



PRESS PACK

SCANDAL



Scandal /noun/

1. A public outcry regarding something shocking or highly improper. 2. An incident caused by behaviour outside the norm of society that causes general censure and gossip. 3. A situation known to the public that brings infamy, notoriety, embarrassment, stigma or shame to the person or party involved in the scandalous behaviour. (See **scandalous**).

For a better definition of *Scandal* tune in from 10 Jan at 8pm – only on e.tv

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1. INTRODUCTION

SCANDAL ROCKS e.TV

Scandal - there are some who insinuate that we incite it, inferring that we are the agent provocateurs in this new saga to rock e.tv. We certainly admit we're notorious for it – AND, finally, we confirm that the 'scandalous' rumours are true ...

e.tv is thrilled to announce the launch of SCANDAL – soon to be South Africa's hottest, daily-drama.

This January, let Scandal take you into the heart of the newsroom at 'The Voice' - and into lives, and beds, of the investigative reporters, photographers and editors who will go to any length to break the story first.

Be there as they uncover disturbing truths, and experience the daily drama as their personal ambitions and ethics collide with professional challenges.

It's a brand-new and homegrown show that is intelligent, provocative and sexy. For compulsive viewing that will forever change the face of South African television, tune in Monday to Thursday at 8pm from 10 January and feel all the heat and glamour for yourself...

2. PRESS RELEASE 1:

A SIZZLING, HOMEGROWN SHOW FOR THE NATION

Scandal, a brand-new and proudly South African drama series, will make its highly anticipated debut on e.tv in January 2005. This local show is ready to take on some serious competition when it takes a centre-stage position in e.tv's weekday programme line-up. **Scandal** will provide an entertaining mix of glamour and excitement to a nation hungry for homegrown talent and colloquial storylines as it takes ownership of the hotly-contested, 8pm, Monday to Thursday slot.

Scandal takes us right into the heart of the busy newsroom at 'The Voice', a struggling weekly newspaper based in Johannesburg. Viewers will feel the thrill of the chase as they discover just how far the team is prepared to go to break the story first. It's nothing less than compulsive viewing when personal ambitions collide with professional challenges as investigative reporters, photographers and editors strive to file the biggest stories against pressured deadlines. Faced with questionable sources and ethical ambiguities, the reporters at The Voice often uncover shocking, disturbing and poignant truths while struggling to maintain their journalistic integrity.

But the show is not only about the behind-the-scenes drama that goes into breaking today's hottest story - it's also about the intriguing personalities that people this intense, character-driven drama. The storylines revolve around fourteen very different characters, each one linked to The Voice and each brought together by unique circumstance. Their beliefs, egos and actions constantly influence each other's lives while their personal aspirations, noble and dishonourable, colour their everyday realities. In an industry plagued by constant criticism; these characters, some endearing, some infuriating, are all consumed by their passion to see their dreams realised ... at any cost.

A dynamic cast heads this cutting-edge drama about the constant search for 'exclusives' and the latest, most sizzling, headline information. Leenda Reddy, Luthuli Dlamini, Rani Chuene, Siyabonga Twala, Sandy Mokwena, Zoe Fairbrother, Candice Derman, Renate Stuurman, Dewald Reinecke, Sarah Ngubeni, Welile Nzunza, Stephina Zwane and Ashley Dowds have all signed contracts to star in **Scandal** - and, as the characters they play on **Scandal** become household names, these talented actors will become part of the history of a local show that will change the face of South African television as we know it.

A team of seven scriptwriters, including Moose Thabete (senior writer and co-producer), is creating an entire world behind the cameras as they flesh out characters and explore the intriguing storylines that will soon unfold on **Scandal**. Thabete, who also worked on Jozi Streets, touched on some of the major themes running through the show: "A newsroom is a hub of activity and this is brought across in the way the show is scripted. **Scandal** is about pace and movement - because in **Scandal**, everybody has an agenda ... and everybody's trying to get something or somewhere. Everybody has secrets and skeletons...some more haunting than others. Everybody has a journey, and everyone will travel that journey. For some, it will bring happiness and others revelations beyond their wildest expectations. There will be pain, disappointment, courage, success, triumph, joy, violence and sex ... that is, after all - REAL LIFE."

Malebo Phage, e.tv head of local programming, doesn't think it will take long to convince viewers to tune in every week night to catch this exciting addition to e.tv's schedule: "**Scandal** is a daily-drama with a difference. Viewers will practically see shocking headlines flash across their screens

- from abortion to murder, from gossip to hypocrisy and to glamorous secret agents of both the past and present regimes. South Africans have been starved for choice in that time slot."

From **10 January**, tune into **Scandal** for all the thrills and excitement taking place behind-the-scenes in a busy newsroom. Find out how far a news team is prepared to go to get the story first - and how well they cope as they juggle personal and professional lives while trying to manage the latest news crises. It's local, challenging, sexy and highly entertaining - don't miss it - free, only on e.

3. PRESS RELEASE

e.TV REVELS IN SCANDAL

Beautiful women, powerful men, bloated egos, ruthless ambition, hidden agendas, open fights and lies - and don't even talk about keeping up with who hates who - all this plays out in the fictitious newsroom of "The Voice".

Scandal is about the people who work for this Johannesburg based newspaper – the pressurised deadlines, the chaos of breaking news, the fight for increased circulation and Ad spend – to their (no longer) private lives and personal angst. Scandal leaves no reputation untarnished.

The two main characters are Stan Nyathi (Luthuli Dlamini) and Vusi Zwane (Siyabonga Twala). While they have different approaches to business, they maintain their friendship outside of the newsroom. Stan is the editor of the newspaper and Vusi is the owner. Stan is married to Thato (Rami Chuene), whom he blindly loves. Other cast members include the veteran in the newsroom, Eddie Khumalo (Sandy Mokwena).

In the newsroom there's the take-no-prisoners, up-and-coming journalist Lulama (Sarah Ngubeni), and Political Reporter, Vanashree Devan (Leeanda Reddy). Often perceived as pushy, Vanashree sees herself as being driven. There's small-town Samantha (Candice Derman) in the role of the style/fashion editor and the self-serving Managing Editor, June Simms (Zoë Fairbrother).

Advertising Executive Andrew McBain (Ashley Dowds) is the guy you will love to hate. Jaco Geldenhuys (Dewald Reynecke), the Sports Journalist, is the resident playboy at "The Voice". Passionate about photography, Breyton Isaacs (Jacques Blignaut), is the mystery man in this newsroom. Tamia Bardill (Renate Stuurman) is the beautiful and feisty receptionist at "The Voice".

Fana Baloyi (Welile Nzunza) is a man trying to escape his past. He's determined to become a better person and, although his job as a messenger at "The Voice" might seem belittling at times, he perseveres.

It's been generations since we've had such a good bit of drama at e.tv...

4. PRESS RELEASE

e.TV BACKS A WINNER

e.tv's dynamic Channel Director, Bronwyn Keene-Young, makes no bones about what prompted the free-to-air channel's decision to commission **Scandal**: "We're quite simply looking to increase our prime-time market-share on weekdays after 8pm. Local drama is a highly successful genre in South African television. Given that e.tv has now firmly established itself as South Africa's biggest English-medium TV channel, 2005 is the perfect time to launch a new, quality drama in the 8pm slot."

The Executive Producer of **Scandal** is e.tv Head of Local Productions, Malebo Phage, who believes that nothing makes your ears prick up like a good, solid, sordid scandal. And in the print media, nothing of course sells like a scandal.

"That's why this story is set in a newspaper environment, where the storyline unfolds in the midst of high drama, deceit, and gossip about other people's faults and wrongdoings," he says.

The paper is called The Voice -- it's struggling terribly -- and the MD of the company is always trying to raise more (much more!) money to save it from finally folding and dying an undignified death.

Then of course there are daily crises and vigorous debates about which stories to run; with subplots and cliffhangers that will make viewers sit on the edge of their seats. They will indeed white-knuckle their way through each riveting episode.

Disgraceful love triangles, backbiting, rattling skeletons in the cupboards and hideous slander will be the order of the day. The show has oodles of sex appeal, the actors are heavyweights and the stories are written by a team of entertainment experts under the polished guidance of Moose Thabete.

"Thabete, from Coconut Cool Productions, proved himself as an outstanding wordsmith and scriptwriter with Jozi Streets, a previous drama on e.tv, which was a smash hit with viewers," says Phage.

"This time he will also produce the show and with his youthful genius and creative flair, we expect this show to set the world of TV on fire. Because as in **Scandal**...where's there's smoke, there must be a fire."

5. A WORD FROM THE PRODUCERS...

Clive Morris and Moose Thabete are the producers of Scandal. This outstanding team were invited to speak their minds about the upcoming launch. Despite the tears, sheer hard work and drama that goes into putting together a show as challenging as Scandal, they were surprisingly philosophical... :

'...the universe has a way of putting people together, at just the right time and for all the right reasons'- Author, (who knows but it sounds good).

Clive and Moose began working together on a youth magazine show called Moose's Place in 2001...they had however met before when Clive was directing the Kora Awards...Moose at the time was one of the musicians performing. Nothing came of that initial meeting...it wasn't the right time...2001 on Moose's Place was. Since then, the two have been inseparable. Clive and Moose officially joined forces in 2003, working on the hugely successful real-life police drama, Jozi Streets for e.tv.

As a result of an informal conversation at the reception of #5 Summit Road (e.tv), about a daily drama based on the internal workings of a newspaper...the intriguing relationships...the fear...the adrenalin...all the thrills and frills...was born **Scandal**...the most Scandalous bambino this side of the border.

Coconut Cool Productions, the company responsible for **Scandal**, is a combination of the bald WHITE man and the 'dreaded' BLACK boy. e.tv gave this exciting duo yet another chance to create...and create they love to do. It is Clive's and Moose's hope and wish that this combination of **'experienced youthfulness'** will continue breeding successful programmes...hopefully even more successful than their first, Jozi Streets. It is also their hope that e.tv will continue having faith in them and allow them to do even more of what they know and do best...

ABOUT SCANDAL...

Both Clive and Moose are extremely excited about **Scandal**... "it's like giving birth...(as if these two **guys** know how that feels). One of the reasons for the overwhelming confidence is knowing that we haven't cut any corners.

It all started with the search for the ideal CAST...and what a search it turned out to be. The audition process was long and intense but we were determined to find the people who we knew could bring **Scandal** to life...and we did. We have complete confidence in every single one of our cast members and if we were given the chance to do it again...we wouldn't do it any differently.

Scandal also boasts amazing sets...that, as the Art Director will tell you, didn't come about overnight. The entire feel and look of the show from the sets to the lighting to the directing is like nothing ever seen before on South African screens...it's real...it's alive...it's Scandalous.

