

Truth, Lies and Alibis

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By Fred Bridgland

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On New Year's Eve in 1988, 14-year-old Stompie Seipei Moeketsi was beaten to within an inch of his life. He was stabbed and dumped in the veld on the outskirts of Soweto, and when he was identified six weeks later the trail led to Winnie Mandela and the feared Mandela United Football Club. With the world's eyes turned to SA and its hard-won transition story, an uncomfortable story of Winnie Mandela emerged as her trial, appeal and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission became entangled in a web of secrecy and lies, racial tension and political expediency. Was she above the law? How did Nelson Mandela try to protect her? What does it mean for politicians' respect for the rule of law in the democratic era? This exploration of the Mandela United Football Club's reign of terror throws up questions about the nature of justice and accountability – and how these differ for the 'important' and 'unimportant' people of this world. Veteran correspondent Fred Bridgland, who covered South Africa for UK newspapers at the time, reinvestigates and delivers explosive new information.