Quell the mayhem NIGHT

Cape Times WEDNESDAY, JULY 11, 2007 ✶

PHIL

Carte d'embarquement
Boarding pass

DIBLASI/DEBRA

CHARLES DE GAUL 2F

JOHANNESBOURG

Vol / Flight	Classe	Date	Départ / Time
AF 990	Y	12JUN	2315

Embarquement / Boarding	Siège / Seat
F49 22H20	25E NO
Porte / Gate Heure / Time	

NB Poids / Weight

TEMPO

043

AIR FRANCE

by Debra Di Blasi

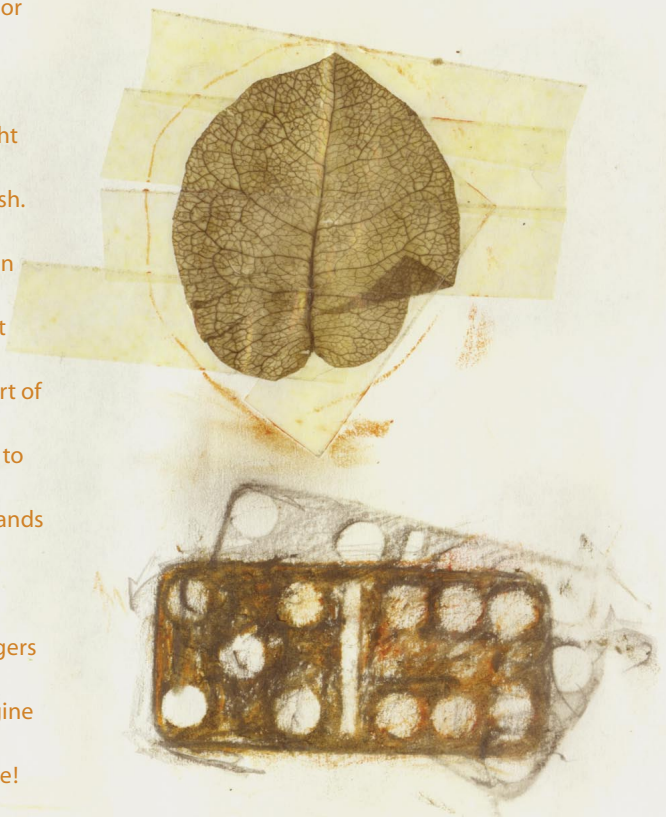
follow the murder

Sipho he sit round these place playing dominos drinking beer like he swallow some canary. Black cat with all his teeth so white and sharp. Sipho been to prison. In prison he make sharp his teeth with some rock. Now he got a devil cat grin, a sin-against-God mouth happy as feasting hyena. Now Sipho, yes, he got him some big money and fat belly to hold such sweet supper as every pretty young singing girl in Khayelitsha. One time this week every week Sipho got him a new canary. He give her windy yellow scarf she wrap round her head and when she sing, "O Sipho, you some prince, man!" her voice go whistle-sweet like them yellow canary in Auntie's bougainvillea. Like sweet yellow canary so small so soft and sing and sing except below inside shadow some black devil cat ready to jump high. Sipho jump high just to show he jump high. He swallow canary just to show he swallow canary. And nobody act like they know nothing. But I know what is truth and what is not truth. I know who kill them canary and bury under Mama Sipho's latrine. I know even Sipho shit do not stink so bad.

Your honor, will it please the court:

June 14, 2007
Hildebrand Restaurant
Cape Town, South Africa
5-course Dinner for 3
+ 2 Bottles Wine = $72.33

Phil Spector's hair is the the Holy Grail. Chew on it and you shall sing like a canary. *Tweetle-tweet! Tweetle-tweet!* Phil Spector is a canary, today yellow. Yellow canary hair straight as a feather's fringe. Girlish. Girl canary man singing in the rain-swept trees. But Phil Spector is not the sort of canary one would breed to multiply. No. His bony hands tremble. Imagine those trembling bird-bone fingers holding dry bread! Imagine breadcrumbs everywhere!