Another challenging process was the scripting...we needed to ensure that we have scripts that are written to suit the style of the show...exciting, pacy, punchy, compelling and unforgettable. This meant the scripting team had to think drama...not soap. Think short, relevant and exciting scenes...breaking the norms of a regular daily.

Trust us when we say...The Generation gap is about to be filled...to the brim. With the support e.tv has displayed...an awesome cast...amazing directors...fantastic sets and exciting scripts...Scandal will truly....well we'll let the viewer finish this sentence for us.

SCANDAL will shoot from the hip and give it to you the way it is...oh...and you CAN quote us on that too." Enjoy it! - **Clive and Moose**.

6. THE CAST OF SCANDAL

In no particular order we bring you a taste of the sexy cast of Scandal...

Ashley Dowds (Character: Andrew McBain)



Hailing from the Natal Midlands, Ashley Dowds is the type of versatile actor that prides himself in choosing and playing roles that are starkly different from himself. He finds these roles particularly interesting and attractive.

Ashley, or Ash as he is known by his friends, is an avid fan of the outdoors. He even dreamt of becoming a fisherman or a game ranger as a child.

"The thought of acting as career prospect came later when I was in high school. I remember in Standard 6, one of the 1st team rugger-buggers bullied me into taking his role in the school play – I loved it! As they say- the rest is history as I never looked back." It seems only fitting then that one Ashley's favourite and most memorable roles was that of Miles Carathas, a rugger-bugger in Anthony Ackerman's "Old Boys".

Ashley goes on to mention that if he weren't acting he'd probably be a writer, a farmer or a travel presenter. "I actually love travelling and a career as a travel journalist would be ideal."

Interesting facts:

Birthday- 10 July

Most Embarrassing Role – Dr Incredible – a corporate icon for TV

To Relax- Ashley reads in his hammock, swims, and likes taking walks.

Favourite hangout- Melrose Arch. He's not a regular but says the pool deck, with its funky design, is a huge favourite.

Candice Derman (Character: Samantha Young)



Candice Derman who was born and raised in Johannesburg, is no stranger to South African TV. Having already starred on two other “soapies,” she’s on her way to becoming a veteran in the genre.

Candice dreamt of being an actress from a young age and treasures each and every role she’s ever had the opportunity to play.

I love the fact that I’m doing something that I’ve always dreamt of doing, but if I wasn’t acting I’d probably be a Yoga Instructor. I love Yoga and do it about four times a week.

Candice is married and is one of 4 sisters. She is the proud owner of two fluffy Persians and three wrinkly shar-peis.

Interesting Facts:

Birthday- 26 November

Would most like to work with- David Lynch (director of Twin Peaks)

Dewald Reynecke (Character: Jaco Geldenhuys)



Born in Vanderbijlpark, Dewald Reynecke had dreams of becoming a vet as a child but changed his mind in Matric.

After school, he went on to star in Children's Theatre taking various animal roles such as "The Cow" – which happens to be one of his most memorable roles and "The Duck" – his most embarrassing one.

Dewald would love the opportunity to work with Patricia Lewis. He says he still cannot believe that Brad Pitt was given the role of Joe Black. Dewald staunchly believes that, given the opportunity to star in "Meet Joe Black," he would have done the role more justice than Brad Pitt.

Interesting facts:

Birthday- 4 August

Unusual hobby- making wall clocks

Favourite place to go on holiday- Mosselbay- where his mom's ashes are

Favourite hangout- *Unplugged* in Melville – because they have a jukebox!

Jacques Blignaut (Character: Breyton Isaacs)



All it took was a single remark, given by a proud teacher, to spark Blignaut's interest in drama. It came in the form of a compliment from his Standard 4 teacher. She told him that his performance in the class production of "The Jungle Book" was worthy of an Oscar nomination.

"After that particular incident I knew that I wanted to be on stage."

Jacques also toyed with the idea of being a fashion photographer or rock star. It's doubtful that either one of those professions would have worked out as (by Blignaut's own admission) he has a terrible sense of style and considers himself in desperate need of a teacher!

He now spends most of his time listening to music, watching movies, and hanging out with his mates- mostly in Melville.

Favourite hangout- his bedroom because it's cheap!

Likes to read - FHM!

Like to work with- Julianne Moore, Edward Norton, Anna-Mart van der Merwe and director Lara Foot-Newton

Leeanda Reddy (Character: Vanashree Devan)



Leeanda Reddy will choose Durban, the city she was born and grew up in, over Cape Town anyday.

Leeanda fell in love with acting in Grade 1 when she starred in her class production of Pinocchio. "I still remember that role like it was yesterday! I loved it so much that although I was too young to know if that's what I wanted to do- it kinda stuck with me throughout my life."

"Now that I'm doing this, I can never imagine myself doing anything else. Admittedly, I would be one of those 'unfulfilled' people with an office job and I'm glad I came to my senses while there was still time to change my mind about a possible career prospect."

Interesting Facts:

Birthday- 19 September

Would love to work with- Quentin Tarrantino

Would love to have starred as- the "bride" played by Uma Thurman in "Kill Bill".

Music preference- Hip-Hop, R&B, Classical and Opera.

Luthuli Dlamini (Character: Stan Nyathi)



Born in Zimbabwe, Luthuli's parents moved to the UK in 1967. This was where most of his love for the theatre was cultivated.

After a few stints in various theatres around the UK, Luthuli decided to move to South Africa. He landed the role of a young black South Londoner with mental problems in Maralin Vanrenen's theatrical masterpiece Blue/Orange. "That was such a fantastic challenge and I got a chance to work alongside Ashley Dowds (who incidentally plays the role of Andrew on SCANDAL) and Ron Smerczak whom I credit as my mentor."

Luthuli finds the stage more rewarding than TV. He says that TV is more of a challenge because, unlike on stage, he has to wait a while for the audience's reaction.

"Although it may seem as though I've always been into acting I also wanted to be a million things like all other kids. At some point I wanted to be a boxer, an astronaut, an engineer, an investor, a doctor, an actor, a filmmaker and lots of other things..."

Interesting Facts:

Favourite book- Fyodor Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment"

Role he would have loved to play- "Othello" done by Laurence Fishburne

Favourite and most memorable role - Christopher on a theatrical production "Blue/Orange"

Sandy Mokwena plays Eddie Khumalo



Having once starred in "Ipi-Tombi" – one of South African theatres most prized exports- then-it is safe to say that Sandy Mokwena has earned his place as a veteran on South African theatre.

But Sandy Mokwena's humble manner belies his thespian stature. Many of cast members on Scandal claim he's a great person to learn from and he's always got time to give them tips.

"I've been doing this for a while now, and I can safely say that I love doing what I do." Born in Soweto, Sandy grew-up in a time when young people were taught to aspire towards the professions of law, medicine and education. Sandy himself wanted to be a lawyer. But as time went by he discovered his love for the stage and decided to give it a shot and never looked back.

Interesting Facts:

Favourite reads- books on Spirituality

Favourite local holiday destination- Durban

Enjoys- a game of pool

Zoë Fairbrother plays June Simms



Zoë Fairbrother fell in love with acting after seeing "The Sound of Music" at age 5. This Johannesburg born actress is no stranger on the small screen having started her TV career on "Grab" -a youth magazine programme in the early 90's. An avid traveler, Zoë always dreamt of going overseas. After a stint overseas, she returned home to pursue her acting career.

"After my beautiful baby boy Sam and my fiancé, acting is another close and great love. After being on Backstage for a while I left to have Sam and now I'm back again."

Zoë appreciates the opportunity to work with the cast on Scandal -"There's such a wide variation of skill and talent that it's definitely going to be an interesting production."

Zoë says she'd love to work with Anthony Minghella, or the producers of "Bridget Jones' Diary" and "Love Actually". "If there's a role out there that I would have loved to play it's the role of Hannah in "The English Patient" played by Juliette Binoche."

Interesting Facts:

Childhood nicknames- 'Squirt' (from her brother) and 'Blossom Bottom' (from her mom)

She was once a tooth on a British toothpaste commercial

Favourite holiday destination- The Seychelles, because it's idyllic and she fell in love there

Favourite reads- "Memoirs of a Geisha" by Arthur Golden, "The Poisonwood Bible" by Barbara Kingsolver and "The Alchemist" Paulo Coelho

Siyabonga Twala plays Vusi Zwane



It was in high school that Siyabonga discovered his love for theatre. Having first dreamt of being a journalist, he caught the acting bug when his teacher decided to do a version of “Woza Albert” and he was assigned a role.

“That was a disaster, but I told myself that this is what I wanted to do. When I told my parents they were a bit sceptical because they didn’t know anyone who was an actor and made a living out of it.”

“After that I got a chance to meet the great Gibson Kente who encouraged me to follow my passion. But my parents were set on me getting an education so that I could make a living.” Because of this, Siyabonga went on to study Tourism and hated it. He also tried to study commerce but that didn’t work out either.

Then something interesting happened. Siyabonga got a chance to work with Mbongeni Ngema on “Woza Albert.” He played Zuluboy on the production’s UK tour in the early 90’s.

“The thing about acting is that people always associate you with the character you portray but it’s always nice to play someone you’re completely different from. That means you don’t have to base the character on who you are, maybe only the situations that are common to every human being.”

Interesting Facts:

Birthday- 9 August

Favourite hangout- home - because he’s in love with his family

Would most love to work with- Winston Nthsona

Scariest moment- opening night when doing theatre

Role he would have loved to do- Othello done by Laurence Fishburne

Renate Stuurman plays Tamia Bardill



“It’s amazing how many people recognize me on the street now that I’ve been on TV a while”. With her distinctively Urban-Afro look, it’s no wonder most people cannot get enough of Renate Stuurman. How could anyone miss that hair!

Besides being beautiful and talented, this Cape beauty believes that she’s lucky to be working as an actor today. “When I first moved up to Johannesburg it was very difficult to get into acting but with faith and perseverance I finally got a small part which led to other bigger things, and now I’m here.”

Renate believes that being an actor right now in SA is something that people respect as a profession. “At least now people can make a living out of it. Although it’s still difficult to crack it, once you do it’s smooth sailing.”

Renate’s has known from an early age that she would be an actress. “I began to take Drama classes in grade 1 and also did a bit of Ballet- so I’ve always loved performing.”

Interesting Facts:

Birthday- 8 Dec

Favourite hangout- anywhere where they serve good food!

