

# CURRENTS OF TRUTH

A JOURNALIST'S QUEST FOR JUSTICE  
IN THE AGE OF AI

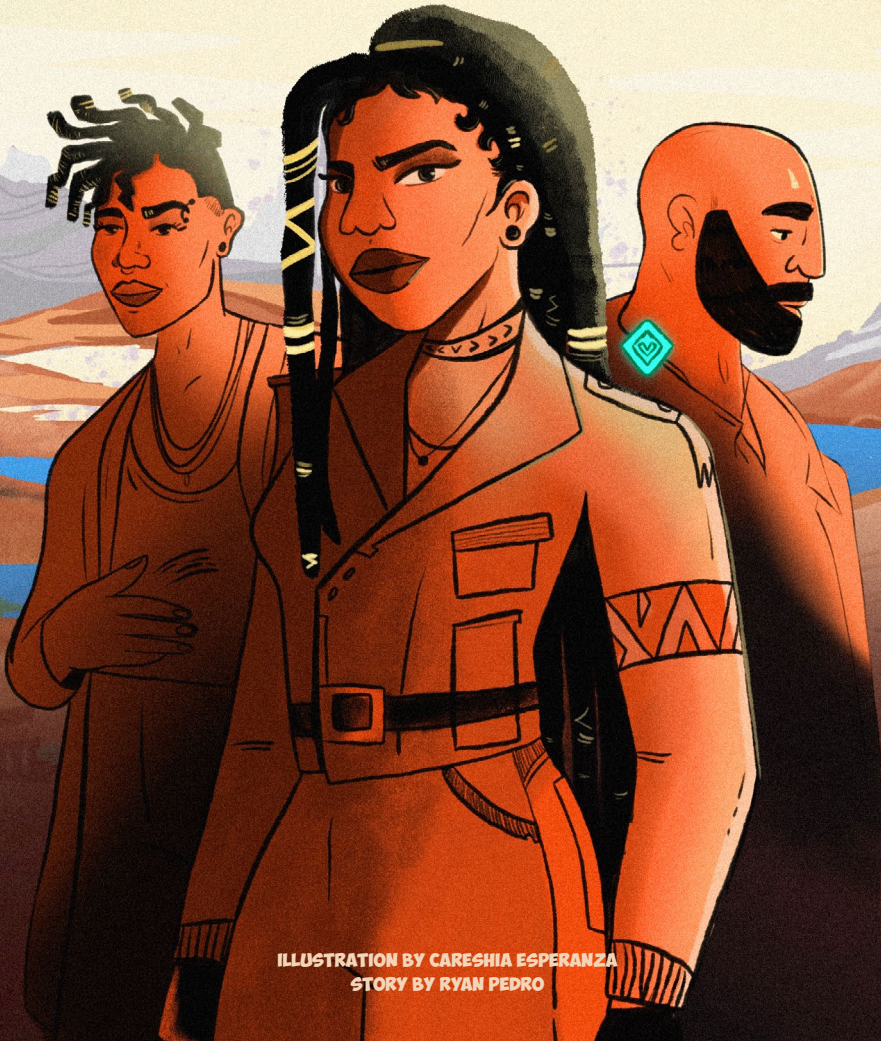


ILLUSTRATION BY CARESHIA ESPERANZA  
STORY BY RYAN PEDRO

## CURRENTS OF TRUTH

This is a story set in a fictional city in Africa, in the not-too-far future. It follows a young investigative journalist, her mentor and her friend, a computer genius, who work together to uncover and expose a complex disinformation campaign fuelled by artificial intelligence and save their people. In a tale of bravery and honour, they risk their careers and safety to uncover the truth about who is poisoning their community and they overcome many obstacles together to save the day!

With this comic book, the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung's regional Media Programme for sub-Saharan Africa seeks to highlight the changes in the media landscape wrought by technology – both good and bad. Artificial intelligence will continue to permeate every element of our lives, including the media, and one way is through the massive spread of disinformation online. This story is important for the work of journalists not only in Africa, but across the world and highlights how we use AI to tell important stories, but also, how dangerous it can be if it goes unchecked.

Finally, in a time where the trust in the media is continuously decreasing, the KAS Media Programme takes its role, and that of journalists seriously in building that trust back up and buttressing the credibility of the media. One tool by which we can achieve this is media literacy. We believe that this comic book is for everyone, not just journalists, and can be used to educate everyone, no matter the age or profession, about the threats against democracy.

