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Doubt

A professor, a genocide, and NBC's quest for a prime-time hit.

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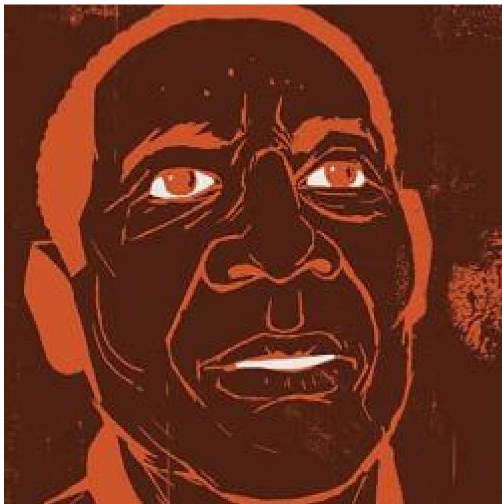

One Monday last December, a stranger presented himself at the office of Sanford Ungar, the president of Goucher College, located in a suburb of Baltimore. He introduced himself as Charlie Ebersol, a television producer. A handsome, affable, and royally confident young man--he was sometimes pictured in the gossip pages with his girlfriend, the tennis star Maria Sharapova--Ebersol explained his visit by saying he was doing research for a new prime-time show on NBC. Beyond that, he was cryptic, Ungar recalls. "He said, 'We're going to come back tomorrow and tell you about somebody who works here who's done some very, very bad things.'" The meeting, Ungar says, left him totally baffled. Ebersol remembers the encounter somewhat differently. "Literally five minutes into my going into conversation," Ebersol told me, "he said, 'Are you talking about Leopold Munyakazi?'"

Ebersol was producing a new documentary series called "The Wanted," about international fugitives from justice, and he was exploring an

explosive charge: that Munyakazi, a Goucher professor of French, had taken part in a genocide. The day after their first meeting, Ebersol returned to Ungar's office with his co-producer, Adam Ciralsky, an investigative journalist who'd once worked as an attorney for the CIA. They were in possession of what, at first glance, appeared to be a devastating collection of facts. Munyakazi had been living in his native Rwanda in 1994, when many thousands of his countrymen took up guns and machetes against their neighbors at the urging of a vicious government, killing a minimum of 500,000. After the fall of the genocidal regime to a rebel army, Munyakazi was imprisoned for four-and-a-half years. He'd been provisionally released, but then he'd fled to the United States, where he'd asked for asylum. (The appeal was still pending.) The producers told Ungar that the Rwandan government wanted Munyakazi back and had more than 70 pages of sworn affidavits from witnesses who attested to his participation in the genocide. Then they told the president that they'd return the next day with a Rwandan prosecutor, whom they'd flown in for the purpose of a dramatic confrontation.

Ungar, a white-haired ex-journalist with a leonine voice--he had once been the host of NPR's "All Things Considered"--considered himself well-prepared to assess the seriousness of NBC's accusations. His resume prior to taking the top post at Goucher included a stint as director of Voice of America. He had visited Rwanda several times, and, in the 1980s, he'd written a 500-page book about Africa.

Though he oversaw a large faculty, Ungar was slightly acquainted with Munyakazi, a new adjunct who had been placed at the school just that year by the Scholar Rescue Fund, a nonprofit that arranges financial support for exiled academics. He'd heard that Munyakazi had some

controversial political views, but, to Ungar, the professor came off as "a very polite, formal person of the old school." "I find it hard to imagine," Ungar would later reflect, "that he's a mass murderer."

Journalistically, Ungar also didn't know what to make of the NBC producers' approach, particularly the suggestion that they were working in concert with a foreign prosecutor. Indeed, the producers had conceived of "The Wanted" as a radically different approach to news-gathering. The stars of Ebersol's show were members of an experienced team he'd assembled to track down fugitives, including terrorism experts and a former war-crimes prosecutor. To Ungar, it all sounded like tabloid television. He got even queasier when Ebersol and Ciralsky returned to his office the next day, December 10, with a camera crew and Jean Bosco Mutangana, the head of Rwanda's genocide fugitives tracking unit. Ungar recalls that the producers asked him to sit for the cameras while Mutangana presented the details of the indictment. He refused. "Having worked in the media myself," he says, "I wasn't about to be fooled."

Those on the other side of the camera recall the scene another way. Ungar was relaxed, even flippant, the NBC producers say. They claim that his employees offered the jet-lagged Rwandan prosecutor eyedrops, so that he didn't look bloodshot on camera. Though Ungar initially wouldn't tape an interview, he did allow the NBC crew to remain on campus to pursue their questioning of Munyakazi. (As a former journalist, Ungar told me, he felt it would have been "hypocritical" to kick them off.) He went so far as to send the NBC crew, accompanied by a Goucher P.R. officer, down to the classroom where the professor was just finishing a French lesson.

