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A MOTHERLESS PARIAH SEARCHING FOR IDENTITY AND RELEVANCE.

A personal narrative of inter-racial segregation exploring the journey of a mixed-race child, growing up not knowing his biological mother for more than four decades and his journey in search of his roots, identity and relevance in a still racially and class-divided, post-democratic South Africa.

by

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ABSTRACT

A Motherless pariah searching for Identity and Relevance

I was 41 years old when I met my mother for the first time in the small farming town of Olifantshoek. I was a mixed-race child, born out of wedlock as a consequence of a liaison between a Black mother and a “so-called Coloured” father in Apartheid South Africa, at a time when such a liaison was deemed a criminal offence.

This research report takes the form of a personal account of enforced separation, racial bias and interracial segregation that divided communities of colour, particularly the “so-called Coloured” community, which included my own family.

It narrates how my “African” mother’s perceived unsuitability to raise a child due to her Blackness, willfully deprived me of a bond with my biological mother, my extended maternal family and, in essence left me a motherless pariah, still searching for the knowledge of my true identity and relevance in the land of my birth. The essay seeks also to use my personal story to explore the race and identity issues that face the so-called “Coloured” community. It includes an examination of issues in the history of the colonised inhabitants of the Cape, apartheid-era rules and restrictions around interracial mixing, and debates within the “Coloured” community.

The piece concludes that my existence as a South African is not determined and defined by colour, ethnicity or race classification, but rather by the acceptance of who I am as an individual and as a human being. It argues that the term “Coloured” is unhelpful and that new ways should be found to facilitate the ownership of positive identity.

The accompanying method document outlines some of the research underpinning the narrative piece.



Photo 1: An ID photo of my biological mother Nkagisang, Christinah Magalanyane; the ID of my late father, Harry Lal Presslin, and my father with his grandson, Shakil.

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THE BACKDROP OF INTERRACIAL DIVISIONS IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOUR

The Presslin family lived in Prieska in the Northern Cape just over 300 hundred kilometers from the hamlet of Olifantshoek. My Scottish grandfather, Harry Lal Walter Presslin, was a steam locomotive driver who had landed on our shores during World War 1. Around 1913 he married my grandmother, Maria Magdalena du Preez, when she was only fifteen years old. She was a beautiful, light skinned Coloured young lady whose father, Luke du Preez, was a Dutchman. Gauging from my paternal grandmother's features, I suspect that her mother, Toekie, was of Khoi or Nama descent. She had nine siblings, namely eight sisters and one brother. Three of the sisters married "across the colour line" into the Surtie's, originally from the city of Surat in the state of Gujarat, India and the Suliman families who were also of Indian descent. According to family legend, these families were previously indentured labourers who eventually came to set up shop in Upington on the periphery of the Kalahari Desert.



Photo2: Portrait of my paternal grandparents, Harry Lal Presslin and Maria Magdalena du Preez-Presslin.

The matrimonial match between a White man and a Coloured woman automatically catapulted the family's public standing in a community generally consisting of darker inhabitants, to the higher level of a privileged semi-bourgeois, or the so-called "play Whites". Their first child, Sinni, was born in 1914, a year after their marriage. Five other children followed, namely Bessie, Johanna Violet, Harry, Luke and John. Being of darker complexion in those days was frowned upon, but being Coloured on the other hand, meant access to certain privileges not meant for Black people, such as better housing, better schools and job opportunities.



Photo 3: The Presslin's –
Front from left daughter Bessie, Grandma Maria Magdalena, daughter Voilet me in the corner.
Back from left the sons – Sinny, Luke, Harry, John Presslin in the corner Luke's daughter Rika.

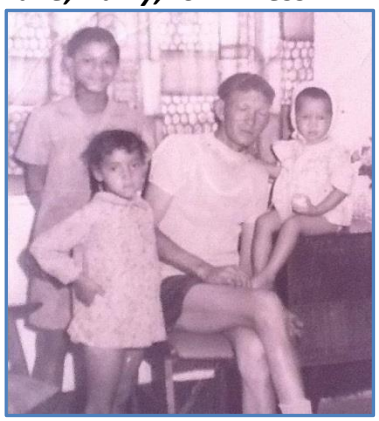


Photo 3a: My uncle, Luke Presslin & his children

My maternal grandmother Maria and Ousie Bess (as we all called my father's eldest sister) raised me from my babyhood as one of their own children. I grew up in 35 Agnes Street, Colville, a sub-economic Coloured township built in compliance with the Group Areas Act by the Kimberley Municipality on the barren chalk plains and among the diamond mine dumps on the northern border of the city. The four-roomed houses were constructed in a very basic style, with the toilet and the single tap outside in the corner of the yard. Although I received wonderful care, love and affection from both my grandmother and my aunt (as well as from the rest of the family), I was often seen as the "swartskappie" or the "little black sheep" in a family whose members were very light of complexion, as opposed to myself who happened to be much darker.



Photo 4: Myself and Ousie Bess Presslin in front of our house in Colville

I grew up with the knowledge and the belief that I was born and bred in Kimberley. Even my identity document testified to this fact, but in 2017, when I applied for an abridged birth certificate I had a rude awakening! My birth certificate stated that I was born in Olifantshoek on the 3rd December and not on the 23rd of December as I was informed since I could remember. I had been celebrating my birthday my entire life on the 23rd of December, only to discover upon my entry into my half century that my born day was not correct. Upon my enquiry from the family I was told that the reason for this deviation from celebrating my official birthdate on the third of December was due to a financial decision by the family, namely to minimize the number of presents that I would have had to receive on my birthday as well as on Christmas day. So, for all my days growing up as a child I had never received any birthday present on the 3rd of December, and only one present on Christmas day to make up for both my birthday which was supposed to be on the 23rd December and Christmas.



Photo 5: Ousie Bess with her daughter Evelyn and Grandma Maria Magdalena du Preez -Presslin

THE EARLY YEARS – Growing up in Kimberley

After my abduction at the tender age of three months, the earliest memory I have as a child was when I was about three years old. As far as I can recall I was a sickly child and I was hospitalised for three solid years. My cousin Evelyn later told me, "The reason for your illness was because you were only breastfed for three months by your mother and your early weaning from her breast milk had a negative impact on your health. You had a very weak immune system and that is the reason why you are so thin". The three years and lonely cold nights I spend in hospital with no physical contact of any kind from the warm and comforting bosom of a mother, prepared me mentally to be fiercely independent later in life.

Ousie Bess was a cook, nowadays referred to as a chef, at the Kimberly Mental Hospital. It was five kilometers from where I was hospitalised. She was always at my bedside during the day after her shift which ended in the early afternoon. She assumed the natural role of my mother. She was a heavily-set woman with incredible energy, swore like a sailor but endowed with strong Christian values. This was portrayed in her commitment to get everyone to church on a Sunday morning and none of the children dared to miss Sunday School at the Nederduits-Gereformeerde Kerk or NG Kerk, (the Dutch Reformed Church) where the family worshipped. On Saturday evenings at around 7 o'clock she would crack the whip to prepare us for Sunday. "Haal jou Sondagklere uit die kas sodat Anna dit kan stryk en polish jou skoene, my kjeend" (Take out your Sunday best so that Anna can iron it and polish your shoes, my child), she would nudge me on. Although not my mother, on face value I presumed as a child that she was, seeing that I never knew another mother. It became a given throughout my life that she was not only my mother, but also our provider, protector and the head of the family. While I was in hospital, there were fewer visits from my family members during the week, but over weekends they came in droves. My father, in the meanwhile, had married a lady by the name of Maria Klein, a person of Indian and Coloured descent. At the time he was working on a construction job in Natal, and that is where he settled down. I cannot recall him being there for me during my entire stay of almost three years in hospital. I hardly saw him as he did not come to Kimberley regularly; he only visited occasionally every second or third year during the December holidays, when the construction workers would take their annual leave.

The Presslin's was a very close-knit family and the four-roomed house of my grandmother (some of the family called her Kaka) and her daughter Bessie in the rough Coloured township of Colville in Kimberley, was unofficially the "family headquarters". 35 Agnes Street was home to myself, Ousie Bess and my grandmother, Maria Magdalena du Preez-Presslin. My grandma was the only woman at that time that would proudly announce her maiden and married surname all at once – today we would know it as a double-barrel surname. Also living with us were three other women: Evelyn, Ousie Bess's daughter and my cousin, Emelda. She had been sent by her parents to live with us so that Ousie Bess could correct her belligerent behaviour and to mend the strained relationship between her and her parents. The third additional occupant was our nanny,

Anna, who had been dispatched by Aunty Tot, my grandmother's sister from Prieska, where the family originates from, to assist Ousie Bess in raising us. It was common practice that if a family member had financial or social problems raising a child, such children would be left with my grandmother and Ousie Bess to assist in caring for them.



Photo 6: The house on 35 Agnes Street, Colville, Kimberley, where I spent my childhood years

Anna our nanny, arrived in 1970 and became our de-facto second mother. She insisted on bathing, dressing and grooming me and the girls, in spite of us complaining that we were already big enough at the age of seven to wash and dress ourselves. Surrounded by five women, I was the only male in the house. The situation automatically led to me being responsible for most of the traditional "manly" chores, such as collecting and chopping wood for the fire, starting the fire at five in the morning for Ouma to make breakfast and to have hot water for the bath before school. My grandmother was a tough taskmaster and as the only male who did most of the tough chores around the house, it was quite upsetting for me at times, and I often complained and questioned the status quo. Although the girls did their share of cleaning and cooking, I still held the view that the tough chores were assigned to me because I was the "black sheep" in the family, the "dark one" that had to perform all the menial tasks. Later, after having read Alex Hailey's seminal book, *Roots*, I even thought that I was being enslaved. My grandmother always tried to convince me otherwise though, assuring me that had my grandfather still been alive, I would have wished that my skinny behind was on another planet, as the tasks would have been twice as hard. "That old Scotsman would have whipped your thin behind into shape. I am here to make sure you grow up to be a strong man, for the girls to be proper ladies and for all of you to be the best that you can be", she would often say after hugging me. Those wise words made me stronger, and I began to believe that I could excel beyond the confined boundaries of this poor community, surrounded by the dismal diamond mine dumps – we referred to them as "the heaps".

The heaps were also our playground for all types of boyhood adventures, for instance, when we would take a bicycle with no tyres and ride from the top of the heap at lightning speed two hundred meters downhill. The onus would be on the rider to stop himself by plunging his body in the soft sand when he arrived at the bottom, as there was no braking mechanism to prevent the inevitable crash.

The community in Colville was a diverse mixture of people: it was a "rainbow nation" that featured from light-skinned, straight-haired, blue-eyed blonds to dark-skin, course-haired, high-cheekboned individuals. The township housed a variety of Coloureds, Khoisan, Muslims, Indians, and Africans from different ethnic groupings, with even a few rebellious White people. Case in point: there was this young White soldier who had gone AWOL from the Nationalist army and came to live with us for a while; he even had a brief affair with one of my cousins. All these groupings had one thing in common: they all spoke Afrikaans. This bridged the language barrier and made the township a truly cosmopolitan, integrated community. Ousie Bess earned a reasonable salary, but one of the major perks of her job was that she could bring left-over and surplus food and groceries home. There was always ample food and luxuries for a household situated in a very poor neighbourhood. Milk, boerewors, meat, a variety of cheeses and cheesecakes were just some of the stock that filled the fridge, as well as an outside coal-wooden cooler, which needed to be watered twice daily to keep the contents cold. Being the generous soul that she was, many neighbours in Agnes Street, or those in the community who needed food were recipients of Ousie Bess's generosity. That was also perhaps the attraction of the family members who used to converge and congregate at this small four roomed house in Colville on Sundays, under the pretext of coming to see if granny was still well.
My uncle Sinnie or "Dadda" as everyone referred to him, was the eldest in the family and was the only one who had a shiny, black Ford sedan. He was also the enforcer of discipline who exacted punishment with his "sjambok" on any of us who might have misbehaved during the week. If you knew that you will be reported to Dadda, then you would normally vanish just after lunch to avoid a humiliating beating in front of all the cousins and in full view of the watching neighbours.



Photo 7: Uncle Sinnie (Dadda), his wife, Mina and Ousie Bess's daughter, Evelyn on her 21st birthday

All or most of the family, would normally arrive just before lunch or for late afternoon tea and cake, while we, the children, would be playing in the backyard under the fig and peach trees. Ouma's favourite ginger beer and Ousie Bess's doughnuts were the only treat which distracted the children from their games in the backyard. The doughnuts were prepared on Saturday night by myself and the girls. On Sunday mornings, just before going to church, we would deliver the orders to the families in the street. Later, Grandma also added the ginger beer to the basket of goods we were selling. This small business, which only operated on weekends, served to create a skillset for the girls and created additional income for the family. Ouma would normally say, "We don't want to sell everything as it would upset Oom Salie McKuur, the Slams (Muslim) on the corner". He operated a little corner shop from his house.

As a tall, scrawny child, I was always picked on at primary school and whilst not having much muscle to show, I decided that I would make lots of friends to protect me from further harassment. We formed our own little gang with the boys who played sport, who loved to read and who were prepared to share reading books. There were Afrikaans photo story magazines like *Ruiter en Swart, Die Wit Tier* and *Mark Condor*, to name a few. These magazines came out on a monthly basis and were zealously read and shared amongst my crew. Then I found a book with no pictures in it. It so happened that a handsome, dark and tall Uncle Frank often came to visit in a big car at night. While he and Ousie Bess were having a conversation in the back seat, I was instructed to play with the steering wheel and eat my sweets. My eyes fell on this book and I decided to take possession thereof. This book, which had no cover, was *The Godfather*, by Mario Puzo. It was based on the story of the rise of the Italian Mafia in America.

