

TAXI WARS

by

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Earlier revisions

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Sept. 14, 2009

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BLACK SCREEN: JOHANNESBURG - THIS MORNING

EXT. JOBURG STREET - DAY

The driver, MANELISI, 30's, his pockmarked face with sparse teeth placement, honks non-stop.

The horn is two naked wires sparking together. The steering wheel is missing. Manelisi navigates the kombi by using two wrenches to steer.

The taxi is almost full of passengers squeezed in like sardines in a can. Each passenger stares straight ahead, each in their own world.

A well-dressed woman with shopping bags appears. The conductor makes a circling sign with his hand. The woman nods in response. The kombi stops and waits.

The other passengers are getting restless, waiting.

WOMEN (HEAVY SET MAMMA)
Nix driver, we're full. I'm late.

MANELISI
Fatsuck, we're not full. I'm not moving until we are full. So shut it.

All resistance ends. The woman with the shopping bags arrives and looks for a seat. The other passengers move over to reveal the only seat available: a plank of wood fitted between two other seats. Suddenly, a brand new sparking, blue taxi pulls up behind the old red taxi. The blue kombi has an available seat next to the driver. The woman with the shopping bags beelines for the blue taxi and jumps in.

MANELISI (CONT'D)
Nx! Asshole.

The blue taxi screeches off down the street. The old, red taxi takes off after it. At high speed, the two taxis jockey for position, without regard for safety.

The red taxi stops to pick up people but the waiting passengers refuse, waiting for the newer blue taxi.

Manelisi gets out of the red taxi and walks over to the blue taxi. It's driver is a middle-aged man with a friendly face, JABULANI MKHIZE.

JABULANI
Manelisi, it's you. Ha, you looking for change? I only have -

Manelisi holds up a pistol and shoots Jabulani through the head. Blood splatters the window as bits of brain cover the woman next to him. Jabulani's body slumps over

the steering wheel and his dead foot jams down on the accelerator.

Full acceleration. The blue kombi, windows splattered with blood, speeds down the street driven by a dead man. Two passengers fling themselves out of the moving taxi as the kombi crashes through an ivy covered, chain link fence. Suddenly, we are on a golf course. Golfers scatter to avoid being killed. A lady golfer doesn't clear in time, becoming another casualty. The kombi comes to rest in a strange tableau, five feet from the 16th hole flag on a tranquil golf course. Silence.

EXT. MINISTRY OF SAFETY AND SECURITY - DAY

A gun salute goes off. Armed soldiers in full livery stand on either side of a dais where ERIC MABOTE, early 50', black, suave and erudite, stands at a podium.

MABOTE

Thank you all for being here. We have victories to celebrate and we are here to thank those responsible. Our honoree today is a top policeman dedicated to keeping the peace in our city.

On the stage, JOSEPH MAHOLA, black, 42, sits on a chair with his wife, MMABATHO, black, 42. Mmabatho beams at her husband.

In the front row of the audience sits RONNIE VAN DER RUIT, white, 47, with his Afrikaans wife, MAGRIETA, white, 45. Magrieta laughs derisively.

MAGRIETA

(Whispering)

Oh, how exciting. More blacks patting each other on the back. Which one is this one?

RONNIE

(Whispering back)

Eric Mabote. Minister of Transport.

MAGRIETA

Couldn't find the minister of garbage cans?

MABOTE

We all know taxi violence is prevalent in our beloved Johannesburg. 40 000 mini-bus taxis are used daily by a million people in Johannesburg. That is a success story. The taxis make over half a billion dollars per year.

MAGRIETA
 (Still whispering)
 All un-taxed...unlike your salary.

Ronnie completely ignores her.

MABOTE
 Our honoree stepped up, leading a raid on
 an entire gang of violent criminals in
 Doomfontein who used taxis to transport
 stolen goods and drugs. He was shot in
 the process.

RONNIE
 (Whispering)
 In the arm.

MAGRIETA
 This whole thing looks like a children's
 television show.

MABOTE
 Joseph Mahola, I award you with a medal
 of honor for valor in the line of duty.
 Our country is safer with one less drug
 and crime cartel on our streets.

Joseph gets up to receive his award to great applause.
 The audience is made up of mostly black policemen. There
 is a minority of white policemen who clap politely.
 Mabote clasps Joseph's hands, gives him a wink. The wink
 seems to momentarily startle Joseph.

Ronnie looks over a group of black policemen staring at
 him, their faces full of loathing. Ronnie returns their
 stares, never breaking once. He stares each of these
 cops down. He only breaks when his phone buzzes with a
 text. Ronnie read the text, leaving him with a "what the
 fuck?" look on his face. Ronnie gets up to leave.

RONNIE
 (Whispering to his wife)
 I've got to go.

MAGRIETA
 Ronnie Van der Ruit, you are not leaving
 me here in this disaster.

Margarita follows Ronnie out.

On stage, the same thing happens with a text on Joseph's
 phone. He seems to have the same "what the fuck?" on his
 face. Joseph subtly starts to get up and leave the stage.
 His wife, Mmabatho, doesn't let go of his hand.

MMABATHO
(Sotto voce)
Where are you going?

JOSEPH
Work.

MMABATHO
They are honoring you.

JOSEPH
Because I work. It'll be fine.

Mmabatho rolls her eyes and let's him go. At the same time, without breaking stride in his speech, Eric Mabote registers the two cops exiting.

INT. OPULENT HOME

The opulent Houghton mansion, behind eight foot walls and electric fencing, has security cameras at every corner.

A group of black, expensively suited, business men sit with their host MOSES MPANZA, 40's, in his living room.

While drinks are served by servants; one servant comes around to each man with a large sterling collection bowl. At first, we can't see what is being collected. Moments later, the bowl is filled with handguns.

Sitting in expensive leather chairs, each man brings out a briefcase filled with cash. SAMMY DAVIS, JR. (he talks just like him) and TINY MNAMO immediately begin yelling.

SAMMY DAVIS, JR.
Tiny Mnano, you've had the Diepkloof-Sandton route for three years now.

TINY
And I've also had the Volso route, which is too damn long. And with petrol prices so high, a five rand ride isn't even worth the petrol. So it evens out.

MOSES
(conciliatory)
Well, what if the ride was eight rand?

All the men consider the raise.

TINY
No. At eight rand I'd lose my riders to the Patco bus. No, no, no. If I am being forced to sell, I'll sell Diepkloof Sandton route for 50,000 rand.

SAMMY DAVIS, JR.
40,000.

MOSES
Settled.

TINY
I'M BEING ROBBED BY THIS...

Moses stares at Tiny, instantly silencing Tiny's dissent.

TINY (CONT'D)
(finishing impotently)
...this is all sleg, bull!

MOSES
Pay the man.

Sammy pulls piles of cash out of his valise and pushes it into the middle of the table.

TINY
But listen, Sammy Davis, Jr. If just one of your taxis is on my other routes ... I'll burn your whole fleet. The skies of Joburg will be black with flames.

SAMMY DAVIS JR.
I don't want any of your routes. They're shit, like you. Like your whole family.

Fists start flying between the two men until Sammy Davis Jr. pulls out a hidden gun and shoots a bullet into the ceiling. Silence. Moses walks over to Sammy Davis Jr.

SAMMY DAVIS JR. (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, Moses, but this man insulted my family

MOSES
(quietly)
I understand. Tempers are hot. But rules must be obeyed. Give me the gun, they aren't welcome here.

SAMMY DAVIS
(handing him the gun)
Okay, because this has to be fixed.

With the gun in his hand, Moses instantly puts it to Sammy Davis Jr's temple and fires, spraying brains all over the other bosses.

MOSES
Fixed. No more disobedience. Anyone else have a problem?
(a look to Tiny)
(MORE)

MOSES (CONT'D)
 You have your route back.
 (To all)
 Where is Jabulani Mkhize? He has big
 routes. He needs to be here.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY

Jabulani Mkhize's bullet ridden body still hangs over the steering wheel of the blue kombi on the golf course. Yellow police tape now surrounds the crime scene as a lethargic forensic team works over the crime scene.

Ronnie, in an unmarked Ford, drives up. As he lights a cigarette, Ronnie stares at the bullet ridden taxi. He is then met by ranking policeman, SERGEANT KABELO, 35.

RONNIE
 I'm Ronnie...

SKABELO
 ...Van de Ruit, I know who you are. What
 the hell are you doing here?

RONNIE
 Don't know yet.

KABELO
 Maybe you're here because you know all
 about black on black. But you aren't
 needed here.

RONNIE
 Look, Fuckface, I'd rather drive a rusty
 nail into my foot than be here with you
 or anything to do with these shitass
 taxis. But I just got assigned to this,
 the Scorpions have seniority here so give
 me the fact sheet and go back to picking
 your nose.

Ronnie blows smoke straight into Kabelo's face. Kabelo, about to retaliate, looks into Ronnie's eyes. The steel, cold, blue eyes stop Kabelo in his tracks. Ronnie grabs the fact sheet from his hands.

Just then, Joseph arrives in the same style unmarked Ford. He walks up to the two men.

JOSEPH
 Sergeant Kabelo, I'm Captain Joseph
 Mahola.

KABELO
 I know who you are. Mahola, hero of
 homicide. Don't expect me to bow in
 reverence. Why the fuck are the
 Scorpions on this?

Joseph looks to Ronnie.

RONNIE
Mahola, I'm Ronnie...

JOSEPH
...Van de Ruit. I know who you are.
What's your designation here?

RONNIE
As I told Fathead here, I got assigned to
this shitfuckdickhead taxi case. It
comes from the top. Scorpions now do
taxi cases, I guess.

Joseph, ever the diplomat, takes a beat.

JOSEPH
(Not warm, official)
Van de Ruit, I can't imagine this kind of
thing...is your kind of thing. But you
have orders, so welcome to the Taxi Wars.

RONNIE
(Perfect deadpan)
Yeah, thanks. I'm thrilled to be here.

KABELO
Sir, he shouldn't be here, this....

JOSEPH
Cop. This cop from the Scorpions, who
has seniority over you. He is here and
you need to be back with your men.
(To Ronnie)
Detective, Van der Ruit, shall we have a
look at the crime scene?

They walk over to the body in the taxi.

RONNIE
This party didn't end well.

JOSEPH
(Reading the sheet)
One victim. Jakota Association chairman
as of -
(checks his watch)
fifty- six hours ago. Ouch. Bad career
choice. Oh, this is interesting. He was
also Transport Minister Mabote's cousin.

RONNIE
Your minister? The one who just gave you
an award?

JOSEPH

Careful, Mr. Van de Ruit. But I agree, I can now see why this case is getting extra muscle.

RONNIE

Look, Mahola, I'm sure you're a good chap. You and I have no reason to be doubling up on this.

JOSEPH

Yet, we are. So let's figure out what the "this" is.

Ronnie shrugs his shoulders and begins to investigate inside the taxi.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

It says the driver, Jabulani Mkhize, isn't just a driver. He owned twenty-six taxis. One of the original taxi millionaires. House in Houghton, vacations in Europe.

Hearing this, Ronnie steps out of the taxi. He lights a cigarette and stares at the body and the scene.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

That's it?

RONNIE

It is fucking taxi murder. Some fuck shot this fuck in the face. But I want to know why is a taxi millionaire, who has more money than you and I will ever make, driving a taxi for 5 rand a pop?

JOSEPH

Test drives?

Ronnie laughs, surprised this guy has a sense of humor. Joseph goes in a closer look at the body, Ronnie smokes.

RONNIE

I should take up golf. Wear fucking ugly pants and hit a ball.

Joseph comes out of the taxi.

JOSEPH

Van de Ruit, you're right. This isn't you stepped-on-my-route shit. Because if it is, the driver who shot an owner just signed his death warrant.

EXT. BLACKJACK'S BUILDING

Manelisi, covered in Jabulani Mkhize's blood, drives up to an old, industrial garage with a roll up, metal door. The outside is covered in faded ads for washing powder and shoe polish.

Outside, an OLD MAN, 80's, dressed in rags, sits behind a pyramids of oranges for sale.

OLD MAN

(mumbling to himself)

There was a great warrior born on a day like this, with the sun hidden in the middle of the day. The hiding clouds.

(To Manelisi)

Those clouds have come again. The day has arrived...

Manelisi pays no attention to the homeless man. He honks once and silently the door rolls up and open.

As Manelisi drives in, the camera tracks up a tall man seen only from the back. First, a pair of Gucci loafers, followed by a pair of fashionable, woolen pants. The man's hard back muscles are silhouetted under a silken sweater. The man walks up to the window of the kombi.

MANELISI

Jabulani Mkhizi is dead. It worked just like you said....

Manelisi starts to get out of the car, but the man bangs the car door closed with his knee.

MAN'S VOICE

(Menacing but controlled)

Fucking idiot, driving through the streets with blood all over you. Why not slap on a placard saying to the cops, "Follow me, I'm a murderer!"

MANELISI

It's okay, Blackjack, the cops are yours...

MAN'S VOICE

Not every cop is mine, you fuck.

The man throws a KFC bag at Manelisi.

MAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Here's your money. Now get out.

MANELISI

But, Blackjack...

The man jabs his finger repeatedly into Manelisi's forehead.

MAN'S VOICE

Think, Bru. Think! Now, GO.

Dismissed, Manelisi drives out, barely making it before the roller door crushes the kombi.

EXT. BLACKJACK'S BUILDING

Moments later, the man, driving a black convertible Porsche, comes out of the garage and the roll-down door closes. The Porsche drives through downtown Johannesburg streets, past fashionable cafes crowded with black and white hipsters.

The man drives on past a sign declaring today's headline: SCRAMBLE FOR SOCCER WORLD CUP CONTRACTS, past women walking with huge sacks of flour on their heads. A chic couple drive by in matching yellow Lamborghinis through a dusty, shanty town. The girl, not much older than 24, winks at our man in the Porsche. A newspaper sign: UNEMPLOYMENT REACHES 43%. A headline: 5th TAXI KILLING THIS WEEK.

He stops at a traffic light, his arm hanging out the side of the Porsche. Two young thugs eye the gold Ebel watch loose on his wrist. They charge to the car but when they see who is driving, the thugs stop short and slink away.

The Porsche turns onto a more deserted street. A police car sits there, idling. Ten feet away, a Pitbull Armed Response vehicle is doing the same. The Porsche pulls into the space between them and pauses. It's windows slide down soundlessly. Two KFC bags are simultaneously thrown from the Porsche into the parked cop and security vehicles. Then the Porsche speeds off.

EXT. SOWETO NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER

In the poor section of Zola, the man pulls up to the small, neighborhood taxi rank. Vendors line the wall selling everything from roasted sheep's head to calls from dial phones jeririged to the building.

Knowing everyone is watching him, the man throws the Porsche in park. The camera comes around to his face for the first time. BLACKJACK, 6'4, all muscle, handsome, stylish and... scary. He cuts through the crowd to one of the kiosks. A vendor, ZAKES, 20'S, long dreads, appears.

ZAKES.

Blackjack, you look real sharp, bro.

BLACKJACK

Save it. Any harassment from the Pitbulls at the mansion?

ZAKES

If the security guys know it's for you there's never really a problem.

He gives Blackjack a stack of cash which Blackjack counts faster than anyone in the world.

BLACKJACK

You're certain this is the sum total of what was in the house?

He nods, yes. Instantly, there's a knife on his jugular.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)

You're not holding out on me, are you?

ZAKES

Bra, that's the take, man! Oh, some guy left this for you...

Blackjack grabs the envelope. Blackjack opens it and looks it over cursorily. He looks inside the kiosk at a variety of home appliances.

BLACKJACK

The take from the mansion? The blender.

Zakes grudgingly hands him the fancy, chrome blender. Blackjack goes back to his car with it and drives off.

EXT. MEN'S HOSTEL - DOWNTOWN JOBURG

A converted, old factory with only a few windows unbroken. Clothes and men's desperate faces fill every window. This is the bottom of the barrel; poverty is a step up.

Blackjack pulls up in the Porsche. All eyes are on the Porsche. He gets out of the car, fitting a gun into the front of his trousers, and goes in. Each man makes eye contact with Blackjack. It's a game of visual chicken. Clearly: touch this car, you're dead.

In the courtyard, Blackjack stops to watch as a zulu muti ritual is taking place. Several young men stand bare chested. Another man walks around them, a black mamba snake coiled around his limbs. He makes tiny incisions on the young men's chests with a rusty razor and rubs gun powder into the wounds.

INT. MEN'S HOSTEL

Blackjack walks down the halls, filthy with garbage and clothes: food cooking and food rotting. Fires in trash cans light the feces-filled halls. Men of all ages from various African countries mill about.

Blackjack finds Manelisi in his section. A putrefying body lies on the floor. Manelisi, smoking a cigarette, washes his clothes in a bucket.

BLACKJACK

Who is your friend?

With a foot Manelisi prods open the dead man's mouth, revealing two rows of metal and jewel enhanced teeth.

MANELESI

He is my own Harmony Gold mine. Twenty-four carat and even some platinum. Got two diamonds in the wisdom teeth too.

BLACKJACK

I hate coming to this place. You need to answer your phone, asshole.

MANELISI

Oh, yeah, my battery is dead.

BLACKJACK

Charge it, idiot. I have another job for you.

(Takes out the note Zakes
just gave him)

Bestride Taxi man. Mr. Sipho Xaba is not playing nice in the sandbox. 1000 rand now and 1000 rand on completion.

MANELESI

(Alluding out the window to
the courtyard)

Blackjack, got to up our price. After the muti, the boys out there will jack their take. 200 rand is what they want!

Blackjack looks out the window. In the courtyard, the snakes head has been cut off and it's blood is now being rubbed into the young men's chests. The men recoil in pain, blood running down there chests.

MANELISI

Enforcers are more expensive after that muti. Now they are invincible. Bullets can't touch them.

BLACKJACK
(incredulous)
That is superstitious jabberwocky.
They're just high off old school drugs.

MANELES
That shit work, nx!

BLACKJACK
(Bored)
Sure, it does. The job has to be done
now.

MANELES
Okay. But Blackjack, I need a gun.

BLACKJACK
Fuck off. I'm not hiring a fisherman
without a fishing pole.

MANELES
Bra, I got rid of my gun on your job this
morning. Haven't time to get another.

BLACKJACK
(irritated)
Hell, take this one.

Blackjack give him his gun and the 1000 rand.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)
Boy, you're becoming increasingly stupid.
I need to rely on you. I can, right?

He nods, yes. Blackjack sees he has gunk on his shoes.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Fuck, I hate this place.

He causally cleans it off on the dead man's body.

INT. ELSIE'S HOUSE, (MODEST BRICK HOUSE) SOWETO TOWNSHIP

Blackjack carries a large package as he enters the house
of his mother, ELSIE MNGOMEZULU, 68. The modest house is
cluttered with mementos, furniture and photos.

