A Bridge to Truth: The Life of Glenda Wildschut of South Africa

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A NOTE TO THE READER

In the following pages, you will find narrative stories about a Woman PeaceMaker, along with additional information to provide a deep understanding of a contemporary conflict and one person's journey within it. These complementary components include a brief biography of the peacemaker, a historical summary of the conflict, a timeline integrating political developments in the country with personal history of the peacemaker, a question-and-answer transcript of select interviews, and a table of best practices in peacebuilding as demonstrated and reflected on by the peacemaker during her time at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice.

The document is not intended necessarily to be read straight through, from beginning to end. Instead, you can use the historical summary or timeline as mere references or guides as you read the narrative stories. You can move straight to the table of best practices if you are interested in peacebuilding methods and techniques, or go to the question-and-answer transcript if you want to read commentary in the peacemaker's own words. The goal of this format is to reach audiences through multiple channels, providing access to the peacemaker's work, vision, lives and impact in their communities.

ABOUT THE WOMEN PEACEMAKERS PROGRAM

The Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice's (IPJ) Women PeaceMakers Program annually hosts four women from around the world who have been involved in human rights and peacemaking efforts in their countries.

Women on the frontline of efforts to end violence and secure a just peace seldom record their experiences, activities and insights — as generally there is no time or, perhaps, they do not have formal education that would help them record their stories. The Women PeaceMakers Program is a selective program for leaders who want to document, share and build upon their unique peacemaking stories.

Women PeaceMakers are paired with a Peace Writer to document in written form their story of living in conflict and building peace in their communities and nations. While in residence at the institute, Women PeaceMakers give presentations on their work and the situation in their home countries to the university and San Diego communities.

The IPJ believes that women's stories go beyond headlines to capture the nuance of complex situations and expose the realities of gender-based violence, thus providing an understanding of conflict and an avenue to its transformation. The narrative stories of Women PeaceMakers not only provide this understanding, but also show the myriad ways women construct peace in the midst of and after violence and war. For the realization of peace with justice, the voices of women — those severely affected by violent conflict and struggling courageously and creatively to build community from the devastation — must be recorded, disseminated and spotlighted.[i]

BIOGRAPHY OF A WOMAN PEACEMAKER — GLENDA WILDSCHUT

Glenda Wildschut is a South African human rights activist and peacebuilder whose work dates back to the early 1980s, when she began working with political prisoners, their families, exiles and orphaned returnee children in South Africa and Namibia. Since then she has dedicated herself to human rights activism, torture rehabilitation and healing and reconciliation.

Wildschut was born into the violence and human rights abuses of South Africa. At an early age she felt the injustice of growing up in a system designed to disadvantage and oppress people of color. On this part of her life, she reflects, “It was determined where I should attend school, which university I should study at and which professions I will not be able to even consider pursuing.” Wildschut was also arrested and harassed by police. Determined to transcend these experiences of oppression, she obtained academic qualifications both in South Africa and the U.S., and made it her life focus to advocate for reconciliation and healing of the country’s fractured past.

A registered nurse, midwife and psychiatric nurse (specializing in child and adolescent psychiatry), Wildschut is recognized as someone who combines her professional training as a psychiatric nurse and her activism to produce meaningful effects. Early in her activism career, she collaborated with a group of health workers to establish a trauma center for survivors of violence and torture - the first center of its kind in South Africa. She is the first South African to be awarded the Health and Human Rights Award by the International Institute for Nursing Ethics.

In 1995, Wildschut was appointed by former president Nelson Mandela to serve as a commissioner on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. She has since shared her expertise in peacebuilding and reconciliation in many countries, including Sierra Leone and Rwanda.

For over a decade, Wildschut has been a board member for the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation, helping it develop a Community Healing program which encourages community-level reconciliation. She continues to use her considerable skills, experience, passion and commitment in the journey of reconciliation and peace in South Africa.

CONFLICT HISTORY — SOUTH AFRICA

Even though the policy of apartheid wasn't formally established until 1948, South Africa had experienced generations of racial segregation before that. Blessed with a desirable climate and a multitude of natural resources, South Africa was a coveted piece of land. The English and the Dutch recognized the abundance South Africa had to offer and separately colonized the country in the seventeenth century. The English and Dutch fought over control of South Africa, and when the English dominated the Dutch descendants (otherwise known as Boers or Afrikaners), it resulted in the Dutch establishing the new colonies of Orange Free State and Transvaal. The discovery of diamonds in the aforementioned areas further incensed the rivalry between the English and the Dutch. The English invaded, leading to the first Boer War.

While the Dutch and English fought for domination, native Africans became subordinates in their own country. Beginning with the arrival of white settlers in the late 18th century, laws and regulations were put in place to separate the colonizers and the natives. Whether it was the Dutch or the English, it was clear that the white minority had control.

Laws resulting in separation soon led to the disbursement of natives to specific areas that would become their so-called "homelands." By 1910, the year that the white minority groups joined to form the Union of South Africa, there were nearly 300 reserves for Africans throughout the country. Three years later, the inflammatory 1913 Land Act institutionalized the territorial segregation of blacks and whites. Black Africans were forced onto reserves, and it was illegal for them to work as sharecroppers. Those opposing the Land Act formed the South African National Native Congress, which eventually became the African National Congress (ANC).

This racial fissure only widened as the English and Dutch precariously shared power over the colony. It wasn't until the 1940s that the Afrikaner National Party was able to pull away and claim the majority. In 1948, Dr. D.F. Malan, largely considered one of the architects of apartheid, led the National Party in the first campaign that appealed to the minority by promoting white unity. Apartheid was invented by strategists in Malan's party as a way to ensure its power over the economic and social system. The initial goal of apartheid was to maintain white control while extending racial separation. The National Party won the election with 80 seats (mainly from Afrikaner voters) while the English United Party received just 64.

Race laws made an impact on every aspect of social life: whites and non-whites were not allowed to marry across racial lines, there were jobs that only whites could obtain, and all blacks were required to carry "pass books" that contained their fingerprints, photo and information. Without these passes, blacks were not permitted entry to non-black areas. These new race laws re-classified what it meant to be South African. The Population Registration Act in 1950 demanded that all the country's citizens be racially classified into one of three categories: white, black (African), or

coloured (of mixed descent). Included in the coloured category were subgroups of Indians and Asians. Appearance, social acceptance and descent were the criteria for the classification. Classifications determined the type of education, health services and job prospects that one could have access to.

In 1951, the Bantu Authorities Act formed a basis for ethnic government in African reserves, essentially alienating them from the rest of South Africa. A series of Land Acts set aside more than 80 percent of South African land for the white minority. Any rights that were guaranteed to natives and non-whites by South Africa now were confined to the parameters of the designated homelands.

The Public Safety Act and the Criminal Law Amendment Act were passed in 1953. These allowed the government to declare states of emergency and increase penalties for protesting against or supporting the repeal of a law. The penalties were severe, including fines, imprisonment and whippings. These acts laid the foundation for one of the most pivotal moments in the apartheid era. In 1960, a large group of blacks in Sharpeville refused to carry their passes. The government declared a state of emergency which lasted for 156 days. During that time, the police opened fire on a group of unarmed black citizens. Sixty-nine people were killed and 187 wounded. The tragic outcome of this protest cemented the idea that objecting apartheid peacefully would not be effective. As a result, the ANC and the Pan-African Congress established military wings, although neither was equipped enough or strong enough to pose any real threat to the state.

By 1961, most anti-apartheid advocates had been captured and sentenced to long prison sentences, including Nelson Mandela, who was the founder of the *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (or “Spear of the Nation”) movement, the military wing of the ANC. It cost Mandela his freedom from 1963 to 1990. Most of his confinement was spent at the prison on Robben Island.

The country saw massive unrest and instability throughout the ‘70s and ‘80s. A monumental protest occurred in 1976 in Soweto, a black township just outside of Johannesburg. Thousands of schoolchildren demonstrated against the use of Afrikaans, the oppressor’s Dutch-derived language, as the official use of instruction. Like in Sharpeville, law enforcement upheld the law in brutal fashion. The police tamed the crowd with tear gas and bullets. The protests, in conjunction with government crackdowns and a national economic recession, brought unwanted international attention to the country. No longer could apartheid supporters claim that the policy ushered in peace and prosperity to the nation. Realizing the human rights abuses that were rampant in the country, the United Nations General Assembly declared apartheid a crime against humanity in 1973. Three years later, the UN Security Council voted to impose a mandatory embargo on the sale of arms to South Africa. In 1985, the United Kingdom and United States followed suit, imposing crippling economic sanctions.

The National Party government eventually succumbed to the international pressure. In 1989, P.W. Botha and the National Party government unsuccessfully tried

to implement reforms on pass laws and interracial sex and marriage. By 1989, Botha was forced to step aside to make way for F.W. de Klerk, a white politician who lobbied for the end of South Africa's racial segregation policy. He envisioned a multi-racial democracy where all citizens, including the country's black majority, had equal voting rights, among other things. de Klerk was the seventh and last head of state under the apartheid era. His successor was Nelson Mandela, who became South Africa's first black president in 1994. In that year, a new constitution that restored equal rights to blacks and other racial groups was put into effect, marking the official end of apartheid.

In response to the violence and traumas committed during apartheid, Mandela formed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1995 with the goal of restorative justice. Apartheid victims were invited to share their stories and experiences. Apartheid perpetrators were given the opportunity to give testimony and request amnesty from both civil and criminal prosecution. The commission was split into three committees: the Human Rights Violations committee, the Amnesty Committee, and the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee. It was a conscious decision on the part of the commissioners to have the human rights violation hearings happen first, to allow victims to share their stories without interruption or cross-examination. Finally, victims would have the chance to be heard. Next came the amnesty hearings. Standing by their actions during apartheid, many apartheid perpetrators didn't apply for amnesty. But for those who did, full disclosure was necessary. Finally, the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee was responsible for restoring a sense of justice. This last step of the commission sheparded people onto the road to healing.

Over a seven-year period, the TRC recorded the testimony of over 21,000 victims, 2,000 of whom testified publicly. Over 7,000 amnesty requests were received. Fewer than 1,000 received amnesty.

INTEGRATED TIMELINE

Political Developments in South Africa and
Personal History of Glenda Wildschut

1899-1902

- The second Anglo-Boer War rages on. The Treaty of Vereeniging ends the conflict.

1900

- ***Ridley Crisp, Glenda's maternal grandfather, arrives from England to fight in the Anglo-Boer War. Crisp stays in South Africa after the conflict ends and marries a woman named Mosadiwatlala, who would become Glenda's maternal grandmother.***

1910

- Along with the British colonies of the Cape and Natal, and the Boer republics of Transvaal and Orange Free State, the Union of South Africa is formed.

1911

- Legislation reserves skilled jobs for whites.

1912

- The Native National Congress is founded and later renamed the African National Congress (ANC).

1913

- The Native Land Act is enacted to restrict black ownership of land to reserves.

1914

- The National Party, assembled to champion Afrikaner interests, is founded.

1924

- Afrikaner nationalism gains traction when the National Party comes to power in a coalition government with the Labour Party. Afrikaans becomes South Africa's official language.

1930s

- As a result of the flourishing wartime economy, black labor becomes increasingly essential to the mining and manufacturing industries, and the black urban population nearly doubles.

1948

- The National Party adopts the policy of apartheid, or separateness.

1950

- Group Areas Act is passed to segregate blacks and whites. Nelson Mandela-led ANC responds with a campaign of civil disobedience and petition for direct parliamentary representation.

1953

- ***Glenda Wildschut is born in District 6 in Cape Town.***

1956

- Twenty-thousand women of all races march from all over the country to ascend the steps of Pretoria's Union Buildings to present a petition to Prime Minister J.G. Strijdom. The petition expresses disapproval for having to carry identifying passes at all times.

1960

- The Sharpeville protesters stand up to laws that require blacks to carry passes at all times. Sixty-nine black demonstrators are murdered and several thousand arrested. This event became known as the Sharpeville Massacre. The ANC and other political parties are banned.

1960s

- International pressure of the apartheid government begins. Massive sanctions and boycotts take place across the country. Steve Biko begins and leads the Black Consciousness Movement.

1961

- Mandela leads the ANC's new military wing called *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (or "Spear of the Nation"). South Africa is declared a republic and leaves the British Commonwealth.

1963-4

- The Rivonia Trial, often referred to as the “trial that changed South Africa,” takes place. The trial is named after a suburb of Johannesburg where leaders had been arrested at Liliesleaf Farm. The African National Congress uses the farm for privately held meetings. Ten leading opponents of apartheid, including Mandela, are charged with 221 acts of sabotage. Mandela is sentenced to life in prison.

1966

- Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd, considered the primary architect of apartheid, is assassinated in the Parliament by parliament messenger Dimitri Tsafendas.

1970s

- The Black Homelands Citizenship Bill approves the withdrawal of South African citizenship from blacks and forces 3 million people onto new settlements deemed black “homelands.”

1973

- ***Glenda starts studying at the University of Western Cape and begins political activism.***

1976

- Uprisings that begin in Soweto result in at least 1,000 deaths, mostly youth, due to clashes between black protesters and security forces. This is known as the Soweto Uprising.

1977

- Black Consciousness leader Steve Biko dies in police detention. Thousands attend his funeral.

1970s-80s

- Thousands of blacks flee into exile.

1983

- Parliament approves multiracial representation, but excludes blacks. The United Democratic Front is formed to bring together a united front of churches, civic associations, trade unions, student organizations and sport bodies to fight oppression.

1984-9

- Massive civil unrest and township revolts lead to a perpetual state of emergency in South Africa.

1985

- ***Glenda and her colleagues pioneer a torture rehabilitation centre in Cape Town, called the Trauma Centre.***

1989

- F.W. de Klerk succeeds P.W. Botha as president. Public facilities are desegregated, and many ANC activists are released from prison. Secret meetings are arranged between the National Party and Mandela.

1989-91

- ***As a representative of the Trauma Centre, Glenda works with political prisoners at Robben Island to help them and their families prepare for their releases.***

1990s

- Widespread political violence continues throughout many urban areas of the country. The National Peace Accord is formed to reduce political violence, providing a safety net for the negotiation process.

1990

- Mandela is released after 27 years in prison when a ban on the ANC is lifted. ANC declares the end of the armed struggle. Exiles begin returning to South Africa.

1991

- The Convention for a Democratic South Africa starts negotiations on the formation of a multiracial transitional government and a new constitution extending political rights to all groups. de Klerk repeals the remaining apartheid laws. International sanctions are lifted.

