



THE GOOD AMERICAN

THE EPIC LIFE OF
BOB GERSONY,
THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S
GREATEST HUMANITARIAN

ROBERT D.
KAPLAN



Random House New York

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Published in the United States by Random House, an imprint and division of
Penguin Random House LLC, New York.

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Names: Kaplan, Robert D., author.

Title: The good American / Robert D. Kaplan.

Description: New York : Random House, [2020]

Identifiers: LCCN 2020012098 (print) | LCCN 2020012099 (ebook) |

ISBN 9780525512301 (hardcover) | ISBN 9780525512325 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Gersony, Robert. | United States. Agency for International
Development—Officials and employees—Biography. | United States.

Department of State—Officials and employees—Biography. | Humanitarian
assistance, American. | Refuge (Humanitarian assistance)—United States. |
Philanthropists—United States—Biography.

Classification: LCC HC60 .K3435 2021 (print) | LCC HC60 (ebook) |

DDC 327.730092 [B]—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020012098>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020012099>

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper

randomhousebooks.com

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

First Edition

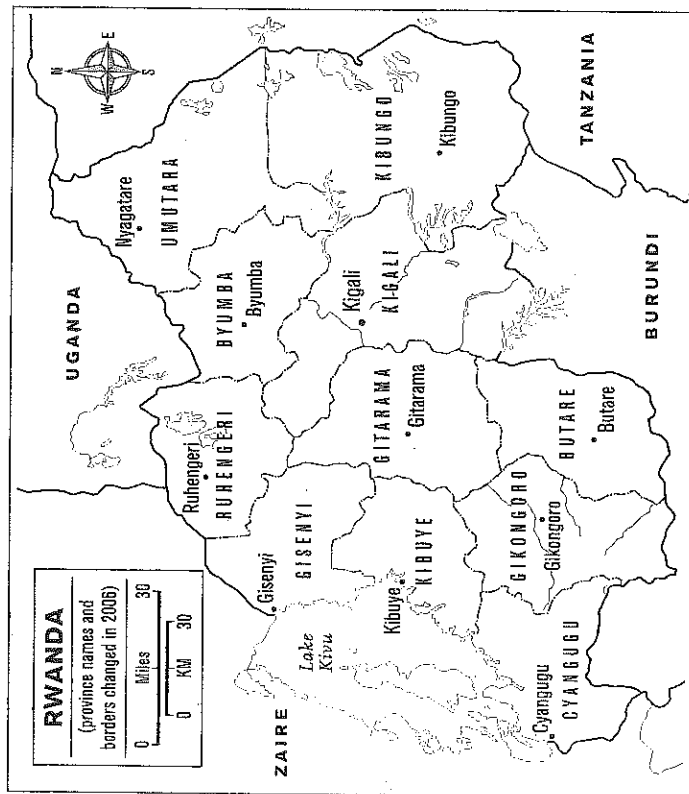
Rwanda 1994

"You Told the Truth. . . . Let Me Worry About the Rest."

The genocide against almost a million ethnic Tutsis in Rwanda in east-central Africa, perpetrated by the majority Hutus in the spring of 1994, was one of the most important events of the twentieth century; and constituted an additional, monumental piece of evidence that the world had not changed nearly as much as American triumphalists and other starry-eyed proponents of globalization and democracy believed following the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

Perhaps no one understands better how the Rwandan genocide transpired and how it was misunderstood than the French expert on Africa, Gérard Prunier. Prunier's classic work, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, published in 1995, contains a sharp criticism of Bob Gersony's field research in post-genocide Rwanda. But in a post-script, copyright 1997, Prunier disavows that earlier criticism and praises Gersony. What happened to change Prunier's mind and make close friends out of intellectual enemies is its own epic story, which involves Gersony in a controversy reaching up to the highest officials in the United Nations. But this saga must begin with the genocide itself, and Prunier's interpretation of it.

The Rwanda genocide, writes Prunier, was not a factor of biology: of tall and thin people with sharp features from some vague Semitic extraction (the Tutsis) and shorter, stockier ones of Bantu extraction from east-central Africa (the Hutus) predestined "to disembowel



each other" like "cats and dogs." It was the result of a process rooted in specific human choices that can be studied and analyzed. Nor, for that matter, is Rwanda as a landscape some dense, interminable jungle like Liberia. It has beautiful vistas and four seasons, so that the whole country looks like a "gigantic garden," with very few tsetse flies and malarial mosquitoes. This engendered, as Prunier explains, "centralized forms of political authority" and a "high degree of social control," the very opposite of the sort of chaos often associated with Africa.¹

Belgium, the colonial power, created a modern Rwanda that was efficient and brutal in the 1920s, with the native population under constant mobilization for the purposes of construction and working in the fields. Rwanda, it emerges in Prunier's telling, was more a place of plans and systems and hierarchies than of spontaneity. And by favoring one group over the other—the Nilotic Tutsis over the Bantu Hutus—the European colonialists, in particular the Belgians, fostered at every dimension of the church and state an attitude of resentment and inferiority on the part of the Hutus, thus lighting a very deliberate, slow-burning fuse.

It was precisely because of the many years of Belgian harping on the superiority of the Tutsis that the lethal idea of "race" came to define the differences between one part of the Rwanda population and the other part. Consequently, in 1959, the Hutus toppled the Tutsi monarchy and over 100,000 Tutsis fled to neighboring countries. This intercommunal violence continued into the early 1960s.² In 1963, writes the journalist Philip Gourevitch, "a band of several hundred Tutsi guerrillas swept into southern Rwanda from a base in Burundi and advanced to within twelve miles of Kigali before being wiped out by Rwandan forces under Belgian command." In response, Hutus massacred tens of thousands of Tutsis in southern Rwanda.³

In the decades that followed, the Tutsis formed their own invasion force in exile. Now that the Belgians were long gone, the French, particularly the French army, became deeply invested in supporting the Hutu regime against this Tutsi invasion force, which had originated in the violence begun by the Hutus themselves. The French

army justified its strategy by telling itself that the Hutu regime was democratic. But with the Hutus making up 85 percent of the population, what really existed was not the spirit of democracy but merely the tyranny of the "tribal" majority, wrapped up in a phony moralism against the so-called feudalistic Tutsis. Prunier does not use the word "tribal" in a pejorative sense, by the way. As he writes, "if tribes did not exist, they would have to be invented." In a world of illiteracy and parochial interests, where philosophies are abstract inventions restricted to intellectuals, "solidarity is best understood in terms of a close community."⁴

This close community brought together the Nilotic Tutsis with the Banyankole of southern Uganda, Ugandan leader Yoweri Museveni's tribe, which helped make allies of Museveni and Tutsi leader Paul Kagame. This is how Kagame's RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Front) was able to utilize Uganda to invade Hutu-led Rwanda from the north. In fact, when Museveni was in the bush fighting the Ugandan government of Milton Obote, Paul Kagame acted as Museveni's chief of military intelligence. Thousands of Museveni's fighters were actually Rwandan Tutsis. This is how the Tutsi RPF came to be formed in Uganda after Museveni came to power there in the 1980s, sending shivers down the spine of the Rwandan Hutus next door. They knew back then that sooner or later they might be invaded by the very people who had oppressed them for so many years. Another thing that terrified them was the 1972 slaughter of many tens of thousands of fellow Hutus by Tutsis in neighboring Burundi to the south.

Nevertheless, history is not only a matter of large impersonal forces, but of contingency—of unpredictable incidents that can ignite such large forces. To wit, in the beginning, two personalities vied for control of the Tutsi RPF, Paul Kagame and Fred Rwigyema. Rwigyema was a moderate whose vision was to employ the Tutsi force not to invade Hutu-dominated Rwanda at all, but merely to use it as a means of leverage for concessions from the Hutu regime in Kigali. The hardliner here was Paul Kagame, who always envisioned a full-scale invasion. Rwigyema was killed in 1990 in a military operation during a dispute over tactics, and thus it would be Kagame's

vision that prevailed, without which the genocide of 1994 might simply not have happened, or not have happened in the way that it did.

The French military was now fiercely backing the Hutu regime in Rwanda with the Americans, a bit more vaguely, backing Kagame's Uganda-based Tutsi force (the upshot of America's alliance with Museveni, which Bob Gersony had an indirect hand in forging in 1984). By 1993, Kagame's RPF had pushed deeper into Rwanda. The United Nations sent peacekeepers to occupy the space between the Tutsi RPF forces in the north and the Hutu government forces just to the south. The head of that U.N. force was General Maurice Baril, a French-Canadian: a name that will come up prominently later in this story about Gersony's Rwanda odyssey.

At this point the Americans, especially the U.S. ambassador in Kigali, David Rawson (Gersony's cheerleader from some years back in Somalia), were promoting a power-sharing agreement between Hutu and Tutsi elements in Rwanda; even as diplomats were making increasing demands on a Hutu regime terrified over the prospect of an RPF invasion. In this beehive of an overpopulated country, the bees were humming louder and louder, and the Hutus, angry at concessions made by their own regime, began organizing their militias to slaughter the minority Tutsis.

The country was on edge, and the Rwandan genocide was sparked by another unpredictable contingency: a Falcon 50 corporate jet carrying Rwandan president Juvénal Habyarimana and Burundian president Cyprien Ntaryamira (both ethnic Hutus) back from peace talks was shot down over Kigali the evening of April 6, 1994, at almost the same moment that the Tutsi RPF was about to march on the capital.