The Corleone's were poor Italian immigrants who had left Sicily to make their home in the "Land of the free", the United States. One character in the book that gripped and inspired me was Michael Corleone, the son of Vito, the godfather of the "familia", and Carmela Corleone. Although they had other sons, Michael was deeply loved by his father and it was said to be most like him in terms of being calculating, intelligent and having a forceful personality. Michael initially wanted nothing to do with the Corleone's "family business" and enrolled at college and later enlisted in the army to escape any potential involvement in crime. However, when his father was nearly assassinated he volunteered to murder the men responsible. He then fled to Sicily. Once there, he learned of the Mafia's roots, fell in love and soon married, but his new-found wife was killed by a car bomb intended for him. This made him join his father's family business, which meant entering the dark criminal underworld of the Mafioso.

I refused to share this prized asset with my friends until I had finished reading it. The book was in my school bag daily and for a full month I could not put it down. Although it was the worse for wear, it still had most of the pages and it unraveled a world of power dynamics, conspiracy, politics, brutality and mystery which intrigued me endlessly. These stories although violent, infused me with hope that all is not lost and that one could rise from the ashes and become

successful if you are resolute, worked hard and remain committed to your cause. For my budding young mind this book shone the spotlight on a world almost identical to ours in Colville, a community riddled with poverty and inequality, but at the heart of these adversities harbouring the inspirational drive by many of its inhabitants to succeed against all odds – not necessarily to achieve success through violence but by sheer determination and endeavour. This story evoked in me a lifelong love for reading.

Although I loved reading, the theatre of the mind radio, was the thing that really fascinated me. Every weekday after school I would listen with Grandma to the Afrikaans radio dramas, and on Friday nights it was time for *Squad* Cars, followed by the *Top 40* on Springbok radio. On Saturdays it was rugby commentary on *Radio Suid-Afrika* (the later *Radio Sonder Grense*). Rugby commentator, Gerard Vivier and music guru, David Gresham, and later Tim Modise and Alex Jay became my idols and inspirations to seriously consider a career in broadcasting.

When I moved to high school in 1975, we were housed in the old buildings that used to be the William Pescod High School, but which had been moved by the Group Areas decree to the Coloured area in the northern part of the city. The school, Bultfontein Road Secondary School, was an *ad hoc* arrangement to accommodate the Standard Six classes due to the huge influx of learners from the eight primary schools in the city and the schools from the surrounding rural areas. The school was situated in the heart of town and my first year at high school proved quite an exciting period in my life: it meant a daily walk through the CBD, passing all the lovely little shops with beautiful clothes and toys.
This "liberation" from the dire, drab conditions of the township was a in its own way a relief, although we were warned by our elders that we had to be out of the "White" part of the town before 9 pm. When the siren went off, it signaled that all people of colour had to be out of town, unless you had a *Dompas* to prove that you had permission to work late. If not, you would be arrested for trespassing. This warning notwithstanding, I could not hold my excitement as I relayed the news to my grandmother: "I will be walking through town every day to school and I don't have to wait for the end of month when you take us shopping", I said.

But my first day of high school in 1975, was also our first personal experience of the stark reality of Apartheid South Africa. After school, my classmates and I passed the only commercial restaurant in town, Wimpy. As kids from the poor township we never had an opportunity to visit any restaurant. With the little bit of spending money we had, we managed to scrape together ten Rand to buy one burger and chips to share amongst the four of us. Upon entering this place of mouth-watering delicacies, we were told in no uncertain terms that we could not be served because the place was only meant for White people. The lady behind the counter, with the nametag "Anna" screamed at us in Afrikaans, "Kan julle nie lees nie? Hierdie plek is net vir witmense en nie vir julle Swartes nie! Gaat uit". (Can't you read? This place is only meant for White people and not for you Blacks – get out of here!).

This was our first encounter with the harsh realities of Apartheid, and this horrid experience remained with me well into my adult life. With mouths drooling, four hungry youngsters could only look at the food from the outside and this must have stirred a rebellion in our collective souls to defy the racial order of the day. We decided to show these racists that they could not just disregard us or to simply wish us away. In consequence we stole some oranges and lemons from the house of a White man a few blocks further up the road from Wimpy to ease the pain of our humiliation inflicted by apartheid. A huge Labrador chased us, but we were lucky to escape and not to get caught by the police. This for us, as a group, was the beginning of a commitment to fight against White domination and to one day occupy a seat in a Wimpy restaurant.

Hardly a year later, the authorities closed down the Bultfontein Road Secondary School and moved us to a Coloured area, Homevale, where my uncle Sinnie lived. We knew that this was probably due to the increase in petty crimes in town, because the White residents were complaining of Black children stealing fruit from their trees. Close to the end of our high school years, one of my fruit-raiding friends, Mervin Blaauw, enrolled into the army. The Nationalist government was at that stage fighting a border war and had resuscitated the old Cape Corps (the Coloured wing of the South African Defense Force that had fought so valiantly alongside the other Allied forces during the Second World War in North Africa and Italy), and named it the *Kaapse Kleurlingkorps* or KKK. Mervin proudly announced: “Gents, me and ou Vasco” – one of our other friends in the street – “are going to fight ‘the Black terrorist’ on the border and we will be getting paid for doing it”. I personally took the news very badly. Their decision to capitulate to the apartheid regime for a meager salary, a brown uniform, to be trained by a White Apartheid officer, and to give up the fight for justice and a chance to sit at a Wimpy table one day, was a betrayal of our bond. Subsequently this placed a strain on our friendship because we obviously held different political ideologies. Sadly, we slowly drifted apart from one another as friends and comrades. Vasco died about ten years ago and Mervin is currently somewhere in the Cape. Only one of those friendships are still lasting today.

The community of Colville was very poor and as children we received the bare minimum for pocket money. This meant never having sufficient cash in our pockets to bet on the “kêrrim” or “carrom” games. In brief, “kêrrim” is a typical “Coloured” game where a square board (approximately 80 cm x 80 cm) made of hardboard, with wooden borders, is placed on top of an oil drum and played with a snooker cue by shooting the flat, round pawns into the four holes in the corners. The aim of the game is to pot one's nine kêrrim men and the queen before your opponent. During the week, we would practice diligently and on weekends we had regular tournaments with 10 cents cash bets to determine who would be king of the kêrrim board. This need for money drove me and my friend to search for something else to do to supplement our meagre cash flow for covering our bets.

There was a tomato farm some kilometers out of town and we decided to go and work on this farm on Saturdays. Five o’clock was call time, when the farmer would arrive, give us roughly-cut

tomato and cheese sandwiches for lunch, a few tomatoes to take home and paying each of us fifty cents pay for our hard labour. In hindsight, this was child labour and exploitation par excellence, but one has to bear in mind that the value systems and child rights at that time were quite different from how these are perceived today. We were rich, or as the kids of today would say, we were the "cheeseboys in the hood". Ten cents were used to attend Father Foëlmer's bioscope on Sunday, ten cents for a Coke and chips, the rest was for pocket money for the week and, of course, bets on the kêrrim games.

A further opportunity presented itself when we were asked by one of the guys in the area if we might be interested to make some extra money by caddying golf bags on Sundays. He said there was no guaranteed payment, but we would receive soup and brown bread at halfway after the first nine holes, and if you were lucky, you could make a few cents if the "Boer" that you had caddied for, happened to have a good day on the course and you had retrieved all his golf balls. He took us through a crash course in golf with the various clubs for long and short holes, irons and woods, names of balls, gloves, golf tees, how many holes there were and a few other basic rules. One of those rules which was probably the most important, was to keep your mouth shut and only speak when you were spoken to. We were warned that if you broke this rule, there could be dire consequences and possibly even brutal beatings that would follow, because the White people we caddied for, were mostly businessmen, farmers and a few from the law enforcement agencies. These were the 70's and we heard rumours from the old folks that some of the Black caddies often disappeared without trace, with no explanation given as to what had happened to them. On some days you were lucky to get anything between ten and twenty rand, which made you the richest boy in the township and at school, but on some days it was bad, as there was no payment from the "baas". One of the advantages of this "work" was that it actually kept us out of harm's way. It was quite standard and normal that several brutal fights broke out over weekends between youngsters from the townships. For instance, if you lived in the adjoining Floors township and you were visiting a girl in Colville, you were bound to get into trouble with the local gangsters if you did not pay an access fee to visit the girl in that township. I realised many years later that this territorial protection could be attributed to the dire social conditions of unemployment and poverty to which many youngsters were exposed in these poor neighbourhoods.

The community of Colville consists mainly of unskilled labourers, artisans, a smattering of teachers, nurses, policemen and drivers, and a large number of social grant recipients. Then there are the inevitable "willie werkers" (people who make little or no effort to find employment), as my grandmothers used to call them. It was a tough environment that also housed some of the most vicious gangsters in Kimberly. One had to constantly be on your guard to defend oneself, and at the same time be vigilant to not fall prey to the social ills of alcohol, marijuana and mandrax, drugs that were ravaging the community. One way of protecting yourself was to learn how to throw a stone "that can follow a man around the corner" and to dexterously wield an Okapi, a three-star knife, that can cut your opponent in five different places within a few seconds. This was crucial in your self-defense to survive and protect yourself.

But I found that listening to the radio, reading books, running and playing sports, were the only ways that would enable me to steer clear from either becoming a gangster or a criminal statistic. But there were not only physical threats of violence against me and my friends from the gangsters in the area, but also psychologically from the Apartheid regime. My friends and I decided to arm ourselves. On Sundays after lunch, at around 3 o'clock our favourite pastime was to watch Kung-Fu movies at the Catholic Church bioscope. As a group we thought it would be a cool idea if we had the karate skills of Bruce Lee and Chuck Norris to safeguard ourselves from the bullying gangsters. On the opposite corner of our street was a gentleman who held a blackbelt grading in karate, and so we asked him whether he would be willing to teach us karate. Lo and behold, he gave us lessons without charging us a cent. Twice a week we would gather on the lawn in front of his yard to learn how to kick like Bruce Lee. Almost instantly the young "wanna be" gangster that would threatingly ask us for five or ten cents at the shop when we were sent to buy bread, acknowledged our new-found fighting skills after I had round-kicked their ring leader. (Some people call it a roundhouse kick when the attacker swings his leg around in a semicircular motion, striking with the front of the leg) And as the saying goes, the rest is history. My buddies and I were now respected.

But that respect did not shield us from the cruelty of the Apartheid regime, and the Youth Uprising in 1976 did not spare us either. We were consistently locked in stone-throwing, running battles at school on a weekly basis with the police and the "jumpers". The "jumpers" were young Black men employed by the police to do their dirty work and to chase after suspected criminals. These guys could outrun and chase down any hundred metre sprinter in their All Star takkies. One cold, blustery winters' night, my friends Vasco, Mervin, Quinton and I ventured out to the roadhouse which is on the main road towards Johannesburg, about five kilometers from our township to go and watch a movie that was shown for free to the roadhouse patrons. This was our usual midweek outing where we could at least catch a free movie, buy a bunny chow consisting of polony, spicy atchaar, "slap" chips and a softdrink. After the movie, at around eleven o'clock, on our way home and just before we could reach the main road, one hundred metres from the roadhouse, the police (we called them "the gattas" in township lingo) suddenly arrived. The wind had picked up and with it came the dust that is so synonymous with the Northern Cape. To shield ourselves from the dust we used our handkerchiefs to cover our faces. This, we believe was the reason why the White officers asked us what we were doing there that time of the night. We explained that we had gone to see the movie and that we are now heading home, and that we were covering our faces from the dust. This did not satisfy them. They began accusing us of a burglary that had allegedly occurred at one of the businesses in the area an hour before and they told us that we were to be arrested for the crime. This is all we needed to hear. Like bolts of lightning we all started running for the railway line. They unleashed the feared "jumpers" who were quietly sitting in the back of the van. I was way ahead, followed by my friends, but as I approached the railway line I forgot that there was a razor-wire fence and the darkness made it even more treacherous. I felt a sharp pain as the razor wire tore into my skin. I grabbed and held

onto the nearest pole to release myself, but this was all in vain. The “jumpers” got hold of me and pummeled me to the ground. They also caught up with Mervin and forcefully dragged us back to the van. Vasco and Quinton, who could outsprint any Jumper in the dark, luckily got away. The two White officers put us in the front of the van and continued to beat us up, until we arrived at the police station. The more we pleaded our innocence while respectfully addressing them as “Meneer”, the more they beat us up while shouting, “Wie de hel is jou “Meneer”? Meneer is ‘n kaffer predikant! Lyk ons vir jou soos ‘n kaffer predikant?” (Who the hell is your Sir? “Meneer” is a kaffir preacher! do we look like kaffir preachers to you?).

On arrival at the police station we were first interrogated and then beaten again while simultaneously asking us if we were part of the terrorist group, the ANC, and whether we were planning to burn down the nearby power station. When they could not find any further joy in beating us, they threw us into a cell with hardened criminals. Luckily one of my school friend’s father was a police sergeant and I called out to him in the corridor. He first enquired why we were there and then he told the warden to remove us and put us in a single cell. Vasco and Quinton, in the meantime, had alerted our parents and the next morning we were set free. But this episode proved to me that there was no justice in Apartheid South Africa and that the only way to make a change was to follow a path where these injustices could be reflected and acted upon so that people’s human rights and dignities could be established and protected. I flirted with the thought of joining the liberation struggle, but my grandmother convinced me otherwise namely that there were other ways and means to fight a good fight when she said, “Daar is diegene wat kan baklei, anders wat kan skryf en anders wat die praatwerk kan doen. Sommige mense kan al drie die dinge doen maar ek is seker jy is nie uitgeknip vir die eerste een nie”. (There are those that can do the fighting, same can do the writing and then there are those that can do the talking. Some people can do all of these three things, but I am sure that you are not meant for the first one”.

