

A Play

GHOST
TWERKERS

Ola-Kris Akinola

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

-Ola-Kris Akinola,
December, 2018,
Pretoria.

ENDORSEMENTS

Such an incisive play that touches on the nerve centre of some of society's most detestable challenges of our time. Ola-Kris weaves reality into an intensely emotional rendition of blatant violation of human rights. Although set in the 1960s, "Ghost Twerkers" is a hard-hitting social commentary on contemporary gender-based atrocities that renders it simply timeless!

*Dr Rachael Diang'a,
Assistant Professor of Film and Chair of Cinematic Arts Dept.,
United States International University-Africa,
Nairobi, Kenya.*

Ola-Kris, feminist scholar, artist and a queer theorist, has presented to us a stunningly thought-provoking play as he reveals the dangers and silence around gender based violence. I had the honour of collaborating with him by bringing my Gender Studies students to critically engage with this intersectional play, which portrays how class, race and gender intersect to oppress and marginalise women. The best way to end violence against women and girls is to prevent it from happening in the first place by addressing its root and structural causes, such as patriarchy. Twenty-six years into democracy, South Africa is still grappling with gender inequality and gender-based violence. The play impacts and probes scholars and activists to continue the conversations on rape, femicide, gender-based violence, patriarchy, inequality and the justice system. We must stop asking victims 'what were you wearing' and reemphasise that 'real men do not rape', 'real men do not kill'.

*Mrs Samukezi Mrubula-Ngwenya,
Dept. of Cultural and Political Studies,
University of Limpopo.*

NOTE TO THE READER OR ACTOR

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

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

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

Sources:

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

CHARACTERS
-according to appearance-

1. MALISA
 2. NANDY
 3. NELLY
 4. SERGEANT MALINGO-police officer
 5. GOGO (Old family Matriarch)
 6. MADALA (Disabled drunk)
 7. DOCTOR
 8. DIKKO
 9. DHLAMINI
 10. JUDGE
 11. COURT POLICE
 12. COURT CLERK
 13. SERGEANT BETHRAND
- REPORTERS
COURT ATTENDERS
NIGHT CLUB GOERS
RAPISTS (6 Men)

Cast & Crew for "Ghost Twerkers" 2019 Premiere

"Ghost Twerkers" was premiered between 1-14 April, 2019 at the New Cinema Hall of the University of Limpopo, South Africa.

MALISA: Mashoto Mphahlele; Victoria Giba; Nomfundo Ndlazi; Tshego Khumalo; Refilwe Themba.

NANDY: Kopano Kgasago; Maria Mashaphu; Riah Mashaphu.

NELLY: Mapule Mpetu; Eunice Soeka; Koketxo Sekhula; Palesa Modipane.

MEN (Rapists): Califonia Ngwepe; Silence Shokane; Chris Rabore; Jabulane Lebeso.

SERGEANT MALINGO: Makungu Mbetse; Gift Makola; Lesedi

GOGO: Phumelele Mabuza; Caroline Kgobe; Mbalenhle Mabasa; Precious;

MADALA: Advice Mbuyane; Kgatla Masie Foster; Chris Rabore;

DOCTOR: Lifted Olusola; Koketso Mohlapi; Relebogile Mashao.

DLAMINI: Shirley Talane; Lesego Seopane; Paul Masia; Harry Motsuki; Mokgomotsi Seshoka.

DIKKO: Unique Mashokoa; Thlologelo Masemola; Bokgomotse; Martin Ramagoshi; Mpho.

JUDGE: Countries Machate; Performance Rakgwatla; Unique Mashokoa.

COURT POLICE: Mokoka; Bonnie Mamakoko;

SERGEANT BETHRAND: Smanga Khoza; Monyela Prince;

REPORTER: Nomsa Sekgota; Favour Alawode; Neo Mokoena; Getrude Masia;

COURT TWERKER: Tumelo Shaka; Lifted Olusola;

COURT CLERK: Caroline Makhubedu

CREW

DIRECTOR: Ola-Kris Akinola.

ASS DIRECTORS: Relebogile Mashao; Unique Mashokoa.

SENIOR STAGE MANAGER: Mmabatho Maboya

TECHNICAL MANAGER: Blessing Shongwe; Lindelani Phetla.

MAKEUP MANAGER: Mashoto Mphahlele.

COSTUME MANAGER: Kopano Kgasago; Shirley Talane;

PROPS MANAGER: Mapule Mpetu.