Thus began the killing of the minority Tutsis by the majority Hutus, both of whom were emboldened and petrified by both the plane crash and the RPF invasion. What made the Tutsis particular objects of hate was the fact that they were wealthier and better educated, a consequence of having been favored by the Belgian colonial system. In Rwanda, Prunier writes, "all the pre-conditions for a genocide were present: a well-organized civil service, a small tightly-controlled land area, a disciplined and orderly population, reasonably

good communications and a coherent ideology containing the necessary lethal potential." The remnants of the Hutu regime and the militia authorities set up roadblocks, ordered house-to-house searches, drew up detailed lists, and closed off neighborhoods, with the killers using AK-47 assault rifles but mainly machetes (*pangas* in Swahili). Pogroms multiplied. The relative absence of wild country, unlike so much of Africa, made it harder for people to escape. It was a cascading tsunami of bloodshed. Mutilations and rapes were common. Corpses and limbs were heaped in separate piles. Radio Mille Collines ("a Thousand Hills"), an extremist Hutu media network, exhorted the Hutus to keep murdering. In Washington, Chas Freeman, by now assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, pleaded with the U.S. military's joint staff to jam all fixed and mobile radios inciting racial violence in Rwanda: but to no avail.⁵ Roughly 800,000 to 850,000 people—11 percent of the total population, mainly Tutsis—were killed. Around 2 million fled across the border to Tanzania, Burundi, and Zaire, and another 1.5 million or so became internally displaced.⁶

In the same time frame in Kigali, the RPF Tutsi invasion force managed to topple the Hutu-led regime that had been perpetrating the genocide, with General Paul Kagame installed as the de facto head of government by July. Moreover, the RPF's 157th mobile division, commanded by General Fred Ibingira, was quickly moving in a clockwise fashion through the Rwandan provinces of Byumba, Kibungo, and Butare, pacifying the eastern, southeastern, and southern parts of the little country. The Hutu perpetrators of the genocide had by now fled into refugee camps in Zaire, Burundi, and Tanzania.

In sum, the majority Hutus had committed genocide against the minority Tutsis, but the Tutsis themselves were now on their own warpath as they took over the country from the terrified Hutus. Yet in the outside world it was still a black-and-white situation: the Hutus were like the Nazis, plain and simple, with no mitigating circumstances.

As for Paul Kagame, he was technically only the vice president under a Hutu president, making the character of the new Rwandan

regime somewhat ambiguous. Yet it was he who was really in charge. Kagame is "a cold fish, about as cheerful as a kamikaze pilot," according to one expert observer. Kagame was good organizationally, but without a moral compass: a bit like Mengistu Haile Mariam, the former Marxist dictator of Ethiopia, himself a passionless, ruthless killer. All Kagame ever had to offer was efficiency and results.

Kagame had been in charge, and RPF general Ibingira had been sweeping clockwise through Rwanda for several weeks already when Bob Gersony and his three-person team, consisting of himself, his wife, Cindy, and Tony Jackson, touched down in Kigali in a German cargo plane from Nairobi on July 30, 1994.

Bob Gersony's own involvement in the Rwanda crisis would not have happened at all without a great coincidence.

He and Cindy had been married for almost two years in July 1994, yet they had never really gone away together. Bob and Cindy found themselves alone in a house in the French village of Chens-sur-Léman, just across the border from Geneva, Switzerland. Pierre Gassmann, Bob's old ICRC friend from his Uganda assignment, had lent them his place. It was late morning, Bob and Cindy had just woken up and were settling down to their first exquisite breakfast, sampling the hot bread, fresh butter, and pâtés from the village, amid the vines, trellises, and the expectation of rich coffee and fine wines for Cindy, as Bob eschewed caffeine and alcohol.

Then the phone rang.

It was Bill Garvelink, Gersony's old traveling companion in the Bolivian highlands who now worked for J. Brian Atwood, the administrator of USAID. Atwood had just returned to Washington from Goma in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), where a million refugees from the Rwandan genocide and political crisis had fled.

In fact, Cindy had been with Atwood in Goma and traveled to this French village by way of Nairobi and Geneva for their vacation. Cindy was on a temporary duty assignment in East Africa for the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, and actually had not been invited to ac-

company Atwood from Nairobi to Goma, when suddenly the regional director for Africa in OFDA, Katherine Farnsworth, learned that her father had died. So at the very last minute, Cindy was asked to travel with Atwood to Goma on July 18, 1994, in place of Kate Farnsworth.

Cindy mentioned to Atwood that her husband, Bob Gersony, had once briefed him on Nicaragua. Indeed, did Atwood ever remember that briefing! Gersony had spent literally hours informing Atwood about all the issues involved in reconstruction on Nicaragua's Atlantic coast. Not only was this news, but the manner of the brief itself had inspired Atwood. This Gersony, Atwood thought, wasn't just another bureaucrat. When Atwood had asked him whom he respected most, Gersony answered, "Agronomists, because agronomists know how to relate to peasants."

For the first time in some years, Bob Gersony was at the forefront of Brian Atwood's thoughts, thanks to Cindy being accidentally on the plane to Goma and seated next to him.

Atwood was appalled at the situation in Goma, where there was widespread cholera, little potable water, and Hutu genocidalists mixed in with the mainly Hutu refugees. "Kids with dead eyes mobbed the runway. The water was so dirty it was as dark as Coca-Cola. Hutu military vehicles were still patrolling the refugee camps. Hell, it was worse than hell," Atwood recalls. Though the Hutus had perpetrated the genocide, the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front had meanwhile taken power in the capital of Kigali at roughly the same time, driving Hutus out of the country en masse. In one sense it was a case of good and evil; on another level it was messy and complicated. The messy and complicated part would be something Gersony was destined to discover on his own, to his great horror, interview by interview.

Atwood, Garvelink said over the phone, wanted Gersony to go immediately to Geneva, the headquarters of UNHCR, and meet with Sadako Ogata, the United Nations high commissioner for refugees, about the situation in Goma. Atwood then wanted Gersony to travel to Goma and "straighten things out there."

Gersony thought to himself, "Straighten things out! Is he crazy?"



U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata, who sent Gersony to investigate the situation in Rwanda in 1994.

Goma was a vast conflagration of human suffering and the United Nations and other agencies were doing all that they could just to cope with the mess.

"If I go to Goma, I would only be a fifth wheel, a busybody parachutist telling the U.N. and the NGO workers what to do. I would be worse than useless. I would be a distraction."

Gersony told Garvelink in no uncertain terms that if he did go to Rwanda as well as Goma and the other refugee camps over the border in whatever capacity, he would only do so accompanied by Cindy and Tony Jackson: this was Franco-phone Africa, and Jackson spoke fluent French. Jackson was also Gersony's lifetime "ambassador to the left-wing," as he always liked to put it, someone particularly useful in an international emergency with so many NGOs on the ground.

"Whatever you want," Garvelink answered. ("Negotiating a contract with Bob Gersony had always been a nightmare," Garvelink recalls.)

It so happened that Gerald Walzer, the deputy U.N. high commissioner for refugees, the number two person in UNHCR under Mrs. Ogata (it was always "Mrs. Ogata" or "Madame Ogata"), was a friend of Gersony's from Bangkok, when Gersony had worked on the South China Sea piracy problem a decade earlier. Walzer was a charming Austrian from Vienna just like Gersony's mother. Gersony decided he would make a day trip to Geneva to see Walzer.

In Geneva, Gersony told Walzer about Atwood's idea to send him to Goma. Walzer rolled his eyes. Nevertheless, Gersony advised that the most important thing to do now was to get the refugees home as

soon as possible. He remembered the reconciliation-without-revenge strategy of Yoweri Museveni in Uganda in 1986, which had helped bring peace to that country after years of mass killing, a formula that the new Rwandan government might follow.

"We need to pull hundreds of thousands of Hutus back into Rwanda from camps in Zaire, Uganda, and Tanzania, in order to deprive the Hutu genocidalists of their population base in the camps. Even though the Tutsi RPF controls the new government," Gersony went on, "Rwanda is simply not viable without the Hutus who make up 85 percent of the population, many or most of whom are not murderers."

That was Gersony's "optimistic thesis" at the moment, a moment when many assumed that the genocide was simply a case of the Hutus killing the Tutsis, sort of like the Germans killing the Jews: the Tutsis being totally innocent and the Hutus totally guilty, in this case. And thus it was not a bad thing that the Tutsis had taken effective power away from the Hutus.

Of course, the situation was full of far more twists and turns—and of far more tragedy—than that. It was the process of discovering, bit by bit, just how much more convoluted and just how much more tragic the Rwandan catastrophe actually was—how naive his original thesis was—that Gersony's greatest professional and personal crisis would begin to unfold.

Walzer liked Gersony's thinking and immediately took him in to see Mrs. Ogata, someone as diminutive in size as she was towering in willpower and the ability to make tough decisions. Indeed, she had a very un-Japanese way of saying, in impeccable English, exactly what she thought? Mrs. Ogata instantly liked Gersony's idea of a three-person repatriation force, given that she was under pressure from the new Rwandan government and other parties to stop spending money on genocidal Hutus in refugee camps when Rwanda itself was suffering.

Gersony, by this time, was well known, and positively so, in the UNHCR family.⁸ In fact, he was referred to as "a friend of the house." This most important of U.N. agencies knew of his work in Uganda

and Mozambique, and also in Sudan, where he had repaired the relationship between the U.S. government and UNHCR following the rushed departure of Jerry Weaver from Khartoum. There was also Colomnecagua on the Honduras-El Salvador border, where Gersony had kept that refugee camp from being moved and thus ended the State Department's threat to cut funds to UNHCR.

The arrangement would be thus: USAID was engaging Gersony to work for—and only report to—UNHCR, so that Tony, Cindy, and Gersony would be completely under United Nations supervision, even as USAID paid Bob's consulting fee.

A few days later Bob, Cindy, and Tony got U.N. passports in Geneva as well as UNHCR survival kits: small trunks filled with basic necessities for three weeks in the field.

There was no passport control at the airport when the three of them arrived at the end of July. Kigali was littered with broken glass. Many buildings were without windows. Electricity and water were uncertain. The city constituted a war zone just beginning to rebuild.⁹ Roman Urasa, the UNHCR representative in Kigali, gave Gersony a hard stare upon meeting him at his office. He had made no plans, no sleeping arrangements for the new arrivals, even as he cautioned them not to stay at a hotel. Urasa, a Tanzanian, bore a grudge against Gersony dating back to Mozambique. It was Gersony's report criticizing the human rights record of RENAMO that had spoiled Urasa's carefully laid-out plans to repatriate Mozambican refugees from neighboring countries. At over 5,000 feet in altitude, the nights could be chilly in Kigali. The three slept on the cold stone floor of UNHCR headquarters that first night without their survival kits, which were supposed to have been sent ahead but which never actually arrived. No matter, Gersony thought. With Atwood, Mrs. Ogata, and Walzer all behind him, "I had juice."