My music and mathematics teacher at Homevale Senior Secondary School, Joe van Wyk, made me fall in love with music and I tried to follow that particular vocation. Unfortunately, this career choice did not go very far or work out well. I sang lead in a few school plays and this gave me the confidence that maybe I could be the next Black Elvis Presley. Most of my peers at school said I sounded like Michael Jackson, so I auditioned with a popular youth band in Kimberly at the time, called *CC Beat* and I got the part. The band was headed by Victor Khojane, my friend and now leader of the well-known *Dr Victor and the Rasta Rebels* party band. I think it was due to my ability to sing falsetto that I was asked to join the band.
For two weeks we rehearsed, and I was ready to hit the big time on stage. But on the eve of my first performance at the age sixteen, my voice suddenly broke and I could not do my Michael Jackson impersonation anymore. The croak in my voice made me sound like a frog and a cross between Barry White and Judy Boucher. I lost the passion for singing, but my interest in music as an art form remained. Unbeknown to me that croaky voice that robbed me of my stage performance, was the link to a career in the theatre of the mind, namely broadcasting.

Summertime temperatures soar to over forty degrees in the Northern Cape. I only learned to swim at the local public pool while at high school, but through sheer determination I was inducted as part of the fringe players in the water polo team the following year. Although not a natural athlete, I did road running almost every second day, succeeded to play rugby as a lock for the first team in school and I stayed with the polo team on the fringes for three years until Matric. These sporting activities and my love for reading and music kept me busy and away from the unraveling political tension in the country and the social ills that were afflicting the youth in Colville. I can now convincingly say that participating in sport turned out to be my saving grace.

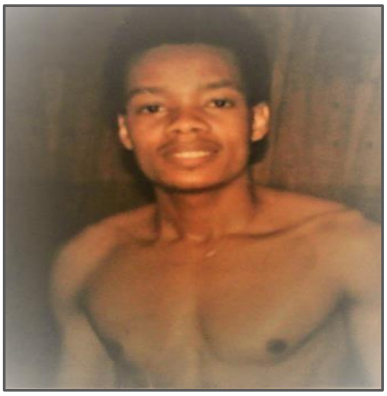


Photo 8: Elvis in matric

The fact that we had a huge family always kept us busy with a wide variety of chores at home, and notwithstanding Ousie Bes and grandma being so loving, the question about my dark skin compared to the rest of the family and my biological mother never materialised, up until I was in my final year in high school. Whenever the conversation went in that direction, it was always brushed aside when Ousie Bes would say, “Stop met jou nonsense. Dis grootmense se geselskap. Kjeenders moet gesien en nie gehoor word nie. Loop help die meisiekjeenders met die huiswerk”. (Stop with your nonsense. These are adult conversations. Children must be seen and not hear Rather go and help the girls with the house chores). The tone was defensive but yet very direct. At that point you knew that you had to drop the subject, unless you were looking for a hard smack or a “warme klap” from Ousie Bess. At first, I was under the impression that my mother died and maybe nobody in the family wanted to hurt my feelings. Unbeknown to me, not a single soul in my family dared to share this dreaded secret with me. Not until many years later…..

WHAT DOES HISTORY TEACH US ABOUT COLONISATION, SEGREGATION AND SEPARATION?

Sol Plaatje in his book *"Native Life in South Africa"* said, "Awaking on Friday morning, June 20, 1913, the South African Native found himself not actually a slave, but a pariah in the land of his birth". This dreaded sentiment was probably expressed by the Khoi and the San, as they witnessed the arrival of the first Dutch settlers at the Cape of Good Hope more than 300 years ago, before Plaatje's revelation in 1913.

Historically as a group the Khoi and the San people of Southern Africa are often called the "Khoisan", a term that has been used to describe their broad similarity in cultural and biological origins, as well as their inter-tribal assimilation. The San people are the huntergatherers of Southern Africa. They have been called by many names: "San" or "Sonqua", "Soaqua", "Sarwa" or "Basarwa", and "Twa", all basically meaning, "those without domestic livestock". The Dutch settlers used the term "Bossiesman" or "Bushman", to refer to them as "bandits" or "outlaws". The men hunt for meat (mostly antelopes) using poisoned arrows and spears on hunts that could last several days at a time.

The Khoikhoi ("men of men") or Khoi, sometimes spelt KhoeKhoe, on the other hand practiced extensive pastoral agriculture in the Cape region with large herds of cattle, goats and sheep at the time of the arrival of European settlers. The Khoi were the first native people to come into contact with the European sailors in the 14th Century before they started using the Cape as a trade and refreshment outpost for sailors going to India. The Khoi were also the first natives to meet the Dutch settlers in the mid-17th century. The European immigrants labelled them Hottentots, in imitation of the sound of the Khoi language. The Khoi people's whole lives revolved around their cattle and they were constantly on the move in search of better grazing for their cattle and sheep.

Jan van Riebeeck arrived on the shores of the Cape of Good Hope with three ships on 6 April 1652 and fortified the site as a way station for the VOC trade route between the Netherlands and the East Indies. They met Autshumato or Herry the Strandloper (as the Dutch had named him) of the Khoikhoi as the first inhabitants of the land on the beach. He was the one who made it possible for the settlers to survive at the fort by being the supplier of fresh meat. He entrusted van Riebeeck to teach his young eleven-year-old niece, Krotoa, who was later named Eva by the Dutch, in the western ways of life, and to act as interpreter between the two groupings. She also served as the go-between the Dutch and the Khoi to stop a war between the groupings. Later Krotoa fell in love with a Dutch surgeon, Peter (Havgaard) van Meerhof. They became the first recorded mixed marriage couple in South Africa and this is a true indication that Krotoa is the ultimate "stammoeder" or ancestress of the mixed descendants of all "so called Coloureds" in South Africa. With increased trade, more settlers, including a large group of French Huguenots

fleeing religious persecution and immigrants from all over Europe, arrived and settled at the Cape. These settlers, including Africans and Muslim slaves and religious leaders who were banished here from the East, and indentured labourers from Indian descent brought here between the 17th and 19th centuries, were mostly men. Naturally they desired women to cook, clean, entertain and keep their beds warm. In this unruly, unstable, patriarchal setting, Khoi-San, Nama, Griqua and African women were either forcibly prostituted, enslaved or used as concubines to fulfill this need. All these forced and sometimes consensual integrations created a new nation that could not be defined. The rise in miscegenation and interracial intercourse between these groupings that bore children were simply identified as Basters and later, as the so called “Coloured”.

I am relating the story of the Khoi-San and its descendants as I have a suspicion that my maternal grandfather, Klaas Magalanyan, who was a Black Botswana national, could be from mixed Setswana and even San bloodlines. He married my grandmother on my mother’s side, Emsa or Elsie Willemse, a White British/Afrikaner. Their union took place at the northern frontier of the Northern Cape where in his book, *“Hidden Histories of Gordonia”,* Martin Legassick speaks of a remote area, Gordonia, the frontier part of South Africa located in the Northern Cape Province, which was inhabited by the Basters (in the late 19th century, but there were also Xhosa speakers and descendants of other KhoiSan people who had settled in this area). He relates about the histories of racial segregation and people being treated as pawns in both the colonial and apartheid eras.

This is perhaps the reason why my search for identity gravitates towards the Khoi-San as a collective which would include the Nama, Griqua and Korana (a group of racially- mixed Hottentot peoples originally from the area along the Orange, Vaal, and Modder Rivers) as they were the first nation that were intermarried across colour lines in the frontier Northern Cape area.

CONTEXT OF RACE CLASSIFICATION

My sense of history is that the doctrine of apartheid was made law in South Africa in 1948 to further entrenched legislation to marginalize Coloured and Black people in South Africa. The imposition of the term “Coloured” to people that are of mixed race and described as “Other” was another devastating measure. The Group Areas Act legislated the mixed descendants of the Khoi-San as “Coloured or “Kleurlinge”. The Afrikaners defined them as; "gemors” (rubbish), “nie-mens” (not human), “sukkelaars” (strugglers), “nie-volk” (not a nation), “laer as a ding” (lower than a thing), “die oorblyfsels van die nasies” (leftovers of the nations), “Gamskinders” (Children of Sham), etc. These discriminative and derogatory terms and other disparaging names were forced upon the descendants of the Khoi-San with a stroke of a pen. This characterization and imposition of the Coloured race label on the Khoi-San as a collective, has led to the descendants of these communities being forced to accept a Coloured label – an identity that is not only derogatory, but downright insulting. The label “Coloured” is not defined as a race or a clan anywhere in a historical context, it is simply a tag to define a people different from South Africa’s minority White and majority Black mainstream. In 1980 Marike de Klerk, then wife of former apartheid era South Africa President F.W. De Klerk, referred to Coloured people in this way, "You know, they are a negative group ... a non-person. They are the people that were left after the nations were sorted out. They are the rest."

But judging from my own observation, the Coloured derogatory term had no bearing on people’s allegiance during the Apartheid era, as it came with certain benefits such as better education or schools for Coloureds. Coloured education, although in essence inferior to that of Whites, was better than the Bantu education that was provided to Black South Africans. It was a confused and distressing period in the history of the country and the status of being “somebody” in the Coloured community, has always been determined in terms of physical appearance, in other words, how “white” one looks. Those who looked too “black”, including myself, were not only subtly frowned upon, but were overtly more than covertly rejected and thus treated as an *untermensch (a person considered racially or socially inferior).* Although this did not feature in the Presslin household, it certainly was a reality in the township and elsewhere in the country. The inter-race classifications in the Coloured and Black communities were the despicable products of colonial and apartheid engineering, which involuntarily indoctrinated an “I-am-better-than-you”-attitude. Many Coloureds aspired to be “White” just to get favourable and better treatment in terms of money, job opportunities and dubious respect. The lighter in complexion you were, the better were your chances for material advancement and to be Coloured rather than Black, was the passport to a false privilege. This prevalence of self-hate racism and a dividing class system in the Coloured communities further separated them into light and dark skin types, coarse or straight hair, brown or green eyes and even into an educational ranking system of those educated or not. This was, and sadly still is, a categorization of internal divisions that prevail in many “so called Coloured” families in the country. Many family members that were lighter in complexion were reclassified as White, and as such would actually move out

of townships to go and live in White suburbs so as not to be associated with their darker kin. "Coloured" became the collective name for all those who were "not a White person or a native". It was the notorious Population Registration statute that created the official term "Coloured" as the legitimate name and false identity for different and diverse groups of people, who had little in common. In accepting the term "Coloured" it automatically denied the descendants of the Khoi-San, the Griqua and Nama as well the descendants of slaves and slave owners the truth of their progeny and stripped them of their heritage, reducing their cultures and traditions to nothing.

Notwithstanding, South Africa's formal transition from apartheid to a constitutional democracy, race still continues to be a salient feature in the social and political life of our country. It was Apartheid, that hated system of institutionalised racial segregation and discrimination in South Africa between 1948 and 1991, which was the demon that isolated and segregated so many Coloured and Black communities, as well as dividing and tearing apart families in South Africa, as it had occurred between myself and my biological Setwana mother.

In hindsight one could probably blame my abduction and the forced separation from my mother on the Apartheid regime that had masterminded the concept of divide and rule. Be as it may, this abhorrent system paid off and contributed to the separation of mother and child for four decades. Paradoxically, this fallacious doctrine of "the goodness of Whiteness" also infected the relationship between the "non-Whites", resulting in an interracial class dividing system between the Black African and Coloured communities. This played out in the scenario that in the Coloured communities light-skinned people with straight hair and blue or green eyes were put on a pedestal and admired for their "Caucasian" features, while those of darker pigmentation were typically on the lower scales of acceptance and respect. This lamentable state of affairs inevitably contributed to the involuntary separation of mother and child for practically a whole lifetime.

Since the introduction of Apartheid legislation in 1948 it was inevitable that racial discrimination and a deliberate class dividing system would lead to the horrific separation of Coloured and Black families such as my own. Translated from the Afrikaans language, the word "apartheid", meaning 'apartness', embodied an ideology actively supported and implemented by the National Party (NP) government. It was a well-thought-out form of social engineering that called for the so-called harmonious, but separate co-existence of the different racial groupings in the country. Theoretically each individual racial grouping was thereby supposed to develop optimally and to live out its own aspirations, culture, traditions and beliefs in "freedom" and on an equal footing with the other surrounding ethnicities. But in practice this "separate development" morphed into a completely different story: it was a grossly unequal system that resulted in minority White domination while reducing the Black, Coloured and Indian majority to the indignities of serfdom and suffering. Long before the legislative introduction of Apartheid, punitive laws had already been passed during the colonial era to accomplish the goal relegating the black masses to

servitude by the passing of the dreaded Land Act of 1913 which saw millions of Black, Coloured and Indian people losing their land to white people.

