

A Play

GHOST TWERKERS

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GHOST TWERKERS (A Play to combat Gender Based Violence)

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With the increase in rape and femicide cases in South Africa in 2018, this play creates an opportunity to increase awareness, educate, inform as well as initiate dialogues on gender based violence in order to interrogate and, perhaps, stem the scourge in the country, continent and the world. This responsibility is owed by all of humanity.

-Ola-Kris,
December, 2018,
Pretoria.

SO YOU MAY KNOW

Ghost Twerkers is specially written by Ola-Kris in honour of all victims of rape, femicide, inequality, wars and gender based violence all over the world, especially on the African continent and particularly in South Africa. South African Police Service, with Stats SA, has published the country's crime statistics for 2018. According to the SAPS, shockingly, the number of reported rapes in South Africa has increased to 40,035 cases in 2018. On the other hand, sexual offences in 2017 was 49,660 but rose to 50,108 in 2018.

The rape of South African women is among the highest in the world, according to a Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) report release. In 2015/2016, apart from horrifying rape statistics, a surprising finding was that 2.6% of white women and 2.5% of black women believed men may beat women. An unexpected finding was that women had the same pattern of attitudes towards domestic violence as men, Stats SA said. One in 40 SA women believe it is acceptable for men to beat them. At least 2.6% of white women and 2.5% of black women believed men may physically assault women. For both men and women, the highest percentage of individuals thought it was acceptable for a man to hit a woman if she argues with him, and the lowest percentage of individuals thought it was acceptable for a man to hit a woman if she burns food. Black men had the highest percentage of individuals who thought it was acceptable for a man to hit a woman, followed by white women.

This development has again revealed to the world the South African rape culture. "In a rape culture, women perceive a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself. A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women as the norm. In a rape culture both men and women assume that sexual violence is a fact of life, inevitable". One of the biggest problems with an inescapable rape culture is that it directly affects survivors getting justice for the crime because not only do many victims feel as though they won't be believed; there is a widespread belief that many victims are to blame for being raped because of wearing revealing clothes, being intoxicated or even due to their sexual orientation among others. Of course, this is all nonsense as the victim is never at fault.

Sources:

1. news@citizen.co.za
2. <https://businesstech.co.za/news/government/270689/south-africa-crime-stats-2018-everything-you-need-to-know/>

CHARACTERS
-according to appearance-

1. NIGHT CLUB GOERS-about 12 people
2. MALISA-victim
3. NANDY-victim
4. NELLY-victim
5. MEN-rapists (6)
6. SERGEANT MALINGO-police officer
7. GOGO (Old family Matriarch)-50)
8. MADALA (Disabled drunk) (45)
9. DOCTOR
10. DIKKO
10. DHLAMINI
11. JUDGE (55)
12. COURT POLICE
13. SERGEANT BETHRAND
14. REPORTERS (4)
15. COURT ATTENDERS (8)

This play is set in a winter of the late 60s with costumes, props, hairstyles and make-ups presenting the 60s vintage. Gogo's shack sits on a far left corner of the stage and on the far right sits the police station. The court is positioned far deep in the middle while the night club is positioned in between the Court and the Police station. The Doctor's office is in between the Court and Gogo's shack. Presently, a television broadcast is projected on the screen as the reporter reports. Two Police officers at the station, Sergeant Malingo and detective Bethrand listen to the news on radio. Madala also listens to the radio while Gogo moves in and out of the shack.

FIRST MOVEMENT

News Report

And here is the news in full. Violent crime in South Africa has become rife and horrific, with the escalated prevalence of sexual assault and rape leading to South Africa being labelled "the rape capital of the world". This is largely attributed to the pervasive rape culture that exists in the country. Unfortunately, the criminal justice system is failing survivors as few cases are reported and even lesser get justice. The nagging question is, do the civil Courts offer an appropriate alternative?

What we do know at the moment is that the law is simply not doing enough for rape survivors. According to the 2016/2017 crime statistics, over 100 people are raped every day in our country, and that's just based on the attacks that are reported. This means that the number of people being brutally violated adds up to tens of thousands every year.

(Name of Reporter)
Southern Agency Television

SECOND MOVEMENT

Night Club. Music Blaring. Gamblers. Dancers. Pot Smokers. Brawlers. Bouncers. The scene opens with a number of girls seductively twerking, pole and lap dancing for male clients who shower them with money. Malisa, Nandi and Nelly are part of the dancers.

