

Stones against A Mirror

**A 28-page excerpt from the
award-winning book about
friendship and betrayal in South
Africa's Struggle for Freedom**

Hugh Lewin

**ColdType
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Against
A Mirror

Friendship in the time of
the South African struggle

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THE AUTHOR

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Stories should be a mirror held up to life.
Sometimes those mirrors are cracked or opaque.
– Brian Keenan, *An Evil Cradling*

PREAMBLE

Hugh Lewin was a member of the ARM (African Resistance Movement), a small underground group of anti-apartheid protesters active in South Africa in the early 1960s. The group was largely exposed by the police in raids following the Rivonia Trial in June 1964, where Nelson Mandela and his comrades were sentenced to life imprisonment. Most of the ARM group, like Lewin, were detained under the 90-day law or escaped into exile.

Some two weeks after the detentions a bomb exploded at rush hour on the central concourse of the Johannesburg railway station. The bomb had been placed by John Harris, an ARM activist and school master – and friend of Lewin's. An old woman died as a result of the bomb. Harris was sentenced to death and executed in April 1965, the only white South African to be executed for anti-apartheid activities.

In *Stones Against A Mirror*, Lewin organises events as a journey between two railway stations: from Park Station in Johannesburg - the site of the bomb planted by John Harris - to York station, and towards a meeting with his friend Adrian, the man who betrayed him to the Security Police 40 years earlier.

BOMB

From our history comes the image of a young man with a large brown suitcase on a bench in the Johannesburg station concourse. He was not travelling anywhere. – Athol Fugard, in a private letter describing Orestes, which was performed in Johannesburg in 1975

JOHN HARRIS. The friend, fellow undergrounder and Sanroc activist whom I had persuaded to join our sabotage group. The man who told me about my collapsing marriage.

After Adrian's detention in Cape Town in July 1964, I visited John twice: once with Ronnie to discuss the detentions; and the second time at dawn on 9 July – the day of my own detention – to tell him that the others had all left; that I expected to be detained quite soon myself; and that everything was finished. There was nothing more to do.

He and John Lloyd were the only remaining cell members we were able to contact. They were now on their own. The two Johns together. They would need to lie with their heads very low.

Two weeks later, at 4 pm on Friday, 24 July, John Harris placed a suitcase filled with explosives and petrol at Park

Station in Johannesburg. It was rush hour.

The station bomb.

So many unanswered questions. So many theories and counter-theories. How to resolve such a welter of conflicting truths into one tidy narrative? However hard we try, there is always something that doesn't quite fit. I'm neither a historian nor an investigative journalist, yet I cannot write about John's bomb without trespassing into their professional territory, ever aware that my own closeness to the story only serves to confuse me further.

So I try to map John's footsteps, armed with my memories, the personal accounts of those who knew him well, and the information unearthed by an old friend, Magnus Gunther, and my newer friend, David Beresford. Not for nothing does David call his account *Truth Is a Strange Fruit*.

And this is what emerges.

In the late afternoon of 24 July 1964, the railway police and two newspapers received a short message by phone. The message given to each was much the same.

Listen carefully. This is a very important message. This is the African Resistance Movement. Can you hear me? There is a time bomb somewhere in the main concourse of the Johannesburg Station. On the handle of the suitcase is a label bearing the words "Back in Ten Minutes". It will go off at 4.33. Don't touch it. It is not our intention to harm anyone. Clear the concourse by using the public address system at once. Do not try to defuse the bomb as the suitcase is triggered to explode if it is opened.

The *Rand Daily Mail* reported receiving its message at about 4.15 pm, from a "cultured African voice". *Die Transvaler* said they were impressed by the "suiwer", or pure, Afrikaans used at about the same time by a caller who contacted the

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paper. A Captain Viljoen of the SA railway police reportedly received a call at 4.25 pm “from an English voice” telling him to clear the concourse.

No action was taken to trace the suitcase, or to clear the concourse of the rush-hour crowd.

At 4.33 pm precisely, the bomb exploded with hideous effect under the whites-only bench in the shelter at the top of the stairs leading to platforms five and six. At least twenty-three commuters were badly injured. They included twelve-year-old Glynnis, who was permanently disfigured, and her seventy-seven-year-old grandmother, who died of her injuries six weeks later.

Eight months later, on 1 April 1965, John Harris was hanged in Pretoria for the murder. He was the first and only white anti-apartheid activist to be executed. He was twenty-seven at the time.