One of the official conduits of the Apartheid statute, was the Group Areas Act of 1950, which physically separated the races and called for the forced removal of Coloured, Indian and Black people from their traditional living spaces and dumping them into areas that were specifically earmarked for each of these racial groups. In the case of the Black Africans, the Homelands or Bantustans became a harsh, cruel reality, as the Nationalist government was intent on separating these Black South Africans according to their specific tribes. This was done to maintain White control and to entrench the power of the minority White regime in the country. After 1948, the Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 and the Immorality Amendment Act of 1950 was legislated to complete the basket of legislation that resulted in me being removed from my mother and raised as a Coloured. The intent of the Immorality Amendment Act was to prevent all interracial romantic liaisons and marriages between the various racial groups generally, and between Whites and "non-Whites" specifically. But in spite of this law trying to keep people physically apart, it failed to enact itself in the hearts of people, because a substantial number of interracial unions followed nevertheless. Liaisons, albeit on the sly, still occurred across colour lines despite these draconian, senseless laws. Case in point was the brief relationship between my father and mother. Sadly, these racial divides and false differences in ethnicity did not only become entrenched within the Coloured community during the era of racial bias, but these bigotries persist to this day.

Despite the search for racial unity and the rainbow nation status as envisaged by moral heroes like Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu and the late President Nelson Mandela, these racial prejudices are still very much alive in this day and time.

TRACING THE TERM "COLOURED"

Since 2013, as an anchor for Newsroom on SABC Channel 404 on the DSTV bouquet, I have had the opportunity to speak to a number of role players to discuss the contentious issue of the legitimacy of the "Coloured" label.

Whilst interviewing Social Commentator and Khoi-San activist, Dr Leonard Martin, on my show in 2016 I posed to him the question whether the term "Coloured" was still relevant today. He said the following, "If we want to deal with the term or the label "Coloured", we have to go right back into the history of the conquest of the aboriginal people of India and out of that, we saw the development of the power cast system. Now the term "Coloured", is directly related to the construction of the Hindu cast system. The White people who conquered India wanted a disconnect between the children they had fathered with the aborigine Indian women, and they called these children *Mallah,* "the dirty ones". Later, with the Spanish discovery of Asia, the Spanish found a terminology which they brought back to Europe and they took to their so called new world the Americas. The term "Coloured" that came to South Africa, is the combination of this entire history, where people were called *Mulattoes*, etc. And so the entire history of conquest and the development of racialism and colonialism manufactured the word "Coloured". The call by those to scrap the term Coloured is in fact the re-imagining of the narrative of the KhoiSan shadow that started against the first colonial invaders that landed in South Africa. In a way, South Africa has been living in a type of schizophrenic denial of the history of the Coloured people. So, yes, the issue of legitimacy, the issue of First Nation Status is something that will not go away".

At a gathering in Eldorado Park in 2017, I met renowned celebrated journalist, editor, writer and poet Dr. Donato, Francesco Mattera, better known as Don Mattera, acknowledged as one of the foremost activists in the struggle for a democratic South Africa. He recited one of his poems for the audience that reflected on the forceful removal of the community from Sophiatown. Afterwards we briefly talked about my project to include his work as part of my submission for my MA, especially his book *"Memory is a Weapon"* In the book *"Memory is a Weapon"* he recalls the trauma he experienced when he first went before the Classification Board, which would decide in which race group he should belong to, "a Hotnot or an Italian". Mattera wrote, "My ID number was 331-591697C; the 'C' stood for 'Coloured' but the birth certificate read 'Mixed' in the column denoting race. It was the first I knew of a race called 'Mixed'. Mixed though, was far, far better than native, and being called 'K', as many reclassified Coloureds were to discover. Wholesome and stable families were shattered overnight, as brothers, sisters, sons and daughters were ripped apart by the cruel laws of race separation. Relentless pass raids netted in hundreds of 'borderline' cases; those bordering between African and Coloured, not between White and Coloured"." We discussed a possible follow-up meeting but unfortunately, Dr. Mattera could not meet with me again due to ill health.

This is but one of many untold stories that haunt the offspring of a divided – and some would suggest an even alienated – community. But the 'so called Coloureds' are not a homogenous group and are part of a continuum of blended DNA backgrounds, a mixed-race community which has seen the worst forms of domestic violence, gangsterism and substance abuse in South Africa.

When the Dutch arrived, they traded their wine and tobacco as payment for the meat, ivory and copper from the Khoi, and this contributed to the advent of an alcohol and narcotic dependency on the Khoi and San people lasting even to this time and day among their progeny.

This brutal, unequal trade has captured the indigenous nation and at the same time destroyed the legacy of the aboriginal Khoi and San's history and heritage, that could have been bequeathed to their descendants or the "so called Coloureds".

AWAKING THE ABORIGINAL SPIRIT AND CHANGING THE NEGATIVE COLOURED NARRATIVE

In 8 May 1996, Thabo Mbeki the then Vice-President of South Africa delivered a memorable speech when he said:

> *"I am an African. I owe my being to the Khoi and the San whose desolate souls haunt the great expanses of the beautiful Cape – they who fell victim to the most merciless genocide our native land has ever seen, they who were the first to lose their lives in the struggle to defend our freedom and dependence and they who, as a people, perished in the result. Today, as a country, we keep an audible silence about these ancestors of the generations that live, fearful to admit the horror of a former deed, seeking to obliterate from our memories, a cruel occurrence which, in its remembering, should teach us not and never to be inhuman again. I am formed of the migrants who left Europe to find a new home on our native land. Whatever their own actions, they remain still part of me. In my veins courses the blood of the Malay slaves who came from the East..."*

These words by the former President are a confirmation of the fact that the Khoi and the San are the aboriginal inhabitants of South Africa and that we genealogically interlinked as a nation. A group at the forefront of enlightening the mixed generation of their ancestry and heritage, is the Non- Governmental Organisation, the *Indigenous First Nation of South Africa* (IFNASA). When I met the founder of the group, Philip Anthony Williams, in 2016 on my television news show on SABC's Newsroom to tell me more about their aims, objectives and activities, he said, "We aim to teach and inform the "so-called Coloured" or the descendants of the Aboriginal nation, about their legacy, legal standing and their history, whilst sharing information and stirring debate about the indigenous first nation status with a view to awaken their collective consciousness. IFNASA have also introduced the Khoi-San Community or KSC Melting Pot WhatsApp group. It is a social media platform that is used to harness and share the historical context of the first indigenous people and their descendants, and about their relevance in South Africa".

I have witnessed that the platform shares information to educate and change perceptions of the descendants of the Khoi-San of being second class citizens through educational debates, online activity, physical community engagements and roundtable discussions. This struggle for acknowledgement by the South African government of the Khoi-San groupings, can be seen in various protest that were staged by the Khoi-San trio, led by Chief Khoisan SA. They undertook a three-week journey walking from Port Elizabeth to Pretoria to camp out at the Union Buildings in December 2017. I had the opportunity to interview John van Rooyen, the spokesperson for the

group and he said, “We are demanding recognition of our culture, our language to be added as one of the official languages and we want to be acknowledged as the first nation of South Africa”.

Another protest was against the newly introduced Khoi-San and Traditional Leadership Bill (TKLB) at the ANC’s 54th National Elective Conference where the groupings called on President Jacob Zuma to discuss the rights of the group, as they believe the bill does not recognise the people themselves and that it may further entrench discrimination along the same lines as Apartheid.

A milestone for the KSC Melting Pot was the consensus that was reached to arrange a National Consultative Conference (NCC 2018) with all the stakeholders from the KHOI AND SAN as a collective, together with institutions self-defining as COLOURED, from 22 - 27 April 2018 in Bloemfontein. The gathering plans to discuss wide-ranging interests of the Khoi and San as a collective, such as unity, land, culture and the people’s political future in order to establish a platform with a national and international footprint to map the way forward for a coherent future of the First Nation. In the interim the organisers had canceled the conference and moved it to September 2018. In June public hearings on land Expropriation without Compensation started in the Northern Cape and the KSC WhatsApp group ensured that a large contingent of the community attended the hearings in order to highlight the loss of land and the racial injustices that were perpetrated against the Khoe and San community that has lingered since the death of apartheid and still remains a festering sore today. This land question is but one issue that will continue to be at the heart of the fight for recognition by the Khoe and San.

For transparency and ethical reasons, I have requested and received permission from the Administrator of the WhatsApp group Anthony Philip Williams, to use the platform’s diverse discussions to complete my inquiry into the resurgence of the descendants of Khoi-San’s consciousness. I have since become a member of the WhatsApp group to gauge the conversations and contribute where necessary. This WhatsApp group is a pivotal tool to convey current news and views as it highlights the plight of the “forgotten people”, with some personal accounts of their struggles and tribulations. It is hoped that the conversations on the platform could assist in my own search for relevance in relation to inter-racial separation, dispel the myths, change the bigoted sentiments and the negative narratives that prevail in society about the descendants of the mixed nation and that it would connect the dots that are currently separating the “so called Coloureds” as a collective.

THE BIG REVEAL

After completing Matric, I left Kimberly in 1980 for the bright lights of Johannesburg, searching for a better life and to conquer my dreams as a broadcaster, but my love for music and the nightclub industry still held me captive. To fulfill my yearning to get into broadcasting, I became a disk jock and played at a number of nightclubs. Much later started a mobile events company with a friend from school and a new-found friend in Johannesburg. We entertained communities in small towns in the Northern Cape until I moved back to Johannesburg to continue my career as disk jock, public relations consultant, media liaison and later as a music promoter.

As a disk jock, the trade of mixing beats and introducing different genres with soul, hip- hop, rap, rock, rhythm & blues and deep house music, took me on a journey that saw me travelling extensively from the 1980's and only settling back in Johannesburg after the defeat of apartheid. While on these ventures, I was doing distance learning in Public Relations and later studying in the field of Journalism when I joined the SABC as a freelance radio presenter in 1996. The engagement with the media here and abroad poised me to align my vision for a career in broadcasting as I travelled to a few countries, unaware and unbeknown to me, the existence of a grieving and heartbroken mother, still alive in Olifantshoek in the Northern Cape.

My grandmother, Maria Magdalena Du Preez -Presslin died in 1985 and two years later we buried Ousie Bess. Neither one of them ever revealed to me the secret of the existence of my biological mother: who she was and that she was still alive, even whilst I was sitting next to Ousie Bess on her death bed. Due to close knit family no one dared still dared to share this secret and I never bothered to engage my father who never talked much and was a closed book even on his cheeriest day. In the interim my father, who had settled in Estcourt, KwaZulu-Natal for all these years with his wife Maria Klein, fell ill. He was suffering from asbestosis from all the years he had been working on the asbestos mines in the Northern Cape. In spite of this serious malady, he refused to stop smoking. Karma seemed to follow my Dad this time around as his estranged wife abandoned him in a state hospital. Verona, my girlfriend at the time, and I brought him to Johannesburg to live with us and she patiently mended him back to health. He later also joined us for a few years in Namibia.

Fast forward to post-apartheid South Africa 1994, we returned to South Africa after spending the last four years in Namibia. In 1995 Verona and I got married in court and for the first time in two decades I could exact vengeance on the Apartheid state by celebrating our wedding ceremony at the Wimpy restaurant, the place that initially stole my right to access and freedom of movement to sit in a simple restaurant more than twenty years ago.
In March 2003 we had a growing family of two boys aged five and fourteen years old, when my dad fell ill again. I am not sure if it was the thought of dying with a lifelong secret, or the fact that he had two grandsons, but while we were "braaing" on a warm summer night next to the pool, and after a few whiskies, my father confided in me in a soft and uncertain tone, "I never told you

this, but your mother is still alive". I firstly felt sick, then shocked and then completely horrified to know that my mother whom I never knew existed, was still alive. I naturally reproached my father bitterly and berated, albeit in their absence, the Presslin family for having been such a closed book, for my father and my relatives having deceived me all these years and to only disclosing this vital information forty years later. "Why did you do it? How could you do it to me, your only biological son?" I cried out loudly. There was a deafening silence and only tears flowing over his cheeks as he sat there, completely and utterly devastated as I was. After the outburst I initially sobbed my heart out for a mother I never knew, and then the doubts and the questions set in – questions for which I had no answers. Why did my mother not look for me after I was taken away from her? Why did she not care about me? Why all the secrecy and collusion among my family members all these years? What had happened to her? What about my racial profile, am I Coloured, Black or mixed, or how do I define myself from this point forward? Who am I?

I needed to know, and I wanted to find the answers to these burning questions. A year later, with the encouragement of my wife, Verona, I mustered the courage to take a bold step to go to Olifantshoek to find my mother.



Photo 9: Me, Verona and our boys, Leeroy and Shakil



Photo 10: Me and my daughter, Elvira

FINDING MY ROOTS

I established through my cousin Doreen who still lived in Olifantshoek, that all my uncle Boetie John and her brothers had moved to Gansbaai in the Western Cape to work in the fishing industry. She also indicated that my mother Christine as they called her, would come to Olifantshoek once a month to collect her pension and that this would be an opportune time for me to meet her. It was early March 2004 when my wife, my father and I drove from Johannesburg the previous night and arrived at around two am at my uncle Boetie John's house in Olifantshoek. We got up early the next day. I was tired, tense and nervous, but at the same time excited to finally meet my own mother whose love and care I had been deprived of for more than four decades. Doreen told me that she had already sent a message to my mother that I would be meeting her on this day, but she also warned that I should not keep my hopes up to see my mother sober, as she had become an alcoholic. This warning did not deter me at all, as I was eager to see her after all these years. The arrangement was to meet her not far from the pension pay point outside the house where she normally visited when she was in Olifantshoek. I was told that she did not want us to go inside the house as it would inconvenience the family. Later we were informed that it was actually a shebeen where the pensioners normally congregate after receiving their pay. When I saw her that morning as the midday temperature started to rise, it dawned on me that the years of trauma and anxiety of not knowing where her baby was, had taken a severe toll on her health and state of mind and that alcohol perhaps, was the only remedy she could find to silence the pain and the demons that haunted her. I saw a figure approaching the car, but I was not immediately sure if it was her. She was tall and elegant, a feature which I partly inherited from her, with Nubian skin and soft curly brown hair. I could immediately tell why my father fell in love with her, even though their relationship was short-lived. She was teary-eyed as we embraced. We both could not contain ourselves whilst sobbing for almost half an hour before we could unlock ourselves and started to share our innermost thoughts. She spoke fluent Afrikaans and very little English, as is common in the Northern Cape, where Afrikaans is the dominant language. I could smell the faint scent of alcohol, but that did not deter us from trying to catch up on a lifetime of separation that brought her to the brink of insanity and alcoholism. She fired a myriad of questions in quick succession, almost comparable to a semi-automatic weapon that had bullets to spare. "Hoe gaan dit met jou?" "Die familie?" "Is jy getroud?" "Het jy en jou vrou kinders?" "Kyk jou vrou mooi agter jou?", "Waar bly julle?" "Waar werk jy?", "Lewe jou pa nog?" (How are you, the family, are you married, do you and your wife have children, does your wife take good care of you, where do you live, where do you work, is your father still alive?)

