

CAPE TOWN COUNSEL

I was counting endless aircraft screws in a dreadful warehouse early in my Air Force career when a new staff sergeant arrived with a funny accent. We thought she might be Australian, maybe British. She introduced herself later in the day, mentioning she was South African. Ignorantly, I thought she looked more European than African. Over the course of the year I learned a little more about South Africa through her and it became a place of interest to me.

Fast forward a few years, I left Active Duty service and was living in a hostel in Cape Town, South Africa. I traveled there alone, longing to learn more about Nelson Mandela, apartheid and the country's history. I was young, single and enjoying the country's tourism, maybe a little too much. As I neared the end of my trip I realized I had cheated myself. I spent all my time at the beach and partying with other foreigners. Fearful of leaving with a shallow perspective of a country with such rich history, I acted foolishly.

Against advice from the locals, I decided to take a taxi into Khayelitsha, the region's largest and most notable township. In short, the townships were the racially segregated underdeveloped urban areas reserved for non-whites. A hesitant taxi driver tried to explain to me that it was not wise to go there alone as a foreigner. With a little convincing and motivation by some extra cash, he stepped on the gas. We were slow-rolling through an alley in Khayelitsha when I saw a group of young Xhosa men outside of a bar. I told the taxi driver I knew them and to let me out. I only said that to give him some peace-of-mind, I did not know the men. Confused by my arrival, I asked if I could buy a round of beer. After a few hours of day-drinking together, they invited me into their homes. Feeling comfortable after a few beers and with friends, I pulled my cameras out.

I wanted to experience the real Cape Town and I was going to get what I asked for. While walking through narrow tin-walled alleys, a tall-slim-man wearing a ski mask quickly ran up on us. A ski mask in the hot African summer confused me long enough for him to aggressively point a pistol to my face and demand my cameras. Frozen, I stood there pale like a marble-European-statue. What felt like eternity was interrupted by my new Xhosa friends, placing themselves in front of me and the pistol. The gunman panicked when the local community started making a scene. He ran off after realizing his stick-up stint had failed.



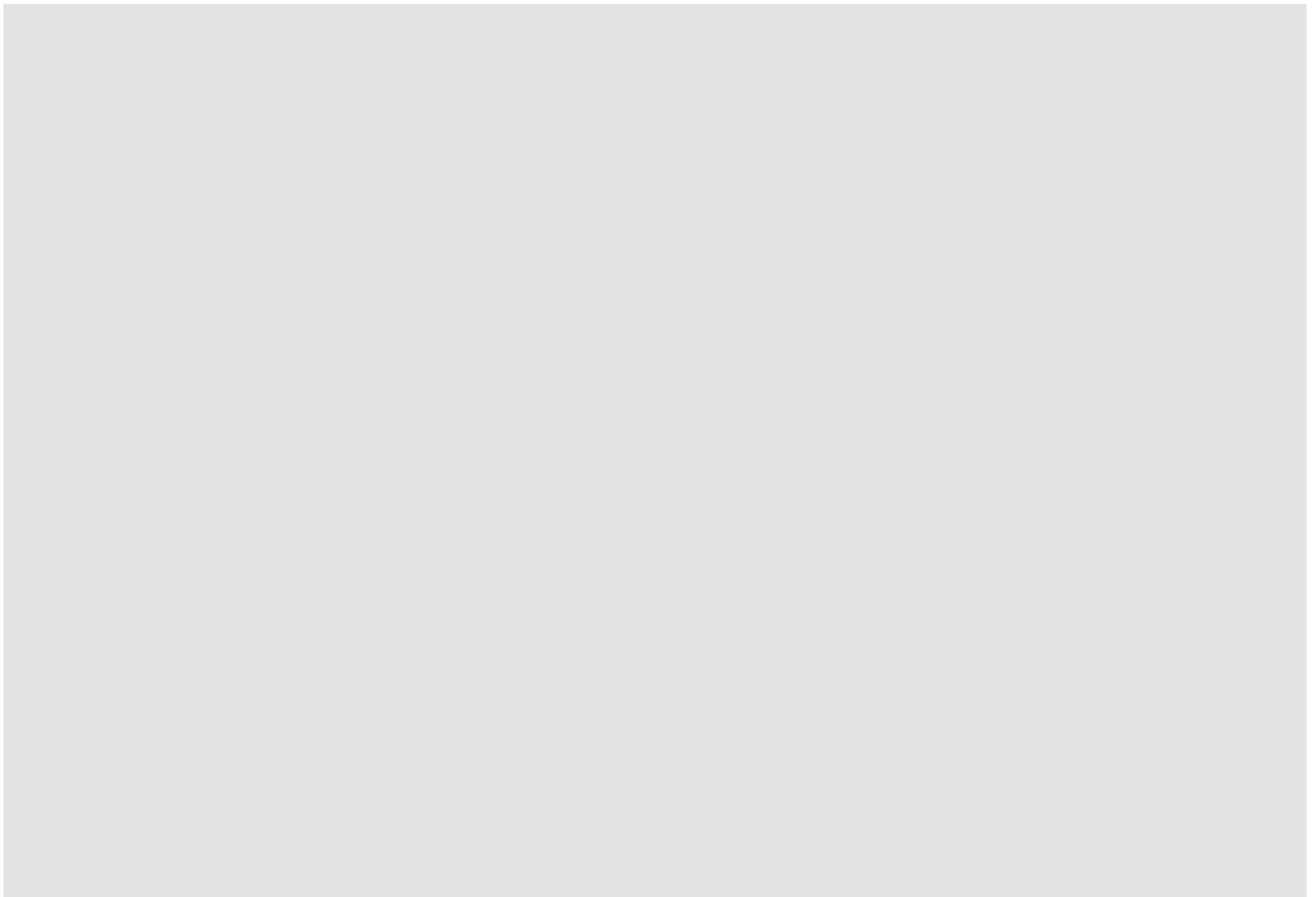
REFLECTION

1. This circumstance was easily avoidable but I was young and dumb. I was warned by the taxi driver of my irrational travel yet I proceeded against his counsel. Do you currently have wise people of counsel in your corner? Who?

2. Counsel does not always need to come from elders, leaders or someone with a title. It can come from a position as humble as an African taxi driver. This man had something that I did not, experience. What are you experienced in enough to the point where you feel you could provide others with wise counsel?

3. Can you think of a situation where you didn't heed counsel in your life? What lessons did you learn?

NOTES



SHARE

This series was inspired by the ring. Like a fighter, we depend on the people in our corner. We can only fight for so long before we need rest, healing and feedback. This series was simply written to help you fight the good fight. Whether you're lacing combat boots, sneakers or oxfords, let's favor a plan to crush the trials ahead. If you've felt empowered or inspired through these short stories, like iron sharpens iron, I encourage you to share this with your team.

Thank you for subscribing to my newsletter. I appreciate you sticking around for my storytelling. If you envision ways for me to improve, your feedback would be much appreciated. Please keep in touch, reach out or send a shoebox of money.



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