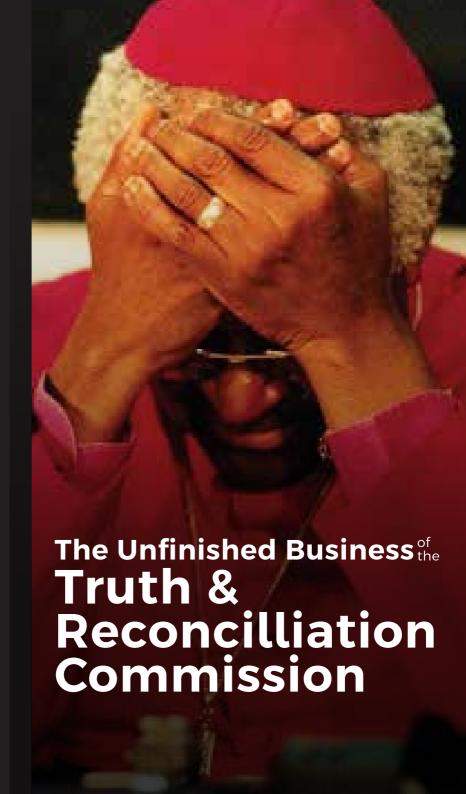
Section 19 Section BE





TRUTH BE TOLD

is a six part documentary series examining the lives of six young activists who died at the hands of the apartheid security police. It looks at their lives through the prism of

South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

This series of films looks at cases in which the truth has not been told, no-one has been held accountable. The selection of the stories will provide a tapestry of events that occurred in the past that still resound in the present.

Through the eyes of the children & family members of the activists, their story of how they were abducted, tortured and killed unfolds. The series will lay bare how transgenerational trauma can pass on from one generation to another.

An apartheid wound that has yet to be cleansed

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

South Africa created the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

in 1995 to help deal with apartheid-era gross human rights violations such as murders, kidnappings, torture, other serious acts of violence and bring about reconciliation through telling the truth about the past.

The TRC was mandated to assist South Africans with healing the divisions of the past and coming to terms with the impact of apartheid. Victims and perpetrators were encouraged to come forward and share their stories in the hope that it would bring closure.

More than twenty thousand victims gave evidence. Around seven thousand applications for amnesty were received on the basis that amnesty would only be granted if the perpetrators gave full disclosure and the political objective of the crime. The TRC granted over 1000 amnesties.

However, if one did not come forward, then one could be prosecuted for human rights violations committed in the past. More than 22 000 families were recognised as "victims" by the TRC. Of this number, approximately 17 000 TRC-recognised victims actually received individual reparations with a once off payment of R30 000 each. Some families have obtained educational benefits. Overall, the government has failed in providing meaningful reparations recommended by the TRC.

It has been over 26 years since the TRC issued its final report recommending over 300 cases to be investigated or prosecuted.

Under the new democratic state, compromises have resulted in very few perpetrators who did not go to the TRC being prosecuted or were refused amnesty.

The TRC's promise of truth for amnesty and prosecution for those who did not come forward was predicated on a strong and just prosecution arm within the state.

Under the Constitution, the NPA (National Prosecuting Authority) and the South African Police Services are under obligation to investigate and prosecute crimes.



THE BONES OF MEMORY

NTOMBIKAYISE KUBHEKA

/ DATE OF INCIDENT

1987

/ THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE

36 years

/ CRIME

Torture, enforced disappearance and alleged murder

Ntombikayise Kubheka was an anti-apartheid activist and a member of the armed wing of the banned African National Congress (ANC), uMkhonto weSizwe (MK). She worked as an operative for the organisation and was responsible for coordinating activities between the internal unit and the external unit of the ANC, as well as for coordinating other underground activities.



The Security Branch of the South African Police (SAP) regarded Kubheka as a senior ANC member and had classified her as being the leader of the KwaMashu ANC branch. Interested in information regarding the arrival of four MK members from Swaziland, Vlakplaas police officers joined forces with the Durban Security Branch to infiltrate Kubheka's network. Two askaris from Vlakplaas befriended Ntombikayise in 1987. She trusted them, believing them to be MK operatives. They lured Kubheka to the Durban beach front, where she was kidnapped, interrogated and tortured by the Port Natal Security Branch.

