

REPORT

SURENDRA LENNY NAIDOO WAS ASSASSINATED BY THE CUSTODIANS OF APARTHEID.

Let us take nostalgic trip down memory lane as related by his mother, Ma Naidu.

Lenny was a very understanding child whether he was wrong or right he would never argue he had respect for his elders.

We shared a very good relationship and we communicated on a level that only the both of us understood. I did not know that my son felt so strongly about what was going on around him.

I did not exactly know what was going on but I did realize that my son was a part of the struggle when he left home in 1986 with just a towel and a few underwear and reassured me that he was leaving not because of anyone else but for the people he loved and cared about, his fellow brothers and sisters of South Africa.

His father took the news of his departure very badly, he was in a state of depression and blamed me for what had taken place believing that I had known all along about Lenny's involvement.

After Lenny's departure it was an extremely tough time for my family as we had to deal with the absence of a son and brother and also because of the way in which we were treated by police.

We underwent constant police harassment .Our phones were tapped and we were followed everywhere in the event that we were going to see Lenny. Our house was surrounded by police every night and every two days our house was searched.

I remember an occasion when Lenny had just left home the police came to my house and dismantled his whole room. They took his tape recorder and anything else that could have been of evidence.

On one occasion I had visitors who were staying over, the Police who were watching our house believed that it was Lenny.They barged into our house and lifted the blanket of my visitor. They saw that it was not Lenny put the blanket back and went away.

The police never gave up. They played like it was Lenny on the phone from varsity to see what information they could get out of me but to no avail as I did not know where my son was.

I did not realize that my son was hiding right next door to my house. He had asked the mother of that home to refrain from religious services as she would tell me where he was.

After that I had learned that Lenny was staying with my eldest son in Isipingo Beach. My son had contacted me because he knew how worried I was about Lenny and reassured me that Lenny was doing well.

When my husband and I went to see Lenny in Isipingo Beach I found him sitting on the floor with a Bhagvad Gita next to him. I still remember that when he saw me he put his head down.

I remember questioning him about what he had done and why the police were looking for him he replied, "No ma, not what I did" he put his hand to his head "they want what I got here"

After two days it was arranged for Lenny to leave. I don't know whether he was to leave the country or just the district. He told me that he would not be seen but we would hear from him.

We never heard anything. My son was killed on the 8th of June but we only received news of his death on the 21st of June.

My husband and I were asked to identify Lenny's body. When we went to Golela we found that the bodies were terribly destroyed. The whole of Piet Retief was stinking.

Altogether there were four bodies but three bodies were stacked on top of each other and Lenny's body was right at

the top. I could not identify my son. I did not want to acknowledge that that child could be mine but the lawyers that accompanied my husband and I knew that it was Lenny.

On our way back when we were in Ladysmith I asked the lawyers what would happen if no one claimed for this child, they told me that he would receive a paupers burial, call it mothers intuition but I felt a strong bond with this child and we decided to go back.

I asked my lawyers that even if it was not Lenny whether I could claim for the body, they said yes, I could.

I prayed the whole night through, Lenny had three strokes on his neck and when he was younger he had gotten cut under his foot and that cut was stitched .The next day when we went back they brought the body right out. I looked for the signs that child was mine. I found the signs that it was Lenny. Lenny's death affected my family terribly.

I became more attached to my other children I wanted them to be with me everyday. I realized that what I lost I could never get back but what I have I will have to cherish.

What really worked in Lenny's blood was that people of colour were treated so differently from white people when we all belonged to South Africa. It was for this reason they founded Bayview Helping Hands to combat hardships that faced Bayview residents on a daily basis. More especially in

road 240, where there were water shortages and a lot of very old and poor people.

As soon as he came from varsity he would run down to 240 and work tirelessly to get those people free water and comfort and do whatever else he could for them.

Later on Lenny became the secretary of Bayview Residents association. It ran very smoothly and along with Bayview Helping Hands used to hold floats and fun runs to raise money for the organizations.

The floats would be held once a year, it would take around three weeks to put together and the members of the organizations would steal cake flour from their homes as they did not have money to buy their own.

I do believe that these children did a lot and achieved much and towards the end when the ANC came up they really achieved what they wanted.

Despite the death of Lenny and all the other comrades as a mother I feel that they did not die in vain. Despite all the political misfortunes that were taking place I do believe that these children would be very happy now.

These very children and countless others have given us the courage to stand up and be heard. Freedom of speech, equality for all, this is what they fought for.

Many people are angry at the government and ask me why I am not because my son was killed and so many others are still alive.

I always tell them that Lenny fought for what he believed in and even though he is dead and gone I know that he is happy.

I know that my son's death could have been prevented. There was no reason for his death. There was no reason for any deaths. The police murdered them and then tried to cover it up, they stole their belongings and placed hand grenades and other sorts of weapons on them because they knew that they were not in danger.

Their case ran for almost a year but we went to the case every two months. We were trying to find justice for the death of our children. We asked that the driver of the car be brought forward but after a few meetings it was found that the driver had been murdered for fear that he would implicate powerful people. The judge ruled off that they could not determine who killed who.

Later on in the truth and reconciliation council it came out that killing my son was a mistake.

To this very day and to till the day I die my advice to all comrades, friends, and members of the ANC would be that we must never forget what our children fought for, we must always be unified and advise people to carry on with the

good work that our children left behind.

What they did was a very big sacrifice, they were strong, and they were brave. They did what they believed in for the benefit of you, me and the generations to come.

If I had one last chance to speak to my son I would say "Lenny, I love you very much my baby, I think of you always".

"You must remember what you did for these people and for our country is a very good thing my boy You are in gods hands and if you are reborn be as brave and special as you were and finish your work for your country".

"You always taught me good things especially your honesty in life. I am so proud of you. I always believed in you. "You always said you walk this way once, you never walk it again that is exactly what you did".

You will always be in my heart my precious child."