- “Inkathagate” reveals the government funded the Zulu Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), causing a big rift between the ANC and IFP.

1992

- In a referendum, whites support political reforms.

1992-4

- ***Glenda co-chairs the integration process of all medical personnel in the Statutory and Liberation Armies into the National Defence Force. As a member of the Liberation Movement, Glenda receives the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.***

1993

- ANC President Oliver Tambo dies. ANC activist Chris Hani, the leader of the South African Communist Party and chief of staff of Umkhonto we Sizwe, is murdered by a Polish emigre. There is a surge in political violence, while the interim constitution of the Republic of South Africa is ratified.

1994

- The first democratic national elections are held. The ANC wins elections and the interim constitution is implemented for a five-year transition period. Mandela is president of the newly formed Government of National Unity. Membership in the Commonwealth is restored and remaining sanctions are lifted. South Africa takes a seat in the UN General Assembly after a 20-year absence.

1995

- ***Glenda is appointed by Mandela as one of the 17 commissioners on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). She is assigned to the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee.***

- South Africa wins the rugby World Cup.

1996

- Chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the TRC begins. Parliament adopts a new constitution, and the National Party withdraws from the coalition.

1998

- The United Nations declares apartheid a crime against humanity, while also finding the ANC accountable for human rights abuses. TRC hands over the final comprehensive report of the commission to Mandela.

- ***Glenda adopts Grant, a 5-month old baby, from an orphanage.***

1999

- The ANC wins general elections and Thabo Mbeki becomes president.
- ***The International Council of Nurses honors Glenda with an award that acknowledges her as one of the three outstanding nurses of the decade.***
- ***Glenda leads a World Council of Churches delegation to Sierra Leone, where she encounters Foday Sankoh, leader and founder of the Sierra Leone rebel group Revolutionary United Front, and convinces him to release child soldiers.***
- ***Grant dies in an accident.***

2000

- The city of Durban hosts the International AIDS Conference.
- ***Glenda adopts a young boy, Luke.***

2001

- The city of Durban hosts the UN World Conference on Racism.
- ***Glenda receives the inaugural Nursing Ethics Award from the International Centre for Nursing Ethics.***

2003

- The government approves a major program to tackle HIV/AIDS.

2004

- The ruling ANC wins the presidential election in overwhelming fashion, gaining nearly 70 percent of votes. Mbeki begins a second term as president.

2005

- Investigators exhume the first bodies in a TRC investigation into the fates of hundreds of civilians who disappeared during the apartheid era.

2008

- Xenophobia attacks on foreign nationals take place all over South Africa.

- ***Glenda leads a team of mediators to assist in stopping violence in the Western Cape.***

2010

- ***Glenda is appointed director of transformation at the University of Cape Town. She becomes a board member for the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation, a program that helps encourages community-level reconciliation.***

2015

- Students protest for the removal of symbols of oppression, such as statues from university campuses, and for the acceleration of reforms and transformation.

- ***Glenda is chosen as a Woman PeaceMaker at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice.***

NARRATIVE STORIES OF THE LIFE OF GLENDA WILDSCHUT OF SOUTH AFRICA

The World Split in Two

The world came to Glenda through a small box.

How is it possible, she thought, *that people managed to get themselves in there, to live out their lives in such an enclosed space*? As a young girl, this is what she always wondered about the radio. But even as a teenager, this sense of awe over the magical box didn't wane. She couldn't wait to listen to the radio every week, when her favorite show came on.

"Squad Cars," South Africa's equivalent of "Dragnet," ran for nearly two decades. The rest of the country loved it as much as the Wildschut family. By 7:30 every Friday evening, dinner had been finished and all chores had been done. Six chairs would be placed around the radio — one for Glenda, the oldest, and each of her four siblings. The sixth one wasn't always there. Her father would only join them when he was not working out at sea. Glenda's mother had more important things to do, like preparing for Sunday school class or cleaning up after dinner.

Every one of the Wildschut children was transfixed. *The story you're about to hear is true. Details are supplied from the official case file of the South African police* were the familiar words uttered by a gruff voice that signaled the start of every show. The next 30 minutes would be filled with *the drama, the danger, the thrills and the facts* of real-life police cases. Glenda paid close attention to the symphony of seemingly banal noises — the soft chirp and buzz of insects, the sound of tires running over a bumpy road, the pitiful rumble of a car that didn't want to start. Dramatic moments would be enhanced by declarative or lingering instrumental interludes. All these phonic layers made Glenda feel that she, too, was in that squad car with detective Mike Niemand.

For Glenda, hearing was the sense that most connected to her soul. Sounds created the most vivid images. Whatever she heard on the radio shaped her world, and as a child, the world consisted of home and school. The Greenhaven community was all she knew, and the cozy, orange home shrouded by the overgrown hibiscus tree in the front yard was her sanctuary. Music hummed through the walls, infusing itself in the air that circulated through the house. Glenda had always wanted to be a classical singer, an aspiration passed down from her mother.

As a young girl, Glenda's mother carried this dream with her as she tended to the chores she had on Lowestoft, the farm where she grew up. She would stand over a dam and see her reflection. In her mind's eye, that reflection multiplied and before long, she saw herself in front of a huge audience. She looked into that dam and sang. Glenda wanted that, too.

The radio became vital in Glenda's life, bringing her everything she needed: music, news and "Squad Cars." But on September 6, 1966, when Glenda was 12, the radio brought her something unexpected. Melancholy notes of somber dirges charged the atmosphere with a heavy sense of sadness.

And then, a robotic, monotone voice delivered the reason for the abrupt change: "This just in … Dimitri Tsafendas, a parliamentary messenger, has stabbed South Africa's prime minister, Hendrik Verwoerd, in the Parliament Chamber."

Verwoerd was a stoic, unbending man who had the strong conviction that South Africa would flourish only by having a segregated society with racial domination by white Afrikaners. He had survived an assassination attempt in 1960 by David Pratt, a 52-year-old farmer who shot him twice in the head. Verwoerd took his miraculous recovery as a sign from God that apartheid was, indeed, a just way of life. Tsafendas stabbed Verwoerd four times in the vicinity of the heart. Verwoerd made no sound. Parliamentary members rushed immediately to save him, but Tsafendas did what Pratt was unable to do — kill the architect of apartheid.

Now the country was in mourning. Or, at least, that's what was expected. In the four days between Verwoerd's assassination and funeral, life went on as usual. But in some ways, it seemed a moratorium was placed on the country. People were supposed to take time to grieve this towering and influential leader. At Heatherdale Primary School, where Glenda was in standard grade 5, students were forced to sing hymns and recite prayers for Verwoerd. The Department of Education of Coloured Affairs sent out programs that teachers and staff members were forced to administer. Students, in their gray and blue school uniforms, congregated in the outdoor quad area. Under a beautiful September spring sky, a collection of guileless voices sang out, "Oh, God our help in ages past. Our hope for years to come."

Usually, when Glenda sang, her shoulders relaxed, her face lifted and her eyes gleamed. But this song didn't fill her the way most songs did. As the hollow lyrics fell out of her mouth, she kept asking herself, "Should I be sad? Somebody has died. Somebody who everyone is saying is a great man." The question resonated as she sat through assemblies touting the greatness of Verwoerd, but she got a sense that even the adults didn't believe in what they were saying.

It was hard for Glenda to imagine what Verwoerd looked like. His old speeches were broadcasted over the radio, and she noticed the militant cadence with which he spoke and the way some consonant sounds coagulated in the back of his throat. In her mind, there was no difference between him and other white people she encountered: unsympathetic and condescending.

She put a face to the voice after seeing his picture in the newspaper. On September 7, a half-page, up-close picture of Verwoerd took up the front page of *Die Landstem*, the Afrikaner newspaper in Cape Town. His ears seemed like anchors weighing down his angular head. His nose casted a large shadow across his face. His

eyes appeared sullen. Despite seeing the man's face, hearing the man's voice and knowing the tragic details around his gruesome death, Glenda still felt no emotion for Verwoerd. When Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated two years later, Glenda mourned the death of a man thousands of miles away more than she did for Verwoerd.

Perhaps Albie Sachs, a lawyer and white opponent of apartheid, said what a 12-year-old Glenda was not quite able to articulate. "One has very mixed feelings about that. Murder is foul whenever it happens," Sachs said on the day of Verwoerd's assassination. "At the same time, I would be quite hypocritical if I said I had regrets. In fact, I think that my emotions are the same emotions that the overwhelming majority of blacks must be having right now in the townships: one of, I'm sorry to say it, jubilation that a tyrant has fallen."

Though it was hard for Glenda to grasp what the loss of this man meant to South Africa at the time, one thing did start to become clear. Before, she understood that things were separated, that people of different races didn't mix. But the love and affection she experienced in Greenhaven shielded her from the grim realities of discrimination. Verwoerd's assassination seemed to present a significant fracture. In the world she knew before, a simple song was enough to invigorate her. Her family looked forward to 7:30 on Friday evenings. She dreamed of being a classical singer.

Yet, on September 6, 1966, Glenda learned that the world did not wholly exist within the parameters of Greenhaven. She realized there were perhaps two different existences: one where people could live in harmony, as if each person represented a note. When played together, those notes created a sweet assonance. The other was one she couldn't quite define. The two polarizing reactions over Verwoerd's death made her wonder what kind of life existed beyond Greenhaven. She wondered if it was one she wanted to be a part of.

Listening to Her Own Song

Glenda infused the tea leaves and let it steep. It took a lot of work to get to this point. There was no electricity in the house, so she had to light a little kerosene lamp to boil the water. Nobody asked her to make tea, but even as a 5-year-old, Glenda's intuition was strong. She sensed her mother was not feeling well and thought tea would be just the right medicine. When the tea had cooled down enough for Glenda to wrap her hands around the cup, she added milk and two teaspoons of sugar. Surely, whatever was ailing her mother could be remedied with a little sweetness.

This memory is not Glenda's, but her mother's. Sometimes, it's hard for Glenda to distinguish what she herself remembers or what is told to her. Regardless, that was the moment Glenda's mother realized that no matter what her daughter chose to do in her life, she would always look to care for people.

Glenda's grandfather was sick. Although he lived with his wife, he was often relegated to a secluded area toward the back of the house. Diabetes had him almost bed-ridden. It was an existence that his favorite grandchild couldn't bear. Glenda adored her grandfather too much.

So most weekends, she would walk the two miles from her house in Greenhaven to a bus stop, then board a bus for a 15-minute drive. When the ride got bumpy — the smooth asphalt receding into unpaved road — she knew she was getting close. Truth be told, Glenda was afraid of going to Bonteheuwel, an Afrikaans word meaning "Beautiful Hills." There was nothing beautiful about this township, where the world went from vivid, undeniable reds, blues and greens to various gradients of gray. Her grandparents settled here after bulldozers flattened the land in Cape Town's District 6 to claim it as "white" land. Between 1960 and 1983, the apartheid government executed the largest mass removals in modern-day history, displacing 3.5 million blacks. Glenda's grandfather was one of them.

No one wanted to live in Bonteheuwel. Forcibly removed from their homes, the people there were angry and bitter. Gangs and drugs were common antidotes for the poverty and hopelessness people felt. Glenda's grandfather lived out the last years of his life here. Losing his true home was something he mourned every day, and Glenda became attuned to this sadness. Even though she was only 12, she sensed that her grandfather was always grieving, always on the precipice of a slow and persistent heartache.

But that changed when he saw Glenda. His grandchildren gave him life, and Glenda's presence gave him respite from his gray days. She loved hearing about his violin. These days, he was too tired to play, but when Glenda was younger, her grandfather thrilled her by playing waltzes and concertos, compositions he learned to play himself by sneaking into the weekly Thursday performances of the Cape Town

municipal orchestra. Of course, the performances were reserved for white spectators only, but Glenda's grandfather befriended ushers who agreed to look the other way when he came to the door. He watched violin bows slide across strings like ice skate blades over freshly hardened ice. The sound that emerged was crisp and precise. He wanted to do that, too. He played for Glenda, doing his best impression of what he saw during those performances.

"Grandpa, what new song did you learn this week?"

Glenda's eyes lit up whenever her grandfather took the violin out of its case. Decades before, a Jewish emigre walked into the music shop where her grandfather worked. The customer brought in a violin that had a hairline crack along the rib. After her grandfather fixed it, the man became a regular customer over the years, coming into the shop whenever he needed new strings or rosin. One day, the customer announced he was leaving the country, but not before he left his violin with her grandfather.

This became his most cherished possession. When he played, it was as if he was not in Bonteheuwel anymore. The music transported him. He played Bach and Strauss, preludes and nocturnes. He loved showing Glenda the new techniques he had learned by watching the Cape Town orchestra.

"This is pizzicato," he said, as he plucked instead of bowed.

"This is vibrato," he said, as his left hand pulsated on the fingerboard.

"This is spiccato," he said, as his bow bounced off the strings.

Glenda liked to imagine that the violin was a Stradivarius, a string instrument built by one of the members of the Stradivari family in the 17th and 18th centuries. The quality of a Stradivarius is unrivaled, the resonant sound as illuminating as the luster of an angel's halo. It might as well have been. To Glenda, her grandfather's playing was heavenly.

When he became sick, it was hard for him to play. She tried to lift his spirits in small ways. Glenda's grandmother usually had a bag of fruit hanging from her bedpost, and the fruit inside often went bad. Glenda would raid the bag and bring her grandfather his favorite fruit. Strips of red apple skin fell away by her feet until only the juicy flesh remained. She cut up the apple and presented the tart pieces on a plate for him.

Another time, she offered to give him a haircut. "Grandpa, your hair is getting so long. We must cut it."

Glenda assessed her grandfather's electric white hair, a contrast against his dark skin. It was disheveled, looking more like unruly tufts of gossamer on top of his head and above his upper lip. A pair of scissors in Glenda's hand didn't do much to temper

his mane. In fact, she wasn't sure if it looked better than it did before. She didn't know what she was doing; she just knew that she wanted to take care of him.

In 1973, the year Glenda started at the University of Western Cape (UWC), South Africa was in the midst of massive upheaval. Many more people were being resettled into black "homelands." A fledgling, wide-eyed Glenda stepped onto campus (UWC was considered one of the Bush colleges, places of higher education for non-whites established by the state) eager to make a difference with the growing swell of youth activists. Many young people were becoming conscientized. Glenda was swept up in this wave.

