**Episode one - El Dorado**

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

colonial, south Africa, river, farmers, migrants, colony, violence, south Africans, land, local, labour, Dutch, Windsor, stones, neighbours, south Africa’s, metro, diamond, identities, British

00:00

Welcome to Episode One of El Dorado. The next 20 minutes contains strong material that you may find triggering. So be cautious. On that note, there will be colonial terms which I'll explain. So, we on the same page, South Africa's colonial past is a melody of coveting eyes from both the Dutch and the British. The Dutch settled in in what was referred to as a Cape of Good Hope. Jan Van Riebieck was tasked with setting up a refreshment station for the Dutch East India Company in 1652 and with him came the company's employees. Britain annexed, the Cape of Good Hope in 1815, and later Natal in 1843. The colony was given the self-governing title in the 1850s because tensions were rising high as you'll hear.

01:20

17th of July 2020.

Morning South Africans if your neighbors are foreigners, and your relationship with them now and kill them at the same time you can't have a relationship with your enemy, destroy them, destroy them, and finish them with their kids killed the father killed the mother and all the kids finish them and burn their houses. Ah this can't be real this cannot be real. This can't be real. This is spam. Go to all restaurants kill all foreigners go to all cash for scrap. Kill them all. Take everything that you want because everything is in your country that means that belong to you South Africans. Gogo no, no, no, no, no, no, no no Gogo. This can't be real. This cannot be real. This is definitely spam. South Africa on the precipice of explosives and a phobic violence. UN experts warned in a statement released on Friday. The rights experts cited operation dudula as an example of hate speech. Originally, a social media campaign operation dudula has become an umbrella for the mobilisation of violent protests. vigilante violence, often targeting migrant owned homes and businesses and even the murder of foreign nationals. Anti-migrant discuss from senior government officials has fanned the flames of violence, and government actors have failed to prevent further violence or hold perpetrators accountable. Without urgent action from the Government of South Africa to curb the scapegoating of migrants and refugees and the widespread violence and intimidation against these groups. We are deeply concerned that the country is on the precipice of explosive violence. In 2008, for example, xenophobic violence resulted in the death of over 60 people and contributed to the displacement of at least 100,000 in a xenophobia is often explicitly racialized targeting low-income black migrants and refugees and, in some cases, South African citizens accused of being too black to be South African. In one highly publicized incident in April 22 a 43 old Zimbabwean national and a father of four was killed. Mum! Mum! Mum! Mum, you need to see this!

On the 17th of July, we received a WhatsApp group message from uGogo wami or my Nan. She had forwarded this message to ensure my uncle was on alert seeing as him and his family live in Jozi.

Not long after she sent a video of migrants being violently attacked in what is supposed to be a sanctuary. I'm no stranger to xenophobia. I grew up in a council estate in England during the 2000s petrol bombed homes of migrant families were part of the lifestyle. But it never occurred to me that a similar type of othering had plagued a nation so close to home, the birthplace of my ancestral roots. Though I'm British, I was born in Bulawayo. I am a mixed bag of Northern Ndebele, Kalanga, Sotho, and Zulu. So home is not just England. I want to know why the rainbow nation is suffering from Afrophobia. I say Afrophobia because it is fear of the Black Other, not fear of the Other, which is xenophobia. That is not to say isn't xenophobic attacks on other identities don't happen in South Africa, they do. But as expressed on the UN report, those who are often targeted are low-income Black migrants and refugees. What happened to Ubuntu?

Ighama lami ngu Nompumelelo, my name is Nompumelelo, I am a photojournalist and public historian on a mission to understand South Africa's present relationship with other African identities. I propose that high unemployment rates in South Africa are not due to migrant labour but rather the government's failure to eradicate a system built on racial capitalism. Why not join me in investigating the parallels between South Africa’s colonial past and its equally violent present.

06:15

If you want to know the end, look at the beginning.

It was 1867 along the Vaal and Gariep Rivers formally known as the Orange River where the Eureka diamond was found by Young Erasmus Jacobs. Fun fact, Gariep was the original name of the river before Robert Jacob Gordon, an employee of the Dutch East India Company named it after the royal House of Orange to honour William V. So, Jacobs was a child that loved to play games by the river collecting stones with no recognition that one day he would change the course of history. It so happened one of the shiny stones in his collection stirred up a relentless curiosity from his neighbour, Schalk van Niekerk. In his hands the stone travelled across Hopetown before capturing the eye of the civil commissioner in Colesburg.

07:24

COLESBERG. March 12, 1867 My Dear Sir, I enclose a stone which has been handed to me by Mr. John O'Reilly as having been picked up on a farm in the Hope Town district, and as he thinks it is of some value I send the same to you to examine, which you must please return to me.— Yours very sincerely, L. BOYES.