After class, a swirling retinue of about ten cameramen, technicians, and

professional interrogators descended on Munyakazi, a broad-faced middle-aged man with an accented, lilting voice. The professor, who had been given little notice, was stunned and refused to talk on camera. After some time, two members of the faculty who knew Munyakazi, a philosophy professor and the director of the school's peace-studies program, joined the standoff, which only heightened the tension. The professors angrily challenged the Rwandan prosecutor. "They kept talking about 'competing narratives' of the genocide," Ciralsky says. "Which really could be considered code for denying the genocide."

What was happening was a collision of two different worldviews: the investigative mindset of journalists and prosecutors, with its normative emphasis on evidence, guilt, and verdicts; and the academic mode of inquiry, which is more discursive and wary of definitive judgments. The disdain between the two sides was mutual. "It was really a kind of guerrilla tactic on their part," says Steven DeCaroli, the philosophy professor who stood by Munyakazi that day. To the accused professor's defenders--a group that would eventually become surprisingly large and respectable--his prosecution was not about genocide, but about free speech, and a foreign regime that manipulates the story of the genocide for political purposes. The way DeCaroli saw it, NBC had been duped. "They were coming with a very tightly logical narrative," DeCaroli says. "And I just wanted to suggest that there was another way of reading the same facts."

The accusations against Munyakazi were 15 years old, but the way his defenders saw it, the turning point in his story had occurred much

more recently, on the afternoon of October 25, 2006, when he'd given a lecture at a faculty luncheon at the University of Delaware. The subject of the talk was academic freedom, and it was staged in cooperation with the Scholars at Risk Network, another of the cluster of interrelated foundations that have assisted Munyakazi since he arrived in the United States in 2004. The organizers had some warning that Munyakazi's appearance would be contentious. Beforehand, someone claiming to represent the Rwandan Embassy in Washington had contacted the university to protest. But Robert Quinn, who headed the Scholars at Risk Network, successfully argued for allowing the professor to speak anyway. "When you're dealing with a place like Rwanda, or any other place where there is widespread social chaos," Quinn says, "you're looking into a place where all lines are blurred."

At the time of the Delaware speech, Munyakazi was teaching at Montclair State University in New Jersey. A deliberate, sometimes pedantic speaker, Munyakazi told the audience of around 100 that he wanted to counter the "lies" that the world seemed to believe about his home country. The professor had brought along a stack of books about the 1994 massacres, accounts written by eyewitnesses like Paul Rusesabagina, whose experience was the basis for the movie *Hotel Rwanda*. These books told a straightforward story: that a wicked dictatorship had encouraged one ethnic group, the Hutus, to rise up against an innocent minority, the Tutsis, setting off a killing spree that hadn't stopped until a Tutsi rebel leader named Paul Kagame drove the evildoers from power. This story was all wrong, Munyakazi declared, holding up the books to show that he'd annotated their flaws with a sheaf of Post-it notes. Munyakazi was a linguist, a man obsessed with terminology, and he turned the discussion to one immensely powerful word: genocide.

The professor contended that the term had been misused in reference to Rwanda's bloody history. The killings had arisen out of an ongoing conflict--a civil war launched by Kagame, now the country's president--and Munyakazi, a Hutu, believed that the rebels deserved a share of the blame. He claimed that the massacres weren't carried out on a strictly ethnic basis, either, and therefore rejected the use of the term genocide to describe them. He preferred "fratricide," which implied a greater balance of guilt.

Munyakazi's positions were questionable, to say the least. But his speech didn't cause much of a stir at first. The forum, after all, was supposed to be about free expression, and the academics in the audience believed in encouraging competing discourses. Gerald Turkel, the sociology professor who organized the talk, understood Munyakazi to be making a reasoned case against the simplifications of journalism and the movie business. "It's much more complex than we've been led to believe," Turkel recently told me. "That was his major message." Indeed, many scholars of Rwanda had come to agree with one aspect of Munyakazi's argument: that Paul Kagame's regime had abused the genocide's legacy in order to burnish its image abroad and stifle dissent at home.

But that day in Delaware, at least a few audience members were listening to Munyakazi with mounting shock. Ralph Begleiter, a journalism professor, had spent 20 years as an international correspondent for CNN before joining the Delaware faculty. He didn't think the Rwandan genocide could be subjected to reinterpretation. "I distinctly remember in the middle of the speech, when he was making the point that there was no genocide," Begleiter recalls, "sort of my eyebrows rising and thinking, 'Oh my God, how can anybody say that?'"