Her body was dumped near her home north of Durban. It was only 10 years later during the TRC Amnesty application that the family were made aware where Ntombi's bones were buried and finally able to give her a funeral and a tombstone.

At the time of her death Ntombi had a 3 year old daughter, today 41 year old Thuli grapples with the legacy of her mother and how difficult life has been without a mother figure.





Currently living in KwaMashu in a one room backroom with her 10 year old daughter Zizipho, Thuli ponders whether her mother died in vain. An inquest into Ntombi's death was opened in 2022.

During the filming of the documentary Thuli was confronted with a shocking event that restirs **The Bones of Memory**.

"I was barely a child when my mother was killed, every child needs their mother to make it, you know. So I was deprived. Must I be angry, must I be sad, I don't know. I am suffering, this will haunt me for the rest of my life". - Thuli Kubheka



"At some point I wonder if my mother called out my name when she was being tortured, or she just said 'I have a child, let me go'. I think she called out my name, so those people knew of Thuli but still they carried on torturing her." -Thuli Kubheka







ROOM 1008

MATTHEWS MABELANE

/ DATE OF INCIDENT

15 February 1977

/ THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE

46 years

/ CRIME

Alleged torture and murder in detention

"BROTHER LASCH, INFORM MOM AND MY OTHER BROTHERS THAT THE POLICE ARE GOING TO PUSH ME FROM THE 10TH FLOOR. AND I AM BIDDING YOU GOODBYE. FOREVER".

These were the words written on the white lining of Matthews Mabelane's dark green and bloodied Lee branded trousers. Fearing for his life he wrote this message for his family while he was in detention for his anti-apartheid activity at the notorious John Vorster Square police station in 1977 during the height of apartheid.

The suspicious circumstances surrounding what happened to Mabelane have always lingered and now the family wants closure and answers as to who is responsible for their son, uncle and brother's unexplained death.



When Matthews brother Lasch heard that the NPA had agreed to reopen an inquest into the death of anti-apartheid activist Ahmed Timol, he thought finally this would also open doors for the Mabelane family's quest for justice.

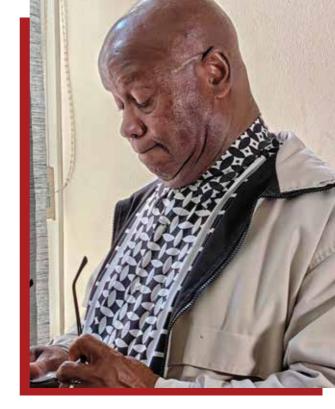
Unfortunately, Lasch and his 96 year old father passed away never getting the closure they so desperately wanted. Another brother, Steve picks up the story for the documentary and despite this tragic event happening four decades ago the trauma 'sits visibly' on his shoulders as he grapples with the mystery of what happened in Room 1008.



An investigation into the death and detention of Matthews Mabelane is ongoing.



"It's 46 years later, when I think of my brother my heart really bleeds because my parents passed on without any closure to his death and until today we are still looking to get closure. We are just wishing that the whole story of my brother's death comes to an end and we can reach closure". - Steve Mabelane





"For me personally I felt lost because I was so close to my brother Matthews, I was in so much pain. -Steve Mabelane

THE COCOON OF PAIN

TOPSY MADAKA

/ DATE OF INCIDENT
December 1987
/ THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE
37 years
/ CRIME
Alleged murder





Topsy Madaka was born in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth in 1954. He was the son of Nontsikelelo and Mongameli Madaka. He emerged in politics during the Black Consciousness era when he participated in anti government student activities under the South African Student Movement (SASM). In 1978 his family became aware of his interest in politics through his role in facilitating transport for activists who wanted to cross the border to Lesotho.

Madaka and his close friend Siphiwo Mthimkhulu (known as the Cosas Two) played a leading role under difficult conditions in mobilizing the people of Port Elizabeth for various political campaigns.



In April 1982, the Security Branch of the South African Police gave an order to "eliminate" Siphiwo and Topsy Madaka. This order was given verbally and the security police clearly understood it to mean that they should be killed and their bodies secretly disposed of.

At the TRC Amnesty hearing in September 1997, Topsy's only son Amandla and his family finally got to hear the details of his father's abduction and killing. Amandla talks of being trapped in a Cocoon of Pain as he battles with transgenerational trauma.