Two points are undisputed: the bomb exploded exactly as forewarned; and the police did nothing to clear the concourse beforehand.

Could the police have cleared the concourse? Did they, in fact, have earlier indications that there would be such an attack? And why did John plant the bomb at the station at rush hour?

Few actions could have had more political impact than planting a bomb at the whites-only terminal of Park Station, and at rush hour. And nothing defined more clearly the desperation of the time: such a lonely act, so out of time and place. And though none of the rest of us had anything directly to do with the bomb, it came to symbolise our activities and signified for all of us the end of our particular struggle, more dramatically than any other action could have done.

It also marked, for me, the end of two more friendships: with John Harris himself, and my flatmate, John Lloyd, who soon afterwards gave evidence against John Harris, and also

against me and my co-accused. Lloyd was released after the two trials and was allowed to emigrate to the UK.

Most ARM activists were already out of the country or in detention at the time of the station bomb. For those of us in detention, it was shattering. Our prime rationale – indeed, our only claim to justification, if not innocence, as an opposition group – had always been that our operations were undertaken on the basis of choosing targets that avoided any risk of injury to people. We were, certainly I knew I was, sitting in the isolation of solitary confinement, horrified at the idea that our trials might be run together and that we'd be charged with John Harris for the station bomb. The lawyers said later that that would have been to our advantage: it would have been difficult to prove involvement in an act that took place two weeks *after* our detention. I'm still not too sure about that – although, when we were ourselves charged with protest sabotage after the end of the station bomb trial, the prosecution made a point of not linking the cases.

But these post hoc musings mean little when you are sitting in the isolation of detention, talking only occasionally, and then only to your captors. The new General Law Amendment Act under which we were held introduced the death sentence for sabotage, whatever outcome. For many lonely weeks of detention, that remained our unresolved preoccupation. Could we really say that we were not involved with the bomb at the station? And what would I have done if it had been me and not John, left alone outside, with the rest of our group either detained or gone?

I had recruited John Harris to our sabotage group in late 1963.

It was during ARM's self-imposed moratorium on activity during the Rivonia Trial and it was on the basis that his involvement would be minimal. He was heavily taken up at

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the time with Sanroc, campaigning for South Africa's expulsion from the Olympics, and was thus a distinctly high-profile activist – not an ideal recruit for the sort of undercover sabotage activities we were involved in. Yet he and I met often and developed a strong mutual trust, and we agreed that his involvement in the sabotage business would be slight. He would participate in only one operation, as our driver on a pylon job. Any idea of his doing more than that was soon shelved, because in early 1964 he attended the Olympics meeting in Lausanne, where he made a very vocal – and successful – statement calling for South Africa's banishment from the Olympics. On his return to South Africa, he was himself served with a banning order, which prevented him from any public political activities. This, in turn, meant that any clandestine work such as sabotage was dangerous.

But that was never going to be a hindrance for John. Dealing with him was like opening a can of beer; you knew there'd be a lot of fizz, not always easily manageable. So, although banned and busy with Sanroc, he continued to come to our planning meetings, especially when we were discussing possible action to mark the end of the Rivonia Trial. It was later clear that these discussions had made a considerable impression on him.

In the early hours of 9 July 1964, as others were leaving the country, there was no plan to be discussed, nothing to be “handed over”; it was merely a sharing of what little information we had left between us – and to warn him to lie low, very low. I remember us chatting quietly, with no sense of any plan for further actions. There was nothing more to do, I said, with the others now all gone. Nothing left to do, except to keep very quiet and lie very low. I left him with a wave and returned to my flat, hardly an hour before my detention.

Years later, I come back to the question of why I had not discussed with John the possibility of my leaving. Why had we not discussed it properly before? The reasons for this went much deeper than the immediate practical considerations and poor planning. Fundamentally, they exposed two serious fault lines in our make-up.

The first was our youth. There we were, in our mid- to late-twenties, wrapped in our enthusiasm and exuberance, bold, defiant and, as at the student conferences, so ridiculously confident. And reckless? I think not, though here was John, only two weeks away from carrying out the most reckless of all actions. What we lacked was the wisdom that longer experience and age might have brought – and we lacked the guidance of elders, all but two of whom were out of the country when we were detained. But there weren't many of them, as far as I knew, and in any case they came with a hotchpotch of ideologies which lacked the political cohesion that might have provided direction to our questionings and uncertainties.