SOUND MANAGER: Nelson Lechelele

MOVEMENT ONE

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

News Report

And here is the news in full. Violent crime in South Africa has become rife and horrific, with the escalated prevalence of sexual assault and rape leading to South Africa being labelled the rape capital of the world. This is largely attributed to the pervasive rape culture that exists in the country. Unfortunately, the criminal justice system is failing survivors as few cases are reported, with only few victims receiving justice. The nagging question is, do the civil courts offer an appropriate alternative? What we do know at the moment is that the law is simply not doing enough for rape survivors. According to the 2016/2017 crime statistics, over 100 people are raped every day in our country, and that is just based on the attacks that are reported. This means that the number of people being brutally violated adds up to tens of thousands every year.

*This is Patricia Baloyi,
Southern Agency Television*

MOVEMENT TWO

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

LIGHTS OUT

MOVEMENT THREE

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

ALL THE GIRLS: (Sing)

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

The girls laugh and exchange "Hi Fives".

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

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

ALL

GIRLS: Typical!

All the girls laugh and exchange "Hi Fives".

MALISA: Did you see that one?

NANDY: Which one?

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

NANDY: Ambitious and curious.

MALITA: Exactly, too curious.

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

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

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

The girls laugh heartily

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

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

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

MALISA: Indeed. Who will admire visitors who subverted our lives, imposing themselves, their ways and their language on us?

NANDY: Nonsense!

NELLY: Such disrespect! I loathe it.

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

NELLY: So, what did you do?

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

The girls laugh hysterically

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

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

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

NELLY: Nicely? Bad move.

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

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

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

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

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

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

ALL

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

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

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

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

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

NANDY: What did he say?

MALISA: He said to me "I am dreaming that I am fucking you right now".

NANDY

AND NELLY: What?

NANDY: The brother said that?

NELLY: He did?

MALISA: That trash of a brother said that to my face. Do I look like a sex doll?

NANDY: What did you tell him in response?

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

NANDY: What did you tell him in reply?

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

NELLY: You lie!

NANDY: You said that?

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

NELLY: We merely do this for the money.

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

The girls sing and dance to Donna Summer's "She Works Hard for the Money". Malisa starts to sob, Nelly and Nandy join in.

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

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

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

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

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

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

LIGHTS OUT

MOVEMENT FOUR

Gogo is with her younger brother, Madala, a disabled drunk. Madala is half drunk. Ongoing discussion.

MADALA: Gogo, there is no more milk.

GOGO: Who needs milk?

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

GOGO: Your liver is wasting away. Stop drinking.

MADALA: Is that an advice or a suggestion?

GOGO: Call it both, I care less.

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

GOGO: Indeed it is you who is the misfit here. Where is your ego? This one misrepresents chauvinists. First males everywhere assume the role of family heads.

MADALA: Males everywhere?

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

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

GOGO: Look at you. A disgrace to this family. No skill, no job, no wife, no child, no life. A useless liability. You abandoned the job at the mines. A criminal offence. Now, you hide for fear of getting arrested. You waste the air you breathe. You disgust me.

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

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

Madala brings out a pocket knife, brandishes it at Gogo, and then moves on her. Gogo is scared and shows anger and helpless disdain because the abuse has become a normal occurrence. She pleads.

GOGO: Please!

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

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

LIGHTS OUT

MOVEMENT FIVE

Police station. Malisa sits, totally unresponsive and indifferent.

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

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

MALISA: *(Looks at him viciously and nods)*

SERGEANT MALINGO: Oh, sorry. Raped. You were three that were raped. I see. Three girls, women, raped. So, tell me again, you said they tied your hands, right? *(He writes)* Hands were tied. And only you came to the station to report? Unbelievable. Where are the other girls? Maybe only you did not enjoy it. Hahaha! Alright, I get it. So, does it happen all the time, that only one victim out of many, in this case, three, would go to the Police station and report an offence allegedly committed against many?

Malisa does not respond.

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

SERGEANT MALINGO: Victim is irresponsive. And then, after that, they took turns in raping you all? *(Mocks)* Hnmmm. It must have been hectic hey. It sounds like, you know, a group thing. What do you people normally call it? Group sex or something. *(Laughs in mockery of Malisa and calls out at a colleague)* Warrant Officer. Come quickly. You will not believe what is going on here.

LIGHTS OUT

MOVEMENT SIX

Ongoing discussion.

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

GOGO: Who would?

MADALA: The damage is deep.

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

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

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

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

GOGO: What is the essence of life if it is lived in misery? No point! How could I be alive and witness my child loose her mind? What is the point of living?

LIGHTS OUT

MOVEMENT SEVEN

Police Station (Continuing)

SERGEANT MALINGO: You have refused to even say a word. Ok. *(He writes)* Victims were tied up. And then raped. So, tell me. Did you at least enjoy it? Did you em...em...come? I am sure you know what is meant by to come. You see, I am just doing my job here. So, here is the question again. Did you, em...em...come? As in.....

MALISA: *(She speaks inaudibly)*

SERGEANT MALINGO: Say that again.

