

# 'Corruption emergency' calls for whistle blower intervention

Issued by [About Known Associates Entertainment](#)

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Probably the most shocking whistle blower killing to occur in South Africa in recent times was the brutal assassination of Babita Deokoran, mother, family woman and senior manager at the Gauteng Health Department. Her attempts to prevent illicit Covid procurement payments running into the hundreds of millions led to her ambush and death in a hail of bullets as she arrived home after dropping her daughter at school. Shot fatally nine times, she died later in hospital.

In our history as South Africans, we witnessed the atrocities of apartheid police actions against antiapartheid fighters many of whom lost their lives: The system has changed but the tradition of whistleblowing remains – and with it a continued need to update our forensic work as citizens, so we understand and express what is afoot in our world, so that we can continue to improve the situations we find ourselves in, in order to raise political awareness around present challenges.

**The South African Human Rights commission says whistleblowing is an essential weapon in the fight against corruption, perhaps the single most important obstacle to SA achieving the status it needs to achieve as a 'moral' Rainbow Nation.** Because of South Africa's history some observers reflect that the country is naturally drawn to stories of justice and reconciliation, hence perhaps the national instinct to support South Africa's genocide application to the ICJ in the case of Israel vs Palestine. The broad view is that it would have been to South Africa's detriment to remain silent whilst witnessing an event on the world stage that mirrored and magnified crimes like detention without trial and ethnic restriction of civil rights, that were a signature of South Africa's apartheid policy preceding 1994.

## New South African movie response

A new South African thriller due for release this month on Amazon, is inspired by several true South African whistle blower stories: *Death of a Whistleblower* is directed by Ian Gabriel and stars Noxolo Dlamini (South African Film and TV Awards – SAFTA - Best Actress 2023) and Irshaad Ally (Four Corners) and is produced by Tshepiso Chikapa Phiri from KAE (Known Artists Entertainment in partnership with EVOD).

*Death of a Whistleblower* deliberately bridges events from the past and links them to events in the present, drawing a line from the notorious Project Coast chemical weapons program of the eighties through to the continuation in the present of powerful private security agencies in South Africa who have the ability and power to call the shots at high levels when they choose to do so.

The South African film shot early in 2023, deals with the increasing phenomenon of gangster style executions awaiting whistle blowers attempting to expose forms of institutional corruption. Recently completed, the film was welcomed at the Toronto's International Film Festival as a work that 'transcends boundaries and embraces the art of human experience'.

"In devising *Death of a Whistleblower*, we wanted to connect the crimes of South Africa's past with our present-day crimes of corruption. Our objective was to highlight both the differences and similarities between the two eras," said director Ian Gabriel.

## Corruption emergency

The deaths of whistle blowers in South Africa has been described as a 'corruption emergency', posing a serious moral question for the Rainbow Nation

The research and analysis journal, *The Conversation*, observes that legislation and regulations in South Africa present a

confusing web for whistleblowers to navigate and results in inconsistent protection, despite the 'corruption emergency' that South Africans are facing.

The events in *Death of a Whistleblower* are bracketed by two crimes, committed 37 years apart. The one crime, as fresh as today's headlines, is revealed near the closing minutes of the film. The other is buried in a cover up concealed since the eighties. The perennial question of revenge or forgiveness is raised as key options in the film

### ***True story sacrifices***

The closing images of the film highlight the true story sacrifice of the lives of five South African whistle blowers, all dedicated to sharing truth with their fellow South Africans, all killed by vengeful gangster style attacks by shadowy individuals determined to keep truth in South Africa from seeing the light of day. The film ends with a dedication to the truths that each of five South African rainbow nation warriors from 2010 – 2023 have given their lives for.

***Death of a Whistleblower*** screens at the Joburg Film Festival in Sandton Square on 28 Feb and streams from the same day on Amazon Prime.

[Death Of A Whistleblower TRAILER](#) from [Known Associates Entertainment](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Join the Conversation: #DeathOfAWhistleblower #KnownForStory #JoburgFilmFestival

### **About Known Associates Entertainment:**

Known Associates Entertainment (KAE) is a television and film production company committed to making content for global audiences. Known Associates Entertainment forms part of the Known Associates Group (KAG), founded by entrepreneur and producer, Tshepiso Chikapa Phiri in 2014. KAE was established by Tshepiso and veteran producer Dan Jawitz in 2018 as part of KAG's expansion. The company is now a 100% black female owned company. Renowned film financier and executive producer, Joel Phiri, is the company's chairperson. KAE develops and produces original in-house content across genres with a wide range of partners. These include Amazon Prime Video, eTV, Netflix, SABC, VIU, the National Empowerment Fund, Indigenous Film Distribution, National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF), the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) and more. Through innovative ways of financing, ranging from equity, production and acquisition finance, capital guarantees and bridging, KAE partners with select film makers to produce quality films and television series on and from the African continent.

