

the **Capetowner** August 22 2019
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Big yes for name change

TAMLYNNE THOMPSON AND STAFF REPORTER

The community came out in overwhelming support to rename Keizersgracht Street to Hanover Street, according to the results of the public participation process held last month.

The matter will be considered at a sitting of full council today, Thursday August 22, according to ward councillor Dave Bryant.

He said the proposal was also recommended by the mayoral committee.

"It is great to see the positive results of the public participation process and the consequent recommendations to approve the name change."

The District 6 Working Committee submitted a proposal that the historical name of the current Keizersgracht be restored, in memory of District Six, to Hanover Street.

A public participation process was held from Monday July 1 to Friday July 26, where people across the city could comment on the matter.

Continued on page 3



Shakir Salie with Tiffany-Kim Thompson, holding a replica of the original Hanover Street sign.

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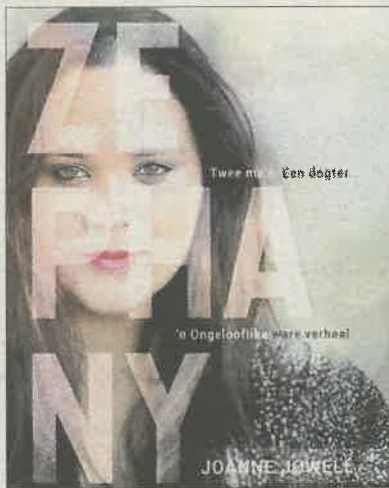
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Read of the Week

Zephany Two mothers. One daughter.
 Joanne Jowell
 Tafelberg
 Review: Lauren O'Connor-May



The veil has finally been lifted on the untold side of the story that has captured our imaginations for more than 20 years.

The person at the centre of one of the most unbelievable and incredible stories has willingly come out of her protective shield to tell her side – which has been kept secret for five years.

Author Joanne Jowell was a good choice for *Zephany Two mothers. One daughter.* because her psychology background gave her an empathetic insight into the unique and complex story.

The book tells the personal story of Zephany Nurse or Miché Solomon, the name which she was given after being stolen from her drowsy mother's hospital bedside in 1997, but several other voices also tell the story; her school teacher, her lawyer, her social worker, her counsellor and her famously introverted "daddy", Michael Solomon.

Jowell herself interjects with her own perspective of outsider turned insider. I found that as the layers unfolded, it was Jowell's insights that pinged with resonance because hers was a voice that I, as a desperately curious reader, could relate to.

A lot of things in the book surprised me. Some of Miché's statements are shocking, because, as Jowell writes in her prologue, "we think we know her".

The book is filled with irony, an irony which is all the more poignant because it is not manufactured. For instance, Levona Solomon, the kidnapper, is considered by all, even her jail mates, as a nurturing, mother figure but her own biological children don't survive, most not even until birth.

Also, the Solomons lived so near to the

distraught Nurses that their paths crossed several times, such as when they attended annual Christmas parties in the same road as the Nurses.

There are numerous goosebump moments in the book, like Miché's description of the strange sensation she underwent when she finally met her "doppelganger" Cassidy at school, who was actually her biological sister, or the bizarre intuition her mother, Celeste Nurse, had that Miché was pregnant while they were still estranged.

Miché's retelling of the day when she was taken away from her "mother" was heartbreaking, as was the slow unfolding of acceptance that the people whom she loved best were not related to her at all.

Most surprising of all was Miché's bold statement that she felt she had been better off with her "adoptive" parents – a sentiment that was echoed by one of her teachers.

● See the interview with author Joanne Jowell on page 8.

Headline act

■ Carl Joshua Ncube, pictured, from Zimbabwe, will be the headline act at the Cape Town Comedy club this week until Saturday August 24. Today, Thursday August 22, the MC will be Paul Snodgrass, Nelson de Gouveia will be the open mic act and Francois van As will be the guest act. Tomorrow, Friday August 23, the MC will be Dugald Pieterse, Liam Bento will be the support act, Mammito Eunice, from Kenya, will be the guest act and Nelson de Gouveia will be the open mic act. On Saturday August 24, the MC will be Dugald Pieterse, Liam Bento will be the support act, Nelson de Gouveia will be the open mic act and Bongani Dube will be the guest act. Ticket prices range from R60 to R120 and can be booked at Computicket. Dinner is served from 6pm and the show starts at 8.30pm. For more information, email info@capetowncomedy.com or call 021 418 8880 or 079 495 3989.