Blackjack is unhappy to find a group of his mother's
friends gathered in the living room, drinking tea.

Amongst the group is a white woman, ESTHER. She smiles
broadly at him. He does not return the smile.

ESTHER

Ooh, Elsie, you're getting a gift. Hello, Dumisa. What have you got there?

Blackjack doesn't answer her and goes into the kitchen. He places a chair against the door and pulls a brick out of the wall above the sink. Blackjack extracts thick wads of notes out of his pocket and stuffs them into the wall behind the stove.

Elsie tries to get into her kitchen to no avail. Her companions begin to notice as, suddenly, the door opens and Else steps into her kitchen. The brick is back in the wall and all is back as it should be.

ELSIE

You keep me out of my own kitchen while I have guests?

BLACKJACK

Just setting up a surprise for you.

He motions to the blender, set up and ready to go.

ELSIE

Instead of giving me respect, you give me stolen goods. What a good son!

BLACKJACK

It's a present, ma.

ELSIE

You go in there and greet your aunties.

BLACKJACK

They're not my... .

Esther suddenly bustles in.

ESTHER

Else, Gladys has forgotten her diabetes sweetener.

Blackjack leaves the kitchen, disgust etched on his face.

ESTHER (CONT'D)

He still thinks...

ELSIE

Never mind what he thinks.

Blackjack quietly approaches the women as they gossip.

GLADYS

The struggle is over as far as the likes of Dumisa are concerned. Now it's all Porsches and the bling- bling.

Laughter in the gathered group.

BLACKJACK
Sanibonani. (Greetings)

In turn, he shakes each woman's hand, looking them directly in the eye.

Esther comes in carrying the blender with pride, beaming at Blackjack encouragingly.

ESTHER
Ladies, can you believe this? Dumisa got
Elsie such a fancy, new blender.

The women coo over the appliance. Hilda lifts the lid.

HILDA
Is it four liters? My daughter-in-law
has the ...oh!

A gasp goes through the group. There is moldy, dried up yoghurt caking the blender.

The women stare at him. Esther puts her hand on Elsie's back in support.

ELSIE
As always. Disrespect.

Blackjack walks out and into the kitchen. He slaps down a wad of notes and walks out of the house.

INT. MABOTE'S HOUGHTON MANSION .

Ronnie waits in Mabote's plush living room looking at an ornate, gold chandelier. As Eric Mabote enters, maids and servants stand at attention.

MABOTE
(Re: the chandelier)
Like it?

Ronnie shifts awkwardly, stalling for an answer.

MABOTE (CONT'D)
Relax, I hate it too. I told my wife it makes us look like uppity, black diamonds. So I paid the price twice. For the chandelier and again for the comment.

RONNIE
Your wife must know my wife.

They laugh. Mabote shows Ronnie to his office, motioning out the window to two twelve year-old boys playing ball.

MABOTE

That's my son and Jabulani Mkhize's boy.

RONNIE

I know he was your cousin. I'm very sorry about his death.

Mabote nods silently.

MABOTE

Jabu was hands on. Test drove each of the taxis he ever owned. Special man. We grew up together at the very beginning of the taxi business.

RONNIE

Terrible. The whole taxi violence thing stinks.

MABOTE

That's why you are here. You know a taxi boss' death means a bigger taxi war. There will be reciprocity soon for my cousin's death.

RONNIE

Mr. Minister, there already is a special taxi violence unit in the metro police .

MABOTE

Ag, we all know they're rotten to the core.

Ronnie shifts uncomfortably. Mabote smiles.

MABOTE (CONT'D)

Don't worry, I'm not trying to put an internal on you. People hate you enough as it is, right?

RONNIE

(trying to finesse)
I'm sure you didn't call me here to discuss my past...

MABOTE

Battalion 32 is not a good credential to have under your belt these days, especially in the police force.

RONNIE

Others can hold grudges, not me.

MABOTE

I love it. You work side by side with the men you chased for ten years during apartheid. Maybe you killed their
(MORE)

MABOTE (CONT'D)
families. Now you have braais in their
backyards.

RONNIE
Sometimes, I wouldn't say it is a
brooderhood.

MABOTE
Funny. Why do you stay on? It's a
mystery.

Ronnie is trying to figure out how to respond.

MABOTE (CONT'D)
I'll cut to the chase. You need a boast
amongst the police at large. The black
rank and file think you are still the
enemy. Plus the Scorpions need a win.
The public think you're redundant.

RONNIE
(carefully)
And you need?

MABOTE
I need the taxi wars snuffed out once and
for all. To do that, I need someone who
has more to gain from doing their job
than taking bribes.

RONNIE
(laughing)
You think because I'm white I'm
incorruptible?

MABOTE
If you wanted money, you'd have joined
your ex-mates running security companies,
guarding mansions...like this one.

RONNIE
Not a day goes by that my wife doesn't
remind me of that.

MABOTE
Van de Ruit, I've read your dossier.
Decorated Battalion 32 military planner.
I want you to use those skills to put the
taxi industry in order. And I will
promote you to where you should be. The
place where less qualified men are now
only because of their black skin color.

RONNIE
I don't care about the affirmative
action. But why me? There are plenty of
former MK* tactical guys.

MABOTE

Too many are still settling scores.

** Mkhonto or MK were the freedom fighters of the ANC.
They worked covertly, often in exile, during apartheid.*

There is a knock. The door opens and Joseph comes in. He sees Ronnie and is surprised.

JOSEPH

Sorry, Minister. Your security guys held me up.

MABOTE

Not to worry. You both know each other.

JOSEPH

Yes. Oddly, we were both assigned to your cousin's murder scene.

RONNIE

Bit of confusion there.

(To Mabote)

Mr. Minister, were you just testing me?

MABOTE

Forgiveness is one thing, trust is another. Yes. I needed to be sure you are up for this assignment. I am.

Ronnie is silent.

MABOTE (CONT'D)

Mahole, Van der Ruit, I am creating a special task force to stop the taxi wars crippling this country. It will operate independently, under the radar.

(a beat)

You two are it.

RONNIE

Sir, I am a scorpion, our separation...

MABOTE

Is over. You are integrating into police force. I am just moving you along faster.

JOSEPH

(Diplomatically)

Mr. Minister, I'm not sure the force at large is ready for a instant integration.

MABOTE

JABULANI WAS MY FUCKING COUSIN, HE HAS A FIVE YEAR OLD CHILD. You want to go outside and tell him that his father's killer will remain free because you want

(MORE)

MABOTE (CONT'D)
to kiss and date each other for ten
years.

Mabote's grief and anger turn the conversation into an order.

MABOTE (CONT'D)
You two begin now. You report directly to
me and let me know if you need anything.
Mahola, you have seniority in the regular
force so Van de Ruit is junior on this.
You've got your orders. Good afternoon.

Mabote shakes their hands and walks out, leaving Ronnie
and Joseph staring at each other.

RONNIE
He sure knows how to end a meeting.

EXT. JOBURG STREETS

Ronnie and Joseph drive along, silently. Ronnie smokes.

JOSEPH
You smoke a lot. I quit that shit.

RONNIE
You get awards a lot. I quit that shit.

Joseph snorts, keeps driving.

JOSEPH
So the minister teams us up.

RONNIE
Hey, he handed you an award. Doesn't
that make you his errand boy?

Joseph stops the car.

JOSEPH
Look, Van de Ruit, you are as famous as I
am. The white cop who stayed. Fine. I
can work with you. But if I wanted snide
comments...

RONNIE
...you would have married my wife.

Joseph can't help but laugh.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
We'll be fine, hero. Let's crack this
thing and we can get on with our lives.

JOSEPH

Fine. But drop the hero thing. It isn't funny.

RONNIE

No problem. Start with Jabulani Mkhize. The minster said he was driving because he actually liked test drives. So that is that.

JOSEPH

He was Jakota. So it was a either a Bestride hit or an internal Jakota hit.

Ronnie rides along for a minute.

RONNIE

One last prelim question. If Jabulani wasn't Mabote's cousin, would this even make the evening news?

JOSEPH

Not our business, this is the assignment. We both know there will be a retaliation soon and we can trace back from there.

RONNIE

Yes, Baas.

Joseph wants to punch this guy but swallows it.

EXT. JOHANNESBURG - BESTRIDE GARAGE SERVICE STATION

Empty taxis are up on the service racks. A Kombi mini-bus pulls in, driven by Manelesi. Inside are three young men from the hostel courtyard, all jacked up on drugs.

GAS ATTENDANT

How much, s'khulu? (big man)

MANELESİ

Hayi gcwalisa nje. (fill it)

SIPHO XABA, unmistakably the boss, stands at the front of the garage puffing on a cigar. A uniformed attendant washing the windshield sees the JAKOTA taxi sticker. His eyes and Manelesi's eyes meet. Manelesi pulls out a Colt automatic and shoots the attendant in the face.

Instantly, the other hitmen bring out AK 47's. The sound is deafening as they squeeze on the triggers. The boss goes down, riddled with bullets. As does the garage mechanic and several bystanders. As the Kombi drives off, the gas hose pulls out of the tank, spilling gas on the ground which flows straight toward the lit cigar.

One beat. Then there is a FIREBALL which engulfs everyone running to help the shooting victims. Flaming humans.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JOBURG STREETS-

Joseph and Ronnie ride along in silence.

RONNIE

Was that your wife with you on the dais?

JOSEPH

Yeah, ten years. Two daughters. You?

RONNIE

I got a wife. No kids, but my wife is really fucking immature. It evens out.

Ronnie's phone rings.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Van de Ruit.

Ronnie listens.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Bloody hell.

(To Joseph)

You got your retaliation.

EXT. JOHANNESBURG - BESTRIDE GARAGE - LATER

Police cars and fire trucks are already at the garage putting out the flames. Joseph and Ronnie pull up.

RONNIE

Fucking hell. I guess mourning periods aren't big in the taxi business.

Seconds later, ten BESTRIDE kombis careen into the intersection from all three streets. The guns of the hopped-up kombis drivers come out of the windows.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

They're Bestride. It's their own fucking garage! These idiots are so hopped up on muti shit, they're going to attack their own people. SHOTGUNS OUT. GET THOSE CIVILIANS OUT OF HERE.

Ronnie's call instantly mobilizes the cops. Patrol car doors open and shotguns come out of the windows. Pedestrians and ambulance drivers scurry for cover.

Testosterone induced kombi drivers gun their engines in

syncopation. A standoff; if anyone shoots, a lot more people will die. Ronnie dashes from car to car, looking for position. From behind, he hears, a loud megaphone:

JOSEPH

(On the megaphone)

BAKWETHU, WE HAVE THIS UNDER CONTROL. MY BROTHERS, THIS IS AN ACTIVE INVESTIGATION SCENE. GO HOME. LET US DO OUR WORK AND BRING JUSTICE TO YOUR FRIENDS.

After a long beat, one taxi shifts into reverse and backs away. Then another. Then another.

When there is an "all clear", Ronnie looks up at Joseph, getting pats on the back from fellow officers. He and Joseph make eye-contact. Ronnie slowly nods his head and walks over to Joseph.

RONNIE

I thought you were a cream puff. You're a diplomat. C'mon, let's see what this retaliation yields.

Ronnie walks toward one of the cars smoldering from the explosion. An older woman helps the ambulance driver put her injured husband onto an ambulance gurney.

Ronnie walks past her, suddenly the older woman launches herself at him.

WOMAN

You disrespectful, boere pig!

Ronnie wheels around, easily averting her advance. The lady falls to the floor.

RONNIE

Lady, are you fucking crazy? Sheesh!

Joseph runs up. All stop to watch this altercation.

WOMAN

This pig steps on my husband's blood. You still treat us like nothing but dirt under his shoe.

Ronnie sees he has, indeed, got blood on his shoe. He rolls his eyes in exasperation.

RONNIE

Jesus, it's fucking crime scene.

WOMAN

GO AWAY. I'm a maid. I can clean. You're a policeman but you can't stop these killers. Go be useless somewhere else.

With his eyes, Joseph tells Ronnie to back off. Ronnie, alone, without any other cops, goes to investigate.

JOSEPH

Lady, he doesn't know our ways.

She speaks to him in Zulu.

WOMAN

My son, please, you know I can't leave his blood, who knows how his spirit may be tainted.

JOSEPH

Will you help me too, Mme? If you saw something, anything.

She takes a rag and starts cleaning up the blood. Covertly, the woman writes on the blood. N-M·X. She wipes more. Then 1-6-6, quick to rub it all out. With the briefest meeting of eyes, Joseph thanks her.

EXT. SHABEEN (UNLICENSED BAR)- SOWETO - THE NEXT DAY

There is music on inside a shebeen. There's an old foosball table, an old TV set with a wire hanger antenna and a small kitchen that doubles as a store.

On the makeshift, kitchen counter, LUNGA YENI, Black, 38, is trying to get a good signal on the TV set. Lunga's face and body are thin. Too thin. He moves slowly. Dissatisfaction seems to live on his face.

The garage carnage scene plays in background on an old television with a wire hanger antenna. Lunga watches the news as a few customers nurse beers.

NEWS REPORTER

(on the television)

A bloody day in Joburg. Bestride taxi leader, Sipho Xaba, was killed with several others in a petrol bombing today.

LUNGA

I say put all the taxi drivers in a pen with real scorpions.

An old sheet serves as a partition between the main shebeen area and the tiny living area. DESMOND, 14, enters from behind the sheet to iron his shirt.

LUNGA (CONT'D)

Desmond, see what those people want.

DESMOND

I need to iron my shirt.

LUNGA
Suddenly, you need to look pretty for
school? Get to it, boy.

NELSON, 18, comes from the back and pats his brother to
get a move on. Desmond grudgingly abandons his shirt.

NELSON
C'mon, you look fine. Let's get you to
school.

Lunga looks at Nelson, exhaling disgust through his lips

LUNGA
Nelson, customer. NOW.

Lunga turns to see the customer is Blackjack, who sits at
a table. Lunga's eyes go wide with recognition and he
frantically motions Nelson away. The other customers give
Blackjack status by turning away or disappearing behind
the beer coolers. Lunga approaches Blackjack.

BLACKJACK
Give me Moghodu (tripe). And a Stoney.

LUNGA
(to Desmond)
Go to Mamketi's and get some moghodu.

DESMOND
(respectfully)
But, it's too early...

LUNGA
DON'T TALK. DON'T THINK. Just do it.

Blackjack watches the father-son confrontation.
Suddenly, all lights, TV and power go out.

LUNGA (CONT'D)
BLACKOUT. God damn it to hell. Fifteen
years ago we shouted, "Power to the
People." Here I am again, shouting,
"power to the people."

Everyone in the place laughs except Blackjack. Desmond
returns with the tripe. The boys start to exit.

LUNGA (CONT'D)
Nelson, bring back something useful like
a good son.

NELSON
(mumbling to himself)
I'll try.

LUNGA
 Trying doesn't pay the bills
 (To Blackjack)
 My eldest. Lazy good for nothing.

Blackjack looks at him then turns away, uninterested.

EXT. JAKOTA RANK

Joseph and Ronnie's car enters the Jakota taxi rank.

RONNIE
 (Off the cuff)
 Hey, smooth stuff with the crazy lady.

JOSEPH
 I know you think she's crazy. But her
 devotion to those beliefs is stronger
 then your devotion to those cigarettes.

RONNIE
 Yeah? Don't be so sure.

JOSEPH
 And we got a lead.

Joseph tapes the license plate number to the wind visor.

RONNIE
 No point coming to the rank. They've
 switched the licence plate by now.

Rows of taxis are loading and off-loading passengers.

The two cops get out and enter the noisy rank. Moses
 MPANZA walks around with inflated self importance.
 Behind him, his Inkabi (foot soldiers) carry several
 fast food bags to his shiny BMW.

MOSES
 Ah, officers. Welcome to the rank.

JOSEPH
 Moses, what's for lunch?

MOSES
 Joseph Mahole, just the usual.

RONNIE
 Don't you Zulus always share with guests?

Ronnie sticks his hand in the brown bag. Moses,
 offended, lets it happen. Joseph is amazed by Ronnie's
 gall. Ronnie is surprised when he pulls out a soggy fry.

MOSES
Don't like chips?

RONNIE
Thought maybe there'd be cash in that bag.

MOSES
No, white officer, this bag has fries.
(Points to the other bags)
The cash, 145,000 rand to be exact, is in those bags. Is it illegal now to make money in South Africa? I run a business. Now, what exactly do the Scorpions do?

JOSEPH
I'm sure you heard that Sipho Xaba of Bestride was just killed.

MOSES
(Flat inflection)
No, I didn't. What a shame.

Moses stands there, eating fries. Across the rank, Ronnie sees Manelisi and his cronies arrive in the taxi with the OLD LICENSE PLATE NUMBER.

RONNIE
You've got to be bloody joking!

Manelisi's eyes meet Joseph's and Ronnie's. The four murderers quickly turn and run back to their taxi. Ronnie and Joseph leg it back to their own car.

MOSES
Lovely to see you.

EXT. SOWETO STREET

Ronnie and Joseph chase Manelisi's kombi through the narrow, dusty streets of Soweto. Inside the taxi:

MANELISI
(to one hitman)
Lean out and shoot them. DO IT!

The hitman isn't too keen, but Manelisi points his gun at him. The hitman opens the door, hangs out the door and begins spraying bullets at Joseph and Ronnie's car. The cop car rams the kombi. The hitman falls out of the moving taxi and rolls under the wheels of both cars.

INT. RONNIE AND JOSEPH'S CAR

The double thud of running over the hitman's body.

RONNIE

Oops.

Joseph gives Ronnie a look.

INT. MANELISI'S TAXI

In the rearview mirror, Manelisi sees the police car.

MANELISI

Fuck. Push send on my phone.

INT. SHABEEN - CONTINUOUS

Lunga is refilling Blackjack's coffee.

LUNGA

So? How is Aunt Elsie?

BLACKJACK

(suspicious)

You know my mother?

LUNGA

Yes. From the neighborhood, in the old days. You don't remember...

Blackjack's phone rings:

BLACKJACK

(As he answers it)

Hold on...

EXT. SOWETO STREETS

MANELES

Fuck, Blackjack, we've got cops on us....

BLACKJACK (FROM THE PHONE)

So, shoot them.

MANELES

These cops are not Metro! I need help. I'm on Corlet Drive. I'm heading to you.

BLACKJACK (FROM THE PHONE)

NO. Jou poos!

MANELES

(totally in a panic)

Blackjack, these cops are on top of us and these Nigerians can't stop talking

(MORE)

MANELESİ (CONT'D)
 about you, about your Porsche. They'll
 rat you out. And I have your gun.

