</sup> eradicates its agency,

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<sup>1189</sup> Dialogue with James Sey, Johannesburg, April 2, 2015.

<sup>1190</sup> Sey, 107.

<sup>1191</sup> Sey, 105.

<sup>1192</sup> Sey, 109.

<sup>1193</sup> Sey, 110.

<sup>1194</sup> Sey, 109.

<sup>1195</sup> Sey, 109.

<sup>1196</sup> Sey, 109.

<sup>1197</sup> Sey, like the scholars he quotes, argues that the power of the image to affect viewers diminishes over time, for various reasons. The author's analysis of interviews with Rehana Odendaal and John Wright, included in this Chapter, suggests that this is not always the case.

<sup>1198</sup> John Berger, *Understanding a Photograph*, edited and introduced by Geoff Dyer (London: Penguin Books).

<sup>1199</sup> Sey, 109.

<sup>1200</sup> Sey, 109.

<sup>1201</sup> Sey, 109.

<sup>1202</sup> Sey, 109.

<sup>1203</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981).

<sup>1204</sup> Sey, 110.

leaving it “caught forever oscillating between document and composition.”<sup>1205</sup> Notwithstanding this, Sey explains towards the end of the paper, that he realised, with “with a frisson,”<sup>1206</sup> that the evidentiary and the aesthetic elements of the photograph are not mutually exclusive: that the images made for documentary purposes were in fact deliberately composed, requiring careful aesthetic decisions.<sup>1207</sup>

Turning his attention more specifically to South African photographs, like Sam Nzima’s photograph of Hector Pietersen, Sey observes that the power of such images of “death and trauma,”<sup>1208</sup> have diminished over time, not simply because they have been aestheticised, but largely because “the original moment where that image was a call to action against the apartheid government has been lost.”<sup>1209</sup> Sey’s critique is valid, but the encounters described in this thesis suggest that, for some people at least, the affective agency of the image has not diminished over time, even though the call for action is redundant.

Sey is ambivalent about how the affective agency of images may shift over time but allows, reluctantly, that people, particularly family members, may still respond viscerally<sup>1210</sup> to the “immensely poignant”<sup>1211</sup> photographs.<sup>1212</sup> Although he did not know Jackie, he said he was acquainted with a member of her extended family and may thus have been more interested in the photographs than he might otherwise have been. Nevertheless, he insisted “that doesn’t really change my reading of the thing. But gives it an intimacy that that is helpful in understanding the context,”<sup>1213</sup> adding that, “as a theorist and an academic, I’m not one who is very fond of turning experiential reflection into epistemological truth.”<sup>1214</sup>

Sey’s paper concludes tantalisingly, that, in the absence of context, of everything that lies beyond the frame, the photograph “invites the unconscious into it, but will not reveal it back. It will only reveal the deaths themselves, in images about which choices have been made,”<sup>1215</sup> but Sey does not explore this further. This, and other observations made about death, are addressed in the discussion at the end of this chapter.

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<sup>1205</sup> Sey, 111

<sup>1206</sup> Sey, 111.

<sup>1207</sup> Sey cites Sontag, who argues similarly that it is an exaggeration to position the dual powers of photography – to generate documents and to create works of visual art - as opposites. Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, 68.

<sup>1208</sup> With reference to Sam Nzima’s photograph of Hector Petersen.

<sup>1209</sup> There is no evidence to support Sey’s contention that the images were published as a call to action. They may well have been intended as a warning. See Chapter Three.

<sup>1210</sup> Dialogue with James Sey.

<sup>1211</sup> Sey, 108.

<sup>1212</sup> Responses by Rehana Odendaal and John Wright, described later in the Chapter, suggest that this is not always the case.

<sup>1213</sup> Dialogue with James Sey.

<sup>1214</sup> Dialogue with James Sey.

<sup>1215</sup> Sey, 113.

## Archive and Public Culture Seminar (2015)

In April 2015, I presented a paper, “*Jackie Quin and Leon Meyer, Maseru, 20 December 1985: Images and agency*” at a University of Cape Town Archives and Public Culture seminar, attended by post-graduate students working in the fields of anthropology, history and archives.

I did not want to project an image onto a screen, as is usual in such seminars, choosing instead to pass A4 black and white prints around the large table at which participants were seated, to allow people to encounter the images directly and choose whether to look or simply to pass them on. Among the prints I circulated were copies of Sampson and Lagardien’s photographs and the screengrab from the *Special Report Series* showing the same scene. Much of the discussion that followed the presentation had to do with the ethics of making and re-presenting images of death in the public domain; the motivations that drove decisions to do this; the value of images like this as historical records; and ways in which the tension between cognition and affect was mediated by temporal and geographic distance. As they addressed these issues, participants mentioned other images that came to mind, including Chris Hani’s body in the driveway of his home following his assassination in 1993; Michael Miranda, the boy killed in the 1985 Trojan Horse Massacre; Angolan and Namibian victims of the Border War; and then recent 2015 attacks in Garissa, Kenya.

One of the participants, Rehana Odendaal (referred to hereafter as Rehana to prevent confusion with André Odendaal) was visibly upset and left the room in tears as the seminar ended. Another, John Wright, while seemingly unaffected, admitted in the break, that followed the session, that he had remained silent because if he had opened his mouth to speak, he would have wept. In conversations with Rehana and Wright in the weeks that followed, it was evident that, for them, the encounter, while intellectually interesting, had triggered powerful and unexpected emotional responses.

### Rehana Odendaal

Rehana is the young post-graduate student in the Department of Historical Studies who left the 2015 seminar in tears. As the mixed-race<sup>1216</sup> daughter of anti-apartheid activists, she identifies strongly with the story of Jackie and Leon and their infant daughter, so her thoughtful reflections on the images are laced with empathy. Rehana declares proudly that she has “a very strong sense of history and the importance of history.”<sup>1217</sup> She grew up hearing stories about the lived experiences of her parents, and others, during the apartheid years, but admits that her parents, “never really told me, the very, like, ugly side of things.”<sup>1218</sup> As a result, apartheid history poses unique emotional and intellectual challenges for her because, “it’s very difficult to imagine fitting into my

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<sup>1216</sup> Rehana, like Phoenix Quin, is of mixed race and the daughter of political activist parents. It is pertinent to mention this because of her strong identification with the child in the Maseru Raid narrative.

<sup>1217</sup> Dialogue with Rehana Odendaal, July 28 2016.

<sup>1218</sup> Dialogue with Rehana Odendaal.

life, um, even though it's the same space and it's also so close temporally but it's just like so far away from my experience."<sup>1219</sup>

Rehana is familiar with images of atrocities and has viewed exhibitions about apartheid and civil rights which, she says, left her feeling "absolutely gutted, because of that, kind of, like, almost disbelief, of people's experiences,"<sup>1220</sup> as did the *Special Report* series which she watched at high school. Reflecting on these, she suggests that "there's something about photographs that capture specific experiences that get left out,"<sup>1221</sup> describing how, when she was working on her Honours project on the Trojan Horse Massacre,<sup>1222</sup> it was the small details of the images, like "bullet holes in the house"<sup>1223</sup> that shocked her most. While images "sort of offend and upset"<sup>1224</sup> her, she says that they do this "in a good way"<sup>1225</sup> shifting her attention from the general suffering to individuals who suffered, giving them "a face and a story."<sup>1226</sup>

For Rehana, the wounding detail in Samson's photographs was what she remembered as a bed, that evoked the couples' life together. "There was something about . . . their intimacy and the way they were lying next to each other"<sup>1227</sup> she said, that triggered her grief, "despite, the circumstances of being in exile and being in a war they'd still found space to be together."<sup>1228</sup> The sudden violent disruption of this intimate scenario distressed her, she said, tearing up again, "I have this image of people raiding the house coming into the bedroom, opening fire."<sup>1229</sup>

Identifying herself closely with the child, she says "It's like that very easily could have been my parents, and it could have been *me* being that child."<sup>1230</sup> This is a theme she picks again at a later point in our conversation, saying, "I remember also thinking when I saw the bed, um, and you said that the daughter had survived, how lucky, she was that she hadn't just climbed into bed with her parents, because that's what I did all the time, especially as a young child."<sup>1231</sup> Encountering the photograph was very difficult, she said, "because it kind of triggered a whole lot of other memories."<sup>1232</sup>

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<sup>1219</sup> Dialogue with Rehana Odendaal.

<sup>1220</sup> Dialogue with Rehana Odendaal,.

<sup>1221</sup> Dialogue with Rehana Odendaal.

<sup>1222</sup> Jonathan Claasen (21) Shaun Magmoed (15) Michael Miranda (11) were killed and several others injured when police sprang from their hiding place behind crates on a truck brings driven down Thornton Road, Athlone on 15 October 1985 and opened fire on a crowd of youthful protestors, *South African History Online*, "The Trojan Horse Massacre", accessed December 2024, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/trojan-horse-massacre>.

<sup>1223</sup> Dialogue with Rehana Odendaal.

<sup>1224</sup> Dialogue with Rehana Odendaal.

<sup>1225</sup> Dialogue with Rehana Odendaal.

<sup>1226</sup> Dialogue with Rehana Odendaal.

<sup>1227</sup> Dialogue with Rehana Odendaal.

<sup>1228</sup> Dialogue with Rehana Odendaal.

<sup>1229</sup> Dialogue with Rehana Odendaal.

<sup>1230</sup> Dialogue with Rehana Odendaal.

<sup>1231</sup> Dialogue with Rehana Odendaal.

<sup>1232</sup> Dialogue with Rehana Odendaal.

Reflecting on the context in which she had encountered the photographs, and how this informed her response, Rehana explained, that she would have expected, in an academic space, to be able to engage with the images intellectually. “It’s not unusual to see quite violent images, or at least violent stories in the Sunday papers,”<sup>1233</sup> she confessed, but “having contributed to the research session quite well up to that point . . . I was very embarrassed about responding the way that I did.”<sup>1234</sup>

Considering the format in which she had encountered the images, Rehana mentioned that initially she had thought it might have been easier to view the image on a screen saying, “if it had been displayed on a screen, I would have been able to look away, close my eyes or do something different.”<sup>1235</sup> As it was, she said, there was only one image she remembered, Samson’s photograph. As she explained, “I think part of why I don’t remember the others . . . after I saw that one image, I kind of just passed the others on. I didn’t want to look at anything else.”<sup>1236</sup>

### **John Wright**

John Wright is an eminent historian, whose ongoing work on the James Stuart Archive has introduced scholars to new ways of thinking about the documentary archive and complex pre-colonial histories. He is a rigorous academic who can be relied on to interrogate seminar papers vigorously, engage in lively debate, and share his knowledge generously. Given this, it was somewhat surprising that Wright did not comment on the seminar presentation. When asked, light-heartedly, about this over tea, Wright responded in an unexpectedly sombre tone, “if I had opened my mouth I would have wept.”<sup>1237</sup> As a scholar of African history, Wright is familiar with depictions of violence. “There are,” he says, “some dreadful photographs of colonial atrocities,”<sup>1238</sup> adding that “those are portrayed rather differently from those photographs you were showing,”<sup>1239</sup> without explaining why.

In our dialogue several weeks after the seminar, Wright said, “I remember simply a young white woman lying looking as if she was asleep and being told that she was dead.”<sup>1240</sup> For him, it is Jackie’s face, so much like that of his own daughter, that opened the floodgates of unspoken loss and dread. His emotional response to the photograph, he said, “comes very much out of having three daughters, one of whom looks not unlike the woman in the picture,”<sup>1241</sup> adding in a faltering voice that his daughters are “roughly the same age as the person in the

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<sup>1233</sup> Dialogue with Rehana Odendaal.

<sup>1234</sup> Dialogue with Rehana Odendaal.

<sup>1235</sup> Dialogue with Rehana Odendaal.

<sup>1236</sup> Dialogue with Rehana Odendaal.

<sup>1237</sup> Dialogue with John Wright, Stellenbosch, July 3, 2015.

<sup>1238</sup> Dialogue with John Wright.

<sup>1239</sup> Dialogue with John Wright.

<sup>1240</sup> Dialogue with John Wright.

<sup>1241</sup> Dialogue with John Wright.

picture.”<sup>1242</sup> He could, he says, imagine one of them, “getting caught up in that kind of thing”<sup>1243</sup> or being pulled into it “willy-nilly,”<sup>1244</sup> adding, “If she’d [Jackie] been an activist in her own right, you know, that’s the sort of thing you might expect. But if you’re a consort, or partner, or whatever, or if you just happened to be in the house at the wrong time . . .”<sup>1245</sup> Apologising for being a bit emotional, Wright admits that it is not just the thought of the tragedy that might unwittingly have befallen his daughters that shaped his response. The photograph also invoked deep feelings of loss and regret saying, “these things come at you surprisingly, like when you’re shown unexpected photographs round a table in a room, a whole slew of memories . . . or thoughts comes tumbling in.”<sup>1246</sup>

While Wright’s response to the photographs is partly coloured by his anguish, it also has to do with the “bloody frailty of life”<sup>1247</sup> and a “fear of the future,”<sup>1248</sup> something, he says, “needs to be made quite a lot of.”<sup>1249</sup> As he said ruefully “in one’s early seventies one thinks about death quite a lot.”<sup>1250</sup> Admitting that he’s not worried about dying per se, he says that what *does* worry him is that life can be brought to an end suddenly and unexpectedly. “One proceeds through life on the basis that it’s just going to continue and you’re in charge of it,”<sup>1251</sup> he says, “in charge of your own livingness as it were, and suddenly you know, the bus comes round the corner and you’re just flattened or [pause] these dreadful men come bursting through the door.”<sup>1252</sup> Speaking of the seminar, he said philosophically, “you have shown how somebody else’s death can suddenly trigger things in oneself,”<sup>1253</sup> illustrating poignantly how images may bring viewers into encounters with their own otherwise repressed or unthinkable fears.

Rehana and Wright’s reflections bring several issues into view. The tension between cognition and affect, vulnerability, the frailty of life, intergenerational memory, postmemory, projection, and the small details that wound. These are addressed in the discussion at the end of this Chapter.

### **Rita Potenza, Times Media Library staff discussion (2015)**

Rita Potenza is a picture researcher. In 2015 she was working in the Times Media Library when I visited in search of the original file copy of Samson’s photograph. Potenza located this immediately because, as she said

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<sup>1242</sup> Dialogue with John Wright.

<sup>1243</sup> Dialogue with John Wright.

<sup>1244</sup> Dialogue with John Wright.

<sup>1245</sup> Dialogue with John Wright.

<sup>1246</sup> Dialogue with John Wright.

<sup>1247</sup> Dialogue with John Wright.

<sup>1248</sup> Dialogue with John Wright.

<sup>1249</sup> Dialogue with John Wright.

<sup>1250</sup> Dialogue with John Wright.

<sup>1251</sup> Dialogue with John Wright.

<sup>1252</sup> Dialogue with John Wright.

<sup>1253</sup> Dialogue with John Wright.

at the time, she had used it recently for a staff discussion, explaining that she had first encountered the photograph when a link to the *Archival Platform* post was sent to Michelle Leon, the Times Media Librarian. Leon showed the post to Potenza and asked her to present a short talk to the library staff, to share with them the story behind the photograph and explain the context in which it had been taken and published.

Describing the discussion, Potenza explained that, because of the potentially upsetting content, “we had to slowly do a slow release, we didn’t just lay it all out there and start our conversation. We had to first brief the people about the background of the story and the question of how it came up.”<sup>1254</sup> The discussion focussed on the motivation for publishing the photograph, the question of whether it had been intended “to frighten off further resistance”<sup>1255</sup> or to expose an atrocity,<sup>1256</sup> and on the ethics of publishing such a “devastating”<sup>1257</sup> image and the impact that this might have had on the families of the victims.