Favourite read- “Things Fall Apart” by Chinua Achebe

Would love to- do an action movie

Sarah Ngunbeni plays Lulama Jackson



Having attended the National School of the Arts, it’s no wonder Sarah Ngunbeni seems at ease in front of the camera. She’s a natural performer and is also an ardent

figure skater. "I can't even think of anything better than what I'm doing. I love acting!" But acting hasn't always been Sarah's passion. While growing-up in Orlando, Soweto, Sarah had ambitions of becoming a doctor or businesswoman. But realizing her strong attraction to performing, she pursued acting.

Interesting Facts:

Birthday- 27 December

Her younger brother is a TV presenter and actor Wring Ngubeni

Favourite holiday destination- Mozambique- because it's close-by and the scenery and surrounds really do it for her

Favorite read- "Rich Dad, Poor Dad" by Robert T. Kiyosaki

Rami Chuene plays Thato Nyathi



Rami Chuene has arrived, and although she's been around for a while she's about to make her most memorable impression on SA TV yet. Having had a short but very successful stint on Backstage as Pearl, she's now back as Thato Nyathi on Scandal.

Rami first realized that she wanted to be an actress after seeing Mbongeni Ngema's "Township Fever" while still in school.

"I grew-up in Seshego and Lebowakgomo in Limpopo and when this particular production came to our area I just could not get over it. I told myself I would one day be an actress."

The fact that she's a good singer is one of Rami's attributes and it's what got her noticed, specially in theatre where Rami got her first break.

Interesting Facts:

Favourite hangout and holiday destination- her parents' house

Would love to work with- Tebogo Mahlatsi and David E. Kelly

Music preference- Jazz, Gospel, and is addicted to Kabelo and Skwatta Kamp!

Stephina Zwane – Lolo Khumalo



Stephina Zwane started her career as a programme presenter on e.tv's Craz-e. "After Craz-e I started thinking about pursuing acting."

"One of the most memorable roles was one of my early ones. I played Jabulile on "Gaz'lam 2" – that was such a great experience."

Stephina, who grew-up in Joubert Park, Johannesburg, is the oldest of three kids and lists listening to music, taking walks and shopping till she drops as the best ways to relax. If she weren't acting she'd probably be a fulltime student or coaching netball.

Interesting Facts:

Birthday- 31 May

Favourite hangout- home

Favourite read- Alan Paton's "Ah, But your land is Beautiful"

Would most like to work with- Leleti Khumalo

7. THE KEY CHARACTERS ON SCANDAL

STAN NYATHI – Played by Luthuli Dlamini

Stan's Background:

Stan is 37 years old and is the editor and co-shareholder of The Voice. He's married to Thato, with whom he attended high school at Waterford in Swaziland, and together they have one son, 17 year old Mangi, who is studying journalism overseas.

More about Stan:

Stan has loved journalism all his life. He attended Waterford College in Swaziland and at the age of 17 (1984), was the editor of the controversial Student Nation newspaper, a Waterford publication that focussed on South African politics. Stan has always been a bright and very determined man, and under his leadership, Student Nation became one of the most circulated student papers in Southern Africa, reaching schools and universities in areas such as Botswana, Lesotho and Zimbabwe. However, the paper was banned in South Africa. In 1985, Stan graduated from Waterford College and made his way back to South Africa. He continued his work with Student Nation and started to circulate the paper illegally in South African schools.

It was at this time (1985) that he met Vusi Zwane, a young, fiery student activist at Orlando High. Stan and Vusi became very close friends as Vusi helped Stan set up the infrastructure required to facilitate circulation of Student Nation amongst Soweto schools.

In 1986, Thato graduated from Waterford College and returned to South Africa to start her training at the nursing college. She helped Stan and Vusi set up circulation of Student Nation in Black Transvaal based nursing colleges. At the end of 1986, Thato fell pregnant with Stan's child.

By 1987, Student Nation had become an unexpected success, receiving attention and assistance from a wide spectrum of Black political organisations. Student Nation's success, catapulted Stan and Vusi to the forefront of student politics. The government at the time quickly took steps to silence the two young men and in October of 1987, Stan and Vusi were arrested under the Treason Act, found guilty and each sentenced to a year imprisonment. Stan was still in jail when Mangi, his son was born.

Halfway through 1988, 21 year old Stan and his partner, Vusi were released from prison. Both men decided to take a back seat from student politics. Stan wanted to focus on his family and in 1989, married Thato.

In 1990, Stan got his first job as a junior researcher at a major newspaper, Weekly Press . He was assigned to work with Eddie Khumalo, one of the most successful journalists at the time. Stan and Eddie became very good friends as Eddie endeavoured to teach the young, ambitious journalist everything he knew. Stan stayed with the paper, working under Eddie's wing for six years. In 1996, Stan left the paper and became one of the senior journalists for a smaller paper, Our Times. Stan stayed with 'Our Times' for 2 years and in 1998, at the age of 31, re-established contact with Vusi, who at this time had amassed a small fortune, and together they started The Voice, Stan in the position of Editor and Vusi the Managing Director.

ANDREW McBAIN – Played by Ashley Dowds

Andrew's Background:

Andrew McBain grew up in Fietas, and definitely wasn't born with a silver spoon in his mouth. What he has today, he has achieved through hard work and by adopting a winning attitude. His family wasn't well off, but he was bright and won a scholarship to attend St. Johns in Johannesburg, and the attitude has rubbed off on him. He finished school with a first class matric and got a bursary to study a B.compt at Wits Business school, which he passed cum laude. After working back his three-year contract, he left to find greener pastures. As a student he had been involved with the campus paper, and always thought he'd like to run a paper at some stage of his life...

More about Andrew:

Although Andrew got into St. Johns on a sports scholarship, he soon began to lose interest in sport, seeing it as a short-term solution to end his poverty. He worked hard and excelled, especially in subjects related to economics and entered Wits Business School on a bursary from De Loitte & Touche.

Economics and politics aren't too far apart, and as a student he was very active in politics. He was on the SRC and was also involved with a campus paper. The mood and anticipation of a new South Africa in the early 90's swept him up, and he dedicated his studies to furthering his personal cause for the good of the country. He was so involved with his "work" that he forgot to get involved in any relationships. The fact that he is now 31 and still lives with his mother, could be a give away. Jaco has mocked him about it a few times and he took great exception to it. So, possibly there's something there...

Andrew takes himself very seriously, and only has a great sense of humour when he's winning. He becomes a real complainer when things don't go his way.

When his three-year contract at Deloitte's expired he left immediately and joined Prime Media. But it didn't work out for him - he had many personal confrontations and never got used to the idea of starting at the bottom. He had seen himself as starting as the CEO's personal advisor, but was reduced to handling radio advertising sales. Despite this unhappy period, he did do good work, which stood him in good stead when he applied for the position at "The Voice".

Since joining the paper in 2001 he has made himself quite powerful. He immediately spotted that Vusi was the strong man and the money man, and made a conscious decision to become his lap dog. This he did very well, though Vusi doesn't particularly like him. Vusi keeps him on because he knows that Andrew will do anything he wants and he likes that.

BREYTON ISAACS – Played by Jacques Blignaut

Breyton's Background:

Breyton was born in Westbury, Johannesburg. A low-income group area that is predominantly coloured. Breyton never knew his father – he was killed in a gang war in 1976, while his mother was eight months pregnant with him. Breyton's mother never got over the death of her husband. She kept herself indoors and did not want anything to do with the rest of the world. She ran a spaza shop next door to their home to make a living. Although his mother was overprotective, she tried to love him as best she knew how. Breyton as a result was also shy and kept to himself. He tried to remain invisible during his schooling years in the district. He passed all his subjects without much effort on his part; which was evident enough in his grades.

More about Breyton:

The only thing that could give Breyton a sense of connection with his father was an old 35mm camera. When Breyton turned seven, his mother gave it to him and told him stories of how his father loved to take photographs. Breyton became obsessed and wherever he went, the camera would go too. As a child, Breyton would click away even if he had no film. When Breyton was around sixteen, he got a part time job as a film developer at a nearby chemist so that he could earn money for film and develop his pictures for free.

Breyton's mother died when he was eighteen years old of TB. Breyton has never talked about it nor has he properly dealt with it. He feels that it is the way life is. There is little point in mourning over what cannot be undone. Breyton swore to himself that he would not wither away as his mom had done.

The owner of the chemist began to take an interest in Breyton's photos and started hiring Breyton out as a photographer for special occasions. Breyton quickly became the community's favoured photographer. While this helped Breyton support himself, his real passion was walking through the streets and taking portraits of everyday life.

On one of his daily walks through the township, Breyton walked into the middle of a gang battle. While taking cover behind a burnt out car, his only reaction was to point the camera and shoot. Breyton sent the pictures to The Voice – and received R500.

Breyton immediately set his sights on becoming a photo journalist and phoned various papers to get a job. When he was refused, Breyton took his portfolio and waited for Stan outside the offices of The Voice. Breyton wouldn't let Stan leave until he had seen his work. Stan admired his persistence and hired him on a probational period.

Breyton keeps in contact with his grandparents who are extremely proud of him, their only wish is that he would finally get a girlfriend. His father's brother has been in jail for the last fifteen years for murder.

EDDIE KHUMALO – played by Sandy Mokwena

Eddie's Background:

Eddie's the most senior journalist at The Voice. Now 40 years old, he has seen it all, done it all - he has awards, scars and consistent trouble to prove it.

More about Eddie:

Eddie was born in Alexander in the mid 60s (1965). His father was a mineworker (he died in a mine accident along with his digging crew when Eddie was seven) and his mother worked in a restaurant kitchen. He obtained his primary, secondary and high school education at local schools where he excelled in history and English, particularly assignment writing. He was twelve years old when the 1976 student uprising (Soweto) against the use of Afrikaans at schools took place.

That incident, which he remembers like yesterday (he was part of the protest), was the major contributor to him getting involved in student politics i.e. to help fight against black suppression, as he grew up. At high school he started experimenting with words, writing protest slogans on placards and walls (graffiti) and reading newspapers avidly.

He became the general secretary of the student representative council (SRC) and discovered the power of mass media. He made up his mind to be a journalist but couldn't find an SA institution willing to accept his application to enrol for the journalism course.

Eddie has a sister (Sonto) who dropped out of school after falling pregnant - she has four kids from different fathers to date. Now and again, she comes around looking for money or to tell him about her troubles (e.g. boyfriend beatings). Lastly, he has one surviving uncle (now a pensioner) who resides in Ezakheni (Ladysmith), his father's place of birth.

In 1984, Eddie enrolled for a Teachers' Diploma at the Soweto College of Education. On weekends he worked on several odd jobs to help his mother with college fees. Bi-monthly, on Saturday, he was a 'garden boy', in Northcliff, where his mother worked. His bosses (a pleasant Afrikaans wife and English husband: to Eddie's surprise) took an immediate liking into him.