INT. SHABEEN

Forgetting Lunga was mid-sentence, Blackjack drops one hundred rand on the table and runs out.

CUSTOMER #1
 Lunga, that was a mean gintsa in here and
 you act like he's Patrice Motsepe.

CUSTOMER #2
 That car costs more than you and I will
 ever make in our lives. That gintsa
 operates out of a old garage on Mnalt St.

LUNGA
 I knew him before he was a gintsa.

EXT. SOWETO STREETS

Blackjack screeches around a corner, expertly negotiating the narrow Soweto streets. On another street, Manelisi veers off the road, tearing a low hanging corrugated iron roof of a shack which flies into Joseph and Ronnie's car.

Blackjack turns up another street and spots Manelisi on a parallel street. Keeping up with them, Blackjack places a tripod on the car window and snaps his sniper rifle on the tripod. He keeps the rifle in position as he drives, weaving his car between the shacks. Then he screeches to a halt...and idles, waiting.

Blackjack sees Manelisi's car, aims his rifle and shoots one of the hitmen through the throat. Then Blackjack turns toward Joseph and Ronnie's vehicle as it appears. Another shot, on target, and the cop's front bumper rips off, which in turn, tears the car's hood totally off. Joseph and Ronnie keep moving.

INT. JOSEPH AND RONNIE'S CAR

JOSEPH
 WHERE THE FUCK DID THAT SHOT COME FROM?

INT. PORCHE

BLACKJACK
 (To himself)
 You jerks bore me.

Blackjack comes out behind Ronnie and Joseph's cop car,

but stays far enough to be obscured by the shacks.

Blackjack calmly rests the tripod cradle on the windshield. He aims his sniper rifle and hits cruise control. He fires two surgical hits at Joseph and Ronnie's tires. The cops swerve, lifting the rear of the car on to the roadside barrier. The car skids along the barrier at 80 mph. The cop car finally coming to a violent stop as a metal pole pierces the windshield, just missing Ronnie and Joseph.

Blackjack turns down a side street. In front of him the taxi is braking hard to avoid a collision.

Manelisi screams at the remaining hitman.

MANELISI

Call the number again. Give me the phone.

The one live gun man left in the car bends to pick up the phone. Blackjack waits until Manelisi is in sight and pulls the trigger.

In the taxi, Manelisi's head explodes open, covering the last hitman. The hitman opens the door and jumps out as the taxi crashes into a concrete wall and flips over.

Blackjack drives up and opens the door for the surviving hitman who jumps in, breathing hard.

Blackjack pulls his rifle down, as if to hand it to the hitman, and he pulls the trigger. The hitman's scalp blows out the top of the convertible with just a bit of brains on the passenger window. Blackjack screeches to a stop, opens the door and kicks the dead hitman out.

Blackjack calmly walks over to the Manelisi's kombi. Pulling out a handkerchief, reaches in and grabs his gun and Manelisi's phone. He takes out the sim card and throws the phone back, then cleans his hands and his car.

EXT. SOWETO STREET - JOSEPH AND RONNIE'S CAR

The car is a total wreck. A metal pole sticks through the windshield. They're banged up. A trickle of blood runs down Ronnie's head, the seatbeats keep them in place.

RONNIE

FUCK!!! YOU ALRIGHT?

JOSEPH

YEAH. YEAH, CAN YOU GET OUT?

Ronnie rolls out of the car, gun drawn, looking for snipers. We see him tracing shots in his head, looking for where each bullet could have come from.

Joseph starts out, but the passenger door was fucked by the barrier. He pull himself out the drivers side.

RONNIE
STAY DOWN TILL I AM SURE WE'RE CLEAR.

But adrenalin has Joseph flying around with more energy than we've ever seen.

JOSEPH
FUCK. THAT WAS CRAZY. WHO WAS SHOOTING
AT US?

Ronnie is looking at Joseph, who is wigged out.

RONNIE
There is no way one shooter could have
done that.

JOSEPH
Was that a fucking set up? Moses Mpanza?
THAT is SO FUCKED UP!

Ronnie stays staring at Joseph.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
What?

RONNIE
Just thinking you got a medal for getting
shot in the arm. What the fuck do they
give you for getting impaled with a pole?

JOSEPH
SHUT UP, RONNIE.

RONNIE
C'mon, just trying to calm you down.
(A beat)
This is what happens when you get into
the taxi shit.

JOSEPH
That wasn't taxi shit. That was sniper
shit.

Ronnie pulls out his pack of smokes. Joseph grabs it, pulls one out and tries to light it with the matches but he is too agitated to do it. Ronnie lights it for him.

RONNIE
We smoke. Then we figure out what just
happened.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. POLICE GARAGE.

Manelisi's old kombi sits in the middle of the garage lit by huge, industrial flood lights. Joseph, Sgt. Kabelo, and several technician are tearing the car apart. Joseph is weary, his clothes still dirty from the accident. Evidence and extracted bullets are on a long table.

KABELO

Eight bullets.

JOSEPH

Where's Van de Ruit?

KABELO

He grabbed the mobile and ran away. The phone's sim card is gone, it is useless. What's it like riding with that monster?

JOSEPH

What planet are you living on?

KABELO

Fuck you. The guy wasn't just Defence Force, he was Intelligence Battalion 32. You know what those fucks did.

JOSEPH

Did. DID. The past. He is all cop and it would do you good to observe him. He's moved on to the present. What's your fucking excuse?

Kabelo is surprised by Joseph's rant. Actually, Joseph is as well. Ronnie, excited, comes in with THEO, 25, nerd, black.

KABELO

Oh look, Van der Ruit found the only cop who will talk to him. The computer nerd.

RONNIE

Eat me, Kabelo. Joe, listen to this. I'm tracking the phone angle. We were turning up and down streets. Someone was giving the shooter our twenty. So one of killers must have made a call. This is my new best friend, Theo.

THEO

If that is true, the sim card determines the number, right? But Vodacom's is not a whole network, so it sends out a repeater signal which becomes part of the phone on the other end. Ok?

Ronnie is impatient, waiting for the summation.

RONNIE
Blah-blah-blah. Get to the good part.

THEO
If that phone is used again, I can track the actual phone of that person these poos were talking to. Even if they use another sim card and new number.

Joseph silently acknowledges Ronnie. Then he yells out to everyone in the lab.

JOSEPH
Guys, you're working this weekend. Let's find this guy.
(To Ronnie)
Good police work, Van der Ruit.

Ronnie takes that compliment in.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TEASERS STRIP CLUB

Blackjack strides into the club with a family member's familiarity and sits alone in a booth. Twenty women work tables as others dance on stage, wearing g-strings and nothing else. SERENA, 28, Slavic, a blond knock-out, slides in next to him.

SERENA
Hello, darling.

She kisses him, it's the first time we've seen Blackjack smile.

SERENA (CONT'D)
Missed you, Mister. How are we tonight?

BLACKJACK
Better to be touching you. I been working. Too much work.

SERENA
Speaking of which, loverboy, I have to go show pussy to the masses.

BLACKJACK
Didn't Marx said pussy is the opiate of the masses?

SERENA
If it was, I'd have stayed in Romania. I got to go do my set.
(MORE)

SERENA (CONT'D)

(Getting up)

I won't be long.

She kisses him. As Serena walks to the stage, with her eyes, she "assigns" two other girls to him. Blackjack surveys the place in quick cuts of information: guy in the corner with a gun in his belt, a coke deal under a table, a man slipping his number into a woman's g-string, a dancer touching another dancer's breast.

The two other Slavic girls, TASHA and MILLA, get on the table and dance inches away from Blackjack's face.

TASHA

Here's our favorite man. Serena says to keep you busy while she's busy.

BLACKJACK

(in perfect Russian)

Spasibo devooshki, no ya po-idu pokushat.
(Thanks girls, I'm going to eat dinner.)

MILLA

Dah, BJ, here's the menu. Nyet on the pork.

In the next booth, a well-dressed white man, Blackjack's age, is watching Serena dance. He turns to Blackjack.

STEFAN

She's very beautiful. The Eastern Europeans know something. Poise under fire, I think.

STEFAN MANNING, gets up and slides into Blackjack's booth opposite him. Blackjack sits up like a sleeping cobra.

STEFAN (CONT'D)

You know that part of the world.

BLACKJACK

You know nothing about me.

STEFAN

Well, I overheard you speak perfect Russian. Not a huge leap. You seem like a smart fellow. Question: With the World Cup coming, who will award the special taxi routes for the 800.000 visitors coming to Joburg? Who?

BLACKJACK

Don't know...don't care.

STEFAN

It's not the taxi associations. So, who makes that multi-million dollar decision?

BLACKJACK

Who - who. You an owl or something?

STEFAN

That's very funny. Who - Owl. The awarding of those routes must seem fair or there'll be a taxi war that'll bring the World Cup to it's knees.

BLACKJACK

I'm not involved in any of that crap...

STEFAN

I beg to differ. You are. Your little adventure today was absolutely connected to the World Cup. Taxi Wars are commerce at it's most primal, with a lot of money at stake.

Under the table Blackjack's foot shoots out, slamming into Stefan's balls.

BLACKJACK

WHO the fuck are you?

STEFAN

(Not flinching)

I work with consortium of men invested in such decisions. They'd like to know you.

Blackjack releases his foot, but not his attitude.

BLACKJACK

(Intense but quiet)

Look, Fuckface, this is where I come to relax. These people are my friends. Otherwise, I'd have killed you with this butterknife.

STEFAN

Consider my offer, it is very lucrative.

Blackjack literally throws his card at him.

BLACKJACK

Call me tomorrow. I'll hire a good man for you. I don't do that shit myself.

STEFAN

Anymore? Given your performance this afternoon with those two cops and that kombi full of Nigerians, I'd say you are still in business.

Blackjack replaces his foot harder. Stefan endures it.

STEFAN (CONT'D)
Your foot is irritating me.

Stefan stares at him as Serena returns to the booth.

BLACKJACK
What's your name?

Blackjack eases his foot just a bit.

STEFAN
Stefan Manning. So nice to meet you.

BLACKJACK
This is Serena Stambolov. Mr. Manning was just leaving.

SERENA
Nice to meet you. Enjoy the club.

STEFAN
Pleasure is all mine. Ms. Stambolov, your club and performance are magical. Good bye.

Stefan gets up and leaves. Blackjack keeps a sharp eye on Stefan as Serena kisses him.

BLACKJACK
Kuk ass salesman. Now, where were we?

EXT. RIVIONIA COUNTRY CLUB -

CAMERA moves through the pastoral course to the tee-off area for the 1st hole. Three men, HUGO ZUNGU, 40, black, JOE GOODMAN, 40, white, Jewish liberal type, and PAUL MOLEFE, late 50's, distinguished, wait for a fourth.

HUGO
Ah, there he is.

Eric Mabote greets other golfers as he walks toward them.

JOE GOODMAN
Eric, stop networking. We're here to golf.

Four caddies step up with the golf bags. Nelson, in green coveralls, crouches behind them replacing divots.

MABOTE
Oh, Joe. Can't wait to be beaten again?

HUGO
 Playing with St. Eric, even if I win, I
 lose. I always come home a 1,000 rand
 poorer.

MABOTE
 Now, when have I asked you for anything?
 They all laugh.

JOE GOODMAN
 Never. I don't need a conscience, just
 need our friendship and a checkbook.

MABOTE
 Divot.
 Nelson runs up to restore the grass around the tee.

MABOTE (CONT'D)
 I don't want any money for charity today.
 I want your help but not your money.
 (He swings)
 I'm going after the taxi violence.
 All joviality is immediately sucked from the threesome.

JOE GOODMAN
 Yourself? No Presidential mandate?

MABOTE
 Just me. Modesty aside, who else can? I
 started as a taxi driver; I know the
 bosses. The chairmen are just
 figureheads.

HUGO
 Figureheads who get killed every few
 weeks. So, besides burying you after
 you're murdered, what can we do?

MABOTE
 Taxi bosses are not crime bosses. The
 taxi situation is a business problem. It
 needs a business solution.

JOE GOODMAN
 And your solution?

MABOTE
 I'm going to pull together a group of
 respected businessmen to objectively
 appraise the value of each route and
 divide them in an equitable way.

HUGO

Are we curing AIDS, too? It'll be easier.

MABOTE

Fine, Zungu. Then live behind electrified wire for the rest of your life.

HUGO

That's not because of the taxis.

MABOTE

Yes, it is. They attack each other, killing innocent people along the way. It lowers the bar in all aspects of our lives.

PAUL MOLEFE

Let's acknowledge the "lowered bar" threatens the success of the World Cup.

MABOTE

You guys dubbed me Saint Eric, I didn't. The World Cup coming off without a hitch will benefit my ministry of transport. But we all have a huge investment if the world sees a calm and safe South Africa.

JOE GOODMAN

Count me in. But don't tell my wife.

HUGO

Joe's white. He has more guilt than me. I'll think about it.

All look to Paul Molefe, the elder statesman.

JOE GOODMAN

Paul, you sit on The Court of Appeals. You don't have time.

PAUL MOLEFE

More to the point, my court is the government. If this is a business problem, then keep government as far away as possible. But I will be a back-pocket adviser.

Starting toward the carts, Nelson notices Eric's shoe is untied. He reaches over and begins to tie Eric's shoe.

NELSON

Wait, sir. Your shoelace...

MABOTE

Son, never grovel at another man's feet.

NELSON
I'm not groveling. I was already down here.

Eric pauses, looks at Nelson, then yells to the others.

MABOTE
Gentlemen, listen to this. What's your name?

NELSON
Nelson Yeni.

MABOTE
Nelson is an example of my own ignorance. I thought he was groveling at my untied shoe for a tip. But Nelson, explain.

NELSON
(embarrassed)
It's not a big thing. The gentleman's shoe was untied, I was crouching down there so I thought it easy to tie it.

MABOTE
That is Ubuntu; the idea that a man is a man through his treatment of another man.

HUGO
(sotto voce to Joe)
Ugh! He's flogging the Ubuntu horse again. Eric, we'll give you whatever you want. Just get off the soapbox.

MOBOTE
How jaded we've become when Ubuntu, what the freedom charter was based on, has become a "spin pitch line" we groan at?

Mabote's "high-road" shuts everyone up. All move to golf carts. Bheki and Joe in the first, Paul and Eric ride in the second. Nelson rides on the back of their cart.

PAUL MOELE
If you sort this taxi nonsense out the ANC will lionize you.

MOBOTE
If anyone still takes that seriously.

PAUL MOELE
Careful of turning our struggle in a punch line. Our enemies would love nothing more.

Eric looks suitably chastised. He then reaches behind him and slips Nelson a 50 rand, putting his finger to his

lips. It is their little secret. Nelson, thrilled, stuffs the money as far down into his shoes as he can.

EXT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DIEPKLOOF

A white neighborhood. The houses are renovated and all behind the gates. Ronnie's house has not been renovated. It's occupants are not keeping up with the Joneses.

In the backyard, Magrieta sits gossiping with three other white women her age. Out by the gazebo, three white men drink beer. Across the yard Ronnie is alone, tending the meat on the brai. He has scratches and cuts on his face. He smokes and drinks a beer as he cooks alone. He is wearing shorts, a tee-shirt...and a bullet proof vest. Two German Shepherds lay at his feet, waiting for scraps.

MAN#1

(Yelling across the yard)

Hey, Ronnie! How's that meat coming?

RONNIE

(Mumbling to himself)

I'm not your cook, asshole.

(Shouting out)

Browning!

The camera swings over the men.

MAN #2

(Sotto voce)

Browning...just like him.

MAN #3

He's gotten so black maybe he's forgotten how to cook white.

The men try to keep their laughter quiet but not enough. The camera swings over to the four women..

WOMAN #1

You know, a young white South African was granted refugee status in Canada solely because he has been the victim of so much black crime. Wonderful, now we are victimized refugees to the world.

Ronnie crosses behind the women to grab some seasonings.

RONNIE

He has refugee status and coward status.

The women feathers ruffle. Ronnie locks eyes with Magrieta who looks right through him.

The gate bell rings. The dogs bee-line for the gate, barking like all hell.

EXT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - FRONT GATE

Joseph, scrapes on his face as well, stands by the front gate that separates him from two dogs who want to tear him apart. As Margarita comes down the driveway, she sees it's Joseph, she slaps on a phoney smile worthy of a president's wife. The dogs continue to bark murderously.

JOSEPH

Hello, I'm Joseph Mahola, I'm working with Ronnie these days.

MAGRIETA

Hello, Joseph.

(A drill Sargent's scream)

SCOOPIE! KOOP! DOWN!

The dogs immediately go into a sit, but stay on guard.

JOSEPH

I don't mean to disturb...

He waits for her to say something like, "you're not disturbing". She doesn't.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

But I need to talk to Ronnie.

MAGRIETA

I'll get him.

One of the two dogs utters a low, ominous growl.

Ronnie comes out where she just exited. He yells in Afrikaans and the two dogs dutifully go to the backyard.

JOSEPH

Sorry to take you away from your friends.

RONNIE

It's okay.

JOSEPH

What's with the vest?

RONNIE

Just careful.

Joseph just looks at Ronnie. Ronnie thinks his vest is completely normal fashion.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

So how you doing?

JOSEPH

Fine. I just dropped Mmabatho and the girls off at the Mall. I hate shopping. You having a braii?

RONNIE

Yeah. Just a few friends over.

Joseph waits to be invited in. Ronnie stands there.

JOSEPH

Nice. Anyway, I wanted to show you this.

Joseph hands Ronnie a piece of paper. Ronnie reads it.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Forensics on the kombi. Three of those hitmen didn't have our bullets in them.

RONNIE

C'mon.

JOSEPH

And the bullets came from a sniper rifle.

RONNIE

(Excited)

I fucking knew it was a sniper.

JOSEPH

We were hit on four different streets. And since there aren't sniper perches atop four shacks blocks away from each other, this motherfucker was mobile.

RONNIE

A precision trained mobile sniper? It's a joke.

JOSEPH

No, it isn't. He's good. Not one extra bullet found in the car from the sniper.

RONNIE

Fuck. But why? Taxi retaliation is on the bosses, maybe the drivers but not the idiots for hire. Who the fuck is he?

The two men just stare out into the street for beat, then an energy starts between them.

JOSEPH

Defiantly ex-military.

RONNIE

Forget it. Ex-Military killers aren't involved in taxi wars. It's loser shit.

JOSEPH
During Apartheid era...they were.

RONNIE
Yeah, so SADF sold the same routes to different rival associations so they'd kill each other. It saved bullets.

JOSEPH
Charming, your old friends.

RONNIE
Fuck off. Your Mkhonto comrades had just as many snipers. Bloody ruthless.

They stop, staring at each other. Silence.

