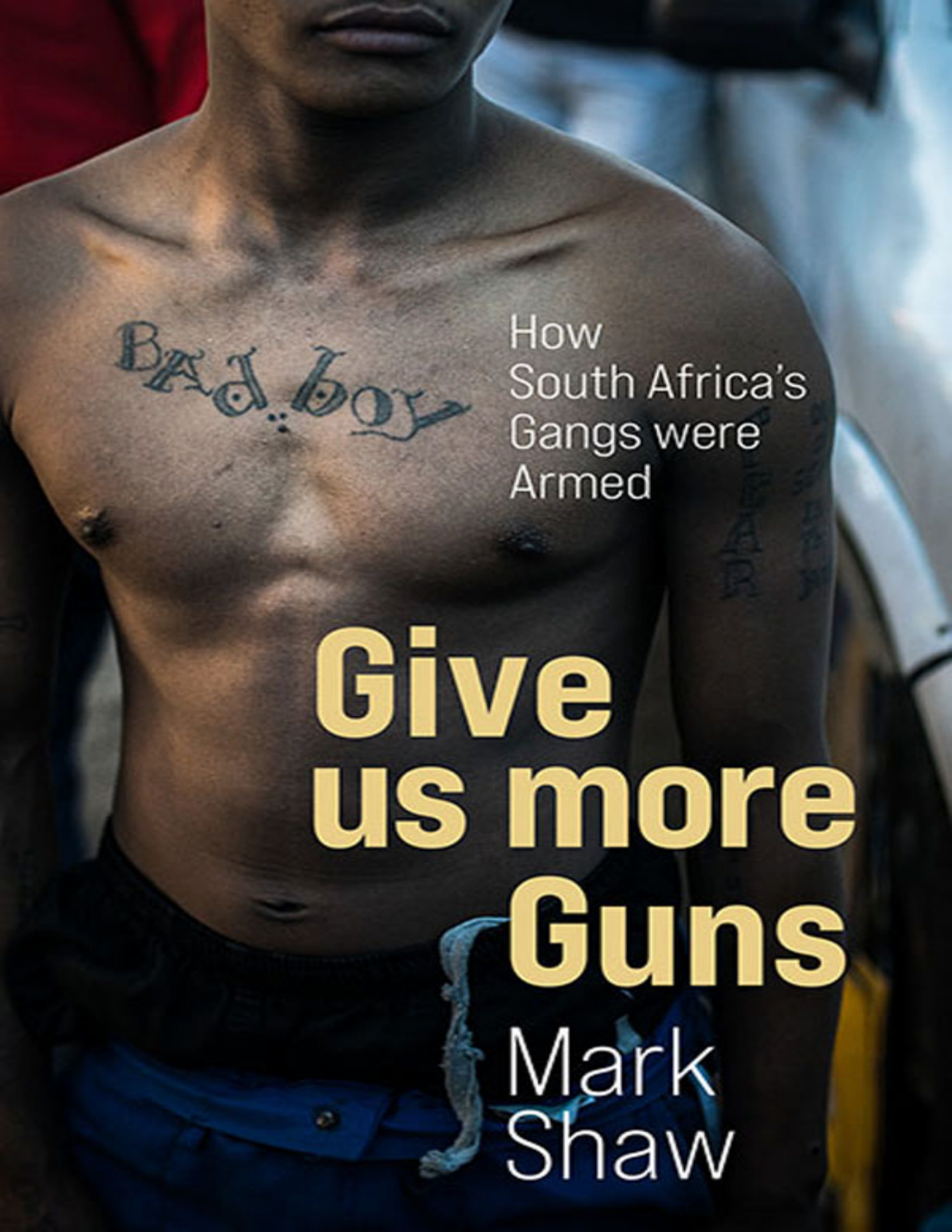


A photograph of a shirtless man from the chest up. He has a tattoo that reads 'BAD BOY' across his chest in a stylized, outlined font. On his left arm, there is a vertical tattoo that appears to say 'GANG'. He is wearing blue shorts with a white waistband. The background is blurred, showing other people in an outdoor setting.