How Eddie ended up in journalism is a fairytale. One gardening Saturday, in his final year at the college, he discovered that his 'baas' (Tom Southgate) was the deputy editor for LOOK!

magazine (a white elite lifestyle publication covering fashion, social news, etc.). He poured his heart out to him about his desire to be a journalist. The next Saturday, Tom surprised Eddie by telling him that he spoke to the editor, his colleague, to allow him (Eddie) to come in and learn the ropes of reporting, as a cadet, and see if he was cut out for it or not. Eddie was ecstatic and grabbed the chance with both hands.

A few months later, his brilliant writing skills started coming out and he was offered a month-to-month contract, covering the township social scene to compete with Drum magazine, which was already entrenched in this market. Sharp and attentive to detail, he was the magazine's first black reporter and used a pseudonym "Calvin Meyers" because of apartheid reasons.

However, in 1985, LOOK! faced financial problems and closed down. Eddie was jobless. As the saying goes, "When it rains, it pours" ... in the same year, his mentor, Tom, collapsed and died of heart failure and his wife sold the house and trekked to London to stay with her daughter, leaving Eddie's mother without a job too. Moreover, Eddie's girlfriend, Rose Nyathi, Stan's twin sister, a second year student at Soweto College of Education, fell pregnant.

Eddie had to find a job real fast. Early 1986, he assembled his portfolio of stories and approached several publications, including the WEEKLY PRESS (a liberal weekly newspaper bent on criticising the apartheid regime), for employment. After much convincing, he landed a job as a junior political reporter. From here onwards Eddie's life took a positive turn. He started earning a decent salary, enough to take care of his mother who insisted that he should marry Rose before she could give birth. So Eddie paid lobola for her and on September 11 that year the two got married (Rose heavily pregnant) and moved to a four-roomed house he had bought in Dube (Soweto), taking Eddie's mother along. In December, they were blessed with a bubbly, bouncing baby girl whom they named Lolo.

In 1987, Rose, now a graduated teacher, got a post at Phefeni High School (Soweto). Eddie's mother stayed at home to look after Lolo. Interestingly, Eddie's career had taken off like a house on fire. His knack for hard-hitting, controversial, investigative political pieces made him a household name amongst general readers, freedom fighters and struggle sympathisers, hence he was forever being locked up by the police for refusing to reveal his sources.

In 1988, Eddie was promoted to being a senior political journalist and had his own column, a meteoric rise considering he had only been with the paper for a mere two years. Everything was going right for Eddie: both him and his wife earned salaries; Lolo was growing up under her grandmother's guidance; his mother was the happiest and she got on very well with her daughter-in-law, Rose, and Eddie was a celebrated journalist whose work was sometimes published overseas (New York Times, Time magazine).

One particular Saturday, in 1989, at the height of political turmoil in SA, while Eddie, Lolo and Rose went out to celebrate Lolo's third birthday and Eddie's new car, members of ADM political party, called for his head, labelled him a 'comrade' disguised as a reporter, fired several shots and threw a petrol bomb at his house, burning it down, killing his mother inside.

After burying his mother's remains, under heavy police guard, a devastated Eddie and his family went into hiding. Pressure took its toll on Eddie: he started drinking. Eddie blames himself for his mother's death and has never forgiven himself since. At the end of 1989, his wife found a teaching post in East Rand (Thembisa township). The family came out of hiding and moved into a house in the area.

In 1990, a young man called Stan Nyathi, was employed by the WEEKLY PRESS (which had really grown in stature and size) as its junior researcher after being set up by Eddie, his brother-in-law. Stan's duty was to obtain any kind of information journals were looking for, for their stories. Meanwhile, Stan helped Eddie to overcome his drinking problem, for a short spell. Eddie rewarded him by letting him write certain stories (between 1992 and 1994) that were meant for

him (Eddie) as his understudy. This helped Stan to become one of the respected writers in the WEEKLY PRESS, by default.

Eddie will never forget 1995. When his drinking problem was over and his career was back on track, his wife was discovered to be suffering from breast cancer, which was at a very advanced stage. Even amputating both breasts did not help the situation - the cancer had spread significantly. The doctors said she had only nine months to live. Eddie became a wreck: he loved his wife dearly. And where did he turn to for comfort? The bottle, of course. Again, Stan, though he was hurting inside (Rose was his twin sister), had to comfort him and discourage him from the act to no avail.

By 1996, as a result of his boozing habits and depression, Eddie was already missing deadlines, coming to work late and sleeping with prostitutes discreetly hoping to get comfort. But the fact remained: he was an exceptionally gifted journalist. In October 1996, Rose became critically ill and was taken to Baragwanath Hospital. She died on their ninth wedding anniversary day. At the end of that year, Stan resigned from the paper to start his own operation with Vusi, leaving his distraught buddy behind.

Between January and March 1997, the editor of the WEEKLY MAIL (Force Motaung) gave Eddie an unconditional leave to get over his sorry state and depression. This was probably the worst decision. It aggravated Eddie's condition. Eddie attempted to take his life several times, without success. One evening he drank himself to a stupor and tried to hang himself from inside his room but fell like a sack of mealies on the floor - he had failed to hook the rope properly around the rafter on the roof above. The last suicide attempt was when he took an overdose of pills only to be discovered by Lolo who called an ambulance. Meanwhile, the lonely and neglected Lolo persevered, fearing for her father, a remarkable feat for an eleven year old. When he returned to work, the paper sent him (and Lolo) to a psychologist (Vicky Simmons) for psychological treatment. At the end of this year Stan, his comforter, resigned to start his own paper with Vusi Zwane, an old friend. After Stan's departure, Eddie really felt lost at the paper.

In 1998, Stan and Vusi Zwane launched The Voice, a weekly newspaper in the mould of the Mail & Guardian and naturally, Stan approached or rather poached Eddie, his friend and mentor, to be a senior journalist there. Eddie took the offer hoping to resurrect his waning career.

FANA BALOYI – Played by Welile Nzunza

Fana's Background:

Fana, 24 years old, has been the newspaper's messenger for the past two years and uses a scooter to get around, which he resents for making him look like a "moegoe" and would do anything to "accidentally" get rid of it. He grew up in Zola 1 township (also known as "Kwamshay' azafe" or "hitting someone to death", which refers to what this township was famous for in the 70s and 80s - thugs bashing or stabbing people to death while robbing them). Ambitious and brainy, his one weakness is blaming other people for his misfortunes.

More about Fana Baloyi:

Fana is bubbly friendly character that everybody enjoys having around. He comes from a destitute family and grew up with her grandmother, a pensioner, in her house in Zola 1. His mother doesn't know who his father is (or is she hiding his identity?) - she's a drunk and has had part of her lung amputated as a result of heavy boozing.

Fana's biggest drawback is the company he used to keep when he was younger. Coming from a poor township, most of his closest friends turned to crime as a way of supporting their financially

disadvantaged parents. During an outing, Fana's friends were caught stealing cars and sentenced to six years in jail. His mother, whom he loves more than life itself was very worried that her son would end up following the same route and before Fana knew it, landed the deliveryman/messenger job at the paper after Eddie (he knew his mother from their days at Alexander High School - is Eddie's Fana's biological father?) put in a good word for him to Stan. Because of Fana's background, he's still connected to the criminal world in Soweto and knows exactly who to call when he needs an underhand favour or information.

Fana believes a man should look good. Which is why, although he's the least paid employee at the paper, everyday, after work, before going home, he ditches his company uniform, and can be spotted sporting the latest fashion brands (clothes, shoes). He dreams of being a well-paid sports journalist, reporting on sports or entertainment around Africa, and then, later, being appointed the editor, who drives around in a brand new, snazzy BMW.

He has a huge crush on Lulama and is forever trying to impress her. He will definitely relish a long-term relationship with her as he's confident he'll be able to satisfy her - Fana thinks he's a quite a stud in bed.

Fana is superstitious. He occasionally cleanses himself of old and potential bad spells, using muthi (e.g. imbiza). He's resolute that the reason why he struggles to make it in life should be blamed on a certain jealous neighbour, an elderly lady called MaHadebe, whom he suspects of witchcraft and having cast spells on him to be a failure as early as when he was a young boy after she realised he was doing well at school, unlike her grandchildren.

Finding his biological father - dead or alive - is his personal mission. But he bears no grudges against his no-show father. The most important thing he wants to know is his dad's surname and family history and genealogy so that he (Fana) can obey the traditions and cultures of that surname accordingly - and maybe his fortunes can turn.

He was a brilliant soccer player who controlled the middle field with tenacity and skill while he played for Zola Stars FC. A talented dribbling wizard, in the mould of Ace Mnini (formerly of Moroka Swallows), the boy was so hot that he was once linked with a move to the 'Dube Birds' (Moroka Swallows). He's since lost interest in playing soccer and has bigger dreams.

Last year (2003), he passed his matric - he was doing it by correspondence at Damelin. He's currently studying for his Communication degree (first year level) through Unisa. After completing his studies he aims to be a reporter.

He wants THE VOICE to buy him a vehicle (a van) to do his job effectively (that's what he claims - in reality he it's his status that he's concerned about) but this has fallen on deaf ears on the management who maintain that a scooter is more suitable for the kind of work he does.

Fana is the breadwinner for both him and his mother. His mother was retrenched two years ago and since then, Fana has been taking care of her. He lives for his mother and would kill before he allows any harm to come to her.

JACO GELDENHUYS – Played by Dewald Reynecke

Jaco's Background:

Jaco is 28 Years old, a sports journalist and part of the 'Boere Aristocracy'. He grew up in Pretoria, attended Affies, then Stellenbosch where he did his BA LLB. Not because he wanted to, but because it was expected of him. He went into Sports journalism aged 25. He is single, and he

intends keeping it that way. He loves women and is devoted to sport. He wants to see SA win everything.

More about Jaco:

Jaco has been sports crazy his entire life. At school he played every sport he could. To his parents' dismay, he even played soccer on Sundays. His passion for sport is what drove him as a child, not his incredible talent. Jaco had aspirations of playing Fly-half for the Springboks, but never got closer than a regular player in the "Koshuis Liga" at Stellenbosch.

In 1995 he went to 'Maties'. Not for any reason other than that everyone in his family had gone there. Everyone, from his great great grandfather, his uncles and some of his aunts, went to Stellenbosch and either did law and/or theology. He has a younger sister Wilmien – they're 2 years apart. She also went to 'Maties' and became an attorney. Whilst at Varsity he began writing the sports columns for the varsity paper. His reason was purely so that he could go to all the games including the tours. He's a real party animal, and it's got him into serious trouble a few times.