John Lloyd once described activism as being akin to sleepwalking. Like a dream, it had its excitement and, often, its semblance of reality. Yet all too often it remained a fantasy, removed from reality and therefore without proper coherence, and with no informed understanding or ideology.

The second fault line was, in part, to do with my being white and thus feeling somehow protected. It would never happen to us, the ruling whites, only to them, black and separate. Even though there were several significant warnings of possible danger, there was this feeling of immunity, of being removed from the dangers. It would never happen to me. I could go on sleepwalking.

It was the evening of Friday, 24 July, and I had been in detention for two weeks. Lieutenants Viktor and van der Merwe, my two most dreaded interrogators, appeared unexpect-

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edly at my cell at Jeppe Police Station. They were not happy. “Nou gaan jy kak,” they said angrily, without any further explanation. Now you’re going to shit yourself. They had been much too soft with me, they said, as we wove through the evening traffic, heading down Eloff Street.

I immediately thought of the station – and of John Harris. I remembered the idea we had discussed at one of our planning meetings, where Dennis had outlined how, using a Zobo watch with the minute-hand removed, you could devise a cunning timer, which allowed a nearly twelve-hour delay. It could be packed with explosives into a large cigarette box, making possible, for instance, an operation where a number of these small incendiary bombs could be dropped into postboxes around the city, detonating simultaneously at several places, thus making a significant statement and giving the impression of a large organisation behind it. John was fascinated by the idea, and he came to the next meeting – it was to be our last – saying that he’d visited the luggage depository at Park Station, where there were rows and rows of wooden shelves. An incendiary bomb, armed with the new timer, could be left there overnight in a suitcase, thus causing a considerable explosion and perhaps even a fire in the middle of the night. It would be the ideal target, harming no one, yet causing damage that could not go unreported.

So when my dreaded pair of Special Branch men dragged me from the car at the entrance to the station and pulled me towards the main concourse, I thought they were taking me towards the luggage depository. It was early evening and, in terms of our original plan, the wrong time of day. I was not unduly worried, even when they dragged me towards a fenced-off section near one of the entrances to the platforms. But then they said menacingly: “Your bomb has just killed fourteen people.” It was all too rushed and inexplicable. Not the luggage depository at all, and there were casual-

ties. It couldn't have been John. "There, look there!" Van der Merwe shouted, but I could see nothing except a roped-off section around a platform entrance and, moving towards us, a journalist I knew from the *Rand Daily Mail*. Van der Merwe hurriedly dragged me back into the car and back to a night of hell at the Grays. "Vanaand is jy dood." Tonight you're dead. As they pulled me down a passage towards the interrogation room, I passed the open door of an office where John Lloyd was sitting. He glanced up apprehensively as I was rushed past. He looked crumpled, as though he'd already had a bad time of it.

Van der Merwe wasted no time with me: he tore off my glasses and began thrashing at me, beating me with balled fists. I screamed and cowered, down on the floor, then up again as he kicked me, then more fists, around the eyes and the ears. I felt detached, as if it was happening to somebody else, as if I was looking down a tunnel, at the end of which were his fists and furious mouth, screaming at me. More names, he shouted, more names! Who else is there? Who else! More fists and, through the pain and the fists and the kicks, I knew he was going to kill me. Though not me – the person at the end of the tunnel, waiting to die. Me. Through the screams and the shouts and the fists, through it all, I realised that, if they already had John Lloyd next door, there was only one person I had not yet mentioned. John Harris, with his plan for the luggage room. He could save my life. He could save all our lives. If he told them about the luggage plan for the middle of the night, he could explain that it couldn't have been him who left the bomb at the platform entrance, not with rush-hour commuters who might be harmed.

I said: "John Harris." The fists stopped. Viktor stepped forward and pulled Van der Merwe away, nodding at him and at the ceiling above us, which was rumbling with the sounds of

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scraping furniture and heavy thuds.

“Ons het hom,” said Viktor. John Harris. We’ve got him. And not too long after that, Viktor joined the team interrogating John upstairs and is said to have broken John’s jaw with a rugby kick. John immediately admitted that he had planted the bomb at the station.