END OF SCENE

LIGHTS OUT

THIRD MOVEMENT

It is early hours. Malisa, Nandi and Nelly from the night club stroll onto a dimly lit and quiet street, sharing a cigarette, laughing and showing off their twerking skills and the money they made for the night, while they wait for taxi.

ALL THE GIRLS: (Sing)

Wont you help to sing
These songs of freedom?
'Cause all I ever have
Redemption songs
Redemption songs
Redemption songs.
Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery.
None but ourselves can free our minds.

The girls laugh and exchange "Hi Fives".

NANDY: My clients tonight were fabulous. Huge tips, my friends.

NELLY: I tell you. I got good tips too, but some tried to be naughty, though. Typical of men, I must add.

ALL

GIRLS: Typical!

All the girls laugh and exchange "Hi Fives".

MALISA: Did you see that one?

NANDY: Which one?

MALISA: The one with the jacket. He had so much fun when I twerked (she twerks), but he killed the fun that moment he became too ambitious for my taste.

NANDY: Ambitious and curious.

MALITA: Exactly, too curious.

NELLY: Even rude! Like the one I danced for. I was dancing on his laps, fair enough. Then he curved his hands around my waist. And, huh! I felt a hard rock somewhere in between his legs. I slowly tried to dance away but the

silly guy wanted more. These men always want more. I wonder why.

MALISA: We do our job satisfactorily. That is why, my friend.

NANDY: They are hungry lions. They want meat. That is why.

(The girls laugh heartily)

MALISA: Correct, Nandy. Listen mates, imagine the effrontery. He started to touch me at my ass as I twerked. This special asset. He touched me. Only my boyfriend does that.

NANDY: The idiot! But there are rules. "Do not touch the dancer". It is written boldly, in Afrikaans.

NELLY: The language of the oppressor. Our men hate Afrikaans as a language.

(The girls laugh heartily)

MALISA: You all know that I have a chronic disdain for disrespect. I cannot deal.

NELLY: So, what did you do?

NANDY: (playing mother) What did you do child? I did not raise you to meddle with unproductive pranksters.

(The girls laugh hysterically)

MALISA: (Playing child) You know your girl, Mother. I said to him nicely, "this is strictly business brother"!

NELLY: (Playing mother) That is my girl. And then?

MALISA: (Playing child) Wait for it, Mama. And then, I tried to move his hand away. At first, very nicely.

NELLY: Nicely? Bad move.

NANDY: (Playing mother) You ought to have kicked his dick. and used the pepper spray I gave you, child.

NELLY: He will not stop at that. Or did he?

MALISA: And then, when the idiot would not flinch, I yanked the filthy hand away from my ass.

NELLY: Such disrespect. Who does he think he is?

NANDY: Goats. They think girls who go to night clubs are prostitutes or junkies. Some of us just want to have a good time.

NELLY: And, like us, some are just there to make a decent living. To survive. Nothing more.

ALL

GIRLS: (Near tears) We are responsible University students.

NANDY: Men should get a life and stop treating us like we are trash.

NELLY: We want to have a good life, better than our hard working mothers and fathers. Not these abuses.

MALISA: Wait for the most disgusting part. He said to me (sobs)

NELLY: He still had the guts to speak. Niggers will never learn their lessons quietly.

NANDY: What did he say?

MALISA: He said (playing man) "I am dreaming that I am fucking you right now".

NANDY

AND NELLY: What?

NANDY: Nigger said that?

NELLY: He did?

MALISA: Nigger said that to my face. Do I look like a sex doll?

NANDY: What did you tell him in response?

NELLY: Wait a minute. Do not tell me you played the dumb. I will beat your ass right now, child.

NANDY: What did you tell him in reply?

MALISA: Very gently and slowly, I said "wake up from your dream and go fuck your mama"

NELLY: You lie!

NANDY: You said that?

MALISA: I said it. You should have seen the expression on his face. Priceless. As if he saw a ghost. I am no prostitute.

NELLY: We merely do this for the money.

NANDY: Nothing more. That is why we work hard.

ALL GIRLS: (Sing and dance to Donna Summer's "She Works Hard for the Money")

Malisa starts to sob, Nelly and Nandy join in.

MALISA: We only want to survive. To fund our education.

