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More Than Just a Game

By Tom Eaton

Left! Left! Left! Left! Left! Left! Left!

In South Africa in the '60s,

apartheid was law.

The police... The police were extremely powerful, like an army, peaceful protests were met with killing, torture and imprisonment.

Our people were denied all basic rights.

-Manu!

-Manu!

Come on, boys, defence!

We risked our lives

to advance the struggle for freedom

and many of us ended up

on the notorious Robben Island,

the Alcatraz of Africa.

We found ourselves in a place and a time

when it was easy to lose one's self.

If sport was never here on Robben Island,

then really, I would have been

a very notorious place to live.

It seems strange how with what

we remember and what we've done,

how we go and all people

how we've played soccer in prison.

If you look at the way

how we had to fight and campaign

to be allowed to play soccer, it's...

You could equate it to the fight for freedom.

But we did play soccer on Robben Island

and I think we played it well.

We were just becoming aware

of a cruel and unjust system

that was taking over most of our lives.

My first knowledge of this system

came from a primary school teacher.

He came into the class and wrote the word

'apar' and 'hate' on the board,

emphasising the 'apart' and 'hate'.

I made explosives.

In those days, you could get the

components of explosives almost anywhere.

Imagine today going into a shop and saying,

'Good day, sir, can I have some ammonium

nitrate and ten kilograms of toluene.
'I want to make some TNT, you see.'
I think we knew that we were getting
into something dangerous
when we were getting into the Struggle.
But I don't think we knew exactly
how dangerous it was going to be.
I seemed normal to
be involved in the Druggle.
Do much injustice in the land.
There was tension. And we were young.
I was in Standard 9 at
Hofmeyer High School in Pretoria.
We were collecting unexploded shells
from a nearby range for use at a later stage.
In the end, they came in overnight,
raided different homes,
arrested 250 to 300 kids.
Came in again, and those of us who were
simply trying to make sense
of the chaos that were around
were also taken in.
The Druggle meant a lot to me,
because I saw what was happening.
I realised that our people were oppressed
and therefore I felt that I should involve
myself into the Struggle.
Good evening, Mr Dingo.
Do where do you think you're going?
I was arrested by the British
in Northern Rhodesia.
And they drove us
all the way back to Pretoria.
And of course, some of us came from
a different political tradition.
The main liberation organisation
didn't offer what we were looking for.
We were a group of young activists,
rather intellectually inclined.
We had decided to study Mao Tse-tung's
book on guerrilla war, Yu Chi Chan.
And when they finally arrested us,
the media sounded as if the whole Red Army
had landed in South Africa.

We were at the beginning stages
and some of us were still trying to
organise to leave the country.
And then a comrade and I were arrested
getting a lift with a famous person.
-Good afternoon.
-Good afternoon.
Your pass, please.
I don't carry a pass.
Chairman Mao says
he does not carry a pass.
Never mind, Mr Dolomon,
we know who you are.
You and Mr Bam.
Will you come with us, please?
Good day, Mrs Mandela.
Bloody bitch!
Football was my passion.
You could even say it was my obsession.
I was the Terror of Atteridgeville.
-Pass the ball.
-I wanted to win.
When I played football, I played hard.
I played every chance I got.
Every time I got a ball or an open field,
I played.
They told me not to go to school that day.
This girl had come to my house and told me
that the police were looking for me
and that they were going to look for me
at school.
And I had said to her, 'Let them look for me
at school. They know where to find me.
'Let them come and pick me up. '
We were so brave.
What was a couple of years in prison?
What was 15 years
when you're not even 20 yet?
We didn't realise. We didn't think
the system could be that cruel
as to send school children to Robben Island.
You people always say you want to go
and rain overseas.
Do now we're asking you overseas!

The island, it seemed to me,
was a very bleak place.
You had a feeling some are forsaken.
The waters just seemed
to deepen his impression.
We were told in no uncertain terms
that you will be treated
like somebody without a name and were
reminded that here, you become a number.
You have to be an epitome of obedience
to the racially supreme master.
Come, don't be shy.
The coffee is getting cold.
You darkies look a bit hesitant, or what?
No enough pap and words, hey?
Just like in the old kraal, hey darkies?
...a home...
Welcome to Gevil's Island.
We apologise for...
We don't understand Afrikaans.
Then you're going to come shore because
here we don't use kaffir-alk.
We don't use kaffir-lover alk either...
...so say one more English word and
Warder Gelpor will break you...
Do you understand me?
Ok then.
Good.
Welcome...
Once again, I apologise if the meal that
we have prepared is not to your taste...
...but here on the island we enjoy
life's simple pleasures.
If there is bird shit on your food, you will
either find food that hasn't been shit on...
...or you must learn to like shit.
Warder Gelpor is full of shit...
...but we like him.
Right, Warder Gelpor?
We know that you think you're going
to govern his country one day.
Your Mr Mandela also thought
he was going to be president.
Do you know where your Mr Mandela

is siing now?
He's siing on his arse over here in he
isolaion cells alking o he walls.
And you're never going o see him again.
Bu wha do l hear from Warder Grikus?
He says you don' even know how
o march wo by wo...
...he says ha you...
...looked like a bunch of chimpanzees when
you were climbing off our lile boa.
Go you know he sory of he hree
chimpanzees, hey?
Wans o proes...
Wans o sudy...
Wans o rule...
All you communiss and erroriss who
come visi us on he island...
...you all hink you are srong.
Bu do you know wha happens afer a
few years of breaking rocks?
The same as wha's going
o happen o you lo.
Before we are done wih you here...
before you leave here...
you will beg o shine my shoes...
Tha's no going o happen.
l will never happen.
Righ, fingerprins and ideniy cards...
...as quick as you can.
So it became very cIear
that if we were going to survive,
we would have o figh he noion
ha we were passive.
We had o show he auhoriies
ha we could organise ourselves
efficienly and wih discipline.
But it was tough, especiaIIy in the quarry.
During winter, sitting down,
breaking stones,
exposed to the freezing AtIantic sea spray,
is something that is very difficuIt
to erase from memory.
Sedick, for exampIe, stiII feeIs coId today.
It's an aImost pathologicaI refIex.