After the luncheon was finished, Martin Mbugua, an employee of the University of Delaware's P.R. department, went back to his office and wrote an article about the event for the school's website. A native Kenyan, he was attuned to the political overtones of Munyakazi's claims. He quoted the Rwandan professor as saying that it was "quite wrong to say that genocide was committed by Hutus" and that there was an "international conspiracy to hide the truth about what happened."

In the United States, of course, offering competing narratives--even noxious, incorrect ones--is a right enshrined in the Constitution. In Rwanda, however, raising questions about the genocide is a statutory crime. By November 10, the Rwandan national prosecutor's office had issued an arrest warrant citing the Delaware speech, charging that Munyakazi had spoken "with intent to negate the genocide," and had "rudely minimized it." But that was not all. The warrant went on to allege that Munyakazi, who had claimed he was a terrified bystander in 1994, had in fact taken part in the genocide.

I have visited Rwanda on several occasions, the first time in 2002. Like most casual visitors, my first impression was one of wonder at the transformation overseen by Kagame. Streets that were littered with corpses when he marched into the capital, Kigali, are now lined with bustling restaurants. GDP has grown at a fast clip, foreign aid and private investment have flowed in, and Kigali's airport receives a steady stream of do-gooder dignitaries like Bill Gates and Rick Warren.

The president's signal accomplishment, however, has been promoting

some tentative reconciliation within the traumatized populace. In the first years after the genocide, the government imprisoned an estimated 120,000 suspected perpetrators, but locking away such a large proportion of the population proved to be practically untenable. So Rwanda opened the prison doors, releasing many low-level killers to their home villages on the condition that they confess their crimes before local tribunals known as *gacaca* courts. An uneasy peace has been struck between perpetrators and survivors at the insistence of the president--and, his critics say, an omnipresent intelligence service.

Kagame's government has also tried to stamp out all public references to ethnic difference. Over the years, it has passed a series of tough laws against "divisionism" and "genocide ideology," which carry punishments of up to 25 years in prison. To those who complain about abridgements of free speech, the government points out that similar laws exist in countries like Germany, for similar historical reasons, and cites the precedent of the genocide, when radio broadcasters spouting an ideology called Hutu Power urged their listeners to exterminate Tutsi "cockroaches." Critics of the regime note that the understandable justification for these laws masks an element of self-interest: They restrict the obvious criticism that Rwanda is now governed by a Tutsi minority.

The indictment against Leopold Munyakazi charges him with violating one of these laws with his speech in Delaware. "Here in Rwanda, we have read what he publicly said," Jean Bosco Mutangana told me when I reached him by phone in Kigali. But the prosecutor angrily rejected the contention that the professor is simply being punished for speaking out. According to the government, Munyakazi had organized and urged on the killers in his home village in 1994. "We take him to be one of the

planners, one of the people who developed hatreds, " Mutangana said. "When the genocide started, he took the lead."

After issuing the 2006 arrest warrant, Rwandan prosecutors repeatedly petitioned the United States to return Munyakazi to face trial. But the two countries have no extradition treaty, so there was little that prosecutors could do but beg. Munyakazi kept on talking, almost taunting the Rwandan authorities. At a forum at Montclair State, he argued about the genocide with Rwanda's U.S. ambassador. Then, last year, a new possibility arose, one that would allow Rwanda to make its case directly to the American people--on television.

Charlie Ebersol hails from an eminent TV family. His father Dick was a legendary NBC programming executive, a creator of "Saturday Night Live" and mastermind of the network's Olympics coverage. Though only in his twenties, his son was already starting to make his own name as a documentary filmmaker. Charlie had a production deal with NBC Universal and a handful of credits to his name, including a film on the snowboarder Shaun White and another about a South African school for orphans. The latter project, filmed while the younger Ebersol was a student at Notre Dame and later aired on HBO, had been something of a fiasco: As it came out, the South African media reported that school officials had allegedly misused donations, that many of the "orphans" did in fact have parents, and that the students had been coached to draw in the filmmakers with false tales of redemption, in an ultimately successful attempt to attract celebrity benefactors like Oprah Winfrey. But the experience hadn't made Ebersol shy about taking on complicated

overseas stories. "I had wanted to get into this idea of education through entertainment," Ebersol says. "I wanted to do something that was really entertaining, that was cool and interesting to my generation and my demo, but that had all the credibility and news standards of a '60 Minutes' or a 'Dateline.'"

And so, when Adam Ciralsky, an award-winning NBC News producer, approached him with a novel idea, Ebersol was more than happy to listen. Ciralsky's proposal had its genesis in a disconcerting fact: that in an age of easy migration, no conflict is confined. An estimated 1,000 immigrants currently living in the United States have pasts that involve violations of human rights. Why not track such criminals down, Ciralsky proposed, and put them on camera?

