

008 INYUKA
I wish I shared your optimism.

009 IYONZWA
Why can't you?

010 INYUKA
It is their court. *Their* justice.

011 COURT CLERK
All rise.

CHAIRS SCRAPE. THE ROOM SETTLES.

012 JUDGE DE VOS
Be seated.

A GAVEL STRIKES.

013 COURT CLERK
Charles Van Cauter, you stand
charged with unlawful brutality,
abuse of authority, and the death
of Isidore Bakanja.
How do you plead?

014 VAN CAUTER
(flat)
Not guilty.

WALLA: A LOW MURMUR MOVES THROUGH THE ROOM.

015 JUDGE DE VOS
Is the prosecution ready to present
its opening statement?

SHORT SLIDE OF A WOODEN CHAIR ON A HARD WOOD
FLOOR.

Side 1 NOAH REYNIERS, 30s, stands and crosses the room.

START >>>

016 **REYNIERS**
Your Honor... Gentlemen of the court
– We are here today because a young
man name Isidore Bakanja is dead.
Was he a violent man? You will hear
testimony that Isidore was not
prone to violence of any kind. Was
he lazy? We will present you with
evidence that he was a hard worker
and was well liked by his co-
workers and friends. He was well
mannered, respected.
(MORE)

REYNIERS (CONT'D)

He rose when the bell rang, labored when the sun burned, and rested when permitted. By every measure this court understands, he did his job. Isidore Bakanja didn't seek trouble. He did not stir rebellion or undermine authority. What he did— quietly, consistently, without spectacle — was live according to his faith.

(a beat)

He wore a scapular. A small piece of cloth. No weapon. No banner. No *threat*. A private promise. A personal devotion. And for this... for refusing to remove that scapular,... Charles Van Cauter murdered him.

SLIGHT MUMMERS FROM THE COURTROOM

017 **REYNIERS** (CONT'D)

The defense will argue that this case is about productivity and efficiency. They will say it is about maintaining discipline. We will show that what this case is really about is power. The power to command a man's soul.

◀◀◀ END

Reyniers returns to his seat.

CHAIR SRAPES THE FLOOR. BODY SETTLES IN THE SEAT.

018 JUDGE DE VOS

The court will now hear the statement of defense counsel. Monsieur Delecroix?

WOODEN TABLE CREAKS

019 DELCROIX

Your Honor, Gentlemen of the court, I am Leon Delecroix. My client, Charles Van Cauter, is a hard working man who was charged with great responsibility a tough situation: overseeing a rubber operation in the Congo. This required him to be a manager, a diplomat, and a host of other things.

(MORE)