Your honor, will it please the court:

The starving child in the Waterfront parking lot begged for money. We gave him a 2 rand coin, the equivalent of $0.27.

mourners on monday

In the parallel world of the Southern Hemisphere friends and family of the dead keen without embarassment or inhibition. In fact, the louder their keeing the more impressive their grief.

What a full heart of sorrow!

What a belly of hollow pain!

Love is measured in wounds. See the mother whose love cuts down to bone.

Oh daughter my daughter! she wails, her rocket voice pulling back the brown flesh revealing the crumbling whiteness of her ribcage wherein flutters the ghost of yellow canary-girl.

Daughter of Africa's hope!

Daughter of Africa's light!

Daughter of Africa's spinning water!

Daughter of Africa, dead: naked, bruised, cut, hands and feet bound like a squatter's pig. Laid to rest now and ever in the memory of each mourner's rage. Rage against the police who say she was a prostitute. Rage against the killer whose face is as blank as the coffin wood descending now into red yellow earth.

Lana Clarkson had yellow blonde hair. In the AIDs clinic waiting room filled with breathing dead skeletons wrapped tight in lesion-stained skin, Mariam Mbango – breathing and dead in one month – Mariam Mbango strokes the photo of Lana's blonde hair yellow as Mariam's eyeballs. Strokes the photo repeatedly with one brown-black finger and closes her eyes, certain Lana's hair must have been as glossy as the paper on which it is printed.

Poor lady, says Miriam Mbango clucking her tongue, shaking her head. *Poor poor pretty yellow bird!*

headline news

CNN's Nancy Grace wants to change her hair color but the producers won't let her. "It's too damn much like Phil Spector's newest rug," she says in that twang o' hers, that banjo-string strung taut and pulled out of the nose *dawnka-dawnka-dawnk*, that parrot drawble and dwit, doppler wax and wane.

"No, Nancy." say the producers.

"Pretty please."

"No, Nancy." say the producers.

"If war ends," that devil Sipho ask, "why I or any man need be?"

"Please!"

"No." say the producers.

"Shit."

Does Nancy know that Phil's new wig is – is it a wig? – is an homage to her hair? That Phil's attorney Bruce TiVOs CNN's "Closing Arguments" every damn day and messengers it to Phil. Does Nancy realize that later, at night after the body odor of jurors and Spector-spectators and defense attorneys' sweaty-palm aides have evaporated from Phil's nose hairs, that then, finally then, freshly bathed and nostrils now full of sandalwood incense, that then Phil sits down in front of the TV and watches "Closing Arguments" and gazes so intently at Nancy's hair that he *becomes* her hair, becomes all light and highlight. "Yes," he whispers, nodding slowly, "yes."

gangsters are cowards

After the hyena passes, the dog barks.
– Maasai proverb

They do in gangs. They cannot do alone. The hyena pack makes them strong. One hyena is weak and fearful. Say "Shoo, hyena! Shoo!" and hyena runs yelping and spine-bent. Gangsters have no spine. Their backs are jellyfish washed up on the sand. Take one gang member and make him stand one-legged on a low rock before the big ocean tide coming in. Make him stand for one whole day, yes. Call him names. Say: "Hyena that pisses itself!" Say: "Wormy dog with no teeth!" Say: "Snail without shell!" His knees will break soft and he will tremble like the Cape shore under violent winter waves. He will shit his pants and cry. Snot will pour from his nose down to his mouth. His tongue shall flap-flop-flup and he shall cry, "O O O mama!" There is no use for one gang boy but to sweep the sand clean of kelp and flies.

The love letters begin arriving on Monday. A Court TV network secretary is the first to read them. When she unfolds the stationery – a simply lovely ivory linen weave! – a feather falls out. It is a yellow feather, small. The secretary's first reaction is glee – yellow will do that to people – then repulsion as she considers that the feather may be infested with lice or deer ticks. (The secretary is a country girl in the city, dragging her now useless knowledge behind her like wet toilet paper on the heel of a shoe.) She folds the yellow feather into a Kleenex. She scans the letter, the jaggly scrawly blotchy-botched handwriting that begins horizontally but gradually tilts upward on the righthand side so that the box created by the text resembles a trapezoid. The only phrase she will recall from the letter:

...canary hair and red nails clackety as castenets on your anchor desk...