But, first and foremost, she was there to get training. She didn't have many choices — the career paths for non-white South African women were essentially limited to teaching and nursing. But Glenda was passionate about wanting to be a nurse. Although she was serious about her studies, she was equally compelled by the political movements happening around her. A.M. Venter, the head of the nursing department, wouldn't have any of it.

"You are not here for politics," Venter said. "You're here to work."

But passion was not something Glenda could easily squelch. She was invigorated by what her classmates were saying, especially Henry Isaacs, a senior at the university who was involved with the National Union of South African Students, the University Christian Movement, the South African Students Organization and the Student Representative Council. He worked tirelessly to mobilize South Africa's youth. Glenda joined him and thousands of others on July 8, 1973. Approximately 12,000 people gathered at Athlone Athletic Park in response to the university ignoring student demands for reform, chief among them that Afrikaans was declared the official language for instruction. Glenda knew what was at risk by participating. She went anyway.

The next day, Glenda's face appeared just above the fold in *The Cape Times*. When Venter called Glenda to her office, she already knew the reason. She walked to Venter's office in Tygerberg Hospital, where she was logging her clinical hours. The office was void of life and spirit, a bureaucratic place where even the books seemed to be lined up in a militant way. Glenda sat down, and the two women tangled in a stoic tête-à-tête. A silent tension quickly filled the room. It was unclear whose will would be broken first. There was a third woman, the matron of the hospital, but it was Venter who made the bigger impression.

Venter was a serious woman, tall with sinewy arms and legs. Her short, cropped hair clung to the back of her neck and around her ears like a helmet. Her eyes were deep and dark. She rarely smiled. She had the newspaper in her hand.

"What were you doing there?" Venter asked.

They had proof. Glenda couldn't deny the fact that she was at the protest, so she stayed quiet. Her silence only made Venter's well of anger deepen. Venter wanted her to beg and plead, to say she wouldn't do it again. In this moment, Glenda taught herself how to keep her face from betraying what she truly felt. After all, she knew the power these two women wielded in her life. Her heart was beating rapidly, so loudly that she worried for a moment that her superiors would figure her out. They never did. They sent her away with warnings ringing in her ears.

Glenda, who already looked like a nurse in her crisp white uniform, emerged from Venter's office and walked down the long, empty hallway back to her class. The steady click of her shoes echoing through the hall was a reminder that even though she might have been silent, she refused to go unheard.

As the school year went on, Glenda struggled to keep her grades up in her nursing courses. It wasn't because she didn't understand the material. Her instructors were systematically flunking her.

So Glenda found another way. She finished the rest of her nursing training at Nico Malan Nursing College. She went on to complete her studies in the field of midwifery and psychiatry. Years later, she would think about the woman who constantly reminded her that she was stupid and foolish for being politically active. Venter's stoic presence came to mind once in 1978, when Glenda was recognized as the top nurse in the country after she completed training in psychiatry, a standing that was based solely on test scores. The other time she thought of Venter was in 2001, when Glenda was recognized by the International Council of Nursing as one of the three best nurses of the past decade. When she received that award, she imagined Venter in the audience, watching with a scowl on her face. In her mind, Glenda walked up to that apparition and said, "You actually were my greatest encouragement because when you told me that I'm no good, that I was never going to be anything, that spurred me on to be the best I could ever be. I wanted to do all of this to prove you wrong."

There was another person Glenda imagined in that audience — her grandfather. What would he think if he could see his granddaughter now? Glenda felt vindicated, but she knew that alone wouldn't have made him happy. Her grandfather would be proud because she not only stood up for herself, but for anyone who felt displaced and discarded, the kind of people who lived in Bonteheuwel. She stood up for people just like him.

It was a sad day when Glenda's grandfather died. She was only 13, but she understood how profound his death was. She would miss the way he played the violin for her and how they listened to his vast vinyl collection together. She would miss how

his sad eyes ignited when he saw any one of his grandchildren. She would miss the way a smile spread across his face after crunching into a delectably sweet apple.

Glenda was grateful for the opportunity to see her grandfather one last time. At his funeral, she took a long look into the casket. The once unruly tufts of white hair on top of his head were tamed and styled. *He looks so handsome*, she thought. He held an expression that she so rarely saw when he was alive. *He looks like an angel.*

She learned one more thing from her grandfather that day: that the best anyone can do is take care of someone long enough and well enough until they are finally able to find some peace.

She Lifted Them Up

Some of the family members on the wobbly 40-minute trip from Table Bay Harbor to Robben Island couldn't help feeling a little seasick. The rickety Susan Kruger ferry was not equipped to negotiate the vigorous undulation of the south Atlantic Ocean. All the passengers had to steady themselves was the idea that once they stepped on land again, they would be seeing their husbands, fathers, brothers and sons.

The ferry rides were often filled with the anticipatory buzz of seeing a loved one, but Glenda's reason for visiting the political prisoners at Robben Island Prison was different: to get inmates ready for release. Glenda represented the Trauma Centre, an organization which she helped pioneer. It was dedicated to assisting people in recovering mentally and physically from the draconian apartheid government. For the last decade, she had been contributing to the cause of ending apartheid, and she could feel the rumblings of the change so many had dreamed of. In preparation for this, she knew how important it was for prisoners to be ready for whatever this rapidly changing South Africa offered. So, on her weekly visits to the island to counsel the prisoners, she was very strict about staying on topic. This week, she had a specific schedule of discussion:

- 15 minutes on how to get in touch with legal services
- 10 minutes on where to buy clothes that were up-to-date with the current fashions
- 15 minutes on how to open a bank account
- 20 minutes on how to reconnect with family members after years, or even decades, apart

The passengers filed off the ferry like a row of black ants to a drop of honey. At the entrance of the prison, a big sign loomed. It said "Welcome" in English and Afrikaans. That sign always bothered Glenda. She always thought how there was no sign big enough to make anybody feel welcomed here.

She didn't have to walk far to get to the visitors' center, but from where she was standing, she could see the whole prison. The island was only about one mile long and two miles wide. She could see the lime quarry, where inmates were forced to crush large stones into puny pebbles. It was mindless and useless work but it was brutal, designed to dehumanize a prisoner by making him toil in the unrelenting sun the whole day for no other reason than to add more rocks to the ocean floor.

Glenda could see where Robert Sobukwe (the Pan Africanist Congress's version of Nelson Mandela) used to stay. Originally sentenced for three years, Sobukwe stayed on Robben Island as a result of the General Law Amendment Act of 1963, where suspects were re-detained after release for another 90-day period without a warrant or access to a lawyer. Sobukwe was released and detained for the next six years. He lived in a lone yellow shack amongst a row of small buildings that housed the prison guard dogs. There, he could read books and wear civilian clothes, but he was kept in isolation. His

existence on Robben Island was not much different than that of the lepers who were banished to this island hundreds of years prior.

But Robben Island was changing. The National Party had started negotiations with Nelson Mandela. Twenty years after Sobukwe's release in 1969, it was as if the prison itself knew a seismic shift was in store for the country. Radio and televisions were no longer banned. Prisoners could receive more than two visits a year. Severe beatings and starvation punishments floated more distantly into the past. When prisoners were released, Glenda wanted them to be as prepared as possible for the new changes, and talking to prisoners and openly discussing how they would cope on the outside was a subtle act of defiance.

Outside of the prison walls, though, chaos still gripped the country. South Africa was in the third year of a nation-wide state of emergency, an oppressive declaration that allowed the apartheid government to detain a large number of people without cumbersome legalities. Ironically, what was happening on the inside was an encouraging sign to Glenda. There was a feeling that the apartheid regime's control was waning and power was changing hands. It was only a matter of time before what was happening within these walls spilled out into the rest of the country. South Africa was in for a long-overdue rupture, and freedom was on its way.

The build-up to that rupture started the way most do — with a small spark. Freedom fighters, especially health workers in the liberation movement, became much more aware about how the apartheid government was attempting to stifle anything or anybody who threatened it. Don Foster and Diane Sandler's "A Study of Detention and Torture in South Africa" shed light on what citizens were enduring at the hands of the government. The study analyzed 176 cases of detention from 1975 to 1984. Participants were interviewed intensively, and the results were disturbing. According to the study, being detained in South Africa meant being severely tortured, both physically and psychologically.

By the time the Foster and Sandler report findings were released in 1985, Glenda was working at Avalon Psychiatric Hospital. During the day, she helped patients cope with a range of mental illnesses. At night, she was part of the Detention Treatment Team (DTT), a group that formed in response to the study. Glenda ran a makeshift clinic out of her house, treating people who had been hurt or detained after political rallies. The DTT tried to identify vulnerable people and give them strategies to cope when they were in the custody of the state. Though not many outside of her political activism knew about her double-life — even her parents didn't know how politically involved she was — law enforcement had begun to take notice.

One day after work, she began the 15-minute walk to her parents' house. It was autumn, so the sun was disappearing at an earlier hour. The neighborhood was immersed in the golden light that manifests just before sunset. A forceful wind blew

against her back and leaves crinkled under her shoes. Suddenly, her ears became acutely attuned. The wind was producing a shrill whistle. The crunching leaves now sounded like the snapping of thick twigs. The rest of her senses rose to match her heightened awareness of sound. Her brisk walking pace turned into a saunter. The neighborhood she walked through was filled with streets named after the other eight planets. She walked past Mars and Venus and Saturn and Jupiter. She made another loop around the galaxy to confirm her suspicion. She was right — she was being followed.

Two men pulled up to her. Even though they were in an unmarked car and civilian clothing, Glenda knew exactly who they were: security police officers, the South African equivalent to an officer of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation.

"Hi, Miss Wildschut," one of the officers said. There was not an ounce of sincerity in the salutation. Glenda didn't reply. "You may as well go home. We know where your parents stay."

Glenda kept her eyes forward and tried to fight the feeling of goosebumps rising up all over her arms. The car drove off. By this time, it was dark. Dread filled her stomach. *Mom can't know about this. She won't be able to deal with it*, Glenda thought. There was nothing left to do but walk back to her parents' house. With every step, she wondered what else they knew about her.

The security police officers were right to take notice of Glenda. She was, after all, a main cog of DTT, which provided physical and mental care for people involved in the anti-apartheid movement. At the time, the activists (mainly people who shared the ideology of the African National Congress) were employing a strategy called rolling mass action: sustained resistance and pressure on the government. This meant that there were events on an almost-weekly basis, and it ensured that Glenda would have plenty of patients in her provisional clinic. Her small bungalow wedged in a row of houses on Cavendish Street would hum with a mixture of adrenaline and urgency. People chose to go there to get medical care instead of a hospital because, oftentimes, police officers hung around the hospitals like vultures. They waited to swoop in on their prey after their injuries were treated.

People started pouring into Glenda's small house, the one with the Oregon Pine wooden floors and barely-there garden in the front. Scalpels and forceps replaced spoons and forks in the kitchen. The dining table turned into a rudimentary operating table where general practitioners removed live ammunition or sutured a wound. The antiseptic smell that started in the kitchen permeated throughout Glenda's house. The living room became a waiting room. The bedroom was a sanctuary. People felt safe within Glenda's four walls, despite the fact that it was across the street from the Woodstock Police Department.

Glenda embraced this seemingly unfortunate geographic location. In fact, she believed it was the perfect decoy. The Woodstock officers assumed all the activity within the liberation movement was happening throughout Cape Town, not right under their noses. They never did discover the foot traffic coming in and out of Glenda's tiny house, how people were transported through an alleyway, then across a small field right to her back door.

Still, the local officers wouldn't leave her alone. It was as if there was a beat assigned specifically for surveillance of her. Sometimes, when she was getting ready for work, she would see Spyker Van Wyk, who would later be identified as a chronic and ruthless torturer, pacing the long sidewalk corridor that ran parallel to the row of houses where she lived. Van Wyk's shadow across the sidewalk looked like that of a monolith. His eyes were hidden in the shady void created by the rim of his hat. His hands were behind him as if bound by invisible handcuffs. On other days, he would find a parking spot squarely in the line of vision of someone walking out of the psychiatric hospital. When he caught Glenda's eyes, he would tip his hat or wave. Once he told her, "You teach other people how to cope in detention. One of these days, we'll see how you cope."

Also next to the Woodstock Police Station was a brothel. Once day turned into night, prostitutes were the ones controlling the sidewalks as they tried to capitalize on the pedestrian traffic coming to and from Cavendish Square. Glenda took care of these women because she knew sex workers didn't receive any healthcare. So she ferreted out antibiotics and ointments from the hospital for them. She gave out sanitary napkins. The women called her "my nurse." They knew the police were keeping a close eye on Glenda.

"If the security police come again to harass you, give me a call," said Mieta, "I'll sort them out."

Mieta, a voluptuous short woman with curly hair, was a good person to have on Glenda's side. She was a leader among the other girls in the brothel, and she knew how to get herself out of a tight spot.

Glenda heard pounding on the door. Two officers waited on the other side. One was Van Wyk. The other she had never seen before. They pushed their way in once she opened the door. They were looking for the usual stuff: contraband and evidence that anti-apartheid gatherings were happening at her house. One of them kicked a waste basket, spilling the contents inside. The other pulled out books from a shelf, aimlessly flipping through the pages and then dropping them on the floor. As they made their way to the bedrooms, Glenda stayed in the living room, picked up the phone and called Mieta.

"They're here," she said. She hung up before the officers came back out.

"So, Miss Wildschut ... what have you been up to? Anything interesting?" Van Wyk said.

"Nothing out of the ordinary," Glenda replied.

"Is that right?"

Just then, Glenda heard the latch on her fence opening.

"Come out here. We know you're in there. Come out here!"

It was Mieta and five other sex workers. Mieta had on a tight sweater, short skirt and a purple scarf tied into a bow that tilted to the left side of her head. She didn't even have shoes on. The other workers' outfits looked just as thrown together. They must have rushed over from the brothel. The officers and Glenda came out to the porch.

"Come out here! Stop bothering her. She's a good woman. She's our nurse. She takes care of us," Mieta said. "But you guys? You guys are terrible and you know that you come to us."

The other five women echoed Mieta's message like a choir and in synchronizing fashion, the women pulled up their skirts and pointed to a spot between their legs.

"*Jy ken die poes! Jy het my poes genaai*!"

Van Wyk and his partner didn't have the presence of officers anymore. It was as if they had turned into little boys being reprimanded by their mothers. Their faces turned red. Their eyes got wide.

"You know you come to this," Mieta said. "You know this. You know you're no good."