# CHAPTER 1: MUDDY WATERS

**NANA! PLEASE FIND MOST READ OR MOST VIEWED NEWS ARTICLES RELATING TO HYDEPHARMA AND THE ONGOING PROTESTS!**



**Fight  
4  
FREEDOM!**



**CERTAINLY, AFI!**





HI, AFI. THE MOST READ AND MOST VIEWED ARTICLE ON THE HYDEPHARMA SAGA IS FROM THE AHANTAN PRESS, THE NEWSPAPER YOU WRITE FOR.

WHAT'S IT TITLED?

"HYDEPHARMA ADDRESSES ANGRY MOB AT THEIR GATES, DENIES WATER POLLUTION ALLEGATIONS VEHEMENTLY."



COULD YOU PLEASE PLAY ME THE VIDEO?

CERTAINLY, AFI!



"OUR ADVANCED RESEARCH HAS CONFIRMED THAT THE RIVER'S CONDITION STEMS FROM ILLEGAL DUMPING BY UNIDENTIFIED LOCALS — NOT OUR FACILITIES. WE STAND FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY."



OH, PLEASE...

NANA - COULD YOU READ ME THE OPENING PARAGRAPH OF THE ARTICLE I'M WORKING ON, PLEASE?

CERTAINLY!

OKYENA'S ATA-ADOO RIVER, ONCE THE LIFEBLOOD OF THIS COMMUNITY, HAS TURNED INTO A CHEMICAL GRAVEYARD. LOCALS BLAME HYDEPHARMA, BUT THE COMPANY DENIES ALL ACCUSATIONS, CALLING THEM BASELESS.



BASELESS, HUH? WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT...

SHOULD I SEND IT ON THROUGH TO YOUR EDITOR, SIIKA?

THIS TASK WILL RAMP UP YOUR PRODUCTIVITY FOR THE MORNING, ENSURING THAT SIIKA READS IT BEFORE YOU MAKE IT TO WORK.



NO, THAT'S FINE, NANA. YOU'RE AWESOME, THOUGH, THANKS!

NO NEED FOR COMPLIMENTS, AFI. I WAS DESIGNED TO MAKE YOUR LIFE EASIER.



IF ONLY ALL TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS COULD HELP US LIKE YOU DO, NANA...

DO I DETECT A HINT OF DESPAIR IN YOUR TONE OF VOICE, AFI? IF SO, IS THERE SOMETHING I CAN DO FOR YOU?

NO, I'M GOOD, NANA.



SO, HOW ABOUT I SEND THAT ARTICLE TO SIIKA FOR YOU?

LET'S PUT A PIN IN THAT FOR NOW. I STILL NEED TO ADD ONE LAST THING.

YOU ARE CLOSE TO YOUR DESTINATION! BUT I MUST WARN YOU, YOU ARE IN VERY CLOSE PROXIMITY TO WHERE PROTESTS ARE BEING HELD AGAINST HYDEPHARMA.

THAT'S THE WHOLE POINT, NANA...



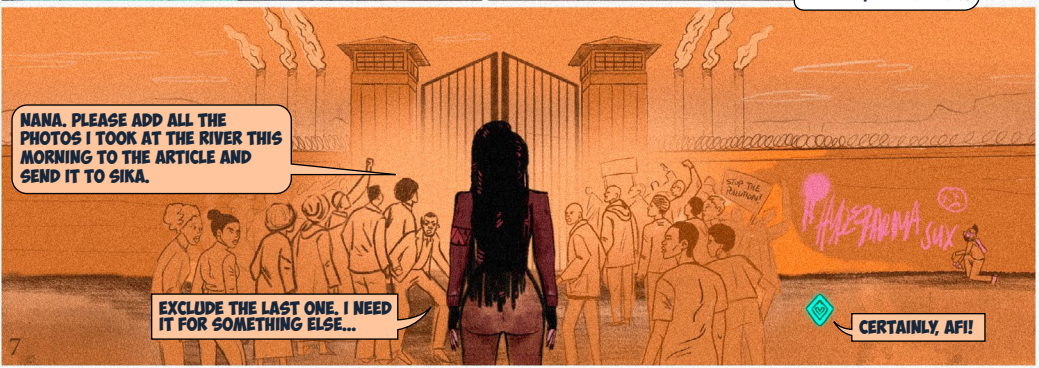
Afi looks at the water, everything seems fine.