As an academic he did reasonably well and graduated in 1998. There after he joined a legal firm in the Cape. But it had strong ties with the National Party/Broederbond and he couldn't get to grips with it. He is obviously politically aware and unlike his family elders, has no problem being with, and even dating black ladies. His liberal stance got him into trouble with his employers. They were also not too impressed with his work. He spent most of his time reading about sport, and writing instead of concentrating on his 'articles'. He moonlighted as a freelancer for Die Burger and a few of the community papers. This gave him access to the sports grounds.

When the senior partners called him in and threatened him with his job, he shocked them by saving them the hassle of firing him and resigned on the spot. They had thought he would jump to attention and pull up his socks. Furthermore, it was a senior partner who was a good friend of his father. That was in June 2000, 6 months short of doing his board exam and being admitted by the law society.

The next day he applied for a part time job at "The Voice", and got it. This brought him back to Gauteng. Within a short space of time he established himself as a good sports writer, and was offered a permanent position that he accepted.

His articles have boosted the readership of "The Voice" as he covers a wide range of sports, writes knowledgeably, but always poses difficult and controversial questions. A Mark Keohane type...

LULAMA NDLELA – Played by Sarah Ngubeni

Lulama's Background:

Lulama is 20 years old, an all-rounder cadet or, simply, general reporter. Recently graduated (2004) with a Rhodes University BA Journalism & Media Studies degree, she's forever looking for the opportunity to prove her journalistic capability against the odds of being perceived as too young and inexperienced to be given challenging assignments. She majored in Journalism and English.

More about Lulama:

Born in Umtata, Eastern Cape, Lulama is a feisty Xhosa lass. Her mother, Nomihlali Ndlela, got pregnant with Lulama while studying law at the University of Witwatersrand in the early 80s. Long before she was born, her supposedly biological father, a medical student, Kgomotso Thuso, then

a rich Tswana boy from former Bophuthatswana (his father was one of Mangope's right-hand men), vehemently denied she was his child because her mother's Xhosa ethnic roots - Xhosas were generally regarded for being cunning by folks back in Bop and Kgomo'tso didn't want to embarrass his father.

In those days paternity tests were overlooked. So Nomihlali, now a qualified lawyer, raised Lulama single-handedly, taught her to be assertive and stand up for her rights from an early age, and never to trust what comes out of a man's mouth, "no matter how sweet and melodious" it tastes and sounds. Nomihlali, Lulama's No.1 role model, has two jobs: she has her own legal practice, Ndlela & Associates, and is a part-time lecturer in the law department at University of Transkei (UNITRA). She has never met her dad ever. However, she knows that he a mogul with a string of practices in Bop and owns several properties.

Lulama studied in private schools all her life and was in a way spoilt for choice - that's the beauty of being a single child of a rich "happening" mother. Although she can speak a bit of vernacular, she's more comfortable conversing in English and makes a bad habit of (and often gets into trouble for) correcting people's pronunciations if she overhears them "raping" (as she terms it) this very profound language.

In other words, she's somewhat of a snob, a perfectionist who's always received great grades/marks at school/varsity throughout. Hence she doesn't understand why people fail their subjects when all they have to do is read, think and write. Being a perfectionist, she doesn't take too kindly to criticism and being treated with mediocrity as if she has no brain.

For some reason, she doesn't see herself working and living in SA for the rest of her life. Her favourite permanent destination would be London - she's visited her aunt over there a couple of times and was wowed by its effective underground train transport system which bears no signs of vandalism unlike our own "chaotic" trains here at home. While there she laid a wreath on Princess Diana's grave; watched the change of the royal guard; surveyed the Westminster Abbey where famous authors, like D.H. Lawrence, are buried.

A good writer in her own right, Lulama juggled four jobs/activities while studying journalism. Firstly, she was both a contributor and editor of the Rhodian, Rhodes University student magazine. Secondly, she was a disc jockey at RMR (Rhodes Music Radio). Thirdly, she was a freelance reporter for the Grocotts' Mail, Grahamstown's local newspaper. Finally, she was a member of the Poetry Society with her fellow English classmates.

She'll welcome any change of scene from THE VOICE should her assignments continue to be boring and "childish". The lady is hungry for a challenge.

One thing she'll like to change is her surname: Ndlela. People have always found it amusing and have called her "Michael Ndlela's black sister"..., etc. No matter how she explains that the surname belongs to her grandfather Xhosa children normally adopt their father's surname - since her mother is not married, other kids refused to listen and teased her tears.

TAMIA BARDILL – Played by Renate Stuurman

Tamia's Background:

Tamia is 24 and works as the receptionist at The Voice.

More about Tamia:

Tamia was one of three children (two since her older brother Ethan, passed away). They were raised mostly by their mother as her father spent most of his time in and out of jail. Tamia's father is very abusive, both physically and emotionally, often brutally beating their mother.

Tamia's mother was the breadwinner for most of their lives, holding down up to three jobs in a desperate effort to make ends meet. Her older brother, Ethan, became a feared Cape gangster, dealing in everything from arms to drugs till he was brutally murdered outside their Mitchells Plain home in 1999, a year after Tamia matriculated. Tamia's father was in prison at the time of Ethan's murder.

Tamia's father was released in 2001 and the abuse began all over again. At the time, Tamia had landed a modelling contract with a small, unknown agency, Millenium, after she was spotted as the winner of Miss Junior Cape, in her matric year. She landed a contract promoting a new youth skin product and was doing a lot of travelling. She returned home one day to find her mother lying unconscious on the kitchen floor, bleeding, while her father was beating her younger brother Trevor. He almost beat the young boy to death. Tamia stopped him. He then proceeded to beat her and that's when she decided it was enough. She went to her agencies offices, in the hope of securing an advance on her campaign payment, only to find that the agency no longer existed...the office was empty and there was no sign that the agency ever existed.

Desperate to get away from Cape Town, Tamia did whatever she had to for money to get away to Johannesburg. She took her younger brother, Trevor, and together they fled to Johannesburg. For the rest of 2001, leading into 2002, Tamia worked at The Voice as a temp and a waitress on evenings, earning a little cash while trying to pursue her modelling career.

In late 2002, while working as a waitress at an industry cocktail party, she was spotted by Lyle Cole, the MD of 'Changing Faces', the country's top modelling agency. Tamia was signed on to Changing Faces' books, but her relationship with the married Lyle extended purely professional barriers. In early 2003, Lyle's wife and 50% shareholder in the agency found out about the affair Tamia was having with her husband. Lloyd ended the affair and Tamia was kicked out of the agency.

She applied for a permanent position as receptionist at The Voice and was accepted for the job. She's never made contact with her father and only her mother knows she's in Johannesburg.

THATO NYATHI - Played by Rani Chuene

Thato's Background:

Thato is the wife of Stan Nyathi, editor of The Voice. Thato and Stan share a history that goes back as far as their school days. Thato attended Waterford College in Swaziland, she was a year behind Stan. The two became high school sweethearts, and when Stan matriculated in 1985, and made his way back to South Africa to set up circulation of his paper "Student Nation" in Johannesburg, Thato agreed to join him upon finishing her matric a year later.

In 1986, Thato graduated from Waterford College and returned to South Africa to start training at a nursing college. It was at this time that Thato was introduced to Stan's new found friend and fellow brother in the struggle – Vusi Zwane. And although Thato's love for Stan was unwavering, the chemistry between Vusi and Thato was evident (to all except Stan), from the minute they met. Thato and Vusi have continued a secret love affair that that has lasted to date. While training at the nursing college, Thato helped Stan and Vusi set up circulation of "Student Nation" in black Transvaal based nursing colleges.

At the end of 1986, Thato fell pregnant with “Stan’s” child. Thato is the only person who knows the true paternity of her son Mangi.

As the wife of an activist, Thato is no stranger to suffering and sacrifice. In 1987, three months before Mangi was to be born, Stan was arrested for his role in Student Nation, and both he and Vusi found guilty of Treason, and sentenced to one year in prison. Thato was left pregnant and alone. It was at this time that Thato moved in with an aunt in Soweto, and soon after the birth of Mangi, Thato returned to work, leaving her son in the care of her aunt, and working double shifts to make ends meet.

In 1988, Stan was released from prison, and Thato pleaded with him to concentrate on his family and take a break from student politics. Stan conceded, and got a job at the Weekly Press as a researcher. From there Stan went on to become a senior journalist at another paper “Our Times”, and then in 1998, together with Vusi Zwane, Stan started his own paper – “The Voice”. Throughout Stan’s career, Thato has been the backbone, the strong support pushing him from behind, and so Thato regards The Voice as the fruits of her own struggle, as well as Stan’s.

Thato is now a nurse at a private hospital in the Northern Suburbs of Johannesburg.

VANASHREE DHEVAN – Played by Leeanda Reddy

Vanashree’s Background:

Vanashree Dhevan is 27 years old and a journalist with “The Voice”. Vanashree’s main area of expertise is the political sciences, and it is for this reason that she handles most of the stories on political affairs

More about Vanashree:

Originally from Durban, Vanashree is the youngest of five children, the only girl with four older brothers, Vanashree’s Mother passed away from cancer when she was ten years old, and she immediately took on the responsibility of looking after all the men in her mother’s absence. Vanashree’s father, an intimidating man set in his old traditional ways, instilled within his family the belief that the woman’s place was in the home. This belief would cause Vanashree to become estranged from her father and brothers in later years. Throughout her school career, Vanashree looked after her father and brothers. She also helped her father in the family restaurant, and he expected that after school, she would work there full time until she got married. However, while her brothers went off to pursue their own careers, Vanashree dreamed of attending university and pursuing a career of her own, away from the home.

Vanashree attended Northlands, a public all girls school, and although she was slight in frame, an easy target for bigger girls to bully, Vanashree’s sharp tongue and don’t-mess-with-me-attitude soon earned her the respect of her peers and most of the girls in the school. At school Vanashree was very active on the student council, and was awarded head prefectship in matric. In her matric year, Vanashree also started a school paper “The Northern Star”, of which she was the editor

Vanashree always dreamed of coming to Johannesburg to study, but her father was reluctant to let her go. Vanashree appealed to her aunt Saroj, a wealthy woman living in Johannesburg – and Saroj convinced vanashree’s father to allow Vanashree to come and study under her supervision. Vanashree moved to Johannesburg and studied journalism and political science at Wits, where she excelled and finished cum laude, she was vice president of the student arts council and senior member of the rag committee.

After leaving university, Vanashree's father demanded she return to Durban, to take care of him, to help run the restaurant and to hopefully get married to a man of his choosing. In a desperate attempt to escape this, Vanashree convinced her aunt to buy her a ticket to Europe. Arriving in London with no more than her suitcase, Vanashree set her mind to getting a job to pay her way and eventually pay back her aunt for the ticket.