NANDY: Varsity life is tough for black students. My mother is a single parent. A cleaner. Besides paying for my tuition, I also fend for the family, sometimes.

NELLY: I owe heavily in school fees and I am responsible for my little brother in grade four. I just want the money, not to be objectified.

NANDY: My family, seven of us, depend on my Varsity bursary. We are doing this just for the money. Nothing more.

NELLY: It is business. No strings should be attached.

The girls cluster and sob some more. Presently, one man appears on the scene, stalking them, then a second man, a third, a fourth. a fifth and a sixth man. The girls are scared and begin to back off as the men come closer. The men catch up with them, two men on each girl, and rip their clothes as they are further beaten and raped. The men finish one after the other, and leave the stage. The girls crawl to one another in pain and grief, sobbing.

END OF SCENE

LIGHTS OUT

FOURTH MOVEMENT

Gogo lives in a shack with her brother Madala, a disabled drunk. Madala is half drunk. Ongoing discussion.

MADALA: Gogo, there is no more milk.

GOGO: Who needs milk.

MADALA: I need milk Gogo. To quench this babalas.

GOGO: Your liver is wasting away. Stop drinking.

MADALA: Is that an advice or a suggestion.

GOGO: Call it both, I care less.

MADALA: You do not care. I suspected it would come out some day and now it has. You do not care about this family. We always get to this moment. The moment when I always wish that I was born before you. I would have been a responsible family head.

GOGO: It is you who is the misfit here. Where is your ego. This one misrepresents chauvinists. First males everywhere assume the role of family head.

MADALA: Males everywhere?

GOGO: Responsible males, that is. Some could even be third borns or last borns. You will find them, everywhere.

MADALA: Exactly! Everywhere. Is this family everywhere? Take a deep breath, woman. Your grandchild goes everywhere, dancing for money. Tell me, is that what decent girls everywhere do?

GOGO: Look at you. A disgrace to this family. No skill, no job, no wife, no child, no life. A useless liability. You are wasting the air you breathe. You disgust me.

As if Gogo's last statements cleared his babalas. He looks at Gogo with sorrow and disbelief in his eyes.

MADALA: Now you mock me because of this disability. You mock your own brother. As usual, you will now be punished.

Madala brings out a pocket knife, waves it at Gogo, moves on her. Gogo is scared and shows anger and helpless disdain because the abuse has become a normal thing between them.

GOGO: Please!

MADALA: Too late. I warned you that you will be punished whenever you insult my masculinity or disability. At least I am useful for something. As the first male, I own this house built by our father. Leave if you are not satisfied with the way I treat you. Without me you cannot even have bread. Put off your clothes.

Gogo starts to remove her clothes while Madala while Madala watches. He begins to removes his pants.

END OF SCENE

LIGHTS OUT

FIFTH MOVEMENT

Police station. Malisa sits, totally unresponsive and indifferent.

SERGEANT MALINGO: How many were the men? Ok I remember your statement reads six (He writes) Six men involved in crime. Six men.

SERGEANT MALINGO: You said that you were three that were attacked.

MALISA: (Looks at him viciously and nods)

SERGEANT MALINGO: Oh, sorry. Raped. You were three that were raped. I see. Three girls, women, raped. So, tell me again, you said they tied your hands, right? (Malisa nods)

SERGEANT MALINGO: (He writes) Hands were tied. And only you came to report? Unbelievable. Where are the other girls? Maybe only you did not enjoy it.

Malisa looks at him with disdain.

SERGEANT MALINGO: So, does it happen all the time, that only one victim out of many, in this case, three, would go to the Police station and report an offence allegedly committed against many?

Malisa barely looks at him with pity

SERGEANT MALINGO: Okay (He writes) hands were tied. (To Malisa) With what? (Malisa is silent).

SERGEANT MALINGO: (Victim is irresponsive) And then, after that, they took turns in raping you all?

Malisa looks at him viciously and nods.

SERGEANT MALINGO: (Mocks) Hnmmm. It must have been hectic hey. It sounds like, you know, a group thing. What do you people normally call it? Group festival or something.

MALISA: (Looks at him viciously)

SERGEANT MALINGO: (Laughs in mockery of Malisa and calls out at a colleague) Warrant Officer. Come quickly. You will not believe what is going on here.

END OF SCENE
LIGHTS OUT

SIXTH MOVEMENT

Ongoing discussion.

MADALA: She is still not talking, Gogo. Not a single blink.