I eventually calmed her down and introduced her to my wife, Verona, who was the one who had played such a key role in compelling me make the trip. I told her about our two boys, the eldest, 15-year-old Leeroy who was in high school in Standard Seven (i.e. Grade 9), Shakil, the baby of 6-years old, as well as my out-of-wedlock daughter from Namibia, the 13-year-old

drama queen Elvira, who was now living with us. Whilst we were living in Namibia Elvira was conceived with a Namibian women Maxi du Toit when my wife came back to South Africa for a protracted period with our first son Leeroy. When she was in grade ten my daughter Elvira requested to come and stay with us to finish her schooling in Johannesburg. I told her how my wife accepted her request and we gave her the same privileges as her brothers. I also shared my passion for radio and television with mom and how I turned it into a career, apart from my Media and Public Relations business.

She let out a girlish laugh and said, "I heard from community members that there was an Elvis Presslin on the Afrikaans station *Radio Sonder Grense*, but I was not sure if it was my baby, because they said that the person on the wireless sounded like a "White man". When I finally arrived at her question about whether my father was still alive, I paused and told her how he contracted tuberculosis, his stubbornness to not stop smoking but that he is well and living with us in Johannesburg. I did not divulge that my father had actually accompanied us on the trip to Olifantshoek, but he was refusing to meet her. She glumly shook her head in acknowledgement and softly said, "He was always a stubborn old ox. I'm surprised he told you that I was still alive". In the midday heat, in early autumn in the back of my car, I tried to convey as much information as possible in short burst, as I wanted her to tell me the story of my abduction and as a child from her care, but I had to wait patiently.

I could not tell whether it was joy, anguish or perhaps the alcohol that played a role, but it seems that she could not stop talking and asking me questions. She told me about my five half-sisters, Elsie the eldest who had moved to the Eastern Cape, Mita who now resides in Louis Trichardt, Lala, with whom she lives with on the farm in Driehoek with her four grandchildren, Maya the third eldest who is fiercely religious and who is married to Frans who works in the mines, and Boeta my half-brother, the "laatlammetjie" who will be going to matric the following year. She also told me of the tough life on the farm and the decimation of the Magaleyane family, with only one uncle Oom Petrus, also known as Oom Twsaro who is still alive in nearby Kathu – the only surviving member of the eleven brothers and sisters she had. "Ons het 'n groot familie gehad met sewe broers Hans, Andries, Jakob, Esau (ons het Om Potseng geroep), Kotie, Mannetjies en Petrus, hy leef nog, en vier sisters Mita, Maria, Anna en Annie maar almal is dood. Dis net ek en jou Oom Twsaro wat nog leef". (We had a big family my seven brothers were Hans, Andries, Jakob, Esau [we called him Potseng], Kotie, Mannetjies and Petrus, the only living sibling. The sisters who have all died were Mita, Maria, Anna, Annie and it is only myself and your uncle Twsaro who is still alive), she said.

When she eventually took a sip of water and a long breath, I jumped at the opportunity to ask the question that was haunting me for so many years. "Mom, why did you not look for me after I was taken?" This question provoked an outburst of emotion with tears running down her cheeks, her body shaking and shivering as if she was about to get a heart attack.

Eventually all she could muster was, “I tried in vain to find you, but your father’s brother, Boetie John, who lives here in Olifantshoek, did not want to tell me anything. They kept me from you because they were “play White’s” and I was a Black Setswana. They thought that I could not raise you, even though you were my own child. For years, I hated your father and his family for what they had done to us, but I learned to forgive and forget. I am so glad you are now finally here my child,” she exclaimed.

She desperately tried to compose herself as she tried to hold back the rage that was part of her being for years. I did not show it, but I was livid at the response. I maintained for years that she could have done more to find me, but at the same time I felt compelled to embrace her again as she sobbed uncontrollably. Her tiny hands clutched mine and at that point I felt her pain and the trauma of the long induced forced separation that was taking a toll on her. Before we knew it, the allocated time for us to meet and spend time together was upon us. The transport that would take her back to the farm was waiting and I had to let her go. At that point I felt conflicted and unsure about my emotional connection to her. I needed to let her go for me to process what had just transpired. I was torn in two, should I connect or coldly disconnect myself from her and the Magalanyane family or should I simply forget that this meeting ever happened? I had so many questions and yet I was conflicted with emotions.

I said goodbye to my long-lost mother in the midday heat in the red dusty streets of Olifantshoek. As she walked away, she said, “I named you Elvis because I loved the King of Rock and Roll, Elvis Pressley and your dad’s surname was Presslin, so I called him Pressley,” as she walked away with a smile which I will never forget. The realisation that I had a mother that loved rock and roll and who christened me Elvis, meant she did care, but here she was, an alcoholic on the brink of an emotional breakdown and this left me confused, drained and to a certain extent, dismayed. We left that evening as the sun faded over the red dusty streets of Olifantshoek back to Johannesburg.

On our return home, my father who went with us to see his brother in Olifantshoek but refused to meet my mother, did not show any compassion when I told him of her hardship on the farm. It seemed as if she never existed to him and I wondered whether it was his guilt or the fact that he stole me from her that was eating him alive. Weeks later my wife convinced me that I needed to close this chapter and we arranged to return to Olifantshoek to bring my mother with us to Joburg so I could get to know her better. Sadly, that wish never materialized. A few months later, my half-brother Boeta informed us that she had died on 8th June 2004, taking with her all the secrets and memories buried in the dusty town of Olifantshoek. “Mama said she was only waiting on you before she goes”, he says, whilst crying on the other side of the telephone line.

We went to the funeral a week later where I met my half-brother and four sisters plus the last remaining member of the Magalanyane clan, Oom Tswaro – he called himself “the last man standing”. The “Pinkster” church funeral service was accompanied by a string of hymn songs,

prayers, devotions and praise singing that was extremely long and tedious, and dragged on from 7am until late afternoon. Finally, at around 5 o'clock that afternoon I could say goodbye to a mother whom I never knew. As the red dust settled on her grave in the heat of the Karoo, the chapter I needed to close, heralded only the beginning of a journey in search of my roots, identity and birthright in relation to my current racial profile of a "so called Coloured" male. Apartheid encouraged inter-racial segregation and created a dividing class system within communities of colour which had separated me and my mother for a lifetime, but this was only the beginning of a journey which I thought, had come to an end on the day of her funeral.

Viewed in the holistic context of my life to this point, I am nevertheless deeply thankful that I could eventually find out the truth about my biological mother, in spite of it being at a very late stage. I now truly realise the validity and value of the biblical word that speaks of the truth setting you free. 'Truth' is a comprehensive term that implies accuracy and honesty in all of its nuances. It is a fundamental reality apart from, and transcending, perceived experience. Truth therefore implies a verified or indisputable fact.

Although there will always be unanswered questions and "what-if", thoughts ,about how it might have turned out if my biological mother had raised me, I fully realise that the manner in which I had been raised by the Presslins will always have inexorable effects in my life going forward, in spite of me having discovered the truth about my birth. I shall always remain thankful to Grandma Maria Magdalena du Preez-Presslin, Ousie Bessie and Anna our nanny, for having been my substitute mothers.

SEARCHING FOR IDENTITY

In late 2017, I did a deep DNA search at the Wits Origin Centre in order to probe whether there is a possible link of myself or my grandparents to the Khoi and San. Knowing now that my grandfather was a so-called Bantu, which could mean Setswana or even part of the Khoi-San from Botswana, could further enhance the chance of a link to the First Indigenous Nation. The results of the DNA Search showed the following:

> **mtDNA haplogroup: *L0d2 (L0d2c2)***
>
> **MtDNA Matches**
>
> When we compared your mtDNA profile with about 10,600 mtDNA haplotypes from 2 international databases, we found no matches (Metspalu et al. 2004, http://www.bioanth.cam.ac.uk/mtDNA/).
>
> A search in our database yielded 1 identical match in a South African Coloured individual.
>
> **Your mtDNA profile is closely associated with Khoe-San individuals from southern Africa**.
>
> Haplogroup L0d2, originated around 65 000 years ago (Barbarei et al., 2013). It is not observed as frequently as L0d1 and is found in less than 10% of the Khoisan foragers, the Tswana people and the Kgalagadi individuals in Botswana. In Namibia it has been found in the Nama pastoralists and Hai||om foragers
>
> *Famous people that share your haplogroup L0d:*
>
> *Archbishop Desmond Tutu*
>
> *President Nelson Mandela*

Although the DNA results needs further analysis to make sense of all the data, I was delighted to learn that my suspicion of a link to the Khoi-San has officially been confirmed by the DNA results which indicate that I am closely associated with Khoe-San individuals from Southern Africa and that I am on the same WhatsApp group, (to be more precise the same Haplogroup) as Bishop Tutu and Tata Nelson Mandela. This ultimately meant that I have a legitimate and vested interest in finding my roots and pursue the legacy of my links to the Khoi and San through my family lineage.

Whilst writing this narrative my half-sister Maya informed me that our grandmother from my mother's side, Elsie Willemse was White and that her family originated from England.
She married our grandfather, Klaas Magalanyane, who was originally from Botswana and, as she put it, "Hy was a "regte ou Bantoe." (He was a real old Bantu). According to Maya there were still some of my grandmother Willemse's surviving family members in Witsand, a nature reserve in the Kgalagadi, who on face value are "uitgebaster", (more White than Coloured). This revelation

resolved the puzzle as to why my mother in appearance was more Coloured than Setswana. Maya also revealed that our mother never married and therefore the reason for the different features within the two sets of children was because herself, Boeta, the " laat lammetjie" and Lala were fathered by Tom Ollyn, whose mother was a White woman by the surname De Koker who had married a Coloured man. The other children were fathered by a Harmse, who was part Khoi-San. This information certainly painted a picture of interracial relationships on a grand scale, in an era where this type of behavior was against the law.

ROAD TRIP TO THE NORTHERN CAPE

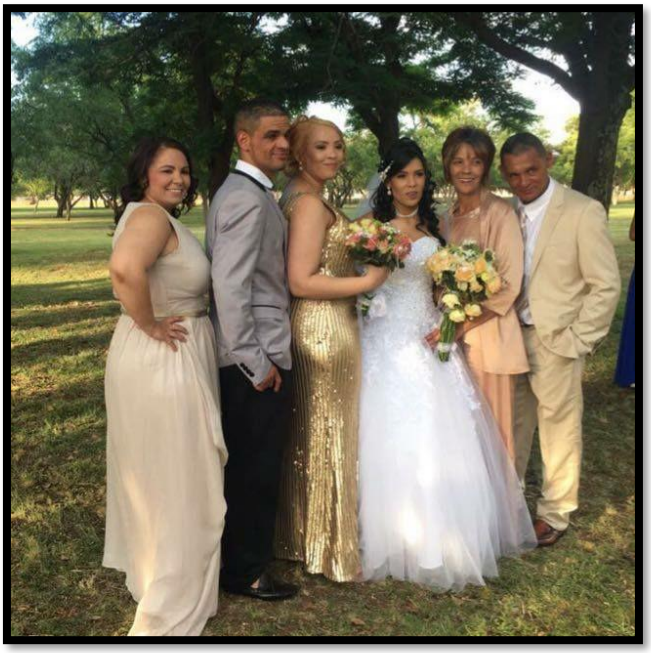
In January 2018 my two sons (now grown men) and I went on a road trip across the Northern Cape to see if we could find family members that could guide us further in building our family tree and to gather information about our ancestors. The plan was to stay for two days in Kimberley where I still had two remaining cousins, then three days in Olifantshoek where some of my mother's children and family are, and then to head to Upington where my first cousin, Mamoud Sulliman lives. He is the son of my grandmother's sister, Ou Nene Du Preez's who had married Harry Lucas Surtie, an Indian indentured labourer who had set up shop in Upington, and whose daughter, Cassie Surtie, married Ibrahim Ahmed Sulliman.