Initially, Potenza says, her animated presentation was met with “glum silence.”<sup>1258</sup> “There’s something about, um, being preoccupied with this sort of thing that turns certain people off,”<sup>1259</sup> she explained, “they feel, why are you like, getting into such a froth over this piece of relic, of old stuff that is past?”<sup>1260</sup> Nonetheless she continued, interest grew as the story unfolded and her colleagues were shocked when they finally saw the photograph, although, she said, “they still found the whole thing fairly off-putting. I don’t think it’s the sort of thing that most people were willing to really engage with.”<sup>1261</sup> Potenza used the opportunity of the discussion to drive home the value of the Times Media Archive and the extensive evidence it holds about the past, explaining to her colleagues that “the fact that the picture is still **here** in the file, is very important for the continued veracity and believability . . . of the of the event,”<sup>1262</sup> and telling them, “that’s what you’re protecting and that’s what you are really charged with in terms of maintenance and custodianship of the archive.”<sup>1263</sup>

Speaking about her work as a picture researcher, and the role of photography in general, Potenza is self-assured, fully engaged, enthusiastic, curious to know more, and open to debate the issues raised. She listens intently and speaks with urgent intensity, gesturing animatedly to make a point. When asked to describe Samson’s photograph, her body language changed. Breaking eye contact, she leant back in her chair, staring into the distance, pausing for a moment, oblivious to the noisy crowd around us before saying softly, rather hesitantly, “it’s a . . . very low angle with the woman on the right-hand side and the man on the left . . . I might be

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<sup>1254</sup> Dialogue with Rita Potenza, Johannesburg, November 11, 2015.

<sup>1255</sup> Dialogue with Rita Potenza.

<sup>1256</sup> Dialogue with Rita Potenza.

<sup>1257</sup> Dialogue with Rita Potenza.

<sup>1258</sup> Dialogue with Rita Potenza.

<sup>1259</sup> Dialogue with Rita Potenza.

<sup>1260</sup> Dialogue with Rita Potenza.

<sup>1261</sup> Dialogue with Rita Potenza.

<sup>1262</sup> Dialogue with Rita Potenza.

<sup>1263</sup> Dialogue with Rita Potenza.

wrong...”<sup>1264</sup> Sounding more confident, she says, “there’s quite a bit of detail of the face of the woman, very young, very doll-like, very young the man’s more sort of spiritually befuddling confused. Her spirit’s set more.”<sup>1265</sup> Potenza’s unexpected but arresting observation brings to mind the notion prevalent in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, that the camera was more sensitive than the human eye and that photographs could render visible that which was otherwise invisible, including the spirits of the deceased.<sup>1266</sup>

As she spoke, Potenza’s repeated use of the phrase “I see” and her utilisation of the present tense, as in “there seems to be ...”<sup>1267</sup> and her searching description, such as “. . . a filing cabinet or something nearby or some sort of box, cupboard, very much grey tones”<sup>1268</sup> suggested that her eye was travelling across the image she saw in her mind’s eye, pausing to examine every detail, much as it did when she viewed the photographic print. This observation accords with the findings of theorists who argue that the process of viewing a “mental image”<sup>1269</sup> is closely aligned with the process of perceiving an image or object that is physically present. In both instances, elements of the image are viewed successively, rather than all at once, an activity that has both temporal and spatial dimensions.<sup>1270</sup>

Shifting her focus from one element to another, Potenza paused to comment on, or interrogate, the image, observing, “. . . and um blankets and some weird kind of floor covering, could have been a mattress or something, there’s some sort of covering . . . but they look very . . . and um, there seems to be something on the floor . . . that’s like, some piece of flotsam and jetsam, next to the cabinet, near to a cabinet of some kind”<sup>1271</sup> and asking abruptly, “where’s the baby ... isn’t there supposed to be a baby?”<sup>1272</sup> Reflections of this nature evidence the strong link between mental images and cognition: Potenza is not just registering the image visually, she is processing it actively in her mind.<sup>1273</sup>

As her inner gaze came to rest on Jackie, Potenza muttered questioningly, sounding slightly puzzled, “there’s some kind of . . . element of exposure on the woman . . . I don’t know if she’s wearing a necklace or if there’s some clothing, that’s a little miss . . . that’s a little, just not . . . it’s just her clothing had some effect.”<sup>1274</sup> As she

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<sup>1264</sup> Dialogue with Rita Potenza.

<sup>1265</sup> Dialogue with Rita Potenza.

<sup>1266</sup> See, for example, James Coates, *Photographing the Invisible: Practical Studies in Spirit Photography*, (Chicago: Advanced thought Publishing Company, 1911).

<sup>1267</sup> Dialogue with Rita Potenza.

<sup>1268</sup> Dialogue with Rita Potenza.

<sup>1269</sup> S.M. Kosslyn, “Mental Images and the Brain,” *Cognitive Neuropsychology*, 2005, 22, 334. Cited in Autumn B Hostetter and Martha W. Alibali, “Visible Embodiment: Gestures as simulated action,” *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review* 15, no.3 (2008), 499.

<sup>1270</sup> Autumn B Hostetter and Martha W. Alibali, “Visible Embodiment: Gestures as simulated action”, *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review* 15, no.3 (2008), 497-498.

<sup>1271</sup> Dialogue with Rita Potenza.

<sup>1272</sup> Dialogue with Rita Potenza.

<sup>1273</sup> Bruno Laeng, Ilona M. Bloem, Stefania D’Ascenzo and Luca Tommasi, “Scrutinizing visual images: The role of gaze in mental imagery and memory,” *Cognition* 131 (2014), 264.

<sup>1274</sup> Dialogue with Rita Potenza.

speaks, completely absorbed in memory, Potenza touches her own throat lightly with her fingertips and then lays both hands on her chest, almost fumbling in her agitation. Continuing her narrative, she strokes her cheek gently as she says, “I see some damage on her face,”<sup>1275</sup> and smooths her hair back tenderly as she adds “he has some damage also on his, and his hair, I can see his hair and I can see her hair . . . sort of pasted . . .”<sup>1276</sup> Potenza’s enigmatic gestures are intriguing, signalling an entanglement of body, language and mental imagery. Jeff Friedman (2014) argues that “in addition to the individual semantic meaning of the words spoken in an interview, the role of the body constitutes a factor in the expression of experience conveyed in the interview.”<sup>1277</sup> He acknowledges that, for oral historians voice, and the changes in tone, volume and pitch have always been considered significant indicators of meaning, and adds that facial gestures, body language and body movement are also significant embodied or non-verbal communication channels.<sup>1278</sup> Friedman urges oral historians to attend more rigorously to these in their transcription, analysis and interpretation of interviews. Nien Yuan Chen, responding to Friedman’s exhortation describes oral history dialogues as, “body-to-body communication, with embodied ‘archives’ – archives that are not of documents but of flesh and blood,”<sup>1279</sup> a description that resonates with Trouillot’s comment on oral transmission, “the source is alive,”<sup>1280</sup> mentioned in Chapter Two. As such, Friedman argues, the dialogues have a performative quality that extends the spoken word and may be lost in transcriptions or aural recordings.

While oral historians including Friedman and Cheng argue that gestures are used as a form of non-verbal or embodied communication when words fail, there is little consensus in the literature on the precise meaning and purpose of these. For scholars with a cognitive orientation, gestures offer an “unwitting window” into the mind.<sup>1281</sup> They are products of the unconscious that offer insights into the cognitive processes of the speaker that cannot be communicated by words alone.<sup>1282</sup> For scholars with a focus on interaction, gestures are used alongside words and gaze as a semiotic resource that makes up ‘composite signals’ that are produced for the benefit of the listener and are primarily communicative in intent. They are made, often consciously, in association with speech as an element of a performed narrative or a composite utterance.<sup>1283</sup> Potenza’s body language suggests that her gestures are not primarily aimed at communication. Although they reference her body, her fumbling hands hint at an uncertainty and her gaze remains fixed on some distant point, seemingly

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<sup>1275</sup> Dialogue with Rita Potenza.

<sup>1276</sup> Dialogue with Rita Potenza.

<sup>1277</sup> Jeff Friedman, “Oral History, Hermeneutics, and Embodiment,” *The Oral History Review* 41 no 2, (2014), 292.

<sup>1278</sup> Friedman, “Oral History, Hermeneutics, and Embodiment,” 293-294.

<sup>1279</sup> Nien Yuan ChenG, “‘Flesh and Blood Archives’: Embodying the Oral History Transcript,” *Oral History Review* 45,(2018), 127.

<sup>1280</sup> Trouillot, 152.

<sup>1281</sup> Kensy Cooperrider, “Foreground gesture: background gesture,” *Gesture* 16, no. 2 (2017), 177.

<sup>1282</sup> Lilian Pozzer-Ardenghi and Wolff-Michael Roth, “Photographs in lectures: Gestures as meaning-making resources,” *Linguistics and Education* 15 (2005) 275–293.

<sup>1283</sup> Kensy Cooperrider, “Foreground gesture: background gesture,” *Gesture* 16, no. 2 (2017), 176-202.

oblivious to her audience of one.<sup>1284</sup> If such gestures are *not* associated with communication, what purpose might they serve? Citing numerous case studies, Autumn Hostetter and Martha Alibali,<sup>1285</sup> argue that the *act* of gesturing brings mental images more vividly into view in the mind's eye, playing a critical role in activating and maintaining memory, and evidencing the "embodiment of language and cognition."<sup>1286</sup> Francesco Iani argues similarly that gestures play an important role in remembering images because they help to sustain "spatial and motor information associated with the mental representation stored in memory."<sup>1287</sup> Iani cites a study by Alan Clark who concludes that gestures are used, when describing images, particularly in cases where "there is a need to compensate for less accessibility in memory."<sup>1288</sup> What Potenza may be doing then, is mapping the narrative on her body as she speaks, using the actions of her hands to prompt memory, bringing elements of the image more sharply into view in her mind's eye.

The dialogue with Potenza brings two significantly different encounters into view: her own intense encounter with the image in memory, and her colleagues' unenthusiastic reception in the staff discussion, a response experienced by Duncan Martin, as described below, and addressed in the discussion at the end of this chapter.

### **Jeremy Clark, *All that is the Case* (2018)**

Jeremy Clark is an attorney. In 2014 he represented the sellers who had put on auction a copy of the autopsy report into the death of Stephen Bantu Biko, a Black Consciousness Movement leader, who died in police detention in September 1977. The proposed sale was contested by the Biko family, and the Steve Biko Foundation, and a lengthy battle ensued in the South Gauteng High Court.

Two years later, Clark registered for an MA in Creative Writing at the University of the Witwatersrand, proposing to write a novel based on the stories embedded in the case, which, he said, seized his imagination and posed interesting questions about "the nature and quality of legal writing and literature."<sup>1289</sup> Clark is related to

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<sup>1284</sup> Kensy Cooperrider describes two distinct categories of gestures. *Foreground gestures*, which are consciously deployed to communicate critical parts of a message and may be used in association with demonstrative references to an entity, a place, an action or the characteristics of an object. They may also be used in the absence of speech, and are generally aligned with the gaze of the speaker, generous in size and require conscious effort. *Background gestures* - arise automatically in association with speech, have no obvious communicative intent, are not used in conjunction with demonstratives or aligned with the gaze of the speaker. These smaller and less precise gestures occur when speakers struggle to articulate concepts or express memories and are often associated with imagery rich narratives, as in Potenza's case. Kensy Cooperrider, "Foreground gesture: background gesture," *Gesture* 16, no. 2 (2017), 176-202.

<sup>1285</sup> Autumn B. Hostetter and Martha W. Alibali, "Visible Embodiment: Gestures as simulated action," *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review* 15, no 3 (2008), 494.

<sup>1286</sup> Autumn B. Hostetter and Martha W. Alibali, "Visible Embodiment: Gestures as simulated action," *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review* 15, no 3 (2008), 494.

<sup>1287</sup> Francesco Iani, "Embodied memories: Reviewing the role of the body in memory processes," *Psychon Bull Rev* 26, 1747-1766 (2019), 1751.

<sup>1288</sup> Alan Clark, "Curing cognitive hiccups: A defense of the extended mind." *The Journal of Philosophy*, 104, 163-192.

<sup>1289</sup> Jeremy Clark, *All that is the Case, Reflective Essay*, submitted as part of the requirements for a Master of Arts by Research (Creative Writing) submitted to the Faculty of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 6 June 2018, 3.

Jackie,<sup>1290</sup> and memories of her and of Sampson's photograph, which he encountered when it was first published in the *Sunday Times* in 1985, thread through his text.

The novel tells the story of Clark's involvement in the Biko case, drawing on legal documents and describing his forays into libraries and archives, "newspaper cuttings, internet posts, letters, diary entries and the like"<sup>1291</sup> in his quest to uncover the 'truth' about the report. For him, "The library and the archive are symbols of continuity, of preserving the past as a basis for an understanding of the present and the future."<sup>1292</sup> In the novel, Clark uses the visits to the library to reflect philosophically about the nature of the past and who controls it, as well as to explore elements of his own personal history. Although much of the novel is clearly autobiographical and grounded in fact, it does contain substantive elements of fiction, a tension Clark acknowledges in his *Reflective Essay*.<sup>1293</sup>

Samson's photograph first comes into view in the novel when Clark encounters a copy of Jenny Hobbs' novel, *Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary*, in a second-hand bookshop, with the narrator explaining that "He had always avoided reading it, suspecting that it somehow adulterated the story."<sup>1294</sup> The sight of the novel takes Clark back in time to an encounter he had with Jackie at Neil Aggett's funeral in 1982, shifting the narrative into a different temporal zone, and bringing her into view as a vibrant and alive young woman. As Clark remembers, "She is so beautiful, with a moon face and long shiny auburn hair and just a little blush on her cheeks. Her brown eyes are round and prominent, her lips full and her complexion fine and fair."<sup>1295</sup>

The photograph he describes as "awful"<sup>1296</sup> comes into a view again when Clark visits the Johannesburg Public Library and, remembering that he had kept a clipping of the *Sunday Times* article but had not looked at it for over three decades, searches *Google* for a link to information about the incident. This takes him to the *Archival Platform* post.<sup>1297</sup> Clark quotes extensively from this, inserting comments or questions between the passages, noting that he and the Biko family were grappling with a question raised in the article, "When does the right to know and tell override the right to privacy?"<sup>1298</sup> and thanking Hobbs for describing Jackie's killers "properly"<sup>1299</sup> as the "cross-border terrorists" they were.<sup>1300</sup>

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<sup>1290</sup> Jeremy Clark is related to Jackie through her paternal grandmother. He and the author have never met.

<sup>1291</sup> Jeremy Clark, *All that is the Case, Reflective Essay*, 9.

<sup>1292</sup> Clark, *All that is the Case*, 5.

<sup>1293</sup> Clark, 5.

<sup>1294</sup> Clark, 10.

<sup>1295</sup> Clark, 107.

<sup>1296</sup> Clark, 152.

<sup>1297</sup> Jo-Anne Duggan, "The Biko autopsy report, what's the 'right thing' to do," *Archival Platform*, January 27, 2015, accessed November 2021, [http://www.apc.uct.ac.za/apc/projects/archival\\_platform/biko-autopsy-report-whats-right-thing-do](http://www.apc.uct.ac.za/apc/projects/archival_platform/biko-autopsy-report-whats-right-thing-do).

<sup>1298</sup> Duggan, "The Biko autopsy report, quoted in Clark", 154.

<sup>1299</sup> Clark, 153.

<sup>1300</sup> Duggan, "The Biko autopsy report, quoted in Clark (2018)", 154.

Clark then describes how he accessed a copy of the *Sunday Times* so he could revisit the original news report and, once he had it on his hands, describes the “sickening”<sup>1301</sup> photograph, “Eyes half closed in an intimate moment of waking, Jackie lies on a cement floor. Leon, or the ANC’s ‘Joe’, lies next to her. Blood marks them and seeps onto the floor. Heroes gunned down like prey or vermin.”<sup>1302</sup> Having viewed the published photograph, he asks furiously, “What sort of man could take it? What sort of journalist would publish it? Aren’t there journalistic norms against this?”<sup>1303</sup> before switching to the first-person voice to express his own rage and impotence, writing,

“I seethe with anger at the photographer and the editor. The image is horrible, a violation of Jackie and Leon, of her baby daughter, of the whole family. I will write to the editor, often said to be a BOSS agent, and . . . somehow tell him how disgusting he is, how bad at his trade, how insulting to us all, and to decency. It’s nauseating. The tone sensationalist, but also smug. This is what happens when white girls consort with terrorists. But it’s too much. I cannot find measured words to attack the newspaper and defend the cause, the family. Defeated by the text and the image I retreat . . .”<sup>1304</sup>

Like Hobbs, Clark invokes Samson’s photograph in a work of fiction based loosely on fact. While Samson’s photograph served as the impetus for Hobbs’ novel, in Clark’s work it serves a different purpose. It brings the past and the present into alignment, allowing him to express his feelings about the image and it acts as a narrative cue to prompt discussion on moral and ethical questions about the display of images of corpses in the public domain raised through his professional involvement in the Biko Autopsy Report case.