GOGO: Who would?

MADALA: The damage is deep.

GOGO: That is the only explanation to this deafening silence.

MADALA: The damage is deep. What can one say? Not as much options for the poor in this country. Justice has become expensive. Rape is committed with arrant impunity these days. Rich men who murder their lovers get nice trials and treated like celebrities, even inside jails.

GOGO: Let my ancestors not sleep otherwise let my life become miserable and let my grand-child live (Sobs). Dear ancestors. Do not be quiet on me now. My life is ebbing away before my eyes. I am dying. Can you not see?

MADALA: Be strong, Gogo. This family needs you alive.

GOGO: What is the essence of life if it is lived in misery? No point!

MADALA: How could I be alive and witness my child loose her mind. What is the point of living?

END OF SCENE

LIGHTS OUT

SEVENTH MOVEMENT

Police Station

SERGEANT MALINGO: (Looks at Malisa) You have refused to even say a word. Ok. (He writes) Victims were tied up. And then raped. So, tell me. Did you at least enjoy it? Did you em...em...come?

MALISA: (Stares at him viciously)

SERGEANT MALINGO: I am sure you know what that means, to come. You see, I am just doing my job here. So, here is the question again. Did you, em...em...come? As in.....

MALISA: (She speaks very quietly)

SERGEANT MALINGO: Say that again.

MALISA: (Speaks very quietly).

SERGEANT MALINGO: I did not hear you. Again please. You see, I must write something. It will assist investigations. You understand.

MALISA: (Beckons on Sargent Malingo to come closer. He does)

SERGEANT MALINGO: Yes. I am here. So, did you?

(Malisa Motions Sergeant Malingo to bend towards her. He does. She speaks very quietly into his hears).

SERGEANT MALINGO: (Surprised/embarrassed) Excuse me?

Malisa motions Sergeant Malingo to bend closer still. He does. She bites his hear off. He screams. Everyone in the Police station storms out with guns drawn. As she is taken away, she spits the bitten-off part of the hear on Sargent Malingo who kneels, holding to his bitten ear and weeping.

END OF SCENE
LIGHTS OUT

EIGHTH MOVEMENT

Gogo sits, dejected. Madala enters, semi drunk, sips his traditional beer.

GOGO: How is my child?

MADALA: Nothing has changed. Fast asleep Gogo. She was granted bail.

GOGO: Her mother blames me. She is still not talking to me. She grandchild is devastated.

MADALA: She has refused to eat still. How many days now?

GOGO: Two.

MADALA: She is in shock and traumatised.

GOGO: Who would not be?

MADALA: The Police officer lost an ear.

GOGO: Just an ear?

MADALA: Gogo?

GOGO: How could you ask a rape victim if she had orgasm during rape.

MADALA: Is it true, or is it possible? Do you also have orgasm?

Gogo ignores his question.

GOGO: That interrogation was beyond ridicule. Insensitive does not even explain it. Very disgusting. He got what he deserved.

MADALA: (He gets a refill). You approve of violence, Gogo?

GOGO: Not violence. It is corporal punishment. Some men deserve such. Even the death penalty.

MADALA: You would even approve of the death penalty Gogo.

GOGO: Of course I will.

MADALA: Gogo?!

GOGO: Stop screaming. You have not received a death penalty. At least not yet.

MADALA: But you just wished me dead.

GOGO: Many times. Rapists and murderers keep increasing and the crime keep escalating in our communities.

MADALA: (In stupor) Is it true?

GOGO: What about femicide?

MADALA: (In stupor) Femicide? I honestly do not know anything about that one. Is he in town?

GOGO: (Ignores him) Life has become very cheap today. The death penalty would reduce that scourge in a hurry.

MADALA: That officer lost an ear. Is that not enough punishment?

GOGO: He should have lost more. That interrogation was out of order.

MADALA: Gogo

GOGO: In my days, men who raped lost more than ears. Some lost their things.

MADALA: (In stupor) What things?

GOGO: Idiot! Their major instrument of atrocity.

MADALA: (In stupor) You do not make sense.

GOGO: Fool! Their dicks.

Madala doses off. Gogo, knife in hand, stealthily goes to Madala and unzips his trousers.

MADALA: (Wakes up from stupor) Gogo what are you about?

GOGO: I wanted to show you the instrument, idiot.

