

Lifesaver

by

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EXT. BEACH. DAWN

The early rising sun bathes a stretching South Coast beach in its early rays. Seagulls fly lazily overhead, greeting the day.

An ELDERLY COUPLE straddles hand in hand on their regular early morning beach walk. The OLD MAN jabs with his cane at crabs that scurries from their holes in the sand as they walk along.

OLD WOMAN

Look!

The Old Man looks at where she points to. A couple of yards in front of them, a body has washed up on the beach.

It is a blond TEENAGE GIRL - and she has what looks like a cigarette lighter burn mark on her right shoulder.

INT. COLONEL MBATHA'S OFFICE. DAY

COLONEL MBATHA (50's), black, no-nonsense and in charge, sits behind his desk and writes up a report. His office walls are covered in plaques and certificates. This job was no hand-out.

His desk phone rings.

MBATHA

Mbatha speaking?

Beat as he sits back in his chair.

MBATHA

I hear you. We should kill this before the media gets hold of it. My best man?

EXT. INNER CITY APARTMENT BUILDING. DAY

A police siren rings out loudly as a police motorcycle shoots on its back wheel from across the road and stops with a suave turn in front of a tall abandoned apartment building.

Off it jumps JASON SCHWARTZ (early 30's), dark-haired adrenalin junkie detective and risk-taker of format. Perhaps a bit on the short side, but muscular and strong like a Staffordshire Terrier. He plucks his shades from his intense blue eyes as he stares at the building, already marked off by police tape.

A considerable crowd has gathered to gawk at the goings-on. Other police cars and officers are already on the scene.

JASON

Right. What have we here?

INT. COLONEL MBATHA'S OFFICE. DAY

Mbatha's face has a glimpse of a smile.

MBATHA

Jason Schwartz, 32, B.Sc forensic sciences Cum Laude before entering the police force.

EXT. INNER CITY APARTMENT BUILDING. DAY

SARAH-LEE (early 30's), colored, a bit run-down by the job but still looking after herself as best she can, turns to Jason. She points with a notepad to a body lying in a contorted position on the sidewalk.

SARAH-LEE

Teenage male, I guess around 17, pushed from the top floor. Broke his neck and a few other limbs as well. Suspect is still in the building.

JASON

How do we know?

SARAH-LEE

He started firing at the rest of the people in the building. Someone closed a slamlock to keep him on the top floor.

Jason wipes with his index finger across his nose.

JASON

One slamlock won't hold a guy with a gun.

SARAH-LEE shakes her head.

SARAH-LEE

No, it won't.

JASON

Anybody in yet?

SARAH-LEE

Nope. That's why I called you.

Jason grins as he cocks his gun and runs into the building.

INT. COLONEL MBATHA'S OFFICE. DAY

MBATHA

SA colors for swimming. All the academic trimmings. Once he locks onto the job, he won't let go.

INT. INNER CITY APARTMENT BUILDING. DAY

Jason bursts into the building, his pistol at the ready. The building has been evacuated, but signs of earlier chaos abounds in the foyer - broken pot plants, overturned chairs, shattered windows.

A piece of red tape across the elevator rules out that option and Jason starts to run up the staircase.

INT. COLONEL MBATHA'S OFFICE. DAY

MBATHA

If there is one guy that can sort you out, it is him.

INT. INNER CITY APARTMENT BUILDING. DAY

Jason reaches the top floor. A flimsy slamlock covers the entrance. Jason kicks it once and the lock mechanism immediately gives way.

Jason pushes himself against the wall on his right hand side, careful not to enter the hallway too quickly.

He aims and peeks around the corner of the top floor corridor. First to the right, but there's nothing. Then to his left. Pistol ready. The corridor seems empty, but if the suspect is really still in the building, he has to be here.

Jason decides to go left first, constantly looking over his shoulder.

EXT. INNER CITY APARTMENT BUILDING. DAY

An ambulance stops next to the body on the sidewalk. SARAH-LEE looks up to see who the driver is. Two paramedics jumps from the ambulance, one carrying a jump bag and they move towards the body.

INT. INNER CITY APARTMENT BUILDING. DAY

Jason approaches the window at the end of the corridor.

Then there is a noise behind him as a door flies open and he hears the sound of someone running in the opposite direction.

Jason swings around.

JASON

Hey!

Jason fires two shots at the SUSPECT (17, black) as he darts after him.

The suspect knocks over a table with a vase on it so that it falls across the corridor. Then he reaches the window at the opposite end of the corridor.

Jason jumps over the minor obstacle without losing speed.

The suspect quickly glances back - and then jumps out the window.

EXT. INNER CITY APARTMENT BUILDING COURTYARD. DAY

The suspect flies through the air and then lands with a massive splash in the dirty swimming pool.

Jason appears at the window and sees this.

INT. INNER CITY APARTMENT BUILDING. DAY

Jason holsters his gun and jumps out after the suspect.

EXT. INNER CITY APARTMENT BUILDING COURTYARD. DAY

Jason lands in the swimming pool the moment the suspect climbs out the edge of the pool and starts to run again.

Jason breaches the surfaces, gulps a large breath and then swims with quick, strong strokes towards the edge of the swimming pool.

The suspect reaches the closest wall and with two fast steps parkours over the wall.

For a moment Jason is stunned - but only for a moment, before he follows in the exact same way.

EXT. INNER CITY. DAY

A busy street awaits on the other side of the wall. Cars, minibus taxi's and other vehicles buzz up and down. On the sidewalks, plenty of street vendors sell their merchandise to the inner-city horde.

The suspect jumps over the wall and takes to the right, mixing with the crowd.

Jason follows quick as a cat. He glances left and right before he spots his prey.

The suspect runs on the sidewalk, zigzags between street vendors and knocks over their tables as he goes along.

Jason follows relentlessly, just a short distance behind him.

The suspect suddenly takes a short right and for a moment Jason loses him.

The suspect flattens himself against the wall of a building at the corner of the street and sees Jason running across the road. Then he continues running to his right.

Jason realizes his mistake and quickly about-turns in the direction of the suspect.

A minibus taxi honks dangerously close. It breaks his speed for a second and Jason has to run around the taxi.

The suspect looks over his shoulder and sees that he has a slight advantage. He grabs a delivery motorcyclist just getting on his bike, throws him on the ground and jumps on the bike to take off.

Jason, still in front of the taxi, sees this and fires two shots, but they miss their target. Jason storms around to the driver's side, his police badge visible.

JASON

Move over!

He plucks open the door, jumps in and pushes the bewildered taxi driver over to the front passenger seat. Jason floors the taxi and lies down on the horn, honking as he chases in the direction of the suspect.

The suspect, with still somewhat of an advantage, glances over his shoulder again: still good.

When he looks ahead again, he has to brake fast. He swings to and fro as he realizes he entered a one-way street. For a moment he loses control of the bike, slides and falls. Quickly he picks the bike back up again and changes direction as soon as he can.

Just then, Jason enters from a crossing street.

The taxi driver's eyes widen.

TAXI DRIVER

Hau!

Jason laughs at the taxi driver without losing speed.

They are now almost caught up with the suspect. Cars fly off in all directions as they hear the bike and the taxi approach them.

EXT. INNER CITY APARTMENT BUILDING. DAY

Another right turn and they are in the street approaching the front of the abandoned apartment building.

Sarah-Lee sees them approach and sighs.

SARAH-LEE
Why am I not surprised.

The suspect on the motorbike charges up to them, realizes his mistake and then swings around almost at top speed to chase back in the direction of Jason with the taxi.

Jason sees his move and makes a very sudden handbrake turn, so that the suspect has no other choice but to ram into the driver's door of the taxi with a loud crash.

This is straight onto Jason's right shoulder.

The suspect loses his grip, shoots clear over the top of the taxi and lands with a thud on the other side.

Jason stumbles out and clutches his right shoulder, his face drawn in agony, but he recomposes like a champ.

He jogs around to the other side. The suspect is still alive, but clearly also in a lot of pain.

Jason bends the suspect's arms roughly behind his back and pulls out a set of handcuffs.

JASON
Jason always wins, bastard. You
have the right to remain silent.

Jason plucks the suspect to his feet and parades him back to where Sarah-Lee and the paramedics are gathered. The paramedics take the suspect and help him into the ambulance.

Sarah-Lee's smile does not reach the corners of her mouth.

SARAH-LEE
Well done, cowboy. Another taxi
we need to fix.

Jason pulls up his shoulders. Not his problem.

Sarah-Lee shoots a last glance at the ambulance as the paramedics close the door.

SARAH-LEE (cont'd)
That guy is still a kid.

JASON
And your point is?

Sarah-Lee scoffs, but doesn't answer.

JASON (cont'd)
Africa is a tough country. See
you back at the station. I'll
start with the paperwork.

Jason walks over to his police motorbike and rides off.

Sarah-Lee glances after him before she turns to the rest
of the bystanders.

SARAH-LEE
Alright, show's over everyone.
Let's clear the sidewalk.

INT. POLICE STATION. DAY

It is a large and busy police station in the inner city of
Pretoria. Dirty, hot, sweaty, filled with civilians,
suspects and tired police force staff. Not the type of
place where you would like to spend your days - working or
otherwise. A lonely pot plant testifies to this.

Jason sits at his desk, busy with the paperwork from the
chase. He pops two painkillers and swallows them dry just
as Sarah-Lee enters.

SARAH-LEE
You almost done?

Jason, focused, keeps his eyes on his work.

JASON
Yep.

SARAH-LEE
Mbatha wants to see us.

Jason looks up, disturbed.

INT. COLONEL MBATHA'S OFFICE. DAY

Jason, Sarah-Lee and two other officers stand in front of
Col Mbatha's desk.

MBATHA
I can now reveal that you all
passed the detective sergeant's
exam. Congratulations.

SARAH-LEE
How soon will the promotion be
effective, Colonel?

MBATHA

It depends on how you handle your next assignments. We all know how things work around here.

JASON

Seriously?

MBATHA

Let me be clear: the first one to solve the next case I give him, will be promoted. Got it?

Jason is speechless as he looks at Sarah-Lee.

SARAH-LEE

Yes, Colonel. Crystal clear.

MBATHA

Great. You are dismissed.

They start to walk out the door.

MBATHA (cont'd)

Jason, hang back. Close the door.

Jason, almost out the door already, does as he is told.

Mbatha motions for Jason to sit down.

MBATHA (cont'd)

I've received a disturbing call this morning from my colleagues down at the South Coast about a possible homicide investigation that they need our help with. And by our, I mean yours.

JASON

What is the case, Colonel?

Mbatha passes a folder to him.

MBATHA

A young girl was found on a beach this morning. Drowned.

JASON

The Little Mermaid had too much to drink?

MBATHA

She had a burn mark from a lighter on her right shoulder.

Jason looks up.

JASON

The same as those girls that were found two months ago...sorry, Colonel, but if it might be trafficking, why not give the case to Sarah-Lee?

MBATHA

She's already busy with a similar case. I can't spare her now.

JASON

But you can spare me?

Mbatha leans forward.

MBATHA

You have certain strengths that Sarah-Lee does not - strengths that will be needed where you are going. Besides, I know you'd like to solve a case before her so you can get the promotion.

Jason scoffs at this very true remark as he opens the folder.

JASON

Where am I going?

MBATHA

Iphilo Beach Holiday Resort in the South Coast.

Jason closes the folder immediately.

JASON

Sorry, Colonel. Can't do it.

He pushes the folder back across the table to Mbatha.

MBATHA

This is not a suggestion for your next holiday, Jason. This is an order.

JASON

Which I refuse to take.

Jason gets up and walks out the door.

Mbatha slowly turns the folder around, sits back in his chair and rubs over his chin.

INT. POLICE STATION. DAY

Jason plonks down at his desk next to Sarah-Lee's.
Sarah-Lee slices an apple with a jackknife.

SARAH-LEE
What did he want?

Jason just shakes his head.

JASON
Doesn't matter. Listen, can you
cover for me for a while? My
shoulder is killing me. I want to
get it checked out before
tonight's function.

SARAH-LEE
Sure. Anything else I can do for
you, your honor?

She smiles at him coyly.

Jason just flips her off before he puts on his shades.

INT. PHYSIOTHERAPIST OFFICE. DAY

A male PHYSIOTHERAPIST (early 40's) examines Jason.
Jason's shirt lies next to him, his muscular physique
exposed. Jason winces as the Physio moves his arm and
shoulder carefully into various positions.

PHYSIO
I'm gonna send you for some
x-rays and a sonar, so I can get
a better idea of what we're
dealing with.

The Physio finishes up.

Jason shakes his head as he puts his shirt back on.

JASON
Busted a door or two down with
it. Like usual. But this morning
was something else.

PHYSIO
I'd rather start kicking them
down if I were you, Jase.

Jason sighs with a nod.

The Physio scribbles on a script pad.

PHYSIO (cont'd)

Sorry, bud, I suspect there's more damage than we think.

JASON

Awesome. Thing is, there's a case at the South Coast that might take first place. Hospitals will have to wait.

PHYSIO

I can give you an injection and some pain killers to manage it until you make a decision. And I want you to wear a sling for a couple of days.

JASON

Cool.

INT. COUNTRY CLUB DINING HALL. NIGHT

A stock-standard farewell party - fancy, but mundane. Neatly dressed guests, fine dining cutlery, a large framed picture of a friendly-but-firm-looking elderly white man with a bushy mustache - Sergeant Detective STEVE BRITZ.

The guests mill about as a MASTER OF CEREMONIES tings on the rim of a champagne glass. Everyone find their seats.

Sarah-Lee, cleaning up very nicely, frowns as she looks at the door. Jason sneaks in unseen, now sporting a shoulder sling over his sports jacket. He sees her and finds his seat next to her.

Sarah-Lee clears her throat softly.

SARAH-LEE

Did you struggle to put it on?

Jason picks up on her sarcastic tone.

JASON

I did, actually. More difficult to do...stuff with the wrong hand, you know?

He winks at her as he passes his little innuendo. Sarah-Lee returns a very fake, very brief smile.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Thank you all for joining us tonight as we celebrate the retirement of Detective-Sergeant Brittz. As we all know nothing kills a night of fun like boring speeches, I now call on homicide

(MORE)

MASTER OF CEREMONIES (cont'd)
 detective Jason Schwartz to do
 the honors.

Jason gets up from his chair and walks to the mic stand
 whilst the guests give the obligatory applause.

JASON
 I haven't written my speech down.
 That is because one of the many
 things that I learned from
 Detective-Sergeant Brittz, or
 Uncle Steve as many of us know
 him, is to think on my feet.

General kind chuckles.

JASON (cont'd)
 We all know Uncle Steve is the
 real deal, but what I want to
 highlight is that a mentor like
 him only comes around once in a
 policeman's career.

Revered silence from the audience. Jason turns to face
 Uncle Steve directly.

JASON (cont'd)
 Uncle Steve, you taught me that a
 man connected to his true self
 will never know his limits. Your
 limits of formal work may have
 come in the form of retirement,
 but your limits as a personal
 mentor to me and many others will
 know no ends.