Come, come, come, ge up, ge up, move!
You are here o work, you're no
on vacaion, move move move.
Go l look like a radio? No,
hen move when l alk!
l wan you ou of my prison, now!
Move, move, move!
It was the same routine every day.
' 'Kom, kom, kom.' '
Grab cIoths and shoes and out.
The probIem was you had to grab any two
shoes, whether they were the same feet
or differen sizes, whaever.
l'm a size 10.
-Wha is his?
-Dize 10. Easy, man.
You know wha, l've go wo lef fee here.
Come on, man, you're he clever one here,
how abou you organise me a righ foo?
l hink Blues has go hree 7 s over here.
Wha's wrong wih Blues? He's he only one
l know ha has hree shoes for wo fee.
Hey, gens, l'm going o find a 10.
Hey, seriously, and no a 7-10, a 10-10.
Line, sop!
No matter how hard they tried
to crush our spirit,
we were prepared to survive.
We were prepared and determined
to execute our Struggle.
Line, move!
Hey, Tony, his could be a 10.
l'm sure if you asked Gelpor nicely,
maybe he...
Negotiating, you know,
came out of necessity.
You had o negoiaie in order o make
sense of life on Robben Island.
Come on, move. Why is his aking so long?
Pu some speed ino hose legs!
The bigges misake he auhoriies made
was o pu us all ogeher in ha
slae quarry in prison.
If they intended to break us in that way,

they achieved quite the opposite
because different people with different ideas
cross-pollinated ideas and thinkings.
And when I look back at it,
people became much more stronger
in their convictions and persuasions
than they would otherwise have been.
Dep forward hose men who
have a driver's licence.
Come now, men!
Lovely, lovely, come here.
There are your cars...your speed machines.
And now?
You've got licences, don' you?
You're qualified.
Grive!
I remember one of the warders, he said,
here in the quarry
we are going to be worked to death.
We are going to be destroyed.
He had a slogan for the quarry,
he said, ''Daar maak jy groot klippe klein
en klein klippe fyn''.
''There you will make big stones small
and small stones tiny. ''
I was very hard in the quarry,
breaking the slabs, you know.
When we remember the quarry,
we see it as a place that unified us
as prisoners
and it also contributed in
unifying us as sportsmen.
Robben Island is remembered as
some kind of university.
And the quarry, we remember it
as a main auditorium of the university.
It was a decision we made that there
we are not going to allow
our vision of ourselves to be blurred
by the vision the Prison Department
and the authorities had of us.
And they made us demand, no concessions,
but privileges in terms of their own,
very own regulations.

Mass murder everybody.
We could no jus spend
one idle momen behind he cells
so we ended up organising games.
Which we played ou of he sigh of warders.
Chess and cards,
which we made out of cardboards,
or draughts, which was made out of
pieces of soap or even wood.
And of course there was Iudo.
We'd draw the Iudo board on a bIanket
with a piece of soap,
which was jus as well.
Wha is his noise?
Go you hink his is a holiday resor?
Ge up, ge up, wha have you go here?
Wha do you have? Dhow me! Where is i?
Why are you geing up?
Wha is his?
Why is here a chess board here?
No more games!
Le his be a lesson.
No more games!
And keep quie!
And we enjoyed those games,
but this was not enough.
We needed somehing more physical.
Hey! Dhu up!
And suddenly, soccer was a passion.
It was aII we couId think about.
It was aII we wanted to do.
We made soccer baIIIs with anything.
Pieces of rag, paper, anything.
For us youngsters, it became a crusade.
Now we would organise our guys
o go in delegaions,
we would go o he senior warder.
We requested our request for soccer
to be considered seriousIy.
And?
We reques he righ o play fooball
on weekends.
Dpor is no a righ.
l's a privilege.

Ou.
We reques he righ o play fooball
on weekends.
No!
Geclined.
-We reques he righ o play fooball...
-...fooball on weekends.
Nee.
-We reques...
-...he righ o play fooball...
-...on weekends.
-Nee.
-We reques...
-Nee.
-The righ o play fooball...
-Nee.
...play fooball on weekends.
Uit!
We reques he righs o beer food.
-En?
-And we reques he righ
o play fooball on weekends.
No.
No. Ou. Ge ou.
We reques he righ o play...
Yes, yes, yes he righ o play fooball...
On weekends.
When he hell else would you play fooball?
Go you hink his a damned social club?
Of course on bloody weekends!
Ou.
Ge ou.
Nex.
-Naidoo, is somebody sill waiing ouside?
-No.
l says here one ime soccer ball
o be bough wih...
Wha's his word here, Naidoo?
Funds, sir, o be bough wih funds.
l'm alking o Naidoo.
When l'm alking o you,
hen you can answer.
Bough wih funds donaed
by he following players.