### **Duncan Martin, *rettelsweN* (2021)**

Duncan Martin is the editor of the monthly *Groote Schuur Probus Club Newsletter*<sup>1305</sup> which is distributed via e-mail to club members. During the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown Martin decided, in the absence of any club activities, to recast the Newsletter as *rettelsweN* and invite members to “fill its pages with stories which may **not** contain news, especially not about the virus.”<sup>1306</sup>

Sampson’s photograph is reproduced in the *rettelsweN* of 7 July 2021 in an article, entitled “Of Art, Good and Evil – Part One,” (Figure 31).<sup>1307</sup> In the article, Martin explains, as he did in conversation with me, that he attended a walk-about by the artist Haroon Gunn-Salie’s of his exhibition at the Zeitz MOCAA and was taken aback by Gunn-Salie’s “harangue”<sup>1308</sup> and was “unsettled and peeved”<sup>1309</sup> when the artist’s mother, activist

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<sup>1301</sup> Clark, 156.

<sup>1302</sup> Clark, 156.

<sup>1303</sup> Clark, 156.

<sup>1304</sup> Clark, 156.

<sup>1305</sup> Probus is an association of retired and semi-retired persons who get together in autonomous clubs. PROBUS Southern Africa, accessed February 2023, <https://www.probusza.co.za/>.

<sup>1306</sup> Dialogue with Duncan Martin, via Zoom, February 18, 2022.

<sup>1307</sup> Duncan Martin, “Of Art, Good and Evil - Part 1” *Groote Schuur Probus Club rettelsweN*, 7 July 2021.

<sup>1308</sup> Dialogue with Duncan Martin.

<sup>1309</sup> Martin, “Of Art, Good and Evil”, 2.

Shirley Gunn, was invited to address the group. Wondering later why he had been so irritated he turned to *Google* to find out more about Gunn and read about how she'd been recruited into MK by Leon Meyer. He was, he said, "dismayed and angered"<sup>1310</sup> when *Google* led him to the "awful story of his murder,"<sup>1311</sup> as outlined in the *Archival Platform* post.<sup>1312</sup> Martin was intrigued by the references to Sampson's photograph and his determined "googling" eventually led him to the online version of Sey's *Critical Arts* paper,<sup>1313</sup> where he says "with great relief and pleasure I *finally* found that image in a form that I could download and use myself."<sup>1314</sup>

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The World's press reported this shocking event a few days later. The Lesotho government blamed South African commandos but South Africa denied this. Jackie's parents, who had arrived that morning in Maseru to visit her, were devastated, and denied the ANC's statement that she had been a member of the organisation.

A TV agency hired an aircraft and flew a group of journalists to Maseru. There they hired a Kombi and drove to the houses where the victims had been shot. From there they were directed to the mortuary. Trevor Samson, a photographer working for Agence France-Presse, took the shocking, incredibly moving photograph below, showing the dead bodies of Jackie and Joe lying side by side on the floor of the mortuary, partially covered by a sheet. This photograph appeared in the Sunday Times of 22 December 1985. A decade later it was shown to the TRC and has been the subject of several articles and studies.



#### Prime Evil

The awful truth about the December 1985 commando raid in Maseru was revealed, bit-by-bit, but ultimately in considerable detail, during the TRC hearings. Some time before the raid Elvis Macaskill had been recruited as an agent of the South African Security Police and had successfully infiltrated the MK cell in Maseru. The party at his house was part of a plan devised by none other than Colonel Eugene de Kock, the then Commander of the at the SAP Counterinsurgency Unit at Viakplaas, near Pretoria. MK cadres referred to De Kock by the nickname 'Prime Evil'.

Warrant Officer Willie Nortje testified that the overall head of SAP counter-insurgency, Brigadier Willem Skoon, had authorised Colonel De Kock to proceed with the raid, following approvals by Police Commissioner Johan Coetzee; the Head of the Security Police, General Johan van der Merwe; and the then Prime Minister, P W Botha.

Colonel De Kock himself led the mission. The other hit squad members from Viakplaas were Nortje, Steve Bosch, Wessens Guide, Snor Vermeulen and an unknown number of African security

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policemen<sup>5</sup>. In addition, Joe Koetzer, Anton Adamson and Doe Willemsse – all security policemen based in Ladybrandt, were part of the commando.

De Kock and Nortje led the attack on Macaskill's house that left the seven party-goers dead. Koetzer shot and killed Jackie Quinn and both Koetzer and Adamson were responsible for the killing of Leon Meyer. General Johan van der Merwe awarded the Police Star for bravery to all policemen who participated in the raid.



De Kock spent 20 years in the Pretoria Maximum Security Prison

In his own testimony before the TRC, Eugene de Kock confessed on behalf of his Unit to more than 100 acts of torture, extortion and murder. About Jackie Quinn he said that his unit didn't shoot women, and that if she hadn't interfered – i.e. hadn't grasped the barrel of the gun – she probably wouldn't have been killed.

The TRC granted De Kock amnesty in cases for which compelling political and/or military motivations existed. However, because Jackie Quinn was not an MK operative, the TRC viewed her killing – the killing of an unarmed non-combatant in her kitchen by highly trained and armed commandos – as a murder that did not qualify for amnesty in terms of the Act governing the TRC.

In 1996 Eugene De Kock was sentenced to two life sentences plus 212 years in prison. However, in 2016, at the age of 66 years and after serving 20 years in prison, he was released 'in the interests of nation-building'.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, I have been unable to find out where he is living now.

#### Postscript about Eugene de Kock

Eugene de Kock was born in January 1949. His father was a magistrate and member of the Afrikaner Broederbond. He instilled Afrikaner nationalist ideology in Eugene and his brother Vosloo and insisted on their speaking pure Afrikaans. In 1967, during his national service in the Army Gymnasium, De Kock's company was deployed to the then Rhodesia/Botswana border to confront militant ANC incursions. De Kock duly graduated from the Gymnasium and joined the uniform branch of the South African Police. He underwent special off-duty training in special operations at Pretoria's Baviaanspoort Prison. In 1976, he underwent officer's training at the Police College and graduated as a lieutenant.



Operation Koevoet: A young Capt. Eugene de Kock with Brig. Hans Dreyer.

In 1978, De Kock was transferred to the security branch in Oshkati, South West Africa. There he co-founded Koevoet, an SAP counterinsurgency unit tasked with combating the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) during the South African Border War. Koevoet was regarded as a highly effective unit, and its successes in tracking and killing PLAN guerrillas prompted the SA Police to set up a counterinsurgency unit in

<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, ANC members referred to African security policemen as 'askaris' – the same derogatory term by which Ethiopian forces under Emperor Menelik II referred to Eritrean soldiers who fought with the Italians at the Battle of Adwa (see *rettelswen* of 31 March 2021).

Figure 30: *rettelswen*, July 7, 2021.

Credit: Duncan Martin / Groote Schuur Probus Club

Reflecting on how the photograph he had *read* about compared to the photograph he finally *saw*, Martin says, "it was what the descriptions had led me to believe it was, but nevertheless looking at it, it was **just** so moving and sad."<sup>1315</sup> Asked to elaborate, he explained, "that's hard to put into words . . . I guess the visual impact of

<sup>1310</sup> Martin, 4.

<sup>1311</sup> Dialogue with Duncan Martin.

<sup>1312</sup> Jo-Anne Duggan, "Jacqui Quinn and Leon Meyer: The Life of a Photograph", *Archival Platform*, August 7, 2014, accessed February 2022 [http://www.apc.uct.ac.za/apc/projects/archival\\_platform/jacqui-quinn-and-leon-meyer-life-photograph](http://www.apc.uct.ac.za/apc/projects/archival_platform/jacqui-quinn-and-leon-meyer-life-photograph).

<sup>1313</sup> James Sey, "Photographing a South African form of sudden death", *Critical Arts: south-north critical and media studies*, Volume 29, Supplement 1, 2015.

<sup>1314</sup> In Sey's paper Sampson's photograph is clearly identifiable as a newspaper cutting, but it has been cropped for use in the *rettelswen*. Although the relevant information is included in the text of the article, it is not seen in close association with the photograph, obscuring its provenance and anonymising the victims. Dialogue with Duncan Martin, via Zoom, February 18, 2022, and James Sey, "Photographing a South African form of sudden death," *Critical Arts: south-north critical and media studies*, 29, Supplement 1 (2015), 110.

<sup>1315</sup> Dialogue with Duncan Martin.

this bleak place, police cell or police station . . . and these two bodies . . . just a life snuffed out.”<sup>1316</sup> He was also, he said, “pissed off”<sup>1317</sup> by the actions of the assailants, especially because “they were willing to kill the mother of a very young child.”<sup>1318</sup> Although Martin does not spell it out, he draws some parallels between Jackie and Shirley, acknowledging that the presence of a child in each woman’s story makes it more poignant.<sup>1319</sup>

Martin gave the photograph “pride of place” in his article, explaining that without it, “the story loses half its punch,”<sup>1320</sup> and arguing that he was “trying to give my readers an intense reading experience.”<sup>1321</sup> While few readers commented on the article, one remarked that “it wasn’t the best *rettelsweN*” and that “she could have done without it.”<sup>1322</sup> This, together with the silence of the other recipients, suggests a reluctance to engage with an unpalatable past, a reaction which may be born out of a sense of guilt or shame or simply indifference. Or perhaps, as Martin said pensively, “some people were just not looking for the intense experience that I was offering . . . They want to read about nice things.”<sup>1323</sup>

As mentioned above, there is a disjunction between Martin’s response to the image, and the reception accorded his engaging article. This is addressed in the discussion at the end of this Chapter.

### **Ismail Lagardien, *Too White To Be Coloured: Too Coloured To Be Black* (2022)**

The circuitous biographies of the photographs of Jackie and Leon come to an end, for now, where they started, with a photographer’s reflections of the day he encountered their bodies in the Maseru mortuary. In his memoir, *Too White to be Coloured: Too Coloured to be Black*,<sup>1324</sup> Lagardien quotes extensively from an unpublished conference paper I shared with him, as well as from the transcripts of our dialogues, to contextualise and reflect on the photograph and the intersection of his experience, the life of the image, and my academic inquiry.

In the chapter devoted to the image, Lagardien expresses his surprise “that a photograph I made had gone into the world, lived a life of its own and come back 30 years later, mnemonic and defiant – demanding that I relive the time during which I made the picture.”<sup>1325</sup> Lagardien also explains that, after seeing the photograph again he “instantly regretted taking it,”<sup>1326</sup> lamenting that, “There is nothing about photographing death that inspires

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<sup>1316</sup> Dialogue with Duncan Martin.

<sup>1317</sup> Dialogue with Duncan Martin.

<sup>1318</sup> Dialogue with Duncan Martin.

<sup>1319</sup> Gunn and her then husband Aneez Salie were recruited into MK in 1984 by Leon Meyer. In 1985 she was arrested and detained in solitary confinement. After her release in December 1985, she went into exile and underwent military training in Cuba and Angola before returning to Cape Town in 1987 where she and Salie established what became known as the Ashley Kriel Detachment of MK. Gunn was arrested in June 1989 and accused of bombing Khotso House, the headquarters of the SA Council of Churches. She was held in solitary confinement with Haroon, her six month-old son, for 62 days before being released.

<sup>1320</sup> Dialogue with Duncan Martin.

<sup>1321</sup> Dialogue with Duncan Martin.

<sup>1322</sup> Dialogue with Duncan Martin.

<sup>1323</sup> Dialogue with Duncan Martin.

<sup>1324</sup> Ismael Lagardien, *Too White to be Coloured: Too Coloured to be Black*, (Cape Town: Melinda Ferguson Books, 2022).

<sup>1325</sup> Lagardien, *Too White to be Coloured*, 114.

<sup>1326</sup> Lagardien, 113.

composition, looking for the ways that shadows and light fall in patterns, nor is there any value in searching for meaning on the faces of the dead. Jacqui Quin and Leon Meyer were dead. Assassinated.”<sup>1327</sup>



**Figure 31:** Ismail Lagardien's photograph as it appears in his memoir, 2022. The image at the top of the page is the remembered photograph referenced in Chapter Four. Credit: Ismail Lagardien

Describing the picture-making event in his memoir, he writes,

“I walked through the house and into the room where their bodies lay, then stepped back out, exhaled, turned my mind off, inhaled, walked back into the room and unceremoniously, with a cold heart and a face hidden behind a camera, I took a long step over the two bodies that filled the frame with their faces, the gaze of finality away from each other, made the picture and walked out of the room, out of the house, into the cool alpine air of Lesotho, and exhaled.”<sup>1328</sup>

This description, crystallised over time, and in writing, is more fluent and detailed than the painfully hesitant account recorded in our dialogue, bringing the picture-making encounter and his own thoughts, feelings and regrets about it into view, reinserting the photographer firmly into future conversations.

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<sup>1327</sup> Lagardien, 114.

<sup>1328</sup> Lagardien, 114.

In Lagardien's memoir, the photograph is reproduced in a photospread in the centre of the memoir, bringing the photograph, first published in Sey's paper, into the published record for the second time,<sup>1329</sup> (Figure 30). While I chose not to circulate copy of Samson's photograph in the *Archival Platform* post, but rather to veil it with words, Sey felt differently. When asked whether he intended to reproduce the photograph in his conference paper, which he knew would be made available online, he acknowledged the need to be sensitive to the feelings of the family and the rights of copyright holders, but argued that, while it may not be appropriate to circulate the photographs in a main-stream publication, the reproduction of the images in an academic publication was "another matter."<sup>1330</sup> Sey's conference paper is of particular significance because it brings Samson and Lagardien's photographs together in the public domain for the first time. This extends the reach of the images beyond the limited confines of the conference audience and raises the possibility of future encounters and different afterlives.

## Discussion

As noted in the introduction, this chapter has explored different contexts in which the photographs of Jackie and Leon were brought to the attention of new audiences as objects of study or reflection. It has considered when, why, and for what purpose they were lifted out of the archive, deemed to be of sufficient interest to merit attention, and how this shaped the way in which they were brought into view, spoken, or written about, received and remembered. As Stanley Fish argues, "To academicize a topic is to detach it from the context of its real-world urgency, where there is a vote to be taken or an agenda to be embraced, and insert it into a context of academic urgency, where there is an account to be offered or an analysis to be performed."<sup>1331</sup> The same generalisation may apply to any similar didactic situation, but while this process shapes the nature of the photographic encounter in various ways, an analytical, interpretation, grounded in theory, does not necessarily preclude affective agency. Sometimes the veils of words and reason are ripped off to expose the raw power that touches even the most hardened viewers, as evidenced in this chapter.

While the didactic context in which the photographs were presented differed in each of the cases described above, each was presented to a clearly defined audience and with a particular outcome in mind. Sey's conference paper, aimed at a well-informed scholarly audience who shared an interest in photographic theory and criticism, demanded an academically rigorous approach. His contribution to the debates around photographs of atrocities have been cited in other scholarly works. The APC workshop presentation was aimed similarly at an academically engaged audience, but with the intention of gathering feedback on research in

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<sup>1329</sup> Sampson's photograph has, by way of comparison, been publicly accessible in copies of the *Sunday Times* preserved in places of legal deposit since it was first published. It has, more recently, been made available in digital copies of the *Sunday Times* and the *New York Times* through their respective online archives.

<sup>1330</sup> Dialogue with James Sey.