PERSON IN CROWD
 Hear, hear!

Sarah-Lee frowns ever so slightly.

JASON
 Let us raise a glass to Uncle
 Steve. Now you and your wife can
 finally take that trip you
 planned. To Uncle Steve!

The guests stand up and raise their champagne glasses.

ALL
 Uncle Steve! For he's a jolly
 good fellow...

As they chant the ditty, Jason walks over to Uncle Steve
 and gives him a heartfelt hug with his one free arm.

INT. COUNTRY CLUB DINING HALL BAR. NIGHT

Jason and Uncle Steve sit at the bar. A waiter pours them two whiskeys.

The two men clink their whiskey tumblers.

UNCLE STEVE
So, what is next for you?

Jason looks away.

JASON
Mbatha wants me to go help out
with a case in KZN.

Uncle Steve's hand stops in front of his lips.

UNCLE STEVE
Where in KZN?

Jason keeps on averting his eyes.

JASON
Iphilo Beach.

Uncle Steve sips on his whiskey with a knowing nod.

UNCLE STEVE
Of all places.

Jason now meets his mentor's eyes squarely.

JASON
If it was anywhere else...

He looks away again as he takes a swallow.

Uncle Steve inhales deeply.

UNCLE STEVE
There is never a 'right time' to
face our demons, Jason. At some
point we just have to do it.

Jason nods slightly.

JASON
I guess so.

UNCLE STEVE
Ask yourself this: if this case
was the one deal-breaker of your
career, would you really let it
slip because of what happened in
the past? Or would you sink your
teeth into it because of what it
can create for the future?

Jason sighs silently as he ponders this advice.

Then his phone buzzes and a text message pops up:

"We're going clubbing. Wanna join?"

INT. CLUB. NIGHT

The club pumps with dancing bodies. Swinging lights and pulsating, deafening music and liquor set the tone.

Jason, now slingless, rubs over his shoulder next to the bar.

He pops two pain killers and washes them down with a shot. Then he moves over to the dance floor like a prowling lion.

He locks onto the first barely legal blonde bimchette he sees. They start to dance loose close to each other, with the music giving them an animalistic rhythm. Jason moves in behind her and rubs with his hands over her hips, making sure his pelvis moves tightly with hers. She turns around, wraps her hands around his neck and as his hands moves to her buttocks, they kiss hungrily.

After a few seconds Jason takes Blondie by the hand and leads her to the bar. He snaps his fingers at a barman and motions "two". The barman nods.

Again they start to kiss wildly, with Jason pressing Blondie's hips against his own.

The barman puts two vodka shots next to Jason and taps him on the shoulder. Jason looks up and hands Blondie her shot. They gulp it down before they return to the dance floor, smiling.

EXT. PARKING AREA. NIGHT

Jason leads Blondie by the hand to his car, a small speedster. She coos as he opens the door for her before he jumps in over the closed door on the driver's side.

With spinning wheels and a roaring engine, they ride off.

EXT. INNER CITY. NIGHT

Music blasts from the stereo as Jason and Blondie races through the city streets.

They swerve wildly around a corner and find themselves in a bustling part of town where the night life abounds with pedestrians.

Jason looks at Blondie as he sees an oncoming car.

JASON
Check this move!

Jason accelerates and quickly plucks his steering wheel into the lane of the oncoming car. The car hoots shrill, just as Jason plucks his steering wheel back into his own lane, mere seconds before hitting the oncoming car.

Jason laughs and turns to Blondie, but she looks ahead of them - and screams in terror.

Jason returns his sight to the front of the road.

Right in front of them a pedestrian crosses the road.

The traffic light is red for Jason, but he realizes that there is no way that he will be able to stop in time. Again he pulls the same handbrake turn as he did with the minibus taxi. The car swings with its right side towards the pedestrian, but doesn't stop in time and he hits the person with a solid hit.

Blondie's screams fill the night as the music has suddenly died down.

EXT. STREET CROSSING. NIGHT

With his left hand clutching his shoulder, Jason slowly climbs over his dented driver side car door. Passers-by start to gather as Blondie now started to wail like a banshee.

JASON
Shut the hell up, will you!

Jason closes his eyes tightly. The noise and the alcohol mixed with the pain killers now really affect him.

He bends over the motionless body of the teenage boy.

JASON (cont'd)
Shit. Shit, shit, shit...

Jason holds his ear close to the boy's mouth and then tries to feel a pulse in the boy's neck.

With difficulty Jason manages to pull his phone from his pants' pocket.

JASON (cont'd)
Hi, we need an ambulance at the corner of Festival and Burnett streets. Hit and run. The victim is still alive, but might not be for long. Please hurry.

He throws his phone carelessly in the back of his car and clambers over the door.

Blondie looks at him questioningly.

BLONDIE
Why did you say it was a hit and
run?

JASON
Because it is.

With screeching tyres, yet somewhat slower, Jason drives off.

EXT. STUDENT HOUSE. NIGHT

Jason stops in front of the gate. The engine still idles.
Blondie unbuckles her seat belt.

BLONDIE
Are you sure he will be okay?

JASON
That's not your concern. Get out,
now.

Jason stares in front of him. This night is done like an overcooked chicken.

Blondie scoffs, opens the door and slams it behind her.

INT. JASON'S APARTMENT. NIGHT

Jason stumbles into a dark apartment and crashes on his right shoulder on the floor next to the sink. His face wrings in agony. Slowly he reaches for his phone and props himself up to a semi-sitting position.

He barely manages to dial a number.

INT. COLONEL MBATHA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

On a night stand, Mbatha's phone rings him awake.

His hand reaches for his phone as he simultaneously switches on a bed lamp.

He frowns as he sees who is calling him.

INTERCUT DURING PHONE CONVERSATION

MBATHA
Jason?

JASON
Colonel...I fucked up...

MBATHA

What did you do?

Jason, drunk and delirious from pain and adrenaline, struggles to compose himself.

JASON

I hit a kid with my car. It was by accident, I swear, but I drove away-

MBATHA

Fuck, Jason!

JASON

I'm sorry, Colonel! It just happened so quickly and...he was still alive when I left. I called an ambulance-

Mbatha shakes his head in sarcasm.

MBATHA

Oh, great, thank God you were sober enough to do that! What would they have done without you?

JASON

Colonel, I'm sorry. I just...

Jason doesn't get any further. The struggle to remain conscious is real.

Mbatha sighs. This is the guy he backs? Really?

MBATHA

8am. My office. And I want you to be sober. I don't care how you do it. We'll talk then.

Mbatha ends the call and falls back onto his pillows next to his wife.

Jason looks at his phone, manages to set an alarm and then passes out on the kitchen floor.

INT. GYM SWIMMING POOL. DAWN

The gym has just opened. A few people find their way around, but the swimming pool area is empty.

Jason wears a Swimming SA sweater. His eyes are baggy and his face is ashen as he sits down on a bench. Carefully he takes the shoulder sling off, removes the sweater and puts on a pair of swimming goggles. He steps out of his slops and gently slides into the cool water.

For a few seconds he slowly rotates his arm and shoulder, testing out the mobility.

Gingerly he starts to half-walk, half-swim across the breadth of the swimming pool, stroking long, slow strokes as he does.

His short stature seems even smaller and lonelier in the large, empty swimming pool.

INT. COLONEL MBATHA'S OFFICE. DAY

Mbatha sits behind his desk checking his wrist watch, Behind him on the wall another clock also ticks the seconds down.

At exactly 8am, Jason, sporting his sling, knocks on the open door.

Mbatha stoicly gestures for him to take a seat.

Jason closes the door and sheepishly takes a seat.

JASON
Is the kid okay?

MBATHA
You do realize he had to be taken
to a *state* hospital?

Jason looks down and only slightly nods.

MBATHA (cont'd)
His injuries are serious, but he
is stable. All things considered
he should be fine soon enough.

JASON
That's a relief.

MBATHA
We'll see.

Mbatha opens a desk drawer and pulls out the Iphilo Beach folder. He pushes it across the desk to Jason again.

MBATHA (cont'd)
There is a case of reckless
endangerment opened against, and
I quote, 'the same cop who used a
taxi to stop a teenager this
morning'.

Jason's gaze flicks to the folder, avoiding it as if it contains the next global pandemic.

MBATHA (cont'd)

If you take this case, I will
pull some strings and it will all
go away.

JASON

And if I don't?

MBATHA

No promotion. Only law suits,
fines, investigations,
dismissal...

Jason sits back in his chair. Finally, he reaches out and
pulls the thin folder closer. He opens it and now
carefully studies the few contents in it.

After a while he looks up.

JASON

There is very little to go on
here, Colonel. For all we know,
it might be a coincidence.

Mbatha folds his hands.

MBATHA

Except, you don't believe in
coincidences, do you, Jason?

Jason smirks. His boss knows him too well. He shakes his
head slightly in agreement.

MBATHA (cont'd)

I'm sending them my best guy,
Jason. I hope you know that.

Jason looks up, surprised by this sudden words of support.
Then he stands up and takes the file.

JASON

You can count on me, Colonel.

MBATHA

I really want to.

Jason takes a deep breath and heads for the door.

Behind him, Mbatha's face is sullen.

INT. POLICE STATION. DAY

Sarah-Lee sits on top of Jason's desk. She slices an apple
and holds a piece out to him.

SARAH-LEE
Breakfast?

For a second Jason hesitates, but then accepts the slice.

SARAH-LEE (cont'd)
Where did you disappear to last night? We had massive fun later on. Karaoke and everything. You should have heard the Colonel do "Hey Jude". Priceless, I tell you.

Jason strainfully removes his shoulder sling as he sits down in his chair.

JASON
Shoulder started to kill me and the pain meds didn't mix well with alcohol.

Sarah-Lee studies his face as he looks away. She finishes her apple.

SARAH-LEE
What did Mbatha want with you so early?

JASON
He's making me take the Iphilo Beach case.

SARAH-LEE
"Making" you?

JASON
Long story.

Sarah-Lee jumps down from the desk and leans in closer to him.

SARAH-LEE
Probably the one about the cop who rammed into a teenager, right?

Jason frowns at her, surprised. She knows.

JASON
If you know everything, why do you even ask?

SARAH-LEE
Because you always underestimate me.

JASON
No, I don't.

Sarah-Lee sits down at her own desk next to his.

SARAH-LEE
Yes, you do.

She turns her attention towards her laptop and starts to work.

Jason looks at the thin file again. Then he gets an idea.

JASON
Why don't you come with me?

SARAH-LEE
What?

JASON
It will be perfect. You can tackle the case while I lie on the beach all day, proving that I don't underestimate you.

SARAH-LEE
You're joking, right?

JASON
Okay, I will help a little.

Sarah-Lee turns to Jason.

SARAH-LEE
The sun doesn't set when you sit down, so, no. Besides, I am swamped myself as it is. Fuckin' human traffickers just doesn't stop.

She turns back towards her laptop and her work.

Jason stands up fast, pushes his rolling chair back and grabs the file.

JASON
Fine. Thanks for your help, *friend*. Good luck with your case.

He walks out, leaving his shoulder sling behind.

Sarah-Lee gives the slightest of eye-rolls and continues with her work.

INT. JASON'S APARTMENT. DAY

Jason grabs a large canvas-style duffel bag, props it on his still unmade bed and starts to throw items in there: T-shirts, a jacket, deodorant, toothpaste.

Clearly not the best way to pack.

For a moment, Jason stares at the heap of clothes and items on the unmade bed before he sits down among it.

As he looks at the wall closest to the door, a massive collage is revealed: a huge mural mash-up of photos, certificates, medals. It tells the story of Jason's life.

His dad is noticeably absent from the "older Jason"-photos.

In the center is a photo of Jason, his mom and his grandmother.

Next to it is a photo of a young Jason atop a 1st place rostrum at a swimming meet, with his dad next to him holding up a poster that says "Jason always wins."

Jason pauses and takes a deep breath as he mouths the words.

He looks at the mess that is his room. Not like this he won't.

Jason turns to the heap of crap on his bed. Carefully, he refolds every item and now neatly places them in the canvas duffel bag.

EXT. JASON'S APARTMENT DRIVEWAY. DAY

Jason throws the duffel bag in the back of his speedster and places a laptop bag more carefully on the floor of the passenger side.

He walks around to the driver side and sighs when he looks at the dented driver side door.

Then he jumps over it into the seat and starts the car.

EXT. ENGEN REST STOP. DAY

Jason drives into a medium-sized rest stop. The parking spaces are already crammed with would-be holiday makers. Moms with small kids that needs to be taken to the loo, dads that stretch out and smoke - everyone is clearly in positive spirits.

Jason turns into a parking space just as TWO TEENAGERS cooing at each other walks around from a minibus and into the space in front of his car. They do not see him.

Startled, Jason honks his horn. The TEENAGERS look up. Jason lifts his hands up in a "come on!"-gesture. The BOY TEENAGER returns a "sorry"-gesture as they pass Jason.

Jason looks into his own rear view mirror and ends their interaction by flipping the boy off.

INT. ENGEN REST STOP SHOP. DAY

Jason finishes picking out his snacks and walks over to the row at the paying counter. In front of him is the same BOY and GIRL that walked in front of his car. We will get to know them as FRANCO (18), the Vaal Triangle's strongest and friendliest no. 8 rugby player, and JACKIE (17), his next-door-pretty ashen-blond girlfriend.

Jason grunts impatiently as Franco and Jackie straddle past the candy rack leading up to the cashiers, changing their minds constantly.

After a while Jason had enough.

JASON
Just pick something and pay,
would you?

Franco and Jackie look at him. Franco smiles.

FRANCO
Chill, bro. We just have to
decide between Mars Bars and
Bar-Ones. We'll be done now.

They turn back to the rack. Jason clenches on his teeth.

JASON
It is the exact same fucking
chocolate.

Franco, quite a bit taller than Jason, turns back to him.

FRANCO
We'll be done just now. One
minute.

Jason snaps.

JASON
I don't have a minute!

He brusquely passes them and moves into the queue in front of them, plonking his few snack items onto the counter.

The cashier says nothing and scans his items as fast as she can.

Impatiently Jason pays for his stuff, grabs the plastic bag and makes off, but he bumps into the turn-style.

FRANCO

You have to swipe your hand over
the exit panel on the left.

Jason grins maliciously at him, swipes his hand over the panel and as the turn-style releases, exits the shop.

Jackie just shakes her head. Franco kisses the top of her head as he turns to the cashier to pay.

EXT. ENGEN REST STOP. DAY

Jason throws his items on his seat and jumps into his car. He starts the engine and revs it loudly.

For a second he looks like he is going to spin away like always, but then he leans forward and presses his head on the steering wheel.

He has got to do things differently if he wants to make this case work.

Jason takes a deep breath and reverses out of his parking bay.

From behind him, Franco and Jackie walk up. They stop and give him right of way.