For a bunch of communiss,
you boys are quie flush wih cash, hey?
Tha 20c a monh you pay us
for breaking rocks can add up.
Naidoo, are you being funny?
Go you wan o make jokes?
Hey? Go you wan o...
come hen, make jokes...
Le's see if you're sill so funny once l've
chucked your ass ino soliarly confinemen
for hree monhs.
The chaps simply wan a ball.
A proper ki, as soon as he guys
can organise he funds.
Moseneke, if he CO les you play,
and he's no going o le you play...
You boys are going o break -
you will suffer. You are oo weak.
You people are lile
piccanin scarecrows already.
Thank you, sir.
Boss!
If you coninue o ask me
for his bloody supid hing,
you bloody learn o call me ''Baas.''
-Undersand?
-Yes.
Now ge ou.
Well, we had o show ha our approach was
indeed a very, very serious one.
Once we go going i also
gave rise o wha l would call a unied fron
ha cu across pary poliical lines
and across all age groups.
It was that united front
that the authorities couId not ignore.
And it was a reaIIy very powerfuI
instrument for us to get things going.
Go you hear wha hey are asking, Fourie?
Go you even read hese hings?
These guys are obsessed wih heir soccer.
Like lile kids.
Bu does Capain hink...?
They are dying in he quarry. How long do

you hink hey'll las?
Come on, Fourie,
we are no unreasonable men.
Give hem heir damned soccer.
They're asking so nicely!
We will invie he Red Cross o come
and observe he whole hing.
Afer all hey like soccer in Dwizerland,
don' hey Fourie?
l couldn' say Capain.
Well l know hey like chocolaes.
Do we'll give he geezer from Geneva a
few chocolaes, and a soccer mach.
Bu find a few guys who look a lile
muscular, okay? Healhy.
And speaking of healhy...
...his plan looks a lile ragic,
no so Fourie?
Yes Capain.
Bu can l ask Capain wha...
Fourie...
ln wo weeks...
...hree...
hey'll be exhausted...
...and his whole hing will be forgoen.
And insis ha we keep conrol of i.
We are giving i o hem, undersand?
They're no aking i from us...
ha's how i works.
Do Capain's answer is...?
Yes Fourie...
...my answer is yes.
Le hem build heir field and le hem play.
It was amazing.
In 1967, four years after arriving
on Robben IsIand,
we began to pIay soccer
on a smaII, makeshift fieId,
just outside our communaI ceIIs.
Everybody waned o play fooball.
He ook he line, come on Lizo.
As a person who came from
he Easern Cape, i was foreign o me,
because l played rugby and cricke.

And when his soccer
was introduced on the island,
those who introduced it
were willing to each us.
Right, ke madoda, here we go,
it's on the ches, it goes down.
-Control it and kick.
-For sure.
Good. Tony.
All right, all right, gents, Alfred, you ready?
Anthony Suze was one of
those soccer fanatics.
He loved soccer, he was a hard kicker
and we even nicknamed him...
Which means, 'Move, I'm going to kick!'
Here we go. There! Almost here!
Nice try, Alfred, nice try.
-Marcus, you ready?
-For sure.
All right, let's do this.
Okay, we'll work on that.
We'll have to work on that.
-We'll have to work on that. Lizo?
-Dharp.
-All right.
-Okay. Let's go.
Hey, it's rugby, Tony.
Hey, gents, I think we found our goalkeeper.
-Hey!
-Goalkeeper!
There was selflessness in the coaching,
of course,
but it was not always about being selfless.
Those guys that I taught about soccer,
I taught because I wanted the best players
on my team.
I wanted to win.
Lizo, here.
-Dorry. Dorry.
-Pro.
Alfred, Alfred!
-Come guys, let's keep it moving.
-Unreachable!
I couldn't believe it.

You know Dedick is a scienis?
And I asked him, I said,
'You, a physicis, you know all about
'forces and veLocity and stuff Iike that.
And so why can't you just kick that baII?''
This is...no, no, no, Gick...Pro, he ball.
Lisen o me
I wan you o go and sand over here.
-Over here, okay.
-Lizo.
Okay. Lizo...
Now Lizo, he was different,
even though he was a rugby pLayer.
Okay, now when Lizo passes me he ball,
you are going o run.
Firs ouch you ge on he ball,
you srike i ino he ne.
No, I don' hink I can do ha, hey.
Gick, don' hink. Jus lisen o me.
Firs srike you ge on he ball,
you hi i ino he ne. Okay?
Head down, weigh going forward,
-kick under he ball.
-Ready?
Dorry, sorry, sorry. Dorry.
-I'll ry i again. Okay, okay.
-Yeah.
-I'll ry i again.
-Eye on he ball.
Eye on he ball. Okay, ready, ready.
Jus give he others a chance raHer, man,
I'll jus si over here.
No, no, no, no,
you're doing very nicely here.
Lizo, don' lie o he man.
He's no doing nicely a all,
he's he wors fooball player in he world.
Tony, i's difficul when you don' come
from a spors background.
Hey, hey, I come from a spors background.
-Wha spors?
-Dwimming is big in our family.
Dwimming, Gick, swimming!
Tha's one spor ha's no going o ge

encouraged here, wena,
he five-mile freestyle o Cape Town, huh?
No, no, Gick, come on, again.
He was helpless.
You know, thank God for soccer.
When I first arrived
and saw my dear friend, Bennie Ntwele,
looking like skin and bones
in just a few weeks on the island,
I thought I would die here,
but soccer was our salvation.
And it was driven by people like Pro Malepe.
Pro was a diamond. He was fast.
He was strong, he was fit.
He was known as Pro because
he was already a professional player
from Pretoria and he was allocated
the task of training the rugby players
and the non-soccer players to prepare them
with basic skills.
He didn't know when to stop.
When Pro trains, he just goes
on and on and on
and it's up, up, up,
if it's down, it's down, down, down,
but he never knows when to stop.
I need you to be saving goals,
not creating them.
Keep your feet on the ground.
Come on, let's go.
Come, I'm counting.
One! Two! Three!
Gentlemen, this is the man
you should be looking up to.
Freddie Dimons is a specimen
of my good work.
It's passion, it's commitment, it's power.
I love it.
You're going to kill yourselves.
You're going to go down.
Morning, Dir.
Gon' you bloody
' 'Good Morning' ' me, Malepe.
It's a shiny morning.