<sup>1331</sup> Stanley Fish, *Save the World on Your Own Time*, (USA: Oxford University Press, 2008), 27.

progress. Rehana and Wright's emotional responses while somewhat unexpected, provide a useful counterpoint to Sey's argument that photographs lose potency as they shift in register from evidentiary to aesthetic objects over time. Potenza's initially reluctant audience did not understand why the photographs she shared were of significance but engaged with more empathetically when the discussion turned to the question of what motivated the *Sunday Times* to publish Samson's photograph. This is an issue that is also addressed at length by Clark who uses the novel, shared with members of his creative writing class, to raise critical issues about the ethics of publication and display of photographs of victims and to air his personal rage and distress in relation to the image of a family member. In Martin's case the audience was a clearly defined small group, confined to their homes and needing relief from the Covid-19 lockdown, while Lagardien's memoir was aimed at a larger and more diverse audience. In each case the photographic encounter was mediated, veiled by the words and actions of the individual presenting the photographs as objects of study and reflection. Words and actions that were often framed as, or attempt to be, as Sey implies, objective rather than subjective, and based on reason rather than emotion. Although Martin and Potenza were disconcerted by the reception accorded their respective presentations of the images, the responses of Potenza herself, Rehana, and Wright suggest strongly that affective powers hold, despite the reservation expressed by Sey, as described earlier in this Chapter.

In one way, Rehana and Wright's responses, like that of Hobbs described in Chapter Five and Odendaal in Chapter Six, may be explained with reference to the concept of projection outlined in Chapter Two. In each case, the interlocutor places themselves metaphorically in the picture, imaging how they might have thought or felt in a particular situation or attributing the anxieties, vulnerabilities or fears it raises into consciousness onto the pictured victims. Rehana identified strongly with Phoenix, the child, who might have crept into her parents' bed for comfort, and she identifies her parents with Jackie and Leon, imagining what might have been. For Rehana too, the issue is compounded by intergenerational memories or postmemory, the stories her parents shared about their lives as activists, strengthens her identification with the narrative implicit in the photographs. Wright, like Hobbs, imagined Jackie as his daughters, projecting his fears for them as vulnerable young woman into his encounter with Jackie, surfacing his own possibly unspoken anxieties about them, his own powerlessness to protect them, and the fragility of life.

The foreboding presence of death, the underlying sense of mourning for lost friends, lovers, a time past and an uncertain future that emerged in these, and other dialogues resonate with the writings of Barthes who seeks to explain why some images leave a lasting impression on him and others do not. In so doing, he draws a distinction between two diametrically opposed qualities present in photographs – *studium* and *punctum*. He uses the term *studium* to denote the context of the photograph and the cultural, linguistic and political interpretation thereof that gives it a certain general or impersonal interest. *Punctum*, he describes, by way of contrast, as the unnameable quality that disturbs, breaks, pricks, bruises or punctures the *studium*. It is the

wounding detail, that is almost impossible to articulate in words, that “rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me.”<sup>1332</sup> Andrés Zervigón links this to Benjamin’s earlier writing, and his mention of the “tiny spark of contingency”<sup>1333</sup> that drives viewers to look beyond the surface of the image for something more; the point of connection “when a photographic moment meets the future beholder over the undefined zone of that beholder’s unconscious.”<sup>1334</sup>

While much of *Camera Lucida* deals with the concept of *punctum* as the wounding detail, towards the end of the book Barthes describes another form of *punctum*, namely the consciousness of time and the inevitability of death, the apprehension “*that is dead and that is going to die*”<sup>1335</sup> [emphasis in the original] and suggesting that the *punctum* may sometimes only be revealed when he encounters the image in memory. For Rehana, the wounding detail was the bed and the implication of domestic intimacy, for Wright, the similarity in appearance to one of his daughters and for Martin, the presence of the child; the unconscious associations they brought to bear on their memories of the image, or as Barthes would have it, what they add to the image that is “*nonetheless already there.*”<sup>1336</sup>

Speaking about the images of Jackie and Leon in the dialogues and in the APC Workshop surfaced memories of other images showing people in similarly vulnerable situations: the exposed corpses of Steve Biko, Chris Hani, Che Guevara, Michael Miranda; unnamed victims of the Bambatha Rebellion; the Border War; and the more recent Garissa massacre. What images like these do, says Dana Amir linking the *punctum* to psychoanalytic process, is to “...shatter[s] the existing categories and the regular order of things by making a ‘hole’ or a ‘wound’ in the observer – rousing him or her from the *studium*’s familiar territory to an alien and exposed region within,”<sup>1337</sup> enabling or compelling an encounter with otherwise unthinkable that lurks beneath the conscious mind.

## Conclusion

This chapter shows how the photographs of Jackie and Leon, even when considered through the most dispassionate lens, resonated on a profound level with those who encountered them, bringing into view the unnameable and the unspeakable that resides beyond the edge of sight. It also counters arguments that unsettling images lose their affective agency over time, suggesting that photographs that surface issues of

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<sup>1332</sup> Barthes, 26.

<sup>1333</sup> Walter Benjamin, Little History of Photography, Walter Benjamin, “A Short History of Photography,” reproduced in *Screen* 13, no. 1 (1972), 6.

<sup>1334</sup> Andrés Zervigón, “Photography’s Weimar-Era Proliferation and Walter Benjamin’s Optical Unconscious,” in Smith and Sliwinski, 42.

<sup>1334</sup> Sliwinski, “Shooting in the Dark”, 333.

<sup>1335</sup> Barthes, 96.

<sup>1336</sup> Barthes, 55.

<sup>1337</sup> Dana Amir, “Studium and Punctum in Psychoanalytic Writing: Reading Case Studies Through Roland Barthes,” *The Psychoanalytic Review*, (2018), 6.

human frailty, vulnerability and mortality not only travel across, but transcend temporal, geographic, discursive and institutional boundaries.

The events, activities, and publications mentioned in this Chapter show the circuitous routes the images have taken from their points of origin, through electronic communication channels, and into the world wide web, through the work of a few actors. The image reproduced in Martin's *rettllesweN* was, for example, only 'findable' via *Google* because it had been mentioned in a post on the *Archival Platform* website and published in an online edition of *Critical Arts*. While the widespread dissemination of the photographs is associated with a certain relinquishment of control – there is no way of monitoring who sees it or for what purpose it may be used – the availability of the images online, as demonstrated in this thesis, has enabled its and varied afterlives. Like the ripples created by a single stone thrown into the still waters of a pond, the first known online mention of the photographs of Jackie and Leon and has catalysed further research, study and reflection, and laid the foundation for future encounters.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# TRACING THE TRACES OF PHOTOGRAPHIC ENCOUNTERS

*Everything leaves a trace, a mark that signals both its presence and its absence. While photographs are in themselves traces of a moment that once was, they also leave traces in material and digital form, and in feelings, memory and the unconscious. Multiple traces of encounters with the images of Jackie and Leon may be found in archives and libraries, in the systems by which the images were arranged and described, in narratives shared in oral history dialogues and memoirs, and in social media posts.*

## CHAPTER EIGHT: TRACING THE TRACES OF PHOTOGRAPHIC ENCOUNTERS

This Chapter concludes the thesis by tracking the material, digital, affective, and unconscious traces of the photographic encounters surfaced through archival research and oral history dialogues. The Chapter argues that archives, while commonly considered as places of preservation and reimagination, may also be construed of as sites of loss and destruction as a consequence of interventions made by archivists in the processes of selection, arrangement, and description of material. The Chapter considers the impact of digitisation and the release of material onto the World Wide Web, with specific reference to the appropriation of images from *Special Report* on various social media platforms. Alongside these tangible traces, the Chapter also notes the ephemeral traces of affect and the mutable traces that may exist in memory and are raised into consciousness when the images of Jackie and Leon are spoken about.<sup>1338</sup> The concluding discussion considers the meaning or significance of other remembered images that came into view in the when the images of Jackie and Leon were recalled in the dialogues.

### Introduction

“... when we write, when we archive, when we trace, when we leave a trace behind us – and that’s what we do each time we trace something, even each time we speak, that is we leave a trace which becomes independent of its origin, of the movement of its utterance – the trace is at the same time the memory, the archive, and the erasure, the repression, the forgetting of what it is supposed to keep safe.”<sup>1339</sup>

Everything that exists, everything that occurs, every encounter, leaves a trace, a mark that signals both its presence and its absence in the present. As shown in previous chapters, the complementary methodologies used in this thesis – archival research, object biography and oral history – surface difference kinds of traces that reside in archives, memory, and the unconscious. Encounters with these traces, loop fluidly backwards and forwards in time, between the preserved record and memory, affect and cognition, the conscious and the unconscious. These bring to mind Laura Ann Stoler’s notion of “history as recursion... history marked by the uneven, unsettled, contingent quality of histories that fold back on themselves and, in that refolding, reveal new surfaces, and new planes.”<sup>1340</sup>

While the paradigm of the trace has been used by theorists, including Benjamin, Barthes and Sontag, to explain or describe the relationship between photographs and the people, places and events they depict, this Chapter

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<sup>1338</sup> Margaret Iversen notes that Freud declared that “becoming conscious and leaving behind a memory-trace are processes incompatible with each other within one and the same system,” for “consciousness arises instead of a memory-trace.” She argues that that “While consciousness must be permanently on erase, its contents expiring quickly to make way for new impressions, memory traces are, to quote Freud, “often most powerful and most enduring when the process which left them behind was one that never entered consciousness.” Margaret Iversen, *Photography, Trace and Trauma* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 12.

<sup>1339</sup> Jacques Derrida, “Archive Fever,” A seminar by Jacques Derrida, University of the Witwatersrand, August 1998, in *Refiguring the Archive* edited by Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris, Jane Taylor, Michele Pickover, Graeme Reid and Razia Saleh. (Dordrecht, Boston, London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), 54.

<sup>1340</sup> Laura Ann Stoler, *Duress: Imperial durability on our times* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016), 26.

does not explore that contested theorisation. Instead, it draws on the work of Pierre Nora, Paul Ricoeur, Jacques Derrida and Verne Harris to consider traces as vestiges or remnants of that which is absent but points to, and is supplemented by, something beyond itself.

Nora, writing in 1989, suggests that “Modern memory is, above all, archival. It relies entirely on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image,”<sup>1341</sup> concluding that “No society has ever produced archives as deliberately as our own, not only by volume, not only by new technical means of reproduction and preservation, but also by its superstitious esteem, by its veneration of the trace.”<sup>1342</sup>

Reflecting on trace, photography and historiography, Elizabeth Edwards argues that, “Although historical sources are often referred to metaphorically as traces, traces of past lives, photographs bring a new level of consciousness and imagination to the idea of trace.” Acknowledging that photographs project the past into the present she argues that they also hold the very *presence* of historical actors, “their social being and the experiences they live through,” and in so doing, they are, “not simply ‘representations’ of the past or bearers of surface facts, but rather bearers of ‘being’ and attendant subjectivities.”<sup>1343</sup> Aligning this with the turn towards experiential, affective and subjectivist histories she contends that “The presence inscribed in photographs offers a visceral sense of the past, and the experience and standpoint of sentient human beings, who are after all, the focus of historical endeavour.”<sup>1344</sup>

### **Material traces**

The earliest material trace of the images, the negatives from the films that were in Samson and Lagardien’s cameras when they visited the Maseru mortuary on 20 December 1985, have been lost. Samson’s negatives were lodged with AFP but when the agency closed its South African offices some years ago, the holdings were dispersed and there is no trace of Samson’s photograph in the corporate archive. Lagardien retained a negative of his photograph after it was wired, but it was stolen, together with many others, when his home was burgled a year or two later.

Although the negatives have been lost, there is a print of Samson’s photograph, made directly from the wirephoto, in the Times Media Library, filed alongside a handful of photographs of the couple as they were in life, sourced from the family in an envelope marked “Quin, Jackie, Murdered Couple” on a shelf labelled “Personalities.” There is no corresponding file for Leon, reflecting the same bias evident in the news reports.

As a material object, the print has substance. It can be experienced in three dimensions, and apprehended

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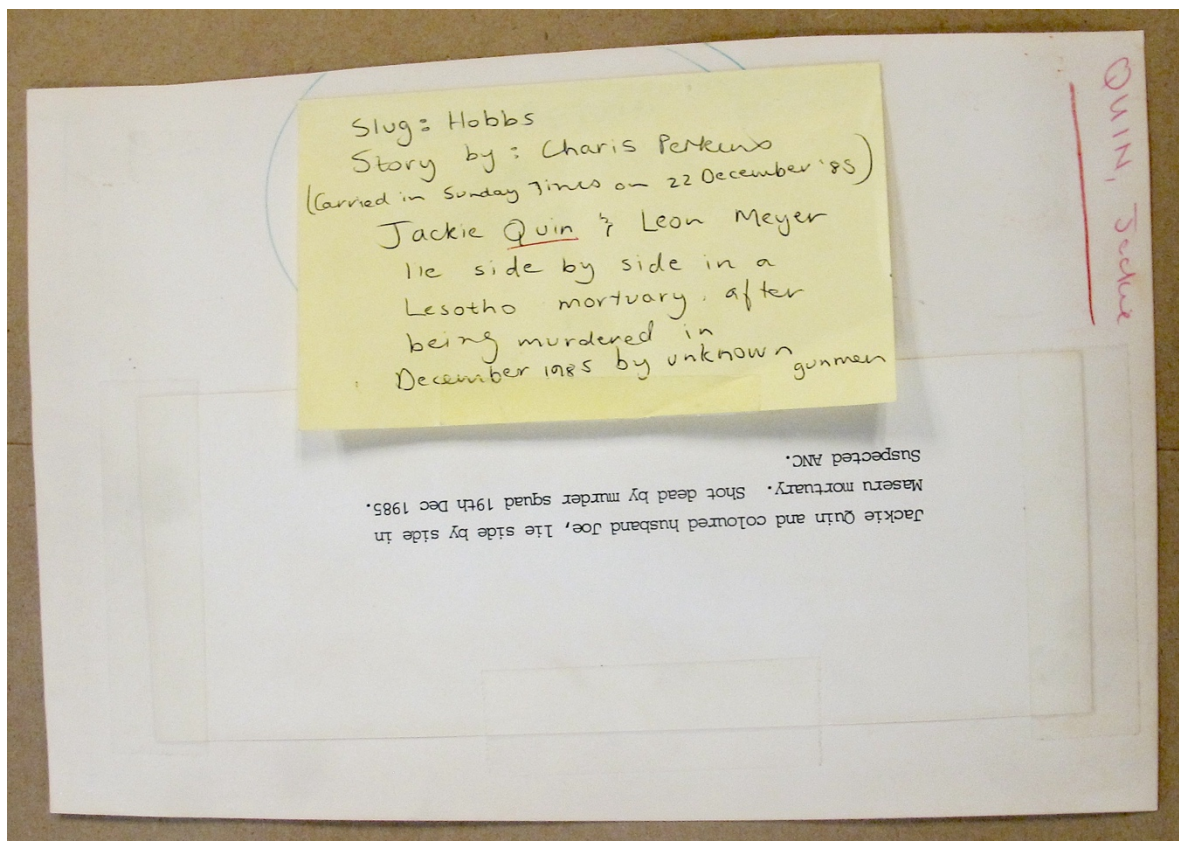
<sup>1341</sup> Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” *Representations* 26 (1989), 13.

<sup>1342</sup> Nora, “Between Memory and History” 13.

<sup>1343</sup> Elizabeth Edwards. *Photographs and the Practice of History*, (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 71.

<sup>1344</sup> Elizabeth Edwards. *Photographs and the Practice of History*, 74.

though all the senses, not just the visual. It has, as Geoffrey Batchen argues, “volume, opacity, tactility and a physical presence in the world.”<sup>1345</sup> Encountering the print for the first time, I recall holding it gently; it arched tautly in my hands as I observed the slightly worn, edges that hinted at other, rougher, treatment. I remember how I lifted it up trying not to mark the shiny paper with my fingerprints and angled it slightly to dim the light reflecting off the gleaming surface, noticing how much sharper the print was than the published image, so sharp in fact that I could see Meyer’s body reflected in the cabinets at the back of the mortuary.