Your honor, will it please the court:

June 18, 2007
Cape Town, South Africa
Exclusive Books: $85.53
June 23, 2007
Cape Town, South Africa
Exclusive Books: $70.20
June 25, 2007
Cape Town, South Africa
Clark's Bookshop: $179.22
July 07, 2007
Cape Town, South Africa
Exclusive Books: $49.12

one two three four
the whites are rich
the natives poor
five six seven eight
let's have some tea
let's ~~celebrate investigate~~ fumigate
fulminate

Nancy Grace is always drumming her long nails on the hard anchor desk. *Clackety-clackety-clackety-clack.* Nancy Grace is impatient. Her mind races at the edge of the speed of light of a world turned back on itself like a serpent swallowing its tail. Time keeps her young and younger. Sharp-witted, sharp-tongued. Oh god how we love simply *love* Nancy Grace!

a woman knows

Nancy Grace says, "Anna Nicole's baby's eyes are too close together."

Inside the cumin seed's a world of woman's making: grain and dyed

cloth, breast milk and moss. All sharp edges honed honey smooth by

Phil Spector says, "How many coats of makeup does it take to screw in an anchorwoman?"

the ocean's coming and going. Tide rise like woman's blood, ebb like

menstrual flow.

Phil's attorney says, "What?"

Inside the mustard seed old women keep their teeth. Poverty does not

Nancy says, "Isn't that a sign of alcohol fetal syndrome?"

collapse faces into overripe granadillas. The skin of their buttocks stays

plump. Men dream the backside of that woman's knees kissed even when

Phil says, "How many anchor–"

she's a grandmother at 30.

Phil's attorney says, "For chrissake, Phil, I don't know, can we just get back to it?"

Inisde the celery seed music wafts like cooking smoke. Children whisper-

giggle, laugh rolling holding full bellies. Dogs sleep with cats, and cats stop

Phil says, "It."

twitching in dreams, and lice succumb to human song. Rain falls but does

not wash away the shack. There are no shacks. There are homes without

Nancy says, "Hey, y'all, can we score some Phil Spector next week?"

vermin and cupboards replenishing and fine linens on beds soft so a

woman can dream what she knows and wake to find it so.

Your honor, will it please the court:

June 25, 2007
New York Bagels
51 Regent Road
Sea Point, South Africa

1 Fruit Salads	2.07
1 Smoked Salmon	3.46
1 Cream Cottage Ch.	67
3 Croissant	2.18
1 Small Bake	.96
1 Fruit Juice	1.80
2 Omelette Filled	9.70
Total:	$20.84

the door with an axe

When Phil Spector of the canary-yellow hair
I say with my thunder voice: Sipho must die! Every body fraid of
gazes into the courtroom camera he is gazing
him because he be king of these gang. He tell police no he is not
into Nancy Grace's eyes. He is gazing into Nancy
but every body know he is. He has much money and Mercedes-
Grace's eyes and imagining Nancy Grace knows
Benz and bling and blang. His door is painted with one red axe,
he is gazing into her eyes. Nancy's no idiot. She
sign of gang king that mean he chop off your head if you come
does in fact know that Phil is gazing into her eyes
through his door. Every body fraid of what Sipho can do when he
while imagining she knows he is gazing into her
get crazy-mad. Every body seen the boy last month pulled apart
eyes and thus wants to dye her hair red. Truth
like some roast chicken. Legs here, head there, arms some place
be known, she would like to shave her head but
else and some place else, too. That boy done nothing bad, only call
Britney already beat her to the punch. You see,
Sipho a mama's teat when Sipho knock over boy's bike. People
this *this* is precisely why Phil is Phil Spector and
laugh at "mama's teat" and that boy too young and stupid so he
Nancy is Nancy Grace: Each exceeds ordinary
say it again to make the people laugh again. Sipho get crazy-mad.
technological expectations. Unlike the average
Next day boy all in pieces. Legs here, head there, arms some place
viewer, they do not expect invisibility while
else and some place else, too. Pulled apart. Sipho leave the boy like
watching Court TV while picking their nose while
that in Main Street so every body see and every body know and
eating fat-free Wheat Thins while drinking sugar-
every body fraid then and now and for long as Sipho live. So he
free Pepsi. They know the world is as dimensional
must not live no more. Sipho must die. Sipho must die. An I be the
as we make it.
one to kill him.