Why is ha?
Promoions...
...all of hem.
Every damned one of hem.
And no you, Mr Gelpor?
And no bloody me.
The English call i ''passed over.''
Pass over.
Go l look like a bloody Jew, ha l
migh enjoy Passover?
Tha is no righ.
No, i's no righ.
You're a good guard.
Mr Gelpor, an excellen officer,
you're always here in he rain wih us.
Very duiful.
Yes, always.
Bu ha is he problem, Mr Gelpor.
How's ha?
Why is i you ha is sanding in he rain
and hey all ge promoions and you don'?
l's...
l's because hey're using you.
They do no respec you.
Even hough you work hard
and you're an excellen officer.
They rea you like us.
Like a...like sor of...
Like less han a human being.
You mus figh your case.
You mus wrie a leer.
l don' know how o wrie such a leer.
Maybe we can help you.
DeIport, who was so vioIent and so mean,
eventuaIIy became our aIIy.
He joined our cIasses
and we helped him with his studies.
And sIowIy DeIport become more human
and DeIport became a different person,
and finaIIy, he passed his subjects
and he was promoted.
''Things change...''
Many of he warders loved o wach us play
because we creaed

grea specacor spor for hem.
Come, come, come, you men mus work...
Look lively wih ha wheelbarrow...
I wan o build!
Move i, sackers!
Hey, hey! You see ha aeroplane?
Tha's a whie man flying here,
flying in he sky.
And you can' even
push a wheelbarrow sraigh.
Hey, don' urn your back on me, boetie.
When I'm alking o you,
you pay aenion, okay?
Hey, Jaco.
The Old Man's looking for you...
...sounds urgen.
You'd beer move i.
Do, who's in he saring I I on Daurday?
We're playing agains he Bucs, aren' we?
We're going o crush hem.
Ja, Dhinners beer have his boos
on his weekend.
Malan, leave ha prisoner alone.
Ge away here, he has work o do.
Bes hurry...
There were warders
who were very fond of us,
there were warders
who actuaIIy were our fans.
There was his warder,
'Maxolo' Dmih we called him,
who could come and open up every ime
I waned o go and play.
Bu here was always a degree of ension
because i ook us years
to break down the barriers,
but most importantIy of course,
it took years to improve the situation
on the isIand.
You had those who were among them
who were very IoneIy.
They had cases where warders
committed suicide,
where young men just put that rifle

on the chest and pulled the trigger.
We decided to organise soccer
in a much more conscious way.
We wanted to play
competitive soccer so that,
if there are clubs, the one club can plan
and the other club can then try and defend.
We want to set up
a FIFA type of association.
We wanted competition,
and in that competition
we are going to create interest,
and that is why soccer for us
had to be introduced
very, very systematically and carefully.
I understand, Tony,
but what I am trying to say is that
these clubs can be quite regimented.
You know I can play with anybody,
but other men are saying 'uh-huh'.
They say a lot of things, Mark,
and that's the problem.
Everybody is saying something,
but who's doing? Who is engaging?
Carefully, discussion, negotiation,
it's not just talk.
Yes, but you see them, I mean, you see
these clubs who always talk about
a united front or these games serving
football instead of politics,
and what do they do when we start
picking sides?
ANC on his side, PAC on his side. Hey?
Right from the beginning,
I was against picking teams
according to political organisations.
Tony, it's more complicated than that.
You know that.
Football is never just football.
Hey, I don't know what game
you've been playing, Mark,
but when I'm playing football,
that is what I'm doing
and I'm doing it properly.

Bu everything ha we do here,
we do i properly.
-You don' have o ell me.
-Bu l do.
We mus keep on saying i.
We mus keep repeaing i.
l's very easy in his place o rerea ino...
l mean, how would you pu i,
'ino familiar hings''?
Like hese safe poliical srucures?
We canno discriminae along pary lines.
Go l hear i righ ha you've pu
a clause of non-discriminaion
in he Manong consiuion?
Exacly righ.
Today Manong, omorrow
he Makana Fooball Associaion,
and nex year FlFA.
lf we're going o do his,
we're going o do i righ.
And ha's he FlFA way, or no way a all.
Tha is why l recruied Lizo,
an African Naional Congress member,
into my team, Manong,
which was predominantIy
a Pan-Africanist Congress members cIub.
Our moo was ''A lapile'', which lierally
mean ''The vulures are hungry''.
We stood for soccer and not poIitics.
Our team's aims were very cIear.
One, to promote and demonstrate soccer.
Two, to spread sportsmanship
and comradeship on the isIand.
The third one was to ensure that
every abIe-bodied person
was taught soccer on the isIand.
Penaly! Penaly! Penaly! Penaly!
They're no geing ha ired any more.
You know, l'm seeing a seady
improvement in our play, Marcus.
For one, beer discipline from he players,
and for wo, you know,
beer coaching mehods
are being employed. l'm really happy.

Pass the ball!
You have to admit, Nedick,
the standard of play is now really good.
Absolutely. And it's also having
a tremendous impact on our morale.
Through football, we could realise
and make a statement
about our humanity, about ourselves.
It's for enjoyment, it's for relaxation.
It is for fun, it is to give
an opportunity for people
to get away from the hardships
of the present.
We worked hard to keep football together.
The Dutch bastard can play.
Hey, Dutch!
I don't think I'd be wrong if I say
soccer saved many of us on the island.
Lindes Naidoo and Dedick Isaacs
were our administrators.
They could not play very well,
but they were very good administrators.
You know, when people see that reams
and reams of minutes and notes we kept,
they might find it strange
that we created such a large bureaucracy
of our sport
and our associations there on the island.
But that's the way we fought the struggle.
That was the system we came out of.
What we did, we did properly, thoroughly,
and we applied that to our sport.
Sunday to Wednesday to do post-mortem.
Wednesday we're planning for Saturday
and if perchance there were delays,
if for some reason,
the warder did not turn up on time,
we would end up filled with anxiety.
Hey, hey, what's all this?
Ah, Mr Malan, you know we only have

from 9:

I'm sure it's about 9:15 now.
It's just five past.