The next day they moved to the Hôtel des Mille Collines, the famous hotel that had served as a sanctuary for hundreds of Tutsis during the genocide. But the place had been trashed. The toilets were

clogged. There was no power or water. Cindy and Tony talked by flashlights with other humanitarian workers at the hotel.

The three sought help at the USAID office, which they also found in a state of disarray: looted, with furniture toppled, and a calendar page still turned to April, the month the genocide began. But it would be USAID that eventually provided them with a vehicle, driver, and supplies, to which they attached U.N. logos with magnets.

Gersony figured he needed a very impressive-looking official letter, or laissez-passer, from the Rwandan government in order for the trio to travel throughout the strife-torn country and conduct interviews. He learned that only Jacques Bihozagara, the minister of rehabilitation and a co-founder of the RPF, could provide such a letter. He asked Urasa to arrange a meeting with the minister. Urasa said sulently that he would work on it.

Gersony was having dinner one evening in the UNHCR dining room when the UNHCR protection officer for the southern Rwandan province of Butare, Kofi Mable, came over in a frantic state, insisting that he had to talk to Urasa. Mable, a Togolese, told Urasa that a report had come in of hundreds of Hutus being slaughtered in a field by a church. Gersony suggested that, in this case, maybe his team should start their investigations in Butare to the south. But Urasa recommended that Gersony not change his original plan to drive first to the northwest. Gersony was not particularly surprised by what Mable had told them. He had always figured that there would be a certain amount of revenge killings after the genocide. As for Urasa's lack of interest in the report, Gersony said nothing.

Days went by, as Gersony waited for Urasa to arrange a meeting with the Rwandan government minister. Gersony used the time to talk with as many NGO workers as he could.

Finally, Gerald Walzer phoned UNHCR's Kigali office from Geneva, and was surprised to learn that Gersony's team was still not in the field.

"I can't go," Gersony told him. "I need a letter and Urasa has been unable to get me an appointment with the minister."

"Put Urasa on the phone," Walzer said.

Urasa took the call alone in his private office. Gerersony asked no questions. But before the end of the day, Urasa told Gerersony that they would meet with Rehabilitation Minister Jacques Bihozagara the next morning, August 9, at eight o'clock.

The minister appeared unfriendly and skeptical.

Gerersony assured him that his team was only interested in the best way to handle the repatriation of refugees, and he promised that nothing would be made public until the minister and others in his government were briefed on what the repatriation team had found. Gerersony wore an extra-earnest expression, something that was easy since that's how he looked most of the time anyway.

The minister agreed to provide the *laissez-passer*. Gerersony then asked that at the bottom of the letter, it should be noted that a copy had been sent to "Vice President Paul Kagame." The minister shrugged and agreed. The *laissez-passer* with Kagame's name at the bottom arrived that afternoon. Gerersony knew that Kagame had only been copied. But that wouldn't matter in the field, where merely having Kagame's name on the document would work magic.

Bob, Cindy, and Tony left the next morning, driving northwest to the province of Ruhengeri, bordering Uganda and Zaire. They would cover seven hundred miles inside tiny Rwanda over the coming weeks, four hundred miles of which would be on dirt laterite roads, from which they were officially barred, supposedly because of the danger of land mines.

Ruhengeri constituted a labyrinthine swirl of hills, wreathed in a complex pattern of narrow dirt paths, making the earth appear even more beautiful. Here and there were tea and coffee plantations, adding to the dignity of the landscape. Gerersony looked up at the hillsides and will never forget the sight: of vast numbers of people silently walking home, single file, their possessions on their heads—men, women, children, old people—from Goma, the refugee camp over the border in Zaire. He thought of the organization of ant columns. The pageant contradicted the operating assumption that no one was returning home because the Hutu genocidalists were not permitting

them to. But here were all these Hutus reversing their original exodus, after the new Tutsi-led regime had taken power in the country. Cindy and Tony did house counts: how many were occupied, reoccupied, or empty. Meanwhile, Bob did one-on-one random interviews. They found that 60 percent of the houses were again occupied. People told Gerersony that they had seeds to plant and required nothing else.

"Do you feel safe?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Has anyone bothered you?"

"No."

The three went from commune to commune in this regimented, hierarchical society. In some areas there were 90 percent occupancy rates.

Gerersony felt deflated. "I'm the repatriation strike force and these people don't need my help," he thought.

Then they drove off the main roads and headed still further north. At the village of Kinigi, they came to a roadblock filled with meaningless government troops. He showed them the *laissez-passer*. The soldiers told him that they didn't care about any letter, and that the U.N.-emblazoned vehicle could not pass, no matter what. "We're de-mining," a soldier explained. "De-mining," Gerersony thought, "on a small dirt road leading nowhere?"

He kept the roadblock at Kinigi in mind. The mystery would soon be solved.

They headed south throughout the province of Gisenyi. There were cows with big horns known as Ankole cattle. People stood by the sides of the roads washing down goat brochettes with banana beer. Cindy and Tony tried the brochettes with *piri-piri* sauce, which Bob avoided, afraid at first of getting sick. He disapproved of lunch anyway. "If we skipped lunch, we could interview one more refugee, and each refugee was precious—you never knew which one would yield a breakthrough in understanding."

Here, though, there were no columns of people returning for him to interview. The atmosphere seemed tenser than in Ruhengeri to

were working under unbelievable stress. Gersony was glad he hadn't agreed to simply parachute into Goma in order to be a fifth wheel. They showed him a just-received report that the RPF had killed 150 men, women, and children with machetes in the village of Kinigi in northern Ruhengeri. Gersony was heartened by the news—heartened, that is, that his suspicions about the de-mining excuse the soldiers had given him about the roadblock there were well founded.

"We're getting very granular," he thought to himself. "It's hard to miss things here, the country is too small." Still, he wasn't altogether pessimistic. There was the overall positive situation in Ruhengeri, while Gisenyi to the south was what you would expect: killings by the new Tutsi regime in the scores, maybe hundreds, yet still not mass killings. The new de facto Tutsi government simply had to discipline its troops more. Until then, the situation was not quite ready for Hutu refugees to return home.

In fact, there were some repatriations of Hutus from Goma already in progress. People would sign up the night before and be taken by bus back to Rwanda the next morning. But even those numbers were rapidly diminishing, Gersony learned. The Hutu genocidalists were beating up the people who had signed up to go back and live under the Tutsi regime, and later the Hutu who was in charge of the operation was found beaten to death, his face barely recognizable.

Crossing the border from Zaire back into Rwanda, they linked up with Cindy, who told them that she could hardly find any Hutus in Kibuye. The houses there were nearly empty of occupants. A pattern had developed. The situation was getting grimmer as they moved south into Rwanda's southwestern corner. They were in fact retracing from the opposite direction the sweep of RPF General Ibingira's 157th mobile division through the country.

Just as they were about to continue across the south of Rwanda, from the southwest to the southeast, Gersony got a message that he was wanted immediately back in Kigali. He was angry. Capital cities always catch you in a spiderweb of official responsibilities where you learn nothing compared to what you learn in the field, even as they

the north. Only 15 percent of the houses were occupied, and those returning were mainly doing so for a brief look-see. The people he did find filled Gersony's notebook with stories of beatings, arrests, and disappearances perpetrated by Tutsi RPF regime troops. Hutus began asking him nervously if they should leave and go back to Goma over the border. They spoke of RPF troops arresting groups of a dozen or two dozen people at a time, and killing them in the nearby Gishwati Forest.

"I was still not surprised at this point," Gersony recalls. "Many hundreds of thousands of Tutsis had just been murdered by the Hutus. What I was hearing, given what had transpired, still fell into the category of revenge killings."

But he kept hearing of whole families disappearing, and in southern Gisenyi, even more people were preparing to flee to Goma.

Goma lay directly over the border from where they were at this point. Bob and Tony crossed the border on foot to Goma, while Cindy headed south with the car into the province of Kibuye to conduct more house counts.

Goma, in Zaire, was a vision out of hell, coated in white lime, used to prevent decay of dead bodies, where there was insufficient potable water and the hard volcanic soil made it difficult to dig latrines. A million people stretched out along roads in squishy mud, barely able to move, with few or no provisions, and disease ubiquitous. Of the thirty-six individuals interviewed by Gersony there, half said they had personally witnessed RPF violence and the other half said they had heard about it. Naturally, these people were afraid to return home. Meanwhile, the Hutu genocidalists were regrouping within this sprawling refugee encampment.

"Is the RPF hunting down actual perpetrators [of the genocide] or just shooting fish in a barrel?" he asked himself. He still wasn't convinced that all of this was much more than revenge killings that had gotten out of hand.

He met the UNHCR representatives in Goma, Filippo Grandi and Joel Boutroue. Filippo, a tall and aristocratic Italian, would go on to become the head of UNHCR. It was mid-August and the two officials

corrupt you with their creature comforts. "Just as I was getting into a rhythm, this damn thing happens," he told Tony and Cindy. "Just as I was getting used to the bad food, to the harsh conditions and sleeping arrangements, and filling up my notebook, I now have to break the spell."

He had been summoned back for a meeting with Michel Moussalli and Kamel Morjane. Moussalli had been named by Mrs. Ogata as her special representative for the Great Lakes region of Africa. A decade earlier he had treated Gersony to a memorable, expensive dinner by Lake Lemana in Geneva when Gersony was burning up with the news he had of atrocities in Uganda's Luwero Triangle. Morjane was the head of Africa for UNHCR and was Mrs. Ogata's most trusted colleague in this crisis. He would go on to become the defense minister and later foreign minister of Tunisia. But as soon as he got back to Kigali, Gersony first tackled the basic necessities: he showered, ate sandwiches in his room, and handed in his laundry. Then he had drinks alone with Moussalli and Morjane. Cindy and Tony had remained in their hotel rooms.

Gersony briefed them for half an hour. He expressed doubts about his earlier plan for the repatriation of Hutu refugees to Rwanda, now controlled by the Tutsis. Seeing how sympathetic both Moussalli and Morjane were, Gersony then decided to really trust them, the way he had trusted Roy Stacy in Harare about what he was discovering about RENAMO. Opening his heart, he said to them to make a decision. He had heard rumors, and also had a feeling, that as he continued to travel across the south of the country, in the opposite direction of RPF General Ibingira's Tutsi army, he might find out things that could put UNHCR in a very difficult position.