07:48

Lorenzo Boyes had sent this letter to Dr William Guybon Athersone, surgeon and geologist from Nottingham who had settled in South Africa with his family in 1820. He was the first geologist to identify the shiny stone wrapped up in an envelope as the Eureka diamond.

08:06

I had never seen a rough diamond before, but upon taking its hardness, examining it by polarised light. I at once declared that it was indeed a genuine diamond of considerable value. Perceiving the great importance of such a discovery to the colony, I wrote to the Colonial Secretary, Richard Southey. Announcing the fact and suggesting that it should be sent to the Paris Exhibition and sold for the benefit of the finder. It was indeed sent to the Paris Exhibition, and purchased by the Governor of the Colony, Sir Philip Woodhouse, for £500.

08:41

This discovery would prove catastrophic for the local ethnic groups within the region and beyond. Tension over land alone was already bubbling to the surface. Korannas, Griquas and Boers lived in uneasy proximity.

Koranas were also known as !Kora and the Griquas were derogatorily named Bastard, they are now known as the coloured community. You may have heard of Afrikaners being referred to as Boers. Boer means farmer in Dutch and Afrikaans.

The!Kora were a nomadic Khoi Khoi community notoriously known for their highly efficient raids. They trekked their chiefdoms during the late 17th century to the south- western Cape to escape colonial violence, settling among Nama herders and groups of San hunter- gatherers.

They were farmers who breed and took care of sheep, cattle and the likes. They had little use for the ways of the Colony and rejected its agents, government officials or missionaries. The !Kora are described as being one of the most significant adversaries of colonial expansion. Throughout the nineteenth century major expeditions were set against the !Kora to stop their widespread raids preventing colonial life from thriving.

Despite their loose political structure, under the leadership of Piet Rooi and Jan Kivido they were the most effective raiders. Piet and Jan’s influence was not just due to their successful raiding records but they had established links with smuggling networks throughout central South Africa that supplied them with guns. The !Kora not only mounted horses but they were well armed with an incredible fortress.

In the region between modern Upington and the Aughrabies falls, the Gariep River spreads out to form a multitude of small islands, varying in breadth and length. These were covered with thick bushes and vegetation hiding the channels between the islands brilliantly.

During one of the expeditions against the Kora, Sir Walter Currie, commander of the frontier police, said.

11:27

I used to think the Fish river bushes stronghold, but it stands nowhere in comparison with this water jungle.

11:34

This fortress would prove fruitful in preventing their capture after one of their famed raids that resulted in a totally desertion of farmers between Calvinia and the gariep River. There were claims that hundreds of! Kora carried off large numbers of sheep, cattle, horses, guns, and wagons across the region.

A unit of about three hundred commandos from Calvinia district marched to the north of the river and tried to storm the island fortress of the !Kora.

They were defeated yet they managed to kill Jan Kivido and thirteen men. This did not stop the !Kora. They descended on farmers that had trekked into the San’s land, lifting over ten thousand sheep before their capture, made possible by one of their community members, Klaas Lucas.

The !Kora raiders partnered up with the San, southern Africa’s first nation. One of their most infamous partnerships was under the leadership of Stuurman. In the south of the Gariep river, they raided three farmers escaping with 3,000 sheep, 70 horses and a herd of 200 cattle. The death of three Boer families set the precedent of how dangerous these raids were.

The response from the KhoiKhoi and the San to dispossession, subjugation, enslavement, and eradication of their way of life was met with genocide. The destruction of raiding parties like that of !Kora and the slaughter of the San enabled farmers to move north to the Gariep river.

Territories between the Gariep and Vaal rivers would form the Orange Free State, an Afrikaner republic that would soon encroach on the land of the Griqua.

13:48

The Griqua were people of mixed heritage, both Khoikhoi and European. They considered themselves the descendants of Adam Kok, believed to the son of an enslaved person. Those who followed him were also Chaguriqua, a Khoikhoi tribe whose ancestral land was in the Piketberg district. Kok was recognised as the kaptyn and awarded staff of office by the Dutch authorities. He and his followers trekked north of the gariep river where European farmers had not settled yet.

While Kok established trade relations with the Tswana and the Kora, his successors made connections with missionaries, colonial authorities like Sir George Grey. Paving the way for Adam Kok the third to secure a treaty with Britain in 1845.

Though it was to protect Griqua territory against white colonists, it wasn’t long before the Griqua were violently clashing with Boers trekking from Natal. The formation of the Orange Free State was the final nail in the coffin for Kok and his people. He sold the territory to the Free State and located to Nomansland per Grey’s suggestion.