We can't run our prison according to
your sportingimeables, hey, Dhinner?
Eish, Warder Malan,
i's jus ha we don't have a lo of ime.
You've go fifeen years, Dioo!
You've go pleny of ime.
Dwar says las week
you didn't play oally crap.
Gid you wach?
No.
Are you going o wach now?
Come people!
Move i!
Your five minues will become en,
hen you're going o file a complain
agains us...
...hen we'll have o si wih Gelpor in
he quarry, because you waned o chi cha.
Come on, le's go!
Warder Malan is now speaking Xhosa?
Hey, Wena, l wonder wha Warder Gelpor
would say, Warder Malan?
Dilence!
Ja, ha is exacly wha he would say.
Playing footbaII was the onIy time
we were out in the open,
away from the ceIIs
and not doing any hard work of the quarry.
It was so wonderfuI to feeI the sun on you
whiIe you were enjoying soccer.
It brightened us.
Why did l ge a yellow card?
We boh wen for he ball.
Mr Maseko, he Makana Fooball
Associaion Gisciplinary Commiee
has reviewed your case
and we came o his conclusion.
l was a 50-50 situaion
and you boh wen for he ball.
Bu you, on he oher hand,
deliberaely showed your suds
across he face of he ball,
inending o harm he oher player.
Tha's why you go he yellow card.

Your complain is overruled, Mr Maseko.
Thank you very much.
You may leave the cell.
Did you get it down?
Defence!
Pass the ball, man!
And then they sent warders
to the mainland to buy our soccer kit
and we finally got colour into the game
and into our lives.
You know, the uniform of a prisoner
is monotonous.
It's the same all over and all over,
but now putting something different
would place us
to a greater extent,
you know, to think that we are outside,
enjoying ourselves outside prison.
Makana Football Association
was named after the Xhosa chief,
a warrior, who was arrested by the British.
He was taken to the island.
He attempted to escape.
He died while doing so.
And we honoured him
by naming our Association after him.
This Makana Football Association,
it was a big thing.
We had over 200 guys playing.
For example, there were three teams.
There was the A, B and C.
The A team was for the top players, whereas
your C team would be for the real amateurs,
guys like Dedick, for example.
The A division had three teams.
The B division had three teams.
And the C division had two teams.
The A teams needed chairmen,
and they got the chairmen.
The criteria we had was no one able
to speak refined English,
or a sense of formal education,
but what we needed was the ability to lead.
The A chairmen were going to be led

by one single chairman,
he Makana Football Association chairman.
And the guy they eventually chose,
was a unifying guy, a calm guy,
a guy who could debate issues.
He had a fantastic grasp
of the rules of soccer.
Dikgang Moseneke,
I think he was 16 years
when he came to the island.
Today, he is the Deputy Chief Justice
of South Africa.
Yeah, we demanded
to be given a bigger field
where we were going to play our sport.
Regulation size, to FIFA requirements.
And so, in 1969, we moved to our new field.
Well, Harry Gwala was a prominent member
of the Communist Party of South Africa,
but he also had
a very deep understanding of sports
in what was known as the Socialist Bloc,
especially soccer.
He would know the names
of all the great soccer players.
Moscow Dynamo, which was
the famous Russian team.
He was also very strict on the field.
It was not easy for him
to change his decision.
Welcome, gentlemen. First on our agenda
is a report back from Marcus Dolomon.
But first he will take us through
matters arising from Daurday's match.
Oh, he has also advised me that he would
like to tackle a very important issue
before he reads the report.
With your permission, gentlemen?
-Yes, sure.
-Marcus, please.
Thank you, Chairman Gwala.
No, it's just that, how can I put it,
we are all players from time to time.
We are not only referees.

We know how i is.

There are passions, healthy passions.

But I know I've said this before,

and please forgive me

if I'm flogging a dead horse,

but we cannot allow rough play.

What?

Makana Football Association,

draw for Daurday, held 4th May, 1970.

Black Eagles versus Gynaspurs,

your referee is Mr Harry Gwala.

Finally, we've got the Dilver Dars

versus Rangers, referee Mr D. Govender.

Linesmen will be Mr Njama, Mr Kunene,

Mr Dingh and Mr Radebe.

Look, can't we have Mr...

The League log laes points.

I don't want to hear it, Mr Duze.

I ruled according to what I saw

in the field of play.

Field of play, what field of play,

on which field of play were you on

-when it happened?

-Tony, if you have any complaints,

-use the official channels.

-Official channels?

Do you want to know what you can do

with your official channels?

I'll tell you what you can do,

you can use your official channels,

file them, in triplicate for all I care!

Right is right

and wrong is wrong, Mr Referee,

and in his case,

I am right and you are wrong!

Presentations of the B Division champions!

-Well done, sir.

-Well played.

B Division champions!

We had fans, we had banners,

we had logos, we had everything.

Spectators were fanatics, you know,

they were... They loved soccer.

They tended now to own the sport itself.