JOSEPH
I just wanted you to be thinking for tomorrow so I thought I'd drop by. See ya in the morning. Enjoy your braii.

RONNIE
Yeah. I'll think on it. Thanks for coming.

Joseph sort of half-waves and gets back in his car.

Ronnie smiles, half waves back as Joseph drives off. We see the dread of having to return to the back yard on Ronnie's face. Joseph's visit was the highlight of his day.

EXT. BLACKJACK'S BUILDING -

The Old Man sits there, talking to himself. No oranges have been sold.

Blackjack sits in his car, out of sight, watching. A new BMW 700 series drives up and parks in front of the building. Stefan gets out. He wears a beautiful Seville Row suit. It is direct opposition to Blackjack's expensive but flashy D&G, Gucci and gold jewelry.

Blackjack pushes his garage door opener. The door rolls up and Stefan enters. Blackjack drives in quickly, inches from running him over.

STEFAN
Friend, you do make an entrance, don't you?

BLACKJACK
Listen, we aren't friends. What do you want?

STEFAN

As I said, I'm here to offer an opportunity of great interest to you.

BLACKJACK

Opportunity? Stop with the code. I told you I will hire somebody for you.

STEFAN

No, we want you. Only you. Three hits ...to start.

BLACKJACK

I'm retired.

STEFAN

Name a price to leave your retirement and return like any good athlete.

BLACKJACK

I'm too expensive for you. For me, 25,000 rand for each hit. All up front.

STEFAN

Well, you have quite a mark-up premium.

BLACKJACK

What the fuck are you talking about?

STEFAN

We just paid you 8,000 rand for a hit, you'd paid the hostel boys 1,000 rand.

Blackjack's gun is instantly in Stefan's face.

BLACKJACK

Make yourself clear or you are dead.

STEFAN

Calm down. We hired you to stage the hit on Jabulani Mkhize.

BLACKJACK

I don't playing games. Get back in your car and go before I kill you.

STEFAN

(Ignoring him)

We'll do better. 50,000 rand per hit. When one is paying that kind of money, one likes to do a test drive. Jabu Mkhizi was on test drive, you were on a test drive.

BLACKJACK

A man offers you twice what you asked for, usually he'll screw you. Usually, I kill him.

STEFAN

Don't. It would be counterproductive. Blackjack, working for us, that Porsche will quickly become a Lamborghinis. This garage in Soweto will become a mansion in Houghton or Sandtown.

BLACKJACK

I hate those neighborhoods.

STEFAN

Then build your own. I am talking a lifestyle change. That's your choice here.

Blackjack thinks for a second. The pistol comes down.

STEFAN (CONT'D)

Black or white, there is a dividing line in this country. Those who make it and run the show. The rest are picking up the scraps. Fencing blenders from tsostis is picking up the scraps.

BLACKJACK

You are not dead, so I guess I am listening.

STEFAN

Precisely timed hits, like clockwork. Some shooting, some explosions. Taxi industry. Every hit is already planned.

BLACKJACK

How much notice?

STEFAN

An hour or two. But here is the key. You must drive a taxi. It's must look internal, like regular taxi violence.

BLACKJACK

You want me in a disguise?

STEFAN

You're a professional. Do what you think necessary to stay under the radar. We know who you were, what you did and, hopefully, are still good at. The man at the top is very wealthy and generous.

BLACKJACK
How will I receive the targets?

Stefan pulls a new late model mobile phone.

STEFAN
You'll get instructions on this phone.

BLACKJACK
No. It's traceable.

Blackjack unlocks a drawer that is full of sim cards and stolen phones. He gets out a pile of sim cards.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)
The sim cards go in pairs. One for me, one for you. The number printed on the card is the new phone number. Use the card once, Stefan. Once.

STEFAN
You are as smart as they say.

BLACKJACK
It's why I am alive. You throw the sim away after each hit. You get me?

STEFAN
It makes sense. I just need to check....

BLACKJACK
Get out!

STEFAN
Calm down...

BLACKJACK
This is not negotiable. Nothing leads back to me. You pay cash, never contact me on my number. And never use the same number twice.

Stefan acquiesces, taking out 40,000 rand and trying to neatly stack it on a table. The money keeps falling as he layers them.

STEFAN
An advance for materials.

BLACKJACK
Ever hear of an envelope?

The men share a genuine smile.

STEFAN
I knew there had to be a smile in there somewhere.

INT. SHEBEEN - SEEDY, WATERING HOLE - SOWETO

Nelson comes in and hands over a collection of coins and small notes to his dad. Lunga is livid.

LUNGA

Jesus, boy. What kind of tips are these?

NELSON

They put up the price of the taxi.

LUNGA

(Slaps him across the head)
That's not something that helps me pay the bills. Now get the beers into the fridge before the ice melts.

NELSON

(tears well in his eyes)
The fridge is still broken?

LUNGA

Did you earn enough money to fix it?

Nelson is about to say something...

LUNGA (CONT'D)

Eat some supper before you start, child.
If that brother of yours hasn't eaten everything in sight.

NELSON

Ntate. Have you eaten?

LUNGA

Shut up. I will be fine. The ancestors will provide.

NELSON

Yes, sir.

Nelson tucks into his food, a meager serving of pap, gravy and a stringy meat. He is determined to not to cry.

INT. MELROSE ARCH HOTEL - PRESIDENTIAL SUITE

An extraordinary woman's ass...with a hundred rand bill slid into the crack. CAMERA widens out, money is strewn around the hotel room. Blackjack mounts Serena and grinds her with increasing intensity. Still inside her Blackjack brings her to the mirrored wall and fucks her while watching himself. She climaxes, collapsing on him.

SERENA
 (whispering in his ear)
 You kill me.

BLACKJACK
 I'd never do that.

He stares at her. She stares back, she does love him.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)
 I mean, who else fucks like we do?

Wrong answer, she pulls up off his chest.

SERENA
 I didn't know we were in competition.

Serena, irritated, goes into the bathroom. He bounds to the bathroom door and watches her put on makeup. He grabs her and turns her toward the mirror, doggy style.

BLACKJACK
 I need more of you.

SERENA
 Baby, that's sweet but I gotta...

BLACKJACK
 Put extra on my bill.

In the mirror, we see a momentary flash of humiliation before a switch goes off. Serena, the pro, returns.

SERENA
 (perfect performance)
 Oh. Then come and get it.

He picks her up, puts her on the counter and enters her again. Her toiletries smash onto the floor as he bangs her against the mirror. She pushes against him. He pushes her even harder. The mirror shatters, pieces falling to the floor. Even more turned on, he drives her harder.

JUMP CUT TO:

Blackjack, back in bed, has her money stacked up next to him. Serena, fully dressed, walks across the broken glass in her stilettos.

BLACKJACK
 I could live in a place like this.
 Modern... maids with fresh sheets.

SERENA
 Really? It's too impersonal for me. It's not a home. Back in Romania, we had a big house, lots of kids.
 (MORE)

SERENA (CONT'D)
 (She looks at him)
 I wish you could have seen it.

BLACKJACK
 I like the service in these hotels.

Wrong answer. She puts her money in her bag.

SERENA
 So what's the new member of the "black diamonds empowerment set" doing now?

BLACKJACK
 Going another few rounds with you.

SERENA
 I wish I could, baby, but this was last minute. I got somewhere I have to be.

BLACKJACK
 I'm not done. I want more you.

SERENA
 (slowly walking to him)
 I have to keep my word to my clients, that's how I am respected. You don't want something that isn't respected.

BLACKJACK
 I respect it. I just need more of it.

She slides on top of him.

SERENA
 Baby, we know what we know. Like when you don't show for weeks, I know. Now, you know I got to go and keep my word. That allows us to be exactly who we are.

Blackjack is so frustrated, he is ready to pop. She kisses him and gets up and returns to the bathroom.

SERENA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Now, if you want, you should take me to dinner. A proper date.

Blackjack thinks, gets up and walks out on the patio.

EXT. MELROSE ARCH HOTEL - POOL AREA

Blackjack walks toward the famous pool where, in the shallow end, diners sit at dining tables with their bare feet shin deep in water. He drops his towel. Diners are frozen. A woman drops a fork of food into the pool. By their reactions, Blackjack clearly wasn't done having sex. He dives into the pool naked.

Serena walks out to the pool where Blackjack is wading. Serena notices everyone staring then realizes he's naked.

SERENA
(almost sisterly)
Mr. Man, I can't take you anywhere.

BLACKJACK
I needed to cool off.

SERENA
I'm serious. There's a you inside of you.
We're all on the same plane, the same
airport but you land on a different
runway.

They stare at each other for a long beat.

SERENA (CONT'D)
So, should I mark off tomorrow night just
for the two of us?

BLACKJACK
(with little enthusiasm)
Mark it off.

SERENA
Love you, baby.

She waits, he says nothing. Serena turns, walks to the lobby through the black glass doors.

INT. SHEBEEN- SOWETO

It's Sunday night and people are coming into the shebeen to buy beer, coffee, and soap. Nelson and Desmond are trying to get the soccer match on the old TV.

LUNGA
You lazy snots. It's going to be Friday
madness any minute. Don't think you can
just watch television like rich boys?

DESMOND
Dad, we're just trying to fix it for the
customers to keep the crowds here.

LUNGA
Don't talk back, insolent child.

Lunga goes to hit Desmond. Nelson jumps in front of his little brother. Lunga pauses, then not really having the strength to hit the older boy, snorts with disgust. People come in and sit, talk, watch TV. Nelson puts on music and people start dancing. The camera catches:

Lunga laughs, singing along to Caiphus Semenya.

LUNGA (CONT'D)

(To Nelson)

Didn't I tell you the ancestors were on
our side today?

Nelson obliges by pouring a bit of beer on the floor.

NELSON

Ncencani bo Shibase (Suckle up Shibase's -
- clan name)

Lunga smiles in approval. An overly made up woman comes and pulls Lunga towards the dance floor. Soon he is in the middle of the circle busting some old school moves. Because he is sick, Lunga dances slow. People laugh, egging him on. Nelson can't help but smile at his old dad having fun. Suddenly, the power goes out. Everyone screams, "BLACKOUT" and laughs.

The music resumes and we follow a cord out of the boombox, along the wall, out the door, on the roof and up to the street light. Desmond, Nelson and a few friends have connected jumper cables and extension cords to the street light. As they scatter back to the shebeen, someone inside changes the CD to put on different music. THE LIGHT CHANGES. EVERY TIME SOMEONE CHANGES THE SONG...THE LIGHT CHANGES. THE CARS ON THE STREET STOP AND START AND STOP AND START.

Nelson slides behind the counter to serve more beer. He looks down at the jar. The top is off. The money inside gone. Nelson pushes through the crowd, running out front into the dark to look for the thief. He turns his angry face up to the sky.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Fuck. Fuck you. You fucking ancestors are
supposed to be on our side.

(Still looking up)

Nothing. Like always, you got nothing for
me.

EXT. BLACKJACK'S BUILDING - SAME SUNRISE

The door rolls up and Blackjack steps out as the township is waking up. A woman sweeps her dusty stoop with a clutch of branches. A drunk staggers home. The Old Man is in his position, the same five oranges in row. Blackjack shakes his head at him.

OLD MAN

The old don't sleep. Who else would watch
the world? Who else would guide the
warriors being born?

A group of Zionists in blue and white regalia march by beating drums and singing.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Ah, the drums. Did you sleep like a mountain and wake like thunder? All of Africa is waking to a gathering. Your world is coming to visit.

BLACKJACK

If my world is coming for a visit, make sure the front of the building is clean.

Blackjack reaches in and grabs a broom

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)

Here. Now you have a job.

An old kombi with dented doors pulls up and drives in. The old man sings a religious song, butchering the words.

OLD MAN

We Jeremiah. Buyele khaya. Uzowashi imoto. Ezizoku godusa.
(Jeremiah, come home and wash the car that'll take you back.)

Blackjack laughs and goes in.

INT. SHEBEEN- SOWETO

Nelson, wearing only underwear and a T-shirt, wakes up under the foosball table with a start, banging his head.

LUNGA

Falling asleep under the table. I had to undress you like when you five.

He rolls over and finds his clothes neatly folded next to him. Suddenly, he rummages inside his shoes. Nothing.

LUNGA (CONT'D)

Question is, did you hide it from me? Or did you steal it from me?

NELSON

I didn't. It was a tip!

LUNGA

Tips? There are no tips. Everything I make and you make feeds this family.

NELSON

It got so busy when I got home. I wanted to surprise you and fix the fridge.

LUNGA

LIAR. We're going down, this whole family.

(MORE)

LUNGA (CONT'D)

(Going off)

I lost your mother, an angel, to the disease. I have it myself. Then to be punished with a lying, ungrateful son.

NELSON

Pop, please. Stop.

LUNGA

I can't take it!

Nelson tries to hug his father. Lunga will not let himself be held, as if tenderness would be too much.

NELSON

I try...

LUNGA

NOT ENOUGH. I need you to be...

Lunga abruptly stops, walks through the back curtain. Nelson sits there, broken.

INT. BLACKJACK'S BUILDING

An old, nasty taxi pulls in to Blackjack's building and parks right next to the Porsche. XOLO DLAMINI, 48, wearing coveralls and cap, steps out of the cab.

XOLO

Blackjack, bra.

BLACKJACK

My crazy comrade. How are you?

The two men hug. It's the first time we have seen Blackjack with his persona and guard completely down.

XOLO

Getting old. Getting slow.

BLACKJACK

Stop it. You are the magic man. What would I do without my go-to man?

XOLO

I brought what you wanted. How ugly you need it?

BLACKJACK

Xolo, you did good. Not sure it could get any uglier.

XOLO

Kyk hier (look here).

He pulls a lever revealing a false back hiding a gun.

XOLO (CONT'D)

Just thought you might need it. Just like the old MK days, sneaking back across the border. I'm sentimental.

BLACKJACK

Fuck the old days. You can have them.

XOLO

Nothing wrong with nostalgia. There is no place for me in the new South Africa.

BLACKJACK

Yeah, I been thinking about that as well. What else do you got?

Xolo opens the backseat revealing: a rifle, a pistol, an uzzi, hand grenades, knives.

XOLO

Just like the old MK days.

BLACKJACK

The only memory I hold on to from those days is you.

Blackjack hands him a wad of money and they shake hands.

XOLO

My man, The clutch on this thing sticks.
(Parting thought)
Watch out if you going to taxi world.
Man, that shit is vrot (nasty).

The door rolls up. Blackjack walks Xolo outside and stands there. The Old Man looks at Blackjack.

OLD MAN

There are many ways to travel. A warrior is only a warrior if he completes the journey.

BLACKJACK

Get some new oranges. Those are old.

OLD MAN

Not as old as your new car.

Blackjack turns and walks back in his house.

INT. BLACKJACK'S HOUSE - MONTAGE .

A montage of a ritual. He tries an outfit: A viscose golf shirt, a shit looking old coverall, parts his hair, tsotsi style. Subtle changes.

He then puts a gold tooth on a front tooth, looks in the mirror and shakes his head.

BLACKJACK
(Street accent)
Bob!

He laughs at himself. But he's pleased. He turns on the new mobile phone. There is a text waiting:

NOW GO BE A DRIVER.

EXT. HILLBROW STREET

As Blackjack drives he opens his glove box and checks his own phone and phone Stefan gave him. Nothing.

A line of people signal for a taxi. Blackjack doesn't notice them. A Metro cop behind him whizzes his siren. Annoyed, Blackjack stops.

The cop approaches. Blackjack eyes him with irritation.

METRO COP
What are you doing?

BLACKJACK
Don't you know who I...

Realizing the cop doesn't recognize him, Blackjack drops into character, instantly losing his educated English, and speaks with a rural accent.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)
Sorry, baas.

METRO COP
You got a problem with those people?

BLACKJACK
What people?

METRO COP
They're called passengers. That sticker in the window says you're a taxi.

Blackjack never actually considered picking people up. The cop returns to his car but trails him. Blackjack stops at the next taxi stop. A middle aged man, a young black girl/white guy couple and some school kids jump in.

They drive as several police cars race by. A headline sign says: ARE WE IN A FULL OUT TAXI WAR? Blackjack looks back, the young couple making out.

MIDDLE AGED MAN
Hey, you two. This is not a motel.

Blackjack's phone buzzes with a text.

**GO TO JAKOTA RANK. TIME
IS SET. TARGET TBA.
EXPLOSIVES.**

Blackjack drives on with his passengers.

INT. POLICE TRACKING STATION

The room has a large, interactive traffic map.
Manelisi's phone is hooked up to a bunch of wires.
Suddenly, a green light appears on the map, flashing...

THEO

We are up. That's him. The dead driver
called that handset twice. We've got him
as long as he keeps that phone turned on.

Kabelo grabs a microphone and talks into it:

KABELO

Mahole, we've got a satellite read on the
phone. HE'S AT THE SANDTOWN RANK.

EXT. JOBURG SKY - SCORPION'S HELICOPTER

Ronnie and Joseph fly low across the Joburg skyline.
Joseph holds a GPS locator in his hand.

RONNIE

We got him. Fucking block him in there.
(Into a radio)
All units to Sandtown. Close down the
Sandtown rank now, until we get there.

KABELO (ON SPEAKERPHONE)

I can't do that.

RONNIE

Close down the fucking rank, you poos.

EXT. SANDTON TAXI RANK

Blackjack pulls up to the Sandton rank. Everyone gets
out. The rank manager comes up to him.

RANK MANAGER

Who the fuck are you? Jakota puts in new
drivers and never tells me.

The manager answers his phone, and goes apoplectic.

RANK MANAGER (CONT'D)
 NO. NO. TELL THE MOTHER FUCKING COPS THEY
 ARE NOT CLOSING THE RANK.

Blackjack, hearing this, drives off.

RANK MANAGER (CONT'D)
 (yelling after him)
 Hey, hold on, the cops are closing the
 rank.

Blackjack drives towards the exit but an arriving police car blocks the exit to the rank. There is hole in the wire fence and people escape the rank through it. The cops make haste to guard the hole. The rank manager is in an argument with SERGEANT PATEL, 35 Indian.

RANK MANAGER (CONT'D)
 Are you going to make up the money we'll
 lose? Forget it. No one closes the rank.

SERGEANT PATEL
 This comes straight from the top.

RANK MANAGER
 Tell the cops some people work for a
 living. How are they supposed to get to
 work?

The passengers grumble in agreement. Blackjack eyes the scene, counting cops and possible escape routes.

BOYFRIEND
 Last time they closed the rank I almost
 got fired for being late. Let's go.

Sergeant PATEL steps up close to the rank. Immediately, drivers and inkabis (killer bodyguards) begin to show their weapons. The cops do the same, but Sergeant PATEL indicates for them to be cool. A taxi slowly drives up right close to the police car blocking the entrance. Sergeant PATEL is talking to the cop in the police car.