BAD BOY

How
South Africa's
Gangs were
Armed

Give us more Guns

Mark
Shaw

Give us more Guns

How South Africa's
Gangs were Armed

Mark Shaw

Jonathan Ball Publishers
Johannesburg • Cape Town • London

‘With remarkable courage, insight and access Mark Shaw takes you into the darkest corners of the ganglands, guiding you through safe houses, clandestine arms cache handovers and encounters with hitmen and informed insiders. He acts as a cicerone through the spiderweb of the gangs of the Cape Flats, the taxi violence of KwaZulu-Natal and the corridors of police power, providing context, nuance and the history of how we came to this point, with the streets ablaze with gunfire. This is a riveting story about how first as a trickle, then as a flood, police weapons flowed into the hands of gangsters and ended in bloodshed. Shaw describes how the guns gave the gangs life as hitmen were ready to pull the triggers over and over again with scant regard for the human cost. It will terrify you but it’s a story you must know.’

– Mandy Wiener, author of *Killing Kebble* and *The Whistleblowers*

‘Mark Shaw’s finger is on the trigger. Target: the complex criminal economy. And Shaw is a deadly marksman. So enthralling you would be forgiven if you thought time had stopped’.

– Vusi Pikoli, former head of the National Prosecuting Authority

*To the children caught in the crossfire
In memory of Dimitri Vlassis, 1959-2019*

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‘The trouble was that South Africa was anything but normal, it was never much of a mother, and its name on the map of Africa provoked more questions than answers. Where did it begin and where did it end? Which bits of it were “ours”, and which bits of it were “theirs”? When you looked hard at the map, it seemed to be a matter not of geography but of guns.’

– Christopher Hope, *The Café de Move-on Blues: In Search of the New South Africa*. London: Atlantic Books, 2018, 120.

‘The Badlands is awash with guns – 32s, 45s, Mauser Red 9s ... they seep in, changing hands for just a few dollars, with ammo for cents; where they all come from is a mystery. A gun now costs the same as a catty of rice. Food inflation; firearms deflation – that’s the Badlands’ law of supply and demand.’

– Paul French, *City of Devils: A Shanghai Noir*. London: Riverrun, 2018, 217.

PREFACE: THE ZULU

It didn't look like the kind of place where illegal weapons would be stashed – a smallish brick house with a chipped iron security gate, positioned between two windows like a rusty nose. There was a neat little garden gate, which opened with a creak. Some untidy shrubs lined the inside of the concrete wall. The security grill swung open. Expectantly, I went in.

The house was dark, with heavy velveteen curtains covering the windows. There was a white lace doily cloth covering the table, the kind that all respectable South African lower-middle-class houses had – at least in the 1970s. It was the sort of place where you would expect to find a lonely old lady sitting in the corner, watching TV maybe, waiting in vain for her grandchildren to visit.

This was a gang safe house. Our man emerged out of the shadows in the back. He had a baseball cap pulled low over his eyes. It was not his house. He didn't look like the lace doily type. The agreement we had was a simple one: he would show me something, just for the record. I would take a look, then leave. Usually I like to talk about things with people like the man in the baseball cap, but that hadn't been part of the deal. Showing and talking were clearly different transactions.

After a brief nod between us, 'baseball cap' reached

behind his back and produced the gun, with a kind of sweeping motion that bank robbers in the movies use – both arms coming forward like a butterfly stroke, the weapon in his right hand, then both hands coming together, elbows slightly bent, gun pointing forward and down. He snorted under the cap. A flash of gold teeth. Then he handed me the piece. We had not said a word to each other.