MADALA: Got you! You will never find it there. Laughs) It is now in my pocket. Girls today are very dangerous so it must be kept safe. (zips his trousers) That is the idea.

GOGO: I hate men.

MADALA: Your father was a man.

GOGO: Noble man. He was different. He worked at the mines and he lived an honest life. Your father met my mum after my father passed away.

MADALA: Our mother was a gift.

GOGO: She would kill you if she was here to hear the way you treat me.

Madala staggers to get a refill.

END OF SCENE

LIGHTS OUT

NINTH MOVEMENT

Madala returns with refill, rendering his lines.

MADALA: (Reflective) You know what? I also want to be a noble man, even if it is in my dreams. Noble is noble. Whether real or imagined, just be noble. Tell me, you were saying that you hated men.

GOGO: I still do.

MADALA: No! Do not say that. Your pastor would deregister you.

GOGO: I hate my pastor too.

MADALA: (Stupor suddenly vanishes). You hate your pastor? (He moves slightly away from her) Now I know that you are the Satan.

GOGO: I care less.

MADALA: Is that the idea?

GOGO: Although I was the victim, I used them very well to my advantage. I retired all the men who came to me. I used them. I wasted them. It was my own revenge. I twerked for them and fucked them because that was all they ever wanted. I also wasted them because that was all I needed to do.

MADALA: (Shocked) Gogo?

GOGO: I have been there and done all that. Girls today are too timid. In my days we were well mannered when treated well by men but vicious when humiliated.

MADALA: Some girls today could also be vicious.

GOGO: They are not.

MADALA: They are.

Malisa comes out of the room. They both regard her but she merely walks past them and out of the house.

GOGO: The appointment is for today.

MADALA: We can only hope she gets help and evidence for the Court. This whole thing might terrify her the more, Gogo. It was hell at the Police station.

GOGO: My child is dead already.

MADALA: Do not say that.

GOGO: Let us hope the hospital helps.

MADALA: You see, I was wondering. Maybe she and her friends were attacked and raped because they came out that they were lesbians. This is Africa Gogo. Not America. People should know.

GOGO: That is not enough reason to be attacked and raped.

END OF SCENE

LIGHTS OUT

TENTH MOVEMENT

Malisa stands in a hospital.

DOCTOR: (Sits behind a desk, taking notes). 21 years. You are an adult. Sit down (Melisa declines).

DOCTOR: I know it could be traumatic for an impressionable mind as yours. But what can we do? (Points at the examination table) Lie down here (Reluctantly, Malisa lies down).

DOCTOR: Remove your underwear.

Malisa looks at him viciously. She removes her underwear.

DOCTOR: Ok. Spread your legs. (He fixes the surgeon lights on an uninspired Malisa). Open it wide for me.

The Doctor inspects.

DOCTOR: You ought to have come here straight from the Police station. In fact, the Police were supposed, under the law, to bring you here.

He checks some more.

DOCTOR: (continues) It has been two days. Now all signs of evidence are lost because you had a shower already. As you would imagine, every form of his DNA is lost. Well, the bruises are there but you see, more evidence is lacking. The Court would ridicule us again. They always do that to us, and to the victims who are in anguish. You can get up now. I will make a report. Let us hope we are lucky to get appropriate sentencing.

Malisa gets up and makes to leave. The Doctor points at the undies but Melisa just looks at him and leaves. The Doctor picks it up and looks at it very closely under the lights.

DOCTOR: And there could be some evidence you know. You never know hey. DNAs could be crazy these days (He smells it). Perfect!

END OF SCENE
LIGHTS OUT

ELEVENTH MOVEMENT

The Court is in session and the atmosphere is tensed. Up Centre Stage is the Judge, overlooking the defence counsel standing and cross examining the victim who is standing in the witness stand. The six accused men stand adjacent.

DHLAMINI: Your honour, it is preposterous.

DIKKO: What?

JUDGE: What is preposterous, Counsel?

DHLAMINI: For the prosecuting counsel to even think, albeit suggest, that the victims seduced the accused persons.

JUDGE: The Counsel made no such accusation.

DIKKO: Did they twerk? Yes, they did.

JUDGE: (To Dhlamini) Did they twerk?

DHLAMINI: Yes, your honour. That is what they do for the money. It is a job.

DIKKO: A little education will suffice here your honour.

JUDGE: This Court shall oblige.