The other half of the Griqua under the leadership of Nicholaas Waterboer would face a turbulent fate perhaps worse than their peers. Their land had gradually sunk into poverty because of the Dutch farmers encroachment in the east and north of the region.

The discovery of diamond fields made Waterboer’s life intolerable, covetousness from the Boers and the British would strip his people’s independence and freedom. Remember the Cape secretary, Richard Southey?

Well, this was his response to the discovery of Eureka diamond.

15:48

This diamond gentleman is the rock upon which the future success of South Africa will be built.

15:54

Whilst his prophesy was true, this triumph was very costly to the local ethnic groups. What would follow would be far worse than the conflicts of lands they had endured. Europe set out on a merciless search for El Dorado leaving behind a legacy of lawlessness and injustice.

Waterboer had appealed to Britain for protection and in her signature style she annexed his land under British rule in 1871, calling it the ‘Griqualand West.’ Waterboer soon lost his captaincy but not without the rebellion of some of his people against British control. He was not only imprisoned but his people would join the ranks of landless labourers in Southern Africa feeding the new economic machine (the mining industry) greedy for cheap labour.

It is plausible to say the violent roots of the rainbow nation before it was even a state explain why tensions have risen so high over the decades. Dispossession, economic loss, and subjugation became somewhat ancestral, high unemployment rates are not due to migrant labour but the government’s failure to eradicate a system built on racial capitalism.

Neighbouring identities to South Africa are also escaping from the legacies of their colonial pasts. They too are trying to survive with what little they have to provide for their families. A story in which local South Africa have in common with their neighbours.

I spoke to entrepreneurs across Windsor in Randburg to better understand what it is like for migrants to work in Jozi.

I was taken back by the level of resourceful, resilience and innovative thinking. Aunty Patience runs a restaurant, she calls it her kitchen in between your local shops and a snooker club in the hustle and bustle of Windsor. Hear what she has to say.

18:13

Ah, I can say we run a kitchen whereby we sell African food.

18:25

I just came to look for some better opportunities. As you all know that Zimbabwe is not a good What can I say? Is struggling at some points so for a better life in South Africa. It is not really that good in terms of when they are saying foreigners must go back to their countries. So, it's getting tougher and tougher.

Competition. You know some they might some that are in the same business, like us. Shuwa yeah. At some point, they just break in and stole everything. So, I started again. And then they sent me Metro, Metro police saying I'm not running a kitchen in a good way, or I don't have a licence. By then I was in a process of making licence.

19:36

So, they sent Metro and Metro took everything I had to start again, this is the third time.

19:45

So, I don't know what's next. Yeah. Imagine if you have to look again for a place because I was done there. I think you know, there's a butchery that side. Yeah. I started there when there was no one yeah, I started there, and it was going so well. It was very very busy, so you'll see people get jealous and not knowing is just your ideas and then your prayers no umuthi nothing. So, some you’re using umuthi and what what what. How come you’re busy and then we’re quiet?

20:40

I stayed at home for six months. So, whenever I come to the shops, customers will just scream. Why are you at home? Why are you giving up? You don't give up at a business you don't give up. As much as they provoke you, you keep pushing, come back, we will support you. So, I said let's give it a try. And then we gave it a try. It keeps on when going well until they create another thing again. So yeah. Just keeping our fingers crossed that nothing will happen for the next coming month or so. Just to regain a little bit it's so stressful. You can see us walking around. It’s so stressful.

21:36

Patience’s experience is not unique, many migrant workers like her have to battle local competition often poisoned with the notion that destroying other workers’ properties or calling the metro to raid their environment will prevent them from working. As you will hear later on in the podcast from Xenowatch the fiasco over permits is often governed by Afrophobia. Getting it is a struggle, working without it is a struggle and yet the same rule does not apply to local South Africans doing business without permits.

Frankz Fanon warned Africans and the diaspora of what would follow if colonised people’s humanity and dignity was not restored. The colonies had become a market, Black bodies were subjugated to labour, dehumanised as objects for profit. With an agreed handover to native rule whose interests lied in profit from investment and the labour of others, the colonial country will become a new country in name only.

Fanon called for a genuine consciousness of social and political needs, rather than the hollow glorification of a nation. If we are being honest nationalism is a double edge sword because ultimately it leads to othering and the alienation of other identities. Case and point the current afrophobic epidemic in South Africa.

Join me next time as we travel to the Big Hole, Kimberley to learn about the first mining compound and the legacies it would leave behind. We will then hit the streets of Windsor to hear from another entrepreneur.

Until next time, thank you for listening.

Eldorado is a family and communal production.

This podcast series would not have been possible without the help of my uncles and cousin. Thank you to all the locals that shared their stories with us.