

Chapter 21

The Future Is Africa: Journalism in the New World Order

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ABSTRACT

Africa promises a challenge to the world. Many tech companies will continue to move to Africa to test new technologies on what they believe is fertile ground for a large-scale future market in smart phones, drones, and new services. The largest impact on world politics over the next 30 to 50 years will be from Africa's young people, who will rise in influence more than any other nation. Large-scale companies are creating start-ups and headquarters in Africa, using the continent to test market products and technologies. African news media collaboratives have proven to serve as strong investigative community units against government corruption and serve as a model for other media groups wishing to do the same in their nations.

IMAGINE . . .

Japera Ncube, 34, stared into the warm August night sky, musing about her upcoming trip in a few weeks to Africa. She would visit her family in Ruwa, a relatively small town in the expanding Mashonaland East in Zimbabwe within the Harare Province, The Province, housing the capital city Harare, had grown considerably since she left home to study Journalism in 2006. She earned her degree in Media Arts in 2010. She was now a lead anchor on Drone Television News (DTN), a new non-profit community cable network, recently launched slightly prior to the grand-opening of the decade-long renovation to Navy Pier. The studio was close to her condo. Two years after college, she was engaged to be married, and was expecting a child. She soon gave birth to a son, deciding to raise him on her own. It was a decision that she never regretted. She had carved out a nice life for herself and her son Dakari in Chicago, 12 years old. It had been more than two decades since the duo had been home to visit her family. She visited briefly to introduce her son to the family as well as to report on the upcoming Zimbabwean elections as a freelance American journalist in 2014. Now nearly twenty years later, her brothers and sisters were constantly clamoring for her to return home. She missed them but she always felt uneasy about returning.

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to her hometown. In fact Chicago felt like her real home. She always promised to take her son, 12, to her birthplace. He studied everything he could about his mother's homeland, but there is one thing that she never shared with him. It's now nearly 40 years since the event. She was among the 60 or so children that saw what they believed to be aliens land in Ruwa in 1994. The case made international headlines, and attracted the interest of scientists, researchers, psychologists, media types and a host of weirdoes. She usually kept her story to herself, for many doubted her story through the years, and those of her classmates, some older and younger than herself. The visitation came in 1994, on her sixth birthday. She had wished for something special that year, but often wished that she had asked for another bland birthday, for all the grief it caused her through the years. She and her friends never shared that day, well at least once the interviews stopped. Trying to help, many experts came to debrief the children, which scared many of the children even more. Their parents told them that they had amazing imaginations. But after something like that, it is not like you can just put it away in your head. Upon returning, she had feared that her son might trigger another event, being he was around the age of the children then. He saw Africa as an adventure. She had mixed feelings about the region, having heard stories of how some things had changed for the better, and others for the worst. She had received permission from her network to report from Africa over the next 6 months or so, returning after the winter celebrations. She would scout out the area, and produce a series on the tremendous growth of the tech industry across Africa and provide weekly updates, sharing her perspective on what all this development will mean for her nation and the world.

She and her son were greeted at the regional airport by her siblings, who escorted her to the province. Her hometown was now only one spec in the larger Capital region.

She and Dakari were set up in a small quaint house, ideal for two. The next few days involved catching up with family and old friends, not one mentioned the incident. It was like it never happened, but she knew the truth. They did as well. Then one week after she settled into her house; a frantic little girl came knocking on her front door. Flashing before her mind, a chill ran through her spine. Then she thought, "Could this be happening again?" The moment she thought of the idea, she bent down to calm the girl, only to find out that her brother was teasing her. She realized being back near the school was triggering memories. She decided it was time to tell her story, which was slightly different from the other children. Whereas many of the children described strange odd beings of unknown species. She instead only experienced them as bodies of light, similar to visitations from the spirit world. As an educated and professional Chi-town woman, she had no framework to really explain what she saw. She always regarded it as a spiritual encounter, setting her on a life course to help others in telling their stories, helping to motivate them to follow the path that shines bright toward their future. That is why she joined the Drone TV Network, where she would produce a documentary series on New Africa based on personal narratives discussing the rise of technology in African cities. She was particularly interested in talking with the people of her province, now experiencing an infusion of technology and the simultaneous expansion of the middle class.

Japera looked back at the sky, pondering if she were being watched. She caught a glimpse of a shooting star. She wondered if those visitors from 40 years ago, knew that she would be back to continue the story. She realized that she controlled her future, and everything she had accomplished could be traced back to that September day in 1994. For a while, she had shut down. Through the years, she began drawing

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