Glenda's eyes got wide, too. She couldn't believe how easily these women made the officers crumple. They were being put in their place, and Glenda was happy to see the women using their agency to take back some power from Van Wyk and his partner. The two men hurried to their car and sped off.

"Voertsêk! Voertsêk" the women yelled, as if shooing away a begging feral dog. "Voertsêk"

They yelled until only gray smoke from the exhaust pipe remained.

Glenda couldn't always avoid law enforcement. In 1987, Glenda had just come back from the United States after being on a mid-career scholarship. She traveled

around the country with stops in Washington, D.C., Seattle, San Francisco and Miami, among others. She was working and learning in psychiatric units across the country. Her last stop was New York City, where she reveled in being just a tourist. She went to Central Park and the Empire State Building. She boarded a ferry to see the Statue of Liberty for the first time. Now, she was settling back into Cape Town after eight months away. Soon, she would be detained.

Her capture followed a political event headed by Allan Boesak, a gifted and persuasive orator who was the leader of the United Democratic Front (UDF). With the African National Congress banned from the country, the UDF was the closest thing that resembled organized representation of citizens against apartheid. Boesak was speaking at a mass funeral in Gugulethu. Continuing the strategy of rolling mass action, funerals had become common events for freedom fighters to gather.

Officers stormed the event wielding batons and shooting colored powder into the crowd in an attempt to mark menacing activists. Glenda was thrown into the back of a police van with other freedom fighters. When officers ushered her from the holding cell to the interrogation, Glenda had to keep reminding herself of the things she told her patients. *Don't let them break you. Keep your mind busy. They will try to mentally exhaust you. Find a way to outlast them.*

The interrogation room was what she expected. Cramped. Cold. Oftentimes, interrogations were pointless, just used to rattle the detainees into giving some kind — any kind — of information that might lead to anti-apartheid leaders. But on this day, the two officers' objectives were clear. They wanted to know if the UDF was actually a front for the African National Congress.

"So you regard Allan Boesak as your hero. Why's this?" one officer said.

"Everybody knows Allan Boesak," Glenda said.

"Why were you at this mass funeral? You were there to support him. We knew you were there for UDF."

"Officer, I'm just a nurse. People come to me when they're hurt, and I must help them. Those rallies can be quite dangerous."

These officers started saying some familiar things, something about the Inkatha Freedom Party's position in the anti-apartheid movement. Then, she remembered her time in New York, and how an American on the ferry from Staten Island to Liberty Island asked her about South Africa.

"The Inkatha Freedom Party is losing ground," Glenda remembers saying. "The ANC is going to come back any moment now."

Now these words were being repeated back to her. Was the fellow tourist a spy? Was she being followed, even in America?

She stuck close to her story.

“Officers, I’m not involved with any kind of movement. I’m a nurse. I was just there to help.”

“No, no, no. We know about you. You teach people how to cope in detention. You’re helping Boesak and the UDF!”

“Officer, I assure you I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Oh, you don’t want to talk? Fine, we’ll give you some time to think.”

They put handcuffs around Glenda’s wrists, then cinched them until metal touched flesh. They led her over to the window.

“Lift your arms!” one officer said.

She put her arms over her head. She had to stand on her toes in order for the handcuffs to go through the bars of the window. At first, she thought she could get used to this perpetual state of stretch. But soon, the stretch turned into an ache. The seldomly considered strips of muscle between her shoulders and waist were now all she could think about. They felt like pieces of leather stiffened by a scorching sun. It felt like her flesh was cracking. As the minutes passed, she wished for numbness.

She wondered if this was the worst of it or if it was just the beginning. She had talked to so many former detainees that she knew the torture in detention was unpredictable. They could keep her for a day or weeks. They could implement the Helicopter Method, where they handcuffed a detainee’s hands and feet and suspended the detainee from a broomstick, made him look like a pig at a Hawaiian luau. Or the Phonebook Method, where detainees stood barefoot on the edge of a stack of telephone books for hours. Or the Hooding Method, where a black bag was placed over a detainee’s head. Or the Shock Method, where electrodes were placed on people’s noses or genitals or rectums.

The purpose of all these methods, no matter the varying degrees of cruelty, all had one purpose: to break down the detainee psychologically. Glenda kept reminding herself of the advice she gave to patients in her living room. She thought about her house and the last trip she took to Table Mountain. *Think of open spaces. Stay alert. Talk to yourself or imagine talking to a loved one.*

Twenty minutes passed. Forty minutes passed. Maybe an hour. It was hard to tell. To Glenda, it felt like days. When the officers came back to release her, she felt

muscles across her body falling back into place. They led her to a cell that housed the other funeral-goers.

“How long am I going to stay here? What do you want from me?” Glenda asked as they prodded her into the overcrowded cell.

“You’ll find out,” was the only answer she got.

Glenda and the rest of the women in the cell formed an instant bond.

“I’m not falling asleep here,” Glenda said.

“I’m not either,” said another woman.

They kept each other awake, and if one of them couldn’t stave off sleep any longer, another woman would sit next to her as she slumbered. They sang. They danced. They kept each other sane. When daylight started to seep into their damp and dark cell, a guard unceremoniously opened the cell door.

“Everybody, go home,” he said.

Glenda's role at the Trauma Centre was to comfort victims who suffered from mental and physical abuse from apartheid perpetrators.

The officers didn’t know that detaining Glenda only made her more dedicated to her work with DTT. The work with DTT eventually became the Trauma Centre. Finally, victims of violence and torture had a place to go to heal. The Anglican Church had gifted the Centre with the Cowley House on 126 Chapel Street, a white and cream building that looked bleached from the sun. It was another safe space Glenda could offer her patients. Whether she met people through DTT, the Trauma Centre or Robben Island, she always tried to provide a place of refuge. She believed in what the activists were championing, but she believed her role in the fight was different.

Apartheid was a formidable boulder that had wedged itself in the foundation of South Africa. What the freedom fighters were doing was extracting that boulder and slowly pushing it to a ledge. Progress was slow, but that boulder was moving. People were joining the push. Glenda never saw herself as the muscle. Other people were better at that. She was often off to the side, tending to people who had been crushed by that boulder at some point. She healed people back to strength so they could fight. She cheered them on. She lifted them up.

No Separation, No Distinction

It's early evening on this spring day and the light of the setting sun bathes Table Mountain in a heavenly incandescence. South African conductor Alex Fokkens lifts his baton and on his cue, the Cape Town Symphony Choir and the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra releases notes that form mellifluous strands of music. These strands resonate throughout Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, weaving in and out of the trees of the lush setting.

The choir and orchestra are performing the opening chorus, "O Fortuna!" from *Carmina Burana*. The sounds of the various instruments and voices come together and form an ocean swell: powerful and grand. At first, the music is gentle and inviting. Later, it's dramatic and ominous. Glenda, singing in the soprano section, is lost in all of these emotions. The lyrics seem like something she can touch; she sings about how fate is so mercurial. She is caught up in the quickening pace of the work and all of a sudden, it's like she's running: pumping her arms, churning her legs, breathing heavily. The song climbs in unison with Fokkens' raising arms. And then, he closes his fists. Applause erupts.

At one point in Glenda's life, this is all she ever wanted: to sing for people. In a perfect world, singing is the life she would have chosen. Providence had other plans. It shepherded her onto a different path, one that facilitated the delivery of so many unheard voices, just never her own. But her dream of performing didn't leave her. Only now, there is a slight amendment. Being a soloist doesn't entice her as much as it used to. She would rather be among the choir. There is a strength in the harmony that materializes when voices are braided together — no separation, no distinction.

At times, regret does sink into her consciousness. *What would have happened if I took the other path?* Instead of pursuing a singing career, Glenda was in the throes of her political activism. That was in addition to her nursing career, which demanded her full attention; her teaching career required the same. These positions led to her role as the co-chair of the integration board of military health services and then as a commissioner for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. When could she sing?

While these two paths seem wildly divergent, they were, in actuality, parallel. Her singing life coincided with her political life. When she sings, it's not the ego that gets nourished. It's her sense of being an essential part of an accumulation. She does her part in taking disparate components and turning them into something that makes sense in the world. Only in hindsight can she see that she may have been doing that all along.

In 1991, just after the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC), Glenda was an instructor at Carinus Nursing College, an affiliation of the health science department at the University of Cape Town. After a decade of nursing, Glenda decided to devote the rest of her career to teaching it. She was sitting in her office marking term

papers when the phone rang. It was Vejay Ramlakan calling from the ANC office in Johannesburg. Glenda knew Ramlakan from the time they both worked underground with trauma patients, people who had been detained and tortured by the apartheid government. Ramlakan was a medical doctor and had been a political prisoner at Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela had recently been released from.

"Glens, I don't have a lot of time to talk. We're setting up a joint military command council to ensure the integration of all the military formations," Ramlakan said. "I need you to manage the health personnel. Glens, you have to come."

Glenda never knew where her political activism would take her, but she never refused the call. She put in a notice with her school, let her family know that she would be gone for a while, and packed a beat-up red suitcase. Soon, she arrived at Shell House, the ANC headquarters in downtown Johannesburg, where an empty, drafty office awaited her.

The goal of Ramlakan and his team was to combine the ANC, the party of the freedom fighters, with the once-apartheid government agencies (SAMS and SADF). SAMS stood for the South African Medical Services, a branch of the South African Defence Force. Ramlakan recruited mostly professionals in health-related fields to negotiate the integration of the liberation movement and the former standing system. But there was no support. No budget. Glenda had a goal but no resources.

That members of the ANC and SAMS once regarded each other as enemies was the most formidable mental hurdle. To members of the ANC, the opposition consisted of malicious bigots.

The people involved with SAMS once viewed their counterparts as terrorists. Some still did. This reluctance to fully accept the people across the aisle manifested in covert acts of sabotage. One day, it might have been passing down orders in Afrikaans, defying the protocol that English was now the official language. Another day, it might have been members of the then Defence Force telling their new colleagues stories about how they tortured people they captured during the apartheid years. The women were targeted in a different way — they were on the receiving end of unwanted sexual gestures.

"We have to be very tight, stand strong together," Ramlakan told Glenda. "We'll support you. Remember, we have to be beyond reproach."

Glenda and the rest of the team knew there was little room for error. The SAMS officers were like bloodhounds on a scent trail. Any whiff of trouble justified their initial suspicions: the ANC and its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), were disorganized and inadequate. As a result, every step had to be deliberate. Every action had to have purpose. While Glenda may have arrived in Johannesburg with a sense of hope that South Africa was headed in the right direction, the subtle power plays experienced by

Glenda and her team disturbed her. *How can there be an integration if only one side wants it?*

The first order of business was to make a comprehensive list combining the health personnel from both of the once-warring parties. This would be called the Certified Personnel Register (CPR). This was difficult for both sides as neither kept particularly detailed records of its members. Each side was responsible for creating its list, and compiling the ANC's fell on Glenda's shoulders. The lack of equipment forced her to use her own computer, and she began manually inputting names into a rudimentary database. Glenda recruited a colleague, psychologist Claire Bless, to bring some order to the seemingly endless list of names.

Glenda and Claire were opposites in every outwardly way. Glenda was black; Claire was white. Glenda was an Anglican freedom fighter; Claire was an atheist communist. Glenda was a native South African; Claire, originally from Switzerland, chose South Africa as her home. Despite the differences, they were united in one goal — to help South Africa get to the first all-race election in the country's history. This was the unspoken pact that drove the two women to work so hard that they hardly saw day turn into night or vice versa.

After months of compiling names, reviewing qualifications and updating the database, Glenda and Claire were ready to submit an initial CPR. Finishing this list had more significance than just logistics. Glenda and Claire had the power of legitimizing or dismissing people who had dedicated their lives to the liberation movement. Livelihoods were on the line. And having a comprehensive list sent a message to the SADF, too. It showed that the ANC was capable of completing a monumental task.

In total, the list consisted of approximately 3,500 names. The dot matrix printer — in which each letter was composed of dots — had to work all night to complete the job of printing the list. Each dot was produced by a tiny metal rod, so a line of words sounded like the muffled sounds of rapid fireworks. Every printed name came with an audible confirmation, guaranteeing a sleepless night for both Glenda and Claire. It was a capricious machine, so the women had to be attentive. The printer could need ink or a new ream of paper at any point in the night. As the sun rose, the printer was spitting out the last few names. By 9 a.m., an encyclopedia-thick stack of paper sat on Ramlakan's desk, ready for approval.

Multiple things vied for attention — Glenda felt like she was constantly at the edge of a massive cliff. One wrong step, no matter how small, could be fatal. But she couldn't help noticing the young receptionist in the SAMS building. The receptionist was slight in frame and her lack of life experience was apparent. She must have been right out of high school. Glenda would rush up and down the corridor as usual, and the girl's gaze would fall on her like a heavy cloak. When Glenda looked in her direction, the receptionist looked away immediately.

After enduring weeks of her ogling, Glenda walked up to the receptionist's small cubicle and said in Afrikaans, "Hello. How are you?" The receptionist answered meekly.

"I'm going to make a cup of tea," Glenda said. "Would you like to come along?"

The difference between the two women's gait was stark. Glenda's shoulders were relaxed, and she walked with a soft sashay. Meanwhile, each of the receptionist's steps were outlined with a sense of caution, as if she were heading into completely uncharted territory.

"I have to ask you," Glenda said. "Why do you keep looking at me like this?"

"I was looking because I've never seen a terrorist in my life," she said in a thick Afrikaans accent. The young girl still appeared shy and scared, but her curiosity seemed to have a stronger grip.

Who was this terrorist? Glenda thought to herself. And then she realized. She was the terrorist. The more she talked to the young woman, the more she started to understand how people from the ANC were being perceived. The receptionist told her swart gevaar was sweeping through communities that favored the old apartheid regime.

"My parents are building bunkers underneath their homes and putting away perishable food and medical supplies," the receptionist said. "There are people out there who are really scared."

Glenda brought the hot tea cup to her lips, letting the steam rise and hide the mixture of disappointment and frustration spreading across her face. It was always so hard for Glenda to hide what she was really feeling.

Glenda and the receptionist maintained cordial and office-friendly interactions after that initial meeting. But the young women's sentiments haunted Glenda. *This is the next generation. If this is what they're thinking, what hope do we have for the future?*

In order for MK to properly integrate with SAMS to form a new and balanced Defence Force, both sides needed to be completely transparent. An orientation at Messina Army Base was scheduled for the beginning of December 1993. Glenda and the rest of Ramlakan's team would learn about SAMS facilities and gain more knowledge of its organizational and policy framework.