**Figure 32:** Annotations on the back of Trevor Samson's photograph.  
**Credit:** Arena Holdings

A series of notes positioned haphazardly on the back of the print, offer clues to its use and reuse over time, (Figure 33). For instance a large yellow Post-it note reads “Slug = Hobbs. Story by Charis Perkins. (Carried in *Sunday Times* on 22 December 1985) Jackie Quin & Leon Meyer lie side by side in a Lesotho mortuary after being murdered in December 1985 by unknown gunmen.” A second note, written directly onto the surface of the print in green pen reads, “MUST RETURN TO JOE SUTTON, S TIMES,” while an adhesive label carries a typewritten note, “Jackie Quin and coloured husband Joe, lie side by side in Lesotho mortuary.” There's no

<sup>1345</sup> Geoffrey Batchen quoted in Joanna Sasson, “Photographic Materiality in the Age of Digital Reproduction”, in *Photographs, Objects, Histories: On the Materiality of Images* edited by Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart. (New York, Routledge, 2004), 189.

mention of the photographer's name or the agency that supplied the picture.

In the Mayibuye Archives, there is a photograph of the wirephoto of Lagardien's photograph stored in a swing file labelled "Blockades," in a filing cabinet drawer marked "SADF Aggression," alongside images of military vehicles enforcing the military blockade imposed on Lesotho after the Raid. As with the print in the Times Media Library, the information on the back of the print carries useful information about its biography. The Mayibuye sticker, pasted over an IDAF one, speaks to the movement of the image from London to South Africa. Handwritten notes, "Biography: Quinn Joe & Jacqueline," "Lesotho blockades (Military)" and "Joe & Jacqui Quinn killed in Maseru, Lesotho, December 1985, by South African commandoes"<sup>1346</sup> signify the attempts of three different archivists to categorise or contextualise the image.



**Figure 33.** The cropped version of Ismail Lagardien's photograph in the Mayibuye Archives.  
**Credit:** Mayibuye Archives

The notes on the back of the print led to a drawer a labelled "Biographies: Women" and a print of Lagardien's photograph, cropped tightly to show Jackie's face, (Figure 34). The handwritten text on the back of the print reads simply, "Jaqui Quinn, Lesotho, 1986."<sup>1347</sup> There is nothing to suggest that the image has been cropped from a larger photograph. As a fragment of the original and bearing the wrong date, the photograph is

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<sup>1346</sup> The spelling of Jackie's surname is incorrect in these notations; Quin is spelled with a single n.

<sup>1347</sup> Again, the spelling of Jackie's surname is incorrect in these notations; Quin is spelled with a single n.

effectively marooned in the archive. None of the archivists can remember when or why the image was cropped and there is no photograph of Leon in the corresponding file for men.

Speaking about the emotional consequences of handling images like these on a daily basis, Graham Goddard, the archivist in the Photographic Library explained that when he first started working at the Mayibuye Centre in the early 1990s, he was excited to view, “the weapons that were being used”<sup>1348</sup> by IDAF and to see the evidence of past events, saying “If you’ve lived through it, it’s just wonderful to see the proof of it.”<sup>1349</sup> But, he confessed, after 1994 when the new democratic government came into power, he became irritated and angry, explaining that “Everything had changed, there was this sense of euphoria, everyone wanted to forget about the bad things that had happened, but *we* [the archivists] were stuck, living in the past.”<sup>1350</sup> It was particularly difficult, he says, because “everyone was partying and I’m sitting here looking at video footage and stills, and that really affected me.”<sup>1351</sup> Later on, he admitted wearily, his shoulders slumping as he spoke, he got really “cheesed off” to see what was happening in the country and what was going on in Parliament, because “it looked as if everyone had forgotten everything that had happened.”<sup>1352</sup> This, he says, is what ensues when you, as an archivist, “live in the past and in the present all at the same time.”<sup>1353</sup> Rita Potenza, whose Times Media staff discussion was mentioned in Chapter Seven, expressed a similar sentiment, explaining that working with the evidence of the suffering of the past in the present filled her with rage and despair.<sup>1354</sup>

Archives are commonly regarded as places of preservation, but they are also places of loss, destruction, or mutilation, where archivists wield significant power. As Trouillot argues,

“The making of archives involves a number of selective operations: selection of producers, selection of evidence, selection of themes, selection of procedures – which means, at best the differential ranking, and at worst, the exclusion of some producers, some evidence, some themes, some procedures.”<sup>1355</sup>

Joan Schwartz and Terry Cook argue similarly, suggesting that archives both shape and embody public perceptions, and thus collective memory and scholarship, through “the heavy layers of intervention and meaning coded into the records.”<sup>1356</sup> Archival interventions may be deliberate, driven by the intention to forget or erase an unpalatable element of the past, or they may, as illustrated below, in relation to press clipping collections, be the consequence of a bureaucratic arrangement system arising from a particular world view.

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<sup>1348</sup> Dialogue with Graham Goddard, Cape Town, May 18, 2015.

<sup>1349</sup> Dialogue with Graham Goddard.

<sup>1350</sup> Dialogue with Graham Goddard.

<sup>1351</sup> Dialogue with Graham Goddard.

<sup>1352</sup> Dialogue with Graham Goddard.

<sup>1353</sup> Dialogue with Graham Goddard.

<sup>1354</sup> Dialogue with Rita Potenza.

<sup>1355</sup> Trouillot, 53.

<sup>1356</sup> Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, “Archives, Records and Power: The Making of Modern Memory,” *Archival Science* 2 (2002), 6.

Back in the pre-digital era, and in some institutions such as the National Library and the South African Institute for Race Relations (SAIRR), press reports were routinely clipped from newspapers, sometimes pasted into scrap books and filed, usually thematically, for research purposes. As with other archival processes, the selection of reports for retention, and the systems of arrangement were shaped by the agenda or interests of the collecting organisation. This in turn shaped, and continues to shape, the way in which the clippings are accessed and encountered.



Figure 34: Clipping from the *Sunday Times*, December 22, 1985.  
Credit: Arena Holdings

In the Times Media library, clippings of reports about the Maseru Raid were, until 1989, held in filing cabinets labelled “BLACKS,” in a folder marked “Conference & Congress. ANC, AZAPO, AZANIA, ALL AFRICAN CONGRESS. FROM: 11. 12. 1985. TO: 22.12” Among the clippings in this file are the press report from the front page, headlined ‘SPARED,’ which includes a photograph of Patricia Quin and Phoenix, the page two report headed “Jackie a girl they all loved,” and the caption for Samson’s photograph, headed, “THE VICTIMS.” The only trace of the image itself is a fragment of the photograph visible on the back of the clipping from the front page, (Figure 35).

The same clipping of the report described above, also carrying a vestige of Samson's image, is filed in the Barry Streek SA Pressclips collection,<sup>1357</sup> housed at Mayibuye, in a Box labelled "Lesotho 1984-1986," and a folder marked "Lesotho 1985." A photocopy of the clipping is also filed in the IDAF Press Clippings collection, in a box labelled "Foreign Relations: Lesotho. Jan 84-Dec 85," in a folder marked "FR Lesotho: July-Dec 1985." But in this case, the photograph of Patricia Quin and Phoenix has been discarded and, because it is a photocopy, there is no trace of Samson's photograph on the back of the sheet.

The front-page report from the *Sunday Times* described above was not selected for inclusion in the collection of the SAIRR held by the Historical Papers Research Archive at the University of the Witwatersrand, although other clippings associated with the Raid are. While most of the clippings in this collection exclude photographs, the report published on the front page of *The Star*,<sup>1358</sup> including the photograph of a bloodied bath which seems to stand as proxy for the victims, has been retained.

The *Sunday Times* front page report described above was also not selected for inclusion among in the SA Media<sup>1359</sup> collection, although many others covering the Raid were. Hester van der Bergh, the librarian explained, "As long as we get the main story, it doesn't matter in which newspaper it was . . . if somebody looks for a story we can give it to them. We've got the story, but it doesn't necessarily come out of the newspaper that you've read it in."<sup>1360</sup> None of the SA Media clippings include photographs because, as Van der Burgh said, too, these were too difficult to copy. In the absence of the image, the report is reduced to words, leaving it to the viewer to conjure up the scene in their own minds.

While Samson's photograph has been excised from the clippings described above, in the Mayibuye Archives the image has been cut and retained separately. An A3 size photograph of the image itself, clipped from the *Sunday Times*, with a handwritten note reading, "Caption missing. Jackie Quin + her husband and her husband 'Joe'? Maseru Raid." is lodged in a cabinet marked "Photographs" in the Mayibuye Archives Large Print Store. There it lies randomly in a heap with other large images – including an enlargement of the wirephoto photograph of Lagardien's photograph.

A print of the same photographed clipping is also filed in the ANC Archive at the University of Fort Hare, in a folder marked "SADF Aggression." An IDAF sticker on the back of the print and a single handwritten word,

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<sup>1357</sup> Barry Streek, a Cape Town journalist, operated a news clipping service from the late 1970s to the early 1990s and published a weekly bulletin, *SA Pressclips* which was distributed to a small group of subscribers.

<sup>1358</sup> Sapa-Associated Press, Reuter, "Lesotho blames SADF for killings in Maseru," *The Star* (Johannesburg), December 21, 1985.

<sup>1359</sup> The Archive of Contemporary Affairs at the University of the Free State, was home to the SA Media Clipping Service established in 1972 to serve the needs of parliament for current information relating to political, economic, social, labour and cultural developments. SA Media was acquired by Sabinet in about 2015 and the clippings are now available online to subscribers. *Sabinet*, "All SA Media (News Clippings)," accessed January 2025, <https://discover.sabinet.co.za/search?Search=&ProductType=allamedianewsclippinga>

<sup>1360</sup> Dialogue with Hester van der Bergh, Bloemfontein, June 22, 2015.

“Maseru,” are the only clues to its identity or provenance. In this collection, the print is filed alongside a set of garish snapshots of unidentified bodies. The only clue to the identities of the victims are the words “Maseru Massacre” handwritten on the back of the snapshots.<sup>1361</sup> While the metadata attached to the images is woefully inadequate, it reflects something of the context in which the images were collected and sorted by volunteers or untrained staff members attached to IDAF. Nevertheless, in the absence of any more substantive information, the victims are reduced to unnamed ciphers.

Clippings of the news reports, including Samson’s photograph, were retained in the personal archives or albums of various family members, occupying an uncomfortable space between other photographs and press cuttings. Jackie’s godmother, Ydie Durandt, cut “that horrible photograph”<sup>1362</sup> out of the *Sunday Times*, but chose not to file it alongside other press cuttings carrying news of the family. Instead, she stored it “safely folded up in an envelope”<sup>1363</sup> out of reach in a box on the top shelf of her bedroom cupboard. She was afraid of stumbling on it accidentally, she said, fingering her necklace in agitation as she spoke, “because Jackie just looked so, so . . . dead and you don’t want to see people you love looking like that . . .”<sup>1364</sup> Twenty years later, when she packed up her family home, she posted the fragile clipping, still untouched in its envelope, to Jackie’s sister. She couldn’t throw it away, she said tremulously, “because it was Jackie, after all.”<sup>1365</sup> The attachment to these traces of the past and the decisions on how and where to retain clippings like this have profound implications for the transmission of memory from one generation of a family to another, however difficult it may be: if the record is lost, so is one of the traces that might spur personal narratives that may otherwise go unspoken. The retention of images like this in family archives also raises the issue of what Marianne Hirsch terms post-memory,<sup>1366</sup> and the way in which the next generation – Jackie and Leon’s daughter and her cousins – come to terms with their memories of the difficult story of Jackie and Leon that they “‘remember’ only by means of the stories and the images”<sup>1367</sup> that they grew up with.

### Digital traces

Researchers seeking copies of the *Sunday Times* reports are no longer required to sift through outdated classification systems or dusty filing cabinets: scanned copies of the publication are now available online to subscribers<sup>1368</sup> in a fully searchable format, and it is possible to view reports as they would have appeared on

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<sup>1361</sup> Two of these images are included in Naidoo, *Le Rona Re Batho*, 28 and 62.

<sup>1362</sup> Dialogue with Ydie Durandt, Cape Town, April 15, 2016.

<sup>1363</sup> Dialogue with Ydie Durandt.

<sup>1364</sup> Dialogue with Ydie Durandt.

<sup>1365</sup> Dialogue with Ydie Durandt.

<sup>1366</sup> Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 103.

<sup>1367</sup> Marianne Hirsch quoted in “An interview with Marianne Hirsch,” Columbia University Press, accessed February 2025, <https://cup.columbia.edu/author-interviews/hirsch-generation-postmemory/>.

<sup>1368</sup> *Newsbank*, accessed January 2025, <https://www.newsbank.com/>. This service is available to subscribers including institutional libraries.

the pages of the print version when they were first published. Nevertheless, as Andrew Hoskins contends, the pervasive presence of digital devices and networks has shifted the way in which people search for, access, copy or acquire, store, sort and preserve information, challenging accepted notions of archive. In a connected world, he argues, the archive is let loose from the “bonds of space, institution and regimented classification, it has run riot ...”<sup>1369</sup>

Lucy Bond and Pieter Vermeulen concur with Hoskins, arguing that memory, “previously thought to be anchored in particular places, to be lodged in particular containers (monuments, texts, geographic locations) and to belong to the (national, family, social) communities”<sup>1370</sup> has become mobile, fluid, flexible, or unbounded in a globalized, connected age,<sup>1371</sup> crossing cultural, generational, medial and disciplinary dimensions seamlessly. One of the effects of this has been to shift the conversation about who speaks for the past. The power and authority of traditional gatekeepers in the academy and institutions of memory who have communicated through publications, documentaries, exhibitions, etc. has been undermined or diminished, letting loose myriads of “unofficial actors.”<sup>1372</sup> This is demonstrated below with reference to social media posts by Kunu Matima and Africa Bush Wars who went by the handle “@modernconflict” on Twitter. Both have appropriated images from *Special Report* as indisputable evidence of persecution to support contending agendas, bringing into view a disturbing juxtaposition of sanctioned and counternarratives, as suggested below.

Until 2021, when the building was destroyed by a fire, the videotape containing the footage made by Brink and Msibi in the Maseru mortuary was held in safekeeping in UCT’s Jagger Library, in an obsolete format: the tapes were inaccessible unless digitised.<sup>1373</sup> The *Special Report* series, which included clips from this footage, were similarly held out of sight in the SABC Archive until 2013 when they were digitised and made available online via YouTube.<sup>1374</sup> Although this offered an unprecedented window into a significant moment in South Africa’s recent past, the release of the material in a format that could easily be copied, made it vulnerable to reuse for purposes never intended by the producers.

Kunu Matima, a South African activist living in the United States of America, took screenshots of scenes included in Episode 6 of *Special Report* and used these to illustrate his post on the Raid uploaded on 27 September 2018, in which he provided a somewhat flawed account of the attack, (Figure 36). Prompted by Facebook

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<sup>1369</sup> Andrew Hoskins, ed. *Digital Memory Studies: Media Pasts in Transition* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), unpaginated.

<sup>1370</sup> Lucy Bond, Stef Craps, and Pieter Vermeulen, *Memory Unbound : Tracing the dynamics of memory studies* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017), 1.

<sup>1371</sup> Lucy Bond, Stef Craps, and Pieter Vermeulen, *Memory Unbound*, 1.

<sup>1372</sup> Robin Ekelund, Robin. “Instant Memories?” *Cross-Sections: Historical Perspectives from Malmo University* 28 (2022), 68.

<sup>1373</sup> When I identified the tapes the Library arranged to have them digitised so that I could view the footage.

<sup>1374</sup> SABC, accessed January 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/@sabc>.

Memories,<sup>1375</sup> Matima reposted the post on the same date in 2019,<sup>1376</sup> 2020,<sup>1377</sup> and 2021,<sup>1378</sup> and again on 17 November 2021,<sup>1379</sup> when his attention was focused on women victims of apartheid violence,<sup>1380</sup> and on 25 April 2022,<sup>1381</sup> when factual errors made in the post were corrected in a comment by Marion Sparg.