DIKKO: A definition your honour. Twerking is dancing to popular music in a sexually provocative manner involving thrusting hip, ass movements and a low, squatting stance (he demonstrates as he speaks).

DHLAMINI: It is a job your honour.

DIKKO: No contest. A question, though.

JUDGE: Yes, you may.

DIKKO: Is this twerking, this job, is it seductive?

DHLAMINI: My lord?

JUDGE: What is your answer, Counsel?

DHLAMINI: My lord?

DIKKO: (To Dikko) Counsel is grandstanding. Is this job seductive? That is the question.

DHLAMINI: My lord, this is...

DIKKO: Your honour, the counsel is going around in circles.

JUDGE: (To Dikko) Let me be the judge of that.

DHLAMINI: This whole exercise has become but a joke.

JUDGE: Let the Counsel be wary of words uttered in this court.

DHLAMINI: This honourable court has been approached for a redress, my lord. The Court's tardiness is frustrating, to say the least, my lord. This could lead to impatience on the part of the victim. My lord, this court ought to expedite hearings and judgement, otherwise...

DIKKO: My lord, Counsel is suggesting the victim should have taken matters into her hands?

JUDGE: I did not observe that at all.

DIKKO: It was apparent enough in his submission, your honour. That is extrajudicial.

DHLAMINI: My lord?

DIKKO: Counsel suggested that victims take the law into their own hands.

JUDGE: Did he?

DHLAMINI: Counsel is beside himself, my lord.

DIKKO: He just blatantly declared war on our judiciary.

JUDGE: Let me be the judge of that.

DHLAMINI: My lord, my colleague's demeanour is a complete abuse of this judiciary process.

JUDGE: I shall be the judge of that.

DHLAMINI: This is a farce.

JUDGE: A farce?

DIKKO: My lord.

JUDGE: Quiet!

DHLAMINI: My lord.

JUDGE: And quiet, too! Listen, both of you. Your utterances beg contempt of my court and you might regret if they are not tamed. I shall dully make observations of

inconsistencies, misunderstandings and possible slander from your submissions, Counsels.

BOTH COUNSELS: As the Court pleases.

DHLAMINI: Your honour, if due diligence is exercised in this matter, the accused are the monsters that need taming.

DIKKO: That is prejudicialis injurious, your honour. The Counsel is seducing this Court in favour of preconceived ideas. This could result in harm or injury to the accused.

JUDGE: Counsel must refrain from prejudicial insinuations.

DIKKO: Counsel is in contempt.

JUDGE: (To Dhlamini) Counsel?

DHLAMINI: Your honour, it is laughable for the prosecuting counsel to suggest that the victim seduced the accused. Besides, jurisdiction is a factor to be considered here.

JUDGE: Clarify your submission, Counsel.

DHLAMINI: The three victims were doing their job at the club. The incident occurred after hours.

DIKKO: Your honour, the accused paid to access the venue. It is routine. They paid for the services. It is the norm.

DHLAMINI: Objection, your honour!

JUDGE: Over ruled! You may continue, Counsel.

DIKKO: The accused had the rights to receive all services at the club. They paid for their presence as well as conducts.

JUDGE: Any objection to that, Counsel?

DHLAMINI: Your honour, before this results into a circus, I must remind this honourable Court that the incident occurred after office hours, away from the club. How is that for paying for services at the club?

Suddenly, Malisa charges towards the six accused sitting on the opposite side of the courtroom. She is restrained by the police but she manages to retrieve a firearm from the Court Police. Malisa manages to hold the Court Police hostage.

MALISA: Here we go! This would go down one way or another. Peacefully or with a lot of casualties. Move only if you are ready to die.

DETECTIVE

BETHRAND: (Draws a weapon) Drop that weapon or you will be wasted.

JUDGE: (To Malisa) This is a court. You cannot possibly do that. Somebody must restrain this woman at once.

DETECTIVE

BETHRAND: You do not know how to use that thing.

MALISA: Watch me surprise you.

Malisa fires the gun into the air.

MALISA: That was not an accident.

JUDGE: (Furiously to Dhlamini) You may want to clarify your client's behaviour to the court.

DETECTIVE

BETHRAND: Last warning. Drop that weapon or you are dead.

MALISA: Too late. I am already dead. I am a ghost. I died since the day I was raped. We died. Pull that trigger if you are a man with balls. Pull it!

DETECTIVE

BETHRAND: Do not try my patience. I will not hesitate.