Gersony explains to me twenty-five years later: "I knew they couldn't say no to me. But I had to have it on the record, that it was their decision that I continue my journey. For the reigning assumption in the West was still that the Hutus were simply the perpetrators and the Tutsis only the victims."

Moussalli and Morjane did, in fact, say yes. They told Gersony that

he should continue his travels. Moussalli and Morjane simply wanted to know the truth. They wanted "field-based, quality-of-information," that's all. Gersony reveres them to this day.

On August 22, 1994, Bob, Cindy, and Tony left Kigali for the southwest to pick up where they had left off.

They planned to travel from the province of Butare eastward to the province of Kibungo in Rwanda's southeastern corner. Only 25 percent of the houses in Butare were occupied. There was the unmistakable odor of human flesh. Everywhere fat dogs were hanging about: always a bad sign. But the start of the genocide was already four months past, and it was four months since the RPF had swept through here, pacifying the province. Whereas Gersony had been pleased by what he saw in northwestern Rwanda and had been concerned by the situation in western Rwanda, here in the south of the country he became truly alarmed. There was a real atmosphere of tension. The three crossed the border into Burundi, where Hutu refugees told them that they had been invited back home by the Tutsi authorities, but after they had witnessed large-scale arrests and killings, they came back to Burundi as refugees a second time.

The three returned over the border into Rwanda and then headed east, to the province of Kibungo: a true step into hell.

Kibungo was flatter with fewer trees. There were no goat brochettes or other food available, so they survived on a wheel of cheese that Bob and Tony had bought at a makeshift stand in Goma. Soldiers were everywhere, not letting their vehicle through at a main roadblock, despite the *laissez-passer* and the U.N. logo on their car. It was the first time since Kinigi that this had happened. They finally managed to enter a military headquarters. It was buzzing with activity. Some kind of major operation was ongoing. The RPF soldiers all had fresh uniforms and expensive Motorola phones and radios. The three obtained a quick meeting with a snarly, arrogant major from military intelligence, who had a real command presence. He had no time for polite conversation. Yes, he knew they had a *laissez-passer*,

but nobody goes into the area of the operation. Gersony pointed out Kagame's name at the bottom of the letter. The major said: "I'll let you in. But don't be a reporter. Things happen to reporters here."

They drove further inside Kibungo.

It was all deserted, no civilians; "there were more people in the middle of the Gobi Desert," Gersony thought. But there were quite a few military outposts: again, soldiers with neat uniforms and expensive Motorola radios. There was no sense of a looming battle or engagement with another army. The province was truly pacified. The RPF was in complete control.

Once in a great while they saw an old man or old woman sticking his or her head out from behind a tree or hut. Gersony interviewed them deep in the bush, disobeying the order not to be a reporter. They told him about mass killings. Cindy and Tony did house counts: there was nobody in the houses. They saw what appeared to be a brick schoolhouse surrounded by about half a dozen fat, greasy dogs. The smell was overpowering; it had even seeped into their car. Bob went inside the small building. Stacked up against all the walls, with hands tied behind their backs in kneeling positions, were fresh human bodies, all executed within the past few days: thus the smell.

On one wall, smeared in red, presumably blood, Gersony read:

"Hutu can [sic] home to die."

He interviewed a man on the road, who told him:

"The army is killing everybody they can find."

Further down the road was a Catholic church. Strewn throughout the churchyard were bodies, but these were shriveled and desiccated, and thus emitted no smell. Inside, in the pews, they counted sixty more bodies in the same condition. These people had been dead for some months: victims of the original genocide. Here there were no dogs prowling about. They could easily tell the difference between the bodies in the church and the bodies in the school building. The two scenes told the story of Butare and Kibungo.

They were driving down a dirt road in Kibungo when they came upon a surreal sight: a long line of stocky Hutu men in bright pink medical scrubs, carrying picks and shovels, being force-marched by

Tutsi RPF soldiers with assault rifles at the front and the rear of the line. They stopped the U.N. car to shake hands with the RPF soldiers, in order to show deference. Later they saw another such column, and then another. Finally they slowed the U.N. car to a crawl and asked one of the men in the middle of the column, far from the soldiers at the front and back, "What are you all doing?"

"We're burying fresh bodies."

Another day they passed large groups of men in pink scrubs digging long pits. The armed RPF soldiers around them looked relaxed, none in defensive positions. There were evidently no Hutu militias anymore to guard against. But they did occasionally encounter RPF troops packed into the backs of trucks screaming and chanting. Their excited mien was unlike the other soldiers that they had seen.

They spent eight days traveling about southern Rwanda, sleeping at night in abandoned homes.

Gersony became terrified of what he knew, of what he had accumulated in his notebooks the past few weeks, and the possibility of having his notebooks confiscated; or of being arrested, or worse, by the RPF. The fact that he was protected by his U.N. status did not alleviate his paranoia.

He was overcome with relief as their car crossed the Akagera River bridge into Tanzania on August 30, 1994. They passed through a drier, more open landscape and soon arrived at the vast refugee camp of Ngara. They headed for the UNHCR headquarters there, with its clean latrines, hot showers, mouthwatering buffets, and general ambience of glamping. They slept on army cots, a luxury after Butare and Kibungo, despite the bedbugs. Cindy and Tony relaxed, drinking Primus beer. Bob shared their findings with the local UNHCR officials. They told him that all the evidence about large-scale killings by the new Tutsi regime that they had gathered from the refugees there was identical to his, and that they were fishing dozens of bodies with machete and gunshot wounds out of the river daily. He conducted interviews with randomly selected refugees in Ngara and its satellite camps for several days.

By this time they had conducted over two hundred one-on-one

interviews, and one hundred one-on-two-or-three interviews at ninety-one locations, including nine refugee camps in three counties. Within Rwanda they had covered 41 of 145 communes, and gathered some material from 10 others, totaling about a third of those in the country.¹⁰ The stories they had heard were corroborating each other. While those in the refugee camps might have been influenced by the propaganda of Hutu genocidalists, their stories, nevertheless, tracked with those of the many more people he interviewed inside Rwanda itself. Moreover, UNHCR workers in the refugee camps had been hearing the same stories from refugees just as they stumbled across the border, before they could be influenced by the genocidalists.

GerSONY knew he had to get back to Geneva and brief Mrs. Ogata about what was going on. His plan was to drive for several days southeast across Tanzania, from Ngara to the capital of Dar es Salaam, where the three of them could fly back to Geneva. He was frightened of reentering Rwanda. He called Gerald Walzer on the UNHCR satellite phone. Afraid of being monitored, he casually mentioned to Walzer that he had something important to tell him. Walzer insisted that they return first to Kigali, only four hours away to the northwest, so as not to insult their Rwandan hosts.

So they returned to Kigali, spent one night there, said their good-byes, and flew to Nairobi with all the notebooks. For GerSONY, every minute back in Rwanda was nerve-racking. In Nairobi they camped out in a luxury hotel for a week, organizing and analyzing all the interviews, which GerSONY typed up, working all day, every day they were there, internalizing the results of his reporting through the typing process, and going out periodically for BLT sandwiches.

"I had previously hated Nairobi," Cindy explains. "I always found it congested and unfriendly. But coming out of Rwanda with all of its horrors, Nairobi was like paradise, a place where we could comfortably work."

The more than three hundred accounts of the interviewees told the following story:

The RPF had met little resistance at first, as it wheeled its army through Rwanda, so that the countryside was occupied by relatively friendly Tutsi soldiers with Hutus among them. Weeks went by. These soldiers were replaced by others: all Tutsis, the kill units, the soldiers that GerSONY had observed chanting and screaming from the backs of trucks; their legs draped over the sides.

They would call people to meetings: something common in such a hierarchical and well-organized society. The soldiers would deploy in a semicircle, open fire, and slaughter everyone; or sometimes order people into a church and set the building on fire with the help of grenades; or separate people into groups and kill them with machetes in the bush. They would hunt down escapees in the swamps and banana plantations. The army then went from village to village conducting mop-up operations. Machetes were preferred because they were silent. All of the murders were done by uniformed RPF soldiers.

May and June were the big kill months, before the population widely understood what was happening and hid or escaped over the borders. One hundred percent of the victims were Hutus. The original genocide against the Tutsis had begun in early April and lasted through the end of June, so this second mass killing occurred both in the immediate aftermath and also somewhat parallel to the genocide.

GerSONY estimated that May and June saw a minimum of 20,000 murders of Hutus in Butare and Kibungo, with a minimum of 10,000 in July and August. In sum, the Tutsi RPF committed a minimum of 30,000 murders in order to create a Hutu-free strategic rear base in the south and southeast of the country: to counter the genocidal center of gravity for the Hutus in the west and over the border in Zaire.

Despite the safety and luxury of Nairobi, GerSONY was in a foul mood during the whole week there. He admits, "I was ungrateful, very unpleasant with Cindy and Tony. I was always snapping at them." Cindy remembers: "When Bob gets worried and nervous, he lashes out. It was the worst I've ever seen his behavior in more than twenty-five

years of marriage. All he did was question the results, blaming Tony and me. But he couldn't escape from the evidence we had compiled."

Though the conclusions of the research were no real surprise to him, for the first time he was faced with the documented reality of it all. In the back of his mind he had kept hoping that the accounts would add up to a more muddled outcome: revenge killings that had gotten way out of hand. But here in the neutral, antiseptic environment of a Nairobi luxury hotel, the awfulness of his predicament nakedly stared him in the face.

"I knew no good would come of this for me," he says, still full of intensity. It was hardly the truth he wanted to share with the world. "There was this genocide in which close to a million people had been murdered only weeks and months ago and the West had done nothing to stop it, so that the immensity of the guilt was overpowering. The Hutus were the Nazis and the Tutsis were the Jews in the minds of concerned and influential people in the outside world. And now I'm the one bringing them news that the very victims of the genocide were killing the perpetrators of it, on a large scale, in an organized and premeditated way. No one would make the distinction between the RPF and the innocent Tutsis, I knew. The messenger of this news would be reputationally ruined, I thought. No one is going to be happy to get this information. I knew our report was going to be attacked and taken apart," he continues, "and that I would be the one assailed personally: since I am accusing the Tutsis of mass murder right after a genocide against them. It doesn't get any worse than that. I have always made the distinction between the mass murder of tens of thousands of people and the genocide of hundreds of thousands. But no one attacking me will make that distinction. I really thought this was going to be the end of my career."