**Figure 35:** Kunu Matima, Facebook post, September 27, 2018.

**Credit:** Kunu Matima / Facebook

Screenshots from *Special Report* Episode 6.<sup>1382</sup> **Top row:** “Last supper in Maseru in 1985.” “Phoenix: She rose from the ashes of the cruel murder of her parents. Where was god in all this?” “The blood of the martyrs of our suffering under apartheid

<sup>1375</sup> Facebook’s Memories function reminds users of posts published on the ‘same day’ in the past, making it easy to share these again. “*All your memories are in one place now* accessed April 2022, <https://about.fb.com/news/2018/06/all-of-your-facebook-memories-are-now-in-one-place/>.

<sup>1376</sup> Matima shared this post in 2019, with following text: “The Second Maseru Massacre proved the savagery of the apartheid regime. Our country has experienced non-stop brutality for centuries. Is it any wonder the homicide rate against men, women and children has continued without pause? Kuna Matima, Facebook, 27 September 2019, accessed January 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/kunu.matima1/posts/10215148050523383>. Content no longer available.

<sup>1377</sup> Kunu Matima, Facebook, 27 September 2020, accessed March 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/kunu.matima1/posts/10218078146653955>. Content no longer available.

<sup>1378</sup> Kunu Matima, Facebook, 27 September 2020.

<sup>1379</sup> Kunu Matima, Facebook, 17 November 2021, accessed March 2022 <https://www.facebook.com/kunu.matima1/posts/10220392375028218>. Content no longer available for public viewing.

<sup>1380</sup> On the same day, Matima shared a post about the death of Jeanette Curtis Schoon and her six-year-old daughter Katryn, killed in 1984 in Angola by a letter-bomb sent by apartheid agent Craig Williamson, accessed March 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/kunu.matima1/posts/10220392421829388/>. Content no longer available.

<sup>1381</sup> Kunu Matima, Facebook, 25 April 2022, accessed May 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/kunu.matima1/posts/10221138040789396>. Content no longer available

<sup>1382</sup> SABC, *Truth Commission Special Report*, Episode 06, Part 06.

oppression.” **Middle row:** “House of death in Maseru.” 2nd Row, L-R, “Vlakplaas killer, Warrant Officer Willie Nortje.” “Vlakplas (sic) Death Squad Leader Prime Evil, who murdered the innocents all over Southern Africa.” **Bottom row:** “Award ceremony for the Maseru mass killers of our people in Pretoria.” The 8<sup>th</sup> image is uncaptioned. None of the images are credited.

General comments by friends and followers who encountered this post suggest that it served a mnemonic function, reminding them of past events and memorialising the “fallen heroes.” It also triggered comments about the failure of the TRC and demands for justice. By April 2022, Matima’s post had been shared by 246 friends and followers and 134 had reacted to it: 61 likes, 46 tears, 25 angry, 1 wow and 1 love. Reactions like these, Lucy Bond, Stef Craps, and Pieter Vermeulen suggest, “yield precious information about people’s unconscious desires and predispositions.”<sup>1383</sup> While some of Matima’s posts, praise “struggle heroes,” others are fractious and inflammatory<sup>1384</sup> and he takes pride in exposing the “hidden truths” of the past, something his followers value. As one commented, “Whenever I read your post or articles, I become sad not because they are bitter but because real history have [sic]been hidden in all kinds of archives.”<sup>1385</sup>

Although Matima makes occasional use of news clippings, presumably from his personal archive, most of the images on his Facebook page appear to have been ‘lifted’ from online sources. Images are rarely credited to individual photographers and the sources are seldom named or acknowledged. Many of the images he shares show apartheid violence or its bloody aftermath: police beating protestors, wounded or dead bodies.

Scrolling through Matima’s posts is unsettling. Not just because of the subject matter and the tone of the content, but because of the temporal confusion that ensues as posts loop randomly between quasi-historical accounts of past events and self-promoting personal information, or contemporary opinions. This presents a challenge to any historian attempting to use social media as a source. Reflecting on this kind of disjunction as a feature of social media, Hoskins suggests, that the untethering of material once held safe under controlled conditions renders it fluid,<sup>1386</sup> and often sows confusion, as does its use alongside other posts, that randomly juxtapose past/present, here/there, and personal/political.<sup>1387</sup> As Hoskins asserts, and as evident on Matima’s Facebook timeline, in the digital environment “All that is vital and all that is redundant now seem to have the same location, the same presence, the same screen: personal priority and perspectives are diminished in the shadow archive where everything seems perpetually here and now.”<sup>1388</sup> Aligned with, and creating further disturbance, this is the challenge of ‘prosthetic memory’, the term used by Alison Landsberg to describe

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<sup>1383</sup> Lucy Bond, Stef Craps, and Pieter Vermeulen, 155.

<sup>1384</sup> Matima has, for example, made sweeping statements claiming that *most* apartheid era photographers filming protest activity supplied information to the South African Police force.

<sup>1385</sup> Kunu Matima, Facebook, 13 August 2018, accessed April 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/SA.History/photos/a.1006730952769950/1564585320317841/>. Content no longer available.

<sup>1386</sup> Hoskins, ed. *Digital Memory Studies*, 87.

<sup>1387</sup> On 25 April 2022, Matima published three posts covering, the 1976 Battle of Entebbe in Uganda, the 1985 Maseru Raid and the 1982 Maseru Massacre. On 27 September 2018 he published two posts, the first on a talk about apartheid that he delivered to high school students in the USA in 2016, and the second on the Maseru Raid.

<sup>1388</sup> Andrew Hoskins. “Archive me! Media, memory, uncertainty,” in *Memory in a Mediated World: Remembrance and Reconstruction* edited by Andrea Hajek, Christine Lohmeier and Christian Pentzold (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 9.

personal memories that derive from experientially oriented encounters with representations, like films or photographs, that make it possible to have memories of events through which one did not live, or may have been too young to remember<sup>1389</sup>.

Africa Bush Wars, which gives their location as Salisbury, Rhodesia,<sup>1390</sup> draws heavily on online news archives and media to create their posts. Like Matima, they<sup>1391</sup> used screenshots from *Special Report* to illustrate a post about the Maseru Raid,<sup>1392</sup> supplementing this with a clipping of Samson's photograph from the *New York Times*, and including a similar mix of victims, perpetrators and location shots.



Figure 36: Africa Bush Wars, *Twitter*, December 20, 2018, and December 20, 2019.

Credit: Africa Bush Wars / X

Clockwise, from left to right: A headline clipped from the *New York Times* of December 21, 1985.<sup>1393</sup> Screenshots of a houses targeted by the attackers, Vlakplaas operative Warrant Officer Willie Nortje, Vlakplaas commander, Eugene de Kock and Jackie and Leon in the Maseru mortuary clipped from Episode 6 of the *Special Report* series.<sup>1394</sup> Samson's photograph and of a portrait of Richard Macaskill, together with the accompanying caption clipped the *New York Times* of December 21, 1985.<sup>1395</sup>

<sup>1389</sup> Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

<sup>1390</sup> The pre-independence names for Harare and Zimbabwe.

<sup>1391</sup> Africa Bush Wars, *Twitter* accessed March 2022, <https://twitter.com/modernconflict?lang=en>

<sup>1392</sup> Three of the clippings are identical and one, the scene in the mortuary are a fraction of a second apart.

<sup>1393</sup> Alan Cowell, "9 SOUTH AFRICANS SAID TO DIE IN RAID", *New York Times*, 21 December 1985, accessed February 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/1985/12/21/world/9-south-africans-said-to-die-in-raid.html>.

<sup>1394</sup> SABC Truth Commission *Special Report*, Episode 06, Part 06.

<sup>1395</sup> Uncredited, Agence France-Presse photographs, *New York Times*, 21 December 1985, accessed February 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/1985/12/21/world/9-south-africans-said-to-die-in-raid.html>

This post was first published on Twitter (now X) on the anniversary of the Raid in 2018<sup>1396</sup> and reposted on the same date in 2019, (Figure 37).<sup>1397</sup> The only comment the post is a link to an article, “De Kock links PW to Maseru Massacre.”<sup>1398</sup> Africa Bush War replied to this writing, “He wasn’t [sic] really any kind of soldier or fighter or whatever he was if he puts his wife in harms [sic] way like he did. Knowing after the landmine the South Africans might be coming.” The “he” in this statement is clearly a reference to Leon, and the tone of the reply suggests the writer’s disdain for him. This, together with the use of the pre-independence names (Salisbury, Rhodesia), and warning that, “all the peoples of southern Africa will pay a heavy price” acknowledged in the collage as a statement emanating from the State SSC, suggests a particular ideological position unsympathetic to the victims.

The images appropriated by Matima and Africa Bush Wars are used to support different agendas but they both mirror a version of the ‘truth,’ and are veiled, in one way or another by the political beliefs of the posters, shaping the manner in which the attached images are encountered, perceived and remembered. Sharon Sliwinski, citing Arnold Benjamin and Sigmund Freud who understood photography as a “medium that lends itself to unconscious communication”<sup>1399</sup> argues that the “the public (and private) circulation of photographic images is one means by which citizens carry on this unconscious conversation . . .”<sup>1400</sup> reflecting something of the psychic processes at work. In the examples cited above, these conversations are crude and unproductive, undermining the use for which they were originally intended. As Sliwinski contends, conversations like these have less to do with *what* is seen, than how they are seen or perceived.<sup>1401</sup> As argued in this Chapter, the images of Jackie and Leon have been ‘seen’ and used as evidence to initiate contradictory conversations about personal sacrifice, persecution, justice, mourning, retribution, retaliation and vengeance invoking responses that imply fear, terror, horror, grief, outrage and self-righteous satisfaction in different audiences. What the repurposing of the images of Jackie and Leon for other purposes does is to bring into conversation, and into view, not just the dark ‘shadow archive’ of images of apartheid atrocities, but also the unseeable and unspeakable images that have been put out of mind but remain treacherously, deep in the unconscious.<sup>1402</sup>

Access to digital media and technologies has fundamentally changed the way in which people remember, forget,

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<sup>1396</sup> Africa Bush Wars, *Twitter*, 20 December 2018, accessed 19 March 2022, <https://twitter.com/ModernConflict/status/1075785375145177089/photo/1>.

<sup>1397</sup> Africa Bush Wars, *Twitter*, 20 December 2019, accessed 19 March 2022, <https://twitter.com/ModernConflict/status/1208020237062410240/photo/1>.

<sup>1398</sup> Erika de Beer, “De Kock Links PW to Maseru Massacre”, *IOL*, Accessed March 2022, <https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/de-kock-links-pw-to-maseru-massacre-39634>.

<sup>1399</sup> Sliwinski, “Shooting in the Dark,” 331.

<sup>1400</sup> Sliwinski, “Shooting in the Dark,” 331.

<sup>1401</sup> Sliwinski, “Shooting in the Dark,” 331.

<sup>1402</sup> In his study of the photographs of American soldiers torturing inmates of Abu Ghraib prison, Joseph Pugliese extends the notion of the ‘shadow archive’ beyond harrowing photographs of atrocities to include “the unseen; the torture which was documented but remains unseeable, the torture that has been seen and wilfully forgotten, the torture that is not documented. . . .” Joseph Pugliese, “Abu Ghraib and its Shadow Archives,” *Law and Literature*, Volume 19 No. 2, 247-276.

share, use and communicate information about the past. This Hoskins contends, has catalysed an ontological shift in the conceptualisation of memory: the entanglement of memory and digital networks makes it virtually impossible for anything that has been communicated digitally to be forgotten.<sup>1403</sup> As is evident in Matima and Africa Bush Wars social media posts the diffusion of information which is kept in constant circulation preserves the past relentlessly in the present, flattening chronological time and “constantly remediating that which was once under the control of functional human forgetfulness.”<sup>1404</sup> Forgetting may be necessary and healthy to human existence,<sup>1405</sup> as Ricoeur argues, but it may also be destructive, or as Harris suggests, “malevolent, dysfunctional and pathological”<sup>1406</sup> when it is enforced.

### **Affective traces**

Ricoeur argues that traces may be documentary/archival, cerebral/cortical or affective, describing the latter as, “the passive persistence of first impressions: an event [that] has struck us, touched us, affected us, and the affective mark remains in our minds.”<sup>1407</sup> Placing a similar emphasis on the affective dimension, Ann Cvetkovich although not referencing Ricoeur, conceptualises “an archive of feelings”<sup>1408</sup> which she associates with “archives of trauma” that may similarly be, “unspeakable and unrepresentable . . . and often seems to leave no records at all.”<sup>1409</sup> Exploring this conceptualisation through the lens of lesbian public culture, she constitutes or identifies archives that embrace the material as well as the intangible and ephemeral. Like the archive constituted for the purposes of this thesis, these embrace and explore traces of feelings and emotions embedded in cultural texts – novels, poems, documentary films, performances – and practices – personal testimonies recorded in oral history interviews, memoirs, photographs artworks and social media posts. An archive of this nature, Cvetkovich asserts, is significant because it complements documentary archives, offering access to “invisible and erased histories”<sup>1410</sup> and alternative modes of knowing. Michael Roper, like Ricoeur and Cvetkovich, affirms the significance of historical sources that enlist the researcher’s emotions and invest the past with meaning.

Affective traces of the picture making encounter and encounters with the images of Jackie and Leon abound in the oral history dialogues discussed in Chapters Four to Seven. These include descriptions of shock, anger, and sorrow that indicate the emotional impact of the images on the viewers. Affective traces also come into view obliquely in the cultural products arising from these encounters, such as *Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary*

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<sup>1403</sup> Hoskins, ed. *Digital Memory Studies*, 103.

<sup>1404</sup> Hoskins. “Archive me!” 8.

<sup>1405</sup> Verne Harris, “Genres of the Trace: memory, archives and trouble,” *Archives and Manuscripts* (2012), 152.

<sup>1406</sup> Harris, “Genres of the Trace,” 152.

<sup>1407</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, translated by Kathleen Blamey and David Bellaauer (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 427.

<sup>1408</sup> Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*, 7.

<sup>1409</sup> Cvetkovich, 7.

<sup>1410</sup> Cvetkovich, 8.

<sup>1411</sup>or “Gutted with the Glory”<sup>1412</sup> and expressed in memoirs and other written forms.

### Traces in memory

As with affective traces, this thesis surfaces traces of the picture making encounter and the images of Jackie and Leon encountered in the mutable, fragile, fluid and transient domain of memory. These affirm Currie-Williams positioning of afterimages as a “memory or trace of an image”<sup>1413</sup> that exists in the absence of the original that extends beyond the realm of the visual, as mentioned in Chapter One. As Currie-Williams notes, describing these multisensorial manifestations or traces, “what lingers is not simply the visual impression of the photographic image, but the affective, sonic and haptic registers that have sustained over time.”<sup>1414</sup>

Memories of the visit to the mortuary have been brought into the public domain through the evocative descriptions penned by Charles Nqakula,<sup>1415</sup> Mzwakhe Ndlela,<sup>1416</sup> and Ismail Lagardien, and memories of the encounter with the images of Jackie and Leon are included in texts by Jenny Hobbs, Warrick Swinney, James Sey, Jeremy Clark and Duncan Martin. Memories like these, Harris argues, citing Derrida and Carolyn Hamilton, enter the archive as traces because they have been inscribed onto a surface that is external to the individual’s psychic apparatus and deemed to be worthy of protection and preservation.

Memories of the images – surfaced in the oral history dialogues, though word and gestures will similarly enter the public domain through this thesis, as will the mis-memories described in Chapters Four to Seven and addressed in the Conclusion. However, not all images are remembered or even misremembered, some are simply forgotten. Davison and Hooper, for example, while remembering the circumstances of the encounter with Lagardien’s image and the curatorial debates around its display, admitted that they don’t remember the image clearly. This is not unusual, as Harris, citing Ricoeur, argues, the process of forgetting is not in binary opposition to remembering, rather, “forgetting is imbricated in memory.”<sup>1417</sup> Harris elaborates:

“The notion of total recall – of a memory which is absolute and holds all – is monstrous. To be human is to have mnemonic limits of capacity and competence. To be human is to need to have the traces of violence of violation, removed from living memory, from anamnesis. To be human is to have the capacity to forgive – a capacity which Ricoeur describes as an appeasement of memory, which ‘seems to constitute the final stage of the progress of forgetting’. To be human is to have the right to forget.”<sup>1418</sup>

Furthermore, Harris suggests that “the logic of the trace is an enabling to forget” and that every act of recording memory whether it be from “the movement from intermediate memory to short-term memory, the

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<sup>1411</sup> Hobbs, *Makeshift Mortuary*.