As Jason changes gears to drive forward, he sees them in his rear view mirror. He gives a slight nod to acknowledge their stopping, and then he drives off at normal speed.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT VISITOR'S PARKING. DUSK

Jason passes through a security gate and parks his car in the visitor's parking lot. He gets out of the car and takes off his sunglasses to get a proper look around.

Immediately he is struck by the tall palms, banana trees and other lush green overgrowth that is staple to the South African south coast. Beautiful pink and yellow flowers with strong scents dot the bushes while a troupe of monkeys scatters from one tree to another.

Jason inhales deeply. In a certain sense, he has come home.

INT. MULHERENGO'S OFFICE. DUSK

In a cluttered but neat office, a tall man, more handsome than he should be in a charismatic sort-of way, with a flat patch of dark hair and a handlebar moustache sits hunched over a desk, desperately vaping. This is RICARDO MULHERENGO (mid-40's), the Resort Manager. A heavy cheep-looking golden chain dangles from his neck onto the desk like a weight pulling him down, but he needs it to distinguish where his billowing chest hair begins and his beard, which he keeps clean shaven, begins.

With his eyes fixed on his tablet in front of him, Mulherengo swipes one picture after another. Is he on Tinder, or some other app? Is he just scrolling through his social media feed? With his right hand clutching onto his Vape for dear life, his left hand alternates between swiping pictures or winding the golden chain around his index finger, accompanied by sounds of panting breath. What is this guy doing?

Jason knocks on the open door with the "Manager" plaque on it. Mulherengo does not look up.

MULHERENGO

What?

JASON

Excuse me?

MULHERENGO

What?!

Jason looks taken aback. Okay, then.

JASON

Are you Ricardo Mulher...

Now he looks up. A sarcastic smile curls his thin lips as he gets up from his chair. He is much taller and scrawnier than he looked sitting down.

MULHERENGO

Mulherengo, Ricardo Mulherengo.
And before you ask, yes, it is Portuguese.

Jason was not going to ask, but he does squint at Mulherengo - does he know him from somewhere?

Mulherengo sucks on his vape again. A moment of stand-off between the two men. Then Jason reanimates.

JASON

Detective Jason Schwartz. I trust you knew I was coming today?

The expression on Mulherengo's face changes immediately.

MULHERENGO

Detective! I am so glad you are here. Please, come in. Close the door.

He comes out from behind his desk and extends a hairy hand to Jason, who shakes it a bit reluctantly.

Mulherengo vapes again.

MULHERENGO

I can't tell you how stressed I've been the past couple of days. Things like these...they're really bad for business.

JASON

I can imagine. Do you have any more information for me on what happened?

MULHERENGO

Well, James-

JASON

Jason.

MULHERENGO

Jason. My bad. As far as we could gather, the girl was a resident from one of the hamlets surrounding Iphilo Beach. I don't think it was an accident that she washed up where she did.

Jason frowns.

JASON

What makes you say that?

Mulherengo pulls up his shoulders.

MULHERENGO

I suspect someone might have it in for me- I mean, the resort. I've been manager for just over a year now. Been around the parks and rec system before, and I really like this place. But I think my management style does not sit well with everyone.

Jason stares at him.

JASON

So, they're trying to make the resort look bad so you can be fired?

MULHERENGO

It could very well be so, yes.

JASON

Don't you think murdering someone to accomplish all of this is a bit excessive?

Mulherengo's left index finger twists the golden chain into a noose.

MULHERENGO

Sure, but I mean, we can't leave any suspicions out of the question, right?

If Mulherengo twists the golden noose any further, he's going to suffocate.

Beat from Jason.

JASON

Right. Any suspects?

MULHERENGO

There's a new lifeguard here, Mike Ruben. Likes to be called Mikey Mike. Came a bit out of nowhere, just before the first girl washed up on shore.

JASON

The first?

MULHERENGO

I mean, *this* girl, before her. He is quite the charmer, but I don't trust him as far as I can see him. But I had a thought.

JASON

Which is?

MULHERENGO

He mustn't know he is being investigated, so you can be undercover as a fellow lifeguard. I heard you are quite a swimmer? Yes, that should do it.

JASON

Seems like you already have all your ducks in a row, yeah?

Mulherengo turns to a massive open cupboard that contains all the duplicate keys for every door of the resort. A quick search and he finds the one he is looking for.

MULHERENGO

Your chalet is reserved and ready. My suggestion is that we give it one week, otherwise he might get suspicious himself.

JASON

Can I maybe do this investigation
my way? My superiors never
interfere with my modus operandi.

Mulherengo stops and grabs an almost desperate puff on his
vape. Relieved, he blows the smoke into the air.

MULHERENGO

Don't think of me as a superior,
detective. Think of me as a
secret source of support. An
invisible ally.

Jason folds his arms across his chest, unsure of what to
make of this.

MULHERENGO

Now, let me take you to your
chalet.

Mulherengo opens the door, gesturing for Jason to exit.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT CARAVAN PARK ROAD. NIGHT

Mulherengo drives Jason and his bags in a golf cart
through the caravan park section of the resort up to the
chalet section.

MULHERENGO

It is best we leave your car in
the parking lot. No lifeguard
will drive something like that.

JASON

I know how to work under cover.

Mulherengo grins.

MULHERENGO

I bet you do. And I bet you enjoy
the perks that comes with it,
huh? All the ladies you get to
huh-huh-huh without them knowing
who you are, hey?

Mulherengo jabs Jason's right shoulder just a bit too hard
with his elbow.

Jason instinctively grabs onto his shoulder as he fakes a
grin. Not really his type of joke right now.

Mulherengo doesn't notice.

MULHERENGO (cont'd)

Slam! Get them in the-

Jason grabs Mulherengo by the arm.

JASON
LOOK OUT!

A SMALL BOY on a scooter slides and falls in front of the golf cart. In the low light they did not see him.

Mulherengo brakes hard, making himself and Jason lunge forward.

MULHERENGO
Come on, get out of the way!

The boy picks up his scooter and scurries out the way.

With wide eyes Jason follows him until he is safely back in his family's caravan tent.

Mulherengo resumes the drive.

MULHERENGO (cont'd)
These kids...we had so much trouble with them this season. Messing about at the restaurant, teenagers drinking and creating a ruckus until what time...You know, maybe I *should* get a constable for the resort to keep them in place.

Jason just looks at him. It's been a while since he's been compared to a mere constable.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET. NIGHT

Mulherengo stops at chalet number 26, far up the hill.

In the daylight the view is quite something, but right now none of that matters to Jason. He just stares at the number painted on the wall of the small house.

Mulherengo's voice brings him back to life.

MULHERENGO
Come by the office first thing tomorrow, so we can get this lifeguard-thing going.

Jason turns in his seat.

JASON
Why this Mike-guy? If he has it in for you, what would be his motive?

MULHERENGO
That is what I want you to find out. Just a feeling I have. Good night!

Jason barely gets a chance to grab his bags before Mulherengo speeds away in the dark as fast as the golf cart allows him to.

Jason stares after the golf cart. He frowns. Why does this guy look so familiar?

Jason shakes his head and turns around to the chalet's door.

CUT TO FLASHBACK

EXT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET. DAY - 25 YEARS AGO

A MOM, a DAD and a young dark haired boy (JASON), enter the same chalet with all of their holiday things - beach umbrella, towels, picnic basket, the works.

JASON'S MOM

Shoo, what a day! Such a nice beach to be on. I'm glad we decided to book here, aren't you, hon?

CUT TO PRESENT

EXT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET. NIGHT - CONTINUED

Jason inhales deeply and then unlocks the door.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH. DAY

It is the same beautiful stretchy curved beach we saw at the beginning. The rays of early sunlight turn the water into a sparkling highway to the vast horizon.

On both ends of the beach protruding rock formations book-end the curved bay. Eager early-morning fishermen cast their bait off the southern end.

Mulherengo exits a bushy pathway that leads onto the beach. Jason, now donning very noticeable red swimming trunks and a bright white shirt displaying the National Sea Rescue Institute's logo, follows.

MULHERENGO

Beautiful, isn't it?

Jason scoffs softly. Even though he doesn't want to be here, he cannot disagree.

Mulherengo leads Jason to where the lifeguards have already set-up their post for the day.

A hulky curly-haired guy, MIKEY (20-s), sits on a slightly raised chair. He plucks away a merry tune on a ukulele.

MULHERENGO (cont'd)
Mikey! Mikey Mike!

Mikey looks up with a friendly boyish smile.

MIKEY
Hey, Bossman!

He continues to pick at the strings of the ukulele.
Mulherengo motions for him to come over.

MULHERENGO
I want you to meet Jason. He's
going to join you this week. He's
considering joining our team here
at Iphilo.

Mikey's smile and fist bump is as sincere as they come.

MIKEY
Hey, dude! Welcome to the best
beach in the country.

Jason smiles back - for a change, someone who immediately
makes him feel at ease.

JASON
Howzit. Yeah, it is beautiful.

Mulherengo lights up his vape.

MULHERENGO
I'll leave you to get on with it.
I'll be in the office at half
past five, Mike.

MIKEY
All good, Bossman!

Mulherengo walks off vaping, back to the bushy pathway.

Jason stares after him.

JASON
Why do you have to meet him at
the office later?

Mikey points to the inflatable rescue boat, still perched
on a trailer hooked up to an ATV close by.

MIKEY
He keeps the keys in his office
and his office times varies.

JASON
Why don't one of the lifeguards
keep it?

MIKEY

Nooo, Mulherengo is very finicky about things like keys. Don't bother to fight that fight. Anyway, let me introduce you to this baby!

Mikey leaves his ukulele on a towel at his post and walks to the inflatable rescue boat (IRB). Jason follows quickly to the bright red and yellow boat.

JASON

Good to know you guys have an inflatable boat here.

MIKEY

We just call it a rubberduck. And this one's name is Umsindisi. It's an isiZulu word that means 'savior'.

JASON

Nice! So how do you operate her?

MIKEY

Help me get her into the water and I'll show you!

Mikey unchains the security chain. They grab the handles on top of the rubberduck and slide it off the trailer, swing it around and drag it quickly to the water's edge.

When they are knee deep, Mikey jumps in and starts the engine. Jason body-rolls in and takes a seat at the front, grabbing onto the rope handle. He smiles back at Mikey.

JASON

Let's go!

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH - OCEAN. DAY - LATER

Jason and Mikey patrol the waves, jumping one after the other. Jason, who sits in the front of the rubberduck, smiles excitedly as his eyes spot the water for any casualties.

When there is none, Mikey turns the rudder back towards the beach.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH. DAY - SAME

Jason and Mikey jump out of the rubberduck in the shallows and pull the lightweight boat up onto the sand, a good 30m from the water's edge.

It is low tide and now the beach is packed. Umbrellas and gazebos color the sand while flocks of people of all shapes and sizes take on the slightly cool water, breaking the waves and having a blast.

Off to the southern end, children run and scream excitedly in the small lagoon where the river mouths into the ocean.

JASON

Are they okay over there?

MIKEY

Yeah, they're fine. They can't get into any real trouble during low tide. But we do throw an eye that side once in a while.

They walk back to the lifeguard post past a pack of teenagers under a lazily put-up gazebo. One of the boys opens a beer from an ice cooler and hands it to a dark-haired, scantily clad girl who sits down between his legs.

TEENAGE BOY

Here, Melissa!

Melissa smiles and swallows from the bottle.

JASON

Don't they cause trouble?

Mikey shakes his head as he sits down on a towel, his chair now occupied by another lifeguard.

MIKEY

They're just teenagers. They mostly party at the pool area, where they should, but that's far from the other campers. Without them there will be no vibe here, anyway.

Jason wipes his face dry. Hmmm.

JASON

How long have you been working here?

MIKEY

About a year and a half. I love this place, always have. When it

(MORE)

MIKEY (cont'd)
is not peak season I work in a
bait shop in Port Edward, but
this is much more fun than
selling fishing tackle and chum.

JASON
I bet.

MIKEY
How 'bout you? What have you done
before becoming a lifeguard?

Jason clears his throat, ready to lie his ass off.

JASON
I-

He doesn't get any further than that, as Mikey jumps up
and grabs a set of binoculars. He peers out towards the
southern bend of the rocks stretching out into the sea.

MIKEY
Look there. He's not gonna get
out of the current.

He passes the binoculars quickly to Jason. Through them,
Jason also now sees a YOUNG BOY, who still swims but
struggles more and more to get away from the rocks.

MIKEY (cont'd)
Let's go, Jase!

Jason loops the binoculars over a hook and darts after
Mikey. They grab the rubberduck, swing it around and pull
it towards the water's edge.

Mikey blows hard on a whistle, indicating to the throng in
front of them to clear some space.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH - OCEAN. DAY

Jason jumps into the front as Mikey starts the engine and
throttles it into a quick speed. They hit one wave, and
then another, skipping over them as Jason pulls the nose
of the rubberduck upwards.

As soon as they clear the break of the waves, Mikey turns
to where the YOUNG BOY is now clearly in deep trouble. As
they approach, Jason can almost feel the current pull the
rubberduck closer to the rocks.

Jason sees the distress on Mikey's face as he stares at
the rocks and back to the rubberduck, trying to figure out
how to get closer.

JASON

I can get to him. Just keep her steady.

He doesn't wait for an answer before he dives overboard.

Jason covers the short distance with strong strokes to where the boy now fails. Almost too easily he manages to get behind him.

JASON (cont'd)

Just relax, I got you.

He places his left arm from around the boy's back and holds him upright, while he keeps his right arm free to swim back to the rubberduck.

Then a sudden pull of the current combined with a sudden massive swell sweeps both of them toward the sharp black rocks.

Jason pulls the boy close to his chest and braces for the inevitable impact.

The wave slams them against a smooth, flat square of rock. Jason takes the impact directly on his right shoulder. His eyes shut tightly as it takes all he has not to scream out in pain and let the boy go.

From the rubberduck, Mikey throws a buoy attached to a rope to them.

MIKEY

Jason! Grab it!

Jason manages to turn his head and spot the location of the buoy. He quickly turns his body and kicks with all his might against the flat surface of the rock, launching himself and the boy towards the buoy.

With his free hand he grabs onto the buoy. Immediately Mikey throttles the rubberduck to ride off a little deeper, away from the break and the swell to relative safety. He pulls Jason and the boy along as he does.

When the water is a little calmer, Mikey turns the rubberduck towards Jason and the boy. He takes the boy from Jason and pulls him into the rubberduck first, before he reaches back and stretches a hand out to a coughing Jason.

His voice is much sterner than Jason thought it would be.

MIKEY (cont'd)

Next time, please take the buoy when you jump out. We could've lost you both.

Jason just nods as he coughs out the last bit of seawater.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH. DAY

Jason and Mikey beach with the rubberduck. The boy's PARENTS both wait on them with another lifeguard. The boy clambers out of the rubberduck and falls into their arms as they take him away.

BOY'S DAD

Thank you. Thank you very much.

