

Ugandans to the rescue

Wednesday, 18th November 2009

Janet Museveni's secret deed

by Timothy Kalyegira



First Lady Janet Museveni at the Smart Partnership summit at Speke Resort Munyonyo, Kampala, July 28, 2009.

"Murder, like talent, seems occasionally to run in families." --- George Henry Lewes, *Physiology of Common Life*, 1860. What does this mean?

With Uganda still pondering over the details and meaning of the murder of the former army commander, Maj. Gen. James Kazini, the national mood remains ripe for an understanding of where this trail of blood starts and leads.

In summing up what goes on inside President Yoweri Museveni's head, a *Uganda Record* analyst observed:

"Think about it: he has conjured up the image of a man who faced and evaded death on the front line yet he has never engaged the enemy in active combat. He knows that those who know this and were active combatants sneer at him. He also knows he has never won a free and fair national election.

Consequently he has this morbid fear that the truth will catch up and expose him so if he thinks someone is up to showing the world that the emperor is naked then he must be dealt with ruthlessly. Stalin (who had been an active combatant, albeit extremely ruthless) did this in Russia when he murdered all the war heroes of the revolution [because] he feared competition!"

The story of Yoweri Museveni cannot be complete without an understanding of the secret history of another person in his life: Janet Museveni, his wife and the current Ugandan First Lady.

Let us get the specifics.

In 1994 or 1995 (definitely in 1995), the Museveni's teenage daughter Natasha had fallen in love with a young man who worked as a videographer at the Pan African Movement secretariat in Kampala.

This young man was called Warren Bantariza. Bespectacled, handsome, relaxed, serious, he had a thoughtful air about him, spoke slowly and with intent, the sort of young man who would have intrigued and attracted Natasha, the most fanciful and artistic of all the Museveni children.

How she got to know him is not clear, but she did get to know him one way or the other.

They started dating. Or more accurately, they started secretly dating, since Natasha knew her mother, would not have approved of this relationship for reasons we shall soon see.

For Natasha to make the relationship seem like a friendship and nothing more, she would often bring along her sister Patience during her meetings with Bantariza.

Somehow, Mrs Museveni got to know about it and immediately became angry that there was a relationship at all. She determined that it had to be stopped.

The First Lady contacted a young army officer called Lt. Noble Mayombo to find a way of bringing to an end this relationship which she strongly disapproved of.

Mayombo worked out a plan for this. He contacted a Makerere University student called Shadrack Rwakasisi. The plan, as hatched by Mayombo, was to have Warren Bantariza eliminated.

Rwakasisi would be the person to carry it out. Rwakasisi asked a few friends known to him and Bantariza to accompany him to the Pan-African Movement offices in Muyenga in Kampala to ask Bantariza out for a day in Entebbe. One of them was Raymond Ofungi, a son of the former Inspector-General of Police, Luke Ofungi.

Rwakasisi hoped that by coming along with friends known to Bantariza, it would not raise any suspicions.

When Rwakasisi came to the Pan-African offices, he signed the visitors' book and indicated that he was Bantariza's visitor. Since they were friends, Bantariza agreed to go along.

A source told the *Ugandans to the Rescue* that the watchword for the mission had been to tell Bantariza that Natasha wanted to see him in Entebbe (presumably State House Entebbe, but definitely a location of some sort in Entebbe.)

The group then left the offices and went to a small take out (or takeaway) restaurant in Muyenga not far from the Reste Corner Hotel where Rwakasisi suggested that they pick up some fast food,

and then go on to Entebbe. They all agreed.

On the way to Entebbe, they ate their food and talked. Before long, Bantariza started complaining of not feeling well. He started convulsing. Clearly, he had eaten something like poison in his food.

The car speeded on to Entebbe. Bantariza was getting worse by the passing minute and it was now obvious that he might go into coma. In panic, Rwakasisi drove to a location near the Imperial Botanical Beach Hotel where he hoped to leave Bantariza.

Although in fits and convulses and moaning, Bantariza did not show any sign of dying any time soon. He was put down on the ground and the car was driven over him to kill him. Even that did not work and the boy remained alive.

In a panic, Rwakasisi then got Bantariza and tied him up at a cliff near the beach front and off the party drove, back to Kampala.

According to an intelligence officer, even this did not kill Bantariza and late into the night, a fisherman on a boat on Lake Victoria heard the sound of a male voice moaning and upon rowing in the direction of the noise, found Bantariza hanging by the cliff, a rope around his neck.

He later died.

A number of officials at the Pan-African Movement were arrested and framed over Bantariza's murder. They denied any part in his death. What gave away the story was that Rwakasisi had signed in the visitor's book that day and this incriminated him right away.

Raymond Ofungi was arrested and taken to the Central Police Station in Kampala. While there, he privately narrated the story of what had happened to some police officers.

They realized that Ofungi had been an unwitting accomplice to the murder and did not have anything to do with it. Since they were professionals and had entered the police at the time Luke Ofungi was the Inspector General of Police, they worked out a way to smuggle Ofungi's son from detention.

Rwakasisi was arrested and ended up at Luzira Upper Prison in the condemned section, for the murder of Warren Bantariza, where he remains to this day.

One of the Pan-African Movement officials framed over the murder started his own investigations into the murder but was discouraged by Mayombo. "Are you the police?" Mayombo said to this official and ordered him to leave the matter to the police.

This Pan-African official went to the *Monitor* newspaper and narrated the whole story to a staff reporter, but somehow, the story was never published by the *Monitor*.