Initially, Vanashree was unable to find work as a journalist, so for the first year she worked as a waitress in a small Indian restaurant in Camden town. It was at this restaurant that Vanashree met Gavin Latter, an Englishman to whom she would become engaged in the year to follow. Gavin was a bright and talented performer in his final year at RADA, and although Vanashree was two years older than him, Gavin was the one to push for an engagement ten months into their relationship.

Vanashree landed a job with a small newspaper, and looked set to settle in London for good, when tragedy struck suddenly, and her father was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Vanashree, racked with guilt, felt she had to return to South Africa to take care of her father. Gavin promised that he would fly out to join her as soon as he could.

However, as Vanashree cared for her father in the last months of his life, her relationship with Gavin took strain, as he landed a lead role in a show on the west end, and was unable to come out to see her.

Soon after the death of Vanashree's father, she broke off her engagement to Gavin, and decided to give South Africa a second chance.

She sold the family restaurant and used the money to secure an apartment and looked for a job as a journalist, and after an interview with one of her idols, Stan Nyathi, she was hired as a journalist on "The Voice"

VUSI ZWANE – Played by Siyabonga Twala

Vusi's Background:

Vusi is 36 years old and is the managing director and co-shareholder of The Voice.

More about Vusi:

Vusi's past screams violence, lies and deception. At the age of 16 (1984), Vusi was one of the most outspoken and radical young political activists at Orlando High in Soweto. He was best known for using violence to sort out any problems and at that stage had already seen the inside of jail cells, even though it was always for very brief periods of time. Although young, Vusi was highly feared by many students at surrounding schools. Even teachers feared his temper and what he was capable of doing if brushed the wrong way.

In 1985, Vusi quit school just before completing standard eight and chose himself a career in violent politics. He tried, unsuccessfully to enter the ranks of 'Umkhonto' and then later, in the same year, tried to set up his own violent youth league movement. It was at this time that he met Stan Nyathi, who had just graduated from Waterford College in Swaziland. Vusi and Stan became instant friends. Stan at the time was determined to set up distribution of his political student paper, 'Student Nation' at Soweto schools and Vusi had the reputation and contacts to make it happen. They were perfect for each other.

In 1986, Stan's longtime girlfriend, Thato who was also at Waterford graduated and moved back to Johannesburg to study nursing. By this time, Vusi had helped Stan to successfully set up distribution of 'Student Nation' in many of Soweto's schools and was working on a plan to take the student paper national. He took an immediate liking to Thato, who found herself intrigued by Vusi's dangerous streak. Vusi, Thato and Stan worked together at getting 'Student Nation' distributed at black nursing colleges in Transvaal. Half way through 1986, Vusi went behind

Stan's back and slept with Thato. Later that same year, she fell pregnant with a child both Stan and Vusi believe to be Stan's, Mangi.

In 1987, Vusi and Stan were arrested under the Treason Act and sentenced to a year imprisonment each. Both Vusi and Stan were still in jail when Mangi was born.

Halfway through 1988, 20 year old Vusi and his partner Stan were released. It was at this stage that Vusi decided to drop out of politics. His ambition had changed. Vusi wanted to make money and didn't care how he did it. At the end of 1988, Vusi moved to Durban where he started working for a well known and dangerous business tycoon, SELBY NYALA. Vusi rose quickly through the ranks of Selby's organisation which included, amongst other businesses, a taxi empire and an alcohol bootlegging operation. A major part of Vusi's 'job description' included eliminating any and all threats to Selby's empire.

By 1992, Vusi had become one of Selby's most trusted employees. In 1995, Selby was murdered and an attempt was made on Vusi's life. Selby had never had sons and left all his business dealings in the hands of Vusi. Fearing for his life after the murder of his mentor, Vusi fled to Johannesburg, expanding the taxi empire and establishing a flourishing drug trade.

In the two years that followed, Vusi aligned himself with some powerful, high profile businessmen and politicians, and took a backseat in terms of direct involvement in criminal activity. In 1998, Stan approached him with an idea to start a newspaper. Vusi saw this as the perfect opportunity to 'clean' his millions. He joined forces with Stan and together they started, 'The Voice', Stan as the Editor and Vusi, the Managing Director.

JUNE SIMMS – Played by Zoe Fairbrother

June's Background:

June Simms is 33 years old and is the Editor in Chief at The Voice. June is estranged from her husband of ten years, she lives alone and is a workaholic, preferring the surroundings of the office to that of her lonely apartment.

More about June:

Kate Edwards (June Simms) grew up in Johannesburg and attended Rhodes University where she studied Journalism. It was at university that she met her husband, John Hopkins, a charismatic and charming Political Science major, six years Kate's senior. The two were married within six months, and soon after that, John began a tirade of physical and emotional abuse that lasted the course of their ten-year marriage. At first, Kate was talked into abandoning her career by her husband, but after six unhappy years, she began freelancing under a pseudonym – 'June Simms' - so that John would not find out.

In 2002, June finally left her husband and moved into her own apartment. John tried many times to force June to come back to him, until she was finally forced to get a restraining order against him.

In January 2004, June approached Vusi Zwane, and Vusi soon appointed her Editor in Chief, a move that caused much tension between Vusi and Stan, as Stan felt he was not consulted on the matter. However, in June's short time and the paper, she has proved herself above and beyond the call of duty, earning the respect of Stan and the other Journos at the paper.

SAMANTHA VAN ROOYEN – Played by Candice Derman

Samantha's Background:

Samantha Van Rooyen is 24 years old and is the fashion journalist for The Voice. She is a fresh face in Johannesburg, having moved down from Kimberly to pursue her career in Fashion.

More about Samantha:

Small town girl from Kimberly, Samantha's love of fashion was kindled at a very early age, and she was soon known and sought after as the best dress maker in the town, and managed to put herself through college with the money she made from making Matric dance dresses for the girls at Kimberly High school.

Attended the Diamond fashion academy in Kimberly where she finished top of her class and won a bursary to come to Johannesburg and attend the London school of Fashion in Johannesburg. To make extra money, Samantha started writing freelance fashion columns for a local magazine; it was here that she developed her love and talent for fashion journalism. It was at this time, as Samantha made her name as a fashion journalist, that the Voice lost its own fashion journalist, and Samantha was called in as a temporary fill in, while June looked for a permanent replacement. However, Samantha soon impressed both Stan and June, and they asked her to stay on with the paper.

Samantha is happy in her position at the paper, but holds high hopes of using the contacts she makes from interviewing top notch designers in the industry, to launch her own collection one day.

8. SCANDAL STORYLINES EPS 1-20

EPISODE 1 - 10 January @ 8pm

Stan and Thato celebrate their 15-year wedding anniversary. Vanashree meets with two agents from the NCA Intelligence Organisation and they give her a document that alleges that the head of the Investigation Bureau, Elias Nkabinde, was a spy for the apartheid regime. She then discusses the story first with Stan, which angers June. Eddie gets a call from his policeman friend Bert who informs him that a 'prostitute' has been murdered. On the scene Eddie notices her expensive shoes and thinks there is more to the story. The Voice has been running a story on a major petroleum company whose employees are on strike. They claim the company is responsible for contaminating the dam water at their plant, which has resulted in the death of 3 children and many adults have fallen sick. The company in question, Merkuchem, also happens to be The Voice's biggest advertiser. The newspaper is in financial difficulty and the bank refuses to grant them another loan. Vusi sets up a meeting with two potential investors whom Stan immediately dislikes. Samantha manages to secure an interview with S.A's top fashion designer, Peter Greyling. Eddie sees Thato and Vusi having dinner at a restaurant.

EPISODE 2 – 11 January @ 8pm

Eddie is having dinner with Stan while Thato continues her dinner with Vusi. Thato and Vusi discuss Stan's stubbornness regarding the Merkuchem issue and the financial difficulty The Voice is in. Andrew is still trying to convince Stan to drop the Merkuchem story. Stan is adamant that he won't give into Merkuchem's threats. Fana tells Lulama he has a great story for her...her first really big break. Stan gives his idea of how to increase The Voice's circulation to Vusi. Vusi discusses it with Andrew who doesn't think it will work. Jaco has been working late. On his way out of the office, he hears someone silently sobbing behind the reception desk. He thinks it's Tamia. He walks around the back to find Samantha on the floor crying...she looks up at him and he realises she's been assaulted and has a cut on her lip.

EPISODE 3 – 12 January @ 8pm

Jaco tells the other journos about Samantha. It turns out that Greyling tried to rape her. For the first time we get a sense that Tamia has experienced something similar in her past...she takes Samantha's situation personally. June asks Samantha to tell her what happened and says that Greyling must pay. Samantha just wants an apology. Vusi congratulates Stan on his marketing plan...the lifestyle insert. Stan tells Vusi that he's decided to put the Merkuchem story on hold until the official tests results on the dam water are in. Eddie meets with Bert again. He asks Bert for help on his lead on the shoes, Bert refuses and tells Eddie that he won't risk his career for what he knows is a useless story. Lulama meets Fana's friend, Ahmed, who tells her an intriguing story about a gang that kidnaps street kids and sells them off as child slave labour in Dubai. They in turn use the money to buy drugs. Vanashree and Breyton are desperately looking for photos of Nkabinde with someone else. She (Vanashree) is hoping to make contact with someone he's linked to so she can investigate further. Thato's affair with Vusi is confirmed. We see them in Vusi's bedroom having made love.

EPISODE 4 – 13 January @ 8pm

Andrew walks into the conference room to find Greyling threatening to sue The Voice after Jaco's assault. Andrew calms the situation and asks Greyling to join him in his office so they can talk things through. Lulama talks to Stan and starts to tell him about the story. She needs R10 000-00. Stan refuses, and reminds her that they don't pay for stories. Lulama is disappointed. Ahmed calls her and threatens her...he wants R5000 that night for what he's told her so far. Lulama

speaks to Jaco and he agrees to help. They hug; unaware that Tamia is watching them. Andrew sees Vusi and is angry that Stan took June's side. Vusi tells Andrew that Stan has decided to drop the Merkuchem story. Andrew is relieved and calls Carol to set up a meeting. Vanashree has been calling around trying to determine the identity of the mystery man in the picture with Nkabinde. She has no luck. That night, while working late, a message pops up on her screen asking her if she's not afraid of the dark...someone's watching her. Vanashree's petrified.