But when she starts walking up the shoreline, in the direction of HydePharma's plant, she sees the landscape change around her.



YOU ARE ENTERING A RED ZONE, AFI. PLEASE, BE VIGILANT.



NANA, PLEASE ADD ALL THE PHOTOS I TOOK AT THE RIVER THIS MORNING TO THE ARTICLE AND SEND IT TO SIKA.

EXCLUDE THE LAST ONE, I NEED IT FOR SOMETHING ELSE...

CERTAINLY, AFI!

LATER THAT DAY...



THIS IS NOT WHAT I WROTE, SIKA! YOU CHANGED EVERYTHING! THIS IS... THIS IS... YOU TWISTED MY WORDS TO MAKE HYDEPHARMA LOOK INNOCENT!

WE ADDED BALANCE, AFI.

BALANCE?! YOU MEAN LETTING THEM GET AWAY WITH POISONING MY PEOPLE?!

YOU CAN'T JUST ACCUSE A COMPANY OF WRONGDOING WITHOUT SOLID PROOF!



THAT, THERE? THAT'S EMOTION. NOT JOURNALISM.



YOU WOULDN'T KNOW JOURNALISM IF IT HAD TEETH AND BIT YOU IN THE BUM...



EXCUSE ME?!



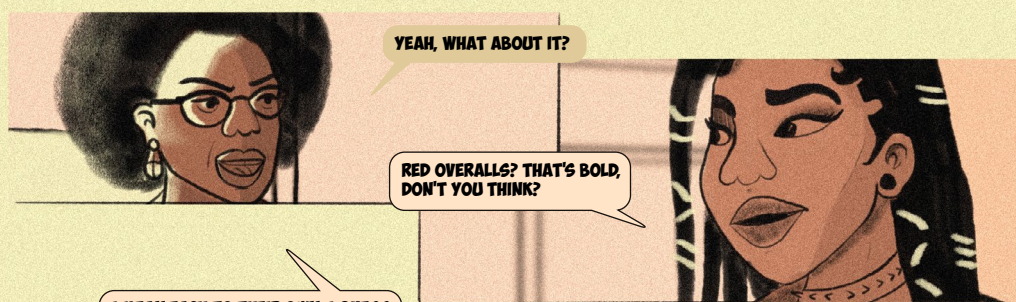
THAT VIDEO IN OUR MOST RECENT HYDEPHARMA ARTICLE? IT'S... INTERESTING...



WHAT ARE YOU ON ABOUT NOW?

THE CLOTHES THE HYDEPHARMA EMPLOYEES WEAR AT THE PLANT?

THE RED OVERALLS WITH THE WHITE HARD HATS?



YEAH, WHAT ABOUT IT?

RED OVERALLS? THAT'S BOLD, DON'T YOU THINK?

I MEAN EACH TO THEIR OWN, I GUESS. WHY ARE YOU ASKING ME THIS? WE COVER THE NEWS COMING FROM THE HYDEPHARMA PLANT. NOT THEIR FASHION CHOICES.

SO MAYBE THEY SWITCH THE COLOURS UP FROM TIME TO TIME? WHO KNOWS? WHO CARES?!