What happened next is a key part of this story.

William Shakespeare, in his tragic play *Hamlet*, explained what happens when murder takes place.

Wrote Shakespeare: "For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak With most miraculous organ." (*Hamlet*, Act II, scene II)

This is an important lesson, because it helps us understand the reality that there is an invisible spirit Being at the highest place of existence that ensures that, for reasons we do not fully understand, murderers always leave a trail, a sign, a finger print, an incriminating piece of evidence.

It would have been almost impossible to trace who might have ordered the murder of Warren Bantariza, but for a chance event.

At State House in Nakasero, there was a young Muhima boy, the kind commonly called a Kadogo in Ugandan slang, who was deployed in the army at the president's residence. He was one of these teenage soldiers who were almost always in close proximity to President Yoweri Museveni.

One day, in a moment of idleness, this boy started playing with the military radio or walkie-talkie that Museveni uses or which is available to Museveni to use. Either he caused it to develop a mechanical fault or some other problem, but the result was that it could no longer work.

When Museveni discovered or was told about this, he angrily ordered that the young soldier be sent to Luzira Prison as a disciplinary measure.

While at Luzira, this young soldier identified Shadrack Rwakasisi as the killer of Warren Bantariza. He then said something more important.

He told some fellow inmates of an argument he had witnessed between President Museveni and the First Lady at State House Nakasero. Mrs Museveni, angry and near hysterical, was telling the president, in the Runyankore language, that there was no way she was going to allow "Bairu blood in my family."

The Bairu are the sub-ethnic group that form the largest percent of the Ugandan tribe known as the Banyankole or Banyankore.

The Bahima are the minority and were for centuries the royal class, in much the same way the Tutsi minority and the Hutu majority form the bulk of the people known as the Banyarwanda of Rwanda or the Barundi of Burundi.

Janet Museveni is said to be from the Bahinda clan of the Bahima, the actual royal blood line of Ankole (Ankore, or Nkore).

As the First Lady was getting worked up and insisting she would not allow this relationship

between Natasha Museveni and Warren Bantariza to happen, Museveni did not seem to see a problem with it.

Janet Museveni, according to the soldier who was sent to jail, was angrily telling Museveni that Bantariza had raped Natasha. That is why she was most angry and in this argument appeared to be seeking Museveni's intervention.

Museveni remained casual about it and, according to this soldier, told the First Lady that he did not think Natasha had been raped by her boyfriend. Museveni, usually liberal about sexual matters, thought that the First Lady was overreacting.

It might have been after this argument that Janet Museveni contacted Mayombo to take action against Bantariza.

This deed, according to an intelligence officer, is what endeared Mayombo to the First Lady and that year 1995 is when he started his rapid rise in the army ranks and becoming a national star.

That was the reason that, even though Museveni resolutely refused to visit the ailing Mayombo at the International Hospital Kampala in late April 2007 when he had been poisoned, Janet Museveni made a point of attending Mayombo's funeral service at Kololo Airstrip in Kampala in May 2007, a few days after his death.

As stated above, the vital lesson in this story is not the gory details of murder and intrigue, but what Shakespeare wrote, that "...murder, though it have no tongue, will speak With most miraculous organ."

It always leaves pieces of evidence that come to the light in the most strange twists and coincidences, the most unintended incidents.

A loyal soldier at State House messes up Museveni's military radio and Museveni angrily dispatches him to jail, giving him the opportunity, unwittingly, to narrate what he saw at State House that would have remained hidden from the pages of history.

There is a well known murder in the 1990s of a Makerere University student, Aaron Kagondoki, from Ntungamo in western Uganda, murdered and stuffed into a latrine, on orders of.....

The Ugandan state that murdered Maj. Gen. James Kazini, in their haste and amateurishness --- or because "murder, though it have no tongue, will speak With most miraculous organ" --- left behind so many trails, fingerprints, contradictions, and glaring bits of evidence, that even shoe shiners and market women, just from the most superficial glance at the stories in the media, have concluded that Lydia Draru did not in any way murder Kazini.

After Bantariza's murder, Janet Museveni, as Gen. Salim Saleh had been after the murder in 1997 of Kazini's brother Lt. Col. Jet Mwebaze, because haunted and life nightmarish.

This is the time, starting in late 1995, that Mrs Museveni took on the air of religiousness and

Christianity that she is now strongly identified with. According to an intelligence officer, this is the time that she became "born again" or at least started displaying her faith or claim to having faith, in public.

The murder of Bantariza, the *Uganda Record* speculates, might have been the most traumatic event in Natasha Museveni's life and might have been what drove her to the self-destructive and rebellious behaviour that she is well known for.

She later got married to a young lawyer called Edwin Karugire. On the day of their wedding, Saturday Sept. 2, 2000, an unusually heavy rainstorm hit Kampala and Entebbe.

Trees were uprooted and electricity poles brought down. The wedding reception was held at...the Imperial Botanical Beach Hotel in Entebbe, a few hundred metres from where Warren Bantariza, Natasha's lover, was murdered.

On the day of Jet Mwebaze's burial at Kapeeka near Nakaseke, there was a heavy downpour. On the day of the burial of the murdered Maj. Gen. James Kazini, Friday Nov. 13, 2009, there was a heavy downpour over Kampala.

"For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak With most miraculous organ."

This is the reason some of us have lost our fear of death, detention, or arrest by any government or individual.

We now know the pattern and we know the invisible spirit forces that control the universe.

END