

PLAY: Convicted

WRITER: JC ZONDI

This writing is based off true stories, primarily that happened to one Njabulo Ndlovu who was imprisoned in 2004 at 19 years old.

Opening with a Lucky Dube's 'Prisoner'; As the light slowly brightens up, it lights a man sitting on a chair, he's almost looking beyond.

2.1 (a). HELL be thy name

Bheki: It's hard to be innocent in prison, because almost everyone there is guilty, and even if you're not guilty they make you guilty. I met a lot of different people in there. Some you could tell were once kind and some you could just tell were the animals the world proved them to be. One such individual was 'Skhova' directly translated as "Owl". He prided himself for not sleeping. He'd stay awake for 3 days if he had to, just so he could kill you. It's odd how it's the none threatening ones that are the most dangerous in prison sometimes.

(As Bheki describes Skhova he slowly transforms into his man.)

Skhova was very skinny, I mean, he had protruding shoulder bones skinny. He had a scar on his left cheek. When he looked at you, his eyes were always piercing; he looked like he was already murdering you. *(Adjusting his body to mimic the man he speaks of)*

(Pause. Skhova looks at the audience piercingly.)

Skhova: I am a nice guy yeah? At least I give an option depending on my mood; ncela (suck) or dunusa (bend over)? *(Gesturing to his private parts)*. Once you are here, I don't care who you were outside, you could've been a billionaire for all I care. Once you are here, you are either two things to me yeah.

Isfebe sami (my bitch) and guilty. You want to die? Or cry every day? Then deny either of those things. Akekho umuntu ozozenza ngcwele ngcwele in here *(No one is a saint here)*. Do you think we all want to be here... well *(he laughs)* some of us actually love it here, but no! Circumstances and choices put us in here. Yayizwa le English engiyikhiphayo (talking to audience member) Circumstances and choices... I was like you phela, educated but I was like

fuck it... I am tired of waiting... let me take...so ngathatha...odalawayo bangithatha nabo (I took, and I was taken). So, here we are, have you made your choice...ncela (suck) or dunusa (bend over)?

(Transition).

Bheki: Either choice defiles you as a man. I had only ever heard about the events and the actions that take place in prison; sometimes with my friends I would laugh, saying *'never, be fucked by another man? I'd rather be killed'*

(Pause)

Activity Sample

Chapter 2 – 'HELL be thy name'

Purpose: This activity encourages students/performers to engage in introspection and creative expression by imagining and presenting what they think their past life looked like. By basing their presentation on their feelings, creativity, and thoughts, students can explore their own perspectives, beliefs, and emotions. This activity promotes self-reflection, self-expression, and public speaking skills while fostering a deeper understanding of personal identity and experiences.

1. In groups of 10, recreate the courtroom scene Bheki describes. Explore the setting, the dialogue, the unfold of events, etc.
2. Who are you in this courtroom? What is your role? Understand the character you are playing and how that character relates to the case and the court setting itself.