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## **About the producer Tshepiso Chikapa Phiri**

Tshepiso Chikapa Phiri is the CEO and founder of the Known Associates Group of Companies, which includes a below-the-line agency; a design studio; a film production development and finance company; and a state-of-the-art film and television studio in Gauteng which is under development at the Cradle of Humankind.

She is a University of Cape Town Alumni, with 20 years` experience in communications, events, media and marketing, TV, and film producing.

Her career spans from working in international events including the North Sea Jazz Festival and Sithengi Film Festival.

In 2007 she decided to commit to a career as a television and film producer, her training ground was at Bomb Productions where she was the associate producer on the drama series Zone14.

In 2008 she formed a boutique film and television production company Zing Entertainment with her partner Joel Phiri.

Zing in partnership with Pulp Films produced MTN`s The Beautiful Game a football documentary filmed throughout Africa.

In 2014 she formed Known Associates Pty Ltd (KA) which is a below-the-line agency that has its own dedicated creative design studio.

KA skilfully produces and directs world-class projects in the communications, experiential, and relationship marketing industries, both locally and across Africa.

In 2018 Tshepiso founded Known Associates Entertainment with partner Joel Phiri.

It also broadened its offering into the servicing of international productions working on “Beast with Universal Studios”, and The Woman King (Sony Pictures) starring Oscar Award-winning Viola Davis and South Africa`s very own Thuso Mbedu.

In 2022 she engineered the acquisition of Moonlighting Films the biggest production servicing company in Africa which has provided production services to major Hollywood studios since 1997.

KAE`s current production slate delivers five feature films including the sequel to The Umbrella Men by John Barker, and Ian Gabriel`s new film Death of a Whistle Blower which both premiered at the 2023 Toronto International. In 2023 she won the Best Producer Award at the National Film and TV Awards.

Tshepiso is the Chairperson of the Independent Producers Organisation (IPO), other boards she sits on include the Independent Black Filmmakers Collective (IBFC), The Durban Film Mart Institute (DFMI), The Gerald Sekoto Trust and Media Heads 360.

## **About the director Ian Gabriel:**

Ian Gabriel is a South African director of colour whose extensive experience in film and theatre began at Dorkay House, Johannesburg`s famous anti-apartheid theatre venue.

Ian`s feature film, *Four Corners*, was the South African Official Submission for Best Foreign Language Film at the 86th Academy Awards, was awarded Best International Feature and Best Feature (USA) at the Santa Fe Independent Film Festival and won 6 Golden Horn South African Film and Television Awards including Best Picture. His previous film Forgiveness won the Best South African Film Award in 2004, was a Golden Leopard nominee at Locarno and won the Locarno Youth Jury Best Film Award.

Ian collaborated with his son transgender writer/actor/director Gabe Gabriel on the family dramedy Runs in the Family,

which received the 2023 Best South African Film Award at the Durban International Film Festival. The film reflects on Ian's Indian diasporic past and on his son's transgender future and is available worldwide on Netflix. *Runs in the Family* is a 2024 GLAAD Awards Outstanding Film Nominee (Streaming and TV).

Ian's latest outing is *Death of a Whistleblower* – a true events thriller about whistleblowing and the funding for profit of warfare in Africa and the Middle East. Ian will follow this outing with a director collaboration between himself and Gabe Gabriel focusing on an apartheid era/ Aids crisis 'disco resistance', white-passing, trans heroine Granny Lee.

Ian is in development on a disruptive historic series- *Sabela Gold* – focusing on the rise of South African Black consciousness and revolutionary urban thought in pre-World War One South Africa. He is a participant in the DGA Diversity program.



(Corporal Albert Loots 'Irshaad Ally' tries to mask his anxiety)



(Journalist Luyanda Masinda [Noxolo Dlamini] leaves no trace as she strides away from the car she's incinerated)



(Martin Bezuidenhout ‘Deon Coetzee’ bears down on Major General Thuli Yiza ‘S’Thandiwe Kgoroge’)

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