The gun was a Z88 – a 9 mm pistol. It sat heavy in my hand; dull and black. I weighed it up and drew a bead on the wall of his house, squinting down the sights in the gloom at a space between a flowery poster and a painting depicting the Cape mountains. I had wanted to check how the gun had been tampered with, but the light was too dim and the owner was glaring at me. I cupped the gun in both hands, looked at it as closely as I could. Then, feeling self-conscious, and not knowing what else to do, I gave it back to him. He took it, nodded approvingly, and then padded off to a back room to pack it away.

By that point, I had spent three years talking to people about how guns that were the property of the South African state had leaked into the hands of criminals. Most had been willing to talk, but few had been eager to show me their guns. Over the years, I had glimpsed plenty of Z88s – there had been furtive gestures to a barrel poking out from a straining belt or someone pointing out a police officer's holstered gun – but until my meeting at the safe house I'd never held the gun in my hand. Several gun dealers had also shown me their Z88s. In one case, I got to see one of the earliest models, complete with its wooden box and

bronze plate engraved in Afrikaans commemorating its production, like flotsam from a forgotten era. The gangster's gun, in contrast, seemed all too real-life.

Emerging from the gloom again, baseball cap said abruptly that the gun he had shown me was known as a Zulu. He had emphasised the word for my benefit. 'Here we call that gun a *Zulu*.' The Zulu was the underworld gun of choice.

I have spoken to many gangsters about the Zulu. This was a middlelevel gang boss from Hanover Park, Cape Town, whom I met in 2017. Like so many others interviewed in the course of researching this book, he explained that the thing about the Zulu is its reliability. 'It is mos hard to break. We are just plain used to it.'

Just the street name, Zulu, says a lot about this weapon. It plays to a series of stereotypes in South African history, conjuring up images of rampaging impis coming in for the kill. Having possession of a Zulu is a status symbol on the gang-ridden Cape Flats, a sign of power and the ability to influence the things and people around you, if only through the deadly act of aiming it at someone and pulling the trigger. As one gang interviewee put it, while sucking air through his teeth and giving out a short chuckle, 'We sommer can kill with the best of them.' He was by no means exaggerating: by that point, the murder rate in Cape Town had reached levels seen only in parts of Central America.

What is special about the Z88 is that it is a South African gun. All of our own making. Gangsters and other criminals

are oddly proud of the Z88's origins. Possessing this gun, a collective South African pride swells the chests of its rightful owners, police officers, and those they are meant to police. I can't recall how many times this came up: the Z88 was a good gun because it was a local product made for local conditions – even though the design, as I was at pains to point out, had been borrowed from other models made elsewhere. 'Yes, but it was made much better,' retorted one representative of the underworld. 'Local is lekker' applies in gangland too.

Thousands of Zulus were manufactured over the years. It was designed in the late 1980s by Lyttelton Engineering Works near Pretoria on the basis of a request from the South African Police (SAP), which had been rapidly expanding and urgently needed more guns. The '88' part indicates the year in which the first model was produced; the 'Z' reflects the surname of the chief engineer, one T.D. Zeederberg – nothing then to do with Zulus. Mr Zeederberg appears to have been something of a legend, known for his exacting standards and habit of making walking inspections of the factory to make sure that all was in order.¹

The Zulus come in several configurations, but all have Z88 stamped on the barrel and the words 'Made in South Africa'. Earlier versions have the 'L' and 'E' of Lyttelton Engineering on the handgrip; later versions have a 'V' embossed over a target. The 'V' stands for Vektor, which would later become the Denel brand name for the handgun.

The international sanctions imposed on apartheid South Africa in the 1980s had prevented the import of guns for

the police service, so Lyttelton Engineering copied the design of the Italian Beretta 92 pistol, a sleek, good-looking and durable model. Beretta would later sue for copyright infringement in a case that eventually seemed to have been quietly dropped.² In the violent uncertainties that characterised the last days of white rule, Zulus were bricks in the apartheid state's crumbling defensive wall. Several decades later, it is a profound irony that these guns ended up in the hands of the very people they had been designed to shoot – men like the gangster who had let me hold his gun in that dark room, vectors in a spiralling orgy of killing that was to dominate the Cape Flats from around 2011.