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Zephyry author: please reserve judgement

LAUREN O'CONNOR-MAY

Zephyry *Two mothers. One daughter* author Joanne Jowell, from Sea Point, hopes the book will bring the people at the centre of the story a reprieve from the huge amount of "public judgement" they have received.

"If there is one thing that I think people can take away from this book it is to reserve judgement until you understand that this is a story with points of view and everybody has one. Before you make your judgement you should probably know all sides."

The titular Zephyry was abducted from her mother's arms in hospital when she was just three days old. Through a series of bizarre coincidences she was reunited with her biological parents, 17 years later.

Throughout all the media frenzy surrounding the reunion and court case which followed, Zephyry remained deliberately silent. A ground-breaking court order protected her privacy. Last week, she decided to break her silence, have the court order lifted and reveal the identity given to her by the kidnapper – Miché Solomon.

In the book, Joanne transcribes a series of interviews with Miché, her "adoptive" father Michael, her social worker, counsellor, lawyer and teacher.

Joanne has written several books, all of them non-fiction and most biographical. Other than writing, Joanne also has a background in psychology.

"The drive to come out of hiding was very strong for her," Joanne said. "And that is what put her in this state of readiness now and

that's why she is seemingly handling it and all the focus, the scrutiny and the public judgement, so well.

"She says in the book 'I'm done with hiding. I want to be able to say who I am and love whom I love and move on. I don't forever want to be the kidnapped victim of someone who was painted with a criminal's brush'."

The book is written chronologically and starts with Miché's retelling of Lavona Solomon's story.

Lavona was convicted of kidnapping and fraud and has already served four years of her 10-year sentence at Worcester prison.

After discovering that she had been kidnapped, Joanne said, Miché, was in a "very dark place".

"Thanks to that protection order she was allowed to wallow in that dark place and to slowly come out, with lots of mistakes and hurdles along the way."

Joanne was Miché's eventual author of choice but initially she had spoken to several others before a "connection" was formed.

"She was in discussions with the publishers through her lawyer who was guiding her through the process."

The interviews took place over a series of months while Miché was pregnant with her second child.

"The readiness to tell the story has a lot to do with the ease with which the story comes out but first and foremost we connected as human beings. She's very easy to connect with," Joanne said, describing Miché as "warm" and "open".

Celeste Nurse, Miché's biological mother, has told media that she was hurt by the statements in



■ Author Joanne Jowell

the book but Joanne defended this, saying Miché was very protective of the Nurses' reputation.

"She was very protective but she was reasonable. There is stuff that we didn't include. In our interviews we talked about everything. It was an open, safe space to literally say anything. But when it came to actually writing it, if what was said was not in the public's interest or Miché's best interests, we decided to leave it out. Everything that's in there, is there for a purpose."

On the flip side, there were also many elements that Joanne felt were worth including but Miché needed convincing. One example, was the disclosure that she considered terminating her pregnancies.

"She grappled with that a lot. It is a huge source of guilt for her. I felt people would resonate with that. I think that was worth pushing for."

But despite the author's hopes, the release of the book has caused



■ Zephyry Nurse

a flood of "public judgement".

On social media, people have accused Miché of disrespecting her biological parents, being immature and breaking her silence for money.

Joanne said the huge public interest in the story was understandable.

"You are two days postpartum and you wake up and find your baby is not there. There is not a mother in the world that hearing that, doesn't clench her uterus and feel nauseous."

"As a mother, instinctively, your empathy goes to Celeste. It's every mother's worst nightmare that she endured for 17 years and so instinctively, if you're going to pick sides, that's who you are going to side with."

"But as I talked to Miché and got to know her and Michael, and got deeper and deeper into it, I felt I was opening in my heart towards Lavona. Our hearts start to bleed for them as they bled for

the Nurses.

"This is what Miché finds so difficult to get across to people. She is being told, 'You are only allowed to have feelings for your biological parents because the other side is a criminal side.' How can you tell the daughter of a loving family to harden her heart to the person who has only ever shown her love?"

In the book, Joanne details her attempts to give the Nurses a voice.

"I did reach out to them but it was a thwarted effort," she said.

She hopes that in time their reconciliation will continue.