Mikey smiles at the BOY'S DAD and waves in acknowledgment.

MIKEY

All good, sir! Best for him to get some rest now, yeah?

The PARENTS smile and nod as they walk away.

Mikey now turns to Jason.

MIKEY (cont'd)

How's that shoulder of yours?

Jason scoffs and wrings his shoulder slowly in a circular motion.

JASON

Fuck, bro, it's-

Before he can finish speaking, a kicked rugby ball hits him solid on the exact same shoulder. Now Jason can't hold back anymore.

JASON (cont'd)

Oww! Fuck! Fuck! Shit!

He drops to his knees as he grabs onto his shoulder which now really hurts.

Mikey grabs the rugby ball as it rolls towards the surf.

MIKEY

Who's is this?

Jason looks up the beach. Surprise - none other than FRANCO jogs closer to them to fetch the ball.

FRANCO

I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to...shit, man, are you okay?

He hunches down next to Jason who doesn't even look at him.

JASON

Just leave me alone, okay
asshole?

Franco stays hunched down. His voice is softer now.

FRANCO

I'm really, really sorry. My dad
is a doctor, he can check your
shoulder out for you.

Jason doesn't answer, but he lets Franco help him up.

Mikey passes the rugby ball back to Franco.

MIKEY

You guys might wanna shift over
to that smoothed-out patch of
beach further up.

FRANCO

Sure, no probs. Sorry again, man.
We stand at A27, you can really
come by later so my dad can check
you out.

Jason glares at him, but the sincerity in Franco's face
can't be denied.

JASON

Thanks for the offer.

Franco throws them a thumbs-up and jogs back towards his
pack of buddies who remained a couple of meters behind. He
motions for them to move their game upwards along the
beach.

Mikey turns to Jason and frowns inquisitively.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT - RUBBERDUCK LOCK-UP. DUSK

Mikey and Jason drive the ATV with the rubberduck in tow
to a large garage situated underneath the main office
building.

Jason jumps off and opens the garage's roll door as Mikey
reverses the IRB's trailer into it's home.

Mikey switches off the ATV and closes the door.

MIKEY

Lala kahle, Umsindisi.

Jason laughs.

JASON
What does that mean?

Mikey smiles back.

MIKEY
"Sleep tight." She helped us a
lot today.

He locks the discus padlock and puts the key in his
pocket.

INT. MULHERENGO'S OFFICE. DUSK

The office is open, but Mulherengo is not there. Mikey
knocks and enters, but Jason remains behind.

Mikey looks around and then goes to the cabinet.

MULHERENGO
Thank you, Mike.

Jason swings around, startled by Mulherengo who speaks
behind him. He locks eyes with Mulherengo.

MULHERENGO (cont'd)
How was the first day?

JASON
As good as can be expected.

Mikey hangs up the padlock key with the other locks and
keys.

Behind Mikey's back, Mulherengo makes big eyes in Mikey's
direction. Jason shakes his head quickly.

Mikey, oblivious to their exchange, turns back around.

MIKEY
Key is in its place, bossman.
Let's go get a drink, Jase.

Jason keeps his eyes on Mulherengo's as he walks off.

JASON
Sounds good.

When they finally break eye contact, Mulherengo's chain is
twisted around his finger so tightly it looks like it is
about to fall off.

INT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET. NIGHT

Jason plunges down onto a wicker chair. His shoulder now throbs immensely. He reaches for a bottle of pain killers and swallows three of them down without any water.

For a moment he sits there with his eyes closed and just breathes slowly.

Then he gets up and closes all the drapes.

INT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET BEDROOM. NIGHT

Jason takes out the folder with the little information and starts to put it up on the one wall. He starts to create an infographic.

Outside there is a loud crack of thunder, followed by the sound of soft rain.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT VARIOUS. NIGHT

Rain pours down in buckets as thunder cracks and lightning flashes constantly.

Wind blows palm trees almost completely sideways.

This is a squall of the worst kind.

Just outside the entrance gate, lightning strikes a thick, large tree.

It falls squarely across the road and blocks the way between the entrance and the bridge over the river leading up to it.

No one can get in or out now.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT RECEPTION OFFICE. DAY

The storm has passed, but the resort looks worse for wear, with leaves and branches strewn about everywhere.

A sizable crowd has gathered in front of the reception office, clearly unhappy with the circumstances.

Jason comes down the footpath leading to his chalet and finds the commotion. He sees where Mikey stands off to one side and joins him. They fist bump.

JASON

Place is in bad shape, huh?
What's Mulherengo gonna do?

MIKEY

We're about to find out.

Mulherengo stands on the verandah of the resort's entertainment hall for a little height, making his tall shape even taller. His vape is already lit.

MULHERENGO

We have to remain calm, folks. Our terrain cleaners will tend to all they can during the day as soon as we have the sewerage fixed. It is a matter of priorities now.

CAMPER 1

And the bridge? How long before we will be able to cross it again?

MULHERENGO

Like I said, it is a matter of priorities. It will take quite some time to cut the tree away. I'd rather we sort out the water and sanitation first, and then the electricity. I need you to be patient with the road. We have everything you need at the shop.

Reaction on Jason, who frowns at Mikey. Mikey nods.

MIKEY

The tree is not the worst news this morning.

JASON

What is?

Before he answers, a WOMAN (40's) shouts out.

MELISSA'S MOM

I don't want anything from the shop! I want to be able to leave to get help to find Melissa!

MELISSA'S DAD

Our daughter is missing this morning and you don't have anything to say about that? Where are your priorities now?

This stirs the crowd into a frenzy. Everyone seems to shout at the same time.

JASON

A girl is missing?

MIKEY

Teenage girl. You remember that one from the gazebo at the beach? Her parents figured she was at a friend's tent when the storm hit. This morning she was nowhere to be found.

Mulherengo raises his hands and breathes in deeply as he waits for them to stop screaming.

MULHERENGO

I have already notified the authorities. A task force will come by helicopter later today to help search for your daughter. The rest of you can come and write up your complaints here on this form, and the terrain teams will attend to it when they can. That will be all for now.

Mulherengo vapes long and hard as he turns away from the crowd and deliberately walks to his office, leaving the livid mob behind.

Jason sees Melissa's folks and rushes over to them.

JASON

Do you have a photo or a description of your daughter?

Melissa's Mom shows Jason a photo on her phone. It is definitely the same girl from the beach. Jason nods.

JASON (cont'd)

We will keep an eye out wherever we go today. I'm sure we will find her.

He leaves the parents and walks over briskly to Mulherengo's office.

INT. MULHERENGO'S OFFICE. DAY

Jason walks in and closes the door behind him without ceremony. Mulherengo is on his laptop, but Jason simply slams the screen down.

JASON

This task force, where are they coming from? When did you notify them?

Mulherengo pushes Jason's hand slowly from his laptop and opens it again.

MULHERENGO

You have to understand that is none of your concern. I don't want everyone to know everything. Seeing police will rattle people up.

JASON

They are already rattled up! We have a seriously distraught family looking for their daughter, who wants the police here. You *cannot* be caring about appearances right now!

Mulherengo rise up slowly from his chair. His height really towers over Jason.

He puts a hand on Jason's shoulder.

MULHERENGO

Please remember who runs the show here. I invited you to come and I gave you an assignment, so stick to it. If you can't do that, I'll have to find somebody else who can. Now, please excuse me. I have a resort to fix.

Stare-off between the two of them.

Mulherengo's smile looks like a shark's.

Jason turns around and exits the office.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT RECEPTION OFFICE. DAY

The crowd has calmed down, but a good many people still write down complaints.

Jason pulls his phone from his pocket and dials a number. The first attempt just rings. The he tries another.

JASON

Hey. Howzit going?

INT. POLICE STATION. DAY

Sarah-Lee sits on top of her desk.

SARAH-LEE

It's going. How about you?

INTERCUT BETWEEN THE TWO SCENES DURING PHONE CALL

JASON

Listen, where is Mbatha? He's not answering his phone.

SARAH-LEE

Poor guy was shot in the leg yesterday. He is in hospital for a day or two.

JASON

Fuck.

SARAH-LEE

What's up?

JASON

Things are a little more difficult around here than I thought they would be. And the resort manager is...weird. Put a hand on my shoulder just now.

SARAH-LEE

Ooh, big no-no. Who else is there that can help except the weirdo?

Jason looks up. Franco and Jackie are some of the last people to write up complaints on the list. He pulls a slight face.

JASON

My choices are limited. Either the main suspect, or some teenagers.

SARAH-LEE

Teenagers! Are you sure you can connect with them?

JASON

Oh fuck off, will you. Of course I can.

SARAH-LEE

I would give a taxi driver a blowjob to see that. Look, Jase, they might actually be your best bet. Teenagers on holiday often have a tendency to turn into these little heroes. Part of the holiday adventure and all that. You should use it.

Sarah-Lee has a point and Jason knows this.

JASON
Mmmm. Good chat.

Jason shoves his phone back in his pocket and looks to where Franco and Jackie finish up. They see him and when they make eye contact, he motions for them to come over to him. Franco holds out a fist for a bump.

FRANCO
Hey man.

Jason leaves him hanging and keeps his own hands in his rain jacket's pockets.

JASON
Morning. Listen, do you guys know the girl who disappeared last night? Melissa?

Jackie nods.

JACKIE
Yes. She is one of our resort friends. We all see each other here every year. We know her well, she wouldn't just run away.

FRANCO
Any idea how we can help?

Jason shakes his head.

JASON
Not yet. But swing by the lifeguard station later. Maybe we can exchange information or something.

FRANCO
Will do.

Jason nods and turns around, but then Franco calls him back.

FRANCO (cont'd)
Sorry, man, what is your name?

Jason turns back.

JASON
Jason.

Franco walks closer again. He holds out a proper palm for a handshake. After a beat Jason relents and shakes his hand properly.

FRANCO

Good to meet you, Jason. I'm Franco, and this is Jackie. How's your shoulder?

Jason nods in acknowledgment to Jackie, who gives a small wave.

JASON

It's...better. Thanks for asking. See you guys later.

Jason walks off and takes two pain pills from his other rain jacket pocket. He swallows them without water again. The shoulder is definitely not better.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT - RUBBERDUCK LOCK-UP. DAY

Jason reaches the garage door and sees the lock is gone already. Only the latch is closed.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH. DAY

Jason finds Mikey at the lifeguard station, but there is no sign of the rubberduck or the ATV.

MIKEY

Hey! I thought you were getting the rubberduck?

Jason shakes his head.

JASON

No, I thought you took her out already? I was at the garage but there was no lock on it.

Mikey frowns.

MIKEY

That's strange. Weren't you getting the keys when you went after Mulherengo?

JASON

Nope.

MIKEY

We'd better go fetch it then.

Mikey jumps off from his chair and jogs with Jason over the sand to the footpath leading through the bushes.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT - RUBBERDUCK LOCK-UP. DAY

Mikey and Jason reach the garage from the beach's side.
The circular lock shines in all its glory in its place.

JASON

No fucking way. I was here just
now and there was no lock on it.

MIKEY

You sure, man?

Jason just inhales sharply, pursing his lips.

Mikey relents.

MIKEY (cont'd)

Cool, I believe you. I'll go grab
the keys from the office.

Mikey jogs off, leaving a teeth-clenching Jason behind.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH. DAY - LATE AFTERNOON

It is a cold day on the beach and only here and there a
daring soul or two brave the windy sand.

Off towards the lagoon's side, a large, flat piece of
beach has washed out. Franco and three of his mates,
PERCY, QUINTIN and RUDY, play touch rugby on this surface,
dodging each other and passing the ball on the hard sand.

At the lifeguard's post, Jason peers out to sea with the
binoculars.

Mikey sits atop his chair and plucks away on his ukulele.

JASON

Still no helicopter.

MIKEY

I wonder why they didn't show.
Maybe they didn't have fuel?

Jason smirks.

JASON

Anything is possible in this
country.

Mikey smirks back and puts down his ukulele.

MIKEY

Let's pack up. Nothing's gonna
happen here today.

JASON

Cool.

Jason looks off to the side where Franco and his mates are playing.

JASON (cont'd)

I'll be back just now.

He jogs over to the boys, who doesn't notice him right away. Jason realizes this and suddenly speeds up. Percy passes a long pass to Franco, who waits on the outside of Rudy to sidestep him. Before the ball can reach Franco, Jason intercepts it, ducks past Rudy and scores a try behind the try line drawn in the sand.

The boys clearly did not expect this, but they cheer nonetheless.

Jason turns around and pops the ball back to Quintin. Franco looks impressed.

FRANCO

Quite the jackrabbit, aren't we?

Jason grins.

JASON

One of my many skills. If you're a short shit like me, it's easy to pick them up.

Reaction from the boys.

JASON (cont'd)

Are you guys up for some action?

EXT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET. NIGHT

Jason sits on the balcony wall of his chalet. His legs hangs down the side as he peers into the night. It is a quiet, clear evening, with the stars shining brightly.

Jason inhales deeply, looks at his watch and gets ready to swing back over the balcony wall when he hears soft talking. Franco, Rudy, Quintin and Percy walk up to him, with flashlights and an array of hockey sticks and cricket bats in hand.

JASON

Cool. You showed.

FRANCO

Didn't you think we would?

No answer is also an answer.

JASON

We'll do one hour shifts at a time, two by two. The other two can chill or sleep here on the balcony. There is some coffee and biscuits and shit.

RUDY

Who's going with you?

Jason looks at him blankly.

JASON

I'll take a shift by myself. Okay, who's going first?

Quick discussion among the boys.

FRANCO

Me and Quin.

JASON

Cool. Be back in an hour.

Franco and Quintin walk off. Rudy and Percy come up the stairs of Jason's chalet. Jason swings around and stands in front of the door to block it.

JASON (cont'd)

I'll be inside.

Jason closes the door firmly as he enters.

RUDY

Okay...

The boys take a seat on the plastic chairs to make themselves sort-of comfortable.

INT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET BEDROOM. NIGHT

Jason stands in front of the infograph, which has since been updated and elaborated to include Melissa's and her folks's info. He walks up and down the small bedroom, lost in thought. He returns to the wall time and again to make a note, check something on it, or scratch out something else.

Outside he hears the boys' voices as the shift exchange happens.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET. NIGHT - CONTINUED

Jason opens the door and peeks out.

JASON

Anything?

Franco shakes his head as he yawns.

FRANCO

Nope. All good in the hood.

Jason just nods to this and closes the door again.

INT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET. NIGHT

Jason walks over to the counter and swallows three painkillers. From one of the cupboards he takes a jar of muscle cooling gel. He shifts up his sleeve and rubs a large quantity on his stiff shoulder.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET. NIGHT - CONTINUED

Jason exits his chalet. All four of the boys are asleep on the plastic chairs now.

Jason locks the door behind him, flicks his hoodie over his head and switches on his flashlight as he walks past them.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT - RUBBERDUCK LOCK-UP. NIGHT

Jason reaches the rubberduck garage. He plays with his flashlight over the doors and the discus lock. It is firmly in place.