In bed at night he was plagued by racing thoughts. He took an extra Xanax, a prescribed medication against anxiety, which he had been taking since the mid-1980s.

He arrived at the Ramada Renaissance Hotel in Geneva healthy but in psychological turmoil. Pierre Gassmann came over the first

night for drinks with him, Cindy, and Tony in the hotel bar. Gersony, sipping juice, poured his heart out to Pierre. Pierre will never forget the meeting. "Bob was a complete wreck, paranoid, biting his fingernails. I simply told him: 'All you can do is give them the facts.'"

The meeting with Mrs. Ogata took place September 12, 1994. Beside her around a small table in the corner of her vast office were Gerald Walzer, the deputy high commissioner; François Fouinat, her chief of staff; Kamel Morjane, UNHCR head of Africa; and three other officials.¹¹ Gersony spoke in dense detail, aided by a frayed, dirt-stained, cruddy map of Rwanda: a real map. He began with his positive impressions of Ruhengeri in northwestern Rwanda, in order to build credibility, and then as he narrated his travels around to the south and southeast, his briefing gradually turned darker. After three hours he still hadn't finished. A second meeting of the same group was scheduled for the next day. At the end of the second briefing, he made clear the distinction between the genocide of the Tutsis and the mass killings of the Hutus that followed soon after.

He was in no way diminishing the magnitude of the former crime because of the latter, he said.

Mrs. Ogata spoke.

She said she would immediately halt organized repatriations of Hutus to Rwanda from neighboring countries. "Mr. Gersony, you've done a great job, but this problem goes higher than me." She then asked him to brief Kofi Annan, the U.N. undersecretary-general for peacekeeping, a Ghanaian, and more importantly a leading candidate to be the next U.N. secretary-general.

But before he left the room, Mrs. Ogata, explaining that she had nothing on paper regarding this staggering report, asked Gersony for a copy of his briefing notes. He hesitated, then handed them to her reluctantly. His notes were full of all sorts of points of emphasis and personal comments, as these things often are. *She has given me her trust and so I will give her mine*, he thought. "Don't worry, I'm putting your notes in my safe, no one will see them," she said.¹²

With Cindy and Tony flying back to Nicaragua, Gersony next trav-

eled to London, where Kofi Annan was at the moment. Gerald Walzer accompanied him there for the sake of support from the head office.

The two-hour meeting with Annan on September 14, at a hotel near Heathrow airport, went well. After all, Gersony had been recommended by *the house*. Annan didn't appear particularly surprised or even perturbed by what Gersony had to say. Annan's own "moral charisma," in the words of one journalist, emanated from his self-awareness of the United Nations' own limitations in such a tragic world,¹³ though this very attribute could also make him a fatalist. At any rate, Annan already seemed to be strategizing about how to handle the information Gersony had given him. Annan had to be very troubled at this moment, or he should have been. It was Annan, who as head of U.N. peacekeeping, was in the main bureaucratically responsible "for assuring that the UN Mission to Rwanda remained small and weak," and thus did not do nearly enough to prevent the genocide of the Tutsis.¹⁴ Redemption for Annan in conventional terms had to mean standing up for the new Tutsi government. But here was this American contractor telling him that the new Tutsi leaders were themselves guilty of killing a large number of people.

Both the United Nations and the Americans were backing Kagame's new government in the face of no other alternative, and Annan was also Washington's emerging candidate to be the next U.N. secretary-general. However, by this time Mrs. Ogata had sent to him and other top U.N. officials cables that had come from UNHCR's own field offices at refugee camps in Tanzania and elsewhere, which corroborated Gersony's findings. Thus, Annan asked Gersony to immediately brief U.N. Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali's inner circle in New York.

Gersony told officials at U.N. headquarters in New York that he needed several hours for the briefing. There was no pushback. The meeting took place September 16, 1994. It was a Friday, he remembers. The meeting was chaired by Marrack Goulding, the U.N. undersecretary-general for political affairs, a truly formidable British presence in U.N. circles who apologized to Gersony for the absence

of Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, who was away in Japan. Goulding sat opposite Gersony. Packing the table on all sides were six others, including the legendary Algerian negotiator Lakhdar Brahimi; the Peruvian diplomat and Boutros-Ghali's senior political adviser, Alvaro de Soto; and the Tunisian diplomat Hédi Annabi.¹⁵

Gersony, with the aid of his frayed map, spoke for two hours without interruption. At the end, Hédi Annabi, who would later be killed in an earthquake in Haiti, said, "Nothing Mr. Gersony has said surprises me. I have heard these kinds of reports." There were no challenges, just requests for clarification. There was never a question of *whether*, only a question of the protocol for taking action. Goulding immediately wrote to Boutros-Ghali that Gersony would be instructed to return to Rwanda to brief its effective leader, Paul Kagame. Without explicitly endorsing Gersony's findings, the United Nations would use his report to demand "that if such killings are indeed taking place, they be immediately stopped."¹⁶

Kofi Annan, who was in Burundi by this time, would be diverted to Rwanda in order to accompany Gersony to the meeting with Kagame. The United Nations was playing it straight at this point in the Rwanda crisis. But as with many international crises, the United Nations was not really in control of the policy to the extent that the United States was.

Before the meeting ended, Gersony asked Goulding's permission to brief the USAID administrator Brian Atwood in Washington, merely as a courtesy since it had been Atwood who originally initiated his reporting trip to Rwanda. Goulding consented. Gersony called Atwood to ask if he could meet alone with him the very next morning. Atwood agreed.

Though it was a quiet Saturday morning, Atwood ambushed him. While Atwood remembers meeting first alone with Gersony, Gersony remembers entering Atwood's large, intimidating office and being met by a large group. Gersony had a quick decision to make: Should he give them all the long, no-holds-barred brief? He decided he had no choice.

At the meeting were eight others besides Atwood, including the

deputy USAID administrator, Carol Lancaster; George Moose, the assistant secretary of state for Africa; and Donald Steinberg, the director for Africa at the National Security Council.¹⁷ This group's reaction to Gersony's brief was quite different from that at the United Nations the day before. Here no one was pleased with Gersony. The reason: Kagame was more of an American-supported ruler than a United Nations one. The United States, having failed to take action to prevent the original genocide against the Tutsis, now embraced the new Tutsi regime as a means of moral self-absolution; moreover, Kagame was a close ally of Uganda's Yoweri Museveni, another U.S. client. Gersony was being driven crazy by the constant need of American officials to simplify a complex situation and put into neat semantic categories what was going on. George Moose in particular, according to Gersony, delivered a rambling, semi-coherent monologue, criticizing minor aspects of the brief.

Gersony rolled his eyes, and was blunt: "I don't see your point."

Gersony longed for the days when Chet Crocker and Hank Cohen had held that same job in the Reagan and elder Bush administrations.

But there was a lot more going on than that. Gersony, for all his attributes (and precisely because of his attributes), could also be, in the words of a colleague, "annoying, persistent, and somewhat overpowering." Moreover, "it was the very nature of his work that required a 'trust me' element. For there was always the possibility that he didn't get it all right." This came to a head in Rwanda, where an early presumption of absolute truth had existed that Gersony exploded with his methodology. And yet as impressive as his methodology was, being a methodology that dealt with human experience in the midst of war and chaos, he was dealing with Shakespearean elements that even the best methodology could not quite capture.

Maybe some of his interviewees had lied to him; maybe some were genuinely confused. He clearly got the big picture right, but beyond that, there could have been nuances that he missed. It's possible that he also didn't have the full story.

"A lot of people lost it over Rwanda. Rwanda led to a lot of soul-

searching, which often results in bad analysis," one State Department official says.

Margaret McKelvey, a veteran of the Africa desk at the refugee bureau, adds: "The skepticism about Bob's analysis was somewhat ironic. Six months earlier Kagame's RPF had been our enemy, its representatives not even allowed to enter the State Department building. Now, after the Hutu-led genocide, the RPF went suddenly from being bad guys to being heroes. So the RPF was the enemy until they weren't. But Gersony brought us back to reality about the RPF."

In any case, Arlene Render, office director of central African affairs in the State Department, sent two cables to all U.S. embassies the following week about Gersony's Saturday morning briefing, stating that "the team found that systematic killings by the RPA [RPF] were taking place . . . and the team will inquire what steps Kagame plans to take to halt these abuses." The entire matter, the cable said, would be taken to the U.N. Security Council.¹⁸

Gersony, thoroughly tense and exhausted, having gotten little rest since he had originally left for Africa from Pierre Gassmann's French villa two months earlier, flew back to New York and then on to Nairobi, where he met up with Kofi Annan and Kamel Morjane, the very sympathetic Tunisian deputy to Mrs. Ogata. From Nairobi, the three flew to Kigali, a place that Gersony now dreaded, where he was to deliver the same briefing of several hours' duration to one hostile audience after another. It was September 20, 1994.¹⁹

The first such briefing he gave at Annan's insistence was to Shahrar Khan, Boutros-Ghali's special representative to Rwanda and a former Pakistani foreign secretary. Also in the room was Major General Guy Tousignant, the latest in a line of French-Canadian officers who had led UNAMIR, or the United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda.²⁰ Both Khan and Tousignant were uncomfortable with Gersony's findings, which put them on the spot. In such a small country, how could they not have known what was going on? But Gersony was blunt with them, telling his audience exactly what he had told every audience thus far:

"I stake my twenty-five-year reputation on my conclusions which I recognize are diametrically opposite to assumptions made by U.N. and other observers on the ground here."²¹

Major General Tousignant simply remarked when Gersony had finished: "Now I understand why the Rwandan government wouldn't let UNAMIR into Kibungo."²²

Paul Kagame was at this time in South Africa meeting with the recently elected Nelson Mandela. In fact, Kagame might actually have extended his visit there by a day or two in order to avoid seeing Annan and Gersony. Thus, Gersony ended up briefing Faustin Twagiramungu, the figurehead Hutu prime minister in the Tutsi-controlled state. At the rectangular table Twagiramungu sat at one end and Gersony at the other. Annan and Morjane sat on the side closer to the prime minister. The room was packed with RPF military intelligence figures and soldiers who spoke English: all allies of English-speaking Uganda's Yoweri Museveni. Twagiramungu was probably the only Hutu in the room, and he also spoke French. The scene was testimony to the political distance that this former Francophone colony had traveled away from its Belgian and French roots.