SERGEANT PATEL
 Don't you move that car!
 (To the rank manager)
 We are closing the rank as part of a
 criminal investigation.

The taxi is practically on top of the police car. The policeman scoots over to the passenger seat. A second taxi pulls up and sandwiches in the cop car. The first taxi makes contact and starts rocking the police car. Frightened, the policeman turns the engine on.

SERGEANT PATEL (CONT'D)
 You! Stay there.

The taxi's rev their engines, goading him. Sparks fly as metal scrapes metal and the police car makes it's escape. Instantly, taxis scramble out of the rank. Pandemonium breaks out as more police cars arrive, immediately trying to avoid crashing into escaping taxis.

Blackjack just makes it through the exit before it is blocked again by police cars. In his taxi, the young black girl cries on her boyfriend's shoulder.

BLACKJACK
What's wrong with her?

BOYFRIEND
She's just scared brother. Just scared.

Blackjack just drives on. His phone rings with a text.

U HAVE 10 MINUTES.

INT. SCORPIONS HELICOPTER

Ronnie and Joseph are frustrated. They are unable to land because of the hundred or so taxi's below.

RONNIE
Joe, get that clearance.

JOSEPH
Ja, ja.

Joseph's mobile rings.

RONNIE
Kabelo?

KABELO (ON SPEAKERPHONE)
Signal's moved. He was in Rosebank but is now on the move. Last read Booyens area. I'd say he's heading to Soweto.

RONNIE
Fuck, there's only about a million ranks in Soweto.

KABELO
Sorry. You'll know as soon as we have a radius.

INT. JAKOTA RANK - DRIVER'S HALL

A huge hall where the drivers hang out between the rush hours. There is a pool table, a spaza (a take out cafe), a television, sofas and chairs. Blackjack walks in, taking everything in quick cuts, imputing every detail.

With just a few physical changes, Blackjack looks just like one of these drivers, and not anything like himself.

In one corner a group is gathered, laughing. A driver, JOHNNIE, a local comedian, is doing his routine.

JOHNNIE

So I picked up this big mama, BIG, and she sits in the back. I know my suspension is shot but suddenly I'm hearing metal on metal. This mama made the kombi's frame cut into the gas tank. Some guy throws a cig out of his window right into a puddle of my gas. Suddenly, there's smoke. The back of my kombi is on fire. We pull this fat cow out of the back. THE BITCH IS ON FIRE. Had to throw her into the fountain.

(His big finish)

All I could say was, "This ride's on me!"

The room erupts into laughter and the normal milling-about returns. Johnnie catches Blackjack's eye.

Blackjack engages in the conversation but seems to be practicing a new accent, a new walk.

JOHNNIE (CONT'D)

Hey, mfowethu. You're a new one.

BLACKJACK

(in his street accent)

Yebo, I just started.

JOHNNIE

Welcome. You can never have too many friends, especially in this place. C'mon, I'll show you around.

(Sticks out his hand)

Johnnie Ngubeni. Watch me. One day I'll be a celebration (celebrity). You are?

BLACKJACK

Chakide.

CHAIRMAN MICHAEL NJOMANE comes in with Moses Mpanza.

JOHNNIE

He's the new chairman, Michael Njomane. The last one died last week.

BLACKJACK

What happened?

JOHNNIE

Drove into a bullet. The nasty piece of work with him is Moses Mpanza. Try not to even look at his ugly face.

BLACKJACK

Okay. Stay clear of Moses Mpanza.

JOHNNIE

That'll be hard. You hand him your rank fees. Welcome to the rank, bra.

BLACKJACK

Thanks.

JOHNNIE

(big persona gone; quietly)
And if you need a little cash or a place to stay, talk to me as well. I can help.

BLACKJACK

But don't even know me.

JOHNNIE

Oh, but I do. Instinct. You're a good man.

They shake and Johnnie walks away. Blackjacks sits next to a group of drivers playing dice to observe everything.

Nelson comes in, instantly overwhelmed by everything. We see him gather up all of his courage and come over the drivers next to Blackjack.

NELSON

Sanibona bobaba, you need a driver for one of your taxis? I can make money for you while you sleep.

An old-timer takes pity on him enough to stop and answer.

OLD TIMER

Kid, start by washing some kombis. That's how you start.

Out the window, Nelson sees many teenagers washing taxis.

NELSON

Washing kombis?

OLD TIMER

Too good to wash kombis? That's how you start here.

Nelson respectfully tips his cap, going next to Blackjack.

NELSON

Hey, you got a shift needs filling in? Please? I need a gig after hours.

Nelson doesn't recognize Blackjack from shebeen. But

Blackjack recognizes Nelson.

BLACKJACK
Why you want to drive so bad?

NELSON
(trying to look mature)
I need work.

OLD TIMER
Boy, where's your parents?

NELSON
(shakes his head)
My mom was a shebeen queen. She died
last year of the big A.

OLD TIMER
Boy, don't work for sympathy here. Nobody
in this place ain't got a story about the
Aids worm. That won't get you anywhere.

Nelson, blown away by the guy's cruelty, walks away.

OLD TIMER (CONT'D)
These tsotsi kids will try anything..

Blackjack checks the time and crosses the parking lot
passing a defeated Nelson, and returns to his taxi.

He takes the wire, a hook, some duct tape and a hand
grenade out of the back compartment. He does a few
twists with the wire, tears off a piece of tape, and puts
it all in his pocket. Text buzzes.

WHITE BMW
TARGET: CHAIRMAN NJOMANE

CHAIRMAN MICHAEL NJOMANE'S PHOTO

A white BMW is parked between the administration building
and the driver's hall. Blackjack gets out of the kombi
and walks to the BMW's driver door. Then he drops his
keys, gently kicking them under the car. Bending down,
Blackjack quickly wedges a grenade next to the gas tank,
pulls the wire taut and tapes it to the door hinge. Then
he is up, with his keys, dusting himself off. He walks
over to the spaza and buys a coke.

EXT. JAKOTA TAXI RANK - ROOF - 30 SECONDS LATER

Blackjack's POV: Chairman Njomane comes out and walks
toward the BMW. At the same time, Johnnie, the funny
driver, comes out of the hall and seeing the chairman,
jogs over to him. Johnnie repeats the fat lady story. A
mildly puzzled look is on Blackjack's face.

JOHNNIE
This ride is on me!

The chairman laughs, opens his door and Johnnie helps him close it. The car explodes in a huge fire ball. Johnnie's body is blown high in the air, landing 15 feet from Blackjack's kombi, splattering blood on the windshield.

People run out of the buildings. Nelson is one of the first on the scene.

Blackjack gets out of the kombi and walks over to Johnnie's body. In the chaos of people screaming, Blackjack looks like a boy who pulled the wings off his first butterfly and can't understand why it can't fly.

Blackjack gets back in his kombi and drives out. On the street, he pulls out the phone's sim card, hurls it into the ashtray and puts in a new sim card. A text buzzes.

GOOD WORK.

Blackjack looks at the phone. After a beat, he picks up his own phone and texts something.

EXT. JAKOTA TAXI RANK

Fire trucks, ambulances and cop cars clog the rank. Nelson wanders around in a daze and encounters VIRUS, 25, barking orders to kids washing his taxi. Virus is fielding calls and texting on a high end Nokia. Virus talks in "tsosti-taal", a ghetto dialect spoken by criminals and kids who want to be cool.

NELSON
Did you see what happen?

He is an annoying fly to Virus.

NELSON (CONT'D)
Hey bra, you need a driver?

Virus writes a text while Nelson waits patiently.

VIRUS
(not looking up)
No money in driving. You want is to be my stuurboy.

The offer stops Nelson in his tracks.

NELSON
Your what?

VIRUS
(not looking up)
Drop offs, pick ups.

Nelson knows the casual tone implies trouble: drugs.

NELSON
Bra, I'd rather drive.

VIRUS
Aw, little shit, will no one make you a driver? You start washing taxis. Then maybe someday some driver gets shot and you get to drive a taxi for the owner, who pays you nothing. Boom. Bye-bye.

NELSON
If I work for you, what will I make?

VIRUS
Those old madalas in there pull down, what? Three clipas a week?

NELSON
A week? That's all they make?

VIRUS
I'll pay you double. 600 rand.

Nelson knows this is the deal with the devil.

NELSON
Why me?

VIRUS
Cops won't stop you. So wear those stupid, good boy clothes, Okay?

NELSON
800 rand.

VIRUS
Fuck you, little shit face. Any one of these kids would take half.

NELSON
They don't wear stupid, good boy clothes.

Nelson's leg is shaking but he is holding his ground.

VIRUS
Guts. Alright, 700.

Nelson is staring at a group of the old drivers.

VIRUS (CONT'D)
NO TIME FOR BABY CRAP. Yes or no?

NELSON

Let's go.

VIRUS

Okay. Smile. You just got a job.

Nelson looks around and musters up a smile. Virus and Nelson get in and take off, music blaring.

INT. SCORPIONS CAR

Joseph and Ronnie, in a new Chevrolet, are driving.

KABELO (ON SPEAKERPHONE)

There's been a bombing at the Jakota rank. The new chairman of Jakota, dead.

RONNIE

Bloody bliksim THIS fook!

JOSEPH

We are almost there.

KABELO (ON SPEAKERPHONE)

Forget it. Your boy is already on the move again.

RONNIE

Fuck. We are always a step behind this asshole. We need to get in front of him.

Joseph looks at Ronnie.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

What?

Joseph is about to say something when:

KABELO (ON THE SPEAKER)

It looks like he is headed to Yeoville.

They do a U-turn, sending traffic in every direction.

KABELO (ON SPEAKERPHONE)

(CONT'D)

Van der Ruit, there are a lot of very pissed off taxi people. You can't keep disturbing these ranks.

RONNIE

Dumb shit, if there is a full-on war, we can really talk about a disruption.

JOSEPH

Kabelo, Ronnie made the right decision.
Start thinking like a cop and not a
pussy.

RONNIE

Thanks. When we get this cunt, I'm going
to slice pieces off this fookin mampara.

JOSEPH

Quit talking dirty, you're turning me on.

Both surprised by how they get along, they turn into
Rockey Street, Yeoville. Organized chaos. This is the
African melting pot of Johannesburg: Twenty languages,
businesses, bars, hair salons and cell phone shops.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Welcome to Rocky Street. Where stolen
phones go to die.

The two cops just sit there in their car staring at the
thousands of mobile phones on the street.

EXT. JOHANNESBURG STREETS

Nelson is clearly nervous as he rides with Virus.

VIRUS

Relax, little friend. You will like my
business. Open the glove box.

Nelson opens the glove box. Inside is a packet of white
powder freeze dried to the size of a cigarette packet.
And an empty Craven 'A' cigarette box.

VIRUS (CONT'D)

That is the future. Tik. Crystal.

Nelson is holding the packet...staring at it.

VIRUS (CONT'D)

Best thing is it's made from cold
medicine. Now fit it into the empty
cigarette box.

Nelson does as he is told. When finished, he looks up to
see that they are in Hillbrow.

NELSON

Virus, this is Hillbrow. This is solid
Nigerian territory. You in with them?

VIRUS

The Nigerians are greedy. I get the
people what they need for cheaper.

NELSON

Those freaks are crazy. They'll fucking kill you just because it's Tuesday.

He pulls over to a building. People mill about in front.

VIRUS

Relax, boy. See the guy in the yellow jumper selling lacquer boxes? Tell him you'll trade a pack of cigarettes for a box. Make the trade, come back to papa.

Nelson knows this is the pact with the devil. No way out, Nelson gets out and walks toward the man.

EXT. HILLBROW BUILDING

Nelson's POV: every eye on him. A normal walk is fraught with danger. He walks up to the guy with the boxes.

VENDOR

Yeah, bra, what you want?

NELSON

Trade you a box for a pack of cigarettes?

The vendor is seasoned, pausing for just a second then pulls a box out of a bag under his chair.

VENDOR

Sure. Enjoy.

The walk back for Nelson is fast, triumphant.

EXT. YEOVILLE -

Joseph and Ronnie stand in the middle of the chaotic street market. Joseph is reading a text on his phone.

JOSEPH

Final ballistics on the Njomane's BMW. A South African military hand grenade.

(A beat)

Let's do this your way.

RONNIE

Great. What way is that?

JOSEPH

You just said it. We're detectives, not chase dogs. Let's get in front of him.

(A beat)

What is he? Don't think. What is he?

RONNIE
A sniper.

JOSEPH
A bomber.

RONNIE
A terrorist.

JOSEPH
My first thought. Military.

RONNIE
Okay, military. Which means my comrades-

JOSEPH
Or mine.

They stare at each other.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
You protecting anyone?

RONNIE
Fuck you, Joe. You think I'm here because I'm protecting people? I made my choice fifteen years ago.

JOSEPH
Not an accusation. A question.

RONNIE
What about you? Big hero and all. They going to just open the books to you?

JOSEPH
(Flying off the handle)
Fuck you. I get that shit at home and the station, so drop it. Look, I am not crazy about going into MK past. It's a rather secretive thing, even now. Lot of unhappy people in MK dirty laundry.

RONNIE
We...maybe need to...do this seperately. I can't go look into old Battalion 32 crap with a black. Might slow down the investigation just a bit.

JOSEPH
Okay...we separate. You go to your sources and I'll go to mine.
(After a beat)
If you need to cross the line, do it under the radar.

RONNIE

Okay.

INT. BLACKJACK'S BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Blackjack sits, his Glock in his lap. There is a horn outside the roll-up door. Blackjack clicks the opener. Stefan pulls his BMW series inside the garage. He gets out with a bag which he places in front of Blackjack.

STEFAN

You can count it.

BLACKJACK

I better not need to.

STEFAN

Come on, we need each other, my bru. You can trust me.

BLACKJACK

Since when are we eating at the same table?

As Blackjack counts the cash, Stefan looks around.

STEFAN

Okay, okay. Your whole set up just seems a bit lonely.

Blackjack stops counting, scowls at Stefan then returns to the counting. Stefan continues rabbetting on.

STEFAN (CONT'D)

Listen to me, I sound like my wife. She's American. Keeps talking about how lonely, she is, that this country has no future, that everyone is out for themselves. She's not African, like us. .

Blackjack's phone buzzes with a text. Reading it, there's a odd reaction on Blackjack's face.

Blackjack picks up the Glock. Stefan's eyes widen and he flips out of the way just as Blackjack pulls his trigger. The bullet bounces off Blackjack's taxi.

STEFAN (CONT'D)

Shit!

BLACKJACK

Nothing personal, man.

STEFAN

Double crossing fuck. He betray you as well. After you're done, he'll kill you.

BLACKJACK

Who is he?

Stefan hides amongst the myriad of crap in the building.

STEFAN

I don't know. He is a just a voice on the phone. But I have stuff on him in my home safe, in case he tried to fuck me.

BLACKJACK

Bullshit.

Realizing that Stefan is behind a the big appliance box, Blackjack shoots one shot into the box. Stefan falls from behind it. The bullet has pierced Stefan's heart.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)

You were right. He fucked you.

Blackjack stands there. CU On Blackjack's phone. We see a picture of Stefan on the picture message. The phone rings...he pushes the hands-free button.

CLIENT (V.O.)

I appreciate you making changes at the last minute. You will be compensated for the extra work.

BLACKJACK

Good. And by the way, we're done.

CLIENT

What?

BLACKJACK

You heard me. I'm done with this job.

CLIENT

No. Our relationship is one that is ongoing. You work for me now..

BLACKJACK

Fuck off. I said I'm done.

Blackjack hangs up. Immediately, the phone rings again. Blackjack does not pick up. It continues to ring.

MONTAGE: EXT. JOHANNESBURG STREET

In the middle of the night, several men can be seen working on the roads, pulling covers off man holes.

In the middle of the day, a succession of taxis slam into the uncovered holes. Kombis with blown out tires and busted suspensions are all over.

On another street, passengers are herded at gun point out of one taxi and into another. The driver of the first taxi is dead in his seat.

EXT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE

The girls are sleeping in the back. Both Joseph and Mmabatho look knackered as they arrive home.

MMABATHO
This new car is quite the...

JOSEPH
...piece of shit.

Joseph punches in a code into the key pad outside the house. On their gate is a sign proclaiming: PROTECTED BY PITBULL ARMED RESPONSE. The gate doesn't budge.

He tries the code again. A siren begins to wail.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
Ah Christ.

MMABATHO
They changed the code yesterday.

Before they can even get out of the car, a swarm of uniformed security guards descends on them, guns at the ready, hemming the car in from all sides.

PITBULL SECURITY #1
Freeze. Let me see your hands!

Joseph flings the door open.

JOSEPH
FUCKING IDIOTS.

The guards panic.

PITBULL SECURITY #2
Hold it! Hold!

JOSEPH
What is wrong with you! Guns first, questions later? My kids are in there!

PITBULL SECURITY
Captain Mahola, sorry. Excuse us sir.

Mmabatho gives her husband a wary look as she punches the right code in. The gate opens.

JOSEPH
Stupid, ignorant fools.

The over-the-top reaction now has the guards upset. As they walk back to their car, one says to the other, not intending for Joseph to hear-

PITBULL SECURITY #1
Some hero, what a jerk,!

But Joseph does hear it and goes ballistic. He runs back to the guard, grabs his shoulders, spinning him around. He is about to punch him.

MMABATHO
JOSEPH! JOSEPH MAHOLE.

He stops just before he slugs the security guy.

JOSEPH
(to the security guards)
Just go. GO.

The security guys scurry to the car and drive off. Joseph walks back to Mmabatho. He hands her an envelope he clearly has had in his back pocket for days. He turns around and walks out of the gate and down the street. Mmabatho watches him then opens and reads the letter.

EXT. KLEINFONTIEN - DAY

This is a dusty, ugly little town. The signs are in Afrikaans. The few people on the street are all white. Ronnie gets out of his car, pauses for a minute and lights a cigarette. He stares down the street. He looks miserable. He snubs out the cig and walks into a shop.

INT. SHOP - DAY

Ronnie goes up to the counter. The sign at the top reads: KLEINFONTEIN GENERAL STORE. SLEGS BLANKES (WHITES ONLY).

(All characters in Kleinfontien speak, unless otherwise noted, in Afrikaans. Italicized words will be subtitled.)

RONNIE
Gemmer. (ginger)

The Clerk, blonde 40's gives him a Stoney.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
Also, I'm looking for an old army friend
who lives around here. Gert Van Der Walt?

CLERK
I don't know that name, sorry.

RONNIE
Thanks anyway. I'll just sit for a while.
Ronnie sits in the cafe. The clerk picks up the phone.