Can Amandla reconcile the trauma of his father's death as he goes in search for answers as to why he was killed? As past and present merge Amandla expresses how he shielded himself in a Cocoon of Pain to deal with the trauma of his father's death.

The episode highlights Topsy's role in the liberation struggle and looks at the Mandla's and family's journey to healing, justice and reconciliation.

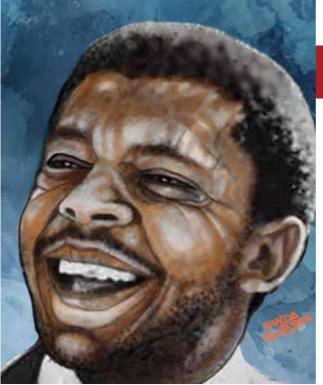




"In 1996, I was 19 years old when I went to the Truth Commission, that is when I got to see and hear the perpetrators elaborating on the story of what happened to my dad. It was a shock to me and my whole family at the time, we didn't even know how to feel. I am still angry at what happened. I can see what role a father can play in the lives of their children and that was taken away from me". - Amandla Madaka



"For me the TRC was just a show, a talk show in particular. None of the things they promised they said they would do came about. The only thing we got from the TRC was half the truth of what transpired. After that you were left on your own, we are still on our own, you don't know how to move, there is nothing happening". - Amandla Madaka



PATHWAYS TO LIGHT

BHEKI MLANGENI

/ DATE OF INCIDENT
15 Feb, 1991
/ THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE
33 years
/ CRIME
Alleged murder

Jazz musician Mandla Mlangeni 35, is slowly coming to terms with the death of his father who was killed when he was 5 years old. Mandla uses music and by extension his trumpet to heal. In his debut album Bhekisizwe which he dedicated to a father he never knew, his loss echoes powerfully through his music.

Bheki Mlangeni was a young human rights lawyer who was killed in his Soweto home by a booby-trapped walkman. It was sent by apartheid security policeman Eugene de Kock aka Prime Evil and it exploded on the 15 Feb, 1991 as he began to listen to it. 5 year-old Mandla was a witness to this horrific scene.



Bheki was detained for political activities in 1985 at Diepkloof Prison, Johannesburg. Mlangeni and his law firm presented evidence in 1990 to the Harms Commission of Inquiry into secret hit squads. He was a pivotal lawyer in the historic Delmas 4 Treason Trial.





The documentary criss-crosses from present to the past as Mandla examines who his father really was and at the same time honours him by keeping his memory alive through his music. Issues of transgenerational trauma are explored.

When addressing the man that was instrumental in his fathers' killing Mandla said..."They said he (Eugene de Kock) must consult all the families but he did not do that. I think he owes the family an explanation. Maybe he will come to face my mother. Then she can decide whether she is pardoning him. At least he must come and see the damage he did to this family".



Trapped in a place of darkness Mandla goes on a journey to explore his **Pathways to Light**.



"I was four and a half when my dad passed on. I was at home waiting for them to come back. And heard my mother and father's footsteps going into the room. Moments later I heard a loud bang, I didn't know what that was, but I immediately rushed to my father's room. Quite a few adults were already there and were just devastated and crying. It was very traumatic. Just a lot of chaos. Blood everywhere, he was blown up. I tried to wake him up, but I mean, blood kept on splatting out. It was only when I was slightly older that I started processing what had really happened. And that's when I think it also affected me". - Mandla Mlangeni

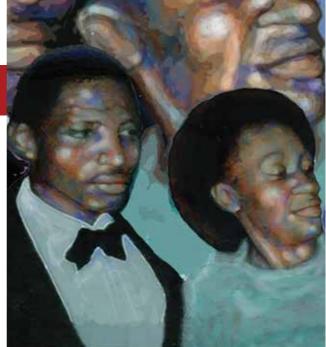


"I found the trumpet at the crossroads in my life, the trumpet saved my life in that it opened up a different world for me by helping me deal with my process of healing and coming to terms with the history and the trauma that I have lived with since a young child". - Mandla Mlangeni

DEATH CAME KNOCKING

RICHARD & IRENE MOTASI

/ DATE OF INCIDENT
December 1987
/ THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE
37 years
/ CRIME
Alleged murder



Tumelo Richard Motasi was a policeman based at the Hammanskraal Police College. The Northern Transvaal Security Police compiled a file on him which suggested that he was an ANC agent giving sensitive information over to the ANC in Zimbabwe and Johannesburg.