"There's an opportunity for bridge-building, there's an opportunity for connections to be made. Miché's intentions were never to destroy the relationship any further. I really hope that all the doors remain firmly open because I think all is not lost there."

Overall, Joanne says, it's been a huge privilege to write the book because the story is so unique.

"It's the stuff movies are made of. That's why I write non-fiction because life is ironic. Fiction can't hold a candle to it. You can't make this stuff up."

"I'm grateful to the publishers who allowed me to put a psychological hat on and go deeper. The story may be unique but the issues it deals with are not. Issues like forgiveness, identity, trauma, nature versus nurture, these are hugely relevant issues and I'm really glad that we were able to use the book to pick away at them."

Joanne Jowell will be in conversation with Miché at the Fugard Theatre on Sunday September 8 at 10am as part of the Open Book Festival.

Tickets to the event cost R45 and can be booked at Webtickets.

Ghostbusters seek out the city's ghouls

TARA ISAACS

Some of Cape Town's popular landmarks – including the Castle of Good Hope – are haunted, say a team of paranormal investigators.

Cape Town Paranormal Investigations, a non-profit organisation based in Durbanville, is made up of a team of 16 investigators from across the city.

Their work includes researching the history of various buildings, including the Castle of Good Hope, Brackenfell Train Depot, Tygerberg Hospital and Green Point Lighthouse built in 1824.

The group's founder, Marc Leitao, says it all started five years ago when he and some friends found themselves talking about their various paranormal experiences.

"Our experiences could not be explained, and we decided to investigate whether or not it was just our minds playing tricks on us or if spirits were roaming the city."

Team members Amanda and Corne de Klerk, of Brackenfell, describe themselves as "sceptics by nature" and say they joined Marc on the ghost-busting journey because they wanted to know if they were living in a haunted city.

But the team doesn't go ghost-hunting on a whim. Each case can take weeks, if not months, to prepare for.

"We do not walk into a place and believe that there is activity. We do sufficient research on the history of locations, speak to



■ Cape Town Paranormal Investigations team members.

people who have lived at locations previously, visit museums and pick up old newspapers. Thereafter, we will visit the area to investigate for possible activity," says Corne.

Some investigations are tedious while others are of a more spine-chilling nature, says Amanda.

"Sometimes you go and investigate, expecting an experience of a lifetime, but you sit there for hours and nothing happens. On other occasions, it's unexplainable, and we scratch our heads about the things we find."

Marc recalls the time when, out of frustration, he shouted, "Please just show us something! Come on prove that you are here!"

The team got a pen and a door-knob thrown at them seconds later.

Marc says all their findings are factual and the team do not dramatise their YouTube and Facebook videos.

They use infra-red cameras and motion sensors, audio recorders thermal-imaging cameras, handheld camcorders and instruments to read fluctuations in electro-

magnetic fields.

The team say they can pick up anomalies, or spiritual energy, that the eye cannot.

In a video, which according to the team was shot at the Brackenfell Train Depot in March 2018, they can be seen shouting questions into the empty space around them. An audio recording from that night, they say, picked up an eerie response, which sounded like a disembodied voice from a faulty phone: "Insane, I am dead."

At Simon's Town School, founded in 1815, the team say, they found evidence that a boy who died many years ago is still roaming the corridors.

But waiting for responses from reluctant spectres is only one of the frustrations they face in their work, says Marc. There are those who waste their time and resources by calling them out under false pretences.

"Many people call us saying that they are having creepy experiences in their homes, and when we investigate, it turns out that they

are testing the way we do things."

Another problem is when they get called by tenants who believe they are rooming with a free-loading phantom, but the team can't do anything without the landlord's

permission, and many landlords, says Marc, simply refuse.

Amanda says that while some of the team's followers encourage them to pray or read from the Bible, they are not psychics, mediums or preachers.

"We have normal day jobs and are ghost hunters by night, which is a hobby," she says.

Their new video, *Ghost vs Brain*, to be released in coming weeks, helps you tell whether you're seeing a ghost or experiencing a trick of the mind.

To find out more about the group search online for Cape Town Paranormal Investigations or call 071 899 3467.

Sudoku No 549; Level: Hard

6	3	9				8		
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	2	5		7				
8			6					
						8		
	6	4		2	9			
			1	4				
9	7							
							3	1

How to play:
Fill every column,
row and 3x3 box
so they contain
every number
between 1 and 9.

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Solution on
page 5