Ebersol and Ciralsky managed to sell NBC on a twelve-episode series. The show would target alleged war criminals, terrorists, and other international wrongdoers. Besides Ciralsky, the fugitive-tracking team would include Roger Carstens, a former Green Beret and counterterrorism specialist; Scott Tyler, an ex-Navy Seal with expertise in urban reconnaissance; and David Crane, a former prosecutor with the United Nations war-crimes tribunal for Sierra Leone. While Ciralsky handled the reporting end of the show, Ebersol says he strove to "create a format, an aesthetic, that drew in a new audience" that wasn't used to watching news. "As much time as Adam and I and the team spent researching the targets," Ebersol explains, "I spent working with camera crews ... to be able to produce a show that looks like *The Bourne Identity*."

The NBC producers knew that Rwanda was a target-rich environment. They made an exploratory trip there with Pierre-Richard Prosper, a

former prosecutor with the U.N.'s Rwandan genocide tribunal and onetime head of the State Department's war-crimes office. Ciralsky returned seven times over the course of a year, gathering evidence on several alleged fugitives from justice, including Munyakazi. He talked to prosecutors, case investigators, Tutsis who had escaped the killing, and even confessed Hutu *genocidaires*. "We've got everybody at every step in this case," he says, including President Kagame, who sat for two interviews. "Kagame's big thing," Ciralsky told me, "is, 'I don't care if he's tried here in Rwanda, I don't care if he's sent back, but somebody needs to try the guy.'"

The producers' reporting left them convinced that, whatever Munyakazi's supporters might say, there was a strong argument for the professor's guilt, and none whatsoever about the genocide. "They're like, 'Well, it's complicated, there's different ways of looking at it, there's a gray area,' " Ebersol says of the genocide. "But you know, there isn't a gray area." *

When Sanford Ungar first learned about NBC's accusations, he didn't think he knew enough to judge them. He turned, as many people seeking to understand the events of 1994 did, to perhaps the world's best-known specialist on Rwanda: a petite, silver-haired woman named Alison Des Forges.

Des Forges held a unique sway over perceptions of Rwanda. Within the

small community of academics and human rights activists who have spent their careers examining the genocide and its aftereffects, she played a sort of oracular role. A recipient of the MacArthur Foundation's "genius" grant, she was not an academic, though she'd done her Yale history dissertation on Rwanda and had spent years in the African Great Lakes region. She was an activist, a senior adviser to Human Rights Watch. In 1994, she had been one of the first to raise the alarm about mass killings in a then-obscure corner of Africa.

Des Forges understood that the genocide was more complicated than an atavistic outburst of African ethnic hatreds. Traditionally--and this is a vast simplification--the labels "Hutu" and "Tutsi" had referred to the kind of work one's family did and, by extension, its position in the societal hierarchy. Tutsis had superior status, a position solidified under Belgian colonial rule, but the Hutus took the upper hand, thanks to an uprising that occurred in 1959, just before independence. Many Tutsis were killed and more were pushed into refugee camps in neighboring countries. In 1990, Kagame, a son of Tutsi refugees, led an insurgency against the Hutu-dominated regime of President Juvenal Habyarimana, which responded with progressively more brutal reprisals against Tutsis. Habyarimana was killed when his plane was shot down on its approach to Kigali's airport in April 1994, and a hardline junta took over. The genocide, which seems to have been planned for some time, began immediately.

At the time, Des Forges was keeping in touch with her contacts in Kigali--from afar, she helped one of them, a human rights activist named Monique Mujawamariya, to escape the country--and writing impassioned appeals for Western intervention, which went unheeded. After Kagame's Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) put an end to the

genocide, she returned to Rwanda to interview survivors, collecting their accounts of the killing into an 800-page oral history.

At first, the RPF's victory in the civil war was greeted with almost universal relief. Kagame took care to present the facade of a multiethnic government. He initially reserved the office of president for a Hutu, giving himself the vice-presidency (while retaining control of the army, the real position of authority). But, over subsequent years, the Hutus within the transitional government were marginalized, opposition was curtailed, and Rwanda became embroiled in a series of devastating wars in neighboring Congo. Des Forges, along with many experts in the academic community, began to turn against the regime, arguing that it had become dictatorial.

Many journalists and policymakers continued to look at Rwanda as a heartening story overall. Whatever Kagame's failings, they pointed out, there was still no serious comparison between the RPF and the *genocidaires*. But, while many observers talked of progress, Des Forges and other Rwanda specialists saw delusion. And Kagame's unsinkable reputation only stoked their frustration.