From the very beginning of the visit, tension hung in the air like stubborn humidity. It was as if everyone was in on the charade. People were smiling and exchanging pleasantries, but beneath it all, a struggle of wills was at play. SAMS wanted to assert its dominance and show who was really the superior of the two. Glenda clenched her teeth to remind herself to keep her mouth shut.

On Thursday, December 9, the two groups were scheduled to visit Norex, the electric fence separating South Africa and Zimbabwe. Glenda knew about this fence. Farmers working for the apartheid government formed commandos and patrolled the border crossing. Many of her trauma patients told her how freedom fighters crossed here on their way to exile in Zimbabwe. That's how she knew that the fence was always set to the highest voltage.

It was not a formidable barrier, just five meters wide and three meters high. But as one general gave historical context and insisted that the main purpose for the fence was to keep out unwanted animals, Glenda couldn't stop imagining young men being thrown up against the fence, electric currents singeing through human flesh.

She remembered one patient's story in particular. He, a white man, had been conscripted into the military. He also happened to be gay, which left him just as vulnerable as a freedom fighter. He was forced to do laborious and menial jobs, tasks that his counterparts didn't have to do. He had to run extra miles, wrestle other cadets in order to receive food, clean the floor using just his toothbrush. His time in the army left him so traumatized that he could describe his torturer's blotchy skin and the shaky timbre of his voice well enough to give Glenda goosebumps.

The group quickly moved on to Messina airfield, where one of the generals sat in the empty seat next to Glenda. He tried to make small talk, complimenting Cape Town's temperate weather and asking Glenda if she followed rugby. All the while, Glenda kept asking herself, *Do I know this man? Why is he so familiar?*

"Yes, I enjoy watching rugby," Glenda said.

He continued on about the national team and as she took a closer look at his face and tuned in to his voice, it became clear. Goosebumps. This was the general her patient was talking about, a man capable of subjecting a fellow human being to voltage high enough to kill a dog. *These are the men I'm supposed to work with?* Glenda thought to herself.

The next day, the task team was ushered into a theater by the Messina Air Field. The generals wanted to show Glenda and her cohort that the Air Force didn't just carry out government orders. They performed rescue missions, too.

There were only enough people in the theatre to fill up the first two rows. The lights lowered. The projector came on. An expansive shot of South Africa appeared on the screen before them. The sound of helicopter blades slicing through the air filled the auditorium. Then she heard a familiar voice.

"I don't know what happened. The car blew up."

There was a little boy's screaming in the background.

Glenda's heart fell to the bottom of her stomach. She knew who it was, none other than Bea Abrahams. And the screaming must have belonged to her young son, Leo. Glenda knew Bea. At the time of the explosion, Bea was the director of Glenda's Trauma Centre. She lived in exile with her husband and two children until the ANC was unbanned. On their way back to South Africa, the car exploded. Bea's husband and daughter were killed. The presentation went on to show how the Air Force helped "rescue" Bea and her son.

Glenda's shock turned to rage. She brought her hands up to her mouth in an attempt to catch the resentment forming on her face. Her knees were knocking together. Her hollow stomach was now filling with a shrieking sound, like a tea kettle ready to be taken off the burner. The SADF staff knew what it was doing. Ramlakan warned this would happen. Members of the old apartheid regime knew how far intimidation could get them.

Soon, the group was heading into a simulation room that housed a centrifuge, a machine intended to replicate the strong g-forces experienced during flying. There was a one-way mirror for observation. A general walked up right behind Glenda. His reflection was almost superimposed over her face. He wasn't touching her. Still, his presence smothered her. His comment was barely audible, only loud enough for her to hear.

"So, how is Bea now?"

Chills ran across the back of her neck. Glenda clenched her teeth and continued to look straight ahead. *What was he trying to get out of me? Fear? Shock?* She refused to give him anything. She refused to let him think he had any effect on her. This was something she learned to perfect. Vigilance and single-minded tenacity — as long as those were her pillars, she knew what she was building wouldn't collapse.

All the work had come to this moment. Glenda couldn't believe what they had accomplished in just over two years. Every sub-council had a chair from the South African Defence Force and one from the African National Congress. Glenda and the rest of the team were able to form an equivalent rank structure to integrate the liberation army in with the already-established one. And the first all-race election in the country's history was two days away.

It was Sunday, April 24, and Claire had come to where Glenda stayed, a room at the Holiday Inn that was a short walk from Shell House. On most days, Glenda's room was nothing more than a sleeping station. But on this day, Glenda wanted to wash her hair and take her time.

"C'mon, Glenda. Let's just go to Shell House and get our work done," Claire said. "Then we can enjoy the rest of the day."

"No, Claire. I really have to insist. I just want to take it easy this morning."

Glenda deserved it. The whole team did. Most of the MK group members had left Johannesburg to be with their families that weekend. It had been a tumultuous month. Just weeks earlier was the Shell House Massacre. At least 20,000 Zulus marched in the name of the Inkatha Freedom Party to show support for the Zulu King, Goodwill Zwelithini. Tension continued to mount between the ANC and IFP. The substantial crowd carried traditional cowhide shields and spears. As they got closer, warning shots were fired from Shell House windows. They had no effect. The crowd continued to chant and sing, their spears piercing the sky in unison. More shots were fired, except this time demonstrators were hit. Believing the demonstrators were planning to storm the building, ANC security rushed to get into an offensive position. Now shots were coming from all directions. A long round of AK-47 blasts punctuated the chaotic scene. Soon, paramedics rushed to aid the injured. Demonstrators scattered. Police officers scurried to take cover in whatever the concrete jungle offered. In the end, 19 people were killed.

Surely, the worst was behind the country, Glenda thought. South Africa was days away from a historic event and the mantra that drummed through the ANC party was, "We must move forward."

As she dried her hair, Glenda could barely hear Claire. Suddenly, the droning of Glenda's hair dryer was interrupted by a violent sound. Both women knew a bomb had exploded, but they weren't sure if Shell House was the target. They ran out of the room and onto Small Street, a passageway between the hotel and Shell House. The narrow alley was filled not with the usual bustling merchants and pedestrians, but with rubble and stone. Glenda and Claire ran into the street, each going to the first casualty she saw. People lay in the street with shrapnel sticking out of their bodies like thorns on a rose stem. Claire spotted a man lying face down. She flipped him over and started CPR.

"Claire, you have to stop. He's already gone," Glenda said, attending to another victim. "Please, let's do CPR on someone who has a chance."

As medics poured out of the screaming ambulances that came onto the scene, Glenda and Claire were pushed to the side. As the mayhem ensued around her, Glenda wondered what would have happened if she had not felt the need to wash her hair that morning. *Could this have been Providence, too?* Whatever it was, she would honor it by voting the following Tuesday. All this would be in vain if she didn't cast a ballot.

Glenda had to go back to Cape Town to vote. On that Tuesday, Glenda walked to the voting station with her colleague Father Michael Lapsley and her sister Meryl-Joy. In a stroller was her niece, Caitlyn. She smiled as she looked down on the young girl, knowing that the rest of the elections her niece would vote in would be as free as this one.

Glenda didn't mind the long queue, which was the standard in voting stations around the country. More than 22 million South Africans turned out to vote. Despite the violence that led up to the election, a reverberating peace welcomed democracy to the country. Constituents had many candidates to choose from. In all, there were 19. But a majority of the population voted the same way Glenda did. Results came in within 24 hours and the ANC's Nelson Mandela won an overwhelming majority, making him the first black head of state the country had ever seen. On that day, being a South African meant something different. On that day, Glenda was free.

Glenda didn't have much time to celebrate with her family. She had to head back to Johannesburg to reconvene with her colleagues. Her brother, Kevin, dropped her off at the airport. At this point, Glenda had had a few hours of sleep; she was still running on adrenaline. She figured she would get some rest on the flight.

Waiting on the runway, she thought about her part in the monumental change. This was her first quiet moment in months, and she thought about how everybody came together to make the election happen. As the plane started to ascend, Glenda looked out the window and saw Table Mountain, the landmark she always looked for to let her know she was home. For Glenda, the mountain was always an inviting figure, one that accepted her into protective arms. She felt safe in the mountain's presence. Beyond the mountain was just blue, a place where the Atlantic and the Indian were not two individual oceans, but one harmonious body of water. What Glenda was looking at had no separation, no distinction. Just something strong enough to move land and mountains.

The Truth of the Matter

Glenda pulled up to a peach-colored brick house on 405 Philani St. in Paballelo, a lonely semi-desert township in the Northern Cape of South Africa. Orange dust rose from the car tires — the street was still unpaved. It was a quaint, modest house with its mint-green trimmings and brown roof. Nothing about its appearance indicated the horror that occurred 11 years prior. For Mrs. Sethwala, the matriarch of the house, living there carried the cruel irony of dwelling in the very place of her son's demise.

Glenda entered Mrs. Sethwala's home with two members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). There was a deferential quality in the way she waited to step inside the house and be asked to sit down. She knew how reluctant Mrs. Sethwala felt about being contacted by a commissioner from the TRC, but the woman softened as soon as she heard Glenda's gentle soprano voice. The house was small. The two women were seated closely, their knees almost touching. Face-to-face, Glenda peered into the anguished eyes of a grieving mother and did what no one else had ever done. She listened.

Mrs. Sethwala's voice carried the unmistakable tremble that resulted from an acrid mixture of emotions: sadness, anger, bitterness, disappointment. The two women conversed in Afrikaans, Glenda's second language, yet nothing was lost in the exchange. *There's nothing quite like a mother's grief,* Glenda thought to herself.

The women talked for over an hour, every word of Mrs. Sethwala's account being recorded for the archives. Mrs. Sethwala was able to untether herself from the anger that corroded inside of her for too long, the kind that left her soul to rust. Finally, she was able to speak her truth. Glenda got what she came for.

Mrs. Sethwala's testimony now sits in a non-descript, unassuming beige building on Hamilton Street in Pretoria, South Africa. The building is not much to look at, although tiers of windows gives the building a scaly appearance. A large speckled slab of granite declares this place the National Archives of South Africa. Despite its lackluster outwardly appearance, what it holds is invaluable. If all the pieces of paper records were placed on top of one another, the stack would stretch over 40 miles high. These pieces of paper stitch together the whole of the country's history. Volumes look like they have been dug up from centuries-old tombs. Tattered book spines and peeling leather covers claim coveted spaces on shelves. Walking down the main aisle of one of the repository rooms feels like walking in the middle of a kaleidoscope — rows and rows of books seem to replicate and mirror each other.

The documents remind citizens of what South Africa once was. They symbolize that history is never really gone, no matter how much one might want to forget. Some of the truths housed in this building cannot be contained on the page. There are many atrocities and violations in South Africa's violent past, but the most haunting is

apartheid. In an effort to address the wrongs of the oppressive regime, the then newly democratically elected president Nelson Mandela opted for reconciliation over retribution.

The world had never seen anything like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. South American countries such as Chile and Argentina carried out truth commissions, but South Africa's approach was unique because healing was the ultimate goal. Mandela strongly believed the country could not move forward without grappling with its past.

So starting on April 15, 1996, the process began to uncover the truth. The commission interviewed victims like Mrs. Sethwala and took over 22,000 statements. If words were pebbles, the testimonies taken by the TRC would provide enough to construct a miles-long road. These are the truths that cannot stay quiet in the National Archives building. The words emanate with a glowing penumbra. They are meant to be read and absorbed, seared into bones and flesh the way cows are branded with identifying marks.

And yet, the testimonies are hard to access. There are many reasons for this, some being the sensitivity of the information and lack of staff to organize and sift through the backlog of record requests. In this nondescript building on this unassuming road, the truth is there, but there are so many barriers around it.

One person's truth is never exactly the same as anyone else's. There's forensic truth and personal truth. Societal truth and emotional truth. And when trauma becomes another filter through which memory is interpreted, truth in one person's eyes can be wholly unrecognizable to the next.

Truth is an elusive thing. It's mutable. Amorphous. Prone to modification. During the truth hearings, television cameras and broadcast crews made the trials accessible to not only millions of South Africans, but to people around the world. People became entranced by newly unearthed stories of injustice. Although high-profile cases such as the Sharpeville Massacre and Cradock Four captivated the world's attention, Glenda sought to look for truth where no one else was looking.

In the fall of 1996, Glenda found herself in Upington, a nine-hours' drive away from her native Cape Town. The town in the Northern Cape was known because of the Upington 26, the defendants who were convicted on a doctrine of "common purpose," which placed criminal liability on all the participants in a criminal endeavor, for all that resulted from that endeavor. The incident was not only an example of vigilante justice gone wrong, but of how an arcane doctrine shattered the lives of innocent people.

It started 11 years prior, in 1985, when 5,000 Paballelo demonstrators turned violent. Paballelo, an adjoining black township, provided a large portion of the workforce for the majority-white Upington. Fifteen thousand people lived in Paballelo, and residents were speaking out against the living conditions. Police chased the protesters

away from the local stadium with tear gas and rubber bullets. A smaller crowd of 300 found its way to 405 Philani St., the home of Lucas Jetta Sethwala, a local black municipal policeman despised for the way he treated local traders.

The crash of stones against his peach-colored brick house and the shrill shouting and angry voices singing freedom songs brought Sethwala outside. He shot into the crowd and injured a young boy, incensing the mob. They chased him back into the house, then out the backdoor, and he was caught in an open field nearby. They beat his head with the butt of his own shotgun. They poured petrol on him, and against the dark night sky, flames erupted all over his body.

Reports about Upington flooded through the radio and television speakers that day in 1985, and Glenda was incredulous when she heard the news. She always remembered Upington as a sleepy town en route to Lowestoft, her mother's family farm. There was nothing but cactus and sand out there. Now, it was the site of gross injustice. Innocent people were rounded up as suspects, some of whom were nowhere near the crime scene. This included Evelina de Bruin, who at the time was a 52-year-old domestic worker. She had no prior history of political activism. In fact, she couldn't even read or write and encouraged her children to avoid getting involved in any anti-apartheid movements. She had no idea what was happening when she got arrested.

A year after the horrific killing, 26 people were convicted of murder and public violence with the intent of common purpose. Fourteen were given the ultimate punishment. de Bruin, who was singled out as the one who incited the crowd outside Sethwala's home, was the only woman among the 14 sentenced to death.

"What is the judge saying?" de Bruin asked her husband when the judge delivered the verdict. "Why is everyone crying? What is happening?"