Jason turns back.

Behind him, a slowly-pushed down branch reveals that someone watches him from the bushes.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET. DAY - EARLY MORNING

It is still dark, but the day has only just started to change color. Jason returns up the stairs of his chalet.

JASON

Okay, time to go home, before
your parents also think you're
missing.

Lazily the boys wake up, yawning and stretching from the uncomfortable night's sleep. As they get up, Percy tries a last bit of coffee from the flask on the table. No luck.

Jason doesn't even register this.

FRANCO
Nothing on your watch?

Jason shakes his head.

JASON
Thank you, guys. Go get some
proper rest.

As they leave, Franco holds out his fist again for a fist bump. Jason smirks, but returns it this time.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT RECEPTION OFFICE. DAY

A couple of men march down to the entrance gate with wood-chopping axes in their hands.

Mulherengo darts out the office. He barely manages to reach and stretch out his long arms in front of them.

MULHERENGO
Please, let's just wait a few
more hours, the team...

ANGRY FATHER 1
We're not waiting any longer.

ANGRY FATHER 2
Yes, fuck off, Mulherengo, we're
leaving this place today!

They push past Mulherengo and reach the large, thick tree trunk that neatly crosses the entrance to the resort.

Without further ado, they start to chop away at the trunk.

Mulherengo turns away and takes out his walkie-talkie.

MULHERENGO
Charlie, come in for Alpha, over.

A beat and then a buzz in response.

VOICE ON WALKIE-TALKIE
This is Charlie standing by for
Alpha.

MULHERENGO
Please ensure that the tool shed
is locked up and the key is in my
office. No worker or anyone else
goes near that place today.

VOICE ON WALKIE-TALKIE
Sure thing, boss.

Mulherengo puts his walkie-talkie back and vapes, his eyes fixed on the couple of make-shift lumberjacks chopping away at the fallen tree.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH. DAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Jason and Mikey both sit on high rise chairs - in silence. Except for a lone surfer or two enjoying the bigger waves that comes with high tide, the beach is virtually empty.

Mikey looks at his watch.

MIKEY

I'll take Umsindisi back so long.

Jason nods.

Mikey jumps off his chair and does as he said.

Jason takes the binoculars off their hook with one hand. He moves his other shoulder around in slow, circular movements. He winces as he does, before he lifts the binoculars and stares out to sea.

He barely makes out the pair of arms that wave for help, so far the person is from the beach.

Jason throws down the binoculars. He cracks his knuckles and neck, grabs a buoy and jogs towards the surf.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH - OCEAN. DAY - LATE AFTERNOON

With long, strong strokes, Jason swims closer to where he last saw the person.

He looks around and dives underneath the water, resurfacing after a while. Nothing.

Again he goes underneath, this time longer, before he breaks the surface again. Still nothing.

Jason inhales deeply and dives down again.

Finally he resurfaces and gasps for air with a girl in his arms - JACKIE, Franco's girlfriend. We almost can't make out it is her, but when Jason wipes her hair away from her face, we can clearly see it is her.

Jason turns her on her back and immediately starts back towards the beach, which seems a million miles away.

Jason takes turns to look at the beach and look back at Jackie, who seems lifeless, as he swims slowly and tired back towards shore. His own breathing is coming more rapid now, as the inevitable fatigue sets in.

Realizing they are both going to drown, Jason fastens the buoy's rope around Jackie's chest and lets her lie over it. With his right hand he holds on to the buoy's handle, while he tries to swim with his healthy, left arm.

Then the current pulls his feet from under him.

Jason inhales sharply as he swallows a large mouthful of seawater. He looks over his shoulder.

They are closer to the rocks than to the shore, and they are swept closer second by second.

Finally, he can't do it anymore.

JASON

Help! Help us! Help!

From his POV Jason can see nothing. Then, out of the corner of his eye, a person dives off one of the rocks and swims in their direction.

This renews Jason's confidence and he waves almost desperately with his healthy arm as he tries to keep Jackie's face out of the water with the other.

When he comes closer, Jason now see it is Franco himself.

FRANCO

Turn on your back and follow my lead. The current is weaker just over there. I'll grab her.

Evenly surprised at and grateful for Franco's calmness, Jason does as he is told. He turns on his back and kick strongly and rhythmically as he follows Franco toward the beach.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH. DAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Jason and Franco stumble onto the sand. They half-carry Jackie between them.

Mikey runs up to them and takes Jackie. He immediately starts CPR on her.

Jason falls flat on the sand, eyes closed, completely out of breath as the surf washes up over his feet.

Franco scurries over to where Mikey works on Jackie.

Mikey blows and presses, blows and presses - and then Jackie coughs up what seems like gallons of sea water.

This makes Jason turn around and crab-crawls on all fours closer to them.

Jackie sits up, with Franco aiding her back.

FRANCO
Cough it out, babe.

Jackie coughs again as she gets the last of the salt water out her system. She looks up at Jason.

JACKIE
You saved me.

Jason shakes his head.

JASON
Franco did. He saved us both.

Franco beams.

FRANCO
I just finished what you started.

Jackie turns her head to Mikey.

JACKIE
And you. Thank you.

Mikey grins.

MIKEY
Just doing our jobs.

Franco shakes his head.

FRANCO
No, you guys are doing much more than that. Let's stick you for a burger at the beach bar later? As a thank you. Both of you.

Jason brushes it off, having caught his breath now.

JASON
No need, really-

FRANCO
Dude, I'm not taking no for an answer. Eight o' clock.

Mikey looks at Jason, who relents with a smile.

JASON
Sure.

Franco helps Jackie up.

FRANCO
Awesome.

They walk off.

Mikey extends a hand to Jason, who still sits on his knees in the surf and pulls him up.

MIKEY

Let's pack up.

Jason hesitates for a second, and then smiles faintly.

JASON

Yes. Let's.

INT. MULHERENGO'S OFFICE. DUSK

Jason knocks on Mulherengo's slightly ajar door.

Mulherengo sit-stands against his desk, his finger around the chain and his vape at the ready. He looks up and motions for Jason to enter.

Jason closes the door.

MULHERENGO

I owe you an apology, Jason.
Today was probably one of the
worst days during my time here at
Iphilo. I shouldn't have snapped
at you.

JASON

No worries. I can imagine.

Mulherengo lowers his voice confidentially.

MULHERENGO

Has Mikey dropped anything worth
knowing yet?

Jason scratches his head.

JASON

I'm not sure he is our guy. We
might have to look for other
suspects.

Mulherengo folds his arms.

MULHERENGO

Please don't tell me you are also
falling for his charms?

JASON

Come again?

Mulherengo leans closer to Jason and puts a hand on his shoulder.

MULHERENGO

I've seen how he operates. He uses that beach boy-moves of his to soften people up and then when they least expect it, slam! He drops them like it's hot.

There it is again: slam!

It makes Jason frown, but he shakes it off quickly.

JASON

Drops them how? What do you mean, exactly?

Mulherengo now puts both hands on Jason's shoulders.

MULHERENGO

Just...don't let your judgment be clouded by what you want to see.

Jason looks at the hands on his shoulders. Quickly Mulherengo removes them.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH BAR. NIGHT

The island-style beach bar is lit up with colored lights, surf boards, palm trees, fake pineapples and Tiki-torches. Stereotypical, sure, but it works. Vibey music in the background creates an almost absurd atmosphere of fun amidst the current goings-on in the resort.

Jason, Mikey, Franco and Jackie sit at a wooden bench-and-table-combo with humongous burgers and heart attack-fries, dripping with oil and sauce.

Off to the side, Quintin and Rudy drink cocktails from empty pineapples with two teenage girls, one blonde and one brunette.

Jason struggles to speak with his mouth full of food.

JASON

This is amazing!

Mikey tries to take a bite of his burger without spilling the sauce that drips from it. He fails.

MIKEY

Told you.

Jason licks his fingers.

JASON

How did you know where to come look for us, Franco?

FRANCO

I took a nap while Jackie went for a swim. When I woke up I couldn't find her on the beach, so I thought maybe she went shell-collecting on the rocks. That's when I saw you guys.

Jason beams.

JASON

Well, thanks again.

JACKIE

How's your shoulder?

Jason has to think quickly.

JASON

I actually hurt it before, chasing...I mean, jumping into a pool. Stupid really. That's what happens when you show off pool tricks.

FRANCO

Still have some tricks in you?

Jason frowns.

JASON

Meaning?

Franco motions with his head to the nearby swimming pool.

FRANCO

I think it's time to see who has the best moves.

Jason sits back, a little taken off guard. Then he regroups.

JASON

What I've forgotten you still have to learn.

He swallows the last bit of burger and fries and pushes his plate forward.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT SWIMMING POOL. NIGHT

MONTAGE STYLE:

- Jason, Franco and Mikey compete through various diving and jumping moves, the one copying and besting the other.
- They team up two by two and "bull fight" in the swimming pool, Jason on Mikey's shoulders and Jackie on Franco's.

Jason laughs non-stop.

- Jason points towards the roof of the restaurant, overhanging the swimming pool.

- The guys jump from the roof into the pool while Jackie cheers and laughs loudly.

With a deep breath, Jason jumps last.

He stays under water longer than he needs to, as if to force himself to remain there.

Then he breaks the surface - a man reborn.

Jason's jubilant shout is sincere and free.

From a distance, Mulherengo watches them and slowly puffs on his vape.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT CARAVAN PARK ROAD. NIGHT

Jason and Mikey walk alongside Franco and Jackie and stop at campsite A27. Their hushed giggles come across like drunken party-goers returning home.

FRANCO

This is us. Thank you, guys.

JACKIE

(with a curtsy)

Milords. I bid you good night.

Jason rolls his eyes.

JASON

See you tomorrow.

Jackie and Franco giggle again as they enter the caravan's tent.

Mikey and Jason turn around and start down the road between the quiet caravans and tents. Their silliness has died down a bit now.

Mikey clears his throat.

MIKEY

Didn't think you would enjoy this so much, did you?

For a moment, Jason considers:

JASON

Mike, I-

But then he decides against it.

JASON (cont'd)
No, I didn't.

INT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET BEDROOM. NIGHT

Jason makes notes on the growing infograph. He writes down Quintin, Rudy and Percy's names and make connecting lines with Jackie and Franco's. He writes down "Blonde" and "Brunette" and makes links to Quintin and Rudy.

He stands back a little while he ponders.

JASON
What am I missing?

Then he turns around, grabs his hoodie and flashlight and heads out.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT - RUBBERDUCK LOCK-UP. NIGHT

Jason moves through the bushes, flicking his flashlight on and off. A movement close by the rubberduck lock-up's door grabs his attention. Jason shifts a little forward so that he can see better through the bushes.

The garage door is wide open - and out comes Mikey, who shoots glances over his shoulders before he pulls the rolling door close fast.

Jason steps on a dry branch and gives away his position.

With his own flashlight, Mikey shines straight towards Jason.

Busted, Jason comes out.

MIKEY
Jase? What are you doing here?

JASON
Thought you locked up after shift?

A quick dart of Mikey's eyes before he answers.

MIKEY
I did. I was not sure of how much fuel was in the tank before tomorrow. Mulherengo actually gave me permission to keep the key for the night. Weird, huh?

Jason nods slowly.

JASON
Very weird, indeed.

Mikey flicks the keys around his finger and stashes it in his pocket.

MIKEY

Are you on patrol? We have security guards, you know. We should get some sleep.

JASON

You're right. We should.

For a moment the two guys stand in an awkward silence, Neither of them want to leave first.

Then Mikey relents with a slight grin.

MIKEY

See you in the morning, Jase.

He walks off.

Jason stares after him for a couple of seconds and then also walks away.

INT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET BEDROOM. NIGHT

Jason takes a red marker and writes Mikey's name in large letters on the one side of the infograph and circles it.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET. DAY - EARLY MORNING

There is an urgent banging on Jason's chalet door.

FRANCO

Jason! Jason, Wake up!

A still sleepy Jason emerges, rubbing his eyes. Franco and Rudy stands there, very distraught.

JASON

'Sup, guys?

RUDY

There's another girl missing.

This wakes Jason up immediately.

JASON

Who?

RUDY

Alicia...the blonde girl that was with me at the beach bar last night. I offered to walk her home, but Quin wanted to get another drink, so they left by themselves. This morning, she is missing.

Beat from Jason.

JASON

Fuck!

EXT. IPHILO RESORT RECEPTION OFFICE. DAY

The one caravan after the other stands in tow to leave the resort. Packed up and ready to go, angry over-it camper-dads with arms hanging out of windows and shades on their eyes revs their cars impatiently as the security guard unlocks the heavy palisade gate and rolls it away on its tracks.

The road where the stump was, is cleared. Only a few scattered pieces of trunk remain.

Jason, Franco and Rudy walk past the exodus, straight to Mulherengo's office.

JASON

Wait here.

INT. MULHERENGO'S OFFICE. DAY

Jason finds Mulherengo vaping behind his desk. He scrolls through something hidden from view on his laptop. Jason closes the door firmly behind him.

JASON

What the fuck are you doing here?

Mulherengo ignores him at first. Then:

MULHERENGO

Good morning, Jason. How are you doing?

Jason bites on his lip.

JASON

Another girl is missing. Your campers are leaving faster than the Israelites left Egypt...and you just sit here?

MULHERENGO

What do you want me to do? Lie down in the road in front of them and beg them to stay? 'Please don't go! We'll keep you safe!' They can do whatever they want.

JASON

Fair enough, but what about the missing girls?

MULHERENGO

I didn't make them disappear.

Now Jason slams with his hands on the desk.

JASON

But you're not doing anything to find them!

MULHERENGO

Neither are you! You are just drinking with the teenagers and our main suspect and jumping off of rooftops with them, aren't you?

Mulherengo sits back in his chair. His finger finds the chain around his neck and starts to wind it up. He directs his attention back to his laptop and ignores Jason, who stands there, mouth agape.

Then something catches Jason's eye: the keys to the rubberduck, neatly in place in the open cabinet.

JASON

Has Mikey been in yet this morning?

MULHERENGO

No.

JASON

And you still have the only key to the rubberduck?

MULHERENGO

If you don't know that by now, you really are the dumbest cop in the country.

Jason stares at Mulherengo, who has not looked up from his screen now. Jason shakes his head and leaves the office.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT RECEPTION OFFICE. DAY

Jason meets Franco and Rudy outside.

JASON

I have a call to make. Go round up some more of your friends that has not left yet and meet me on the beach in half an hour.

They nod and jog off. Jason looks for a secluded spot on the hall's veranda and takes a seat as he dials a number.

INT. POLICE STATION. DAY

Sarah-Lee sits at her desk, her eyes red and tired. Empty coffee cups and half eaten apples litter her desk. She takes turns in staring at her computer screen and staring at her notes.

Mbatha comes in from the door and hands her a fresh cup.