Your honor, will it please the court:

3 round trip tickets from New York to Cape Town: $5,086.72

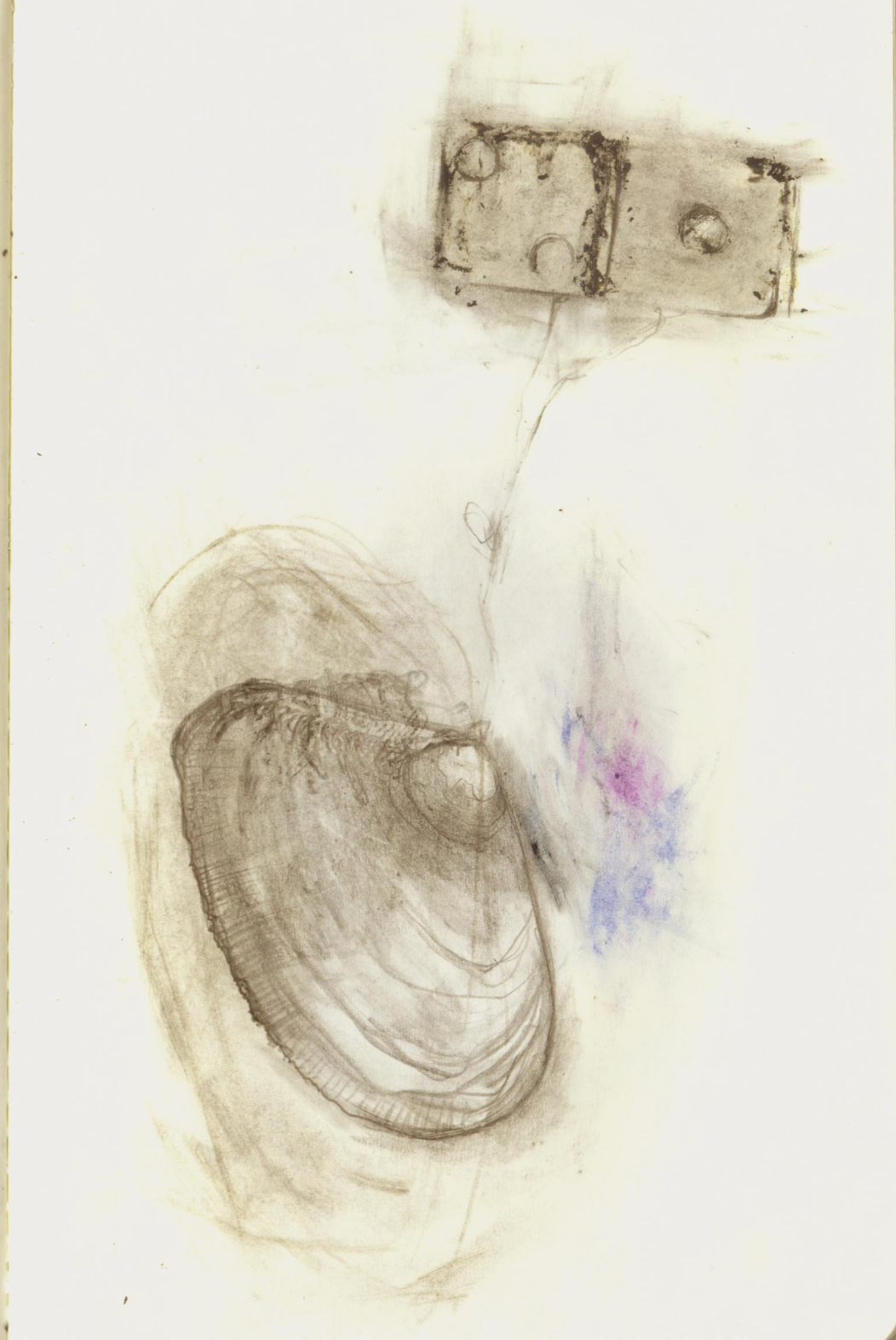
I be a mountain come crashin down on Sipho's head breakin his bone to dust. I spit on the dust of his bone and make mud.. From mud I build a house for yellow canaries.
*Yes, it is his hair, and it's real. Yes, I style his hair. I like the way he looks. I think he is very cute. And I like the way he dresses and I like his hair and that's that.**