Gersony felt like he was at the wrong end of a firing squad.

As with all his briefings, Gersony had his map and began with the positive developments in Ruhengeri that he had observed at the start of his field trip and his conflicted appraisal of Gisenyi, which helped build credibility for a comprehensive, balanced analysis. After all, no one at this date had randomly interviewed as many people in as many locations as he had. Ninety minutes later, after he finished, there was a moment of quiet.

The prime minister said: "I myself am a Hutu and I don't believe these reports are true." But he then proceeded to ask softball questions. What emerged was a non-denial denial of what Gersony's research showed. Twagiramungu would flee Rwanda into exile in Belgium the following year.²³ Cutting off the prime minister, a member of the Tutsi military intelligence team asked Gersony:

"How can you be sure the people you interviewed were Hutus?"

"What would hundreds of Tutsie selected randomly and inter-

viewed alone in different locations, all pretend to be Hutus and then give false information?"

The prime minister asked: "How did you arrive at the figure of thirty thousand killed?"

Indicating the figure was "an order to magnitude," Gersony explained his methodology. Crucially, the killings were large-scale and systematic.

At the end, Annan privately signaled to Gersony some concern over the numbers question.

Kamel Morjane told Gersony, "You did fine."

Next, Gersony went to the home of Roman Urasa, head of the UNHCR office in Kigali, to brief him. Urasa told him at the end, "You've made our life very difficult." The truth seemed to affect Urasa less than the political complications that the truth would cause for the local office. Gersony was by now getting reactions from two types of people: the *protection*-oriented officials, who concentrated on the truth and its implications for innocents still at the mercy of the RPF; and the *politically* oriented officials, who jumped immediately to what it meant for their own positions, and those of their governments and organizations.

The U.S. ambassador to Rwanda, David Rawson, had helped Gersony enormously and heaped praise on him during the Mozambique and Somalia episodes of his life. But Rawson was now a different man: he must have been because of what he had witnessed. The son of medical missionaries in the region, he had grown up a speaker of Kinyarwanda. He was one of the State Department's exemplary Africa hands, akin to the Arabists and China hands of old. But because he had played a significant role in the diplomatic process that forced political concessions on the Hutus, just prior to the genocide they committed against the Tutsis—and because he had personally witnessed the piles of bodies along the roadsides—Rawson may have been seeking atonement by championing the new Tutsi regime. At the end of the Rwanda tragedy, Rawson would seem to have no friends, only detractors. Gersony, who was no stranger to personal

business recognized the humanit

Rawson insisted on seeing Gersony alone, without any other embassy officers present. Gersony was very wary, afraid of a "he said, she said" report of their meeting. After listening to Gersony and praising him for his work elsewhere in Africa, Rawson suggested that the Hutus he had interviewed may have been victims of a collective hallucination.

"We interviewed hundreds at random in ninety-one locations in several countries. Are you saying they all had the same hallucination?" Gersony asked him.

A quarter century later Rawson recalls to me:

"While I thought Gersony's sampling technique somehow captured the story of Somalia's nomadic clansmen, who are independent and difficult to pin down, I wondered if his sampling technique worked in Rwanda with its dense population, and history of outward conformity to expected behavior. In Rwanda, stories quickly spread, and became internalized and repeated as one's own."

Gersony shoots back:

"Rawson had no problem with our sampling technique in northern Rwanda—Ruhengeri and Gisenyi—where he liked the results: the sampling technique in his mind was only flawed in southern and eastern Rwanda—Butare and Kibungo—where he didn't like the results."

Rawson may have been less than candid with Gersony when they met in Kigali in 1994. It was late September and the previous month, August 5 to be exact, he had been one of those officials receiving a secret cable from Frederick Ehrenreich of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, which stated:

Despite RPF professions of support for human rights, it will take "justice" into its own hands . . . There have been numerous recent reports of systematic killings of Hutus by the RPF . . . The continuing flow of thousands of refugees into Tanzania suggests that significant human rights violations are occurring in eastern Rwanda, an area which has been under

More significantly, on August 11, Rawson's ambassadorial colleague in Burundi, Robert Krueger, fired off a secret five-alarm cable mentioning a "conscious [RPF] policy of terrifying Hutus in southern Rwanda, encouraging their exile. . . ." Krueger wrote of "intentional cruelty" of the RPF, and added:

There are repeated reports . . . made by Hutu refugees from Rwanda that: after having occupied a certain area, the RPF had called together a "peace meeting" at which many men were taken away who subsequently disappeared. At times it is said that all participants at such meetings, including women and children, have been liquidated.²⁵

Then on August 17, Rawson met with Kagame himself and raised the issue of Hutus fleeing south into Burundi and Tanzania. When all this is taken into account, Rawson's skeptical reaction to Gersony's briefing appears somewhat inexplicable.²⁶ But in another sense it doesn't. As Rawson told a colleague who had raised the issue of RPF human rights abuses: "There is no path out of this mess except by helping the Rwandan RPF government," even as he knew that the RPF couldn't stand him, as they associated him with the diplomatic context that had led to the original genocide against the Tutsis.

Undeterred, yet full of fatigue and a growing anxiety, the next day Gersony delivered yet another multihour briefing, this time to Seth Sendashonga, Kagame's interior minister, a Hutu. At the conclusion, Sendashonga said, "I am already aware of all these killings. I have sent many letters to the vice president [Kagame] and haven't gotten an answer. Your report is going to be a great help to me." The following year Sendashonga fled into exile in Kenya after criticizing Kagame. In 1998, the RPF assassinated him in Nairobi.²⁷ Before he was murdered, Sendashonga would tell the Africa expert Gérard Prunier that the repercussions of Gersony's reporting had stopped the RPF killing machine in Rwanda's south and southeast. (This would be confirmed years later by another scholar, writing that the

factors, led the RPF to order soldiers to stop killing civilians after late September.)²⁸

Following Sendashonga, Gersony, accompanied by Kamel Morjane, briefed Kagame's chief of staff, Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Rwigamba.

"Are you saying that these murders have been systematic?" Lieutenant Colonel Rwigamba asked Gersony.

"Yes, they could not have occurred without senior officials of the army knowing," Gersony replied.

General Maurice Baril, the military adviser to the U.N. secretary-general, was also in the room. He remembers how "livid" Colonel Rwigamba became at Gersony's remark. "The atmosphere was tense, with armed guards at the door," says Baril. Speaking truth to power was not a mere phrase to Gersony. At this point he began to really worry about his safety. But Kamel Morjane didn't blink.

Gersony stumbled back to the UNHCR office, out of energy. Urasa wasn't there. So he just sat alone, enjoying a moment of downtime. Then who walks in? Ambassador Rawson, along with Prudence Bushnell, a deputy assistant secretary of state for Africa ("the DAS" in Washington bureaucratic lingo), and Timothy Wirth, the former Democratic senator from Colorado and now the undersecretary of state for democracy and global affairs. Rawson had a deer-in-the-headlights look upon seeing Gersony. Gersony had the presence of mind to ask the three, focusing on Bushnell and Wirth, if they would like a briefing. Rawson hesitated but Bushnell and Wirth both said yes, the latter carefully so. A former politician and smooth operator, Wirth may have quickly calculated that he should never be on record as refusing such an important brief. In fact, Gersony's report was a main purpose of Wirth's trip to Africa.

So Gersony performed yet again, with his map, and beginning with the good news from Ruhengeri in order to disarm them. Indeed, as he told this and every previous audience, Ruhengeri constituted incontrovertible proof that where the RPF permitted safe return and did not conduct mass killings, Hutu refugees streamed back into Rwanda in the tens of thousands. But it would be a mistake to

in Rwanda because of the actions of Kagame's troops in more strategic areas, to which both the United States and the United Nations were turning a blind eye.

Gersony directed his eyes throughout to the DAS, Pru Bushnell, a sparkling, intelligent, high-church WASP. Her father had been a career Foreign Service officer and she was viewed by some as the real brains and power in the Africa bureau.²⁹ When Gersony finished talking, Wirth thanked him but was noncommittal. Bushnell knew, however, that everything Gersony said was true. This became apparent in a carefully worded confidential cable that the embassy sent out immediately afterward, on September 23, which also included Wirth's assessment that there was "potential for serious damage to international support" for the new Rwandan government on account of Gersony's report, which "could greatly complicate" American diplomatic efforts.³⁰

Indeed, three weeks later in Washington, Wirth would personally express doubts about Gersony's reporting to a group of NGOs. Wirth, according to several people involved with the issue, was still acting like a senator, hard-charging for a policy of repatriation, which meant consciously undermining the results of Gersony's research. Sheppie Abramowitz, representing the International Rescue Committee, would fire back at Wirth: "Some of us have known Gersony for years and we take his reporting seriously."

Wirth and ultimately the State Department would publicly have none of it, even as privately they used Gersony's fieldwork to bring pressure on Kagame.

Translation: The United States was behind the new Tutsi government in order to stabilize Rwanda and to atone for its own failure to prevent the genocide against the Tutsis. There appeared to be simply no practical alternative to Kagame's RPF regime at this point. After all, who else was going to rule Rwanda if not Kagame? Kagame, it must now be said, went on to become an exemplary modernizing dictator, accomplishing wonders with the economy, infrastructure,

summer uniform and sat down beside him. General Baril, after heading UNAMIR, had become a military adviser to Boutros-Ghali and was often at U.N. meetings with Gersony, but usually stayed quiet.

"I know you've been telling the truth," Baril said in his French-Canadian accent. "I was getting constant reports back in 1993 that the RPF in areas it controlled in northern Rwanda was acting identical as you describe. I should not worry, Bob. We all know you've done a great job."

Decades later, Baril would reiterate to me that "it was difficult for the rest of the world to believe the truth: that Kagame and his leadership could allow such horrors after what had happened from April to July 1994."

Gersony flew out the next day. With him at the airport VIP lounge in Kigali were Kofi Annan, Kamel Morjane, and Shahryar Khan. Annan called him over to a huddle with Khan.