MBATHA

No rest for the wicked?

SARAH-LEE

There's something that just doesn't make sense, Colonel. This cartel's base seems to be either in St Lucia or at the Wild Coast, but all of the girls disappeared *between* those two places. How did they get hold of them?

MBATHA

And you're sure it is this cartel?

SARAH-LEE

I...all the evidence that we have, and it is scarce, by the way, suggests a strong link.

As Mbatha frowns and hunches down to look with her, Sarah-Lee's phone rings.

SARAH-LEE (cont'd)

Jason. How's the beach?

INTERCUT BETWEEN SCENES DURING PHONE CALL

JASON

Hey, Sarah-Lee.

SARAH-LEE

'Sarah-Lee'? Good grief, what is wrong?

Sarah-Lee puts her phone on speaker to let Mbatha in.

JASON

Another girl has gone missing last night.

SARAH-LEE

You're shitting me.

JASON

I have a few theories, but I'm not sure how to connect them. I

(MORE)

JASON (cont'd)
do think they may be related to
your own investigation, though.

SARAH-LEE
How so?

JASON
The manager and one of the other
lifeguards...shady vibes. Heavy.

Sarah-Lee frowns at Mbatha. He nods.

SARAH-LEE
Jase, okay. I'll be down there by
this afternoon. Keep a close eye
as much as you can.

JASON
You bet.

Jason ends the call.

From behind him, the RECEPTIONIST (40) exits the building.

RECEPTIONIST
Jason! Hi!

She waves him over, the rubberduck's keys in her hand.
Jason jumps up and jogs closer.

JASON
Morning.

RECEPTIONIST
Mikey is sick today. Stomach bug
or something. You are on shift
alone today.

She hands him the keys and walks back inside. Jason's
shoulder's sag as he looks up and down the road leading
out of the resort.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH. DAY - EARLY

Jason sits alone on Mikey's high-rise chair and stares out
at the ocean through the binoculars. Only a few fishermen
are about with their lines in the water. Other than that,
the beach is empty.

Mulherengo walks over from the rock's side.

MULHERENGO
Are you coping alone?

Jason throws him a look that could kill if he tried to.

JASON
What do you care?

MULHERENGO
I just want to know.

Jason looks away and through the binoculars again.

JASON
I'm fine.

Mulherengo lights up his vape.

MULHERENGO
I've decided to let you do things
your way. I won't question you
again.

Jason frowns at him and shrugs.

Beat from Mulherengo before he pries forth.

MULHERENGO (cont'd)
I'm just tired of people not
helping me the way I want. Have
you ever experienced that? It can
be só frustrating.

Jason shoots a look at him and then turns his attention to
the blank ocean once more.

MULHERENGO (cont'd)
Anyway. Just thought you should
know.

Mulherengo turns around and walks away.

Jason stares after him.

From the other side, Rudy, Quintin and Franco approach.

FRANCO
Hey, Jase.

JASON
Guys!

He jumps down from the high-rise.

FRANCO
It is just us that are left.
People are leaving fast.

Jason nods.

JASON

This might actually work in our favor. I need you to patrol again, but for God's sake, don't go alone. You *have* to stick together. Promise?

The boys nod.

QUINTIN

We promise.

JASON

Great. Come and report throughout the day when you can.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH. DAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Jason puts his buoy in Umsindisi and fastens the end rope to one of the aft handles. He struggles to pull the rubberduck into place by himself. His shoulder does not play games anymore.

Jason sees Franco and Jackie walk over from the lagoon's side. Jason waits for them to catch up to him.

JASON

Why are you alone? Where are the other guys?

FRANCO

Their parents called them to help pack up. We just had to get away from the craziness in the campsite, so we went to the rocks. Nice and alone.

JACKIE

Our parents decided to wait until tomorrow before we also leave. Let the bulk go first.

JASON

You should have told me you were there. It's not safe to be alone right now.

FRANCO

Aww, look at Jason, caring for us and shit!

Jason can't help but smile.

JASON

Hey, f...just, don't get used to it.

Jackie laughs and turns to Franco.

JACKIE
Now he's even cuter!

JASON
Cut it out! Franco, get your girl
back to their tent where her
parents can keep an eye on her.

Jackies puts a hand on Franco's chest.

JACKIE
It's fine, babe. I'll use the B
gate. It's closer to our site.
You help Jason. He clearly needs
it. You should really have that
shoulder looked at, dude.

JASON
That's the least of my worries.

Franco jumps on the back of the ATV.

FRANCO
No use arguing, Jase.

Jason looks concerned as he gets on the ATV and he and Franco drive off, leaving Jackie to walk to the entrance closer to the lagoon's side alone.

EXT. LAGOON ENTRANCE PATH. DAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Jackie enters the iron gate leading from the beach and closes it behind her.

As soon as she turns around, a hand holding a white cloth clasps over her mouth and nose. It smothers her attempt to scream and puts her to sleep immediately.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT - RUBBERDUCK LOCK-UP. DUSK

Jason parks the ATV in front of the rolling garage door.

JASON
I just have to fetch the key for
the lock from the office.

Franco frowns.

FRANCO
But there's no lock on it?

Jason now also looks closer at the latch. The lock is indeed missing.

Jason inhales sharply.

JASON

Come on.

They jog off towards the office.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT VISITOR'S PARKING. DUSK

As Jason and Franco jog through the visitor's parking on their way to the office, Mikey comes jogging down the hill towards them.

Jason slows down. This is weird.

JASON

Hey, bud. How are you feeling?

Mikey stops when he meets them and holds out his fist for fist-bump greetings.

MIKEY

I'm great! Sorry I missed shift today. Just had to take care of those personal matters. You know how sometimes there are just things that cannot wait, right?

Beat from Jason as he studies Mikey's chipper demeanor. Clearly no stomach bug here.

JASON

Right. We were just on our way to fetch the key for the lock to put Umsindisi back to sleep.

MIKEY

Oh, don't worry about that. I forgot the lock back at my place. You can just put her away, I'll go fetch the lock and lock her up.

Franco looks questioningly at Jason, who nods slowly.

JASON

Cool. We'll do that.

Mikey turns around and jogs back up the slope.

Franco turns to Jason.

FRANCO

How did he know the lock wasn't on the door if we didn't tell him?

Jason just lifts his eyebrows.

JASON
Let's follow him.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT TENNIS COURT - DUSK

The tennis courts of the resort is situated past a line of caravan stands at the far back end of the resort. To get to it, you have to go down a lane of overhanging trees and shrubbery which secludes the tennis courts and dilapidated tennis court house.

Jason and Franco come jogging around a corner, just as Mikey enters the overhanging tree lane.

FRANCO
What's he doing at the tennis court?

JASON
Let's go check it out.

Hunched over they sneak closer until they are almost right outside the tennis court house. Its windows are dirty and covered with cardboard.

Franco tries to sneak a peek through a small gap in the window - and then Jason's phone rings loudly in his pocket. Jason hurriedly motions for Franco to get away. They scurry off back the way they came.

Jason answers without looking when they are at a safe distance.

JASON (cont'd)
What?

SARAH-LEE (O.S.)
Hello to you too. I'm at the office here at the resort. Where are you?

JASON
Hey! Sorry about that. Hang on, I'll be there just now.

Jason puts his phone away.

FRANCO
Who was that?

Jason smiles.

JASON
Some girl at reception. Better go get her.

FRANCO

Now? Okay, I'll wait here. See if something's up?

For a moment Jason considers it, but then he shakes his head.

JASON

Why don't you go check if Jackie's safe at your camp site? We'll meet back at my chalet.

Franco shoots a look back towards the tennis court house and then nods.

FRANCO

Okay. See you now.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT RECEPTION OFFICE. NIGHT

Night has now fallen and a cloudy storm swell has begun to roll in from the ocean's side.

Jason finds Sarah-Lee standing next to her car on the tarmac in front of the hall. He rushes in for a hug.

Sarah-Lee's eyes widen, but she returns the hug.

SARAH-LEE

This is new.

Jason smirks.

JASON

Whatever. Let's go to my chalet, so I can catch you up.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET. NIGHT

Jason and Sarah-Lee walk up the stairs to his chalet.

JASON

What is the typical profile for the people that abducts the girls before they are sold?

SARAH-LEE

Sometimes they are very much what you imagine them to be. Gross, off-putting, all of that. Other times they are the guys you really least expect.

JASON

Like Mikey.

Sarah-Lee shrugs as Jason opens the door.

INT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET BEDROOM. NIGHT

Jason brings Sarah-Lee to the infographic on the wall. She studies it with a keen eye.

SARAH-LEE
Now let's see...

JASON
I want to go back to the tennis court to check for activity. If a boy by the name of Franco comes by, just keep him here.

SARAH-LEE
Who's he?

JASON
An ally.

Jason takes the last of his pain killers. He swallows them dry as he throws the empty packet on the desk. Sarah-Lee lifts an eyebrow.

SARAH-LEE
Shoulder still an issue?

JASON
A bit stiff from working alone today. Nothing to worry about. You don't happen to have some more, do you?

SARAH-LEE
Sorry, no.

JASON
No worries.

Sarah-Lee nods as Jason leaves. She returns to the infographic.

SARAH-LEE
What is the link here...

EXT. FRANCO/JACKIE'S CAMP SITE. NIGHT

Franco jogs toward the caravans. His own DAD and JACKIE'S DAD stand outside with folded arms. They are not amused.

FRANCO'S DAD
Where the hell were you?

FRANCO
I was with Jason. We put away the lifeguard's rubberduck.

JACKIE'S DAD
Where's Jackie?

FRANCO
She...she said she's coming
straight here from the beach. I
thought she was back already?

FRANCO'S DAD
Why would you let her walk alone,
with everything that's going on?

FRANCO
I...you know how she...

JACKIE'S DAD
Damn it, Franco!

FRANCO
I'll go look down the path to the
bottom gate. She was coming in
that way.

FRANCO'S DAD
We'll have to report it to that
dipshit who runs this place. For
fuck's sake, please be careful.

Franco grabs his cricket bat that lies nearby.

FRANCO
I will.

He runs off as the first drops of rain from the storm
start to fall.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT TENNIS COURT - NIGHT

Jason reaches the tennis house. There is no light coming
from inside. Jason grabs the door handle. No surprise - it
is locked. It only takes a moment for Jason to decide to
ram it with his shoulder.

Big mistake. He winces as the pain from his shoulder
forces him to think of something else.

Jason looks around and sees a piece of a young tree stump.
He picks it up and, using it as a battering ram, jabs away
at the rusty door handle. After a few rams, the door flies
open.

Jason flicks on the light switch that seems to still work,
as a yellowish glow fills the small room. Except for some
card boards and an old dirty blanket on the floor, the
place is empty.

MIKEY

You won't find anything in there.

Jason swings around to see Mikey right behind him.

JASON

This your business?

Mikey says nothing but tries to go in. Jason steps in his way and blocks the door.

JASON (cont'd)

Left something behind of one of
the girls that you abducted?

For a second it looks like Mikey's going to answer him, but in stead he grabs Jason's wrists and jerks him away in a fast wrestling throw-movement.

Jason is short, but he weighs more than Mikey expected and it doesn't have the exact desired effect. As he falls, Jason sweeps Mikey's legs out from underneath him with his feet.

Mikey falls toward him, as Jason manages to roll away. Both men now slide in the dark mud as the soft rain sifts down through the roof of leaves above them.

Mikey scrambles to get back on his feet, but Jason grabs hold of his ankles and pulls him down again. As in one move, Jason jumps up and lurches over Mikey, using Mikey's position on the ground to his own advantage.

Jason tries to get in a swing or two, but Mikey blocks them relatively easy. Jason's shirt tears in the process.

Mikey pulls both of his legs up and in a strong kangaroo-like kick, he kicks Jason in the stomach so that he spatters backwards and lands on a tree root sticking out of the ground. The tree root thumps into his back and kidneys and tears his shirt even further.

JASON (cont'd)

Ouuuww!!

This gives Mikey the chance to get up and take off.

Jason painfully crunches back up to a sitting position, only to see Mikey run off around a bend.

JASON (cont'd)

Fuck!!

EXT. IPHILO RESORT CARAVAN PARK ROAD. NIGHT

Franco hastily runs down the path to the gate where Jackie was supposed to come from.

The campsites closest to the gate, on the banks of the river that feeds the lagoon, has already been abandoned.

Franco turns around. This is the one girl he never should have lost.

FRANCO

Jackie!!

A beat, and then he resumes his desperate search.

INT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET. NIGHT

Franco, soaked through and through, runs up the stairs and hammers with his fist on the open door.

FRANCO

Jason! Jase! Where are you?

He darts inside before he gets an answer.

The place is quiet. A light from the bedroom catches Franco's eye.

INT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET BEDROOM. NIGHT

Franco freezes as he sees the infographic on the wall. Shocked, he wipes his face with his one hand as he goes closer to the infographic.

FRANCO

What the fuck...

He notices the empty packets of painkillers strewn about.

Off-Screen we hear a toilet flush. Franco swings around just as Sarah-Lee enters the bedroom.

SARAH-LEE

Hey, you must be Franco, right?
I'm Sarah-Lee.

She holds oher hand to greet him.

Franco sees the gun sticking out of the holster on Sarah-Lee's hip and retreats instead.

FRANCO

Stay away from me! You people...
you won't get away with this!

He shoves Sarah-Lee out of his way. She stumbles to the ground as he makes a run for it.

SARAH-LEE
 Wait! You have the wrong idea!
 Wait!

But Franco is gone.

Sarah-Lee gets up and hurries towards the door.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET. NIGHT

As Sarah-Lee exits the chalet, she bumps straight into Jason.

JASON
 Has Franco shown up yet?

SARAH-LEE
 Jason! Look at...yes, you just missed him. Jason, he saw the infographic. He thinks it is us.

JASON
 Aw, shit, you've got to be kidding me. Come on!

Sarah-Lee can barely keep up with Jason who, torn shirt and limp and all, dashes down to the caravan park.

EXT. FRANCO/JACKIE'S CAMP SITE. NIGHT

The storm is now in full swing. Lightning flashes and thunder cracks ever so often.

Franco sprints towards the dads, now equipped with flashlights and makeshift weapons of their own.

JACKIE'S DAD
 I knew I should have brought my gun along.

FRANCO
 It's the lifeguard!

FRANCO'S DAD
 Mikey?

Franco comes to a halt, completely out of breath.

FRANCO
 No, it is...

Jason runs up to them just as Franco gets back up straight.

JASON
 Franco! I don't know what you've seen in there, but I think you got the wrong impression.

With renewed energy, Franco lunges at Jason. He grabs him by the shreds of collar that remain.

FRANCO

You! You pretended to be our friend! Where is she?

Sarah-Lee finally catches up to them.

SARAH-LEE

Stop! Let him go!

Franco looks up with Jason firmly in his grip.

FRANCO

And she's in on it!

Sarah-Lee pulls her badge from her pants' pocket.