His activities were apparently the subject of discussions at the Northern Transvaal Divisional Crime Meeting. The evidence from the TRC Amnesty Hearings, indicates that General Jacob Gabrielle Roux Stemmet (the Divisional Commissioner of the Northern Transvaal Division), General Ras, Brigadier Jack Cronje and Colonel Kloppers instructed Captain Loots, Captain Hechter and Warrant Officer Van Vuuren decided to eliminate Motasi as he was a threat to the Security Branch of the South African Police and the government of the day.



Loots then requested Joe Mamasela (a Vlakplaas askari) to establish the actual address of Motasi. Mamasela did so and reported back to Loots. On the evening of 1 December 1987, Loots, Hechter, Van Vuuren, Mamasela and the driver Danny Selahle, went to the Motasi home. Mamasela knocked on the Motasi home front door and spoke to Mrs. Irene Motasi who told Mamasela that Motasi was not at home. Mamasela then took Mrs. Motasi and her small child into the bedroom and kept them captive in the bedroom awaiting Motasi.



Both Richard and Irene were executed. Five year old Tshidiso was in the home miraculously survived by hiding in a cupboard.

Today, married with two children, Tshidiso tries his best to shield them from the trauma he experienced as a child. However, it is ever present, bubbling under the surface, because when death came knocking it scarred him for life.



Investigation by the Hawks is ongoing.



"I can't necessarily explain the trauma that I grew up with because I can't define it but I always knew that I'm a bit of abnormalish, I wanted my space, I didn't want to interact more with friends". Tshidiso Motasi

"My recollection of my parents was you know the normal family, that is when I knew my dad and mv mother because I was the only child. The recollection is just that, I can't say anything specific of the happy days or what because it all comes back to that fateful event. so whenever I think of my parents I just don't want to think about it because that picture, it comes every day because it is the last picture I have of my parents". - Tshidiso Motasi



THE BREASTFEEDING WARRIOR

PHILA PORTIA NDWANDWE

/ DATE OF INCIDENT
1988
/ THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE
36 years
/ CRIME
Alleged torture and murder in
detention



Phila's, also known by her code name Zandile, role in not betraying her comrades of the Natal Machinery of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) will be highlighted. She was in the unit that was responsible for the infiltration of MK cadres into Natal. Ndwandwe was recruited into the African National Congress (ANC) in 1985 while she was still a dental therapy student at the then University of Durban Westville (now University of KwaZulu-Natal). Ndwandwe was a sought after target by the security police who were hell bent on capturing her.

During her exhumation, a blue plastic bag was found around the waist of her remains. She had worn it as a panty to maintain her female dignity. Ndwande's skeletal remains were found in a shallow grave with the thin piece of plastic still covering her torso. She was only 23.



Phila had a 3 month-old son at the time of her killing. Today Thabang is a 34 year old successful chartered accountant, we will hear from him how he has coped from the tragedy of losing his mother who he calls "the breastfeeding warrior".

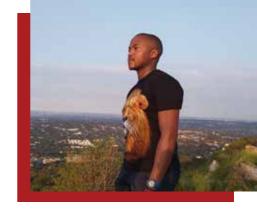
The Breastfeeding Warrior unfolds through the eyes of Thabang, Phila's only child. Today he suffers from transgenerational trauma and is still coping with the loss and anguish. By using moving archival footage from the actual exhumation of Phila's grave and pivotal TRC archive, the documentary explores issues of trauma, reconciliation and forgiveness in South Africa. In a sense, Phila is given a voice as her bones start to 'speak' back to us and start to invoke her spirit.





The documentary makes us realize that the impact of apartheid-era gross human rights violations extends beyond a single 'criminal incident' itself and continues to affect South Africans today.

"I am the son of Phila Portia Ndwandwe and Bhekithemba Bethwell Mabuza. I am a descendant of Umkhonto we Sizwe warriors and they are the reason I'm here today". -Thabang Mabuza





"I call my mother the Breastfeeding Warrior. At the time when she was abducted and killed I was only 3 months old and she was breastfeeding me. **Everything that** subsequently happened showed that she was a warrior until the end. She decided not to talk and unfortunately that was how she left this world". - Thabang Mabuza