*spoken by Phil Spector's wife, Rachelle

story goes

Story goes it was he the quiet young black man who lived alone in the blue shack by the chemical toilets making toys out of discarded oil cans. Story goes he killed them all, all the pretty girls every one who dated the alleged Gangster Sipho. Jealousy. Story goes. The quiet young black man painted a yellow canary on the wall above his bed in his rotten fetid shack. Twelve yellow canaries meticulously rendered. Finally, story goes, he set his sights on Sipho himself. One full-moon night walked through the door painted with one red axe to kill Sipho with a scrap of rusty rebar. Sipho killed the quiet young black man in self-defense, story goes. That quiet young black man must have been fierce, for he was found with twenty-seven axe wounds on his body. His hands cut clean from wrists. His feet cut clean from ankles. Story goes. Story goes and goes and goes. All the people tell the police that story is true. They tell themselves that story is true. This is how they live. How they live another day.

Practically everyone says, "Poor Lana" and means poor torn scrap of paper
blown down the metaphorical Main Street of this hollowness.
They mean, "I once saw a yellow canary in a gooseberry bush, and then it
was gone. I haven't seen one since."
Meanwhile, thinks Nancy Grace just as she's dropping off to sleep after
another long tedious day in CNN studios, *pigeons are everywhere.*



number armed with weapons: 1

weapon: Colt .38

number armed with weapons: 49

weapon: 9mm Parabellum

we need to speak

Nancy Grace loves victims. She supports them. Is their flag flown at half-mast. But Nancy knows, doesn't she, doesn't Nancy know that without a crime there is no victim. Without a criminal there is no Court TV, no Closing Arguments, no Nancy Grace beloved by prey and predator alike? Of course she knows.

And surely Nancy knows, doesn't she, doesn't Nancy know that victims are never real to TV viewers, they're two-dimensional, no flesh and blood and broken bone and teeth chipped by gun muzzles. Merely photons whose very existence depends on the thumb on the remote – there/not there/there/not there. Not really real but entertainment, entertaining arena of light waves and sound waves and people half-size or smaller waving at you as if you existed to these victims live or previously recorded, to Nancy, to Phil, to Lana or the memory of Lana.

You do not. Not. No. You don't you will rot before Nancy and Phil learn your name. They will never learn your name.

Unless you die horribly. Painfully. Publicly.

Your honor, will it please the court:

July 3, 2007
Fish Hoek, South Africa Open Market

enough is enough

Maybe yes in some other life behind that dead and pretty yellow moon I be the fire in these tall dry grass and you, Sipho, you be every damn burning blade. Ah yes, Sipho devil man, you shall know my burning go on forever making you nothing. Even when you are many. Making you nothing, nothing, no thing, Sipho, no such thing in this pity world but ash under these feet of wormy dogs.

"'There but for the Nancy Grace go I.'"

–*The New York Times,* May 14, 2007

Your honor, will it please the court:
We ate a seven-course meal at Boschendal Winery, wherein every course was a buffet. We were served by an elderly Bushman, member of a race of people nearly disappeared, certainly nearly forgotten. When he swept our table clean of bread crumbs I wanted to weep. Instead, I nibbled on a fine curried fish. Soon, vacation