The case received international attention. Black South Africans implored the justice system for corrective measures. Finally, in 1991, an appeals judge overturned the convictions and ordered that de Bruin and her husband be set free. While people were transfixed by the injustices happening to the wrongfully accused in the Upington case, Glenda sought out the stories that weren't being told.

She thought about Sethwala's mother and how she, too, was grieving a loss. *Why isn't that acknowledged?* Glenda thought. Sethwala's mother was shunned in her community. She only heard her name in hushed whispers behind shielding hands. She couldn't find solace in church, where even her reverend turned his back. She doesn't ever remember him praying for her.

Mrs. Sethwala remembered how a young boy came back to her house after the uproar and delivered the news. "Aunty Baby, they have already killed Jetta, and he is lying there burning." Living in the same house 11 years later was a constant reminder of her nightmare. The four walls never released the violence of that night. She accepted

that this might be the rest of her life. Although she wasn't a part of the Upington 26, she was also condemned to a solitary existence and long suffering.

But Glenda wanted to know her story. Despite the fact that Glenda had no children at the time, a motherly instinct had always ruled her sensibilities. She was deeply touched by Mrs. Sethwala and the loss of her child.

After taking Mrs. Sethwala's testimony in her house, Glenda asked if she would speak at a public hearing in Upington's town hall. *It's one thing to tell your truth*, Glenda thought, *but quite another to have your truth be heard by your perpetrators.* Before Mrs. Sethwala stepped foot in that public forum, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission wanted to prepare her. It provided "briefers" — members of the community who were trained to provide psychosocial and emotional support to the victims in order to make them feel as empowered as possible when testifying. Having briefers was an idea Glenda brought to the other commissioners. She knew how important it was to feel supported when trauma was being relived.

Although probably the most unseen of all the TRC staff, the support briefers created an environment that made testifiers feel safe. Having worked with political prisoners, targeted activists and torture survivors, Glenda employed this approach at her Trauma Centre. She knew the most gentle way to to get to the truth was to treat the victim with dignity and to give back his or her voice.

Their goal was to implement the principles of critical incident briefing. They asked three main questions regarding the victims' trauma: What were you thinking about? What were you feeling? What did you do? This basic set of questions allowed victims to grapple with the cognitive, emotional and practical feelings they were dealing with at the time.

Loved ones and a briefer formed an emotional barrier around Mrs. Sethwala as she walked into Upington's town hall. Glenda was the facilitator for her hearing. Finally, Mrs. Sethwala had the chance to reveal the burden that years of silence had built. The most important words that Glenda told Mrs. Sethwala: "Quite a few of the people have told us about the events that led up to the death of your son. So, we will ask you to tell us from your side how the event affected your life. We will listen very carefully."

The smooth, dark skin across Mrs. Sethwala's face was punctured by multiple lines — parentheses around her mouth and horizontal scratch marks in the isthmus between her eyes. She was missing one front tooth, but it was hardly noticeable behind her full lips. Her face unclenched as she talked, as if every word that left her mouth carried with it an ounce of sorrow.

“Paballelo community, the community killed my child and they burnt him to death,” Mrs. Sethwala said. “For the ‘Upington 26’ group, I want to say it was a low blow. It was a heavy blow, but I picked myself up again. I survived.”

The hall went silent during Mrs. Sethwala’s testimony. It was as if a sense of remorse kept the community members from making any noise. Even the reverend of her church, Aubrey Beukes, had expressed remorse on behalf of the community earlier that morning.

“Please forgive us that we allowed you to suffer in silence amidst all the media attention,” Beukes said. “We were all victims. Forgive us the times that we drove past your house showing journalists and foreign people where Jetta stayed and telling them our stories and not inviting them to make some time to listen to your pain.”

Mrs. Sethwala wasn’t there to hear Beukes’ testimony, but Glenda paraphrased his sentiments and delivered his message. The words contained angles as sharp as Beukes’ features — triangle nose, angular face, pointy shoulders. Maybe that’s why they were so hard for Mrs. Sethwala to swallow. The acknowledgement didn’t erase any of the pain of the last decade.

“Why did he not support me and give me any attention? He is my reverend. He is my minister. Why didn’t he support me during that time?” Mrs. Sethwala asked Glenda. “I feel I am already dead, and that this process will be a very long and time-consuming one. I have actually become quite used to my pain. I don’t bear any grudges against anybody, but if you lose your confidence and your faith in other people, it is very hard to restore.”

Glenda could see that Mrs. Sethwala emerged from the hearing still a broken person. For some, telling the truth at these hearings was enough to absolve past sins. For others, it was a brief respite from a slow and crushing pain. What Mrs. Sethwala faced in the aftermath of her son’s brutal death irrevocably altered what she understood about the human capacity. People could be cruel beyond measure. People could kill without guns or knives. But perhaps Glenda’s presence during that hearing let her know that people were also capable of extreme empathy, even if it did come too late.

When the hearing was done, Glenda got back into her car and started the nine-hour drive back to Cape Town. As Glenda pulled away from Upington — that same orange dust rising from her tires — she couldn’t stop thinking about Mrs. Sethwala’s voice. It haunted her. It was as if the life in every word that she spoke was stripped by her years-long pain. Her words were barren bones. She wondered what would happen to Mrs. Sethwala, how her life would change now that her truth was out there in the world. Maybe Mrs. Sethwala could never fully recover from her trauma, but she could always hold on to the fact that her story mattered and that it made a difference for people to hear it.

The road to reconciliation was not paved. It could get treacherous and winding. Formidable roadblocks were ahead. But Glenda sought out the smaller things that might impede healing. The other commissioners looked for the boulders. Glenda looked for the pebbles.

As Upington appeared smaller and smaller in her rearview mirror, Glenda became sure of her purpose on the TRC: to give a voice to the ignored, to seek truth where no one else was looking.

A Quiet Space with the Archbishop

South Africa's Table Mountain was once a guardian, the old legend goes. It was the greatest and strongest of the four guards appointed to protect each of the far corners of the earth. The guardians fought ferociously against the envious Dragon of the Sea. But he was too strong, and before the guardians succumbed to the waters, they asked the Earth Mother to turn them into mountains so they could always stand guard against evil. The greatest giant, Umlindi Wemingizimu, became Table Mountain. To this day, it continues to look over the people of South Africa.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu has his own genesis story. He says, "In the creation story, we are told that when God created the earth and all living things, he sat back and admired his handiwork. But I believe he looked at the southernmost tip of Africa, where the two great oceans meet, and said, 'Mmmm … I should do something special here.' And he took the mountains and the oceans and the plants and the animals and created a southern gateway fitting for the most vibrant, most diverse, most exciting, most wonderful continent in all the world."

The way the universe worked in Tutu's mind was often infused with a sense of wonder. That's why, even at the height of apartheid, Tutu believed that humans were inherently good. The world was filled with goodness. And when he became the chairperson of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, this mantra was his salve for the times he was reminded how cruel humans can be to each other.

The TRC was where Glenda met the Archbishop. She had only admired Tutu from a distance up until the day she went to report for duty at Bishop's Court. Glenda and the 16 other commissioners gathered at the Archbishop's residence on December 16, 1995. The members of the cohort were assigned to sit in alphabetical order around a circular table. Alex Boraine, who was appointed by President Nelson Mandela to serve as a deputy chair, was on Tutu's right. Glenda's surname placed her on Tutu's left. Although Boraine was often considered Tutu's right-hand man throughout the commission, there were times when Tutu turned first to Glenda. It made sense. After all, the Archbishop was left-handed.

Glenda and Tutu formed a special bond throughout the commission. They found comfort in their shared ancestry. Both of their mothers were from the same region and spoke Setswana. Both belonged to the same church. Both had a penchant to resort to humor when emotions got too overwhelming. They soon regarded themselves as friends rather than co-workers. While she continued to call him "The Arch" out of respect, he started calling her "Ousie", which was an endearing Setswana term meaning, "big sister" or "boss lady." Glenda could rely on him in a way she couldn't with the rest of the commissioners.

In 1998, a couple of years into the work of the commission, Glenda received a phone call that delivered news she had been waiting a very long time for.

"Glenda," the voice said. "We have a baby for you."

Her motherly instinct was something that burned in her for most of her adult life, but it had been almost undeniable in the last few years. Adoption seemed the best option to placate this yearning. As soon as she hung up, she jumped from her desk, spilled out into the hallway and burst into Tutu's office next door.

"What is it, Ousie?" Tutu said.

"I just got a call from the adoption agency," Glenda said. "They've got a baby for me. What am I going to do with a baby?"

Tutu clapped his hands together and let out his infectious laugh. He walked around his desk to embrace her. Her overwhelming jubilation reflected back to her in his eyes. He placed his hands on her shoulders and smiled.

"Just love it."

Glenda walked up to St. John's chapel at St. George's Cathedral with a 5-month-old baby in her arms. The baby was dressed in a light blue one-piece, his chubby arms and legs spilling over the fabric. Glenda knew this church well. This was the Archbishop's church, a site of refuge for so many freedom fighters and anti-apartheid rallies. For a long time, Glenda lost touch with her faith. Raised as a Baptist, Glenda came to feel that the religion was too heavenly-minded to be of any earthly purpose. It discouraged worldly thinking. The glory was in the afterlife, not this one. In light of apartheid, this didn't give her the comfort she was seeking. When the Anglican Church donated the Cowley House to the Trauma Centre in 1985, Glenda found a faith that could sustain her. A part of her soul ignited. Her faith would carry her through so many trials.

In the chapel, Tutu was waiting for them. He had on an ornate gold miter and a beige floor-length cape covered in gold embellishments. He took the baby from Glenda's arms. He had two very important jobs that day: a baptism and a christening.

The baby was cradled in Tutu's right arm over a stone fount. Tutu dipped a ladle into the water and slowly poured it over the baby's forehead. The baby did not cry or fuss. It cooed contently and waved its arms and legs. Glenda was beaming, and the sunlight coming through the chapel's stained-glass windows made the room shine with bursting colors. The room could not be filled with any more light or love.

"What is the name you have chosen for this child?" Tutu asked Glenda.

It didn't take long for Glenda to decide what she would call her son. The baby had been abandoned by his mother and was so unwanted that she hadn't even give him a name. The nurse at the maternity hospital insisted on giving him something that was unsentimental and matter-of-fact.

"Just name him, 'Goodenough'," said the nurse.

But the baby wasn't good enough; he was perfect. Glenda wanted to be reminded of that every day. So on the day that marked the beginning of his new life, the baby was also given a new name. Glenda let a short silence resonate before answering the Archbishop. "His name is Grant Sipho Wildschut." It was a fitting name, one that meant "gift."

"Grant Sipho Wildschut," Tutu said. "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Tutu kissed Grant on his still-wet forehead and handed him over to Glenda. Her loved ones assembled around the fount and each lit a candle for Grant, promising to keep the flame of faith burning in him. Everybody who mattered was there at the church — all of Glenda's family and many of her commissioner colleagues. There was also Wilhelm Verwoerd, grandson of the architect of apartheid. Verwoerd denounced his grandfather's and father's politics long ago. He joined the African National Congress and was a researcher at the TRC. He had become a close friend and strong ally of Glenda. And then there was Father Michael Lapsley, who lost his hands and part of his sight when a letter bomb addressed to him exploded years earlier. Glenda had asked him to be Grant's godfather.

As Lapsley posed for a picture with the baby, tears pooled in the corners of Glenda's eyes. She would keep that photo for a long time. She would know the true significance of her happy baby resting between the hook prosthetics that took the place of Father Lapsley's hands. She would see the ineffable beauty that emerged from the juxtaposition of woundedness and redemption. Godson and godparent had both been hurt and discarded. And yet, here they were, in St. George's Cathedral, proving that there was life after tragedy.

Shortly after Grant's baptism and christening, the TRC began to wrap up its victim and special sectoral hearings. By now, Glenda had her own way of mentally preparing for the emotionally exhaustive sessions. Like Tutu, Glenda was prone to unexpected waves of grief. One day, she could hear about violent and relentless torturing sessions and manage to keep a stone face throughout it all. On another day, she could hear a mother lamenting the loss of her child and feel absolutely destroyed.

The way to absorb all the horrific stories was to find a quiet mental space. Glenda had to rid her mind of any previous baggage and go into every hearing with a

blank emotional slate. She had to give herself enough time and room to pray. This approach wasn't just self-preservation. It was a way to lead victims out of their trauma. Glenda wanted to create a safe, quiet space and then invite others to join her there. This was something she never had to do with the Archbishop. They had similar sensibilities. They approached matters in a calm and clear-minded way. Both of them let their humanity guide them. Oftentimes, when she arrived in her quiet space before those hearings, she found that Tutu was already there.

Things Seen and Unseen

Glenda believed she was looking into the face of evil. In this incarnation, evil had a graying beard that gave his face a jagged outline. His nostrils always seemed flared, his upper lip curled in the same way an alert guard dog would anticipate an intruder. His hair was unruly: gray dreadlocks sprouted from his scalp like weeds in an open field. Then, there was that unmistakable mole on the tail of his right eyebrow. Foday Sankoh, in a royal blue kaftan, was everything people said about him: a savage, a madman, a ruthless dictator consumed by the quest for power. When Glenda sat across from him — only a desk separating them — in a suffocating room in his dingy-white, two-story home that doubled as his headquarters, it wasn't fear that Glenda was fighting. It was revulsion.

Glenda and her World Council of Churches (WCC) colleague Kjetil Aano met with the rebel group (Revolutionary United Front, or RUF) leader because the people of Sierra Leone had compelled them to. Originally, Glenda was supposed to be in Freetown only to lead a WCC delegation and assist the country in applying the conditions of the recently signed Lome Peace Accord. Endorsed by both Sankoh and President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, the agreement was the first step in mitigating a civil war that had gripped the country for the past 10 years. Even though it had been about four months since the accord was signed, rebels — specifically child soldiers — were still behind rebel lines. The locals asked Glenda to meet with Sankoh. Maybe she could convince him to release the child soldiers.

She arrived at Sankoh's headquarters with two other WCC staff members. But when Melaku Kifle, a WCC colleague from Ethiopia, learned how long Sankoh would keep them waiting, he went on ahead to Geneva, Switzerland for the delegation debriefing. The wait wouldn't deter Glenda. She promised she would meet with Sankoh, so she and Aano waited it out.