The guns

The Zulus were recalled from the law-enforcement front line to be replaced by more modern guns purchased from outside South Africa. Decommissioned, they were stockpiled in the police armoury from about 2000, consigned for destruction. Well and good. Another step towards achieving a safer and democratic South Africa. The government was doing its work.

But then something happened, something with far-reaching and long-term consequences for all South Africans, but particularly those in areas where gang bosses carry more weight than municipal councillors or teachers. Instead of having the guns crushed and melted down at the police storage and destruction facility in Vereeniging, a middle-aged white police officer, resentful at his lack of promotion and eager to make a quick buck, removed the

guns and sold them. At first, he sold them himself, then later he forged a business deal with a former shooting buddy and police reservist who acted as his middleman and sold the guns wholesale to the gangs.

The police colonel behind the theft and sale of the weapons was one Christiaan Lodewyk Prinsloo, gun expert, sworn protector of the public and illegal flogger of state property for cash. The alleged intermediary was Irshaad 'Hunter' Laher, one-time salesman, hunting enthusiast and restaurant owner.³ There are many others who will play a part in this story. But these two men stand at the centre.

The alleged leader of South Africa's largest criminal group, the Americans gang, Sanie American, in a remarkable recorded interview before Prinsloo's arrest in January 2015, described what was happening:

Today, people, the kids, they just wanna kill because there's too much guns on the streets. There is one source that is providing the guns for all different gangsters in the Western Cape. The same person, if he comes with 300 guns and ... you can only buy 50, then he goes to rival gangs. He sells to whatever that one can buy and whatever's left he goes to the other gangster and he sells it to the other gang. That's every second month, ... they come with three, four hundred guns ... and it's all Z88s.⁴

As it turns out, Sanie American may have been peeved that

other gangs were getting their hands on the guns first, and not his gang. That was soon to change. The guns spread like a mutant cancer through the gangs. From impending destruction to distribution on the street, the Zulus and other guns began inexplicably arriving in Cape Town, reaching men like the gangster in the baseball cap. They empowered some criminal formations and weakened others, who found themselves increasingly outgunned. They were sold to numerous gangster groups until the Cape Flats was inundated with them.

And they killed. At a conservative estimate, and based on the ballistics evidence available, the guns Prinsloo failed to destroy and sold on have been linked to 1 066 murders and some 1 403 attempted murders in the period between 2010 and 2016 alone.⁵ These numbers of killings mean that Prinsloo's work is, without doubt, the deadliest single crime to have been committed in post-apartheid South Africa.⁶

I began my research into the story of the Prinsloo guns, focusing on the initial cache of 2 400 that Prinsloo had admitted to police investigators he had sold to the gangs of the Cape Flats from around 2007. Over the course of the research, it became clear that this was just the tip of the iceberg of this man's crimes. From the mid-2000s until just before his arrest in early 2015, he is likely to have fenced more than 9 000 police guns to a go-between with the gangs and other criminal organisations, which have since been distributed to places far beyond the Western Cape. Guns from the police consignment have been subsequently found in Johannesburg, Durban, Nelson Mandela Bay and

elsewhere. Many of them were Z88s. Over time, this gun market moved from a supply-driven to a demand-driven one: gangsters competed with one another for access to the guns, threatening Prinsloo's intermediary with violence if he did not deliver.



A gang favourite. The South African manufactured Z88 pistol was issued to the police in the last years of white rule. Z88s formed a large part of the firearms consignments that Prinsloo sold to the gangs. PHOTO: JULIAN RADEMEYER

Prinsloo has not been the only source. Guns have haemorrhaged from police stores at station level, from individual officers, from metropolitan and municipal police departments, and from other government departments, such as the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). Digging into the Prinsloo case reveals a litany of mismanagement and poor messaging by the police on the issue of firearms control. The critical failure of the South African Police Service's (SAPS) Central Firearms Registry contributed to the life-destroying trafficking of guns, allowing it to continue for so long. The registry's administrative systems are a shambles, while corruption has marred the issuing of firearms licences. The failures of this institution, central to the government's much-vaunted policy of gun control, have prevented any sustained

attempts at equitable gun regulation, with critical implications.