So, when Des Forges was approached by Ungar, she told him not to assume that Munyakazi was guilty. She believed that Kagame's government often used the word "genocide" as a weapon to discredit its opponents. Des Forges reviewed the indictment, which raised further questions in her mind. She honestly couldn't determine what Munyakazi had done during the confusion of 1994. What she homed in on was his

more recent past--the story of his flight from Rwanda.

In 1999, Munyakazi was released from a prison in the town of Gitarama. He'd been held without trial since being swept up in a wave of arrests a few months after the genocide. The timing of Munyakazi's release seemed suggestive to Des Forges: It came before the large-scale reconciliation program began, during a more limited effort to reduce the genocide prisoner population by culling the weakest cases. "I would say ninety-nine percent of those people who were released during that time were people who had nothing to do with the genocide," says Aloys Habimana, a Rwandan lawyer who works for Human Rights Watch.

Des Forges had another reason to doubt the indictment's version of events. Munyakazi hadn't just been released from prison. He actually seemed to have been welcomed out. He'd been able to secure a teaching position at a new public institute in Kigali and moved openly in the capital's intellectual circles. Technically, Munyakazi's release was only provisional, and he was not supposed to leave the country. But these terms seem to have been laxly enforced. Munyakazi was issued a passport and traveled abroad twice. He'd returned to Rwanda both times--not the mark of a wanted man.

When Munyakazi eventually did leave Rwanda for good, he claimed that it was because of political pressure. Des Forges could recognize his story. In 2003, there was a presidential election, which Kagame won with more than 90 percent of the vote. Both during the campaign and after, opposition politicians--most of them Hutu--suffered extreme harassment. Some were arrested on the loosely defined charge of "divisionism." Many human rights activists, such as Aloys Habimana, were forced to flee the country. In exile, once-reasonable voices of

opposition turned into zealots.

The prototypical example of this process of radicalization is Paul Rusesabagina, the real-life protagonist of *Hotel Rwanda*. Since the release of the movie, Rusesabagina, a Hutu, has had a highly publicized falling-out with Kagame, who branded him a "manufactured hero." He now lives in exile in the United States. When I first contacted Leopold Munyakazi, saying I wanted to learn more about his case, he sent me a long list of character witnesses to call--and one of them, to my surprise, was Rusesabagina. In his Delaware speech, Munyakazi had attacked *Hotel Rwanda* for being full of falsehoods, but Rusesabagina told me that he didn't necessarily disagree with Munyakazi's views, which they'd discussed. "I am convinced that, as time goes on," Rusesabagina said, "history will prove him right." Rusesabagina claimed that the Rwandan government would stop at nothing to silence those it perceived as threats. "They have tried to assassinate me many times," he said.

The academic experts on Rwanda didn't go as far in their accusations, but they too made reassessments of the genocide, revisiting uncomfortable questions of causality. Kagame had reaped the credit for stopping the massacres, but some scholars argued that he had also played an inadvertent role in setting them in motion by invading and, perhaps, by shooting down Habyarimana's plane. (The mystery of the assassination, which is alternately blamed on Hutu schemers within the Habyarimana regime, remains a great crypto-debate.) A few people on the fringes, like Munyakazi, took the argument to ahistorical extremes, saying that Kagame and the genocidal regime bore comparable responsibility for the bloodshed. The more orthodox view among Rwanda specialists was that, while the *genocidaires* were indisputably villainous, Kagame wasn't the story's hero.

Des Forges was particularly concerned about atrocities allegedly committed by the RPF during the civil war and the genocide period. She wanted the international tribunal that was prosecuting leaders of the genocide to investigate RPF killings of civilians, which she estimated at 25,000. Human Rights Watch also wrote a series of highly critical reports about Rwanda's justice system and its conduct in Congo. The Rwandan government responded with predictable hostility, attacking Human Rights Watch in frequent communiques and banning Des Forges from entering the country.

But it wasn't just the Rwandan regime that questioned Des Forges's objectivity. She had many critics, who wondered whether she'd lost perspective--whether she'd become so obsessed with Kagame's imperfections that she failed to see anything else.

Des Forges freely admitted that she never independently investigated the case of Leopold Munyakazi. "Her concerns had more to do with her opinion of the government's credibility," recalls Pierre-Richard Prosper, who discussed the matter with her. (By this point, he was no longer working with NBC.) "As I recall, I said, 'Look, regardless of what your political feelings are, I think you have to distinguish between politics and justice. This case warrants investigation, and the guy needs to answer to the charges.'" But Des Forges saw the indictment mainly as an instrument of political persecution. In 2004, Munyakazi had been named alongside many of her Hutu activist friends in a parliamentary report on the propagation of genocide ideology. Munyakazi had learned that he'd been cited in the document around the time he left for the United States for an international congress of French teachers. This time, when he went abroad, he hadn't come back, choosing exile instead. But that didn't make Munyakazi a fugitive, Des Forges argued. She believed he was a

dissident.