MALISA: How old are you?

DETECTIVE

BETHRAND: (Hesitates) 35. Why?

MALISA: As a cop?

DETECTIVE

BETHRAND: 15.

MALISA: You became a police officer at age 20.

DETECTIVE

BETHRAND: Drop your weapon.

MALISA: Old enough to be a criminal, right?

DETECTIVE

BETHRAND: I will not hesitate.

MALISA: Are you different?

DETECTIVE

BETHRAND: Different?

MALISA: Pull that trigger if you have never raped a woman in your 35 miserable years on earth.

DETECTIVE

BETHRAND: (Looks around the Court. Shamefully lowers his weapon)

JUDGE: This Court will adjourn.

MALISA: (To the Judge) How old are you?

JUDGE: You cannot interrogate me. This is my Court.

MALISA: Not anymore. Have you ever raped a woman?

JUDGE: I am not under interrogation.

Malisa's firearm goes off again.

MALISA: Will you speak or I should make you speak?

JUDGE: (Scared) Yes. I mean no, your honour. I am 64 years. It was a very long time ago your honour. She was actually my girlfriend, but that day I was very horny and she was not willing. So, I...

MALISA: You raped her.

JUDGE: Forgive me your honour. Like I said, she was my girlfriend. It is now a long time ago, your honour. And in actual fact I was.....

MALISA: Quiet! The judiciary has become a charade. Your jokes end here today. A tree is known by its fruits. Your fruits as judiciary have become worrisome and pathetic. Women in this country have no defence from their men. Their lovers. Court clerk.

COURT

CLERK: (Scared) Yes, mayor. I mean yes, your honour.

MALISA: Check the records. How many rape cases in Courts this past year?

COURT

CLERK: (Hurriedly checks the records) More girls and women have been raped and murdered in the past year. 291 cases more than the penultimate year.

MALISA: Convictions?

COURT

CLERK: Not commensurate to offences.

MALISA: And why is that?

COURT

CLERK: Am not sure your honour. Most offenders were released on bail. Cases tend to evaporate after several adjournments. Counsels and victims get tired of Court sittings.

MALISA: There have been meagre convictions of these heinous crimes in recent times. Rapes everywhere, every time. Men continue to murder the women they swore to protect, love and cherish. It is already an epidemic. Is this it?

Malisa's firearm goes off again. Presently, TV crew comes in for a live broadcast of the ongoing:

MALISA: Is this the country we pledge to build? Our communities are no longer safe. Our children are no longer safe from gang violence and drugs. What have we done to us? What have we done to generations unborn. Is this the rainbow nation we want?

SOLO: *Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika*
Maluphakanyisw' uphondo lwayo,
(Lord bless Africa May her glory be lifted high,)
Yizwa imithandazo yethu,
Nkosi sikelela, thina lusapho lwayo.
(Hear our prayers, Lord bless us, your children)

MALISA: Are our ancestors proud of us today? In sane societies, men protect their women. Ours have become lunatics, raping and killing girls and women with impunity. That is the joke that we have now become.

Nandy and Nelly come in. They walk to the Judge's table. Clear it, rips their tops and lie down on it. Malisa shoots into the air several times. Throws the gun at the Court Police. Walks up to the table where Nelly and Nandy lie. Rips off her top and speaks.

MALISA: We call on all dogs all over. We are on national television. Come over here rapists. All men who maim, rape and murder little girls and women. Come. If you are not cowards, come out now in this public space and do what you do best. Animals. Come. Bring your cocks. Come screw. Come fuck. Come screw little children, come fuck your sisters and mothers, and grandmothers. Come on cowards. Anyone of you out there?

SOLO: *Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso,
O fedise dintwa le matshwenyeho,
O se boloke, O se boloke setjhaba sa heso,
Setjhaba sa, South Afrika, South Afrika.*
(Lord we ask you to protect our nation, Intervene and end all conflicts,
Protect us, protect our nation, the nation of South Africa, South Africa)

The six accused men make to move towards the three protesting women.

COURT

POLICE: Do not even think about it! One more step and you are all dead.

MALISA: (To the Police officer) Too late, hypocrite! Where was the police when we were raped? What makes you think you can protect us now? (To the accused rapists) Come. (Malisa rips her top off) No one will stop you now. Come finish what you started. Come, animals, fools. Vultures. Come.