The focus of this book is not just on the spread of the guns themselves, but also on a wider set of criminal market changes in South Africa that they catalysed. It is also an indictment of the police service, which has failed to implement adequate, transparent forms of gun control. This is particularly evident in sectors such as the taxi and private security industries, which blur into organised crime.

If the South African state, as the Constitution provides, is responsible for the safety of its citizens, it has failed. The guns that the state owns and controls are intended to be used to achieve the societal security promised by the Constitution. Instead, the opposite has occurred. An enormous number of state weapons, leaked to criminals because of weak internal systems, corruption and mismanagement, have been deployed in a range of violent crimes, and they are still being used.

This book is an exploration of how those guns were removed from the police stocks, the extent of the loss, how they were illegally sold, and to whom, as well as how a policy of gun control whose purpose was to reduce violence in South Africa fell apart through poor implementation, error and corruption. We will probably never know the exact number of guns that have been diverted in this way, but what we can see is their impact in the daily headlines of murders and violence in communities across the country, particularly on the streets of Cape Town. Many of these

guns are still in criminal possession. Unless they are retrieved, the killing will continue.

The gangs

Besides the cost in human lives lost, the guns also triggered major changes within South Africa's criminal underworld. The guns were beginning to arrive at the same time that the illegal drug market was experiencing an upsurge in South Africa, setting off a series of gang wars, several of which continue to this day.⁷

Furthermore, it is probable that the surge of guns provided by Prinsloo specifically and the state more generally was central to transforming the illicit firearms economy. Price trends for weapons sold on the black market indicate that a cartel for illicit weapons has formed. A number of underworld dealers have colluded to raise the price of illegal guns, and they source guns from the armouries of the state and the stockpiles of firearms handed into the police. This is not of course the only source, but it has been a major one: a pile of guns waiting to be plundered. They access an almost unlimited supply of guns at a low cost, for which the underworld is prepared to pay big money. The profits to be made from gun sales rival those from drugs.

What interview after interview with gangsters has revealed is that the Prinsloo guns transformed the nature of organised crime, and ordinary people are living with the consequences. Cape Town, where most of the Prinsloo guns were circulated, is now one of the most violent places on

earth.⁸ The firearms were used by organised-crime groups to unleash an orgy of killing so intense that in mid-2019, the South African military were called in to patrol the city's gang-infested areas. That in itself was an important moment in the evolution of post-apartheid South Africa's security: a recognition by the government that the police could no longer manage the situation on their own because they lacked the strategic ability, were riven by internal conflicts and had themselves become complicit with the gangs.

It is something very hard to get your head around: the police and the wider state, both wittingly and unwittingly, armed criminals in South Africa, strengthening their operations and activities by giving them access to firearms, and threatening the life opportunities of many ordinary people.

Given the number of guns he was implicated in selling, the Prinsloo case is at the centre of this scandal. Hundreds of people, including women and children, died between 2007 and 2019 as a result of one man's crime: a resentful senior police officer selling millions of rands' worth of guns to fund his son's university fees. That crime should have at least sparked outrage, yet the response has been remarkably muted. The reaction of the SAPS to the case in public has been cautiously reticent – partly, I suspect, because they fear a civil case against the service for the damage done by the guns.