So many shattered shards of memory about that night. So much blood on the floor as they battered every detainee in town. All under the direction of Brigadier van den Bergh, whose later version (as proudly told to Bram Fischer) was that he had been driving home when news of the bomb reached him and, mystically, the name of John Harris had popped into his head. Rubbish. There was never anything mystical about Van den Bergh or Special Branch operations. They had John’s name from John Lloyd, then from me.

After all the questions and theories, the point remains: why did the police not make any attempt to clear the concourse after the warnings? Did they have any prior knowledge of a possible attack? And, crucially, the fundamental question: at what point, and why, in the two weeks after he’d been “handed the baton” of leadership, as he saw it, did John Harris embark on an operation that contradicted the organisation’s basic policy, and which carried with it the definite risk of injury and, as happened, fatalities? There’s a huge gap between the organisation’s long-term agreed policy and what John did at the station that evening. To plant that bomb on the station, at that time of day, required a mental shift we had all vehemently opposed. In one solitary leap, John took us all beyond ourselves. The station bomb had a logic of its own, an inevitability that none of the rest of us was capable of contemplating.

John’s words at his trial remain the touchstone:

I felt terrifically, ecstatically happy while sitting on the

bench. The suitcase was on the right of me in the shelter above Platforms Five and Six. I knew that what I was doing was right.

So was John crazy, doing what he did? That was the defence raised at his trial: that he was in a moment of “manic ecstasy” that excluded rational awareness and therefore criminal responsibility. He testified about the sense he had at the station, while sitting with the suitcase bomb at his feet, of being “in a glass ball with all the people outside”; there was evidence of his state of “elation” after he’d left the bomb on the concourse, of his being “breathless, drenched in perspiration”. But this claim of madness was a desperate last attempt by his defence team, trying to rescue him from the rope. Of course he wasn’t crazy – no crazier than the whole society was crazy, enmeshed in its politics of oppression and discrimination. John’s bomb in 1964 delineated the extremes of state power and the possibilities of opposing it. It was a desperate act, building his own altar of sacrifice, where he was both priest and victim.

I could never have gone along with John’s new plan. But what if . . . what if he’d tried to persuade me personally that it was necessary to provide something spectacular – something “pivotal”, as he put it – some dramatic demonstration that there remained an active opposition within the country? Could I have resisted the cold purity of his logic? I would like to think that I could, but I say so with only partial conviction. Built into our initial decision to accept violent protest against state violence and intransigence was a possible – and fatal – momentum, and I have to accept that there was an element of chance that saved me from joining John in that last walk up the steps to the gallows at Pretoria Central, or appearing as a witness against him in a murder trial.

John had clearly worked out for himself everything that might happen. I remember the last time we met, in prison.

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He had already been tried and sentenced to death. Surprisingly, he was still at Pretoria Local Prison – the remand prison mainly for blacks, with a few whites squeezed into a corner; he was not yet with the “condemned” at Central Prison up the road. There were four more of us at Local, recently out of detention, now in the limbo of awaiting trial on charges of sabotage. We were kept in the same section, all waiting for a visit from our lawyer, the marvellous Ruth Hayman. We arrived at the Visitors’ Room just as John had finished a consultation with her. His accompanying young boer got into a panic as he tried to lead John away, without bumping into us. Baruch Hirson was ahead of me as John came down the steps, brushing the boer aside and holding out his hand to greet us. “Whatever happens,” he said, greeting Baruch, “we’ll know that what we did was right.”

Baruch was stunned, as though he’d met a ghost – which, in a sense, he had. Baruch didn’t know what to do or where to look. His fluster enabled the boer to pull John past us and take him away down the passage, while we filed in to see Ruth. I had not been able to say anything to John, just a wave and a glancing smile as he disappeared. I thought then that we might never again meet, never have an opportunity to discuss what had changed his mind about possible targets, and their effect. I was sleepwalking, hardly mindful of the gravity of that last meeting. In a state of bewilderment.

Coldly, later – days, months, years later – there was time to ponder. The crucial point, central to John’s conviction for murder, was whether he had had an “intent to kill”. At his trial, and thereafter, John vigorously denied any such intent. But how could he deny it, given the lethal nature of his bomb and its timing? There could be only one explanation for his vision of a “spectacular” event that would cause no harm: that was a conviction that warnings would be given and that the warnings would be heeded. It was a vision of

the station concourse being completely cleared, leaving a huge empty space with the suitcase in the middle, where the bomb would explode dramatically for all to see, and for none to be injured.