Photo 11: Anita and Mamoed Sulliman and their daughters

In Kimberley we stayed with my cousin, John Presslin, my uncle Sinnie's second eldest son. With all the information gathered from him we established that there was our grandmother's brother, Poks du Preez, who we did not account for on the family tree. He had a daughter, Dulcie who was still alive. We tried to contact her, but it seemed they had gone on holiday. We then went to the old family house in 35 Agnes Street, Colville but we could only see the remnants of a once vibrant family home damaged by imposters who were our neighbour's children. Aunty Marie who lived on the corner, has now taken up residency at the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Pretoria. Her house is now occupied by Boetietjie Visagie, my second cousin who informed me that his sister Poppie, my dear friend whilst growing up, is living in their father house in Homestead. When we arrived at Poppie's place, both of us could not believe that we have not seen each other for almost thirty years. She told me that her father was still alive, and that he would be able to give us more information as their entire family also stems from Prieska. At the age of eighty-two, Uncle Izak "Sakkietas" Visagie remarried five years ago and he was still in good shape. He remembered me and said, "You are Kaka's child", referring to my grandmother who had reared me. Although he could not remember so well anymore, the big revelation came when he finally made the link between the Presslins and the Dicks, that is, when he told me of my great aunt Doosie du Preez, his mother, who first married Gert Visagie and had six children, and later had five children with his father, Toppie Dick. That is how I, my cousin Poppie and Yvonne, aunty

Marie's beautiful daughter whom everyone thought would marry me some day, were related. After three and a half days in Kimberley we finally left for Olifantshoek.



Picture 12a. Cousin Poppie husband Pappie and their family

The next morning, we met my half-sister, Maya and part of the Magalanyane clan. The only remaining child from Klaas and Elsie Magalanyane, my eldest uncle Petrus or Oom Tswaro, could not provide us with any information about his mother and father, other than stating the obvious about his sisters and brothers and reflecting on his childhood on the farm. All he said was that although Elsie his mother was white, she hardly spoke a word of English or Afrikaans to them and preferred to speak Setwana. The question around the surname Willemse or Williams (which I have a suspicion could be Williams if she was British and pronounced Willemse by the Afrikaans-speaking community), could also not be conclusively verified, nor could he give us any information on the possibility of any remaining family members of my grandfather in Botswana. Death records will probably reveal the correct surname which we could not attain at the time.



Photo 12: Part of the Magalanyane clan



Photo 13: My uncle, the last surviving elder of the Magalanyane's, Petrus or Oom Tswaro, with my son Shakil



Photo 13a. My half-sister Lala Magalayane in the middle with some of the clan members

The only other information we could gather was the extended family tree which has grown to eighty-four children, grandchildren and great grandchildren of Klaas and Elsie Magalanyane. Unfortunately, we could not visit the farm Driehoek where my grandparents were buried to verify the grave and surname.



Photo 14: ***My half-brother, Boeta, my mother's "laat-lammetjie" and his family***

Our trip to find family members of my grandmother in Witsand could not be completed due to a menacing dirt road which left us with a tyre burst and a puncture, but we managed to track down an English-speaking Mike Williams living in Witsand, but his cellphone continuously went on to voicemail. I still need to interview him to establish any possible links to Grandma Elsie. On our family tree I discovered that the daughter of Lal Surtie, my first cousin, married a Philip Williams, now deceased and they have two daughters, Corrine and Odille. Whether there is a link, is still an outstanding question. On Facebook I found Awie Willemse from Postmasburg and he is tracking down older family members in the region to confirm if there is a family link.

After two days in Olifantshoek we headed north to Upington to see my first cousin, Mamoud Sulliman who lived in the same house of the Surtie's, which I visited more than four decades ago as a child. I remembered those wonderful carefree days as children when me and Elmo Surtie, now a neurosurgeon in Canada, would slide from the top of the big, white house on top of the hill with cardboard and rolled in the dirt as the board came to an abrupt halt at the bottom of the hill. On arrival I saw that the house is now surrounded by houses that made up a suburb and no longer stood tall on its own on top of the hill. Mamoud and his wife offered us a place to sleep and told us stories of the family and showed us pictures of his grandmother and family. We then

worked on the family tree and it emerged that their son was also working on the Sulliman's, Surtie's and Van Rooi's (his wife's maiden surname) family tree. This was a welcome relief as all the info needed will be forthcoming from that part of the family. This is how I finally saw where the famous actress, Sharleen Surtie-Richards formed part of our family tree. On the side of my great aunt Sophie (Ou Nene) du Preez's-Surtie she had married Harry Lucas Surtie, whose son, Hokkie is Sharleen's father.



Photo 15: Ou Nene du Preez-Surtie with her husband Harry Lucas Surtie and their children

We were scheduled to drive to Prieska to find the Du Preez's and Presslin ancestors in the archives the next morning, but on our way there my cousin Robbie Hess, who now lives in his grandmother's house next to my grandmother house, called to inform me that he had to urgently drive through to Limpopo to pick up his family. So, our great Northern Cape trip ended a bit abruptly with no conclusive evidence on my great grandfathers, Presslin, Du Preez and Magalanyane, but I do believe that a lot more work needs to be done to master the family lineage.

Back in Johannesburg I contacted the South African Defense Force Documentation Centre to search for any record of my maternal grandfather, Harry Lal Presslin from Scotland who might have been a medal recipient for the 1914/15 Star, The War or the Allied Victory medal relating to the British Support staff that participated World War 1 in South Africa.
I also requested possible information about him being dispatched as a locomotive driver to the Northern Cape frontier. I am still waiting for an outcome.

CONCLUSION

Acceptance of the mixed-race identity have come to the fore in the 21st century with our very own Soweto-born and bred Trevor Noah, a stand-up comedian of mixed ancestry with his mother being IsiXhosa and his father a White Swiss-German. Trevor's parents' union was illegal due to the country's apartheid system, which officially sponsored racial oppression and segregation.
He became the first mixed race presenter and non-American to host The Daily Show, a popular American satirical news program. In the United States Dr Martin Luther King Jr was responsible for the entrenchment of minority rights in America, Barack Obama became the first African-American President elected in the United States and Megan Marckel a mixed-race American woman are now married to Prince Harry of the British monarchy. Our country's history can boast with similar mix race greats like the late Walter Sisulu, ANC stalwart and freedom fighter, whose mother was isiXhosa and his father a White civil servant. These are just some of the prominent examples that have shone the spotlight on the legitimate rightful place of people of colour and mix ancestry in a new world order.

I am of the view that my search for identity, family bloodline and relevance will somehow reveal a sense of my true South African identity, to better understand and to self-identify who I am and how this will impact on my family, our offspring's and their descendants in relation to their current racial classification as Coloured. These dialogues might just contribute to change the negative stereotypes of Coloureds being uneducated, being potential gangsters, being violent of character, suffering from drug and alcohol dependency, having no front teeth, greeting you with 'Awe, ma se kind', being rude, loudmouthed, sexually promiscuous and being born criminals, while as a collective group being rotten to the core. Hopefully it will also open the debate about the disintegration of Coloured communities due to interracial segregation, but it might also be instrumental in dispelling the notion of this wide classification of a Coloured race created by Verwoerd and his ilk, to create a new narrative that will prompt a new search for identity and introspection of race politics in South Africa.
My trip to the Northern Cape is but one of several visits to complete the search for my family lineage and the ever-growing family tree. When we left Johannesburg in January the family tree was just shy of one hundred and twenty family members. That figure has now grown to 418 family members and this is still far from complete as it does not include the children of the fourth generation.

I have achieved my dream of becoming a broadcaster on radio with RSG and SAFM, television personality and news anchor on Kyknet, SABC3 and SABCNews with a happy family of my own, but what I have learned from this enquiry is that the Presslins, Hollenburg's, Magalanyane's, Du Preez's, Roux's, Surties, Visagie's, Dicks, Sulimans, Willemses, Matthanes, Nimmerhouts, etc. etc the family list seems endless – is a truly diverse rainbow nation, within a vast spectrum called the

family. The search for pure ethnicity as part of the Khoi- San heritage is a perhaps an ideal, but not a birthright and a panacea to a specific racial profile.

I have realised that my existence as a South African is not determined and defined by my colour, ethnicity or my race classification, but rather by the acceptance of who I am as an individual and as a human being.

But I do believe that the contentious #Coloured Label, must fall. This in order for the new generation to know and understand that the label Coloured which does not constitute a race, was a forced intervention to deny them the opportunity to claim First Nation status and claim to a country which is also rightfully theirs.

I am hopeful that my personal narrative as a microcosm of the broader issues of interracial separation and displacement, can be used as a stepping stone or a starting point that can serve as a rallying call to make a difference to the many untold stories of this misunderstood, misrepresented and misjudged mixed generation who are in many ways still pariahs in the land of their birth.



Photo 16. Myself with some members of the Presslin, Hollenburg and Greeves family with friends.

<u>THE END</u>

A MOTHERLESS PARIAH SEARCHING FOR IDENTITY AND RELEVANCE.

METHOD DOCUMENT

Investigation underpinning the personal narrative long form piece of
A Motherless Pariah Searching for Identity and Relevance",

by

Elvis Presslin

Student No: 762175

INTRODUCTION

'A Motherless Pariah searching for Identity and Relevance', is the story of a mixed - race child born out of wedlock, as a consequence of a liaison between a Black mother and a "so-called Coloured" father in the Northern Cape in Apartheid South Africa at a time when such a liaison was deemed a criminal offense. He grew up not knowing his biological mother for more than four decades.

The Presslin family of mixed Scottish, Dutch and Coloured bloodlines insisted that my father remove me from my biological Setswana mother. The reasoning at the time was that the Presslins could not allow one of their offspring to be raised by a Black woman. I was literally abducted by my Coloured father as a three-month-old baby and never returned to my mother again. I only met my biological Setswana mother for the very first time, when I was forty-one years old.

The story is premised on my personal account of enforced separation, racial bias and interracial segregation that divided communities of colour, particularly the "so-called Coloured" community, including my own family dating back to pre-and post-apartheid South Africa. It is a narrative report which sketches the discovery of my biological mother and the search for my true identity.

After a half a century, the journey of the child that grew up to be a man, a husband, a businessman and broadcaster in search of his roots in a still racially and class-divided post-democratic South Africa, will hopefully unmask inter-racial segregation within communities of colour which willfully deprived him of a relationships with his biological mother, his extended maternal family, his community and, in essence, the knowledge of his true identity. There is a definitive sense within these so-called 'Coloured' communities, that there are myriads of similar stories relating to inter-racial separation that was premised on one's skin colour in Apartheid South Africa.

The investigation of self-introspection will also attempt to find family from both my mother and father's side, as well as other alternative voices within these communities of colour that were exposed to similar circumstances. This inquiry will hopefully unmask some of the unanswered questions prevailing in relation to my family's heritage on both sides, and whether these false racial divides within families and communities of colour, are still prevalent today.

AIM OF THE ENQUIRY

The investigation captures my journey and life story, culminating in a search of my true identity in relation to my current racial profile of a "so-called Coloured". It looks at the relevance of racial classification in a democratic South Africa and how it impacts on my children and future generations. This personal narrative is morphed into an account of historical context to establish the link between inter-racial divisions, segregation and separation of families, coupled with the disintegration of so-called 'Coloured' communities.

Since the introduction of Apartheid in 1948 it was inevitable that racial discrimination and a deliberate class dividing system would lead to the horrific separation of Coloured and Black families such as my own. Translated from the Afrikaans language, the word "apartheid", meaning 'apartness', embodied an ideology that was actively supported and implemented by the National Party (NP) government. It was a well-thought-out form of social engineering that called for the so-called "harmonious, but separate" co-existence of the different racial groupings in the country. (SA History Online 2016). Theoretically, each individual racial grouping was supposed to develop optimally and to live out its own aspirations, culture, traditions and beliefs in "freedom" and on an equal footing with the other surrounding ethnicities. But in practice this "separate development" morphed into a completely different story: it was a grossly unequal system that resulted in minority White domination while reducing the Black, Coloured and Indian majority to the indignities of serfdom and suffering.

Long before the legislative introduction of Apartheid, punitive laws had already been passed during the colonial era to accomplish the goal relegating the Black masses to servitude by the passing of the dreaded Land Act of 1913 which saw millions of Black, Coloured and Indian people losing their land to the White people.

One of the official conduits of the Apartheid statute was the Group Areas Act of 1950 which physically separated the races and called for the forced removal of Coloured, Indian and Black people from their traditional living spaces and dumping them into areas that were specifically earmarked for each of these racial groups.

In the case of the Black Africans, the Homelands or Bantustans became a harsh, cruel reality, as the Nationalist government was intent on separating these Black South Africans according to their specific tribes. This was done to maintain White control and to entrench the power of the minority White regime in the country. After 1948, the Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 and the Immorality Amendment Act of 1950 (Boddy-Evans 2017) followed. It was legislated to complete the basket of legislation that resulted in me being removed from my mother and raised as a Coloured.

The intent of the Immorality Amendment Act was to prevent all inter-racial romantic liaisons and marriages between the various racial groups generally, and between Whites and "non-Whites" specifically. But in spite of this law trying to keep people physically apart, it failed to enact itself

in the hearts of people, because a substantial number of inter-racial unions followed nevertheless. Liaisons, albeit on the sly, still occurred across colour lines despite these draconian, senseless laws.

These racial divides and false differences in ethnicity were further entrenched within the Coloured community, in an era of racial bias which are still prevalent today, despite the search for racial unity and the elusive rainbow nation status as envisaged by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and former President Nelson Mandela.

BACKGROUND

My maternal grandfather, Klaas Magalanyan was a Black Botswana national, the biological result of mixed Setswana and San bloodlines. According to oral legend he married my grandmother, Emsa Willemse a White British/Afrikaner. Their union took place in the northern frontier of the Northern Cape, where in his book, "Hidden Histories of Gordonia", Martin Legassick speaks of a remote area named Gordonia. This frontier part of South Africa located in the present Northern Cape Province, was settled by the Basters (in the late 19th century, but there was also a number of Xhosa speakers and descendants of other Khoisan people which relates to hidden histories of racial segregation and people treated as pawns in both colonial and apartheid eras. (Legassick 2016). This is perhaps the reason why my search for identity gravitates towards the Khoi-San as a collective which includes the Griqua and the Korana, as they were the first ~~nation~~ groupings that were intermarried across colour lines in that area.