SARAH-LEE

We're cops. Detectives. Let him go, please. He was here undercover.

Jason manages to break free from Franco's grip.

JASON

It's the truth. I was called from Pretoria to come and investigate the first disappearance, but Mulherengo wanted me to pretend to be a lifeguard.

Reaction from Franco.

JACKIE'S DAD

Quite a story. Mulherengo, is this the truth?

Jason frowns and turns around.

Mulherengo, Mikey and a very young uniformed CONSTABLE walk up to them from the direction of the office, kept dry by a massive black umbrella.

Mikey smirks when he reaches them.

MIKEY

I knew you were a fraud.

MULHERENGO

So, Jason, I see the game is finally up?

Sarah-Lee frowns, but Jason just lunges at him.

JASON
 Mulherengo! You were the one who
 asked for *me* to come!

Mulherengo nods.

MULHERENGO
 I did. Mistake of my life,
 because then the other girls
 started to disappear. Who better
 to kidnap them than a cop who
 knows how to do it? Slam!

For a second there is deeper recognition in Jason's eyes.

JASON
 Are you f-

FRANCO
 I saw the profiles on his wall.
 Photo's, info, all kinds of shit.
 It's him.

Mikey turns to Mulherengo.

MIKEY
 Did he lock up the rubberduck
 tonight?

MULHERENGO
 No. I'm still waiting for him to
 come and fetch the key.

Jason explodes.

JASON
 No, I...we...there was no lock on
 the door! Franco, you were there
 with me, you saw it!

Franco shrugs.

FRANCO
 You probably had it broken off or
 something.

Jason can't believe this.

JASON
 This is fuckin' ridiculous...

FRANCO'S DAD
 How did your shirt get so torn?
 Do you normally wear it like
 that, or was it Jackie who fought
 you off?

Jason points at Mikey.

JASON

It happened when I wrestled this asshole at the tennis house.

MIKEY

Why would I be at the tennis house? And why were you there, anyway? Checked to see if Jackie is still okay before you make her disappear?

This is too much for Jason. He lunges at Mikey, but as he does, Franco grabs him from behind.

Sarah-Lee pulls out her gun.

SARAH-LEE

Everybody, stop!

This has the desired effect and they all cease. Mulherengo steps forward and puts a hand on Sarah-Lee's shoulder.

MULHERENGO

Can we put that away, please? No need for it. But I do think your time here has finished, detective. Constable?

The bewildered constable starts to move towards Jason, but Sarah-Lee catches his gaze and shakes her head. The constable retreats again and almost cuffs himself in the process.

SARAH-LEE

You have nothing solid to arrest my partner on, but I'll escort him off the premise myself. First thing in the morning, though, because I've had a very long drive and I want to get some sleep first. You and...*him*...can start to look around to see if you can find Jackie.

Sarah-Lee first points to Mulherengo and then to the wet-behind-the-ears constable.

The dads look uncertain. Franco still fumes off to the side.

Sarah-Lee puts a hand on Jason's shoulder and without a word turns him around.

It is difficult to see whether it is the rain or tears that stream down Jason's cheeks.

INT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET. NIGHT

Sarah-Lee and Jason crash down on two wicker chairs in the chalet. Head down, Jason sits for a moment, soaked to the bone. The water drips from his hair onto the floor.

He rips the last shreds of shirt off and throws the wet rags to the side.

Slowly, his left hand moves over to his injured right shoulder and clutches it.

As he shivers, wet and cold, he makes an intensely lonely figure.

Sarah-lee gets up, disappears into the bathroom and emerges with two towels. She dries herself off with one and throws the other one onto the hunched-over Jason.

SARAH-LEE

Dry off. You'll catch a cold on top of it all.

Jason slowly takes the towel and wraps it like a cloak over his head and body. He sits back up a little now for the first time, but still stares out in front of him.

Sarah-Lee leaves him to take his time.

JASON

I know I've made many mistakes in my life, especially towards teenagers. But this...I did not think this was one of them.

Sarah-Lee gets up again and takes a half-jack of sherry from her purse. She takes two glasses from the cupboard and divides the bottle evenly between them and hands one to Jason.

JASON (cont'd)

Tonight it just felt like all those years ago...the last time I've been here.

He takes the glass from Sarah-Lee, who pulls her chair closer to him as she sits down.

SARAH-LEE

You've been here before?

Jason takes the glass, but doesn't drink.

JASON

Have you ever been bullied?

He looks at Sarah-Lee, who returns his gaze: obviously.

JASON (cont'd)
 My worst bullying happened here at Iphilo. And the main asshole was Mulherengo. I only realized it tonight. I knew I've seen him before in my life, I just couldn't put my thumb on it. But tonight when he said "Slam!" I remembered who he was.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH ROCKS. DAY

Young Jason kneels next to his DAD, who lies in an awkward position on the rocks. Blood gushes from a hole in his head. A bucket of shells lies knocked over next to them.

A tall, wiry teenage boy, YOUNG MULHERENGO, walks by. He literally points and laughs with one of his mates.

YOUNG JASON
 Help! Help us!

Young Mulherengo keeps on laughing.

YOUNG MULHERENGO
 Did you see how that guy fell?
 Fuck, those rocks never saw that head coming. Slam!

Young Jason now cries, alone, left to fend for himself and his dying dad.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET. NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Sarah-Lee swallows from her glass.

Jason lets the towel slide down so that it only covers his shoulders now.

JASON
 Iphilo was literally the last place I wanted to be.

Jason gets up and stares out to the rain and night.

JASON (cont'd)
 Shits like Mulherengo was the reason I decided to become a cop. I wanted to be able to throw dickheads like him in jail with a smile on my face. For so long I could justify my hatred towards teenagers, all of them, no exception. But now...

Sarah-Lee joins Jason at the sliding doors.

JASON (cont'd)
 Now I can't *not* care. Franco and his mates, Jackie...fuckit, I care for them.

SARAH-LEE
 Why is it different with them?

Jason shrugs.

JASON
 They trust me. They let me in. I have to protect them.

SARAH-LEE
 And now the trust is broken. I'm sorry, Jase. This is messed-up.

JASON
 How the hell am I going to prove...

Jason takes a sip from his glass, but pulls a face and throws the rest of the sherry out in the basin.

JASON (cont'd)
 This taste like shit, by the way.

Sarah-Lee shrugs and finishes her own glass.

Jason rubs his hands over his face.

JASON
 I gotta go clear my head. Wait here, take a shower or something. Then we can figure out what to tell Mbatha when we go back.

Jason goes into the bedroom and returns with a fresh T-shirt. He puts it on and grabs a hoodie.

His wink at Sarah-Lee as he exits is a sad and defeated one.

EXT/INT. IPHILO RESORT - RUBBERDUCK LOCK-UP. NIGHT

Jason reaches the rubberduck lock-up. The rubberduck is now noticeably gone from where Jason and Franco left it earlier. The discus lock is firmly in its place.

For a second Jason stands in the soft rain and stares at it. Then he feels around for a rock, finds one and starts to bang on the lock. After a few whacks, he smashes it.

Jason opens the doors - and finds it empty.

Jason takes a few steps inside, as if the IRB might be stashed somewhere deeper.

MULHERENGO
You won't find it in there.

INT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET. NIGHT

Sarah-Lee picks up the shreds of Jason's shirt and throws it in the dustbin under the sink.

MIKEY (O.S.)
Mind if I come in?

Sarah-Lee swings around to the door. Mikey stands in it, his rain jacket's hoodie pulled over his head.

For a moment she just stares at him before she recomposes.

SARAH-LEE
What do want, dude?

Mikey sighs as he enters and removes his hoodie.

MIKEY
It's not what I want, but what I can tell you. And, please, no guns - I come in peace.

Sarah-Lee slowly takes out her gun and places it on the counter next to her.

SARAH-LEE
Okay, Mikey. Talk.

INT. IPHILO RESORT - RUBBERDUCK LOCK-UP. NIGHT

Jason frowns at Mulherengo.

JASON
What do you want? Fuckin' asshole.

Mulherengo walks closer and puts a hand on Jason's shoulder.

MULHERENGO
I'm sorry about what happened earlier. You know Mikey - a bit of a drama llama.

Jason whacks Mulherengo's hand off his shoulder and stares at him blankly.

JASON
In front of a damn constable.

Mulherengo grins sheepishly and clears his throat.

MULHERENGO

He's no constable. Just my nephew. Anyway, I would like to make up for the embarrassment. I have a proposal for you.

JASON

Yeah?

INT. MULHERENGO'S OFFICE. DUSK - FLASHBACK

Mulherengo sits at his desk. He scrolls through his tablet as he talks indistinctly on his phone.

Mikey enters the far side of the office, but the keys slip out of his hand and he bends down to pick it up. As he hears Mulherengo, he stays down, out of sight. Slowly he duck-walks back to the doorway, so that Mulherengo cannot suspect him of eavesdropping.

INT. IPHILO RESORT - RUBBERDUCK LOCK-UP. NIGHT - CONT.

MULHERENGO

I know you know what's going on. And let's face it, pinning it on a dumb-ass lifeguard like Mikey - good idea, right?

Jason inhales slowly. This could mean everything.

Then he smiles agreeably.

JASON

Yes. Yes it was.

Mulherengo gives a little air-punch.

MULHERENGO

I knew you'd be game! I've seen you, Jason. You know as well as I do some teenagers are just better off out of our way. Less trouble for all. If we can make a buck or two in the process, why not?

It takes all Jason has not to break his composure.

INT. MULHERENGO'S OFFICE. DAY - FLASHBACK

Mikey waits outside the office.

Mulherengo swipes through the pictures on his tablet. Indeed they are pictures of young girls.

He stands up and adjusts his pants' crotch to make space for the business. Then he walks into his private office toilet.

Mikey jumps up and grabs the keys to the lock-up. He replaces them very fast with a similar-looking set.

INT. IPHILO RESORT - RUBBERDUCK LOCK-UP. NIGHT - CONT.

JASON

Don't I know that. So, how does this work?

Mulherengo smiles coyly.

MULHERENGO

Umsindisi. Sometimes she saves lives out at sea. Sometimes she saves mine.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT - RUBBERDUCK LOCK-UP. NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Mulherengo sneaks to the garage door, opens it slowly and starts the ATV.

Mulherengo pulls Umsindisi out with the ATV. He drives off towards the beach.

Mikey jogs lightly after him, but keeps to the shadows.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT RECEPTION OFFICE. NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Mikey lurks against the wall outside the office, hoodie over his head.

Mulherengo walks up to the office and is surprised by Mikey - but only for a second. Then he smiles.

MIKEY (V.O.)

He did not deny it or anything. In fact he asked me if I wanted in on the action. When I declined his offer and threatened to call the cops, he pointed out that I had no proof, that he'll deny everything. Plus, had something on me.

INT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET. NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

SARAH-LEE

Like what?

Mikey sighs.

MIKEY

I had a fling with one of his next victims, Layla.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT - RUBBERDUCK LOCK-UP. DAY - FLASHBACK

Mikey presses the blond TEENAGE GIRL from the beginning (LAYLA) against the closed rubberduck garage door. He kisses her passionately as she arches her back.

MIKEY (V.O.)

Nothing serious, but also nothing that her parents would approve of, as she was still in high school. Mulherengo knew this.

Mulherengo comes from around the corner and catches them in the act. He takes a bunch of photos with his phone.

Mikey and Layla stop abruptly. Mikey walks over to Mulherengo, who holds up the phone.

Layla runs off.

MIKEY (V.O.)

The following morning they found her body on the beach.

INT. IPHILO RESORT - RUBBERDUCK LOCK-UP. NIGHT - CONT.

JASON

Where is she now? I left her-

MULHERENGO

She's waiting in the bushes. I had to stash tonight's package at home after you discovered my tennis court operation. Would be good to have a hand this time.

JASON

Glad to be of help.

MULHERENGO

These chicks can be quite a handful. Like that one that drowned. Feisty bitch, that one. Can see why Mikey liked her. Dumb fuck handed to me on a plate.

Jason looks for the everlasting vape. It is nowhere to be seen.

He nods.

JASON

Cool. Do I wait here or...

MULHERENGO

Go get some sleep. Meet me here before sunrise, that's when the

(MORE)

MULHERENGO (cont'd)
trawler will come to collect the
package. We'll be done before
that ballbuster colleague of
yours wakes up. She looked quite
exhausted.

JASON
She did.

Mulherengo's smile is shark-like.

MULHERENGO
I knew I could count on you.

With an excited grin, Mulherengo runs off.

Jason stands frozen. He breathes slowly.

Outside, the thunder rumbles low as the rain dies down.

Then Jason rushes off, back towards the chalet.

INT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET. NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Mikey leans back against the sliding doors.

Sarah-Lee shakes her head.

SARAH-LEE
So you decided to what - save the
girls yourself?

Mikey shrugs.

MIKEY
What else was I to do? I still
feel guilty about Layla. In a way
I am responsible for her death.

Jason comes in from behind him and clears his throat.

JASON
Where were you today? Because
clearly you were not ill?

Mikey turns to him, startled.

MIKEY
Jason! I-

He breaks off and looks back at Sarah-Lee.

Sarah-Lee shoots a glance at Jason, who enters, closes the
door and simply nods.

SARAH-LEE

Continue.

Mikey inhales and carries on.

MIKEY

I had to take some time off.
Figure out some shit with my own
investigation. When I returned
this afternoon...

JASON

...you bumped into Franco and I.

MIKEY

Excactly. When I went back there
after we...wrestled, I found
Mulherengo. Before I could
confront him, Jackie's dad called
him. When I saw Sarah-Lee's badge
and gun, I knew you guys were the
real deal.

JASON

You're one hell of a risk-taker.

MIKEY

If I knew you were undercover, I
would have told you ages ago.

Mikey holds out an open hand to Jason.

MIKEY (cont'd)

Jason, I am so, so sorry about
everything.

For a few seconds Jason just stares him straight in the
eye, man to man, as he locks him in. The weight of this
moment should not pass Mikey by easily.

JASON

You can never, ever, do something
like this on your own again,
Mike. Please realize the
seriousness of this whole
clusterfuck.

Mikey swallows, but keeps the eye contact and nods.

MIKEY

I just want to help you catch the
bastard in the act.

Jason finally takes Mikey's hand.

The moment is enough.

SARAH-LEE

Okay, girls, let's get to work.

EXT. FRANCO/JACKIE'S CAMP SITE. NIGHT

Franco sits outside their semi-packed up caravan on a camping chair. He looks just as tired as he is. Every so often, he checks his phone, which is plugged into its charger.

Nothing.

He rubs his eyes and yawns. His head falls forward, but he jerks it back as he struggles to stay awake.

Once more his head becomes too heavy for his shoulders.

This time he doesn't wake up again.

INT. IPHILO RESORT - JASON'S CHALET BEDROOM. NIGHT

Jason, Sarah-Lee and Mikey stares at the infographic. Mikey's name has now been crossed out. Sarah-Lee takes them through it. She points at various places on a map of the resort as she does.