A chap like Blues,
and there was another one like Baartman.
For my sake, Mark, win it for me!
If you can't win it for your captain,
then think of Baartman,
who cries every time when you lose!
It hurts me. Please, I'm begging you.
I don't want those other guys to win.
You're my only hope, my heroes,
my superstars!
Defence!
Kick! Hey, Kick!
They promised me
they're going to win it for Baartman!
They swore!
Leave the Blues maniac alone
and fight with the real man.
A real soccer man!
Isaacs! Dedick Isaacs!
-What is it, Blues, I can hear you!
-I call you out.
What? Hey, Blues, you a crazy man.
Here I am.
-You still support the losing team.
-Today, Kick, today is today!
-What day, Blues?
-Today's the day that you die!
Hey, you said that three weeks ago!
Is that the day or is today the day?
-You're confusing me.
-Today is the day that you die.
Pass the ball!
Wow! I can't be.
-Look at that!
-Yes!
-Look at that!
-Yes, it is!
-Hey, hey! Mandela.
-And Walter Disulu!
-Ahmed Kahrada!
-I don't believe his!
No, no, no, no, no, no,
that's no Kahrada and that's no Mandela!
That's...Come, you're not supposed to

see ha, people! Move!
Power...is ours!
After that, we never saw the prisoners
from that section again.
They actually built a wall between us
to keep them hidden away.
When we used to have regular meetings,
we had to pick sides.
And of course, there was a motto
that guided all soccer on the island.
The motto of the Makana Football
Association was 'Service before Self.'
Gentlemen, we have here the names
of the team that will be playing
the big match on Daurday. Okay! Dhabalala.
When I played I was like I was home again.
I would transport you away from the island.
Chilewane, Kekane, Zwelendawu.
When we were told that we were not going
to play in a particular weekend
we felt so bad.
I'm sorry for those gentlemen
that didn't make it.
-We'll practice hard this week with Pro.
-I'm sorry.
As far as we were concerned,
a socialist society was one in which
all aspects of your life had to be cared for.
Your mind, your body, your soul,
your spirit. And sports...
Playing sports, playing soccer was
a very important part
of the integrated, holistic approach to life.
For me it was very difficult
because I always wanted to win.
And by now we were successfully
administering and playing soccer ourselves.
We had allowed no interference from
the authorities, and this made them mad!
It was one area on the island
in which we were sovereign,
and where we had control over our lives.
-Hey! Hey!
-Even when working in that terrible quarry,

we found time to discuss soccer issues.
Like me complaining
about selecting the best teams,
and Pro's complaints about training.
I tell you, man, hey're going to lose.
They're going to lose
because hey have got no stamina,
because hey only went to the bathroom
for 10 minutes.
Ten minutes!
You can't do anything in 10 minutes.
I thought I was scheduled for half an hour?
No, it's 45 minutes!
The upper body for fifteen minutes
and then he ran for fifteen minutes.
-And running for fifteen minutes, man.
-Do?
What is Pro complaining about now?
He's angry that Harry took
most of his training time
to give the guys another glimpse
behind the Iron Curtain.
Pro feels they are
not going to be ready for the soccer.
What's Pro's feeling
about Mbaha playing his week?
Marcus, it is very difficult.
Old Boos hasn't had a game in three weeks.
Hey! Old Boos hasn't had
a game in three weeks
because old Boos plays football
like a drunk.
And he is very unhappy about not playing.
Yeah, well, I'm very unhappy about it
when he does play.
They told me Boos wants to
file a complaint with the committee
-if you play Pro again.
-Yeah, I know, I know.
The selection process,
it was a hell of a process.
You want to play inclusive soccer.
You want to involve everybody.
But then you know that Daurday, the other

eam is going o pick up heir bes players.
You sar wondering o say, ''Now, look man,
wha is imporan his week, you know?
''Talk o your guys, you know, hey should
ake i easy on socialism, you know,
''unil we've played our fooball
and hen hey can go back o heir agenda.''
There were clubs playing,
and a he end of he year,
in order o play wihin one anoher's clubs,
no playing agains one anoher,
hey creaed wha was called
''seleced sides.''
Mix he clubs up, and hose who played
wih one anoher,
now played agains one anoher
in heir new emporary club
and hey called i ''seleced sides.''
A side was picked on Robben Island,
and hey named hemselves
he Alanic Raiders.
The Raiders were, almos by acciden,
a very, very srong side.
Drong soccer players like Duze,
and Bimos and Freddie Dimon.
And it was out of the whoIe discourse
of incIusiveness on the one side
and a desire to win at aII costs, that
the incident of the AtIantic Raiders arose.
-Maybe we won' have...
-Dkull and Bones, gens, Alanic Raiders.
Young guys, fas guys, hard guys.
They've poached wo players from Manong.
The Bucs eam have los wo players.
People are saying hese Raiders play
only for pride, for vaniy.
Duze only plays for one hing
and ha's o win!
-Dkull and Bones forever.
-Enough wih ha nonsense now.
I know you gens. I know you,
you are Dilver Dars men and Manong men.
You're no secessionis hooligans!
Dop his nonsense now.

Atlantic Raiders, they were the elite.
We were the elite.
The best players in the best team.
Deleced from across all the cells
in the island. We were the best.
Atlantic Raiders was just a team
that had everything to do
with the cause, you know.
Yeah, yeah, here were complaints
and accusations because we were the best,
we were the strongest team.
They were rocking the boat
right from the start.
The men wanted to leave their clubs
in order to join the Raiders.
We were good, man.
The Atlantic Raiders was a top team
and the Blue Rocks were right at the bottom.
It was a very poor team.
Go! Go! Go!
Old crocks, you know?
But everybody had to play
in the Makana Football Association.
It was the ethos.
And so that's how it came naturally
that these Blue Rocks,
these old guys, these crocks,
had to play Atlantic Raiders.
I was always going to be a massacre.
Massacre.
I don't know what was their preparation
like before we played in November.
But what I know that our preparation,
as always, was pretty intense.
Nice!
And then the big day came.
I was really looking forward to that match.
You know, although we were
political prisoners,
we did not want politics to consume us.
We did seminars and political discussions.
But then we also wanted some fun.
And playing Blue Rocks was
going to be great fun.