The journey will also seek to establish when, where, why and how, this nondescript, confused, untested construct and forced label of the term "Coloured" was unilaterally pasted without any scientific basis onto the descendants of the Khoi-San, Nama, Korana, Griqua, Muslim, Africans and other Eastern peoples who were initially brought to Cape Town's shores as slaves, as well as indentured labourers of Indian descent. The term even became applicable to some European settlers who could not fit into the perceived patterns and standards of living as were set by the White overlords. Why the Coloured label is still being accepted as a convenient convention still relevant in a New Democratic dispensation today will likewise be explored.

An organisation at the forefront of educating this mixed generation of their original ancestry and heritage is a non-governmental organisation, the Indigenous First Nation of South Africa (IFNASA). They aim to teach and inform the "so-called Coloured" or the descendants of the Aboriginal nation about their legacy, legal standing, indigenous rights, their status and their history, whilst sharing information and stirring debate about the Khoi-San's indigenous first nation status with a view to awake their collective consciousness. (IFNASA 2015).

The Khoisan Community or KSC Melting Pot WhatsApp group, introduced by Indigenous First Nation of South Africa (IFNASA) is a social media platform which is used to harness and share the historical context of the first indigenous people and their descendants about their relevance in modern-day South Africa. The platform intends to share this information, to educate and change perceptions of the descendants of the Khoi-San as being second class citizens through educational debates, online activity, physical community engagements and roundtable discussions. Some of the discussions on the WhatsApp group include the history of the Khoi-San as a collective group name for all the tribes associated with the aboriginal nation status (including the mixed generation), progressive proposals on how to deal with the First Nation status, the land issue, why the descendants of the mixed nation were termed Coloured, aggressive strides to forge unity between the various traditional Khoikhoi groups, intellectuals, scholars, students and grassroots communities. This unity drive seeks to address social issues and community degradation,

accessing what interventions or assistance can be provided, if there's still a place for traditional Chiefs within the Khoi-San hierarchy as a collective, as well as the possibility of a political movement or alliance that can chart the way forward for the liberation of the first indigenous nation.

This struggle for acknowledgement by the Khoi-San groupings from the South African government, was seen in various protest that were staged by the Khoi-San trio, led by Chief Khoisan SA, who undertook a three-week journey walking from Port Elizabeth to Pretoria at the Union Buildings in December 2017 to demand recognition of their culture, their language to be added as an official language and to be recognised as the First Nation of South Africa. They spend 17 days waiting whilst on a hunger strike and were willing to wait as long as it took to either meet the President Jacob Zuma or his deputy, Cyril Ramaphosa to hand over their memorandum of demands to the Presidency. They finally succeeded when the government sent a delegation with the Deputy President to meet the trio just before Christmas.

Another protest was held at the ANC's 54th National Elective Conference where a small group from the Khoisan Liberation Movement held up placards calling on President Jacob Zuma to meet with them to discuss the rights of the indigenous group. They were protesting against the newly introduced Khoi-San and Traditional Leadership Bill (TKLB), which was passed in the National Assembly, aimed at acknowledging the Khoi-San community. But the protesting group believes the bill does not recognise the Khoi-San people and their descendants adequately and it may entrench apartheid tendencies and discriminatory practices even further.

For transparency and ethical reasons, I requested and received permission from the Administrator of the WhatsApp group, Philip Anthony Williams, to use the WhatsApp platform's diverse discussions to complete my inquiry into the resurgence of consciousness of the descendants of the Khoi-San. I become a member of the WhatsApp group to gauge the conversations and contribute where necessary. This WhatsApp group is a pivotal tool to convey current news and views as it highlights the plight of the "forgotten people", with some personal accounts of their struggles and tribulations. Through this platform they hope to consolidate shared collective histories, share information and inspire a new narrative for the descendants of the Khoi and the San.

Coupled with these dialogues as well as personal accounts relating to inter-racial separation on the platform by the members, the possibility exist that it could connect the dots that are currently separating the descendants of the Khoi-San as a collective on the WhatsApp social media platform.

RATIONALE / ABSTRACT

When I met my mother for the first time in the small farming town of Olifantshoek in March 2004 at the age of forty-one, it evoked within me a desire to search for an identity not only of me as a so-called Coloured male, but also for my immediate family, my mother, father and their parents. It offered me the opportunity to dig deeper into my ancestry, my community and their historical context within the Coloured community and how the term or label 'Coloured' emanated.

The premise of the story is based on the Presslin family who removed me from my Setswana biological mother based on their racial bias and skewed racist reasoning at the time, namely that the Presslins could not allow one of their offspring to be raised by a Black woman. My paternal grandmother, Maria Magdalena Du Preez -Presslin and my father's sister, Bessie or Ousie Bess as she was fondly known, raised me in Kimberley. All the while it was unbeknown to me that my biological mother was still alive. Being the only boy in the house meant that I was a little spoilt and my darker complexion somehow did not deter the love I received from my granny and Ousie Bes, even though I had several questions later when I became a teenager. When I matriculated and left Kimberley for the bright lights of Johannesburg, I was still not aware of the fact that my mother was still alive. My grandmother died in 1985 and two years later we buried Ousie Bess but still, neither one of them, nor any of the family ever revealed the dreaded secret that my biological mother was still alive and well. Not even whilst I was sitting next to Ousie Bess on her death bed did she utter anything in this regard.

Fast forward to post-Apartheid South Africa. One evening, while having some drinks and braaiing around the pool with my wife, my two children and my father, something radical happened. My father, after having received word from the doctors that he could soon perish from tuberculosis, out of the blue confided in me that my mother was still alive. After a violent outburst and me nearly succumbing to a minor heart attack at this shock revelation, I began bombarding my father with a range of questions that required immediate answers. At that very moment I made the decision to embark on a journey to find my mother. There were several answers evading me, such as why my mother did not look for me after I had been abducted by my father? Why did my mother not search for me after I was taken away from her? Why did she not care about me? Why all the secrecy and collusion among my family members all these years? What had, in the interim happened to her? Was my story of inter-race separation synonymous with those of the majority of Coloured communities or was mine an exception? What about my racial profile, am I Coloured, Black or mixed, or how do I define myself from this point forward? Who am I!?

Acceptance of the mixed-race identity have come to the fore in the 21st century with Barack Obama becoming the first African-American President elected in the United States and Megan Marckel, a mixed-race American woman engaged to be married to Prince Harry of the British Royal House, and our very own Soweto-born-and-bred Trevor Noah, the stand-up comedian of mixed ancestry with his mother being IsiXhosa and his father a White Swiss-German. He became the first person of mixed race ancestry and a non-American to boot, to host *The Daily Show*, an American satirical news program. Trevor's parent's union was illegal in the light of the country's

apartheid laws which officially sponsored racial oppression and segregation These are just some of the examples that have shone the spotlight on the legitimate and rightful place of people of colour and mix ancestry in a new world order.

The enquiry explored the impact of the imposition of the term “Coloured” to a population that is mixed and described as “other”. Article 30/1950 Population/Native Act, declared the Aboriginal and Indigenous First Nation People or Khoikhoi and their mixed descendants as "Coloureds or “Kleurlinge”. The Afrikaners defined them as; "gemors” (rubbish), “nie-mense” (non-human), “sukkelaars” (strugglers), “nie-volk” (not a Nation), “laer as ‘n ding” (lower than a thing), “die oorblyfsels van die nasies” (leftovers of the nations), etc. In 1980 Marike de Klerk, the then wife of former apartheid-era South Africa President, F.W. de Klerk, once referred to Coloured people in this way: "You know, they are a negative group ... a non-person. They are the people that were left after the nations were sorted out. They are the rest." (Wikipedia n.d.) (Van Driel 2017). Through these discriminative and derogatory terms and other names we were forced to accept a derogatory label and identity, brought about by a stroke of a pen upon the descendants of the Khoi-San and all the others who did not fit into the so-called European category. The term ‘Coloured’ is therefore not defined as a race or a clan anywhere in a historical context, it is simply a label to define a people different from South Africa’s White and Black mainstream, but it is still accepted today by a large majority of people who self-define as Coloured.

The Colored derogatory term had no bearing on people’s allegiance during the Apartheid era though, as it often came with certain benefits. During this distressing period the status of being “a somebody” in the Coloured and Black communities had always been determined by how “White” one looks in terms of their physical appearance, implying how straight your hair was, how light-skinned you were, or whether you had green or blue eyes. Those who looked too “Black” with course hair, were not only frowned upon, but were rejected and thus treated as lesser beings. Inter-race classifications in the Coloured and Black communities were a product of colonial and apartheid engineering that indoctrinated a “better than thou” attitude among certain sections of the population who have always aspired to be “White”. (Memele.M 2011). Many aspired to be “White” just to get favourable treatment by the White man in charge. The lighter in complexion you were, the better were your chances to material privilege, and to be seen as Coloured rather than Black, was a passport to false prestige. Some perceived “White” families actually moved out of Coloured townships into White suburbs and detached themselves from their own darker-skinned family members, so as not to be called a “kaffer boetie” (a person with affinity for Black people). This prevalence of self-hate racism and a dividing class system in the Coloured communities further separated people into light and dark skin types, those with either coarse or straight hair, those with brown or blue/green eyes, and even into an educational ranking system of those educated with a matric certificate or a university degree and those without. This was, and still is, a categorisation of internal divisions that prevail among many so-called Coloured families, even though we have supposedly progressed as a nation to embrace non-racialism as a cornerstone of our new-found democracy.

This investigation delved into the historic context since the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck in 1652, including those seafarers who predates almost 200 years before him, such as Bartholomew Dias, a Portuguese navigator and explorer who led the first European expedition around the Cape of Good Hope in 1488. A few years later in 1497 another Portuguese sailing discoverer, Vasco da Gama, landed at Bahai da Santa Elena or St Helena Bay, near the mouth of the Berg River. Here they encountered the Khoi for the first time. Later those European settlers who arrived at the Cape started trading with the Khoi and a bustling trade market was established between these indigenous inhabitants and the visiting ships. Before Van Riebeeck's arrival at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652 there was already a commercial enterprise established by the Khoi and the merchant traders. With increased trade, more settlers, including a large group of French Huguenots fleeing religious persecution, as well as immigrants from all over Europe arrived and settled at the Cape.

All these settlers, Free Burghers and slaves (mostly men), who had arrived at the Cape needed and desired women to cook, clean, entertain and keep their beds warm. It was inevitable that in this unruly, unstable, patriarchal setting, Khoi women were either forcibly prostituted, enslaved or used as concubines to fulfill this need. The eventual result was increased inter-racial intercourse between the White European settlers on the one hand, and on the other, the Khoi, San, Nama, Griqua, Muslim slaves from Indian descent, African and Eastern peoples who were brought to Cape Town's shores as slaves between the 17th and 19th centuries. The liaison between the European settlers and Free Burgers gave rise to mixed offspring who could not be identified as either indigenous or foreign and were simply referred to as "Basters". The miscegenation with different racial groups created a hybrid nation whose descendants are today largely rejecting the element of their Khoi-San identity based upon the limited awareness and knowledge of the history and origin of their forebears. They are now simply called 'Coloured', courtesy of the previous Apartheid government (Leibrandt 1897) and, sadly, perpetuated by the present Black government.

ENQUIRY QUESTIONS

Who I am as a "so-called Coloured" male? What is my true South African identity and how I should self-identify? What are the ramifications of this wide classification of Coloured mean as a label on our children and their offspring?

Is this label of 'Coloured' still relevant in a democratic South Africa? How do we relate to the Khoi-San communities as their descendants, is there a link and if so, what inference would that have on the Coloured descendants?

Can history assist us to uncover the motive behind race classification and separation and what impact did forced separation and segregation have on these communities of colour? Is my story a microcosm of the broader issues of inter-racial forced separation and displacement and could it be applied as a benchmark to relay these heart-wrenching experiences to make a difference to the many untold stories?

Furthermore, how can social media platforms such as WhatsApp be used to communicate history, share indigenous knowledge through storytelling as an outlet to educate and spread awareness of the trials and tribulations of this mixed generation that are not in tune with their ancestry?

ENQUIRY INTEREST

In researching the phenomenon of forced segregation, renowned celebrated journalist, editor, writer and poet, Dr. Donato, Francesco Mattera, better known as Don Mattera, and acknowledged as one of the foremost activists in the struggle for a democratic South Africa, reflected on this painful history of race classification in his book "Memory is a Weapon". I spoke to him briefly at a community meeting that was organised to discuss Khoisan identity with the Human Rights Commission in Eldorado Park in 2017, where he recalls the trauma he had experienced when he first went before the Classification Board, which had to decide in which race group he should belong to, namely "a Hotnot or an Italian".

In his book Mattera wrote, "There was no blood tests, no scrutiny. I was the Italian's son, and the last-born of the family. If the Boers believed I was my grandpa's son, I was not going to be the one to shatter that belief. My ID number was 331-591697C; the 'C' stood for 'Coloured' but the birth certificate read 'Mixed' in the column denoting race. It was the first I knew of a race called 'Mixed'. Mixed though, was far, far better than native, and being called 'K', as many reclassified Coloureds were to discover. These were heart wrenching stories, filled with biting humiliation and anguish which made newspaper headlines daily in the late fifties. Some victims of the reclassification trauma chose suicide to bail them out of their absurd misery. Wholesome and stable families were shattered overnight, as brothers, sisters, sons and daughters were ripped apart by the cruel laws of race separation. Relentless pass raids netted in hundreds of 'borderline' cases; those bordering between African and Coloured, not between White and Coloured". (Mattera.D 2010).