EXT. CAFE - LATER

Ronnie smokes when a knife is slid next to his neck.

GERT
Move a centimeter and you're dead.

RONNIE
What do you want?

GERT
You dead, asshole.

The knife is pulled away. It's held by GERT VAN DER
WALT, 60, tall and in shape for his age. His face is full
of lines, years of sun having done its damage.

RONNIE
Gert. You sneaky bastard.

A clear affection flows between the two men as they clasp
hands. Ronnie hands Gert a cigarette. They light up.

GERT
Shit, you got old.

RONNIE
You got older. You look good, for a mean
old bastard.

GERT
This mean old bastard taught you how to
be a mean old bastard.

They laugh. But the banter seems to be over.

GERT (CONT'D)
(Switching to English)
Speak English. More private. People here
don't ever speak it anymore.

RONNIE
Okay. What is it, ten years?

GERT

Yeah. So it isn't Sunday church and we are not learning about the Prodigal son.

RONNIE

Ease up, Gert. You know this isn't leisure trip. It's work. I got a case, multiple murder, taxi stuff. I'm here because a military guy is doing hits.

GERT

And you think -

A truck comes to a screeching stop next to them. PIET VAN DER WALT, 40's, large belly, leaps out of the van, a rifle slung over his shoulder. Ronnie's eyes widen.

RONNIE

Piet?

The two men slap each other about the shoulder with more emotion than they know to show. It's the first time we see Ronnie really beaming with a smile.

PIET

You old thug!

RONNIE

You grew up. And you're fat!

PIET

Hey, I got me a great girl who knows how to cook. How's Margieta?

RONNIE

The same... mean as a snake.

They both laugh.

PIET

(To Gert)

Pa, did you tell him about it? You coming Saturday?

Saturday?

GERT

Piet is tying the knot.

PIET

The boys are giving a proper bachelor Saturday. Jaco, Frikkie, the Pretorius boys. You know all of them. You're my Godfather, you better be there.

It's really awkward.

RONNIE
Piet, we'll see.

GERT
Piet. Ronald was just leaving.

Gert gives Piet such a stern look that the younger man backs away awkwardly.

PIET
Okay. Well, good to see you Ronnie.

Piet wants to say more, but returns to his truck and drives off.

RONNIE
I'm allowed to talk to you, but not your son?

GERT
I know how to keep an enemy close without thinking he's a friend.

RONNIE
Is that what I am? The enemy?

GERT
You are with the blacks. That doesn't make you a friend. Anyway, you come here to talk taxi shit, then you are talking black. The taxi stuff is all black. Nothing to do with anyone here.

RONNIE
Hey, we started that shit.

GERT
Selling routes was all we did. The war now is them dealing with their animal hormones.

Ronnie, getting nowhere, gets very official.

RONNIE
I need to investigate all leads. Someone with military sniper training is picking off citizens. He almost picked me off.

GERT
Almost doesn't count.

They stare at each other.

GERT (CONT'D)
Did they send you because they know you were involved with the taxi shit in the beginning

RONNIE

No. No one knows about what went on back then. It's history.

GERT

A good, military history. You told Tutu's Shame Commission the least you needed to, to move on, I told what I needed to so I could continue the fight.

RONNIE

Continue the fight?

GERT

Fuck off, Ronnie.

RONNIE

I did intelligence. It is the truth. It's what I told them.

GERT

When you brought men's wives and children to me...did you think I was going to serve them tea? When you planted the evidence in their homes, did you think their neighbors would put pearls instead of burning tires around their throats? That's how you got your intelligence.

Gert is pushing the button on Ronnie's darkest shit. It's written all over Ronnie's face.

RONNIE

Stay in the present. That's the only reason why I am here. Do you know of any Battalion 32 special-ops guys who might be operating in the taxi wars.

GERT

No. Our guys, the ones who are still working, are in Somalia. Congo, mercenary work. No money in it here. No.

RONNIE

Gert, that's all I came to find out. You know, I...I care about you like family even if we don't agree on this stuff.

Ronnie sticks out his hand for a handshake.

GERT

This stuff is our country. To them I am still the enemy. For you, I am your memory. I know everything you did and I am proud of it. Now get out of here.

He doesn't shake Ronnie's hand. That refusal is a knife in Ronnie's heart. He turns and walks back to the car.

GERT (CONT'D)

And regarding your Godson Piet's bachelor party and wedding, don't show your face.

Ronnie gets into the car and drives away.

EXT. ALEXANDRA TOWNSHIP - DAY

Joseph, holding a 6-pack of beer with two are already drunk, walks the streets of the poorest part of the poorest township. A few people recognize him and say hi. A few criminals slink away because he is a cop.

He walks over to a lean-to shack constructed of corrugated sheet metal. The door is another piece of sheet metal. He knocks and slides it open.

SIFISO

What ever you want, I don't have it so go the fuck away.

Alone in the shack sits SIFISO, early 50's, skinny, looking much older, his thick glasses have a crack.

SIFISO (CONT'D)

No, no, it can't be the hero of the police force, Joseph Mahole.

JOSEPH

Hello, Sifiso.

Sifiso goes to hug Joseph who receives the hug gladly but is then hit with the smell of Sifiso's clothes.

SIFISO

I don't know what to offer you. Maybe I can find some...

JOSEPH

No, Sifisco, nothing. I brought beer.

Sifiso hugs Joseph again, which he endures.

SIFISO

If I had know you were coming, I would have prepared something. I would have.

JOSEPH

How you doing, Sif?

SIFISO

How or what? I have no work, my body is pretty wrecked from the war. No one hires old MK officers to work in a shop.

Joseph is sad to even look at him.

JOSEPH

I'm sorry. It doesn't seem fair.

SIFISO

Yeah, fair. Funny word.

(Changing the beat)

Anyway, you didn't come here to talk about an old soldier's woes. Tell me what you are doing?

JOSEPH

Raising a family. I was just made captain.

SIFISO

Then why do you look sad?

JOSEPH

No, I'm fine. I just need help on a case. We've got a killer out there in the taxi ranks.

SIFISO

You got hundreds of killers out there in the ranks.

JOSEPH

This is different. I am worried it might be one of us. He's a sniper, a great one. And just used a hand grenade wired to a car door. This guy...

SIFISO

Was behind the Iron Curtain.

JOSEPH

What?

SIFISO

The hand grenade thing was really only taught by the Soviets. So if he was MK, he was trained behind the Iron Curtain.

Joseph takes that in.

JOSEPH

Can you think of anyone who might be doing this?

SIFISO
Yeah. ME. AND ABOUT 100 OTHER GUYS. We
gave our lives to the struggle. We were
promised jobs.

JOSEPH
I know.

SIFISO
We spent our lives in the bush, we were
trained to do a job for our country. But
some of us didn't fit into police
uniforms very well.
(Directly to Joseph)
You seem to have done it very well.

JOSEPH
Maybe...maybe on the outside.

SIFISO
I came back and they offered me training.
(a beat)
Beading tourist trinkets.

There is a silence that is uncomfortable.

SIFISO (CONT'D)
Anyway, if this guy is MK, he would be so
angry at this country. Whatever is your
problem, Joseph, why you look sad...
multiply it by a hundred. That is how
mad this fucker is.

Joseph stares into Sifiso's eye.

EXT. THE FAMOUS UPSCALE RESTAURANT- CARNIVORE

Blackjack and Serena have just finished a meal. Serena
looks different, happy. Blackjack, dressed now as
himself, seems content. Serena grabs his hand.

SERENA
Give me your hand.

BLACKJACK
Hey.

Looks her in the eye, unsure how to react.

SERENA
Look at me, you know what you mean to me.

He grabs the back of her neck, and pulls her toward
his mouth, to kiss her. She reaches out...

SERENA (CONT'D)
Softer, touch me like this.

She picks up his hand, tracing his fingers across her neck, then her lips.

SERENA (CONT'D)
I hear things you say when you don't speak.

This intimacy seems to make him nervous.

BLACKJACK
Let's go. We can talk at the next surprise.

SERENA
(whispering in his ear)
I want you to make love to me like this.

BLACKJACK
(under his breath)
I do. I will.

Blackjack throws down a lot of money and gets up. The host practically bows to Blackjack as they go.

HOST
Lovely to see you again, sir. I hope your table was satisfactory?

SERENA
Thank you, Phillip.

BLACKJACK
Yes, thank you.

A 100 rand handshake is exchanged. They stroll to the parking area, but instead of his Porsche in the space, there is only a toy Porsche. It has been crushed. It has a little sign on that reads, "ANSWER YOUR PHONE NEXT TIME." Blackjack's face fills with anger.

SERENA
What is this?

BLACKJACK
Cunt! CUNT!

SERENA
Call the police.

Blackjack's phone rings. He picks up.

CLIENT
Don't disappoint me again. .

Blackjack hangs up and charges back into the restaurant, Serena behind him. He grabs the host by the throat.

BLACKJACK
Who have you been talking to?

SERENA
Blackjack, No!

Two bouncers lunge for Blackjack but he is too quick and, armed with a champagne magnum, he decks one of them.

The host is trying to get away and the entire restaurant is watching in horror. Blackjack grabs the host.

BLACKJACK
Someone knew I'd be here tonight!

HOST
He didn't say his name. He said... .

Blackjack punches him in teeth. Blood spews forth. Serena, completely horrified, hardens and walks away as if she does not know him.

BLACKJACK
Where you going?

Serena, not looking back, climbs into a cab. His phone rings again.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)
Listen here, you fuck. I'm going to hunt you down .
(He listens)
I'm coming.

Blackjack walks to the nearest car, smashes the window with his fist and hot-wires the car in seconds.

EXT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - THE PORCH - NIGHT

Ronnie, glassy eyed, sits alone on the porch drinking beer and smoking. As soon as he finishes the beer, he crushes the can and kicks down the steps. There are already several cans at the bottom.

EXT. ELSIE'S LITTLE TOWN HOUSE.(SOWETO) COLD DAWN.

Elsie, in a night dress, a blanket around her, sits on a pile of broken bricks. Neighbors comfort her. There's a smouldering pile of rubble where her home was.

Blackjack gets out of the stolen car and peers at the debris, shell shocked.

BLACKJACK

I swear, mother, I'm going to kill him!

ELSIE

Shut up! That all you have to say? Kill. Your solution to it all. This was my home. No one can give it back to me.

BLACKJACK

Ma, you have to go leave now. Go visit Aunt Mavis.

ELSIE

I just lost everything and your answer is to send me away?

BLACKJACK

Tonight, go. I'll fix this. I'll get you more money .

ELSIE

Think you can fix this with your money?

Esther arrives in a taxi, immediately going to calm Elsie. Blackjack hands Elsie all the cash he has got.

BLACKJACK

Buy some clothes for yourself...

ELSIE

How about the money you stashed in my walls for last eight years.

He turns, seeing the burned remnants of the old stove, and the wall where he hid the money.

ELSIE (CONT'D)

You think I didn't know? There's that wall. Go and get your money.

Blackjack stares at where all his money used to be.

ELSIE (CONT'D)

Son, listen to me. What I wanted for you was to be your own man, a free man. Not a slave to the white man, and not to money.

Blackjack's rage hardly lets him listen. He pulls away.

BLACKJACK

(To Esther)

Get her out of the rain. For her own safety, get her out of here.

He turns and walks away.

INT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

The living room is well furnished. Behind a wet bar, the mirrored walls are covered with citations and medals of Joseph's accomplishments. Joseph walks in, looking tired and sad. Mmabatho is sitting, drinking a glass of wine.

MMABATHO

Your dinner is in the oven. You look like shit.

JOSEPH

Thanks.

Joseph goes behind the bar and pours himself a drink.

MMABATHO

Do we talk about the offer? How long has the letter been in your ass pocket?

JOSEPH

Two weeks.

MMABATHO

Should I be the angry wife for not being consulted about my life? Should I be the grateful woman who lets herself get moved around by "her man"?

JOSEPH

Be whatever you want. That will make one of us.

She stares at him, really seeing his weariness.

MMABATHO

Well...

JOSEPH

It's Stockholm. It's safe.

MMABATHO

Who will we be?

JOSEPH

It's an incredible amount of money.

MMABATHO

We won't know anyone.

JOSEPH

I'll be designing security systems for companies, not chasing taxi murderers.

MMABATHO

What about my parents, your mother, our friends? My patients.

MMABATHO (CONT'D)

(Loud enough to stop him)

I don't want to go back being black living in a white country as a guest! Are you turning your back on South Africa? Everything we struggled to get?

He looks at his reflection in the mirror, his face amongst all the newspaper photos of him. He picks up a paper weight and hurls it against the mirror, shattering glass as awards fly off the walls.

MMABATHO (CONT'D)

JOSEPH MAHOLE!

JOSEPH

WHO IS THAT? A freedom fighter who isn't free? A hero only lauded for political reasons? A cop chasing people who don't know what a life is worth? 500 rand to kill someone one don't even know?

MMABATHO

I don't know what to say.

JOSEPH

Who would you say it to?

He picks up his kid's stuffed animal on the counter.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Say it to the toy cop. Say it to the fighter who lived in the bush and now is only chases his shadow.

MMABATHO

What are you talking about?

JOSEPH

I'm chasing a killer. I know him. Not his name but I know him. It's me before the BEE promotions, the awards. I am jealous. He still has life in him from those days. He's the lucky one...until I find and kill him.

Mmabatho stares at him, looking like he will explode.

EXT. STEFAN'S HOUSE

A white woman CYNTHIA MANNING, 40'S, comes towards the large gate looking distraught. She looks suspiciously at Blackjack, standing there, holding a bag.

CYNTHIA

What's this?

BLACKJACK

Ma'm, I have a delivery from Stefan.

CYNTHIA

My husband is dead.

BLACKJACK

I know.
(Beat)
I killed him.

Cynthia is frozen.

CYNTHIA

What did you say?

BLACKJACK

We worked together, then the boss had me
kill him.

CYNTHIA

Who told you...

BLACKJACK

If the boss thinks you know something,
he'll kill you too. Your phone is tapped.
Take this...

Blackjack gives her Stefan's watch. Cynthia weeps. Just
then a car rounds the corner.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)

Get inside!

He bends down to tie his shoe as the car whizzes past.
Cynthia tentatively opens the gate and lets Blackjack in.
The car drives on, just a family driving down the street.

INT. STEFAN'S STUDY

Blackjack looks through bookshelves and desks. He looks
at a framed picture of Stefan and Cynthia with two kids.
Cynthia stands at the door.

BLACKJACK

What do you know about Stefan's work?

CYNTHIA

He is...was a security consultant.

Blackjack looks at her with pity.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Did you really kill him?

BLACKJACK

Yes. That's what I do. That's what your
husband did.

She walks out. We hear her sobbing in the other room.

Intuition makes Blackjack return to the photo which he

smashes. Between the glass and the frame, he finds an electronic card.

He swipes the card across an old Chubb safe. It pops open. It's filled with bank books, passports, ID books.

He opens a file book and scans it. He finds his own profile on a fax. Blackjacks tears off the sender's number at the top of the page and shoves it in his pocket.

He puts the money and valuables in a bag and goes into the other room where Cynthia is smoking.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)

Here is what Stefan had. Sell the house and go back to America. Or, at least, go away from here till I catch the fucker.

CYNTHIA

Yesterday, I had a life. Now, I've got a bag of pawn. Should I thank you?

Blackjack looks into her eyes and walks out.

EXT. HILLS ABOVE JOHANNESBURG - SUNRISE

Ronnie drives up. Joseph is already there. Both of them look like crap.

JOSEPH

You look like shit.

RONNIE

I always look like shit. It's that you look like shit that is of concern.

They break into laughter; they are so tired.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Why are we out here?

JOSEPH

In case you wanted to tell me something I shouldn't hear at the station.

RONNIE

About my dirty laundry? It's dirty but our guy isn't B32. I saw the guy who knows where all the bones are buried and who's still operating. It isn't our guy. It doesn't make sense.

JOSEPH

Yeah. I think it's a rogue former MK guy. The only new thing my guy said was
(MORE)

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
the hand grenade was a soviet training thing.

RONNIE
Still, where's motive? Why would a crack shot soldier fight in the taxi wars for 500 rand a hit when he could make 75k doing mercenary work up in Congo or Iraq?

JOSEPH
This guy is an enigma.

Ronnie stares into the void, thinking.

RONNIE
You got your fancy ass computer?

JOSEPH
Yeah.

RONNIE
Get it. Wasn't there some freaky, mini revolt by about twenty disgruntled MK guerillas after Mandela came into office?

Joseph grabs his laptop out of the car.

JOSEPH
Yeah. It was over in about 5 hours.

RONNIE
Bring up the names of the guys who revolted.

JOSEPH
Under what? Longshot.com?

RONNIE
It's called police work, cream puff. Cross-referenced all MK guys trained in the old Soviet countries against a list of MK guys that revolted in '94.

Joseph does it.

JOSEPH
Twelve guys. Scratch that. Six are dead, four are in jail, one lives in the US. That leaves one...who disappeared without a trace.

Joseph hands him the laptop. There is a picture of Blackjack, 20 years ago, a clean cut boy.

RONNIE
Dumisa Mngomezulu, MK, left SA when he was a teenager, trained in Bulgaria. This guy's been off the grid since '95. No
(MORE)

RONNIE (CONT'D)
 driver's license, no bank account.
 Dumisa no longer exists in this world.

JOSEPH
 Wait. There is an address of his mother.

EXT. JOHANNESBURG STREET .

Blackjack alone, exhausted, his face looks fraught. At a stop light, he pulls out the phones and uses his own personal phone. He takes out the header of the fax sheet and dials the number at the top.

A GRUFF VOICE.
 Van Der Walt here, who's there..?

Blackjack instantly recognizes the voice. Suddenly, he is overcome with emotion, as if someone just slammed a pole into his gut. He can't breathe. Instantly, he opens the door just fast enough to throw up on the ground.

EXT. JOHANNESBURG STREETS

At a red light, Blackjack sits in his mini-bus taxi. He looks like a wounded animal, ready to gnaw off his leg.

Next to him, Virus's kombi pulls up with Nelson beside him. Blackjack recognizes Nelson. Nelson doesn't recognize Blackjack. They drive to the next red light.

VIRUS
 Jump out and get us some beers.

Virus and Blackjack both stop at the next red light. Nelson gets out and goes inside a bottle store. As Nelson exits the bottle store, a car pulls in front of Virus's kombi with two guys in front. The passenger, a Nigerian gangster, gets out and walks over to talk to Virus. Without a bit of fanfare, the man pulls out a revolver and shoots Virus in the face.

EXT. HILLBROW BOTTLE STORE - CONTINUOUS

NELSON'S POV. The Nigerian pulls Virus's body out onto the street, gets into the kombi, puts the car in reverse, then proceeds to drive back and forth several times over Virus's body. The Nigerian gets out with the lacquered box full of money. Nelson is frozen in the doorway. The Nigerian finds Nelson.