After hearing what Des Forges had to say, Sanford Ungar had profound doubts about Munyakazi's guilt. He still felt he had to suspend the professor--he couldn't have an accused murderer teaching Goucher students--but he made sure that Munyakazi kept receiving a paycheck, and that he and his wife and their children were able to remain in their college-owned house off-campus. During winter break, rumors started to circulate. Ungar figured it was only a matter of time before word got out, so he decided to break the news himself in a mass e-mail to the student body. The news soon hit the papers. That, in turn, seems to have prodded U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which sent agents to arrest the professor for visa violations. Camera crews swarmed the Goucher campus, chasing the story of the suburban *genocidaire*.

Within a few days, though, the spectacle took an unexpected turn. In an interview with the publication *Inside Higher Ed*, Des Forges spoke out forcefully in Munyakazi's defense, picking out what she called "serious failings" in the Rwandan indictment and raising concerns about the government prosecutor's "questionable" arrangement with NBC. On February 11, *The New York Times* ran a front-page piece focusing on the criticism of NBC. At Goucher, Ungar held a town hall meeting, where many students lined up to support the accused professor.

Charlie Ebersol and Adam Ciralsky were restricted from responding to the furor by an NBC policy against commenting on ongoing news-gathering. While they remained silent, Des Forges made herself an

extremely persuasive advocate for Munyakazi. She not only provided skeptical analysis to the press, but also spread information about the case through her network of friends in government and academia. She even made her argument to an executive at NBC. Des Forges had accomplished something remarkable and ironic: She had aroused public sympathy for someone who seemed to doubt the genocide, the central concern of her intellectual life.

"They don't want people to talk about the truth, and each person who tries to say something about it is muzzled," Leopold Munyakazi was saying. He had been talking by this point for more than three hours, somewhat undercutting his contention. Since February, when ICE arrested him, Munyakazi has been out of work and under a court-ordered curfew. He's had little to do but stew himself in words: reading history, reviewing warrants and affidavits, and composing long treatises on exile websites. Sitting with his legs tightly crossed, allowing a black monitoring device to peek out from just beneath the cuff of his jeans, Munyakazi was winding himself into increasingly grandiose protestations of innocence. "I know that there are, in the history of the world, many people who are victims of injustice, of lies, of fabrications, but my conscience is clear," he said. "I am ready to answer all these charges and allegations, and I think it will be a very good opportunity for people in America to become aware of the situation in Rwanda. Because this process seems to be strange--all of this."

That, at least, was beyond dispute. As the professor sat in a boxy brick suburban home, on a tree-lined street close to Goucher's campus, he was

facing, in approximate order of seriousness, the prospect of shaming on prime-time television; the confinement of house arrest pending a deportation hearing, currently scheduled for next March; and the increasing likelihood of a trial back in Rwanda that could result in life imprisonment. He'd found himself cast as a martyr, a victim of the supposed intolerance of Kagame and the perceived gullibility of the media. What the defense of him lacked, however, was any specificity. That was why I had gone to visit him: to hear his version of what happened back in 1994.

I already knew something about him. He'd sent me a voluminous statement that included a twelve-page timeline of important events in his life. Prior to 1994, it said, Munyakazi had taught at the National University of Rwanda. Aloys Habimana, who knew him there, had told me the professor was the type of thinker prone to pronounce "peculiar kinds of positions"--a contrarian. "He was always disagreeing with the people in power," Habimana recalled. "Even before the genocide."

I knew that Munyakazi had been involved in his teachers' union and that, in 1992, he had been elected secretary general of Rwanda's national labor organization. Jean Bosco Mutangana had told me that the union was "very much attached" to the ruling party and its ideology of Hutu Power, but the Rwanda scholars I'd talked to had disputed that, saying the union played a somewhat independent role. "He did not buy into Hutu Power," said Paul Rusesabagina, who knew Munyakazi back then. But, even if that was true, it said nothing definite about his innocence. Once the killing started, people did inconsistent, unthinkable things. "In the hysteria of Rwanda in April 1994," one historian has written, "almost anybody might turn into a killer."

Fifteen years later, in his living room in Maryland, Munyakazi handed me a book by Bernard Lugan, a French academic who argues--contrary to the generally accepted view--that the genocide was not a centrally planned event, but rather a spontaneous popular uprising. "It was chaos," Munyakazi said. "No one could tell who's killing who and why." As he spoke, his wife Catherine, a Tutsi, sat with her back to us, quietly surveilling our conversation as she tapped on the family computer.