The men move to where the women lay. Remove their own clothes and cover the naked bodies of the women.

MALISA: But if you will not do it in the open, why then do you do it in the closet? Stop all this nonsense at once. Let us build a respectable South Africa and Africa. We are not animals.

Everyone freeze on stage. While the news anchor reports, the police arrive to arrest Malisa and lead her out.

News Media Reports

You are live on Southern Agency Television. The hostage situation at the Magistrate Court is now over and the accused hostage taker, a certain Malisa who is a final year student at the University has been taken into custody, although no charges has been laid on her as yet.

(Name of Reporter)
Southern Agency Television

Presently, the Lead Solo begins Bob Marley's "REDEMPTION SONG".

LEAD SOLO: Old pirates, yes, they rob I
 Sold I to the merchant ships
 Minutes after they took I
 From the bottomless pit
 But my hand was made strong
 By the hand of the Almighty
 We forward in this generation
 Rise up Mzansi,
 Rise up triumphantly.
 Wont you help to sing
 These songs of freedom
 'Cause all I ever have
 Redemption songs
 Redemption songs

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery
None but ourselves can free our minds
Have no fear for atomic energy
'Cause none of them can stop the time
How long shall men kill their women
How long shall men kill their lovers
While we stand aside and look?
Some say it's just a part of life,
We've got to fulfil the Book
Wont you help to sing
These songs of freedom?
'Cause all I ever have
Redemption songs
Redemption songs

Redemption songs.

END

HEAL THE WORLD—Michael J. Jackson

There's a place in your heart
And I know that it is love
And this place could be much
Brighter than tomorrow
And if you really try
You'll find there's no need to cry
In this place you'll feel
There's no hurt or sorrow

There are ways to get there
If you care enough for the living
Make a little space
Make a better place

Heal the world
Make it a better place
For you and for me
And the entire human race
There are people dying
If you care enough for the living
Make it a better place
For you and for me

If you want to know why
There's love that cannot lie
Love is strong
It only cares of joyful giving
If we try we shall see
In this bliss we cannot feel
Fear of dread
We stop existing and start living

Then it feels that always
Love's enough for us growing
So make a better world
Make a better place

Heal the world
Make it a better place
For you and for me
And the entire human race
There are people dying
If you care enough for the living
Make a better place for you and for me

And the dream we were conceived in
Will reveal a joyful face

And the world we once believed in
Will shine again in grace
Then why do we keep strangling life
Wound this earth, crucify its soul
Though it's plain to see
This world is heavenly
Be god's glow

We could fly so high
Let our spirits never die
In my heart I feel you are all my brothers
Create a world with no fear
Together we cry happy tears
See the nations turn their swords into plowshares

We could really get there
If you cared enough for the living
Make a little space
To make a better place

Heal the world
Make it a better place
For you and for me
And the entire human race
There are people dying
If you care enough for the living
Make a better place for you and for me

There are people dying
If you care enough for the living
Make a better place for you and for me

You and for me

Songwriters: Michael Joe Jackson

Heal the World Lyrics © Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC

About The Play

Three girls from impoverished backgrounds, desperate to get education and a decent living, opt to become commercial dancers in a night club. A rape incident from some clients would mark the beginning of their freedom from gender based violence. The play creates opportunity for academic and political dialogue to interrogate and, perhaps, stem the scourge in our communities.

About the Playwright

Dr Ogungbemi Christopher Akinola studied Theatre Arts at University of Ibadan, Nigeria and holds a Master's degree from Drama and Film department at Tshwane University of Technology, and a Doctorate in Applied Theatre from English Department of University of Limpopo, South Africa. He is a theatre expert with over twenty-five years' experience as playwright, director, theatre administrator, teacher of acting and film director. He has developed keen interests in African post-colonial literature and cultural studies. Ola-Kris, as he is popularly known is the author of *Hakuna Matata* (a play), which has toured Nigeria and South Africa, as well as several unpublished plays and poems. He has featured in a number of Nollywood and South African movies such as *Jacob's Cross* on MNet and *Room 9* on SABC. He has also directed a number of Nollywood films such as "The Dragons" and "The Lincoln's Clan". His "The Prince of Sovenga" premiered in May of 2018 at the University of Limpopo. "Ghost Twerkers" is his latest play. Ola-Kris currently lectures at the Performing Arts Centre of the University of Limpopo, South Africa.