"There's going to be a one-day [Rwandan] government investigation of what has been happening" in the southeast, Annan told him.

Gersony called it a "whitewash." Officials would drive out in a convoy of RPF vehicles, return the same night, and discredit him.³¹

Annan snapped angrily:

"You're lucky there's going to be an investigation at all!"

"It's a sham."

"That is not your concern!"

"Okay," Gersony meekly answered.

Gersony wandered off alone next to a panoramic window and curled up into a Rodin thinker's position, utterly dejected. According to Gersony, Annan then came over and sat beside him, saying in his trademark mellow, patrician voice:

"Bob, I'm very sorry I snapped at you. You did the right thing. You told the truth, and I want you to continue doing that. Let me worry about the rest."³²

Annan understood the politics of the situation in a way that Gersony, who took everything so personally, did not. Annan knew that merely by conducting an investigation, however phony, the Rwandan government was conceding a point to the United Nations and to Ger-

sony go on to lead a nation out of conflict and underdevelopment, history shows. But nobody dealing with Rwanda knew that then. Moreover, Gersony had upset this whole decision-making process and confused the narrative. He had, merely by methodically listening to people and writing down what they told him, inserted a moral complication into a *raison d'état*.

"The last thing the donor countries and the United States wanted to hear at this juncture was that the victims of the genocide were taking large-scale, systematic retribution against the perceived perpetrators," said an international official. "They preferred a morally black-and-white situation." Moreover, since the RPF leaders were all English speakers and impressive as individuals, "some American officials in particular just ate it all up."

Pru Bushnell, looking back from a vantage point of twenty-five years, says that "Bob Gersony, like others in the aftermath of the Cold War, was intent on making human rights into a national security issue, whether or not it complicated things for us."

On his last night in Kigali before flying home, Gersony was dragged to a reception by Kamel Morjane at the residence of Shahryar Khan, Boutros-Ghali's special representative in country, someone Gersony had instantly disliked and who he felt had been blindsided by his report. The reception was in honor of Kofi Annan, who everyone assumed would be the next U.N. secretary-general. Gersony's fears and hatreds of these occasions proved accurate. In the house filled with United Nations and Rwandan government officials, no one wanted to talk to him, or even to be seen in his company. He wandered outside to the garden and sat down at the top of three flagstone steps alone: weary, upset, and scared for the security of his career, intending to take an extra dose of Xanax before bed. All along he knew intellectually that the evidence he and his team had accumulated would prove to be his undoing, but it was at this moment, with everyone else enjoying themselves over drinks inside, that the full force of it hit him emotionally on this cool, high-altitude tropical night.

Suddenly, General Maurice Baril came over in his Canadian army

sony. In other words, the RPF government had been put on notice. And without endorsing Gersony's findings, Annan was already putting pressure on Kagame's regime to stop the killings.³³ Again, given how, over the decades, Kagame has both stabilized and economically developed Rwanda, albeit in an authoritarian fashion, one might defend the United Nations policy at the time as the wiser course to take. Simply because Gersony's report was true did not mean that anyone was under any obligation to publicly praise him. The point was only to use his report toward a good purpose.

At the end of September, Mrs. Ogata asked Gersony to write a long memo, a synopsis for her file only, of his investigation and the results, to "be treated as confidential."³⁴ The result was a drab yet succinct fourteen-page account, with the bureaucratic title of "Summary of UNHCR Presentation Before Commission of Experts: 10 October 1994; Prospects for Early Repatriation of Rwandan Refugees Currently in Burundi, Tanzania and Zaire."³⁵ It lacked the depth and complexity of his much longer published reports on Uganda, Mozambique, and elsewhere; or of the reports he was later to write about such subjects as the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda and the Maoist revolt in Nepal. Yet precisely because his Rwanda report was never released by the United Nations, it attained a legendary aura over time as "the so-called Gersony report," which many in the human rights community tried to get their hands on and henceforth proclaimed had been suppressed. Some even denied it ever existed, yet spoke about it in conspiratorial terms as if it did.³⁶

All in all, it was Gersony's "biggest play," in Gene Dewey's recollection of Gersony's career.³⁷

Finally there is the case of that French Africa expert, Gérard Prunier, with whom I began this chapter.

In the fall of 1994, Prunier started hearing of a certain "Gersony report" that nobody had as yet seen, which only lent more power and mystery to it. Bizarre rumors abounded among journalists and the human rights community regarding its contents and its author.

"When I heard that this so-called Gersony report attributed mass killings of Hutus to the [Tutsi-dominated] RPF, I immediately assumed French army manipulation in order to develop a pretext to topple the RPF, given the French army's historic support of the Hutus. 'Get me this report,' I told people." Going on, Prunier recalls, "Gersony became in my mind some ghost manipulated by French military extremists who only wanted to restart a war: a son of a bitch who was a disinformation tool of both the French security services and the CIA." Prunier writes in his book *The Rwanda Crisis*, which would be published the next year, that the Gersony report, which he had not seen, nevertheless "tended to obscure rather than clarify the problem," and that "there must be strong doubts about its reliability."³⁸

It soon dawned on Prunier, however, that he already knew Gersony intellectually through the latter's study of five years earlier, "Why Somalis Flee," which Prunier had employed in the footnotes of his own research on the Horn of Africa. So he was at least prepared to listen to him. Through a mutual friend, Prunier and Gersony were able to meet at Gersony's New York City apartment in late 1995. In the interim nothing had happened to allay Prunier's suspicions of Gersony because Gersony himself had not been permitted by the United Nations to speak publicly. For after he returned from Rwanda, Gersony had gone immediately back to Nicaragua, and then on to other assignments in the West Bank, Bosnia, and elsewhere. And as for Prunier, he had not followed completely the vindications of Gersony that had begun to appear in the English-language press.³⁹

Prunier remembers a tiny apartment with a distinctive radical-bohemian air. This prepared him further to find a naïve and out-of-his-depth human instrument of larger forces. His first impression of Gersony-in-the-flesh was of "a total Anglo-Saxon, very rigid and grounded, in a good way, like an accountant." Given the surroundings, Prunier couldn't quite place him. "But within a few minutes I saw that he was honest and had no hidden agenda."

As Gersony began to talk, first about his methodology, then about what he had found in Ruhengeri, Gisenyi, Butare, Kibungo, and the refugee camps across the border, and how he had originally been a

supporter of the RPF (just like Prunier), and how he had, step by step, come to his conclusions, Prunier got "this horrible, nauseous feeling" that he and everyone else writing and talking in New York, Washington, and Paris had been wrong about the RPF up until that moment. For it turned out that "the good guys were really quite bad guys."

In a rush of revelation, Prunier went from disdain to compassion for Gersony, as he saw how full of tension the real Gersony—now sitting a few feet away from him—actually was: he could see vividly how Gersony had been psychologically crushed by the suave and intimidating politics of top U.N. operators swirling around him, only because he was simply being honest, and what he had to say was so shocking and inconvenient to the world's political elite. Gersony was a blunt, truthful, very nervous man among these sly, high-class operators, educated at the best schools, on the diplomatic cocktail circuit.⁴⁰

Prunier, exactly like Gersony, had desperately wanted to find better people on the victims' side. Prunier, defending Gersony later on, would write in 1997 that Gersony "was shocked at his own findings."⁴¹ Prunier would also subsequently admit that it "was my sympathy for the RPF and my refusal at the time to believe" this organization "could be cold-bloodedly killing people" that blinded him to the dreadful truth that Gersony had uncovered.⁴²

It was all something that the liberal imagination, with its belief in the basic goodness of humankind, had difficulty contending with. Once it was proven that both sides were capable of mass killing (even if one side had killed many times more people than the other), then one confronted the horror of there being something intractable in the very human landscape itself, with all the determinism and essentialism that such thoughts bring to bear. Gersony was neither a determinist nor an essentialist: he never succumbed to fate and he didn't stereotype people. He could not have done what he did over the decades if he were such a person. His personal bible had always been André Schwarz-Bart's *The Last of the Just*. But he did have a great reverence for facts, unlike some officials at the State Department and

the United Nations, who did not want him to write up and publish his report; who, indeed, would have found it more convenient had his research never come to light in the first place.

"Bob and I have a great respect for the factual truth. The world is not just an interpretation or a place for competing narratives. That is our fight," Prunier says.

- 7 One example of news coverage of the project appeared in *The New York Times*, written by Shirley Christian: "Back Home, Miskitos Can Sing Again, but Face Daunting Job of Rebuilding," April 3, 1992.
- 8 V. S. Naipaul, *A Bend in the River* (London: Penguin, 1979), p. 63.
- 9 See the El Salvador section of chapter 3.
- 10 Reuters, "Liberia Troops Accused of Massacre in Church," *New York Times*, July 31, 1990.
- 11 "Executive Summary: The Carter Camp Massacre; Results of an Investigation by the Panel of Inquiry, Appointed by the Secretary General into the Massacre Near Harbel, Liberia on the Night of June 5/6, 1993." Panel Members: The Honorable S. Amos Wako, chairman; Robert Gersony, member; Ambassador Mahmoud Kassem, member; Secretariat: Gianni Magazzeni. September 10, 1993.
- 12 William Powers, *Blue Clay People: Seasons on Africa's Fragile Edge* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2005), pp. 15–16.
- 13 "Executive Summary: The Carter Camp Massacre."
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 *Ibid.*
- 16 "Full Report: Liberia: Panel of Inquiry Appointed by U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The Carter Camp Massacre," pp. 57–58.
- 17 Associated Press, "UN Blames Liberian Army Troops for Massacre," *New York Times*, September 20, 1993. "Liberian Massacre Blamed on Army," *Washington Post*, September 18, 1993.