Munyakazi told me that he was living in Kigali at the time the president's plane was shot down. Five days later, he said he received warning that the *interahamwe*, the ruling-party militia, was heading for his home. Munyakazi said he fled with his family just ahead of the attackers, who ransacked the house. The family hid for a few days at a church and with friends before Munyakazi was able to get assistance from a friend who knew General Augustin Ndindiliyimana, a senior military official. The general arranged safe passage in a convoy, which dropped Munyakazi's family back in his home village, near Gitarama.

The Rwandan case against Munyakazi gives a far less sympathetic recitation of events. It claims that Ndindiliyimana, who is now on trial before the U.N.'s International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, sent Munyakazi to "mobilize Gitarama residents for the killings." In the various documents produced by the prosecution, the case against Munyakazi has changed and grown more elaborate with time--a fishy indication, his defenders say--but the gist of the story is that the professor worked with the local mayor to incite others to join the genocide, which had gotten off to a slow start in the area. He allegedly participated in a town meeting where Hutus were urged to take up arms, revealed the hideouts of local Tutsis, and even oversaw some of the hunting, armed with an AK-47. He is not alleged to have killed anyone

personally, but the genocide's organizers seldom did the dirty work. Mutangana told me the indictment was based in large part on the testimony of defendants who'd confessed in the *gacaca* courts. "These are the people who participated in the genocide themselves, who say they worked with him all the time," the prosecutor said.

Munyakazi admitted that he was issued an AK-47 by the mayor, but denied the rest. He said the gun was for the protection of his family--after all, his wife is a Tutsi--and he handed me a series of affidavits signed by people from his home area, Tutsis who claimed he'd helped them avert death by securing false ID cards listing their ethnicity as Hutu. "I went and negotiated with the mayor, because he was my former college student," Munyakazi said. He also claimed to have sheltered Tutsis. "I never saw anybody being killed in my neighborhood," he said. "Instead, I saw people who were hiding on my property."

Given what he was telling me--that Tutsis were being slaughtered--I was curious to hear why he didn't think the word "genocide" applied. "The classic definition of genocide doesn't fit the situation in Rwanda," he said, pointing out that many Tutsis had survived. "I know there were Tutsis who were not targeted," he said, bringing up the case of the roughly 1,000 refugees inside the Hotel des Mille Collines, whom Paul Rusesabagina managed to save through wheedling and bribery.

Catherine, who had been quiet up to this point, broke in. "Yes, they paid!" she said, contradicting her husband. I asked Catherine if she felt threatened, as a Tutsi, during the genocide. "Yes, of course," she replied, in a weak voice. (Indeed, she had lost family members.)

Her husband cut her off. "If we go systematically and do a very clean and clear analysis of the situation," the professor said, "I know there are

examples of some Tutsi who were not targeted, so it is not accurate to say it is only on the basis of ethnicity."

He told me that the key to understanding what had happened was the fear of Kagame's rebels in the Hutu populace. "They had been infiltrating the country, to convince and persuade some Tutsi people to be their members," Munyakazi said. He claimed that it was these "infiltrators" who were targeted by the *interahamwe*. Moderate Hutus, he said, were also targeted. "Whoever was considered as a collaborator, as an accomplice, of the RPF was killed."

Munyakazi seemed to be repeating, in scholarly guise, the very justification invoked by the genocide's authors--that the victims were Kagame's spies. I pointed out that most Tutsis who were killed weren't working with the rebels; they were the poor and powerless of the villages. "I know," Munyakazi replied. But again, he said, the killers were gripped by "the fear that the RPF didn't want to come peacefully and share power--that it wanted to reinstall the former feudalist system."

Catherine had turned back to her computer screen. Munyakazi kept on talking--just theorizing, he assured me. "Now maybe some were having the final solution, " he said. "Saying, 'Ah, maybe it would be better to finish for good this question, this conflict, by killing as many Tutsi as possible.' Some would have maybe this opinion. But I never heard anybody express it. I'm just thinking."

Five days before "The Wanted" was set to debut in mid-July, NBC

threw a premiere party for the show on Capitol Hill. Charlie Ebersol was there, in a chic gray suit and laceless black Converse sneakers, along with the members of his fugitive-tracking team. Eventually, the lights dimmed, and the first episode began to roll. The show opened with grainy news footage of terrorist attacks and an "intelligence briefing" on the team's first target: Mullah Krekar, a militant Kurdish cleric who lives in Norway. True to Ebersol's vision, the show did look like an action movie, with a swelling musical soundtrack, swooping camera shots, and meetings on rooftops. Some of the dialogue wouldn't have sounded out of place on a show like "24."