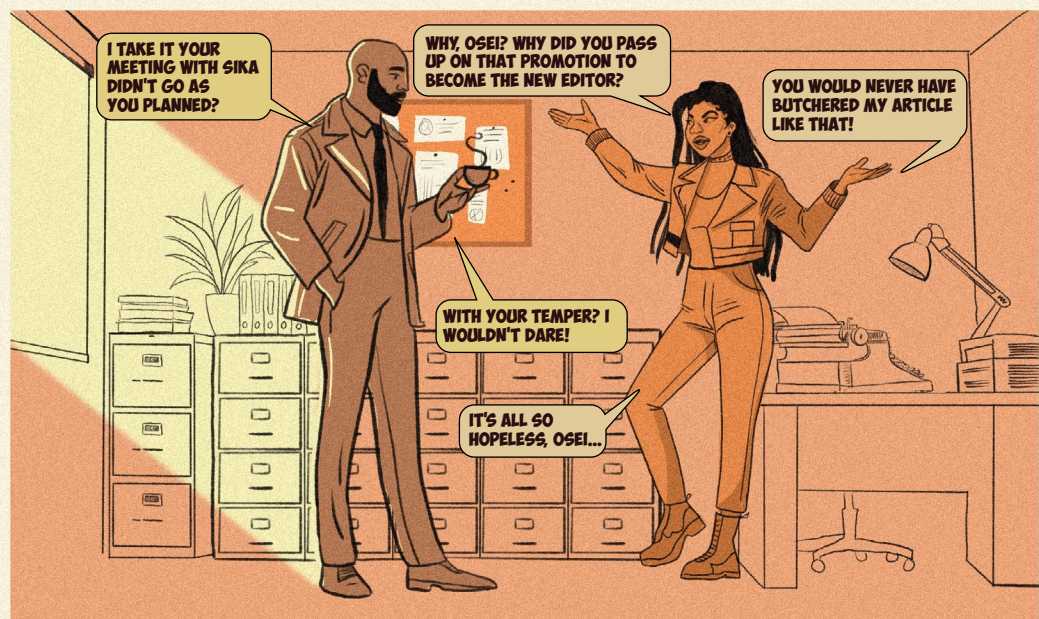


JUST FOUND IT ODD, THAT'S ALL...



AFI....

BE CAREFUL, AFI. YOU'RE A JOURNALIST, NOT AN ACTIVIST. DON'T LET YOUR FEELINGS GET IN THE WAY OF YOUR JOB.



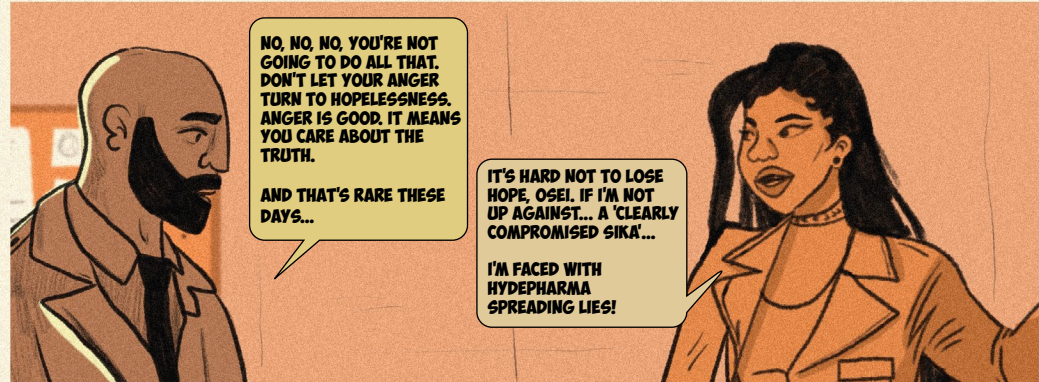
I TAKE IT YOUR MEETING WITH SIKA DIDN'T GO AS YOU PLANNED?

WHY, OSEI? WHY DID YOU PASS UP ON THAT PROMOTION TO BECOME THE NEW EDITOR?

YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE BUTCHERED MY ARTICLE LIKE THAT!

WITH YOUR TEMPER? I WOULDN'T DARE!

IT'S ALL SO HOPELESS, OSEI...



NO, NO, NO, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DO ALL THAT. DON'T LET YOUR ANGER TURN TO HOPELESSNESS. ANGER IS GOOD. IT MEANS YOU CARE ABOUT THE TRUTH.

AND THAT'S RARE THESE DAYS...

IT'S HARD NOT TO LOSE HOPE, OSEI. IF I'M NOT UP AGAINST... A 'CLEARLY COMPROMISED SIKA'...


I'M FACED WITH HYDEPHARMA SPREADING LIES!



YOU SAW THE VIDEO...

I MEAN THAT'S CLEARLY AI, RIGHT?


NOT A LOT OF PEOPLE WOULD KNOW THAT. TO MOST PEOPLE, THAT'S THE NEWS. AND TO THEM, THE NEWS HAS ALWAYS BEEN SYNONYMOUS WITH TRUTH.



WELL, THE TRUTH IS BEING RUINED BY CORRUPT, UNETHICAL JOURNALISTS AND GREEDY CORPORATE ENTITIES WHO WANT TO VEIL THEIR WRONGDOINGS BY SPREADING MISINFORMATION.