-Offside ref, offside.
-Play on! No offside! Play on!
He was oally offside. Toally.
I hink he even handled he ball.
Really, i's a ough experience,
going behind he ne
o go and collec a ball ha has been scored
agains you as a goalkeeper.
-A goal?
-How?
I's a goal. I am applying FlFA rules,
he goal sands.
Tha was clearly offside,
and wha abou he hand ball?
And wo bloody yards away
from he las fee.
-How can ha possibly...
-This is unaccepable!
I canno ref under hese condiions.
Harry Gwala is subborn.
-Where are you going?
-You are refereeing.
Where's he going? You're walking away.
Anthony Duze is subborn!
Tha's agains rules and you know i!
I was crazy bu we said, ''Le's jus
win his hing and ge back home.''
Pass he ball!
Move.
Come gens, come gens.
Pass he ball!
The oId crocks decided
to go and bIock the goaIs, you know.
Pass he ball, man.
Pass he ball, Freddie!
I wen on unil when i came clear ha
the pros, the Raiders camp, couId not score.
Blue Rocks! Blue Rocks! Blue Rocks!
Blue Rocks! Blue Rocks!
Blue Rocks! Blue Rocks!
Blue Rocks! Blue Rocks!
Blue Rocks! Blue Rocks!
The record book of course refleced
ha Blue Rocks had won he mach.

-I know, Tony, I saw it. Okay, I saw it.

-Jesus, Gick! Jesus! I mean, a complain.

A formal appeal or something.

That thing can't stand. It's a farce.

We will appeal immediately. There are various grounds we can appeal on.

-For instance, for referees...

-The refereeing is a bloody joke.

-Yes.

-That's what. Gick, you can't do that.

You saw what he did, he just went off the field like that. You can't do that.

-That is against FIFA regulations, right?

-I'm almost certain it is, yeah.

How then? Jesus, Gick, I mean his thing is a knockout competition.

-But now, they couldn't take it.

-We got knocked out...

Blame the referee, blame the linesman, blame everything in the world, you know.

We appealed almost immediately.

We threw the book at the MFA.

It was serious stuff.

We went there with our captain, Freddie Simon, our vice captain, Lucas Mahlangu, and we became very, very technical.

But Mr Isaacs, the executive committee of the Makana Football Association believes that you have covered this territory already.

If you had a complain, it behooves you to make your protest immediately after the irregularity had been observed.

Once again, I'd like to refer you to the constitution of the Makana Football Association, section 7C, page 9,

-where it clearly states that...

-With all due respect, Mr Deary.

What we are saying, and not for the first time in his meeting, is that we are aware of section 7C.

But we find it problematic.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines

observe as ''become conscious of.''

The events leading to our process...

Mr Isaacs! Please do not try

to divert his hearing with sophistry.

I will not be overruled.

Mr Deereary, I'm simply pointing out

that the events leading to our process

are complex and require checking.

Will you concede that?

-Go on.

-And because they require checking

the process of becoming conscious

of these events,

that is, observing them,

has taken some time,

which is why we are presenting

our petition of appeal

through the correct channels now.

-He allowed...

-Gown.

...that rubbish hand-ball of a goal

and he just walks off the field,

like a bloody chicken!

And he unceremoniously deserted the field

after allowing a goal which had

a telling effect on our morale.

And which arose from a malicious

application of the contents

of the Referees' Charter. In light of these...

...horrible mistakes, I kept on shouting,

Gick, I kept on shouting, ''Come on!

I mean, come on, are you blind?

''Can' you see?

Gon' you know what a hand ball is?

''Gon' you know what an offside is?''

Then, you know what?

He then reacted to the infringement

of the association football rules with mirh,

as if it was a joke.

This is fully counter to the spirit

and history of association football.

And it is also proof...

...that all referees are

bloody nincompoops, yeah!

You ell hem, Gick, you ell hem.
Nincompoops.
We asked for a replay.
We asked for a change of he saus of
he game, anyhing, we fough very hard.
But sometimes I think we fought too hard.
It took five months to resoIve the
AtIantic Raiders-BIue Rocks demonstration.
We aIIowed due process to take pIace,
no matter how frustrating
the whoIe affair was.
And we wouId never have become
vioIent about it.
One of the cardinaI ruIes was never
to Iay hands on another poIiticaI prisoner,
and never give warders or guards
an excuse to intervene.
Duress. We'd make our case in such a way
that they had to Iisten.
Was it the right thing to do? It seemed Iike
the right thing to do at the time.
It seemed Iike the onIy thing to do.
Wha he bloody hell is going on here?
I'll bea you o a pulp.
When Makana FootbaII Association
stages a match,
we'll no allow hem o play.
We wen and squaed on he soccer field.
I's duress, Warder Gelpor.
Proes, Warder Gelpor.
You know abou proesing and wha
you believe in is due o you, no so?
You can' do ha here!
Freddie, Anhony, how long are you
going o lie here?
For as long as i akes o ge jusice.
Miser Makaleni.
This man belongs o your club.
Please, alk o him.
Yes.
This man belongs o my club, Manong.
...bu, he has forgoen his.
Now he hinks he is anoher kind of animal.
And now, gens, why such long faces?

A vulure mus fly high from ime o ime.
Tha is a poin of principle.
No, l do no see any vulure,
bu l see somehing
ha's lying fla on his belly on he ground.
Please, Anhony.
Your chairman is asking you.
No, no, no, Chairman.
l'm sorry, bu l'm drunk wih rebellion.
l is no proper. This hing is no proper!
Your moher raised a disgusing
screw-up of a child, or wha Duze?
Gon' you go any manners?
Uncivilised.
Tha's wha you are.
No respec for age.
No respec for spor.
Uncivilised.
This is your mess.
Play or cha, you have 45 minues.
No.
-And now?
-And now, we wai for jusice.
We were serious.
We were willing o push his proes.
To hell wih he consequences.
l's he principle. lf you're playing o FlFA
sandards, you canno jus suddenly say...
Wha abou he principle of comradeship?
Wha abou ha, Maxabane?
You guys have become
so obsessed wih winning.
l'm no obsessed wih anything.
Warder Malan,
give us a ''lile booser'' please man.
Hey, very nice.
Now go, please.
Careful, prisoner.
Jus now l'll oss his ''booser''
ino he ground, under my shoes...
and you...
l'll have you for calling me man
and no boss, hey.
And hen we will see who is ''going''

and who's no!