State-issued guns and ammunition now regularly turn up linked to crime scenes. The SAPS does not collect or

publish such figures, but evidence of the link emerges from interviews. For example, a professional from a leading security company that is engaged in responding to hijackings confirmed that almost a third of the hundred guns or so that the firm has recovered on average every year in the course of its work have been Z88s.⁹ Although they are often referred to in reports as unspecified '9 mm pistols', police-issue Z88s have also been used in a range of crimes and assassinations reported in the media.¹⁰ If the police report that a 9 mm pistol has been used in a crime, it is most likely to have been a Z88, particularly if the scene is the Cape Flats.¹¹ State property rifles, such as R1s, R4s, and R5s, are also regularly retrieved and reported to have been used in armed robberies, cash-in-transit heists and even clashes between rival groups of illegal miners.¹² The role of the state is to control crime, but it is effectively fuelling it.

As the firearms crimes mounted and the bodies piled up in the morgues, another story emerged. The crisis caught the attention of a small group of police officers, led by two of the most unlikely cops in the country – Jeremy Vearey and Peter Jacobs, former ANC intelligence operatives, who themselves had grown up on the Cape Flats, where the guns in the hands of the gangsters were now causing untold deaths. Inside a police agency riven with ANC infighting and dysfunction, these two officers stumbled on the case of the lost police guns in 2013 and began to investigate. For all their individual heroism in taking the case forward, the resistance they faced in their

investigation and their eventual removal from the case are far from comforting. In fact, the response of the police as a whole is a sobering indictment of the politicisation of law enforcement, and its eventual breakdown, under the Zuma presidency.

Much has been written about the phenomenon of state capture and how it has undermined economic growth and service delivery in South Africa. The story of the leakage of guns from the state also deserves to be seen as part of the state capture scandal. It is without doubt a reflection of the wider process of institutional breakdown that began before the Zuma administration but was accelerated by it. It is the result of corruption, poor management, incompetence and arrogance on the part of state officials, defying the imagination in the same way that the various threads of the state capture story have continued to shock South Africa. The guns-to-gangs phenomenon is a reminder, if any is needed, that for South Africa to survive, let alone grow and prosper, working institutions that operate within the frame of the rule of law are a prerequisite.

I have written this book with the purpose of highlighting these failures, not only because they are shocking, but also because we must make them right if we are to protect the lives and well-being of South Africa's citizens and the very sustainability of our democracy.

Note on the research

Articles have been written about the Prinsloo guns. But this book, which is the product of more than three years of

research and over 200 interviews with gang members and bosses, gun dealers, state officials and many others, is the most comprehensive investigation into both the events around the crime and the environment that made it possible. It considers the impact that Prinsloo's guns have had on the Cape Flats, and how these deadly weapons have shaped the evolving system of criminal organisations in the country. It also examines the failed system of gun control and, as a consequence, how they fell into the hands of mafia-style groups, like the Cape gangs, and how they have fuelled violent taxi wars.

I have not referenced each interview, but make clear in the text, where appropriate and relevant for the story, the informants whom I spoke to, and when. When discussing illegal firearms and other matters of the underworld, most people want to remain anonymous, and I have honoured that. But, as I hope will become clear through the story, I have done my best to confirm the main details of the plot. During the research, I have spoken with people at all levels – very senior police officers and junior ones, street gangsters and some of the most senior gang bosses, lawyers, and the families of victims and those involved. I formally requested support and access to police officers for interviews from SAPS headquarters but never received a reply to my request. I also requested documents from government under access-to-information legislation – these were all refused or my enquiries received no response. In the end, this was immaterial, as plenty of police officers talked willingly, but they could do so only if it was agreed

that they would be cited off the record.

I conducted interviews, which provided information used in the book, in South Africa in 2017, 2018 and 2019, with some follow-ups in 2020 as I finished the writing. Interviews on sensitive subjects can be quite a process, from the simple checking of a detail with a gang boss over the telephone to setting up a gun look-see, like the one described above, to a more detailed discussion with a police officer, for example. Interviews took place mainly in Cape Town, Johannesburg, Pretoria and Durban, but also in Vereeniging, Pietermaritzburg, Witbank and Nelson Mandela Bay. In several cases, people were interviewed multiple times.

