



PRESS RELEASE

Pimp My Bishop
TX Thursday October 16
(Scandal! Mondays to Thursdays at 7.30pm)

Bishop (Molefi Monaisa) is the mysterious figurehead of the human trafficking/sex-trading syndicate of which Khanyi (Thlonepho Thobejane), is the madam – and his No 1 girl.

Bishop's focus, until now, has been on expanding his already sizeable operation in time for the 2010 World Cup. There are many other such syndicates: Nigerian networks; Chinese Triads; Russian and Bulgarian mafia. However, Bishop is a local dude, who recruits girls from rural areas after convincing the girls' parents to give up their children to him. He says he will find them domestic work in the city so they will be able to send money to their families.

These girls, who are poor and desperate, are enticed by his promises about, and stories of, the big city. When they arrive in Jozi, the girls are pampered to the degree that they become dependent on Bishop – either financially, or via drug addiction.

Bishop then manoeuvres them into trading in sex, either to pay off their debts to him, or to feed their addiction. Even when they are trapped in prostitution, the girls, although fearing him, still regard him as firm, but fair.

This man, who is in his prime, is imposing and has charm, presence, and manipulative skills as artful as a festival. He is cunning and wily. He is all about control. Brute force and scare tactics are never his first course of action. Bishop is deceptively gentle and receptive, but his caring façade masks a dark and violent nature of a man capable of true evil.

Khanyi is being paid as a primary informant (okay, informal researcher, then) by the independent weekly, The Voice. Features editor, Dika (Masechaba Moshoeshoe), and newly appointed editor, Eddie Khumalo (Sandy Mokwena) are working on a month-long series of articles that will expose the wickedness of the human trafficking and sex slavery trade.

Khanyi will inadvertently lead Bishop to Eddie's wife, Maletsatsi (Joyce Skefu), whom, we will learn, was bullied and beaten by Bishop during her former life as a sex worker.

And that's just the least of the horrifying details that are soon to be revealed about Mrs Khumalo, who has turned her life around and now leads an exemplary Christian life.

Maletsatsi's life, post prostitution, has become socially acceptable, even if she still has heavy crosses to bear. Her husband Eddie is a recovering alcoholic and prescription drugs addict. Her NZH receptionist daughter, Palesa (Refilwe Madumo), is HIV+. Palesa also dumped her previous boyfriend to pinch her current pastor-to-be boyfriend Lefa (Aubrey Poo) away from her stepsister.

Bishop has information that will endanger everything Maletsatsi holds dear, including her newly built life as a respectable citizen.

There is, of course, the fact that Eddie and Palesa know about her past – but the outside world doesn't...but be warned: more awful news about Maletsatsi's previous life will soon be revealed.

You will also find out just what will a woman do to protect her own.

Molefi is no stranger to playing dodgy types on TV. "I think, that for every actor, it's always fun to play an evil character...to get the chance to be bad without the consequences. I guess that's one perk, we as actors get, the opportunity to explore our dark sides," he says.

"Bishop is one of those people who had it rough, probably ran away from home as a teen and grew up in the streets. I believe he's a good person deep down, but his version of good is twisted, and that's why he got the nickname, 'Bishop'."

Molefi is a versatile actor. He showed his more sensitive side as the single parent, Daniel Phute, on *One Way*, a TV drama about modern-day suburban living in South Africa; he also had a firm and frank subtlety as Tommy Ditheko on the hospital drama, *Hillside*, playing the hospital's CEO.

"Acting for me is not only about portraying different people, but becoming different people. Finding something in common with the character is also important; do I have something in common with Bishop? Maybe... he does have a caring side, of sorts. We're both loyal."

He's played a *Backstage* baddie; a drug dealer in the TV police drama, *Snitch*; a gangster in e.tv's comedy series, *Madam & Eve*; the all out villainous Brutus in a stage production of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*.

Having trained under the guidance of the talented Stephanie van Niekerk at the Method Actor's Centre in Pretoria, Molefi comments that although he comes alive on stage – his accomplishments include Jozi's Windybrow Theatre productions, *What the Bottle Says*, and *Township Funeral*, as well as the play, *Maru*, which has just finished its run at the Market Theatre – he just loves to act, first and foremost.