Where did John get his belief in a harm-free explosion? It's still not evident, in spite of years of discussion among friends. What is clear is that John Harris spoke to several people after the morning I last saw him, when, as he saw it, Ronnie and I had "handed him the baton". He had become the bearer of the baton, the spear-carrier for the organisation. It was his duty, as he saw it, to demonstrate dramatically that there were still anti-apartheid activists undetected by the SB. In his breathless way, he discussed several ideas, with several people. Central to these ideas was the affirmation that all white South Africans were guilty of violence against the black majority and that therefore counter-violence of some sort could not be ruled out on moral grounds. "There are no innocents," he told one friend. In fact, so went his argument, the loss of a few lives in the short term could be justified if the loss led to the saving of many more lives in the long term. For example (an example quoted by at least two people he met), the derailment of a train causing, say, six hundred deaths could be justified if it led to the saving of thousands of lives later. John seemed to be teasingly floating this idea "for argument's sake" – but these discussions were within two weeks of the station bomb.

Then, according to one of the sources, he met a university friend who told him of the Israeli Irgun and their activities, especially the way they set up an attack: planting explosives at a hotel – and giving a clear warning beforehand.

Aha, a warning. Warn them and they'll clear the place beforehand. The warning would remove the risk of possible casualties.

The point about John Harris, said an old friend, was that

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once he had found an idea and come to believe in it, he would adhere to it passionately, ferociously, like a dog with a bone. Look at the way he was passionate about cars, said the friend, commenting on one of John's abiding interests: "He was really a centaur: half-man, half-car."

Now, as baton-carrier for whatever was left of our small sabotage group, he had come across another idea: issue a warning before an explosion, at the railway station, perhaps, and get the concourse cleared. In fact, issue three warnings, two to newspapers and one to the railway police in charge of the station. Tell them all beforehand to clear the concourse. That would allow the bomb to go off in an empty concourse, for all to see and for all to watch, safely from a distance.

John, I would like to believe, trusted absolutely in this scenario. He was so convinced it would work that he continued with the plan, even when John Lloyd was detained on the Thursday – hardly twenty-four hours before the bomb was planted.

John Lloyd was still being interrogated when the bomb went off, and there is a tantalising ambiguity about his immediate reaction when he heard the news: "Oh my God," he exclaimed, according to one report, "what has John done now?" According to another version, what he said was: "Oh my God, has John done it?"

At his trial, John Harris said: "I heard that people had been hurt, but this did not make sense because I had known that people were not going to be hurt." Surely that validates his final words as we passed each other in the prison Visitors' Room: "Whatever happens, we'll know that what we did was right."

Or maybe it's not so simple.

If what we had done was to show active opposition to an evil regime, avoiding harm to any persons, then, of course, our cause was right. But what if our plan was to plant the

station bomb, come what may? That went beyond what any of us would have agreed to. John's plan involved too many imponderables, too much risk. He had left us all behind, at that point. He was on his own. Look at the timing of the event: was a gap of five, ten, even fifteen minutes sufficient for clearing action to be taken? Hardly – even if, in hindsight, there is a suggestion that the security people already knew of the bomb and had decided not to take any action. But that's a separate issue which, had we been planning this together, could only have emphasised the potential risks.

The spear-carrier left us all behind. None of us could honestly say that what was done at the station was right. No wonder Baruch was flustered.

So was this a betrayal by John, a betrayal of the fundamental principles of the group? But betrayal implies an active sense of purpose, a deliberate abandonment of principles and people, with a full realisation of the implications of the deed, both politically and personally.

I believe that John would not have seen it as a betrayal: he would surely have been convinced that the warnings would be heeded and that his bomb would be a demonstration on behalf of us all, spectacular and effective. If so, this was surely a delusion.

One thing is certain, though. Apart from the terrible loss of life and the injuries it caused, the bomb had a devastating political effect: it consolidated white opinion, led directly to the demise of the Liberal Party, and strengthened the hand of the white government for more than a decade, until Soweto 1976.

On every level, the station bomb was a disaster.