EPISODE 5 – 17 January @ 8pm

Vanashree has a panic attack. The following day, she's convinced that someone from the office is playing tricks and sending her the emails. She convinces herself that she's not scared. Jaco gives Lulama the first R 5000-00. Ahmed tells her more of the story. She breezes into the office the following day convinced she has a front pager. She writes her story and submits it to June. June asks her if she's verified the info with more than one source...Lulama hasn't, and June will not read it until the information has been verified. Stan speaks to Samantha about the Greyling story. She assures Stan she's not lying about anything. Stan tells her to write an article exposing Greyling. Fana gives Eddie an envelope. Inside is a picture of the dead woman and Morris Kekana, Head of the Arms Procurement Commission. It turns out that the dead woman is not a prostitute. Eddie tells Stan, and for the first time they are convinced Eddie's on to something big.

EPISODE 6 – 18 January @ 8pm

Andrew tells Vusi that Mekurchem have agreed to raise their ad spend by 30% if The Voice drops the article. Samantha writes the Greyling story. Stan gets a report from millennium labs, stating that Mekurchem is guilty of dumping waste in the water and then doctoring reports to the contrary. He calls Vusi in to read the report. Stan says he finally has the proof to nail Mekurchem. Vusi tells Stan about the 30% increase – Stan is unmoved. Eddie tells June about his discovery that the dead prostitute is in fact a low level diplomat named Marge Williams. He shows her the photograph of Marge Williams with Morris Kekana. June remarks that Vanashree should take the story, as she is the political journalist. Lulama works on the story of the missing children and Ahmed's lead. Thato meets Lolo for coffee, and Lolo tells Thato she is through fighting for a relationship with her father. Lolo asks about Mangi, and Thato says Mangi will be home for the holidays.

EPISODE 7 – 19 January @ 8pm

Andrew is angry that Vusi is allowing Stan to run with the story. Vusi says The Voice has proof and it will make a great story. The journos congratulate Samantha on her bravery about deciding to write the Greyling article. Jaco follows up on the Boots Baloyi story...a soccer legend and hero suspected of dealing with narcotics. Vanashree shows Stan the dead cat she was sent. Stan suggests she drop the story... it's getting too dangerous. Tamia and Lulama have a blow up about Jaco...it almost reaches boiling point. Lulama continues her research on the child slavery story... still hoping to get front page. Andrew has been out to a number of clients pitching the lifestyles supplement idea. To his surprise he receives an overwhelmingly positive response.

EPISODE 8 – 20 January @ 8pm

Lulama's article, based on Ahmed's story, goes to print. The front page says, "Kids kidnapped and sold to a slave trade in Dubai". A woman, Faslin, meets with Lulama at the pub and threatens to shoot her, thinking Lulama knows where her son - one of the kidnapped boys - is. The situation is resolved, the police arrive and the woman is arrested. The Voice appears in court for the interdict application lodged by Merkuchem. The judge grants the interdict. Stan is very frustrated when he is prevented from printing the leaked Merkuchem results. Samantha's article on Greyling goes to print. Samantha is invited by a women's abuse group to give a talk in Bloemfontein.

EPISODE 9 – 24 January @ 8pm

As a result of Lulama's article and mounting public pressure, the police intensify their operation and a man is arrested. One of Vusi's connections at the police station, Papi Maponya, assures Vusi that The Voice will be the first to know when the Police Media Liaison Officers are ready to brief the media. Vusi tells Stan and Lulama about his meeting with Papi. A research scientist arrives at The Voice and asks to see Stan. He had been head of Millennium's Research wing before resigning the previous week. He tells Stan that he leaked the report to him, as The Voice was the only paper that had run with the Merkuchem story. Daily Press runs Greyling's version of the story, which contradicts Samantha's. Andrew goes to Stan and tells Stan this is the exact reason why he didn't want the article done in the first place. Eddie meets with Samantha's friend, a parliamentary secretary, Karlien Conradie. She tells him that she doesn't know too much about Kekana, but the little she knows is that he's a serious womaniser. Vanashree discovers that Van Eeden is head of a food aid security company in Iraq. She starts investigating further and wants to know what the link is between Van Eeden and Nkabinde.

EPISODE 10 – 25 January @ 8pm

Daily Press prints an article linked to an employee of The Voice who alleges that the police have caught one of the kingpins in the kidnapping syndicate. Papi calls Vusi, livid that Vusi betrayed his trust. Vusi in turn is livid that someone opened their mouth, but knows it wasn't Stan. He calls Lulama into his office and comes down on her from a dizzy height. He explains that she's ruined The Voice's chances for an exclusive because now everyone knows. Meanwhile, Eddie misses another of June's meetings. She writes Eddie a final warning and leaves it on his desk... In her investigations Vanashree becomes convinced that Nkabinde and Van Eeden were linked before 1990, and she starts to dig deeper...

EPISODE 11 – 26 January @ 8pm

Stan, Vusi, Lulama and June meet with Yusuf. He explains who he is and why he has come to The Voice. He tells them about the plan to set up the foundation but wants a few days to clear the proposal with the Dubai government. They agree to meet the following week. Yusuf asks Lulama out to dinner. She accepts. Daily Press runs an article on how Merkuchem have sacked their C.E.O. Samantha has her hearing with Stan, Vusi, June and Andrew. June and Stan believe Samantha's story but feel she shouldn't have lied to give it credibility. Eddie arrives at the office, beaten and bruised. He tries to explain to June why he wasn't at work the previous day, but June doesn't want to hear it. She tells him about the final warning. Eddie is irritated and storms off.

EPISODE 12 – 27 January @ 8pm

Malik, the suspected kingpin in the child kidnapping syndicate, is found dead in his holding cell. Lulama rushes to the police station and speaks to one of the police media liaison officers. They tell her that they are not in a position to give any information. A frustrated Lulama has to write an article that echoes the info every other paper has. Vusi gets confirmation that Yusuf appears to be the real deal. Lulama and Yusuf go to dinner. John goes to The Voice in a panic. He asks Stan not to write the story. Stan speaks to June. She convinces him to let it go once and for all. Greyling storms into The Voice and says he's suing them for defamation of character. Eddie is drunk at the bar. An unidentified woman slips an envelope into his jacket pocket.

EPISODE 13 – 31 January @ 8pm

Yusuf meets with Stan, Andrew and Vusi and presents the idea of a foundation that will set up youth centres for under privileged kids. Yusuf wants The Voice to be their media partner. Greyling arrives at The Voice with his lawyer. Stan says there will be no apology. Joffe says they'll be expecting a letter about a court appearance. It looks like a stalemate. Eddie finds the envelope in his messy apartment. He doesn't know where it came from. Eddie asks the barman if he saw anyone messing with his jacket. Vanashree gains access to National archives. She finds out that Van Eeden was a weapons instructor from Holland. The next day Stan calls the journalists in for a meeting. He says Samantha still has her job. Jaco tells June he doesn't think Boots is guilty.

EPISODE 14 – 1 February @ 8pm

Vusi, Stan and Andrew discuss Yusuf's proposal. Andrew thinks it's a great idea that presents exciting marketing and advertising opportunities. Stan thinks it's enough for The Voice to give publicity to the centres. He's not mad about the idea of a partnership. A letter arrives from Greyling's attorney about court proceedings. Andrew calls Greyling and manages to get Greyling to admit that he tried to take advantage of Samantha. Adelaide is back in town and meets with Eddie. Eddie asks Adelaide about Kekana and Marge Williams and cons her into talking. Vanashree meets with the woman from NCA intelligence. Vanashree wants to know if she's on the wrong path. The NCA woman says maybe Vanashree should continue pursuing Van Eeden.

EPISODE 15 – 2 February @ 8pm

Vusi calls Yusuf to tell him that The Voice is interested. He will come with his lawyers and they can then seal the partnership. That night, Lulama has dinner with Yusuf again. They drink a lot and end up in Yusuf's hotel room. At The Voice, Greyling arrives with his attorney. Andrew walks in late, pulls out his Dictaphone and presses play. They listen to Greyling's admission of guilt. Greyling's attorney suggests that they should all drop it. Greyling fakes an apology to Samantha. The meeting ends. Eddie musters the courage to speak to Vusi about the sex club. Vanashree arrives at the office and tries to switch her computer on. She discovers her hard drive has been removed. That night, Vanashree is attacked in the basement of The Voice. The armed, masked man tells her to drop the Nkabinde investigation.

EPISODE 16 – 3 February @ 8pm

Lulama wakes up in bed next to Yusuf, and she's late for work. Lolo arrives at The Voice and asks what is going on. Eddie can't tell her he's going to a sex club...so he lies. Vanashree tells Vusi and Stan about the attack the previous night. She wants protection. She continues her investigation on Van Eeden, and discovers that Van Eeden doesn't seem to exist before 1982. She sees Eddie smartly dressed in a suit, and asks what's going on. Eddie lies to her. Sam and Greyling's article gets printed in the Voice. Stan announces to the journos that the Voice will be publishing a monthly lifestyle supplement. Jaco submits his story to June. She completely changes the tone of the story (making Boots look guilty). She gives the story to the layout artist without Jaco seeing it again.

EPISODE 17 – 7 February @ 8pm

Eddie has gone to the sex-club (during the weekend). In a series of flashbacks he tells Vusi what went down... Eddie has paid her to contact him when Kekana visits the club again. Vusi sees a potential great story for The Voice. He's also aware that neither Stan nor June knows anything about Eddie's visit to the club. Vanashree gets a list of former MK soldiers, serving under Van Eerden in Tanzania, between 1982 & 1987. She makes a call to the Union buildings to set up a meeting with the two guys...Nzimande, and Sithole. The Paper is out, the story condemns Boots, and Jaco is horrified. Boots calls Jaco and tells him that he can't believe Jaco would do that to him. Jaco apologises, but Boots is still angry with him. Jaco comes out of the experience a little more jaded and cynical about journalism.

EPISODE 18 – 8 February @ 8pm

Fana comes into the newsroom, excited. Sam is sitting with Lulama. Fana tells her that Wandu from Loxion Kulcha is a friend and he has managed to organise an interview with Damon D and Loxion Kulcha for the following day. Boardroom Scene: Vanashree reads out from the Daily Press that a major arms deal with Kekana and a German company (Precision Tech) has gone through. Eddie gets a phone call from the hostess he met at the exclusive sex club to say that Kekana has booked out a private room for a celebration the following night. The hostess tells him Eddie can 'plant a substitute hostess' in the private function room. Late that night, Vanashree receives a call from her anonymous source, Deepthroat. He gives Vanashree a riddle and hangs up.

