

FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN

SUPER:

While this picture is based upon a true story, some characters have been composited or invented, and a number of incidents fictionalised.

BRITISH EAST AFRICA, 1907

NARRATOR: History isn't what happened, but a story of what happened. And there are always different versions, different stories, about the same events. One version might revolve mainly around a specific set of facts while another version might minimise them or not include them at all.

EXT. NAIROBI COURT HOUSE - DAY

A CROWD of European and African men and women is gathered. All the Europeans are wearing the double terai, wide-brimmed, floppy hats, one on top of the other. African men and women, wrapped in blankets and some in kanzu, jostle to get a better view of the public flogging of THREE AFRICAN MEN clad only in loin cloth. Each of the three fearful men's hands is tied to a makeshift stake. COL. EWART GROGAN, 33, a 6ft and typical Victorian swashbuckling fellow is acting as prosecutor in the public flogging. He is burly and big handed donning military fatigues. He reads out the charges to the three men.

GROGAN You are accused of showing disrespect to a European lady, guilty or not guilty?

The three men shake their heads vigorously. No.

Grogan calls the complainant, MARY FINCH, 30, forward.

GROGAN Miss Mary Finch, you are a respected European lady of fair means. Have you ever seen these three natives before?

FINCH Yes sir

GROGAN Miss Finch, can you please tells us about the events of May 16th at around two in the afternoon?

FINCH I was walking from Blooms Textile on Government Road when I heard someone make a very rude sound...

GROGAN What was this sound, Miss Finch?

FINCH Whistling, sir.

GROGAN And where did the whistling come from?

FINCH From behind, sir.

GROGAN What did you do when you heard this sound, Miss Finch?

FINCH (*pointing at the three African men*) I turned around and saw these three natives laughing at me.

GROGAN Laughing at you...? And Miss Finch, they are the same natives who had made the whistling sound you mentioned?

FINCH I am very sure, sir.

GROGAN (*addressing the crowd, clicks his tongue*) Tch! Tch! Tch! Whistling at a European lady is a very serious offence... But, we now know that handing these savages over to the courts will be a waste of time. We will, therefore punish these savages ourselves, and any other that dares offend British respectability.

NARRATOR This is the story of British East Africa Protectorate later called Kenya, a country built on the wrong belief that Africans were sub-human; and only existed to work for the white man.

The THREE FLOGGERS, six foot African hulks step forward flexing their muscles like champion wrestlers. Each flogger holds a rubber whip which tapers into several strands fitted with a metallic spike. The floggers mockingly crack the air with their whips.

GROGAN I, Colonel Ewart Grogan, order you to receive thirty strokes of the whip each, as a lesson to other natives that Europeans are superior and must be respected always.

NARRATOR This is the story of people who felt compelled to challenge this myth.

Sweat trickles down the condemned men's black backs.

Grogan looks around at the floggers and slowly nods.

GROGAN Proceed!

And then there is an anguished scream as the first whip cuts across a victim's back. A second scream follows, and another and another as the floggers let themselves loose on the hapless victims. One of the condemned men slumps to his knees, overcome by the pain but the unrelenting muscleman standing behind him swings the whip again and again.

TITLE AND MUSIC ERUPT ONTO THE SCREEN...

FINDING LEVELS

Under and interspersed with CREDITS, a montage.

FADE IN:

INT. THE LEADER OFFICE BLOCK; COMPOSITOR'S ROOM - DAY

Filing cabinets line a wall. There is a wooden table in the middle of the room. Composing blocks containing sentence compositions in various stages of completion litter the table. A few dusty posters as would be found in a typesetter's workshop hang on a notice board. HARRY THUKU, a 20-year African in a loose white shirt and suspenders, removes a block from one of the cabinets and settles at the desk. He painstakingly composes words with fonts on the leading block; systematically makes a proof on a piece of paper and presently complete sentences are discernible to us. Thuku makes a proof of a complete paragraph. We can HEAR him read the words:

THUKU *The colonial commissioner, Sir Charles Eliot has expressed shock over the public flogging of three natives last Monday. He singled out col. Ewart Grogan for his role in what he called a barbaric act and warned that his office will not allow settlers to take the law into their own hands...*

Harry Thuku puts down the proof and his attention is suddenly drawn to VOICES coming through a DOOR which is slightly open. He stops composing and listens.

INT. THE LEADER OFFICE BLOCK; MCMILLAN'S OFFICE - DAY

ARTHUR MCMILLAN, a sinewy, pipe-smoking elderly, balding and bespectacled European in khaki shorts sits across the desk from CANON HARRY LEAKEY of Kabete Church Mission Society. The canon wears a cassock and his hands are clasped over his

crossed legs. McMillan sees the Canon's disapproving eye and reluctantly puts away the smoking pipe.

The missionary has apparently paid McMillan a visit and they have just had some tea. The office is more orderly than Thuku's workplace; a telephone sits on the desk, an events book and a stack of scribbling paper and a few note books occupy the rest of the desk. A poster or two like the ones we have just seen in Thuku's room are hung on a notice board and a single drawer lines one of the walls.