<sup>1412</sup> Kalahari Surfers. *Bigger than Jesus / Beachbomb*. Johannesburg: Shifty Records, 1989.

<sup>1413</sup> Currie-Williams, “Afterimages”, 112.

<sup>1414</sup> Currie-Williams, 111-124.

<sup>1415</sup> Nqakula, 174-180.

<sup>1416</sup> Ndlela, 79-91.

<sup>1417</sup> Harris, “Genres of the Trace, 152.

<sup>1418</sup> Harris, “Genres of the Trace, 152.

movement from short-term memory to long-term memory, from consciousness to unconsciousness, from memory to archives,"<sup>1419</sup> enables forgetting.

### Traces from the edge of consciousness

Derrida, drawing on Freud, argues that the unconscious, archives and memory, may best be understood as genres of the trace.<sup>1420</sup> In Freudian terms, the conscious and the preconscious include memories that may be retrieved and brought into awareness with relative ease while the unconscious comprises wounding or difficult memories and feelings that have been repressed but may be raised into consciousness through psychoanalytic practices including talk-therapy, free association and dream analysis.

While Freud used photographic metaphors to describe the workings of the mind, Walter Benjamin drew on Freud's theorisations of the mind to explore the nature of photography. In Benjamin's framing the camera brings into sight, and thus into consciousness, that which is not visible unaided to the human eye,<sup>1421</sup> and like psychoanalysis reveals that which is "disavowed or otherwise unavailable to consciousness,"<sup>1422</sup> including repressed memories, hidden fears and anxieties, as discussed in Chapter One.

Oral history dialogues may similarly surface buried memories and painful feelings. As noted at several points in this thesis, *speaking* about the images of Jackie and Leon brings into view almost unsayable, unspeakable, unbearable or unseeable traces that exist at the edge of consciousness. These elusive and ephemeral traces may be found in the words, the manner of speaking and the gestures that communicate memories, in the emotionally charged responses that thread through the dialogues, and in the remembered or mental images mentioned as interlocutors struggled to put inchoate thoughts into words.

Viewed collectively in an imagined gallery, the remembered or mental images mentioned by interlocutors do not sit comfortably within the conventional photographic trope of apartheid repression and resistance. There are no images of the perpetrators, police wielding batons or guns, defiant protestors on the march, or crowds of mourners singing in solidarity at political funerals. Neither do they fit the type of classification systems implemented by the archives and libraries mentioned earlier in this Chapter.

None of the remembered images reference the Raid directly. Krige, Comrade AB and Sachs mention images of other cross-border incursions; the 1977 Cassinga Massacre, the 1981 Matola Raid, the 1982 assassination of Ruth First and the 1985 Gaborone Massacre. Krige and Samson associated the images of Jackie and Leon with photographs showing the aftermath of state sponsored violence: the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre, the 1976 killing of Hector Petersen, and the 1994 right-wing victims of a shootout with Bophuthatswana security forces.

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<sup>1419</sup> Harris, "Genres of the Trace, 152.

<sup>1420</sup> Harris, "Genres of the Trace, 147.

<sup>1421</sup> Smith and Sliwinski, 4.

<sup>1422</sup> Smith and Sliwinski, 4.

In contrast, Odendaal, Lagardien and Msibi, mentioned politically motivated violence inflicted by civilians: the 1980 mob attack on Frederick Jansen, the 1985 attack on an unknown woman mentioned by Lagardien, and the 1990 George Goch Station shootings. Two images showing scores of deceased victims were mentioned, the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre and the 1978 Cassinga Massacre. Krige, Odendaal and Samson remembered photographs showing a single individual either precariously vulnerable or at the point of death; a woman on the brink of execution in My Lai in 1968; the Vietnamese girl running from a napalm bomb in Trang Bang in 1972; Frederick Jansen mentioned above; and Samson's 1985 photograph of a woman jumping out of a bus to avoid capture. Swinney, Clark and Sachs, and Odendaal mention corpses on display under different circumstances: the photographs of Che Guevarra displayed to the press in 1967; the Steve Biko autopsy photographs and in his coffin in 1977; Ruth First in 1982 in a mortuary; Michael Miranda in an open coffin in 1985; and Chris Hani in 1993. Delport's memory of the bodies of the schoolchildren drowned in the Westdene Bus Disaster is a thematic outlier in this imagined gallery, but it shares a similar quality, evoking a poignant sense of vulnerability, the precarity of life and the negation of control imposed by death.

Encounters with these images in the mind's eye, as expressed in the dialogues, suggest a moment of deep connection, much like Barthes *punctum*, which raises into consciousness the viewers otherwise unsayable, unseeable, unrepresentable fears, vulnerabilities and anxieties. While this may happen as a private encounter with the self, the dialogues provided an opportunity to articulate and share the public moment with an empathetic other. Several interlocutors, particularly the picture-makers, commented that the dialogues came as a relief, an opportunity to confront the intrusive images, experienced often as flashbacks, in a safe space. As MacCurdy concludes, "It is image that burns itself into our minds whether we want it or not, and image that can free us from a past if we look straight at the pictures that live behind our eyes and communicate them to others."<sup>1423</sup>

## Conclusion

Material traces of the photographic encounter may be accessed in archival repositories and libraries and in digital format on the World Wide Web. Other, intangible trace, memories, feelings, repressed fears and anxieties have been brought into the public domain when they have been recorded and preserved in documentary forms as texts, audio and visual recordings. Collectively these traces constitute a biography of the images and point to the changes in their meaning and significance as they travelled across temporal, spatial, institutional and discursive domains. Like the images themselves these traces capture a moment in time when an encounter precipitated a response, enabling future encounters. But the images, even when stripped of the context, even when untethered from their indexical ties, may bring the viewers into encounters with themselves, enabling them

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<sup>1423</sup> MacCurdy, *Image and Memory in Writing about Trauma*, 53.

to confront the anxieties associated with vulnerability and mortality.

## CONCLUSION

*The images of Jackie and Leon, unlike many others made and circulated alongside news reports in the 1980s, have not languished unseen in archives — or in memory. They have returned defiantly to trouble viewers with renewed intensity, inviting them to both think and feel the past, the present and the future, and to look at other images of violence differently.*

## CONCLUSION

This conclusion offers a brief summary of key points raised in preceding chapters and reflects on conceptual devices explored across this thesis. The introduction maps out the motivation and structure of the thesis. The three photographic images that form the subject of this thesis and the concept of the photographic encounters are explained in Chapter One which contextualises conceptual devices introduced in Chapter Two and discussed further below. Chapter Three provides the historical background to the study, detailing the context in which the images of Jackie and Leon were made, first circulated and received by viewers. Chapters Four to Eight track encounters with the images, and the changes in meaning and significance that occurred over three decades as they travelled across institutional and discursive boundaries and were used for different purposes during a period of unprecedented political and social change in South Africa.

Looping back to the conceptual devices proposed in Chapter Two and alluded to across this thesis, the images of Jackie and Leon, made to be circulated alongside news reports, have been used, and remembered because they **mirror**, or provide irrefutable evidence of the inhumane violence of the apartheid state and the suffering inflicted on those who opposed it, in a form that was transported and shareable across temporal and spatial bounds and in different institutional and discursive contexts. This is evident in the responses of the picture-makers discussed in Chapter Four: Samson, Lagardien, Brink and Msibi, who all expressed a wish that the images they made would show the world the truth about apartheid. It is also evident in the afterlives of the images in publications and exhibitions associated with apartheid and resistance, as discussed in Chapters Five and Six, and in association with the truth-telling ethos of the TRC discussed in Chapter Six.

While the images of Jackie and Leon have been used for the purposes of “certifying experiences,”<sup>1424</sup> the actions or interventions of the journalists, writers, curators and filmmakers whose texts are used in association with the photographs and footage, **veil** them in words. Doing this, whether in texts associated with the image or voiceovers in television news report or documentaries changes the way the images are received and understood. This is obvious in the contradictory positions evident in the messages associated with the images in Matima and Africa Bush Wars social media posts. The use of words as a veil through which to view the images is more subtly evident in Sey’s academic paper, Clark’s novel, and Martins *rettelsweN* and Mellet’s poem which veil the images by designating them as objects of study and reflection.

Veiling is not, however, limited to words, the images of Jackie and Leon are also veiled when they are shown in association with other images. In the Apartheid Museum exhibition and *Special Report* discussed in Chapter Six, for the photographs of Jackie and Leon are subsumed into the category of cross-border actions and shown

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<sup>1424</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*, 9.

alongside various other images of the victims of these incursions.

The images may also be veiled when they assume other lives in other media, as discussed in Chapter Five, when the narrative and the musical composition inspired by Samson's photograph take on lives of their own, shifting the nature of the encounter, leaving the image itself in the shadows. While these interventions veil the images, they may also be understood as traces of past encounters, with the potential to generate future encounters in perpetuity.

Images may be veiled literally to protect viewers, as described in Chapter Six, where the exhibition curators chose to obscure Lagardien's image by veiling it in translucent tracing paper. Social media offers similar options, veiling images with a semi-transparent screen carrying a warning about distressing content enabling viewers to choose to look or look away.

While veiling is used in this thesis to describe actions or interventions that deliberately or inadvertently obscure the images from sight, the concept of the **screen** is used, in the Freudian sense, to suggest the internal, intuitive, unconscious processes used to protect or defend conscious memory from that which is wounding or unbearable. This becomes evident in the displacement of an objectionable element or a difficult memory with one that is more tolerable: a screen memory that acts as a defensive mechanism, concealing the wounding element from conscious awareness, while retaining its affective intensity.<sup>1425</sup> For example, Samson and Lagardien screened the troubling memories of the mortuary visit through meticulous descriptions of seemingly irrelevant incidents: the construction of a makeshift stand in Samson's case, and the memory of the policeman inserting a straw into a carton of milk in Lagardien's account. Sey and Martin, both of whom appear to have been intrigued but emotionally unmoved by the photographs of Jackie and Leon, screen the images differently, foregrounding cognition rather than affect, as demonstrated by Sey's intellectual response and Martin's detailed account of his determined hunt for the images.

While screening serves a protective function, **projection** intensifies the encounter with the image in memory. In this thesis projection is used in two ways. Firstly, in the classic Freudian sense to describe a defence mechanism whereby people unconsciously attribute their disturbing thoughts or unsettling feelings to others to avoid confronting them in themselves. The concept of projection is also used in this thesis to illuminate the new and personal visual elements superimposed on or added to the image seen in the mind's eye. Hobbs and Wright remembering the photograph of Jackie, saw, in their mind's eye, their own daughters. Odendaal saw in Jackie and Leon, the young students he taught at UWC, imagining their youthful idealism being extinguished under similar circumstances. Rehana wept, seeing in the implied intimacy in the photographs of Jackie and Leon a

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<sup>1425</sup> Dimitrios Mellos, "A psychoanalytic exploration into the memory and aesthetics of everyday life: Photographs, recollections, and encounters with loss" (PhD dissertation, City University of New York, 2014), 33.

trace of her own parents' experiences as a mixed-race activist couple. Comrade AB and Potenza bring the child into the encounter with the images in memory in different ways. Comrade AB, as described in Chapter Six, mentions how the crying child comes insistently into view, even though he knows she was not present in the photograph, while Potenza, scanning the image in her own mind asked anxiously about the where-abouts of the child.

The metaphor of the **kaleidoscope** also serves a dual function in this thesis. Firstly, to suggest the mutability of memory. So, for example, in the cases where more than one dialogue was conducted, or when an interlocutor subsequently described an encounter in writing, it has been possible to track the changes that occurred in the articulated memories. This applies particularly to the descriptions of the encounter offered by Lagardien that are as Harris suggests, like all memories, "narrativized – wrapped in a story,"<sup>1426</sup> that shifts and changes with every "moment of recall and re-inscription."<sup>1427</sup> Secondly, the metaphor of the kaleidoscope is used to suggest the array of other images that come into view when the images of Jackie are remembered and spoken about. Delpont for example brought into view a series of other images of the scene, speaking rapidly and in a disjointed fashion about his visit to their home mentions bullet holes in the cupboards, a chart, and a message about a puppy and something about Christmas. This is echoed in some way in the selection of images used in quick succession in *Special Report*,<sup>1428</sup> and to a lesser extent in the use of a series of images, rather than a single screenshot in Matima and Africa Bush War's social media posts, as discussed in Chapter Seven.

Collectively, this analysis suggests that much remains to be explored and learned about the way in which images are remembered and seen in the mind's eye. The issue of post-memory, mentioned briefly in Chapter Eight, is certain to attract attention in the next decade, as the generations that experienced and resisted apartheid age and die. A longer study, tracking the memories of the same group of interlocutors over a lengthier period of study might uncover new and intriguing patterns of remembering and forgetting. An interesting avenue for future research might be to track contemporary images that have assumed iconic status or been inscribed in collective memory in recent years, in order to examine how they are or have been remembered and interpreted by different generations. Studies of the representation of actions against other marginalised groups, such as refugees, the victims of so-called xenophobic attacks, might also yield traces that speak to the collective memory and unconscious communications of what is otherwise unsayable, unseeable and unrepresentable in contemporary South African society.

Turning specifically to oral history and study of images of atrocity or politically motivated violence. While the

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<sup>1426</sup> Harris, "Genres of the Trace, 152.

<sup>1427</sup> Harris, "Genres of the Trace, 152.

<sup>1428</sup> SABC *Truth Commission Special Report*, Episode 06, Part 06.

responses of viewers have been well studied and documented, there is a dearth of information on how perpetrators, victims, and their families respond to their own difficult histories, and the ways in which they have been represented visually in the media, specifically in exhibitions or documentaries that utilise photographs or video footage to relate the recent past, and in artworks. As noted in Chapter One, the question of how and where images of politically motivated violence or sit in family archives or photograph albums has also not been addressed adequately in the literature and could form the basis of a fascinating and compelling oral history study. Similarly, dialogues with exhibition curators and archivists responsible for the interpretation and care of historical images associated with violent events, particularly politically motivated violence, might catalyse productive discussions on this issue within the broader heritage sector. Although, as noted in Chapter Seven, there have been some attempts to develop shared approaches to this, it remains an issue that warrants sensitive and considered discussion.

Similarly, the Maseru Raid, as a historical event has not been considered in sufficient depth. This merits attention, along with the stories of all nine victims, whose lives and contributions to the struggle for liberation remain largely unacknowledged in the public domain.

Finally, in circling back to the images of Jackie and Leon, one question remains. Although interlocutors in oral history dialogues described their *encounters* with all the images in great detail, what of the *images* themselves? While several people remembered seeing the *Special Report* episodes that included a clip from Brink and Msibi's filmed footage, they did not have a clear memory of the footage itself. Similarly, the curatorial team who worked with Lagardien's photograph recalled the image as being violent and shocking, but had only a vague memory of its details. However, their recollections of the debates surrounding its display were sharp. Samson's image, it seems, lives on vividly in the minds of those who encountered it. Even though their memories of the image appear largely influenced by affective resonance, a question remains. What is it about *this* image that makes it especially memorable? Might it be because we are brought face-to-face with Jackie in a moment of deep engagement, as her unseeing eyes look toward the camera? Might it have to do with the form: the dramatic composition, the theatrical lighting, or the resonance with great artworks like Caravaggio's *Conversion of St Paul* painted in 1600, or Goya's *3<sup>rd</sup> of May 1808* painted in 1814? Might Samson's photograph also be remembered because of its powerful *presence* – because it conjures up the Raid not merely as an event, but as a lived experience, as discussed in Chapter Eight.

The images of Jackie and Leon, unlike many others made and circulated alongside news reports in the 1980s, have not languished unseen in archives – or in memory. They have returned defiantly, as Lagardien suggested, to trouble viewers with renewed intensity, inviting them to both think and feel the past, the present and the future, and to look at other images of violence differently.