What did it mean in personal terms for those of us inside? While we were on trial in the weeks after bumping into John at Local Prison, we had access to news and could follow Ruth Hayman's desperate efforts to have John's death sen-

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tence commuted. There was never really a chance of success, though Ruth was still trying when we were sentenced at the beginning of December. By then we'd been removed to the permanent isolation of actual prisoners, and were no longer detainees. We were no longer permitted any news from outside and could no longer hear what was happening to John and Ruth's attempted clemency plea. Then, five months into our sentence, as we were let out one morning in 1965 for exercise, one of the boere whispered to us that John had been hanged that morning. April Fools' Day. Was there someone up there with the sickest of all humours? None of the other boere said anything. And we, as I remember it, said very little either. Just a huge gulp of disbelief and a shocked look around the group – especially those few of us who'd been threatened that we'd be tried with him.

The group in the exercise yard that April Fools' Day included those who'd been tried under the Suppression of Communism Act, and the lone white Rivonia trialist, Denis Goldberg, who was beginning his sentence of four life terms for armed insurrection against the state. Life, not death, for armed insurrection. The death sentence had hovered over the accused throughout the Rivonia Trial and was thrown in the face of the prosecution with Nelson Mandela's crunch point as he was anxiously watched by his lawyers: "the ideal for which I am prepared to die". Less than a year after Mandela's statement and the Rivonia life sentences, John was hanged in Pretoria Central.

So, for those of us inside Pretoria Local it was a moment of total shock. It was something happening in another world, something out of our consciousness, beyond comprehension. Those were bad times inside: isolation, few visits, few letters, our days measured by the piles of stinking mailbags we mended, day in, day out, bag after filthy bag. Yet the virtual isolation from anything from outside was almost a con-

solation, a protection. What happened to John – what had happened to him – was too remote. There had to be another time to mourn a lost friend, another time to recognise that John died for the same cause as Vuyisile Mini and the other MK and Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) cadres executed later. He was the only anti-apartheid white to be executed in South Africa.

John Harris, the final spear-carrier of the ARM, died alone. The rest of us were lucky. We survived.

HANGING

The official record noted, almost lyrically, that “at 5.30 in the half light of an overcast dawn, John Harris was hanged”. He had slept well the night before, and went to his death singing “We Shall Overcome”. His body was cremated at 7.30 after a non-religious funeral service at the Pretoria Crematorium.

The service was led by Peter, the eldest son of Ad and Walter Hain; John’s wife and baby son had been staying with the Hains in Pretoria during the trial. The original plan had been for Walter to lead the funeral proceedings, but he had been banned from all meetings in September 1964, and his last-minute application to a magistrate for permission to handle the ceremony was refused. John’s wife, Ann, who had just returned from her final prison visit with John, heard that Walter had been refused permission and burst into tears. At that point, Peter returned home from school and asked whether he could help with anything. “That would be wonderful,” said Ann, so Peter, aged fifteen, stepped in without a murmur. After so many months with Ann and baby David as part of the family, and with both his parents banned from public gatherings, it seemed the natural thing for him to do.

It was a simple, straightforward form of service at the Pretoria Crematorium, to which John’s body had been brought

by the prison officials after the execution. Young Peter led the ceremony with literary passages and songs chosen by Ann and John before his execution. It was a typical sixties collection, which could have been recited at any anti-apartheid gathering in London rather than in the shadow of Pretoria Prison. Shakespeare, Donne, the Bible, the Battle Hymn – and, to close, the freedom song that John had sung as he went to die: “Oh deep in my heart, I do believe, we shall overcome some day.”

Strange: they hanged him, then handed the body over to the family and friends for the service at the crematorium. After the ceremony, they took the ashes back to Central and kept them in a box in the prison commandant’s cupboard until they were rescued – several years later, it seems – by a prison chaplain, for secret burial in the condemneds’ corner of a Pretoria cemetery, under a gravestone that recorded only John’s name and dates.

On the fortieth anniversary in 2005 of his execution, family and friends attended a ceremony at Pretoria’s Freedom Square where his name was honoured as the first white South African to be recognised at the Square for his contribution to the Struggle. There, his long-hidden gravestone was inscribed with the additional words he had chosen for himself: “True Patriot”.

"This is a book that was waiting to be written. There have been many accounts of life in the active struggle against the apartheid regime but this one is a fearless exploration into the deepest ground – the personal moral ambiguity of betrayal under brutal interrogation – actual betrayal of the writer by the most trusted associate and closest friend; and the lifetime question of whether one would have betrayed that same friend under such circumstances, oneself. Hugh Lewin is the man to have faced this with the courage of a fine writer. Unforgettable, invaluable in facing now the ambiguities of our present and future."

– **Nadine Gordimer, winner of the
1991 Nobel Prize in Literature**

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