In total, Glenda was there for 48 hours. She didn't dare eat or drink. She was too terrified to fall asleep. *Who knows what his men are capable of?* she thought to herself. Sitting in his house, she couldn't stop herself from thinking about all the atrocities Sankoh had inflicted — massive amputation of innocent civilians, systematic rape of women and young girls, the employment of young boys as soldiers in the RUF. She thought of her own son, Grant, and imagined how the boys of Sankoh's army were once that innocent.

Grant was the light of Glenda's life. Grant came into Glenda's life at almost the very moment she gave up the idea of being a mom. The baby, rejected by his mother and left at an orphanage, was exactly what Glenda had been waiting so long for. He had just turned 2, and she had a teary-eyed conversation with him just before coming to meet Sankoh. She couldn't wait to get back to South Africa, to scoop him up and kiss him and take in his still-there baby smell. But first, Sankoh.

When the dictator finally came out, he looked like he hadn't slept for weeks. His derangement was now taking on physical manifestations.

"I know you," Sankoh told Glenda. She didn't know if this was intended to be a threat. Flashes of children with arms stopping just below the elbow, small boys with AK-47s draped around their necks. The revulsion burned like a hot coal at the bottom of her stomach. *I am talking to a human being. I am talking to a human being,* she kept reminding herself. Making demands was no way to deal with a man like Sankoh. She recognized he was not a mentally stable man. She needed to appeal to his EQ, his emotional quotient.

"I know you are a father and that you have children of your own," Glenda said. "And I know that the children that you have in your organization, you also regard as your children. And as a father, I know you want the best for your children. And one of the things that you'd want for your children is that they have access to healthcare."

The dictator only listened. He brought his left hand to his mouth and pondered.

"We are here on behalf of many people who also have the interest of children at heart to request that. This can be your choice that either an international organization can go meet with the children and give them the care they need or that they are released into Freetown."

No demands or even a plea. She gave him a choice. Along with Aano, she politely stood up and left. Sankoh remained silent, and Glenda held her breath all the way to the door. She was surprised and relieved at how fast the interaction was. A car waited for Glenda and her colleague outside of Sankoh's headquarters. Finally, she could let her thoughts drift back to South Africa and Grant. All that was left was the debriefing in Geneva.

Glenda almost didn't make it out of Freetown. Sankoh released the child soldiers shortly after Glenda's meeting with him, but then the international presence in Sierra Leone became nervous. All commercial flights were cancelled. There was no way to leave. After a precarious ride on an old Soviet helicopter from Freetown to Conakry in neighboring Guinea, Glenda was safely on her way to Geneva.

There was a layover in Brussels, Belgium. All she could think about as she stepped off the plane was getting something to eat. Glenda, having inherited diabetes from her father's side of the family, had to be vigilant about her blood sugar. She ducked into an airport restaurant. As she grabbed breakfast items to place on her tray, she opened her phone. Fifteen voicemails. She didn't listen to any of them. She wedged the phone between her shoulder and ear. "*Oh, my God, who's died?"* she thought as the phone rang.

"Glen, where are you? Are you sitting? Is someone with you?"

"What's the matter, Mom? Is it Aunt Sandy?"

"No, my girl. It's Grant."

"What, Mom? What are you saying? I can't hear you very well."

"It's Grant, my girl. There has been a horrible accident."

The tray hit the ground. Her airport surroundings blurred together. Nothing was clear. All of a sudden she was underwater. Things moved in slow motion. Is this how Grant felt?

Her colleague ran over after he heard the commotion.

"What is it, Glenda? What's wrong?"

Glenda looked at him in a confused way. She saw black holes where his eyes were supposed to be.

"My son has fallen into the pool," she said. "I need to call the pediatrician."

Glenda snapped back to real-time. She had no choice. She called the pediatrician, Dr. Hugo. The news was what she expected: Grant was on life support. He had yet to regain consciousness.

"Glenda, it's very grave," Dr. Hugo said. "You need to come home now."

Her colleague made arrangements for Glenda's flight to arrive in Cape Town instead of Geneva. The flight would take half a day. She was scared for all the time the flight afforded her to think.

On the plane, she heard the care-free laughter and casual chit-chat of the tourists around her. They were probably going to enjoy the summer weather and the beautiful stretches of beach. She wondered how it was possible that they all were heading to the same place.

"*Why?*" was the question that refused to leave her head. Soon, the question turned into a demand. *Why was this happening*? She very well could have died in the the heart of Sankoh's headquarters. Or in the Freetown helicopter, whose weak battery caused the flight to be delayed for hours. Why would God spare her just for this devastation? She remembered the moment 21 months prior when the social worker called to tell her that a perfect baby was waiting for her. She tried to remember the good. She started to sing this chorus:

God is good to me

God is good to me

He holds my hand

He helps me stand

God is good to me

The words lulled her into a merciful sleep.

At the Cape Town airport, Glenda's younger brother, Kevin, was there to take her to the hospital. Glenda held onto all the hope she could muster.

In the Intensive Care Unit, ventilators and monitors surrounded Grant's bed. He was intubated. Tubes connected him to machines that helped him breathe. But breath was not life. She had the visual affirmation of what she dreaded as she flew over oceans to reach Grant. Water kept them apart. Water took him away. She gently opened his eye. The exposed orb was empty. She knew he was gone.

Six months after Grant's death, Luke was delivered to her. He was the only healthy baby in the AIDS orphanage where he had been abandoned. His Xhosa name meant "light," and he guided her out of the darkness of Grant's death. Glenda has seen evil, things she wishes she could forget. But she has also seen goodness on a transformative level, goodness that has reminded her that no matter how destructive the act of depravity, it is possible for beauty to also exist.

November 19, 1997 was judgment day for former Vlakplaas operative Thapelo Mbelo, and Glenda was there to witness his hearing. A black officer involved in the murders of seven young freedom fighters known as the Gugulethu Seven, Mbelo applied for amnesty. He was committed to telling the truth, contradicting many statements by his commanding Afrikaner officer Rian Bellingan.

Bellingan insisted the deaths occurred as a result of the police officers' acts of self-defense. The families of those seven young men — Mandla Simon Mxinwa, Zanisile Zenith Mjobo, Zola Alfred Swelani, Godfrey Jabulani Miya, Christopher Piet, Themba Mlifi and Zabonke John Konile — believed their sons and brothers were ambushed and executed. Bellingan's story was further compromised by the fact that a camera crew was there in the immediate aftermath of the shooting. He said the intention of the video was to illustrate Cape Town's new success in fighting terrorism. But if it

wasn't a planned ambush, the victims' lawyer posed, then why would a video crew be on standby for such a routine event?

Nearly six years after the killings and five after the amnesty hearing, both Bellingan and Mbelo would eventually be granted amnesty. But Glenda could see that amnesty wasn't really what Mbelo wanted. He wanted a release from his guilt. After the TRC hearing was over, he gathered the family members of the the Gugulethu Seven in a semicircle in an empty hearing hall. Mbelo placed a chair in the middle and faced the ones who had suffered most from his actions.

"As I am asking for forgiveness, some will forgive me, others will not," Mbelo said. "I know that I will die with a guilty conscience for I have done a terrible thing. I am asking for the parents of those sons, who were there on that day, I ask them for forgiveness from the bottom of my heart."

Some initially rejected his apology.

"You said you were used by the system and you were saving your own life. We can't forgive you," said Eunice Mia, sister of one of the victims. "This was my only brother whom you sold out. We can't forgive you. You have more than one story."

Just as Eunice finished her statement, Christopher's mother spoke up.

"I understand that Thapelo means, 'prayer'," she said. Mbelo stayed quiet. "I hope you live up to your name. I understand that you are the same age as Christopher. I forgive you although I know this will not bring my child back from the grave. It will serve no purpose not to forgive you. As the Bible says, we should forgive those who sin against us."

With those words, a veil of bitterness lifted. The other family members nodded and uttered sounds of approval. Mbelo stood up and offered his hand. Christopher's mother took it, and then wrapped her arms around the man who helped kill her son.

Glenda, sitting just outside of the semicircle, wondered if she was witnessing something too intimate to take part in. In fact, she initially resisted having a documentary film crew come in to record the encounter. But, in the end, she was grateful this revelation was preserved on tape because she had never seen anything more beautiful: the moment a killer and the bereaved left in his wake could embrace and all become human again.

When Glenda looks back on her time with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, she remembers extreme brutality and exquisite beauty. It's paradoxical how these two things can simultaneously exist. It's tempting to say that one cannot exist without the other, but what might be more accurate is that one exists *despite* the other.

Over the years, Glenda has shed many tears from both sadness and happiness, but she's more prone to watery eyes these days. The persistent glimmer in her eyes is not a sign that she is getting weepy, though. Rather, it's a symptom of her tender eyes. Diabetes has claimed the vision in her right eye. She's doing all she can to keep the same fate from happening to her left.

Glenda has seen so much in her life, things that might have dulled her humanity, inured her in an irreparable way. But if all the evil that has transpired before her eyes has not blinded her from beauty, not even diabetes can. Blindness is something Glenda refuses to accept.

Building a Bridge

Glenda's destination was only 20 minutes away from her house. But the further she drove, the more it felt like she was driving back in time. The frantic pace of Cape Town turned into a trickle. There was no sign that the intangibles that made Cape Town a world-class, bustling metropolis had ever found its way to Dunoon. As Glenda drove north on the N7 road, the pavement sidewalk slowly deferred to arid dirt roads. In one part of the informal settlement, white tents were erected side-by-side to cater to the township's growing displaced population. Dunoon's poverty kept it from enjoying any modern-day technological luxuries, running water being one of them. In many ways, the people there felt like political prisoners on Robben Island during apartheid — conditions were dire and there was not much hope of escaping.

Glenda and Pat Mayers, a colleague whom Glenda met when she was a nurse, were part of a mediation team whose goal was to talk to counselors and township elders about the recent xenophobic attacks. Weeks earlier, on May 22, 2008, shops owned by foreigners were damaged and looted. Shacks were destroyed. A mob beat a foreigner to death with stones and bottles. This forced 500 foreigners in Dunoon to flee to the neighboring Milnerton police station for refuge. Foreigners had become a convenient scapegoat for South Africans struggling to find jobs and proper housing. Lack of resources and job shortages made certain situations rife for combustion. Tiny explosions were happening not just in Dunoon, but all over the country. That was the scary thing; nobody knew when the next rupture would happen.

As Glenda and Pat pulled into town, they saw a group of men morph into a mob. Glenda pulled over. Neither women said a word but rushed to see what was going on. Four women with shwe shwe bags stacked on their heads were the cause for the commotion. All their belongings were in those bags — clothes, cooking ware, blankets. They wanted to get to the Milnerton police station. They no longer felt safe in Dunoon because their foreign husbands made them targets.

Four stacks managed to bounce above the crowd despite the men grabbing at the women's arms. The men yelled. They cursed. They demanded answers.

"Why would you betray us? Why would you marry those foreigners?" one man shouted. "They're going to take advantage of you. They just want citizenship."

The women didn't answer, and this fueled the anger and resentment that at one point permeated throughout the township and was now concentrated on this very street. Things were about to explode.

The bouncing stacks of bags helped Glenda and Pat spot the women. They forced their way through the enraged crowd, which was about 50 or 60 men, and formed a barricade around the women.

"People, let these women pass. It is their right," Glenda said.

“These women are traitors. They’re letting in the foreigners who take our jobs and our money. Why should we let them pass?”

One question opened the door for the next. Questions came like rapid fire from all directions. Glenda and Pat were completely surrounded. It seemed as though the men just needed to hear their grievances manifest into words, let their frustration be acknowledged and their voices be heard. They were suffering, and the only way they knew how to deal with it was violence. Someone needed to pay. Glenda and Pat absorbed some of their anger, bringing down the temperature of the mob. Meanwhile, the four women were able to slip away.

This wasn’t the first time Glenda put herself in the middle of a heated exchange. Once, while she was on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission years before, she kept an Afrikaner farmer from beating a young black man with a *sjambok.* She was walking to the hair salon in Kimberley, a town about halfway between Cape Town and Johannesburg. She saw the farmer across the street threaten the young man with the sjambok. This was after apartheid. TRC hearings were taking place and yet, here was this man carrying out one of the most brutal aspects of the apartheid government. A sjambok whip across the back could cause a snake-like scar to rise up from the flesh. Glenda found herself inserted between the two men, holding her arm up before the sjambok came down.

“What did this young man do to deserve this?” Glenda asked the farmer as she stared into his face.

“What must I do?” the farmer said. “He was leaning on my car.”

In both instances — the women in Dunoon and the young man in Kimberley — Glenda didn’t remember cognitively assessing the situation. She only remembered when she quelled the moment of near eruption. Whenever she sensed an injustice, she felt a deep urge to step in, a beating impulse that made her forget her own risks. It was as if every molecule in her body screamed, “You must do something!”

Glenda didn’t work on the mediation team in Dunoon for long. While she was there, she and Pat met with the township’s displaced on a case-by-case basis. They evaluated what those vulnerable people needed and how they could be resettled back in Dunoon. By the time Glenda and Pat left, the township was relatively stable. The women had helped the township avert a potential crisis. But throughout her time in the slum, Glenda kept wondering to herself, *Is our past happening again?*

On the surface, it seemed the root causes of apartheid and the xenophobic attacks were different. One was political. The other was economical. But a closer look revealed the legacy of apartheid and the xenophobic attacks were actually linked to the same bitter and resentful feelings. Social and economic inequalities, lack of access to

opportunities, denial of human rights — all of these violations contributed to both types of upheaval.

Hatred festered among various groups of the country's population. Attacks occurred unpredictably. People were being killed. South Africa was supposed to be beyond apartheid. The country was supposed to have learned its lesson; the people should have known by now how intolerance and a lack of empathy could lead to violence. How was it possible that the people of South Africa were going through this again? The xenophobic attacks hung like an ominous dark cloud over South Africa's new "rainbow" society, one that was supposed to be proud of its diversity.

More attacks cropped up in 2008. Around the time Glenda was in Dunoon, an outburst of violence occurred in the township of Alexandria, which spilled into other parts of the Gauteng Province. It only took two weeks for the violence to jump to other urban areas around South Africa, primarily in Durban, Cape Town and Limpopo Province.

One stark and dangerous distinction was that during apartheid, there was a clear enemy. Everybody knew who they were fighting against. Everybody knew what they were fighting for. But the line between the oppressors and the oppressed blurred when it came to the xenophobic attacks. Sometimes, the bad guys were the Malawians or the Zimbabweans. Or the Somalis or the Ethiopians or Bangladeshis. Other times, the bad guys were more familiar: they were other South Africans.