EPISODE 19 – 9 February @ 8pm

Damon D and the Loxion Kulcha boys arrive at the offices. They are ushered through to the conference room - Tamia flirting with them like crazy. Before Samantha arrives for the meeting, Damon D picks up the latest copy of The Voice, and reads her article. He doesn't seem pleased... Also in this episode, Eddie, and Breyton stake out a hostessing club after getting a hot tip – they ask Tamia to help them spy on the patrons by pretending to be hostess. Lulama interviews an MK soldier who returned to SA after 1994 to find he could not get a job and was not compensated for in any way by the MK fund. June suggests Lulama attack the story from the angle of the MK fund neglecting the very soldiers it was set up to help... Lulama says no, this is the story about the individual, not the organization. She wants to write Samuel's story. June agrees, and is impressed by Lulama's passion. Later, Yusef asks Lulama out for a drink – and they end up getting on like a house on fire...

EPISODE 20 - 10 February @ 8pm

Wandu and Chubbi set up another meeting with Sam. They arrive at The Voice and apologise to Sam about Damon D's behaviour. They tell her that they admire her work and they would like to work with her on an article about their new range (they have discussed this with them and there are three new ranges they are introducing in late January early Feb 2005). Sam has a 'light bulb' moment: They could do a double page spread for the launch of The Voice's very first Lifestyle Supplement... They brainstorm and come up with an additional reader's competition.

9. THE SCANDAL PRODUCTION TEAM HAS THEIR SAY...

Maynard Kraak – Director

After a varied career, I attended film school in the UK – and have worked in the industry for about 6 years now. The main thing that attracted me to Scandal was the script - that and the challenge of going up as a competitor against a show on another channel that has always enjoyed phenomenally high ratings. But I thrive on challenges, and change – and it's important to be competitive in this prime-time slot. Scandal offers viewers prime-time drama more along the lines of mainstream drama (but 4 times a week) and less of the soapie element. Scandal is uniquely structured. It is directed in a way that complements the writing style – it's very pacy. The plot moves episodically – most other prime-time daily-dramas are structured between 12-15 scenes –

Scandal has at least 10 more scenes than this per episode! And we don't spoonfeed our audiences – we're more cerebral. Our show demands participation – as all the info is not given away. In terms of the positioning and branding of the show – Scandal is intelligent, has movement, grit and gloss! I also cannot emphasise enough the importance of our outside shoots – we're a combination drama – other daily-dramas are often shot 100 percent in the studio – we're keeping it real instead!

Enel Viljoen – Production Manager

I manage the production, especially concerning the cast – I make sure everyone gets their scripts and schedules. What makes Scandal different to most other daily dramas is that there are lots of 'outside shoots' – which makes for more interesting viewing. I think the cast is especially sexy and the crew – I just love them, we all get on like a house on fire.

Louise van Graan - Line Producer

I've been in the industry for 15 years and I must say that this is one of the most exciting productions I have ever worked on.

e.tv pulled out all stops to build magnificent sets, find outstanding sponsors and an enthusiastic professional crew. Similarly, Coconut Cool Productions have put together a fabulous cast, excellent directors and a terrific production team.

As with any new project, there have been ups and downs and it has been a real challenge to get a drama of this magnitude up and running. But the end product speaks for itself - this is one hell of a show! My appreciation goes out to all of you who have been involved in putting Scandal together - well done guys!

Hugo Taljaard - Casting Director / Dialogue coach

To celebrate my 25 years working in a plethora of broadcasters, Coconut Cool production gives me the opportunity to live out my penchant for the scandalous. After years of being submerged in soap suds e.tv inspires me to shed the old skin and rejuvenate myself in their latest endeavour Scandal. As dialogue coach and casting director I am privileged to work with a top team of actors and crew. On 10 January 2005 Scandal will launch the coach potato into a new provocative world of entertainment. I am proud to be part of this experience.

Michelle Venter - Set Designer

Michelle designed the sets and then was very involved in building the sets. She oversaw the finishes and the paintwork, and found the props. Now her job involves location scouting - finding the location for outside shoots - and running the art department. She's enjoyed working on a new show like Scandal because she's had autonomous control over the sets from the beginning.

Before anything was designed, Michelle got a brief from the scriptwriting department, and Clive the producer as to what sets were required. She spoke to them about the various characters, about where the characters would live and how it would look. She had to get to know the characters so that she could create the space in which they could comfortably "live". It had to be a space they could act in and relate to, and it had to be realistic for their performance.

There are about ten or eleven sets, but now that they've been designed, Michelle's job has switched to other areas. In the mornings, she goes in and makes sure that the props department

is on par with what they need to do for that day, and briefings are required for the upcoming episodes. Michelle also buys props, checks that nothing is broken, and works on the designs for new sets.

So what is the average size of a set? According to Michelle, it can vary quite a bit. Often they're smaller than they look - it depends at which angles the scenes are being shot. Their biggest set is probably 17m long by 5m wide, and the smallest set is 5m long by 4m wide.

A set is a romanticised interpretation of real life, Michelle points out, and it has to be interpreted in this way. Scandal is a daily drama about relationships, and the set has to reflect this idealised vision.

Elaine de Lange - Make Up Artist

She creates a look for a character and then maintains that look. This is according to what the story line and character demands are, and she therefore has to know each character intimately. People have to be comfortable with a character, she says, and in order to get to know the character, the viewer has to get to know the character's look, so major changes aren't made once the make-up look has been decided on (unless it fits the storyline, of course).

So what does the job of makeup artist on a TV show like Scandal entail? Besides doing all the stars' makeup in the beginning of the day, Elaine also freshens up the makeup throughout the day, and if special effects are required, she does that too. She also does the actors' hair.

She prepares and keeps the continuity scripts, as often they don't shoot scenes in order. A continuity script is maintained as a reference, in case they have to shoot the same episode two weeks later. Elaine therefore has to be on top of things all the time.

She starts work at 7am, and the first actors of the first scene have to have their makeup completed by 7.30am. Elaine also attends pre-production meetings, and keeps up to date with reading scripts, so that she understands the breakdown in the story line and how it affects her job. She leaves at 7pm to go home, and then prepares for the next day.

It's a challenging job, she says. Because of the lighting on set, they have to adapt the makeup accordingly. "Normal makeup" doesn't work, so they cannot use commercial/retail makeup because the lights on set change the effect of the makeup. Usually because the light is stronger, she has to go a bit heavier with the makeup, and everyday looks often don't work.

For instance if hair is worn in a spiky style, with a funky bit up in air, you can get away with that in everyday life. But in TV those little strings of hair would make everything blur around the hair on screen, and therefore the style wouldn't work on TV. And glitter eye shadow, for instance, can reflect light around the eyes, so it isn't used unless it is a specific requirement. This kind of thing has to be born in mind, and much heavier and darker makeup is therefore worn.

Some makeup products make black skin look green or grey, and therefore Elaine imports special makeup from Germany that won't have this effect. The makeup artist also has to do corrective makeup. Black skin is quite challenging to work on and Elaine often has to create dimension with various tones. Black skin can react differently to light and therefore has to have different requirements to balance out the tone of the skin, and they have to work with it to create a 3D effect.

A makeup artist often has to "play the psychologist" Elaine points out, as the actors open up to her and they have long conversations about life on the set. Everyone becomes very much a part of everyone else's lives.

So do the men object to wearing makeup? According to Elaine, not at all. They do complain about pimples now and then, because they've failed to remove the makeup properly, but they know it's part of the job.

Elaine has spent 17 years in the industry, and she says it's her passion. Her role is a behind the scenes one but it's very important as she plays a key part in helping to make the actors feel confident in the roles they are playing.

So who comes up with the idea for how a character's makeup should look? The directors, the producers and the creator of the story all have a say in things. They generally have a picture in mind of what will and will not work for a particular character. They then take their ideas to the actor and describe the picture, and then a compromise is generally reached. For instance an actor with long brown hair may need to cut her hair and dye it blonde to suit a specific role. If an actor has dreadlocks, he may be told to relax his hair to suit his character's personality. If too many male characters on the set have beards, it may look odd, so an actor with a beard may be told to shave his face. Generally, the wardrobe department, the makeup department and the set departments consult each other and work together.

Mel Finch - Wardrobe Mistress

She does the styling for all the characters on the show, and creates the look based on the character's profile.

So what's a typical day like in a Wardrobe Mistress's life? Mel starts work between 6.30am and 7am in the morning, and wraps up at 7 o'clock in the evening. It's a long day, but she says it's a lot of fun and everyone's in the same boat, as they all work the same hours. The wardrobe team generally prep all the outfits the evening before, so they can hit the ground running in the morning and to ensure things run smoothly. Mel dresses all the characters for the day, and there are usually a variety of story lines, so it's hectic in the mornings.

Mel works with two wardrobe assistants and the set standby, Themba. Elke Beukes is their wardrobe HOD, and she and Mel do the shopping, and Elke oversees everything to ensure that things run smoothly. What's nice, Mel says, is that e.tv gives them quite free rein in terms of styles - compared to other sets she's worked on. Obviously there are general guidelines - for instance there can't be too many colours on a set at a time. And she can't dress everyone in cream or beige - as that would be way too boring!

It's important to keep the wardrobe continuity for each character. For instance, one of the characters, June, is a high-powered exec, so Mel styles her accordingly. She and her team do this for all the characters. Themba makes sure that if the last time you saw June, for example, she was getting up from the desk and had thrown her jacket over her left shoulder, that the continuity is maintained, and the next time you see June her jacket isn't over her right shoulder. Mel works downstairs and makes sure that the characters are dressed in exactly the same look that they were seen in previously. She says it's fantastic dressing the Scandal stars, and that it's wonderful working with the actors and discussing the show with them.

There is a workshop approach to coming up with ideas for a character's wardrobe. It's not so much Mel's sole idea or the actor's idea - it has to come from both sides. Mel doesn't force actors to wear clothes they don't like, as she feels that they have to be comfortable in the clothes they're wearing. The actor has to feel good, she says, otherwise he or she will be self-conscious. Many of the actors on Scandal say that they haven't had this kind of approach before on other shows. It's a fresh approach for them, and they're really enjoying it. They work together closely with Mel to establish an outfit... and play around with ideas beforehand, but once it's on the screen, that's that, and things can't be changed afterwards.

Mel says it's wonderful working on a new show like Scandal, as it's great to start from the very beginning when everything is fresh and new, and they haven't inherited anything from anyone else - and nothing is "hand-me-down". She adds that it's a very fresh, dynamic feeling - to know that whichever direction they choose to move in regarding a character, within the context of the workshop relationship between herself, the stylist and the actor, they *can* move in that direction.

Scandal. Always a cause for celebration on **e!** Monday to Thursday @ 8pm. From 10 January 2005.

More sexy photos available on request! And for further salacious (but verified facts!), please contact:

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Or, please contact Thabo Makeleni (011) 537-9399 for further info.

(The e.tv Publicity Team would like to thank Moose and everyone at Coconut Cool Productions for their patience and assistance while compiling this pack).