Many of the incidents, events and legal cases described here are in the public domain, in affidavits, media reports and court submissions. Every effort has been made to ensure factual accuracy, and that interviews and correspondence with key participants are correctly reproduced and acknowledged. If there are any omissions or errors, I would welcome information that enables me to set the record straight in future editions.

DEATH OF A GANGLAND LAWYER

Noorudien Hassan seemed to be as elusive in death as he was in life. I had tramped around the Spaanschemat River Muslim Cemetery in Constantia looking for his final resting place. The descriptions that I had received of where he lay had been relayed to me over the phone in a confusing fashion and I had sketched them out on a scrap of paper too hastily. Was the tomb by a wall or next to the path? Which one of the two adjacent cemeteries had he finally ended up in? Back and forth and back and forth I went for hours, searching among the graves in the hot sun. Until, there he was: a short granite headstone inscribed with *Noorudien Hassan (Mulla) D.O.B: 28.08.1971 D.O.D: 07.11.2016*.

D.O.D. The events of one day. Just three golden letters engraved in black granite, belying a story so complex and hard to grasp, its edges blurring into the mass of gang-related violence on the Cape Flats. One murder among thousands, each part of the massed ranks of shuffling dead, which masked the reality of every individual killing. The story of so much death meant that even the most prominent cases began to fade into obscurity, much like the toll that the blistering Cape summer had taken on the condition of this grave.

The weeds growing in the light-coloured sand over his body had wilted in the heat, splaying over the edge of the concrete boundary. An empty glass jar stood at an angle to one side, hot to the touch.

The death of Noorudien Hassan became, as I dug further and further into the story, a critical piece of history in the violent contestations that had marred life on the Cape Flats for decades. Hassan was the spider in a web, the centre of a network of communication, the holder of the critical purse strings, the indirect facilitator of the flows of drugs and guns – even if his work never seemed to touch either directly.



Assassinated lawyer Noorudien Hassan had the appearance of an affable uncle, but he was deeply enmeshed in Cape Town's underworld. PHOTO: MEGAN BAADJIES / AFRICAN NEWS AGENCY

In life, Hassan looked like a roly-poly uncle. Balding, with a thick moustache and an easy smile, he had the earnest air of someone who might be a willing member of the local school parents' committee. He was short and overweight, and wore a slightly outsized jacket, and what remained of his hair was blown out of place, a windswept character in a windswept city. If you noticed him at your local supermarket, you would not have given him a second

glance.

In his professional life, Hassan was a successful local lawyer. Several people who knew him said that he was driven by money – greedy, some said. That, I suppose, is acceptable for a lawyer. But the issue in question and one that, one way or the other, had ended his life was this: the small matter of who his clients were.

Red carpet gangster funeral

In the underworld, you can tell a lot about a person by the nature of their funeral. John Landesco's seminal study of organised crime even suggests that funerals are the place where the upperworld and underworld meet, at least visibly, for the world to see. He notes that while in life the criminally connected may conceal personal ties, in death they cannot avoid disclosing them.¹ Hassan's funeral was a gathering of gangsters. Perhaps because they had read the organised-crime textbook, the police turned up too, with a camera mounted on a vehicle, snapping pictures of the attendees.

They were all there – the big-time bosses. Jerome 'Donkie' Booysen, wearing a shiny suit and tie, alleged chief of the Sexy Boys, a gang as violent and deadly as any on the Cape Flats, a stark contrast to their label, which suggests a group of teenagers outside a local disco. Donkie is an interesting character. Despite his name, the origins of which are unclear, he is reputed to be the smartest of three brothers. He matriculated with good marks and joined the City of Cape Town as a building inspector, having also

developed a reputation as a good club rugby player.