On either side of Vanguard Drive lies Bonteheuwel, the coloured township where Glenda's grandfather lived until his death, and Langa, a township designated for black South Africans. These two townships sprang from the same acrimonious seed — to give authorities maximum surveillance and control of its residence. The people in Bonteheuwel and Langa endured brutal discrimination. Apartheid kept them both down, though not equally. Bitterness and resentment blew through these two towns like the illustrious Cape Doctor winds. In the hierarchy of apartheid, coloureds were considered above blacks. Coloureds received slightly more funding from the government, better schools and healthcare. The contrast could be seen in the majority of houses that lined the overcrowded streets: established brick and mortar houses for Bonteheuwel and matchbox houses for Langa.

Even after apartheid had crumbled, the legacy of contention continued between the two townships. The people living there took over their oppressor's job and segregated themselves. It was a way of life that had become too entrenched in their psyches. But both communities were experiencing similar obstacles: lack of city resources, shortage of jobs and gang violence.

Glenda, who worked with the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation at the time, saw the similarities between Bonteheuwel and Langa. With the help of IJR, Glenda

wanted to show how they could work together to help solve the issues they were facing. As a part of the Community Healing Project, IJR planned events that encouraged community cohesiveness. Glenda facilitated joint meetings and discussed issues related to reconciliation and healing post-apartheid.

"We have to come together as BonteLanga," said a young man at one of the meetings. He was about 18. Glenda knew that if these two townships were to forge a new relationship, it would have to be initiated and powered by the youth. The name had staying power, and when the two townships revealed municipal plans to build a pedestrian bridge over Vanguard Drive, the hybrid name found a home.

Today, the BonteLanga Bridge is not too much to look out. Its banality resonates in its cement steps and steel railings. It is not particularly tall or wide, and it spans just 15 meters of road. Yet the significance of the bridge outweighs its physical dimensions. Finally, after generations and generations of separation, there is a way to connect the people of Bonteheuwel and Langa.

Glenda knows reconciliation is not something one can demand. It takes time and nurturing. It is slow, but with enough care and awareness, it can be lasting. Reconciliation is not just about forcing two sides to lament on past wrongs, but also encouraging those sides to walk forward together. The first step to making amends doesn't have to be grand or ceremonial. As Glenda has seen time and time again, sometimes, the first step to reconciliation is building a bridge.

A CONVERSATION WITH GLENDA WILDSCHUT

The following is an edited transcript of select interviews conducted by Maggie Thach Morshed between September 18 and November 20, 2015.

Table Mountain plays a role throughout your life and this narrative. Can you talk about the importance of this landmark for you?

I have a very special relationship with this huge, gentle mountain. It spreads across the city and you have the sense that you're being held. It's a very feminine presence. Devil's Peak is a part of Table Mountain. I remember as a little girl I could see Devil's Peak from my classroom. If I couldn't solve a problem or had a difficult time, I would look at the mountain to help me solve the problem. One day when I was in the second or third grade, we had a spelling test. We had to spell the word, "answer," and I couldn't spell it. I looked at the mountain and I said, "Mountain, help me!" And I heard a feminine voice tell me, "A-N-S-W-E-R." It wasn't loud, just there it was. Always, I either look to it or go to it. I have a very strong feeling for the mountain as much as I have for the sea.

Your paternal grandfather was coloured. Your maternal grandfather and grandmother were English and a South African native, respectively. During apartheid, there was such an emphasis on racial classification. How did these classifications shape your identity?

Identity is always an ongoing and evolving issue. It gets either sharpened or reignited, the doubts and so on, through certain events. I always felt there was something bigger that I could belong to. I'm of this country, but not part of it.

Growing up as a coloured, you're not white enough and you're not black enough. And even amongst my cousins, who took on the African black identity, they speak Setswana. They spoke Setswana to each other and when we would visit them up north, we couldn't really always communicate with them because they were speaking an African language that my mother did not teach us or speak to us for many reasons. And so, we really didn't connect.

What is one moment that stands out to you as a time when you distinctly remember the division between whites and coloureds/blacks?

At the University of the Western Cape, we had a psychology lecturer. He was a huge white man. If you can imagine this big body with a little head. On the first day, he told us in Afrikaans, "There are 200 of you in this hall and all of you will fail. I'm telling you that I regard '0' also as a mark. I will not hesitate to give you '0'. Turn to the left. Turn to the right. Your colleague on the left and your colleague on the right will not be in this class at the end of the year." It sounds very scary in Afrikaans. That was our introduction to higher education. You must remember that we were at high school with coloureds. We came from such a nurturing environment in high school. Our principal took a personal interest in each one of us. Our principal used to drive in the early hours of the morning

when we were writing our final exams in the last year of school and just check on us. Our teachers were coloureds. We had people who said education is important. They encouraged us to learn. From this environment, we went to this hostile environment where the objective was not to make us succeed. The objective was to make us fail, and it all linked into this ideology that a black person has a lesser brain, a smaller brain, and therefore, they thought, "Why should we worry about educating these people." It was a charade. It was to produce labor.

I understand faith is a big part of your activism. Can you tell me about the faith you grew up in and the faith that you chose to follow later on during your activism?

My faith helped me make meaning of my existence here in this world. It's an existential thing. I didn't think so much that one day God would miraculously come and liberate me, but God would give me the means to liberate myself. And it was during that time when I was at university and, of course, after I went to college that I actually left the church I grew up in because the Baptist church was very conservative. They didn't preach a social gospel. They did not talk about the evils that were around us. They were totally apolitical, not even socially conscious. It was just about your relationship with God.

Therefore, for quite a few years, I didn't go to church, but that didn't mean that I wasn't spiritual. I left the Baptist church and always wanted to find a special home and that's when I went to the Anglican church. There I found the extremely beautiful music and through my singing in the choirs, I decided to become an Anglican. The Anglican church at the time was outrightly against the apartheid rules. And at the main cathedral [in Cape Town], there was a sign that said, "Everyone is welcome here."

Many people who were against apartheid joined the liberation movement in exile. What were some of the factors that kept you in South Africa?

The liberation movement was banned after 1960 and [Nelson] Mandela was imprisoned. Lots of people went into exile. There were people who encouraged me to go into exile, too. But I made a very conscious decision not to go into exile. I thought I should stay home and use my training and skills here at home. My choice was to support people who were either underground or people who were much more actively involved in the arms struggle. In the 1980s, we started the Trauma Centre and worked with detainees, supporting them and their families, learning as much as we could about the torture techniques that were being used by the police.

In all liberation struggles, there is a sense of admiration for people who go into exile because they sacrifice everything and are totally committed to the struggle. I did not want to do that. Wherever I was, I never wanted the glory. I didn't feel like I needed to be a hero or a heroine. I never sought glory. I just thought I needed to do the things I could do best. So to be a counselor and a health worker — that for me was a political act, a political commitment.

I understand that you have two nursing specialties: midwifery and psychiatry. What made you go from one concentration to the other?

I started in midwifery first. I worked in this neonatal ward and there were these new babies who were born way before their time. And in this unit, I noticed how the mothers longed to hold their babies, but they couldn't because they were too small. So they would stand at the incubator and try to touch the baby. So what I did was I started getting all the mothers together, and we would sit in the little room there, and I got them to talk about their preemies. It was something I did spontaneously. I didn't know what I was doing; I was just going off instinct. We started this little support group, and then I realized that all of these mothers were grieving the loss of a healthy child. They were grieving the loss of a well baby. That sparked my interest in knowing a bit more. I got very interested in mental health nursing.

Can you share some of your feelings about losing part of your eyesight?

I'm diabetic and there has been a retinal detachment. This [left] eye is OK, but it might not be for a long time. But this [right] eye, I'm completely blind. Some days, it's worse than others. I can't really see well, but it's also about keeping your spiritual eye and appreciating your sight, appreciating that you can see the beauty. Maybe it's just half a vision, but at least I can see. I can see it. It many ways, it's when I appreciate [my son] Luke the most, when he comes in and walks with me. When he realizes I'm struggling to see, he'll grab my arm and say, "Step, Mom."

When you were on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, your job was to find the truth. What role does trauma play in shaping truth? What were your experiences with people remembering the same events differently?

I've thought about this issue around memory quite a bit because even in the testimonies, the stories differ from individual to individual. There is some academic thinking around memory and what we call truth. There's a very interesting activity in facilitation for hearing different stories. It's actually putting a symbol that looks like a "W" from one side. So one person will say it's a "W". Another person says it's an "M". Another person could call it a "Z". It depends on your perspective. There are times when the incident is so traumatic that you only remember bits of it. Some person might say, "I can remember intensely the smell of the blood." Or, "I can remember the smell of a burnt body." Or another person might be like, "I remember the food burning in the kitchen while cooking." And that smell triggers off a memory of an event. So memory is very, very interesting. And some people have absolutely no memory of the event. There are forensic facts. There's a person truth. There's a social truth. There's a collective truth. It's the same event, but it comes from a different place.

During some of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings, you witnessed people who had lost faith in humanity. Do you think that humanity could ever be restored?

Oh, yes, I believe that all the time, no matter how scarred people are. It's not an easy process. It's a long journey and people move in and out of that process. In reconciliation, it's often really hard. The hardest work is done by the victim. I believe that for the perpetrator, there's a lot of work to be done on themselves. There's a lot of work to be done between the victim and the perpetrator. But I think that the hard work is done by the victim. Because that victim has to transcend being a victim to being a survivor and not stay in victim-mode. To be a victor, not a victim — that is very hard work.

Part of the hard work is to change the nature of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. Because in that victim-perpetrator relationship, you will always be the victim. So the victim has to change that dynamic. You have to take back the power. In the process of "forgiving" the perpetrator, you are releasing yourself from that relationship with the perpetrator. So you don't have that relationship anymore. Forgiveness is often liberation for the victim, not so much for the sake of the perpetrator.

I always say that the line between good and evil in us as human beings is a thin, delicate line. We have both the capacity to love deeply, but we also, at the same time, have the capacity to be desperately evil. And it takes a good person to be silent for evil to prevail.

Starting in 1996, when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings started, some people wanted more than reconciliation. They wanted retribution. What are your thoughts on truth being more healing than retribution or the other way around?

Look, I always say that these things are not ends in themselves. It's always a process. Truth contributes to this. You cannot have a memorial or a remembrance or forgiveness without the truth. Healing cannot take place if you don't know what happened. Healing is a process. It's like when you have a wound. The immediate treatment is a band-aid or an antiseptic. But it's a process. For me, it's not like [the TRC] was the panacea for all evil. It's just a contribution. And maybe a bigger contribution than any other process.

Some people believe that there cannot be peace or reconciliation without justice. I don't believe in that because how much justice? A bagful? An ocean full? How much before you have peace? These things are so intertwined. Whether that be retributive or restorative, these things all contribute toward peace and they work together. Nelson Mandela was very much for unity and reconciliation. There was an anthem that the Liberation sang. They combined this with the translated Afrikaans stanzas. So our national anthem is in four languages: English, Afrikaans, Sotho and Zulu. Of course, not all of the languages could be in there because we have 11 languages. But it was a symbol of the nation coming together.

You have worked with prisoners at Robben Island. It would be tempting to think that all the stories you have from that time are ones of sadness and anger. Are there any stories of happiness or hope?

There was this young man at Robben Island. His name was Jabu, which is short for Jabulani, which means “happy.” I worked with his girlfriend on the mainland. She lived in Johannesburg, but she came to Cape Town to visit him a lot. They decided as soon as he comes out, they would get married. So they got engaged while he was still in prison. When he came out, he then said to me, “We’re going to get married two days from now.”

I organized, within a day, a wedding for the two of them. I had just got a new car — a little white Nissan Sentra — and that was their wedding car. My sister cooks very well and she cooked for the wedding. I had a friend who lived nearby who was a photographer, and he took the most beautiful pictures of the wedding. The guy who was the director of The Trauma Centre, he was a part of it. I had a special friend who was a minister and he married them. It was just my family and me there, and it was at my house. We had a lovely little wedding ceremony.

Many years after apartheid was over, some townships continued to hold old stereotypes. The Bonteheuwel township was for coloureds while the Langa township was for blacks. I understand both communities harbored resentment for each other. What was the significance of the BonteLanga Bridge?

There were these interethnic and interracial prejudices stereotypes. Apartheid fostered that. There were gradations of privilege. And blacks were always the bottom of the pile. Of course, there was resentment and rage and anger against the coloured community. And the coloured community has their prejudices against blacks. [With the BonteLanga Bridge], you can have the choice to use the bridge or not. There’s nothing forced, but the possibility is there. And that’s what my work has been all my life.

It’s connecting with people, ensuring that people are linked and that they understand the others and empathize with the struggles and fears and prejudices of whatever the other side has because, ultimately, that is the road to reconciliation.

BIOGRAPHY OF A PEACE WRITER —

MAGGIE THACH MORSHED

Maggie Thach Morshed is a former sports journalist whose byline has appeared in T*he San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Fresno Bee*, *The Sacramento Bee* and other news outlets across the country. As a high school and college sports reporter at *The Salt Lake Tribune*, the largest newspaper in Utah, she became an award-winning journalist. Since leaving the newspaper industry, she has received a master's in fine arts from the University of California at Riverside in creative nonfiction and become a teacher at Hamilton College Consulting, where she teaches writing and literature. She is currently at work on a memoir about teaching English in South Korea. Much of her writing revolves around the ideas of immigration, assimilation and identity.

JOAN B. KROC INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE
at the University of San Diego's Kroc School of Peace Studies

The mission of the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice (IPJ), based at the University of San Diego's Kroc School of Peace Studies, is to foster peace, cultivate justice and create a safer world. The IPJ was established in 2000 through a generous gift from the late Joan B. Kroc to the university to create an institute for the study and practice of peace and justice.

The institute strives, in Joan B. Kroc's words, to not only talk about peace, but also make peace. In its peacebuilding initiatives in places like Nepal and Kenya, the IPJ works with local partners to help strengthen their efforts to consolidate peace with justice in the communities in which they live. In addition to the Women PeaceMakers Program, the institute is home to the Joan B. Kroc Distinguished Lecture Series and WorldLink Program, and produces several publications in the fields of peace and justice.

ENDNOTES

[i] A version of this paragraph first appeared in the article "'Women Cannot Cry Anymore': Global Voices Transforming Violent Conflict," by Emiko Noma in *Critical Half*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (2007). Copyright 2007 Women for Women International.