We arranged for a follow up meeting, but unfortunately his ill health prevented us from getting together again.

The brief interaction with Bra Don highlighted the fact that Apartheid which was made law in South Africa in 1948, further entrenched legislation to marginalise so-called Coloured and Black people in South Africa.

Social Commentator and Khoi-San activist, Dr Leonard Martin whose doctoral research thesis into racialism is titled, "The origination and meaning of a Racialist Order: An Anti-Racist Genealogy of Western Power and State Formation as a Hegemonic 'Civilizational' Paradigm", is premised on a critical analysis of the origination and sources of Western racial ideas. His study explored the original textual sources within their context of origin and the social impact and function that racial ideas had in the emergence of Western civilisation. It pursues the state formation processes and the significance of the overall African contribution to the spread and consolidation of a distinct Western civilisation and it ends with the rise of South Africa as a White dominated state, having systematically been constructed into modernity on the basis of the White racialist exploitation practices.

In my interview with Dr. Martin in 2017 on my Newsroom television show on SABC's Channel 404 he said, "If we want to deal with the term or the label "Coloured" we have to go right back into the history of the conquest of the aboriginal people of India and out of that, we saw the development of the power cast system. Now the term "Coloured", is directly related to the construction of the Hindu cast system. The White people who conquered India wanted a disconnect between the children they had with the aborigine Indian women, the aborigine of India, and they called these children Mallah "the dirty ones". Later on, with the Spanish discovery of Asia, the Spanish found a terminology which they brought back to Europe and they took to their so-called new world, the Americas. The term 'Coloured' that came to South Africa, is the combination of this entire history, where people were called *molatos*, so the entire history of conquest and the development of racialism and colonialism actually manufactured the word "Coloured". So, the conquest of the Khoi and San and the usurpation of Khoi and San land throughout Southern Africa, the term 'Coloured' was actually imposed on the people that emerged out of colonialism and enslavement. There have been so many studies done, especially of race, which prove in terms of the DNA of the majority of Coloured people that they are the direct descendant of the Khoi and the San groups. There is no dispute any longer – people that have been labeled 'Coloured' are in fact the descendant of Khoi and San. The call by those to scrap the term 'Coloured' is in fact the re-imagining of the narrative of the Khoi-San shadow that started against the first colonial invaders that landed in South Africa. In a way, South Africa has been living in a type of schizophrenic denial of the history of the Coloured people. So, yes, the issue of legitimacy, the issue of First Nation Status is something that will not go away. And I think it is very important to people to come to grips with this unfolding narrative, that is anti-colonial, it is anti-racist and in fact, it's therapeutic in term of South African identity". (Martin 2016)

These accounts and historical evidence are but some of the storylines that will be inherent in a search for identity and similarities of forced separation and racial segregation.

VOICES

This enquiry in a first-person narrative is based on the strength of my personal account of inter-racial segregation and my family's history and our life story. This personal narrative was morphed into a link between separation of families, inter-racial segregation and the disintegration of communities, especially within the Coloured communities.

There were other voices from family members, secondary accounts from experts and those who have experienced similar experiences and how that translates into the missing link of a national communication platform that can engage and unite the Coloured Khoi-San community. There are also emerging voices from the KSC Melting Pot WhatsApp group, driven by the non-governmental organisation, the Indigenous First Nation of South Africa (IFNASA) that are at the forefront in building a Social media platform that can unite a mixed generation of people.

THEMES

- My Story – The journey
- Family history of the Presslins, Magalanyanes, Willemse, du Preez, Surtie, Sulliman, etc.
- Tracing the term 'Coloured'
- Searching for identity
- Context of race classification
- Intervention to emancipate the first indigenous nation
- What history tells us about forced separation and segregation
- Awaking the Aboriginal spirit - the use of social media tools to spread awareness.

METHODOLOGY - ENQUIRY METHOD

- Online Desktop
- WhatsApp Group – KSC Melting Pot – IFNASA – a non-governmental group spreading awareness on the plight of the Khoi- San through social media.
- Interviews with:
    - Family Members – investigate further all the family linkages from the families Presslin, Du Preez, Magalanyane and Willemse, my grandmother's sister who had married a Surtie, my mother's parents, viz. the Willemses and the Makgalanyanes
    - Community members and extended family
    - Khoi-San activist and movements

- Field trip to:
    - Kimberley, Olifantshoek, Witsand, Upington, and Prieska in the Northern Cape to interview the family and community
    - try to locate the rest of the unknown Presslins – perhaps a trip to Scotland and to my lost aunt, Gayne Surtie in Australia?
    - A personal deep DNA search was done to indicate whether I have a direct link to the Khoi and San, the First Indigenous Nation.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Dr. Don Matera – *Memory is a Weapon*

Renowned celebrated journalist, editor, writer and poet Dr. Donato, Francesco Mattera better known as Don Mattera, who is acknowledged as one of the foremost activists in the struggle for a democratic South Africa, reflected on this painful history of forced removal and segregation in his book "Memory is a Weapon". These realities of apartheid induced separation rings true to my story as he reca*ll*s the trauma he experienced when he first went before the Classification Board, which would decide in which race group he should belong to, namely "a Hotnot or an Italian". Wholesome and stable families were shattered overnight, as brothers, sisters, sons and daughters were ripped apart by the cruel laws of race separation. Relentless pass raids netted in hundreds of 'borderline' cases; those bordering between African and Coloured, not between White and Coloured" (Mattera.D 2010).

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Dr Disa Mogashana – *Unfathered*

In this book Dr Mogashana wrote her memoir of a girl growing up without her father the opposite of what I have experienced. The book of healing for women who grew up with the mantra that #MenAreTrash. The book gives a gripping account of her life with an absent father. Inspired by dreams about her father to pen down the book, Disa gives a deeply emotional account of how not having her biological father in her life affected her childhood and self-confidence (Mogashana.D 2017).

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Charley Pietersen - *Growing up without a Father* (Pietersen 2015)

Millions of children live in homes without the physical presence of fathers. Charley Pietersen tells us in his book of how these children who have dads who are physically present, but emotionally absent, and this is something that I can relate to. If it were to be classified as a disease, fatherlessness would be an epidemic worthy of attention as a national emergency. The impact of fatherlessness can be seen in our homes, schools, hospitals and prisons. In short, fatherlessness is associated with almost every societal ill facing our country's children. Absent fathers are quite possibly the greatest social issue of our time and affects countless millions of lives around the world. The overriding message is that no matter what our upbringing was, we don't have to be victims. We can choose life. We can overcome the emotional wounds caused by an absent, passive or abusive father and go on to have a huge impact for good in the world.

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Barack Obama - *A Story of Race and Inheritance* (Obama.B 1995):

In this lyrical yet unsentimental and compelling memoir, former US President, Barack Obama the son of a Black African father and a White American mother searches for a workable meaning to his life as a Black American. It begins in New York, where Barack Obama learns that his father—a figure he knows more as a myth than as a man — has been killed in a car accident. This sudden death inspires an emotional odyssey, first to a small town in Kansas, from which he retraces the

migration of his mother's family to Hawaii, and then to Kenya, where he meets the African side of his family, confronts the bitter truth of his father's life, and at last reconciles his divided inheritance.

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Tim Crowe (Emeritus Professor, University of Cape Town)
How the origin of the Khoi-San tells us that 'race' has no place in human ancestry
February 4, 2016 6.27am SAST
http://theconversation.com/how-the-origin-of-the-khoisan-tells-us-that-race-has-no-place-in-human-ancestry-53594
In this article Prof. Crowe delves into the ancient origins, anatomical, linguistic and genetic distinctiveness of Southern African San and Khoikhoi people who he says are matters of confusion and debate. They are variously described as the world's first or oldest people; Africa's first or oldest people, or the first people of South Africa. They are in fact two evolutionarily related but culturally distinct groups of populations that have occupied Southern Africa for up to 140,000 years. Their first-people status is due to the fact that they commonly retain genetic elements of the most ancient homo sapiens. This conclusion is based on evidence from specific types of DNA. It is even possible to map one's genetic "ancestry", as South African President Nelson Mandela did, indicating that he possessed some Khoi-San DNA.

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Jan van Riebeeck - *Diary of Jan van Riebeeck*

Set out in this dairy of Jan van Riebeeck is his journey from the Netherlands to the Cape of Good Hope and his daily dairy notes that document his challenges and victories as part of his report to the VOC.

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Sol Plaatje - *Native Life in South Africa: Past and Present* (Ed. Janet Remmington, Brian Willan and Bheki Peterson). The chapter is by Brian Willan and is titled "Native Life in South Africa: Writing, publication and reception. It focuses on Plaatje and the South African Native National Congress (SANAC) campaign against the 1913 Natives Land Act. It was an appeal to the British government and public to support their appeal to disallow the act which ensured that Black people had no claim to land in South Africa.

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Avril Brand – *The Forgotten People of the West Coast: Who were the GuriQua?*
Khoikhoi Culture: A Brief Introduction, (Brand.A n.d.)
In this piece Avril Brand explores the origin of the 'Khoisan'. The Khoisan she says is a broader term to describe both the Khoikhoi as well as the San and 'Bushmen' as if they were one people sharing a common culture. These were, however, two distinct cultural groups. The Khoikhoi called themselves 'the real people' or Khoi-na, to distinguish themselves from other groups such as the San (SoaQua or SonQua), named Bushmen by the colonists. The 'Bushmen' were smaller groups of hunter/gatherers who lived off the veld and had no cattle. The Khoikhoi, on the other hand,

were nomadic herders who owned vast herds of cattle and sheep and lived in large groups based on an exogamous clan system. Exogamy entails choosing a marriage partner from a social group of which one is not a member, as such a marriage brings certain benefits by establishing alliances between the groups. It can also be regarded as necessary for the groups' survival.

Graphics: Adapted from original San Rock Paintings, copyright ABrand, sawestcoast.com, The Cape Herders: E Boonzaaier, P. Berens, C Malherbe, A Smith. Published by David Phillip Publishers (Pty) Ltd. 1996.

Major R Raven-Hart - *Before Van Riebeeck* Published by Struik (Pty) Ltd. 1967

Eric Axelson - *Vasco da Gama: The Diary of his Travels Through African Waters*
Published by Philips (Pty) Ltd. 1998.

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10 Beautiful Images of the Khoisan People of Southern Africa, From Whom All Modern **Humans Descended - by Black Girl With Long Hair – August 13, 2015**
(hair 2015)
One broad study of African genetic diversity completed in 2009 found that the San were among the five populations with the highest measured levels of genetic diversity among the 121 distinct African populations sampled. The San are one of 14 known extant “ancestral population clusters” from which all known modern humans descend. As a tribute to San resilience and cultural strength that they have overcome many obstacles to retain their language, culture, and religious beliefs, even if circumstances have forced them to give up foraging. Coming to political consciousness, some San have recreated themselves as First Peoples, and, with the assistance of sympathetic outsiders, have fought successfully for land and civil rights. While discrimination remains, governments in the region have begun to recognize the San’s uniqueness and to institute at least some policies in support of San development aspirations.

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Max du Preez - *Honour Khoisan by learning about them*
OPINION / 16 December 2014, (Preez.M 2014)
http://www.iol.co.za/news/opinion/honour-khoisan-by-learning-about-them-1796157
How did it happen that most South Africans know virtually nothing about our First Peoples, their history and cultures? How can we make sense of our history or of who we are as a nation if we don’t know who the people were that came before us? The Bushmen and Khoikhoi (often grouped together as the Khoisan) were not only the First South Africans, they represent the oldest lineage of our human species. Most recent researchers agree that the Khoikhoi’s ancestors were of the same stock as the Bushmen living in the area of today’s northern Botswana and southern Zambia. Around 2 000 years ago, they believe, these ancestors came into contact with Black pastoralists and gradually drifted away from hunting and gathering towards herding sheep. They then moved south and west through Namibia and the north-western Cape, where some of

them settled, and eventually to the southern and western Cape. In all these areas they came into contact with established Bushmen societies.
But the Khoisan live on in the genes of many South Africans, coloured, Black and White. They are us. We should honour their memory and learn more about them.
* Max du Preez is an author and columnist.

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RACE REMAIN AT THE CENTER OF SOUTH AFRICAN PSYCHE
(IFNASA 2015)
In this blog post of IFNASA they explore the popular perception that Colouredness is an inherent racial condition derived from miscegenation and this concept are assisting me in deciphering the linkages that exist with all mixed-race groupings. They think that it is perhaps time we unpack the reservations as a collective, honestly. We are fascinated at the degree of essentialist thought school who interpret Coloured-identity as a brainchild of miscegenation (mixture of races) exclusively, while they represent the conservative philosophy of our character. South Africa is a nation rooted in racism and discrimination, until we have an honest discussion we will not be able to uproot the inherent misgivings and suspicions. Race remain at the centre of our psyche. It is the interpretation of former ambassador and director of companies, Franklin Sonn, that gives us determination when he mentions that Coloureds unwittingly contribute to their own marginalisation by being “Ambivalent to Race”. He held that: “We are so taken by non-racialism that we are not prepared to exert race,” he said. He wants Coloured entrepreneurs and others to challenge the community’s exclusion from empowerment and make the system work for them. Racist thinking must fall! Hash-tag!
Anthony Phillip Williams (IFNASA National Convener)

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SA Coat of Arms "!KE E:/XARRA//KE"
The motto is: !ke e: /xarra //ke, written in the Khoisan language of the /Xam people, literally meaning “diverse people unite”. It addresses each individual effort to harness the unity between thought and action. On a collective scale it calls for the nation to unite in a common sense of belonging and national pride – unity in diversity.

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