MALISA: *(Speaks very quietly)*.

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

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

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

Malisa again motions Sergeant Malingo to bend towards her. He does. She speaks very quietly into his ears.

SERGEANT MALINGO: *(Surprised/embarrassed)* Excuse me?

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

LIGHTS OUT

MOVEMENT EIGHT

Gogo sits, dejected. Madala enters, half drunk.

GOGO: How is my child?

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

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

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

GOGO: Two.

MADALA: She is in shock and traumatised.

GOGO: Who would not be?

MADALA: The Police officer lost an ear.

GOGO: Just an ear?

MADALA: Gogo?

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

MADALA: Could it be true, though? Do you? Do you also have orgasm?

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

MADALA: You approve of violence, Gogo?

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

MADALA: You approve of the death penalty Gogo?

GOGO: Of course I do.

MADALA: Gogo?

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

MADALA: But you just wished me dead.

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

MADALA: *(In stupor)* Is it true?

GOGO: What about femicide?

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

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

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

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

MADALA: Gogo!

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

MADALA: *(In stupor)* What things?

GOGO: Idiot! Their major instrument of atrocity.

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

GOGO: Fool! Their dicks.

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

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

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

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

GOGO: I hate men.

MADALA: Your father was a man.

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

MADALA: Our mother was a gift.

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

Madala staggers to get a refill. He returns.

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

GOGO: I still do.

MADALA: No! Do not say that. Your pastor will excommunicate you.

GOGO: I hate my pastor too.

MADALA: You hate your pastor? Now I know that you are the Satan.

GOGO: I care less.

MADALA: Yes, just like

Satan. Heartless!

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

MADALA: Gogo?

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

MADALA: Some girls today could also be vicious.

GOGO: They are not.

MADALA: They are.

Malisa comes out of the room. and merely walks past them and out of the house.

GOGO: The appointment is for today.

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

GOGO: My child is dead already.

MADALA: Do not say that.

GOGO: Let us hope the hospital helps.

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

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

LIGHTS OUT

MOVEMENT NINE

Malisa is in a hospital, standing before a Doctor.

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

DOCTOR: I know it could be traumatic for an impressionable mind as yours. But what can we do? *(Points at the examination table)* Lie down here and remove your underwear.

Malisa looks at him viciously. She removes her underwear.

DOCTOR: Ok. Spread your legs. *(He focuses the examination lights on an uninspired Malisa)*. Open it wide for me. Perfect! *(He examines)* Oh! Not again! You see, you ought to have come here straight from the Police station. In fact, the Police were supposed, under the law, to bring you here. *(He examines some more and continues)* It has been two days. Now all signs of evidence are lost because you had a shower already. As you would imagine, every form of their DNA is lost. Well, the bruises are there but you see, more evidence is lacking. The Court will ridicule us again. They always do that to us, and to the victims who are in anguish. You can get up now. I will make a report. Let us hope we are lucky to get appropriate convictions and sentencing.

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

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

LIGHTS OUT

MOVEMENT TEN

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

DHLAMINI: Your honour, it is preposterous.

DIKKO: What?

JUDGE: What is preposterous, Counsel?

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

JUDGE: The Counsel made no such accusation.

DIKKO: Did they twerk? Yes, they did.

JUDGE: *(To Dhlamini)* Did they twerk?

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

DIKKO: A little education will suffice here your honour.

JUDGE: This Court shall oblige.

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

DHLAMINI: It is a job your honour.

DIKKO: No contest. A question, though.

JUDGE: Yes, you may.

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

DHLAMINI: My lord?

JUDGE: What is your answer, Counsel?

DHLAMINI: My lord?

DIKKO: Counsel is grandstanding. Is this job seductive? That is the question.

DHLAMINI: My lord, this is...

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

JUDGE: Let me be the judge of that.

DHLAMINI: This whole exercise has become but a joke.

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

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

DIKKO: My lord, Counsel is suggesting the victim could take matters into her hands?

JUDGE: I did not observe that at all.

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

DHLAMINI: My lord.

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

JUDGE: Did he?

DHLAMINI: Counsel is beside himself, my lord.

DIKKO: He just blatantly declared war on our judiciary.

JUDGE: Let me be the judge of that.

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

JUDGE: I shall be the judge of that.

DHLAMINI: This is a farce.

JUDGE: A farce?

DIKKO: My lord.

JUDGE: Quiet!

DHLAMINI: My lord.

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

inconsistencies, misunderstandings and possible contempt in your submissions, Counsels.

BOTH COUNSELS: As the Court pleases.

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

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

JUDGE: Counsel must refrain from prejudicial insinuations.

DIKKO: Counsel is in contempt.

JUDGE: *(To Dhlamini)* Counsel?