NIGERIAN
 Hello, dead boy.

Nelson dives into the trash cans as the Nigerian shoots.

The bullet misses, but now Nelson is trapped by the cans so he can't run. The Nigerian points his gun at Nelson.

CU on Nelson, who literally pisses his pants as the Nigerian smiles as he goes to pull the trigger.

We hear the shot. CU on Nelson, he is still alive.

It's the Nigerian who lies in a pool of blood. Blackjack, out the window of his kombi, has blown the Nigerian away.

The driver of the car gets out, gun drawn. Blackjack easily takes out the driver. Blackjack drives up on the sidewalk and opens the passenger door.

BLACKJACK

GET IN. NOW.

Nelson, still in shock, gets in and Blackjack pulls away.

EXT. JOHANNESBURG STREETS

Blackjack drives. Nelson bites his lip to keep from crying. He is filthy and banged up from lying in the trash and his pants are wet.

NELSON

Thank you.

Nelson looks at Blackjack. Suddenly, Nelson literally can't stop shaking.

NELSON (CONT'D)

I can't stop shaking!

Blackjack pulls over onto the side of the road.

BLACKJACK

(yelling)

Fucking idiot! That shit will fuck up your life. It's the devil's stuff.

NELSON

(yelling back)

Who are you, some holy man? Anyway, I don't do drugs. I was just helping him sell them. I need money.

BLACKJACK

Everyone in this country needs money. It's not an excuse for being stupid.

NELSON

What do you know? You got a taxi, you can always make money.

Nelson looks at Blackjack for a moment.

NELSON (CONT'D)
I know you.

BLACKJACK
(quickly)
You asked me for a job at the rank
yesterday.

NELSON
Yeah. Lot of good it did me.

Nelson, starting to cry, looks out the passenger window.

NELSON (CONT'D)
We got no money. My little brother is
smart, he could go to college. My mother
died three years ago. My father is sick,
he'll die soon.
(a beat)
And he hates us.

BLACKJACK
He doesn't hate you. He's trying to
toughen you up for when he's not here.

NELSON
What the fuck do you know?

Blackjack turns all his power on Nelson.

BLACKJACK
DON'T TALK TO ME LIKE THAT OR I WILL
SLICE YOUR HEAD OFF. I never had a
father so I have no pity for you, little
shit. But, grow up. You'll be the man of
the family soon.

NELSON
A man who just peed on himself. Some
man. I'm thinking of running.

BLACKJACK
Don't run, you turd. You got something.

NELSON
What the fuck do you know about it?

Blackjack slams the brakes, gets up in to Nelson's face.

BLACKJACK
There is a fucking line in this country.
Those that do something with their lives,
and those who whine like five year olds.
Make a choice.

NELSON

Did you make a choice?

BLACKJACK

Yeah, just now. Either let that Nigerian blow your head off or see if you got anything between your legs. If you got something between your legs, use em.

EXT. ELSIE'S TOWNHOUSE

Joseph and Ronnie are looking at the pile of smouldering rubble that used to be Elsie's home.

RONNIE

Our lead...literally up in flames.

A five year old boy searches the rubble for treasures.

JOSEPH

Hey, boy. You know what happened here?

BOY

A fire. It was cool. I saw the whole thing.

JOSEPH

Where is the lady who lives here?

BOY

Aunty Elsie went away. The man told the white lady to take her away.

Ronnie looks at Joseph.

RONNIE

Well, that narrows that down.

JOSEPH

Did you know the man? Did he live here?

The boy shakes his head "no".

BOY

He's got the cool car.

JOSEPH

Okay. Do you know where the man with cool car lives?

The boy shrugs "no", losing interest. Joseph and Ronnie start to walk away.

BOY
 (To himself)
 I seen the car the other day at the
 shebeen. Everybody loves the cool car.

Hearing this, Joseph goes back to the little boy.

JOSEPH
 Which shebeen?

EXT. SHEBEEN- SOWETO

Nelson waits for Blackjack to look over so he can thank him properly, but he doesn't. Blackjack is staring at another car that has just pulled up outside the shebeen. Ronnie and Joseph get out of their car.

INT. SHEBEEN- SOWETO

Joseph and Ronnie walk into Lunga's shebeen. A few career drinkers and taxi drivers are hanging around. Everyone notices a white and black cop coming in.

JOSEPH
 Dumelang Ntate. (Hello sir)

LUNGA
 What can I get you?

RONNIE
 Two Stoney's.

He hands them the cool drinks and is about to move on.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
 Brother, we're looking for someone.

Joseph shows her a photo of the very young Blackjack.

LUNGA
 A lot of people pass through here.

RONNIE
 His name is Dumisa Mngomezulu. This photo is really old.

LUNGA
 What you want? I don't know this man now.

RONNIE
 Withholding information from the police means arrest, which would mean this ramshackle outfit of yours goes down.

Lunga continues cleaning the counter, ignoring him.
Joseph gives Ronnie a look, like "back off".

JOSEPH
(sotto voce)
Pappa, you had something for us, I know?

LUNGA
(even quieter)
The guy who might look like that now, he
has a Porsche without a top. He may have
been in here a few days ago.

Joseph realizes drivers are all over in the shebeen, that
Lunga can't say anything. The cops drink their Stoney's.

JOSEPH
What do we owe you?

LUNGA
10 rand.

Joseph pulls out a 100 rand bill. It's all eye contact.
Lunga puts it in the cash box and returns with change.
Only two tens and a piece of paper. The cops leave.

INT. SHABEEN- SOWETO

Nelson jumps out but his legs are still so shaky, he
crumples against the door. Blackjack gets out to help
him. As he holds Nelson up, Ronnie and Joseph walk out.

Ronnie and Joseph take no note of a scruffy man
(Blackjack) holding up a teenager and walk past him.

NELSON
If..if....

BLACKJACK
Jesus, boy!

NELSON
I am grateful for saving my life and
for...

BLACKJACK
For what?

NELSON
You know. If you ever need anything... .

BLACKJACK
Concentrate on you. Grow up and forget
you ever saw me.

Blackjack watches the two cops get back into their car.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BLACKJACK'S BUILDING .

Blackjack drives up. The old man sits with his oranges. About to stop, Blackjack then drives around the corner. Seconds later, he walks by like a pedestrian.

BLACKJACK

Old man, you seen anyone come here today?

OLD MAN

A warrior, my son.

Blackjack, annoyed, assesses the building.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

I had a visitor from the old ones today.
When they awaken, they will not sleep
...you need to listen..

Blackjack gives up and starts walking away.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

You had visitors as well.

BLACKJACK

Were they inside? Old Man, who was here?

OLD MAN

Visitors on your journey were written
before you were born. The time has come.

The old man mumbles on.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

More visitors now.

Blackjack looks up to see Ronnie and Joseph's car coming down the street, checking the addresses.

BLACKJACK

Fuck!

Blackjack goes around back, breaking in a basement window. Inside, he sees the roller door has been wired with a CADAC gas canister.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)

(To himself)

You thought I would blow myself up.

Blackjack moves quickly, getting a bag. He stuffs a few things into the bag.

Once outside, Blackjack gets back into the kombi and drives off. As he passes the Old Man sitting by the door, he can't leave him. Blackjack stops and calmly grabs the OLD MAN and puts him in the kombi.

Joseph and Ronnie are outside the building, exploring addresses and which door leads where. They pay little attention to an old bum getting into an old kombi.

Joseph and Ronnie are near the roller door when there is an explosion. The heavy metal door buckles as the two cops are almost blown to the ground. Dazed but not hurt.

EXT. SOWETO STREET LATE NIGHT

Blackjack parks and looks at the Old Man.

BLACKJACK
Okay, here is where we part company.

OLD MAN
We can never part company.

BLACKJACK
Want to bet? GO.

Blackjack watches as the Old Man totters off down the street. He picks up his phone and dials.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)
Xolo, it's me. I need everything on a Gert Van Der Walt. Here is his phone number. -4565-8934. I owe you, bra.

EXT. TEASERS STRIP CLUB

Blackjack sits outside the club in his taxi. He watches well dressed men come in and out of the club.

Blackjack, in his driver's drag, goes up to the head bouncer, JACKSON. There are two other huge bouncers.

JACKSON
Sir, right of admission is reserved here.

BLACKJACK
Jackson, listen. I know I look different, but it's me. I need to speak to Serena.

JACKSON
Mr. Blackjack, I'm afraid I have strict instructions not to let you in.

He sizes them up for a fight. Serena appears.

SERENA

Fight them, isn't that what you do best?
It means nothing to me...other than to
make me hate what you are more.

She walks back in the club. Blackjack is clearly gutted.
Even the bouncers don't have the heart to rough him up.

JACKSON

Sorry, ndoda. Just go home, Okay?

EXT. HOSTEL LATE NIGHT

Blackjack enters the darkened hostel, lit only by fires
blazing in coal drums. Out of the dark, a shape lunges at
him. Blackjack recoils at the muzzled hyena, it's eyes
glowing. Blackjack makes his way to Manelisi's room.

Blackjack takes a scoop of Vick's vapor rub and smears
under his nose. Blackjack opens the deadman's gold and
diamond filled mouth. Finding a rock, Blackjack
positions it on the dead man's mouth. He hits hard.

Once done, Blackjack settles himself on Manelisi's old
mattress. The only blanket was the one covering the dead
man. Screams and the hyena's growl pierce the silence.

Blackjack pulls the blanket over himself. Opening his
fist, he examines his grim treasure. A dead man's teeth.

MONTAGE: EXT. PAWN SHOP / STREET

Blackjack, tired, exits a pawnshop holding a bag of cash.
Inside his taxi, a text message beeps on his own phone:

**GERT VAN DER WALT. B32 monster. Last
address 34 Ritief Road, Kliprivier. White
only settlement, you won't get in. Bit
of intel: His son PIET VAN DER WALT, 35,
getting married this Sunday. Later, Xolo.**

Blackjack stares at the screen.

EXT. TEASER'S CLUB

Blackjack spots Serena coming in to the club.

SERENA

Go away. I've had enough of being around
people who scare me for a lifetime.

BLACKJACK

I know.

Blackjack strokes the unkempt, tufts of beard, in his taxi clothes. He breaks out laughing.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)
Look at me. Funny, huh?

SERENA
Not funny. Disgusting.

BLACKJACK
It's also funny that for you this country
and this ratty club, are safe.

SERENA
You look like shit and smell like shit.
And you dare to look down on me?

She walks into the empty club. He follows her.
Desperate, he sits down in a booth

SERENA (CONT'D)
Don't mess up the booth, Blackjack. Don't
mess up my life. What do you want?

BLACKJACK
I need to close my eyes for a minute.
I screwed...

SERENA
Me for the last time.

BLACKJACK
Everything up. I'm sorry.

She stares at him.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)
I do, you know...really I do...

SERENA
You can't even say it.

He is incapable of saying it.

SERENA (CONT'D)
Okay, what, do you need money?

BLACKJACK
No. I need just a favor.

He holds out a piece of paper with Gert's number on it.
She has to decide for a beat, then she takes it.

EXT. KLIPRIVIER CITY LIMITS - NIGHT

The Kliprivier boom gates are down as Blackjack's taxi
arrives at the community. Two armed guards stop it.

GUARD # 1
 (in Afrikaans)
 Hey kaffir, you lost your way?

Giggling comes from the taxi's back seat. Serena, barely clad, climbs into the front.

SERENA
 Oh, hi. We are here for a Mr. Piet Van Der Walt.

The guards, intrigued, look at each other.

GUARD # 2
 Ons ken niks oor .
 (we know nothing about-)

SERENA
 We spoke to Mr. Gert. It's a surprise.

One guard makes a call. The other holds his gun on Blackjack but is distracted by the commotion of Serena and Tasha from the club, getting into their costumes.

BLACKJACK
 (looking at his watch)
 The girls have another gig. .

GUARD # 2
 Shut up, kaffir, or I'll blow your baboon lips off.

Blackjack's jaw tightens. Serena gives him a warning look. The guard comes back.

GUARD # 1
 Piet says okay but the kaffir stays behind. I'll drive you.

Blackjack and Serena share a glance.

SERENA
 (super seductive)
 He's our body guard. Besides, he is the only one who knows how to put up the dancing pole. Can you put up a pole?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GERT'S HOUSE

Blackjack finishes putting the pole together, receiving angry looks from the group of men gathered around.

SERENA

Boys, are you ready for a show?

The music comes on and the girls, in costume, begin to dance. Serena is dressed as a dominatrix with whips. Tasha is dressed as a cowgirl with pistols in a holster. Gert comes out. He sees Blackjack in the distance.

GERT

Hey, no bloody kaffirs on my property.

PIET

Pa, relax. He is the servant.

Blackjack's eyes tell Serena to move on. As the dance climaxes all eyes are on the girls. Blackjack slips away, unnoticed.

Tasha drags Piet off to the den. The guys go wild, loving it. The Guard's eyes are fixed on the action. Serena makes her way to Gert.

SERENA

And you must be Gert.

Serena takes Gert to the same room.

INT. GERT'S LOUNGE

The girls begin a solo performance on Gert and Piet. Serena uses her whips to bind Gert tightly to his chair. Tasha has Piet in the same position. The men are caught between thinking this is hot and beginning to worry. Serena duct tapes their mouths shut.

Blackjack comes up and the two girls recede to the wall. Gert and Blackjack come eye to eye for the first time. Gert takes a moment where his anger turns to recognition.

BLACKJACK

So your name is Gert. I never knew your name when you shoved a cattle prod up my ass, when you put electric wire on my balls.

Serena, hearing this, silently weeps. Blackjack pulls the pistols out of Tasha's holster and pushed the barrels up to Gert's skull.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)

Want to see if they're real?

Blackjack turns the music up so no one outside can hear. He cocks the pistols, pointing them straight at Piet. About to shoot, he stops at the last second and pulls the duct tape off Gert's face.

GERT
I know you. You're one of the kaffirs we
turned.

BLACKJACK
YOU NEVER TURNED ME, YOU FUCK. YOU JUST
MADE EVERYONE THINK YOU TURNED ME.

GERT
(Finding his bravado)
Is there a difference?

BLACKJACK
I remember your voice.

GERT
The guards will be here in a minute. What
the hell you want? Take it and go.

BLACKJACK
(laughing)
This isn't a robbery. I don't want your
ugly, trashy shit.

Blackjack places a cushion against Gert's leg and shoots.
Gert's scream, Serena and Tasha's screams, are covered by
the music. Piet, mouth taped, howls as he watches.

SERENA
Blackjack!!

BLACKJACK
He's not dead. When I kill him, he'll die
slowly and painfully.
(a beat)
No, I want to know about Stefan Manning.

Gert, still in pain, breaks into laughter.

GERT
Ah, now I understand. You got the job.

BLACKJACK
What do you know about the job?

GERT
Stefan was one of my boys. I taught him
well.

BLACKJACK
Not well enough. I killed him yesterday.

Gert betrays no emotion. They are staring at each other.

GERT
Mngomezulu. That is your name. I recognise you. You let my boy go and I give you everything you want.

BLACKJACK
What are you talking about, you monster?

Blackjack kicks the bullet wound in Gert's leg and pulls Gert's face upward, putting a gun in his mouth.

SERENA
Blackjack, don't!

Blackjack calms down. He extracts a knife from a hidden strap around his leg and walks over to Piet. Blackjack slices the skin above Piet's eyebrow. The girls scream.

BLACKJACK
Who hired me?

GERT
Okay, leave my boy alone. Stefan came to me, said a taxi boss was paying huge money. Wanted a military trained guy.

BLACKJACK
There are a million ex-military guys.

Blackjack goes to start on Piet's second eye.

GERT
NO. He wanted an outcast. Figured one of the guys we tortured would do it.

BLACKJACK
Which taxi boss?

GERT
Don't know. All I know is he wanted a traitor.

Blackjack charges at Gert with the knife.

BLACKJACK
I AM NOT A TRAITOR, I NEVER SANG.

GERT
No one cares. Everything I have on it is in green notebook in the bottom drawer. ANC informers. Taxi routes.

Blackjack is about to open it, then stops. He grabs Piet by the hair and wheels his chair over to the drawer.

BLACKJACK

In case it is booby-trapped, you just
blew your own kid's head off.

With Piet in front, he unlocks the drawer. No bomb.
Blackjack pulls out a South African army green notebook.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)

We're done...and so are both of you.

Blackjack puts the gun to Gert's temple. Serena screams,
Piet screams, Gert is ready... Blackjack retracts the
gun, turns it around and knocks Gert out with the butt.
He does the same to Piet.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)

Come on. We are done here.

EXT. STREETS.

Blackjack, Serena and Tasha ride in silence.

SERENA

I didn't know they...tortured you.

BLACKJACK

That was the least of it.

(Pulling over)

Get out of here. Take a cab home.

SERENA

Blackjack. Let it end with all of that.

BLACKJACK

I'm not finished.

SERENA

You'll never be finished until it
consumes you. They'll have won all over
again.

BLACKJACK

You don't understand.

SERENA

YES, I DO. I lived under the same system.
Ceaurescu tortured me, tortured my
family. I do understand.

BLACKJACK

Go. I have work to do.

SERENA

Then they have won because you are still
an animal.

(Getting out)

(MORE)

SERENA (CONT'D)

Don't ever come back to me. I can't live with this rage.

She walks away. About to say something to stop her, he pauses. The moment passes and he lets her walk away.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREETS

Blackjack, in the taxi, gives the notebook his full attention. CU of him repeating meaningless words and phrases. He is using his mobile phone as a calculator.

BLACKJACK

RUNNER..5-3-8-8-4-7, SNAKE...6-8-1-5-3,
BONE...2-5-8-3

EXT. LUNGA'S SHEBEEN - NIGHT

Nelson is sleeping next to his brother, head to foot. It's dark. He is awakened by coughing. He looks over to his father's bed which is empty. He gets up and goes out to the main room of the shebeen. Long, powerful, painful coughs coming from the commode. He opens the door and Lunga is on his knees, coughing up sputum and blood.

LUNGA

(Barely able to speak)
Close that damn door, idiot.

NELSON

Pop, let me help you.

Nelson picks up his thin father and puts him in a chair.

LUNGA

Mind your own business. Go back to bed.

Lunga takes a weak swing at Nelson who easily catches it.

NELSON

Listen to me, father. You are sick and I am going to take care of you, even if I have to strap you down and force medicine down your throat.

LUNGA

How dare...

NELSON

Shut up. You are going to rest. You are going to sit, watch tv or sleep. Or so help you, you are going to regret it.

LUNGA
I won't get better.