SARAH-LEE

This is where Jackie went missing. This is their campsite. This gate is the closest to the beach, but we have to go through the entire resort first.

Mikey points to the river bank.

MIKEY

Most of these campers have left because of everything, so it should be relatively quiet if he used this route.

JASON

I doubt he will. He will have to pass Jackie's caravan stand.

MIKEY

You say he stashed her in his house?

JASON

He said so. Where does he live?

MIKEY

A private house, just up the road. He has an access path into the resort, but he has to drive in from outside with a car.

SARAH-LEE

Would he risk manoeuvring the rubberduck in the dead of night?

Mikey shakes his head.

MIKEY

No, that's suicide. He would wait until first light, which is still very early here at the coast.

Jason stands back.

JASON

We could wait him in at the garage. Catch him there.

Sarah-Lee shakes her head.

SARAH-LEE

These guys are smart. Trust me, Jason, he knows we are onto him. I highly doubt he will really trust you this fast. It might either be a test or a trap. We can split up to cover our bases, but I really think we'll be wasting our time.

Mikey nods in agreement.

MIKEY

What do you suggest?

Sarah-Lee stares at the map again intensely.

SARAH-LEE

Are there anywhere else than the one spot from where he could launch the rubberduck?

Mikey runs a finger along the coastline on the map. He stops at the inlet right next to the lagoon.

MIKEY

This remains his best option. He wouldn't risk the open stretches, because there are other houses with sea views from where he could be spotted. This one closest to the rocks will get him around the bend and out of sight the quickest.

Sarah-Lee bites her lip, worried.

SARAH-LEE

That's a lot of open ground to cover. He'll see us coming a mile away.

Mikey draws an imaginary line with his finger over a supposedly closed stretch on the map.

MIKEY

Not if we use this path. It is a hidden bush path that I discovered one day. I've never seen anyone else use it. It brings us right up to the lagoon.

JASON

Then that is our route.

EXT. FRANCO/JACKIE'S CAMP SITE. DAWN

The first light starts to break. Franco's phone buzzes and wakes him up with a whiplash. He anxiously looks at it.

It is a text message from Jackie:

Babe, I'm at the lagoon. I'm okay, but I need my inhaler. Can you bring it to me?

Franco throws his phone down and grabs his backpack. He rummages through it and finds the inhaler.

EXT. BUSH PATH TOWARDS THE BEACH. DAWN

Mikey leads Jason and Sarah-Lee along a very narrow path through a thicket of stinging nettle.

MIKEY

Watch out. These things burn like hell when they sting you.

Carefully, they hurry along the nettle path, one after the other. Sarah-Lee covers the rear.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH - LAGOON SIDE. DAWN

Franco enters the beach through the gate closest to the lagoon's side. Far ahead, right at the water's edge, he can see the rubberduck. With renewed energy, he darts towards it.

EXT. BUSH PATH TOWARDS THE BEACH - DUNE. DAWN

Mikey and Jason reaches the edge of the path which ends on top of a high sand dune that overlooks the lagoon and the rocks. They see the rubberduck ready to take off.

JASON

There!

MIKEY

I don't see Mulherengo. But there's Franco.

JASON

What? Oh, shit!

Sarah-Lee tries to see past them - and then gets clunked solidly on the head. She sags down like a bag of potatoes.

Mikey and Jason turn around, surprised by Mulherengo.

MULHERENGO

I knew you'd betray me!

Jason screams at Franco the top of his lungs:

JASON

FRANCO!!

Mikey gets ready to lunge at Mulherengo, but Mulherengo aims his pistol at him.

Jason sees this and tackles Mikey into the stinging nettle just as Mulherengo fires at him.

MIKEY

Ahhhhh!

He grabs his thigh. The bullet found a target. And the nettle burns like lava.

Jason jumps up and dashes after Mulherengo, who aims at Franco from the top of the dune and fires.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH - LAGOON SIDE. DAWN

The shot misses Franco and slams into one of the rocks protruding from the narrow river that leads from the lagoon into the ocean.

Franco ducks instinctively. He scrambles away, but his feet slip on the hidden rocks. As he falls he knocks a knee against a sharp edge.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH - DUNE. DAWN

Jason tackles Mulherengo. They both tumble down the sand dune towards the lagoon.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH - LAGOON SIDE. DAWN

When they come to a halt, Jason tries to get on top of Mulherengo, but the taller man is suprisingly agile with his legs. He flips Jason's legs out from underneath him so that Jason lands on his back again.

Mulherengo scrambles to his feet and tries to get some distance, but Jason is back up in no time.

Mulherengo quickens to a run and fires a shot behind him as he goes. He misses.

Jason barely catches up to him when they reach the hard sand, still wet from the early morning surf.

Franco struggles to get up from where he slipped. He tries his foot, but his ankle buckles underneath him almost immediately.

Mulherengo pins Jason down and aims his pistol at Jason. With a quick movement, Jason knocks the pistol out of Mulherengo's hand, back towards the dryer sand. Mulherengo gives him two quick punches with his fists, before he gets up and stomps with full force onto Jason's shoulder.

JASON

Fuuuuck!!

As Jason squirms in pain, Mulherengo scrambles away, picks up his pistol and runs toward the rubberduck.

From the rubberduck, Jackie's head now pops up. Gagged and bound she tries her best to scream.

Franco starts to hobble closer on one leg.

Mulherengo reaches the rubberduck. With quick feet he pulls it towards the water. He frowns and then throws one of the buoy's out - the one Jason fixed to the boat with a rope.

Jason gets up and runs to the rubberduck. He sees Franco also try to get there. He shakes his head and points as he runs.

JASON (cont'd)

No! Up the dune! Go help them!

Franco nods and changes his direction towards the dune.

Mulherengo starts the engine. Umsindisi comes alive.

Jason sees the buoy tows after it and chases even faster. At the last minute he grabs onto it as the rubberduck takes off.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH - OCEAN. DAY

The sun peers over the horizon.

Mulherengo points the nose of the rubberduck towards the outskirts of the rocks. The rubberduck is open full throttle.

In the distance, a medium-sized trawler can be seen.

Jason hangs on to the buoy for dear life. Slowly he uses the buoy to winch the rope attached to it and in the process pulls himself closer to the rubberduck.

Mulherengo jerks his head back to see why he can't get more speed. He notices Jason with surprise. He jerks his head back and forth to see where he goes and where Jason is. Then he fires two shots in Jason's direction, but the surf and the spray shields Jason from it.

As he looks forward again, Jason winches the last bit of the rope and pulls himself up towards the side of the rubberduck.

Mulherengo notices him and aims at Jason again, but now Jason is close enough to grab the pistol.

Mulherengo cannot hold onto both the pistol and focus on where he steers the rubberduck. He plucks it out of Jason's grip, but Jason manages to knock it out of his hand completely so that it ends up in the ocean.

With a surge of strength Jason swings himself over the edge of the rubberduck. He almost stomps on a gagged and bound Jackie as he does.

Mulherengo looks flustered as Jason lunges at him with full force. Jason grabs Mulherengo by the chain around his neck and pulls him forward, so that Mulherengo nosedives towards the bottom of the rubberduck.

With one hand, Mulherengo again swings to ankle-tap Jason and sweep his feet from underneath him, but this time Jason is ready for him. He jumps at the last minute and lands with his knees on Mulherengo's back.

Jason grabs Mulherengo's one hand and twists it high behind his back.

MULHERENGO

Ahhh!!

Mulherengo kicks with his heels toward Jason. He hits him in the back so that Jason lurches forward and loses his grip on Mulherengo's hand.

Jason falls to the one side. As he does, he sees Mulherengo grab a leatherman multitool from his pocket.

Mulherengo flicks the leatherman open to reveal a shiny sharp blade. With one movement, Mulherengo pushes himself up and stabs at Jason's chest. Jason backrolls, so that Mulherengo's hand passes by his butt. Mulherengo narrowly misses it - and stabs a gaping hole into the inside of the rubberduck.

Immediately, air starts to hiss out from the hole as the boat starts to deflate fast.

The boat begins to spin out of control now, still at full throttle but losing air by the second.

Mulherengo freezes completely, his eyes wide.

Jason plucks the leatherman from Mulherengo's hand and quickly cuts Jackie's bonds. Then he cuts the fixed buoy loose, before he throws the leatherman into the sea.

JASON

Jason always wins, bastard.
Cheers.

Jason nods at Jackie, who nods back. The two of them jump overboard.

MULHERENGO

Wait! No! Wait!

Jason and Jackie do not look back. Both of them hold onto the handles of the buoy as they slowly kick and swim away from the sinking rubberduck.

Jason is dead tired and switches hands so that he can hold onto the buoy with his left hand and drift on his back. Jackie follows suit. For a second they catch the breather this gives them.

JASON

You okay?

JACKIE

I think so!

JASON

Cool...

Out of breath, Jason doesn't have the energy to kick anymore. He stops and just floats. He can barely hold onto the buoy.

JACKIE

Jason? Jason?!

He doesn't respond.

EXT. BUSH PATH TOWARDS THE BEACH. DAY

Sarah-Lee wakes up to see Franco put pressure on Mikey's gunshot wound. She looks out over the ocean.

SARAH-LEE
There! There they are!

FRANCO
Jackie!

He jumps up on both feet, but his knee and ankle buckle under him. Mikey's leg starts to bleed anew.

SARAH-LEE
Stay here.

She dashes down the side of the dune towards the surf.

Franco tears his shirt to get fabric for a bandage.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH - OCEAN. DAY

Jason's eyes flashes open just as he slips under the water. He gasps as he breaks the surface again and jerks at the buoy.

They are much closer to the beach now than before.

Sarah-Lee swims towards them with strong strokes.

SARAH-LEE
Jason!

She reaches them and puts an arm underneath Jason's.

SARAH-LEE (cont'd)
You can use the buoy. I got him.

Jackie nods and takes the buoy with both hands now. She kicks the rest of the way towards the beach.

Sarah-Lee holds onto the barely awake Jason and pulls him with slow, strong strokes to safety.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH. DAY

Sarah-Lee drags Jason out of the water.

Franco hobbles closer as Jackie gets up out of the water. He hugs her tightly.

Jason's eyes flutters open.

JASON
Is she safe?

Franco hunches down next to him.

FRANCO

She is. Because of you. Jason,
I'm so sorry.

Jason smiles faintly before he drifts off again.

EXT. IPHILO RESORT BEACH BAR. DAY

An ambulance has pulled up in the gangway between the back of the hall and the main restaurant building.

Paramedics tend to Mikey's and Jason's wounds. Both lie on stretchers next to each other, with drips in their veins.

Another paramedic tends to Franco's knee and ankle.

The parents are off to the side. They fill in forms and chat anxiously among themselves.

Sarah-Lee and Jackie sit on a bench close by - a little worse for wear, but unscathed. Sarah-Lee winks at Jackie.

SARAH-LEE

Men are such pissies.

Jackie smiles and nods back.

JACKIE

As if we weren't also injured
ourselves.

Jason sits up a bit.

JASON

I heard that!

SARAH-LEE

Good!

Jason waves her away like he would a fly.

MIKEY

What happened to Mulherengo?

JASON

He sank with Umsindisi.

Sarah-Lee shakes her head.

SARAH-LEE

The rubberduck was still
semi-afloat when we left the
beach. There's a small chance he
might have been picked up by the
guys to whom he was supposed to
deliver Jackie.

JACKIE

You know he told me what happened to the girl that drowned? I guess he got some sick pleasure of it, or tried to scare me or something.

MIKEY

Layla. Her name was Layla.

Jackie nods and continues.

JACKIE

He said he usually delivered the girls asleep to the cartel, but because she woke up and escaped he had to bind me so that I cannot play the same tricks. She must have decided to rather try and make for the shore than become a traffic victim.

JASON

And the burn mark?

Jackie turns her shoulder to Jason, showing a similar red mark.

JACKIE

He gave me one as well. His vape.

Jason and Sarah-Lee look at each other. New information.

The parents are done with the forms.

FRANCO'S DAD

Franco, Jackie, let's go guys. We have a long road ahead.

Jackie's dad puts a protective arm around her.

JACKIE'S DAD

No-one's taking you from us again, sweetheart.

Franco hobbles up with a hopeful smile.

FRANCO

Except maybe me someday?

Jason laughs.

JASON

Pick your moments, bro.

Franco takes Jackie's hand and turns back towards them one last time.

FRANCO

We'll meet up in Pretoria, yes?
This isn't over.

Sarah-Lee nods.

SARAH-LEE

We'll need more statements from
you anyway. You guys were heroes.
Your help in this neverending
fight against trafficking is
invaluable.

MIKEY

And my help?

Jason holds out a fist to him.

JASON

You should come to the police
academy. Your talents are wasted
on the beach.

Mikey bumps Jason's fist.

Franco and Jackie wave at them.

FRANCO

Bye, guys.

JACKIE

Love you!

They walk off with their parents.

PARAMEDIC

Okay, let's go.
(to Sarah-Lee)
We'll meet you at the hospital.

Sarah-Lee nods as they load the two guys into the
ambulance and close the door.

The ambulance drives off.

For a moment, Sarah-Lee turns around and takes in the
quiet serenity that has now dawned on the place.

SARAH-LEE

Damn. I could have done with a
holiday.

EXT. POLICE STATION PARKING LOT. DAY

Title: 3 months later

Jason gets off his motorbike and removes his helmet.
Sarah-Lee waits for him before they enter the building.

SARAH-LEE

Back on the bike! I assume
shoulder rehab is going well?

JASON

Couldn't be better even if I
tried.

SARAH-LEE

I bet mommy's food also helps?

JASON

It doesn't do any harm!

Jason holds the door open for Sarah-Lee to enter first
before he follows after her.

INT. COLONEL MBATHA'S OFFICE. DAY

Mbatha smiles as he closes the folder.

MBATHA

Obviously, the promotion is out
the window now, but I have
reviewed your application, Jason.
I am glad to say it is approved.
You can now work full time with
Sarah-Lee on the trafficking
investigation-

Jason and Sarah-Lee high-fives each other.

MBATHA (cont'd)

-as long as it doesn't interfere
with your other open cases. I
can't take you out of the field
completely.

Jason nods confidently.

JASON

You can count on me, Colonel. Did
Mike Ruben's application for the
academy come through yet?

Mbatha nods.

MBATHA

He falls in Monday, next of next
week.

Jason acknowledges. Sarah-Lee pushes her chair back.

SARAH-LEE

Is there anything else, Colonel?
I have a fresh lead on where
Mulherengo was last seen that I
want to go check out.

Mbatha shakes his head.

MBATHA

No. Go catch me some bad guys.

Jason's eyes glisten as he gets up.

JASON

Yeah!

Sarah-Lee rolls her eyes as she walks out with Jason,
sunglasses on his eyes, in tow.

Colonel Mbatha sits back in his chair and smiles.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END