Chapter 11. Rwanda, 1994

- 1 Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995 and 1997), pp. xi–xii and 2–3.
- 2 *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 35, 39, 46, and 61. Moreover, Philip Gourevitch writes that in the precolonial era, "The regime was essentially feudal: Tutsi elites were aristocrats; Hutus were vassals." Later on, in the colonial period, "Tutsi elites were given nearly unlimited power to exploit Hutus' labor and levy taxes against them." *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* (New York: Picador, 1998), pp. 49 and 56.
- 3 Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families*, pp. 64–65.
- 4 Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, pp. 111–12, 140, and 226–27.
- 5 Pentagon Document Number 194/16345, May 5, 1994.
- 6 Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, pp. 237–38, 265, and 312–13.
- 7 Blaine Harden, "At 81, Japan's Outspoken Force for the World's Poor," *Washington Post*, September 30, 2008.
- 8 Sadako Ogata, *The Turbulent Decade: Confronting the Refugee Crises of the 1990s* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005), p. 190.
- 9 Ambassador Robert and Kathleen Tobin Krueger, *From Bloodshed to Hope in Burundi: Our Embassy Years During Genocide* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), p. 109.
- 10 Ogata, *The Turbulent Decade*, pp. 190–91.
- 11 They were Augustin Mahiga, Leonardo Franco, and Sanda Kimbimi.
- 12 See Ogata, *The Turbulent Decade*, pp. 190–95, for a brief description of the high commissioner's account of Gersony's work, which she said "forced a necessary policy review for UNHCR."

- 13 James Traub, "Kofi Annan's Tragic Idealism," *New York Times*, August 20, 2018.
- 14 Stephen Kinzer, *A Thousand Hills: Rwanda's Rebirth and the Man Who Dreamed It* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), p. 270.
- 15 The others were Iqbal Riza, Ismat Kittani, and Hans Correll.
- 16 Cable from Marrack Goulding to Boutros Boutros-Ghali, September 16, 1994. Goulding later wrote that "practical peacemaking depends on establishing" facts, and not ignoring them. Kevin M. Cahill, ed., *Observation, Triage, and Initial Therapy: Fact-finding Missions and Other Techniques* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), p. 213.
- 17 The others present were Doug Stafford, Arlene Render, Margaret McKelvey, Doug Bennet, and John Hicks—the same John Hicks who had been so helpful to Gersony in Malawi six years earlier.
- 18 The RPA, or Rwandan Patriotic Army, was officially the military wing of the RPF, the two being mainly synonymous. Arlene Render, September 20, 1994, cable number 254232. There was also a second cable, 200310Z, describing Gersony's whole trip and indicating that both the United Nations and the State Department would take the matter up with the Kagame regime.
- 19 About this time, U.N. Emergency Office head Charles Petrie and a USAID disaster relief specialist visited the Byumba region in northeastern Rwanda, one area not visited by Gersony's team. But this new investigation also found that information collected by interviews with local inhabitants "strongly suggests that [the] RPA has carried out systematic reprisals against Hutu populations. . . . the team heard similar stories as those recounted to the [Gersony] UNHCR team by refugees who came from the northeast. . . ."
- 20 Holding this job between Maurice Baril and Guy Tousignant was Roméo Dallaire, who, having been witness to the genocide of the Tutsis, and having gotten no help in the outside world to stop it, went home disillusioned and suicidal. See Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (Toronto: Random House Canada, 2003).
- 21 Luc Reydam, *International Prosecutors* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 34.
- 22 According to a September 22, 1994, cable (number 001588) from the U.S. Embassy in Kigali to Washington, Tousignant admitted "he did not know what was happening in the southeast region and other areas where UNAMIR was not present."
- 23 Twagiramungu would years later admit that the Gersony team report was "congruent with lists he had compiled of thousands of Hutu civilians killed by Tutsi forces." Howard W. French and Jeffrey Gettleman, "Dispute Over U.N. Report Evokes Rwandan Deja Vu," *New York Times*, September 30, 2010.
- 24 Frederick Ehrenreich, August 5, 1994, State 214379 101516Z.
- 25 American Embassy, Bujumbura, August 11, 1994, 02708 111704Z.
- 26 Rawson later told *Atlantic* writer Samantha Power that he was "looking away from the dark signs. . . . We were naive policy optimists. . . ." Though this was in reference to his actions before the original genocide, it may be indicative of his troubled state of mind through Gersony's visit. Samantha Power, "Bystanders to Genocide," *The Atlantic*, September 2001.
- 27 "Human Rights Watch and the FIDH Condemn Assassination of Seth Sendashonga," Human Rights Watch, May 18, 1998.
- 28 Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), p. 146.

- 29 One factor weakening Assistant Secretary of State for Africa George Moose was that Secretary of State Warren Christopher, focusing on Arab-Israeli peace negotiations and other matters, had relatively little interest in Africa.
- 30 Embassy Kigali to Secretary of State, September 23, 1994, 01606 23132222.
- 31 As it happened, the joint team, which included Ambassador Shahryar Khan, left Kigali late the next day, traveled for two hours, and found no evidence except a mass grave dating back several months. The Gersony team had spent more than a month visiting close to a hundred sites and interviewing 300 witnesses. Luc Reyndams, *Let's Be Friends: The United States, Post-Genocide Rwanda, and Victor's Justice in Arusha* (Antwerp, Belgium, and South Bend, IN: University of Antwerp and Notre Dame University, 2013), p. 27.
- 32 Meanwhile, back in New York, Annan pinned back Shahryar Khan's ears in a September 29 cable, voicing "dismay" at public statements made by U.N. officials in Kigali "impugning" UNHCR and the Gersony report. Source: U.N. Cable Number 3172. Kofi Annan died just as I was engaging his staff for an interview with him.
- 33 Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, p. 137.
- 34 Letter from François Fouinat, chief of staff for Sadako Ogata, to B. Molina-Abram, secretary to the commission of experts on Rwanda, Geneva, October II, 1994.
- 35 UNHCR Document Number R0002907.
- 36 To be sure, the report was suppressed, even if the details of Gersony's findings became known. According to a Wikileaks cable released many years later, Boutros-Ghali and George Moose told the Rwandan government "that if the killing of Hutus stopped, then a detailed report [the Gersony report] about the Tutsi massacre of approximately 30,000 Hutus would be swept under the rug." Source: Embassy/Madrid confidential cable number 0000201. Wikileaks: February 22, 2008.
- 37 Gersony had warned that if the United Nations and the Clinton administration did not take firm action against the RPF, "in a few months they will be murdering people right in front of your eyes." To wit, on April 22, 1995, in the largely Hutu refugee camp of Kibeho in the southwestern corner of Rwanda, RPF soldiers fired into crowds of people, killing about 4,000 and wounding 650, according to the Australian blue-helmeted peacekeepers in the vicinity who used clickers to count the bodies. Source: Terry Pickard, *Combat Medic: An Australian's Eyewitness Account of the Kibeho Massacre* (Wavell Heights, Australia: Big Sky Publishing, 2008), pp. 80–81. Stephen Buckley, "At Least 2,000 Refugees Die in Rwandan Violence," *Washington Post*, April 24, 1995. David Rieff, *A Bed for the Night: Humanitarianism in Crisis* (2002; New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), p. 188.
- 38 Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, pp. 323–24.
- 39 On October 18, 1994, in an op-ed in *The Washington Post*, Democratic congressman Tony Hall, the head of the Congressional Hunger Center, defended Gersony, writing that senior officials "who are familiar with the author's track record, would stake their lives on the [Gersony] report's veracity and his methodology." Two days later, an Amnesty International report was issued, detailing significant numbers of "deliberate and arbitrary" RPF killings of Hutus. And two days after that, on October 22, both the London *Independent* and *The New York Times* wrote of "systematic revenge killing" by the RPF throughout Rwanda. In 1999, in her definitive 789-page book on Rwanda, *Leave None to*

Tell the Story, the Yale-educated expert on East Africa, Alison Des Forges, would write that Gersony's team, "although few in number . . . covered more RPF territory and spoke to a wider number and variety of witnesses than any other foreigners working in Rwanda during this period." Sources: Tony Hall, "Cycle of Revenge in Rwanda," *Washington Post*, October 18, 1994. "Rwanda: Reports of Killings and Abductions by the Rwandese Patriotic Army, April–August 1994," Amnesty International, October 20, 1994. Richard Broadbent, "UN Urged to Halt Rwandan Violence," *The Independent*, October 22, 1994. Editorial, "Again, Killing in Rwanda," *New York Times*, October 22, 1994. Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, p. 127. See, too: Howard W. French and Jeffrey Gettleman, "Dispute Over U.N. Report Evokes Rwandan Déjà Vu," *New York Times*, September 30, 2010, and Howard W. French, "How Rwanda's Paul Kagame Exploits U.S. Guilt," *Wall Street Journal*, April 19, 2014.

40 Years later, Hank Cohen, who replaced Chet Crocker as assistant secretary of state for Africa in the elder Bush administration, would write that Gersony had "shamed the U.S. Government" and others into acknowledging the hard-to-admit, complicated truth about Rwanda. Email sent by Cohen, June II, 2014.

41 Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, p. 360.

42 Gérard Prunier, *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 355.

THE WORLD IS WHAT IT IS

Chapter 12. Gaza and the West Bank, 1995

- 1 Chris Hedges, "A Gaza Diary," *Harper's*, October 2001.
- 2 Saddam would increase the payments to \$25,000 per family after 9/11. "Iraqi Ties to Terrorism," Council on Foreign Relations, February 3, 2005.
- 3 "Arafat's Costly Gulf War Choice," *Al Jazeera*, August 22, 2009.
- 4 Ami Ayalon, *The Middle East Contemporary Survey* (1990), vol. 14 (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992), pp. 226 and 265.
- 5 An Israeli commando unit assassinated Abu Jihad on April 16, 1988, at Sidi Bou Said, north of the Tunisian capital of Tunis.

Chapter 13. Bosnia, 1995–1996

- 1 Robert D. Kaplan, "Europe's Third World," *The Atlantic*, July 1989.
- 2 Robert D. Kaplan, "Balkans' Fault Line: Yugoslavia Starts to Feel the Tremors," *Wall Street Journal/Europe*, November 30, 1989. Though my reporting depressed an American president regarding the possibilities of military action, I supported military action from the beginning. In the March 1993 issue of *Reader's Digest*, the same month that *Balkan Ghosts* was published, I wrote: "Unless we can break the cycle of hatred and revenge—by standing forcefully for self-determination and minority rights—the gains from the end of the Cold War will be lost. All aid, all diplomatic efforts, all force if force is used, must be linked to the simple idea that all the people of Yugoslavia deserve freedom from violence." Soon after I appeared on television (CNN, C-SPAN) to urge intervention. I unambiguously urged military intervention on the front page of