NELSON
You are still here, now. Be quiet...let
us love you.

Lunga stares at him for a beat, then turns his head. As
Nelson helps him, he see tears in his father's eyes.

EXT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - MELROSE NEIGHBORHOOD

Joseph hands Ronnie a photo as Ronnie jumps in the car.

JOSEPH
It's him. Your long shot, Dumisa
Mngomezulu.

Joseph hands him a photo.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
That was taken by a security camera at
the gate at Kliprivier.

RONNIE
Kliprivier?

CU of Blackjack from last night.

JOSEPH
That is what Dumisa looks like now.

RONNIE
Who did he take down?

JOSEPH
Your buddy Gert...

RONNIE
No.

JOSEPH
He didn't kill him. Just ruffed him up.

Ronnie is looking out the passenger window.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
I've got this picture in every cop's
hands. They're looking in every hole and
in every kombi.

RONNIE
I fucked up. I trusted Gert. They are
connected.

JOSEPH

It was an honest mistake.

RONNIE

HONEST. I'll be honest. I brought wives to Gert so their husbands could watch him rape them. I planted evidence in homes so the neighbors would suspect them and put burning tires around their necks. I placed cattle prods on little kids' privates. Want some more honesty?

JOSEPH

What are you doing?

RONNIE

I HAVEN'T THE FAINTEST, FUCKING IDEA. But there is a moment before you torture someone for the first time. Then you cross that river together. They will never not have been tortured again. And you will always be a torturer.

JOSEPH

Is this for some kind of absolution?

RONNIE

Fuck you. You can't absolve me of what I did.

(From his deepest pain)

I degraded, tortured, help kill innocent people. It's a tumor in my stomach, I feel it every day.

JOSEPH

I know.

RONNIE

I work in a job I am good at. Where everyone hates me. I live in a loveless marriage. I've lost every person I grew up with...and it still isn't enough.

Ronnie is babbling. Joseph grabs his shoulder.

JOSEPH

STOP. People make mistakes. LOOK AT ME RONNIE. I forgive you.

Joseph stops Ronnie's babbling. Ronnie looks out the window.

RONNIE

I'm scared.

JOSEPH

Of what?

RONNIE
That there is still a strain of them
alive in me.

EXT. SHEBEEN

Blackjack has fallen asleep in his taxi. Nelson comes out the shebeen carrying an empty water jug. He sees Blackjack in the taxi.

NELSON
It's you.

BLACKJACK
Remember, you said you would work for me.
That you'd do anything.

NELSON
You want me to drive?

BLACKJACK
No.

Blackjack hands him a package.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)
Hold this for me. For 24 hours. If I
don't come back tomorrow, open it. It
will tell you what to do with what's
inside.

Nelson eyes the package.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)
It isn't drugs, stupid. You said you owed
me...well, be a man and...

NELSON
Keep my word.
(A beat)
Hey, I made my choice with what is
between my legs. I am staying.

BLACKJACK
Good. Good man. Thanks.

Blackjack drives off, leaving Nelson holding the package.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JOHANNESBURG STREET

Blackjack's POV: The old man sits very calmly in the
second row directly behind Blackjack.

BLACKJACK

What the fuck? How'd you get in here?

OLD MAN

I never got out. Now there's a little peace, I want to sit in front.

He moves through the empty space. His coat tangles on the stick shift. Several oranges drop out of his coat. The old man is sitting calmly as if on a Sunday drive. Blackjack screeches to a stop in the unpaved divider.

BLACKJACK

(actually screaming)

WHO THE FUCKING HELL ARE YOU? WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU?

The Old Man smiles at Blackjack.

OLD MAN

Your anger makes you swear at an old man. It's powerful. A warrior knows how to turn an enemy's spear back against him.

Blackjack, freaked, pulls his leg up and kicks the Old Man against the passenger door. Blackjack's foot is actually in the Old Man's belly. The Old Man doesn't even seem mildly discomforted.

BLACKJACK

No more of your shit. OUT. OUT. NOW.

OLD MAN

(laughing)

Out? A warrior knows when to get out.

With one swift movement, Blackjack pulls out the Glock, points it right at him.

BLACKJACK

YOU ARE ABOUT TO DIE.

OLD MAN.

I am in good company.

Blackjack empties his mag into the Old Man's body.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. FREEWAY DIVIDER

The kombi's exterior, bullet holes fly out of the side. Reverse to his POV. Blackjack is yelling at the top of his lungs. We see that the passenger seat is empty. Blackjack recoils, freaked. His phone beeps a text:

BREE TAXI RANK. 1 HOUR.

BLACKJACK
(almost as a dare)
All right. I'm coming, you motherfucker.

EXT. FREEWAY

Ronnie and Joseph drive on the freeway. The radio is on.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Traffic alert. A special procession is
heading over the Mandela Bridge.

Women, dressed in traditional garb, are marching to the
Bree Street Taxi rank.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
(CONT'D)
Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini has asked
for a traditional cleansing ritual for
widows who's husbands died in taxi
violence. They'll ask the ancestors to
help curb the taxi killings.

RONNIE
(to the radio)
Hey, ask the ancestors to work on the
electrical shortages.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Walking in solidarity is Eric Mabote, the
Transport Minister, who is trying to
bring an end to the violent taxi war.

ERIC MABOTE (V.O.)
The King says this ceremony will allow
these widows' husbands to rest in peace
and discourage their children from
revenging their fathers' deaths.

NEWS ANNOUNCER
But why you, Mr. Minister?

ERIC MABOTE (V.O.)
Because we are all veterans of the war to
free our country. Now we have a new war
that threatens our existence.

Suddenly, at the same time, Ronnie and Joseph look across
the freeway at the traffic going in the other direction.
It is a MASSIVE RAGTAG FLOTILLA of a hundred speeding
kombis. Men are stuffed inside, guns hang out of the
windows. It is the taxi version of an advancing army.

JOSEPH

What the fuck? Looks like every kombi in the city is headed toward Bree street.

RONNIE

Shit, we are in a full war. Have the Metrocops throw down sticks! Seal off the rank.

Joseph is staring out into the void.

JOSEPH

I know. Dumisa will be there.

EXT. JOHANNESBURG FREEWAY

Blackjack, alone in his taxi, is talking to himself. He drives past a news headline sign: WHO IS KILLING ALL THE TAXI BOSSES? His mobile buzzes with a text.

**BREE STREET TAXI RANK -
TRAFFIC - ENTER ON FOOT**

The traffic close to the Bree Street rank is jammed from every angle. Everything is at a standstill. He parks his kombi, grabs his duffle and walks into the rank.

INT. BREE STREET TAXI RANK

The rank is a circus; the shut down has hundreds of people stuck inside. Lining one balcony is a hundred middle-aged and older women dressed in tradition garb. A Tribal Shaman leads them in prayer and song. Drivers and guys from the hostels stand on kombi roofs. Moses is in charge, barking out orders, phone in hand. Various association men are dashing around. It's mayhem.

Blackjack walks in. The mobile buzzes with a text:

I'M HERE

Blackjack texts back:

WHO ARE YOU?

Closer cuts. Blackjack looks at the guys in the taxis: guns, knives, grenades, uzzis. He looks at the opposite side and sees the same thing, the same weapons. Two enemies lined up facing each other. The text buzzes:

I HAVE YOUR MONEY.

Blackjack texts back:

**I DO NOTHING UNTIL I
(MORE)**

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
KNOW WHO YOU ARE.

The text buzzes back (a photo):

(PIC OF MOSES)
DON'T APPROACH ME. HERE
ARE THE TARGETS.
(PIC OF JOSEPH AND RONNIE)
COPS - KILL THEM

The phone buzz doesn't stop...it keeps going, beginning to buzz in the same rhythm as the taxi's horns.

BLACKJACK
 (to the phone)
 Shut up.

But instead, the phone's buzz joins the rhythm of the clapping and drumming of the cleansing ritual. The widows and the shaman are dancing and praying.

WIDOWS
 Senzeni na... senzeni na... senzeni na...
 senzeni na... senzeni na

Everything is jacked up. The singers. The drivers. The cops. Blackjack is talking to an inanimate object.

BLACKJACK
 (to the phone)
 You'll kill all these people? For what?

Behind a parked taxi, Blackjack pulls out an uzzi. He sees Joseph and Ronnie. They make eye contact.

JOSEPH
 (To himself but out loud)
 Don't do it.

Suddenly, the widows' choir kicks the singing way up. Blackjack's POV: All the widows are staring straight at him. The shaman is dancing wildly.

WIDOWS AND SHAMAN
 Buyekhaya ndondana yolahleko, buyekhaya
 hluma njengesihlahla. Cut off your life
 at the roots, cut off your life.
*(Translation: Come back home lost
 warrior. Grow roots deep like a tree or
 cut them off and cut off your life.)*

JOSEPH
 Dumisa!

In his own world, Blackjack doesn't hear. Armed, he gets up, and starts walking towards Moses Mpanza.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

(To Ronnie)

If he shoots in here, it will be a massacre.

BLACKJACK

(Yelling to Moses)

Call them off. You start this and everyone here dies. It's enough

Moses can't hear, but his bodyguards' guns point at Blackjack.

JOSEPH

Stand back. Dumisa, step away!

Blackjack glances at Joseph, a clear moment of eye contact. But Blackjack keeps walking, gun raised above his head. The body guards are freaked and nervous.

BLACKJACK

(To all the drivers)

MY BROTHERS, THERE IS NO WAR. I WAS HIRED...

As he continues walking, he starts to bring his uzzi down, as if to place it on the ground. Then someone drops a wrench, Blackjack looks to the sound.

JOSEPH

(to himself)

Don't...c'mon, don't.

But the uzzi has stopped coming down midway and is pointed straight at Moses. A loud shot echoes. Suddenly, Blackjack buckles mid-stride but keeps walking. There is another shot...he keeps coming with his gun still pointed at Moses. Now the bodyguards let go a flurry of bullets. Blackjack takes all the bullets...finally falls down.

CU's of passengers, widows, drivers in shock. Joseph lowers his gun, it was HIS shots that killed Blackjack.

Slowly, everyone lowers their guns. The whole rank is silent.

Blackjack's body is twisted and cut, lying in the oil of the garage. Folded on top of himself, his arm extended like a Pieta. His eyes are still open and he looks up at the Old Man, kneeling next to him.

OLD MAN

Dumisa. Time to let go.

BLACKJACK

No, not done. Not finished.

OLD MAN

Yes, you're finished. Journey completed, warrior.

Comprehension comes over Blackjack's face. A small smile appears on his bloodied lips.

Ronnie and Joseph's POV: Blackjack, lying there bleeding ...talking out loud...to himself. BUT THERE IS NO OLD MAN IN THE SHOT.

Blackjack dies. The Old Man puts a newspaper over his body, gently covering his face.

Ronnie and Joseph's POV - they watch as the blood-stained newspaper, blown by the wind, lands on top of Blackjack's face.

Ronnie holds everyone back from Blackjack's body. Joseph walks over, crouches down and takes Blackjack's pulse. He hangs his head.

INT. POLICE STATION

Joseph and Ronnie sit at their desks. Ronnie is making eye contact with the void. Kabelo comes in.

KABELO

So, now that this idiotic case is over, you two can go back to not doing whatever it is you are supposed to do.

RONNIE

Kabelo, walk away. WALK AWAY!

KABELO

C'mon, Ronnie. It's over.

JOSEPH

(Going off)

You stupid doos. Why did he do it? Does it fucking matter to you that nothing adds up? He was a soldier just like me and you. That's why I'll leave this country. Not because the whites pushed us down and now everything is bubbling up. But because we forget over and over who we were to get here.

Joseph storms out.

INT. SHEBEEN

Nelson sits on his bed, watching the clock. The package Blackjack gave him sits on his lap. As the clock strikes

the 24 hour mark, he unwraps it. The first thing is a stack of money. On the money is a note:

YOU BROUGHT SOMETHING
USEFUL HOME. BE A MAN AND
BE SMART WITH IT.

EXT. FREEWAY - OUTSIDE OF JOBURG -

The two cops drive out of town.

RONNIE
What's this shit about you leaving?

JOSEPH
I got an offer from the Swedish
Government. Cushy job, big salary,
safety for the girls.

Ronnie turns, looking forward. He lights up a cigarette.

RONNIE
When were you going to fucking tell me?

JOSEPH
You sound like Mmabatho.

RONNIE
You are a fucking cop. Not a cream puff
political hack. I'll stay in this kuk
job because now I know you've got my
back. But if you chicken out and run...

JOSEPH
Ronnie, RONNIE...I turned it down.

Ronnie stops. Takes a beat and then lights a cig.

RONNIE
I'd hate it if you were cheating on me.

They chuckle.

EXT. KLIPRIVIER CITY LIMITS - GUARD GATE -

Ronnie and Joseph are driving up to the guard gate.

RONNIE
We're here on police business.

GUARD
You can come in, but the kaffir stays.

Ronnie jumps out, puts his gun at the guards head.

RONNIE
YOU FUCKING, STUPID SHIT. THIS ISN'T A
RACIST LITTLE GAME. HE IS A COP, NOT YOU
FOR-HIRE RETARDS. NOW OPEN THE GATE.

JOSEPH
(Getting out of the car)
Careful, Ronnie.

Ronnie looks. More guards' guns are pointed at him.

RONNIE
THIS IS SOUTH AFRICA. Follow the law of
the land and DROP THOSE FUCKING WEAPONS.

A stand off for a beat. Then the sound of trucks comes
from behind Joseph. Two hundred SOUTH AFRICAN ARMY
FORCES, white and black, are behind Joseph with their
rifles drawn. The guards slowly put their guns down.

JOSEPH
I thought I'd call it in just in case we
needed a little backup.

EXT. KLEINFONTEIN - GAUTENG

Ronnie and Joseph sit in the car watching Gert's home.

JOSEPH
You call this one anyway you like. If
you want to do this alone, I understand.

RONNIE
Joseph, he doesn't deserve your courtesy.

JOSEPH
It's not about him.

Ronnie nods gratitude as Joseph drives closer to the
house. Ronnie gets out and walks to the house.

INT. GERT'S HOUSE

Gert sits comfortably in an old school La-Z-Boy, totally
not surprised to see Ronnie.

Ronnie comes in and takes the sofa opposite him.

GERT
Ah, the errand boy returns.

RONNIE
I have.

GERT

You do realize that a single call could have you and that kaffir hemmed in.

RONNIE

You ignorant old bastard. The only reason this farce of a town still exists is because you're good at hiding. Like the cowards you are.

GERT

Cowards? If your head ape over there is so brave, why didn't he come here and face me? Careful. They bite any hand that feeds them. Including yours.

RONNIE

And yet, they still beat you. Gert Van Der Walt, you are under arrest for conspiracy, murder and withholding information from a police officer.

Without fan fare Gert pulls out a gun from under the seat, pointing it towards Ronnie, smiling.

GERT

Fitting, I created you and now I'll kill you. The last kill is most important. Killing the biggest traitor.

He puts the gun at Ronnie, then, at the last second, puts it in his mouth and blows his brains out. Ronnie doesn't move, he just stands there, at attention, like a soldier.

EXT. GERT'S HOUSE

Ronnie sits on a bench with Joseph.

RONNIE

He was an amazing leader, I thought he was invincible. But anger and ignorance killed him, not that bullet.

JOSEPH

You okay?

RONNIE

Yeah. Just tired of scabs getting picked off and bleeding.

JOSEPH

You'll be okay.

RONNIE

I'm fine. Stop treating me like a wife, asshole.

Joseph smiles.

JOSEPH
I think it will always haunt me a little
what Dumisa was really doing.

RONNIE
Yeah.

Outside, a helicopter is flying in. People clear to make room for it on the lawn. The helicopter lands and out steps two uniform cops. AND NELSON. The young man is clearly excited by the helicopter ride. He is carrying the bag that Blackjack left with him. He is walked to Joseph and Ronnie.

UNIFORM COP
Mahole, Van der Ruit...Kabelo thought
this was important. This kid came into
the station about an hour ago.

JOSEPH
Who are you, kid?

NELSON
Nelson Yeni.

Nelson hands Ronnie and Joseph the package. Inside, they finds sim cards, Gert's notebook and Blackjack's cell phone. Ronnie looks at the notebook.

RONNIE
I recognise these. They are the notebooks
we used in the army.

JOSEPH
Who gave you this stuff?

NELSON
Blackjack.

JOSEPH
He's dead.

NELSON
I know...

JOSEPH
He was a murderer, he did a lot of
terrible things...

NELSON
And some not so terrible things.

RONNIE
What do you mean?

NELSON

He may have done bad things. But he was a good man.

JOSEPH

You were close?

NELSON

Yes, he taught me stuff. We were friends.

Joseph opens the notebook. Again, the code names:

SHEPHERD, BOLDERMAN, BONE, RUNNER....

JOSEPH

I can't make hide nor hare of any of this. This is all in code.

Ronnie turns on Blackjack's phone and starts going through the texts.

RONNIE

Fuck me. Look at the texts. It's the same names..SHEPARD, BONE...with the real names decoded.

SHEPHERD - MICHAEL NJOMANE

BOLDMAN - SIPHO XABA

RUNNER - JABULANI MKHIZE

JOSEPH

All current and former taxi owners. And they were all on Dumisa's hit list.

RONNIE

The shit never stops. Look at the last name.

Ronnie hands the phone to Joseph.

INT. SANDTON MANSION -

Mabote is leading Ronnie and Joseph past the maids and staff down the hall of the mansion. The staff again, all stand back, heads bowed as they have been trained.

MABOTE

Gentlemen, time for a postmortem drink.

JOSEPH

Mr. Mabote, we have a warrant for your arrest for the murder and conspiracy.

ERIC

I beg your pardon.

RONNIE

The whole thing is wonderfully laid out on the mobile phone sim cards Dumisa Mngomezulu sent us as a gift.

ERIC

Never heard of him.

RONNIE

The man you hired to kill all the other men who traded information for taxi routes almost 20 years ago. Your co-traitors as it were.

JOSEPH

We figure were just doing housekeeping on your past before a run for President?

Something registers on his face then politician's smile.

ERIC

Ridiculous. I'll phone Court of Appeals Judge Molefe to put a stop to this.

JOSEPH

Do. He's the one who signed the warrant.

Joseph handcuffs Eric and begins to walk him out of his mansion. Mabote begins to shout, like a madman.

MABOTE

This is preposterous I am South Africa, what I do, I do for South Africa...
SOMETIMES A MAN MUST ACT FOR THE GOOD...

Watching Mabote being led out, the maids and staff begin to clap. First slowly, then louder. Now openly cheering, they watch Joseph and Ronnie put Mabote into the police car.

RONNIE

(To Mabote)

Shut up and watch your head, asshole.

THE END