# APPENDICES AND REFERENCES

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX: ARCHIVAL PLATFORM POST

#### “JACQUI QUIN AND LEON MEYER: THE LIFE OF A PHOTOGRAPH

Posted on 7 August 2014

*They lie side by side in the mortuary their bodies half covered by a hospital sheet, their clothing in disarray: Jackie Quin and her coloured husband Joe. The couple were shot dead by a murder squad which burst into their home in Maseru on Thursday night. Seven other people attending a party at another house were also killed. The ANC claim Jackie Quin to be one of their members. Her grieving parents deny it. The couple's baby daughter Phoenix survived the massacre”.*

This is the caption to a photograph that appeared in the *Sunday Times* on 22 December 1985. It's a haunting image, starkly dramatic, shot at an angle by a photographer standing somewhere behind and to the right of his subjects, seeing them headfirst. Joe lies with his head turned to the left eyes closed; he could be sleeping. Jacqui's head is turned to the right, her eyes are half-open, her lips slightly parted; she could be waking.

#### Background

The article that accompanies this photograph tells the story of the murder of Jacqueline Quin and her husband Leon Meyer, an Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) commander known in exile as “Joe”, and of Nomkhosi Mary Mnisi, Lulamile Dantile, Vivian Stanley Mathee, Monwabisi Themba Mayoli, and three Lesotho nationals Mankaelang Mohatle, Boemo Tau and Amelia Leseuyeho. It also describes how Phoenix, Jacqui and Leon's one-year old daughter was left alone and unharmed by the murderers. Although there was much speculation at the time it was not known for certain, until almost a decade later, that the victims had been murdered by a group of Vlakplaas operatives under the leadership of Eugene de Kock. For more about this see Jane Quin's post “*De Kock ordered my sister's killing – and no, his debt is not paid.*”

#### The life of the photograph

As all archivists know, every record has a life. It's created, used, filed and then appraised to determine whether it should be destroyed or consigned to the archive. The life of this particular picture took a couple of unexpected turns as it made its way in the world. It didn't, like others published in the same edition of the newspaper slip quietly into obscurity, to lie dormant in the archive. It left its mark on the family and on the photographer and it took on another life, inspiring a novel and being implicated in some way or another in a bombing.

## The photographer

Trevor Samson, the *Agence France Presse* (AFP) photographer who took this picture, has tried to block out the memories of the day he shot it saying, "It's the only way to cope". Pressed to describe the circumstances under which he came take the photograph, he explained how he and other journalists flew to Maseru in a plane chartered by a TV agency, hired a Kombi and drove to the houses where the victims had been shot, before being directed to the mortuary. Samson's voice trembles as he describes the event as profoundly traumatic, the first and only occasion on which he has been in a mortuary. He tells me that even today, the smell of 'Handy Andy' takes him back to the tragic scene, time and time again. The indelible imprint of sensory memory is powerfully echoed in the testimonies of Leon Meyer's brother Chris, and his sister, Dawn Botha, to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Our bodies remember what our minds try to shut out.

Another aspect of this grim day that stands out vividly in Samson's memory is of how the shocked the policemen stationed at the hospital mortuary insisted on showing the journalists everything they could, saying, "You have to see this!"

Although the subject matter of is deeply disturbing, the photograph it is powerful and strangely beautiful, almost baroque, in its dramatic composition and lighting. Samson chose to shoot the photograph at a moment when the scene was illuminated by the lights set up by a TV crew, the stark contrasts of light and dark heightening the innate drama of the scene in a way that somehow seems to dignify, rather than sensationalise the subject. Taken in a blander light the scene might have just seemed rather tawdry.

Part of the power of this photograph lies in the in which the photographer has framed Quin and Meyer, excluding any extraneous detail. Although viewers might wonder what lies beyond the frame, or what is happening on the periphery, there are no clues. In contrast, a glimpse of the same scene, spotted fleetingly in Episode 4 of the SABC's TRC *Special Report*, shows metal lockers standing behind the bodies and includes footage of men, in uniform and in civilian clothes, walking past and around the bodies, leaning over to take a closer look. This has the effect of objectifying the victims, reducing rather than exposing their humanity.

Samson says that he never looked at the image after that day and doesn't ever want to see it again. But then, he doesn't need to; he will never forget the experience, no matter how hard he tries to block it out, it's embedded in his memory. Reflecting on our conversation later, I think how important it is that images like this live on in the archive, but I am troubled by the toll that creating these have taken on those who have borne witness to an unrelenting parade of atrocities, documenting unspeakable acts of violence in words and images. The archive of our difficult and traumatic past has come at a high price to many.

## The media

After shooting the photograph Samson went to a hotel in Maseru where he wired the image directly to AFP in Paris. Within hours the photograph was made available to AFP subscribers around the world, marking its first entrance into the world. It was picked up almost immediately by the *Sunday Times* and published with the lead story headlined in the newspaper two days after the murders.

Some of those who saw this photograph must have been enraged, seeing it as a flagrantly disrespectful invasion of the rights of the victims and their families to privacy and dignity at a time when they were at their most vulnerable. There must surely have been heated debate about this issue in the newsroom. When does the right to know and to tell override the right to privacy?

Questions must have been asked about what motivated the *Sunday Times* to publish this particular photograph. Was it because of the human-interest angle – a mixed-race couple at a time when marriages across the colour bar were forbidden and a baby that had survived a bloody massacre? Did the publication of the photograph imply tacit support for the ruling party's 'total onslaught' or was the newspaper trying to drive home another message: that the struggle for liberation transcended the barriers of class, colour, and creed. Was the *Sunday Times* trying to bring home the horror of atrocities committed by the apartheid regime believing that it was in the public interest to override private sensibilities?

### **The family**

As may be expected, the family found the publication of the photograph deeply troubling. One member of the extended family first heard about the tragedy when her shocked daughter phoned to say that she had seen and recognised the couple in the picture in the newspaper that morning. Other family members, friends, colleagues and comrades of the deceased must also have been among the thousands who purchased a copy of the *Sunday Times* that day. One wonders how they reacted. Did they pore over the photograph looking for clues to a seemingly senseless act? Did they set the paper aside quickly to avoid seeing too much? Did they weep or rage?

One of Jacqui's aunts alerted to the publication of the photograph, and saved from encountering it unprepared, says that, "It was terribly distressing to see that she didn't look calm or peaceful, as one would like a daughter, or a sister or a niece who has died to look." It's an image that has continued to haunt her. She kept the yellowing newspaper clipping folded away in the top of her cupboard for several years, explaining that she'd found it so distressing that she never wanted to look at it again, but couldn't bring herself to throw it away. Eventually, she passed it on to another member of the family. Jacqui's aunt, like Samson, and probably many others, made a deliberate choice not risk a re-encounter with a record they knew would force them to relive the traumatic event all over again.

For the families and others close to the deceased, this photograph will always be remembered for its association with a deeply felt personal loss. For them, it's the stuff of nightmares. But what about others who found themselves unexpectedly confronted with the painful record of a traumatic experience? How did they respond?

### **The bomber**

The photograph enters the record again in April 1986, when mention of it is made in the trial of Andrew Zondo, a young MK cadre who saw it in the *Sunday Times* the day before he deposited a bomb in a rubbish bin inside the Sanlam Shopping Centre in Amanzimtoti, killing five civilians and injuring another 40.

When he appeared in court, charged with five counts of murder, Zondo described how he had been instructed to carry out an attack in retaliation for the December 1985 Maseru raid. Admitting that he knew that it was against ANC policy to injure or harm civilians, a position confirmed by the ANC in its submission to the TRC, Zondo explained how he went to Amanzimtoti in search of a government installation to target. After checking out the police station and the post office and deciding that he could not carry out a retaliatory act there on his own, he went to the nearby mall. In his statement to the court he says that, while having something to eat he "saw people who were reading the newspaper which carried a picture of the woman who was shot in Lesotho, leaving her nine-month-old baby. Then I bought a newspaper myself. On returning home I thought I will come back here and put my limpet mine".

This account, quoted on page 46 of Fatima Meer's book, *The Trial of Andrew Zondo* seems to suggest a causal link between the photograph and Zondo's choice of target, but this is not necessarily the case. On page 108 of the same book, Meer quotes Zondo as describing how coming out of the restaurant he saw a "South African Airways (SAA) mark outside the travel agency" and, because he associated SAA with the government, decided that "this is the place I'm going to use for retaliation".

While the photograph may or may not have played a role in determining Zondo's decision, the fact that he mentioned it in his statement to the court means that it must have had a significant impact on him. It's possible that it triggered his own traumatic memories of living in Maputo at a time when the South African Defence Force mounted a series of cold-blooded cross-border raids, killing South Africans in exile and Mozambiquan citizens amongst others.

Zondo was found guilty as charged and executed on 19 September 1986. In 2006, the road that runs past the shopping centre was renamed after Zondo, in recognition for the role he played in the struggle for liberation.

### **The author**

The photograph enters the record next in 1989, when *Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary*, a novel by Jenny

Hobbs is published. Like Zondo, Hobbs recalls seeing the photograph in the *Sunday Times* saying, “It was a Sunday morning just before Christmas. We were on holiday and there was this awful photograph, the worst I’ve ever seen, of this young couple who had been shot by cross-border terrorists.” Describing the deep impression the image made on her Hobbs explains that she had daughters of a similar age and says, “I was so appalled by the vision of a young woman like them assassinated in her home, that I kept the cutting and subsequent articles about the funeral in Lesotho. Two weeks later I sat down one evening and started writing this fiction.” She adds that, “It was the horror of the cross-border raids being planned and executed by shadowy men sent by the Nationalist government, and the terrible toll that monstrous policy was taking on innocent people, that drove me on.”

While Hobbs has acknowledged the photograph as the impetus for the novel, she has not, as far as I can ascertain, ever acknowledged the photographer by name: Samson seemed quite taken aback to hear that his photograph had spawned a book.

*Thoughts in a Makeshift Mortuary* was published by Michael Joseph in 1989 and in paperback editions Grafton in 1990 and in by Umuzi in 2014. It was translated and published in two editions in Germany under the title *Tief im Süden* in 1995.

The novel is dedicated to “Jackie, and to the many young South African women like her who follow their convictions and their hearts through the barricades that so artificially divide us.” Although Hobbs has been diligent in asserting that her narrative is fictional and the characters “imagined, not based on the people involved”. Jacqui’s family are uncomfortable with it and her mother has chosen not to read the novel. She and other family members feel bitter that the author is capitalising on their pain and appropriated their tragedy for her own purposes. Hobbs seems to think otherwise. On her website she expresses the hope that the novel will make people remember the sacrifices that Jacqui and many others made, and their bravery. Quin’s mother, in her testimony to the TRC, asked for a memorial to ensure that Jacqui and Leon’s story and the reasons for their deaths are remembered. Hobbs’ novel may bring this to mind, but can a work of fiction ever be a fitting memorial?

The photograph may yet enter the record again, through another route. Hobbs has recently granted an option to write a film script of the novel to Sandy Ani-Adjei, (stage name Alexander Arthur), a Ghanaian-born British actor and screenwriter who discovered an old paperback copy while helping a friend clear out his UK attic.

## Conclusion

To really know or be a record, or appreciate its full import, one has to understand the story of its life and trace its journey through the world. As the biography of this photograph makes evident, those who create records are

not always able to foresee or control the ways in which the record acts on or is acted upon by others. It demonstrates the power of the record to both communicate and evoke trauma: to document and provoke action.

Over and above all that, this photograph reminds us that Leon Meyer and Jacqui Quin paid the ultimate price for the role they played in shaping a better world for all South Africans.

*Jo-Anne Duggan is the director of the Archival Platform. She has both a professional and a personal interest in this story. Jane Quin who wrote "De Kock ordered my sister's killing - and no, his debt is not paid" is her cousin, as was Jacqui Quin.*

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## ABOUT THE 1985 LESOTHO RAID

Evidence presented to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa by the families of the victims and by perpetrator seeking amnesty reveals much of the story that was previously veiled in secrecy.

On 19 December 1985, a seventeen-strong team of Vlakplaas operatives led by Eugene de Kock crossed the border into Lesotho where they attacked people attending a party organised by an informer, Elvis Macaskil, killing Nomkhosi Mary Mini, Lulamile Dantile, Vivian Stanley Mathee, Monwabisi Themba Mayoli, all South African ANC members and three Lesotho nationals Mankaelang Mohatle, Boemo Tau and Amelia Leseuyeho. On being informed that Leon Meyer, an MK commander and the main target of the attack and his wife Jacqueline Quin had already left the party, de Kock sent two operatives to their house to kill them. Their one-year-old daughter, Phoenix, was left unharmed.

In 1996 Eugene de Kock was tried and convicted on eighty-nine charges and sentenced to 212 years in prison. Neither he nor any of the other involved were charged for their role in this raid.

Eight of those involved in the planning and execution of the raid applied to the TRC for amnesty these included: Vlakplaas operatives Butata Almond Nofamela, Eugene Alexander De Kock, Willem Albertus Nortje and Izak Daniel Bosch who were in the group that executed the attack; General Johannes Velde van der Merwe, head of the Security Police and Brigadier Willem Frederick Schoon who issued the instruction to de Kock.

Van der Merwe's application was refused on the grounds that he had not made a full disclosure. De Kock, Nortje, Bosch, Vermeulen and Schoon were granted amnesty for their role in the killing of seven of the victims. All the applicants were refused amnesty for the killing of Mary Mnisi and Jacqui Quin because the Committee was not satisfied that the circumstances under which they were killed was covered by the requirements of the Act. Nofamela, whose testimony exposed the activities of the Vlakplaas operatives was subsequently granted

amnesty for all the politically motivated he had committed.

The applicants implicated several other persons in the planning and execution of the raid. These included: the two Vlakplaas operatives said to have been responsible for killing Meyer and Quin, Anton Adamson, deceased, and Joe Coetzer, who refused to testify; the head of the former National Intelligence Service, Neil Barnard; former Minister of Law and Order, Louis Le Grange; former Deputy Commissioner of Police, Lieutenant General Basie Smit; *askaris* Letsatsi, Thabiso and Gregory Radebe; Captain Fouche, of the Special Branch, Ladybrand and; former President P.W Botha.

For more information about the TRC, including recordings and transcriptions of oral testimonies see the website of the Department of Justice <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/> , the South African History Archive (SAHA) <http://www.saha.org.za> and the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) <http://sabctr.saha.org.za>.”

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*Dawn: Monthly Journal of Umkhonto we Sizwe*

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*IDAF Focus on political repression in Southern Africa*

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### *Links to remembered photographs*

#### **A woman jumps from a bus after members of the army fired tear gas into busses during a banned gathering in KwaNdebele. Trevor Samson, 14 May 1986.**

Mentioned by Trevor Samson in Chapter Four.

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#### **Woman pointing to the spot where her daughter was killed.**

Mentioned by Ismail Lagardien in Chapter Four.

See Figure 32. The photograph is reproduced in Lagardien's memoir. Ismail Lagardien, *Too Coloured to be White. Too Coloured to be Black. On the search for home and meaning*. Cape Town: Melinda Ferguson Books, 2022.

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#### **The body of Che Guevara, 10 October 1967, Marc Hutten**

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There are multiple versions of this scene. See also, **Soldiers with the body of Che Guevara, 10 October 1967, uncredited**. <https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/soldiers-with-body-of-che-guevara-news-photo/514885076?adppopup=true>.

#### **General images associated with the Holocaust**

Mentioned by Gerald Klingenberg, Wally Comrade AB and Christopher Till in Chapter Six.

See for example, *Holocaust Encyclopaedia "Concentration Camps, 1942-1945: photographs"* Accessed January 2025, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/gallery/concentration-camps-1942-45-photographs>.

#### **Michael Miranda in an open coffin, October 1985, Paul Grendon.**

Mentioned by Andre Odendaal in Chapter Six.

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#### **AWB member executed by the Bophuthatswana soldiers during an attempted coup, Greg Marinovich, March 11, 1994.**

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#### **Napalm girl, Nick Ut, (contested), 1972.**

Mentioned by Sue Krige in Chapter Six.

Time