But business-minded Booyesen, apparently at the behest of his mother, focused on shaping the Sexy Boys into a formidable operation. Partly applying his experience at the city administration, he built a property empire, pushing down prices at property auctions and positioning himself as the sole buyer. Violence, or the threat thereof, would keep other buyers at bay and prices low. Donkie reportedly had also dabbled in the taxi industry, which required a clear head, a hard set of hands and a finger on the trigger.²

The Sexy Boys ventured into the turf of other gangs in a strategic way, expanding their interests in drug trafficking and dealing, and prostitution. They also provided the muscle for the inner-city extortion market, a long-standing feature of Cape Town's night-time underworld economy.

Donkie's brother Colin, a man about town in his own right, was also there, his bodyguards muscling through the crowd, openly displaying their weapons. The heavies weren't just for show. Like his brother, Colin had been targeted in a number of assassination attempts. In May 2013, he had been shot in the leg and arm outside the Sexy Boys' Belhar stronghold, his family rushing him to hospital so he could fight another day. And fight another day he did, but later, and against his own brother Donkie as the Sexy Boys split down the middle in a vicious internecine turf war over the city's lucrative extortion market that left several bodies in its wake and continues to this day.³

Ralph Stanfield, gangster extraordinaire, alleged leader of the notorious 28s, a black-and-white cap pulled tightly

over his head, shielding his eyes, stalked around greeting mourners. Stanfield has an almost mythical reputation on the Cape Flats, helped along by clever management of the media. He and his wife, the leggy Nicole Stanfield, wear flashy clothes and like to be seen driving expensive cars, just the sort of stuff for newspaper gossip columns. Perhaps more than most gang bosses, Stanfield has an eye for politics as a protective film for illegal business.

In this sense, he learnt the tricks of the trade from an influential predecessor in gangland. Ralph had been handpicked by his uncle, Colin Stanfield. Uncle Colin, who passed away from cancer in 2004, had been integral to an attempt to bring unity among the gangs after an onslaught by a vigilante group, People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD).⁴ In the 1990s, Colin Stanfield had sat the gang bosses down together and negotiated a *Pax Mafiosa* through the formation of a new group, which was christened, appropriately and apparently without irony, The Firm.⁵ With Colin in the driving seat, The Firm took the step of forming a community engagement arm, the Community Outreach Forum, or CORE, whose purported objective was to reintegrate gangsters. Their real purpose, it seems, was to improve their standing in communities and to begin to dabble in politics in the new South African democracy. CORE offered the government R50 million to pay for community outreach activities.

Ralph Stanfield quickly became a central operator in the city's gangster dealings as PAGAD began to find itself weakened following several arrests. The gang bosses kept

oversights are, naturally, my own.

Finally, Dimitri Vlassis, the UN official who played a decisive part in bringing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime to fruition, and long a source of encouragement to me, died while this book was being written. Wherever he is, I can see him twitch his moustache and say, 'You see,' when I tell him that it is done.

ABOUT THE BOOK

‘With remarkable courage, insight and access, Mark Shaw takes the reader into the darkest corners of South Africa’s ganglands.’ – Mandy Wiener

The assassination of police investigator Charl Kinnear in Cape Town in 2020 was yet one more in a spate of murders related to the so-called ‘guns to gangs’ saga, in which state weapons are sold to South Africa’s criminal underworld.

It began in 2007 when Colonel Christiaan Prinsloo and his cronies began selling thousands of decommissioned police weapons to gang lords. Prinsloo’s motive: to fund his son’s university fees. The sale of weapons to criminals, which the police service has tried to downplay, has resulted in a killing spree of unprecedented proportions. Cape Town is now one of the most violent places on earth, and in 2019 the army was called in to patrol gang-infested areas.

Give Us More Guns, based on hundreds of interviews with police, experts and the gangsters themselves, tells the story of this callous crime for the first time. Mark Shaw explores how the guns get into the hands of South Africa’s crime bosses and describes the bloodshed that ensues. He also uncovers accounts of rampant corruption within the police and in the state’s gun-licensing system, probing the government failure that has been instrumental in arming

the country's gangsters.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Shaw is author of *Hitmen for Hire* (Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2017) and director of the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.