-I heard ha old guy in C2...

-Mpofu?

Mpofu, yeah.

He's got high blood pressure

because of his whole proes.

Everyone gets high blood pressure and
depression here. I's like ashma and TB.

But you can't tell me we're also
getting TB and depression

because of the Alanic Raiders.

Hey, guys, I don't like it. The whole
thing makes me very, very unhappy.

What is wrong, is seeing down guidelines,
agreed on

in a democratic and organised way.

And then changing those guidelines
at the last minute?

Comrades, please.

Leave this thing out on the soccer field,
or the disciplinary hearing where it belongs.

-Please, it is very distressing.

-But that is the point, comrade.

This is something that affects
every aspect of our lives.

-Do we have to take position on...

-Enough!

Go on tell me what to do. Leave it alone!

This is causing mayhem,
high blood pressure, you name it.

Those who are angry,

those who don't relate,

they don't talk to one another, and so forth.

Laughter, ridicule, turn to anger,

it turned to emotion,

it tended to divide us now.

I was serious. We couldn't accept the fact
that we'd been beaten by his lousy side.

Gentlemen.

I have here my report on the activities of
our club, Gynaspurs Football Club,

over the period January to June, 1971.

And I had intended to read

the entire document to you today

before I make it available to you
for your perusal.

There are various administrative
improvements I wanted to share with you.

And here are also players
whom we should single out
as having improved dramatically
so far this year.

But right now I think I would like to start
on the second page of my report
with an issue that has been weighing
very heavily on all of us
and that has certainly depressed me
personally since it took place.

Why do we play soccer?

Or any sport for that matter?

Do we play to win? Do we can
say we crashed such and such a club?
For points, for diplomas and trophies?

No.

Let us remember that our sporting activities
here on the island
are meant and aimed at making
our stay here less unbearable
and less intolerable than it is.

Let us not allow them to become the causes
of more frustration, tension and discomfort
than they already are.

Some of us might say,

'Noble ideals and big talk
'which have no bearing
on the real situation.'

I would like to answer those people
with a question.

If we had no noble ideals,
would we have been here today?

Do the guys appeal to us
through the committee structures.

They threatened us in all kinds
of manners and ways.

They appealed to our sentiments as political
prisoners, as sportsmen, as comrades.

I didn't work, but you see,
the thing is we, as things went on,

we fel we had o back down.
We knew we had o back down.
I was becoming unpleasan for everybody.
And we waned o hrow in he owel,
bu we jus didn' know how.
Anhony, wha have you...
There was his old man
in my club, Makaleni.
He was he chairman of our club, Manong.
Makaleni was no a highly educaed person,
bu he was very ariculae
and a very good adminisraor.
And he undersood people.
And paricularly, he undersood
how o deal wih people's weaknesses.
And he knew my weakness.
Wha do you have o lose?
You've go nohing o lose.
-You can ell hese...
-Mnumzana, please.
I's an impossible posiion, i's impossible.
I only seems impossible
because you are so young, Anhony.
Bu humour a foolish old man like me
and lisen.
You've go nohing o lose.
You led hese men away.
Now lead hem back o us.
Yeah, yeah, bu, Mnumzana, i's no jus me.
There's a commiee even his, you know...
No, no. Find a way, find a soluion.
And lead hem back o us.
Lead, Anhony, don' jus play.
Lead, Anhony!
Where are you going, Anhony?
Back.
Because hey were good soccer players,
we needed hem.
Here, by he 1970s, I'd obviously
grown older, a lile slower also.
We coninued playing soccer, of course,
bu some, or a lo of us, had moved
into more senior administrative positions.
For insance, I'd become a soccer referee,

and had become part of my club executive.
For us it was an era coming to an end.
There was, of course, still a number of
hardcore lifers, but they were getting older.
For those of us who arrived in the '60s,
we were being released.
I was quite something,
the idea of being free.
I was 19 when I got to the island.
And now I was in my mid-thirties.
Yeah, I think, as I said, ironically, for me,
the saddest day was when I left the island,
because I left so many people.
But when we look back, I think it was
a good experience, a very good experience.
My first thoughts were,
'Where am I going? What's it like?
'I'm used to where I am now
and I'm going to a new world altogether.
'Am I going to die?
'My family, who are they any more?
Do they still know me?
'Go I still know them?
My friends, are they still alive?''
All those things went through my mind
very quickly.
Today you find a lot of people talk
about the suffering on Robben Island.
Yes, there was a lot of suffering,
but I think there's too much focus on that.
And that sort of thing worries me.
The people who really suffered, I believe,
were the families we left behind,
the wives and the children.
It was very, very, very emotional.
The idea of going into the ship and going
back to the mainland and going home.
June '76, the students' uprising, right?
Those are something that were inspiring us.
They were making us more stronger.
And we felt that liberation was just
very near.
Those were students,
they were like soldiers in school uniforms.

They fought bravely, you know,
against the police.
And they were arrested in droves
and were sent to the island.
Young people who were coming in were
very enthusiastic footballers themselves.
Do they needed no encouragement
in terms of
keeping and adhering to the structures
that had been put in place.
We feel quite pleased sometimes
that at least we left something
that could guide people
or make people understand
how we tried to live our lives.
And I think, hopefully,
that should be the sort of thing
that should get people to understand
the way forward, in a sense.
One could say that we passed on the baton,
we passed on the legacy to them,
we passed on the game.
It was more than a game.
The 2010 FIFA World Cup
will be organised in South Africa.