"The Wanted" has inspired a great deal of critical derision--*Variety* called it "a lowlight in a year filled with them for the news divisions," while the *Los Angeles Times* deemed its style "ridiculous"--but the show's producers have made at least one unique contribution to the debate over Munyakazi: They actually talked to Rwandans about him. The episode on the professor's case, which is likely to air in August, will give voice to this set of witnesses. In one interview, a former policeman who served time in jail after the genocide tells the investigators that Munyakazi asked him for more bullets for his AK-47. A confessed *genocidaire* tells them that the professor led him on "night patrols" that searched for Tutsis hiding in the bush. A stooped woman squats on a riverbank and recounts how she survived a massacre on that same spot, a massacre she believes Munyakazi helped to inspire. "Where is justice? They should pay for what they did," she says. "That's why we're here," Scott Tyler, the show's ex-Navy Seal, solemnly replies.

Such testimony represents an important reminder: There is an objective truth at the root of this story--something terrible did happen in Rwanda in 1994, and Leopold Munyakazi either did or did not take part in it. The

question is whether it is possible, at this late date, to unearth a verifiable set of facts about his actions.

For now, the Rwandan indictment represents the most authoritative account of Munyakazi's alleged crimes. I gave copies of the indictment to several genocide experts. After reviewing it, none were convinced. Timothy Longman, a professor at Vassar College, said that an indictment based heavily on the accusations of *gacaca* defendants couldn't be taken at face value because such people often try to shift blame to others in their confessions and are vulnerable to government coercion. Others pointed to various logical discrepancies, or raised questions about timing. "This looks quite familiar: On several occasions, the regime has taken an interest in a person abroad, including by launching indictments and requesting extradition, after that person spoke out on a public occasion," said Filip Reyntjens, a professor at the University of Antwerp and another prominent Rwanda scholar. "Clearly, this is a way of attempting to silence opponents."

On the other hand, some aspects of Munyakazi's own account are damning. It doesn't look good that he was issued a gun during the genocide. And his claims that he never witnessed any killing during the period described in the indictment seem doubtful. Scott Straus, a University of Wisconsin professor who has written two books on the genocide, directed me to a reliable report that listed five mass graves containing more than 5,000 bodies found in the immediate area of Munyakazi's home.

But Straus stressed that, as incriminating as the circumstantial evidence might appear, he still believed the Rwandan prosecution was politically motivated. "It sounds to me like there's some ambiguity in the case," he

said. "And the current government is exploiting that ambiguity."

On February 12, the day after the *Times* published its front-page story about Munyakazi, Alison Des Forges was flying home to Buffalo aboard a Continental Airlines flight when it crashed in icy conditions, killing everyone on board. She'd spent the final day of her life dealing with a flood of press inquiries about the case, and one of the last things she did before getting on the plane was write a three-page statement detailing her concerns. "Trial by television," it concluded, "neither does justice to the genocide and its many, many victims nor protects the rights of this professor."

When Des Forges died, Munyakazi lost his most effective defender. In May, three months after the crash, a memorial service was held in her honor at a New York University auditorium. It was a rare gathering of a far-flung community. Professors in tweed coats and exiles in baggy suits mourned their loss. Monique Mujawamariya, the friend Des Forges had helped to save from the genocide, spoke movingly of her devotion to Rwanda. A cellist played a doleful composition. "I imagine that, perhaps, upon hearing that Alison had died, some in circles of power and crime in the Great Lakes region have uncorked a few bottles," Filip Reyntjens said in his eulogy. "Let me tell them: Each of those corks is a tribute to Alison."

In the case of Leopold Munyakazi, though, it's still far from clear whether Des Forges lent her reputation to the cause of justice, or to the service of a man who is seeking to get away with murder. Back at Goucher College,

Sanford Ungar still wonders about the truth. "As far as Leopold's guilt or innocence goes, I just don't know," he says. Even Des Forges, he adds, never managed to come to a definitive conclusion. "We had some very good conversations about this," Ungar recalls. "And in the last conversation that I had with her--I actually came across my notes just the other day--she said, 'You know, probably no one will ever know the answer here.'"

** Correction: In the original version of this piece, the following quote from Charlie Ebersol was mistakenly presented as referring to Munyakazi's case: "They're like, 'Well, it's complicated, there's different ways of looking at it, there's a gray area.' But you know, there isn't a gray area." The quote refers to the genocide as a whole, not Munyakazi's case. The piece has been corrected. We regret the error.*

Andrew Rice is the author of The Teeth May Smile but the Heart Does Not Forget: Murder and Memory in Uganda.

By Andrew Rice

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