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

JUDGE: Clarify your submission, Counsel.

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

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

DHLAMINI: Objection, your honour!

JUDGE: Overruled! You may continue, Counsel.

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

JUDGE: Any objection to that, Counsel?

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

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

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

DETECTIVE

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

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

DETECTIVE

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

MALISA: Watch me surprise you. *(Malisa shoots into the air)*
That was not an accident.

JUDGE: *(Furiously to Dhlamini)* You may want to clarify to this Court the meaning of your client's behaviour to the court.

DETECTIVE

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

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

DETECTIVE

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

MALISA: How old are you?

DETECTIVE

BETHRAND: *(Hesitates)* 35. Why?

MALISA: As a cop?

DETECTIVE

BETHRAND: 15.

MALISA: You became a police officer at the age of 20.

DETECTIVE

BETHRAND: Drop your weapon.

MALISA: Old enough to be a criminal, right?

DETECTIVE

BETHRAND: I will not hesitate.

MALISA: Are you different?

DETECTIVE

BETHRAND: Different?

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

DETECTIVE

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

JUDGE: This Court will adjourn.

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

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

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

JUDGE: I am not under interrogation.

MADALA: Idiot. Answer the fucking question, bastard!

MALISA: *(To Madala)* Shut up old man. Normal human beings are having a conversation here.

MADALA: Malisa, it is I your Uncle. I am a normal human being.

MALISA: Oh! Really? Let us talk then. Speak.

MADALA: Speak what?

MALISA: How many times? Tell everyone here and now, Madala. How many times?

MADALA: What are you saying? How many times of what?

MALISA: How many times have you raped me? Yes, tell the world.

MADALA: Nonsense!

(Malisa shoots into the air)

MALISA: How many times?

MADALA: Just fifteen times.

(Malisa shoots Madala. Gogo faints. Everyone is petrified)

MALISA: *(To the Judge)* Now, shall we go over those lines again, Mr Judge?

JUDGE: *(To the Court police)* Get that woman.

MALISA: How old are you?

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

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

JUDGE: I am not under interrogation.

Malisa shoots into the air

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

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

MALISA: You raped her!

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

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

COURT

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

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

COURT

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

MALISA: Convictions?

COURT

CLERK: Not commensurate to offences.

MALISA: And why is that?

COURT

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

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

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

MALISA: Is this the country we pledge to build? Our communities are no longer safe. Women and girls are not safe from rape, femicide and gender based violence. Children are no longer safe from gang violence and drugs. What have we done to us? What have we done to generations unborn? Is this the rainbow nation we want?

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

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

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

MALISA: We call on you dogs all over. We are now on national television. Come over here, rapists. All men who maim, rape and murder little girls and women. Come. If you

are not cowards, come out now in this public space and do what you do best. Animals. Come. Bring your cocks. Come screw. Come fuck. Come screw little children, come fuck your sisters and mothers, and grandmothers. Come on cowards. Anyone of you out there?

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

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

COURT

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

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

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

MALISA: But if you will not do it in the open, why then do you do it in the closet? Stop all this nonsense at once. Let us build a respectable world. We are not animals. Let us make our progenitors proud of our conducts today. May this become the most noble vocation of men around our world.

Malisa hands herself to the Court Police. All freeze on stage. While the news anchor reports, the Court police leads Malisa out, with Nandy and Nelly in tow.

News Media Reports

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

Patricia Baloyi, Southern
Agency Television

Ghost Twerkers | Ola-Kris

GLOSSARY

MADALA: An elderly Uncle in a South African language

GOGO: A grandmother in South African language

The Play

Three girls from impoverished backgrounds, desperate to get education and a decent living, opt to become commercial dancers at a night club. A rape incident by some clients would mark the beginning of their freedom from gender based violence (GBV).

The Playwright

Ogunbemi Christopher Akinola holds a B.A (Hons) in Theatre Arts from University of Ibadan, Nigeria; a Masters in Drama from Tshwane University of Technology as well as a PhD. (Applied Theatre) from University of Limpopo in South Africa. He is a theatre expert with over thirty years' experience as actor, playwright, director, theatre administrator, teacher of acting and film director, with keen interests in African post-colonial literature and cultural studies. As an actor, he has featured in a number of South African movies such as *Jacob's Cross* on MNet and *Room 9* on SABC. He has also directed a number of Nollywood films such as *The Dragons* and *The Lincoln's Clan*. Besides *Ghost Twerkers* (2018), Ola-Kris is also the author of plays such as *Hakuna Matata* (2008); *Tsietsi* (2016); *The Prince of Sovenga* (2017) as well as *The Serial Kisser and the Code of Silence* (2019). All of these works were premiered at the University of Limpopo, where he currently teaches acting, African drama and performance in its Performing Arts Centre.











































































