DISINFORMATION, ACTUALLY.



MISINFORMATION, DISINFORMATION... LYING IS LYING, OSEI.

I HEAR YOU, AFI. BUT YOU NEED TO BE AWARE OF THE BEAST YOUR FIGHTING AGAINST, AFI. AND YOU MUST CALL IT BY IT'S NAME...

IT ISN'T JUST LYING. IT'S DELIBERATE. IT'S CRAFTED TO CONFUSE, DIVIDE AND MANIPULATE THE MASSES. THINK OF IT LIKE ALL THAT TOXIC WASTE HYDEPHARMA IS DUMPING INTO THE RIVER...

'ALLEGEDLY'...

'ALLEGEDLY'... THAT TOXIC WASTE SPREADS, CONTAMINATES, AND SOON, NOBODY CAN TELL WHAT'S CLEAN, PURE AND CLEAR ANYMORE...

THEY'RE CONTROLLING THE NARRATIVE...

BY USING AI TO GENERATE FAKE STUDIES, FAKE NEWS ARTICLES, EVEN FAKE PEOPLE ONLINE.

AND IT'S ALL SAYING THE SAME THING: HYDEPHARMA IS INNOCENT, AND THE MORE PEOPLE HEAR IT, THE MORE THEY BELIEVE IT.

ALL WHILE THE OKYENA'S REAL VOICE, THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE, GETS DROWNED OUT...

OR MANIPULATED...

SO DISINFORMATION IS MUCH MORE THAN TO JUST TELL A LIE...

IT MAKES YOU DOUBT THE TRUTH...

EXACTLY, BUT AGAIN, DON'T LOSE HOPE, AFI. LIKE I SAID, IT'S ALL ABOUT KNOWING YOUR OPPONENT.

AND HALF OF KNOWING YOUR OPPONENT, IS KNOWING WHAT'S IN THEIR ARSENAL OF WEAPONS. THEIR BOX OF TOOLS, SO TO SPEAK. AND AI? IT'S JUST ANOTHER TOOL...

WHAT, LIKE A HAMMER?

YOU JOKE, BUT YES. EXACTLY LIKE A HAMMER. YOU CAN BUILD A HOUSE OR BREAK A WINDOW WITH IT. THE DANGER ISN'T THE HAMMER. IT'S THE HAND HOLDING IT.

SURE, TECHNOLOGY AND AI IS  
PROGRESSING AT A RAPID RATE.  
BUT HERE'S THE THING...

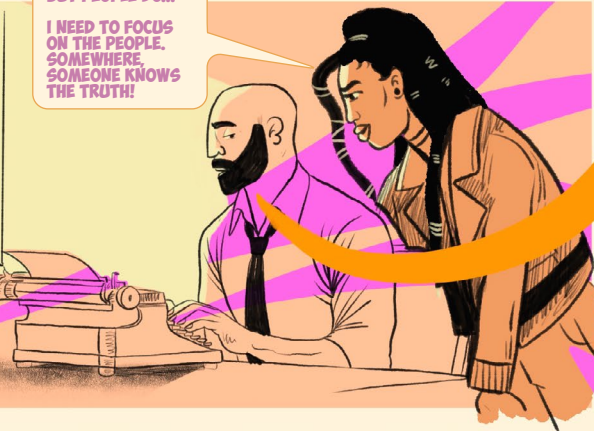
MACHINES CAN'T FEEL, AFI.  
THEY DON'T EXPERIENCE  
EMOTIONS LIKE GUILT, AND  
THEY MOST DEFINITELY  
DON'T FEEL REMORSE.

"Typing"



BUT PEOPLE DO...

I NEED TO FOCUS  
ON THE PEOPLE.  
SOMEWHERE,  
SOMEONE KNOWS  
THE TRUTH!



AND SOMEWHERE OUT  
THERE, THERE ARE STILL  
PEOPLE WHO CAN'T BE  
BOUGHT - BROTHERS AND  
SISTERS IN ARMS.

SO YOU NEED TO KEEP  
DIGGING. YOU NEED TO  
FIND THOSE PEOPLE.

AND I KNOW EXACTLY WHERE TO START...

NANA...

YES, AFI...

CAN YOU FIND ME THE  
QUICKEST ROUTE TO  
KOJO'S HOUSE?

SURE THING!

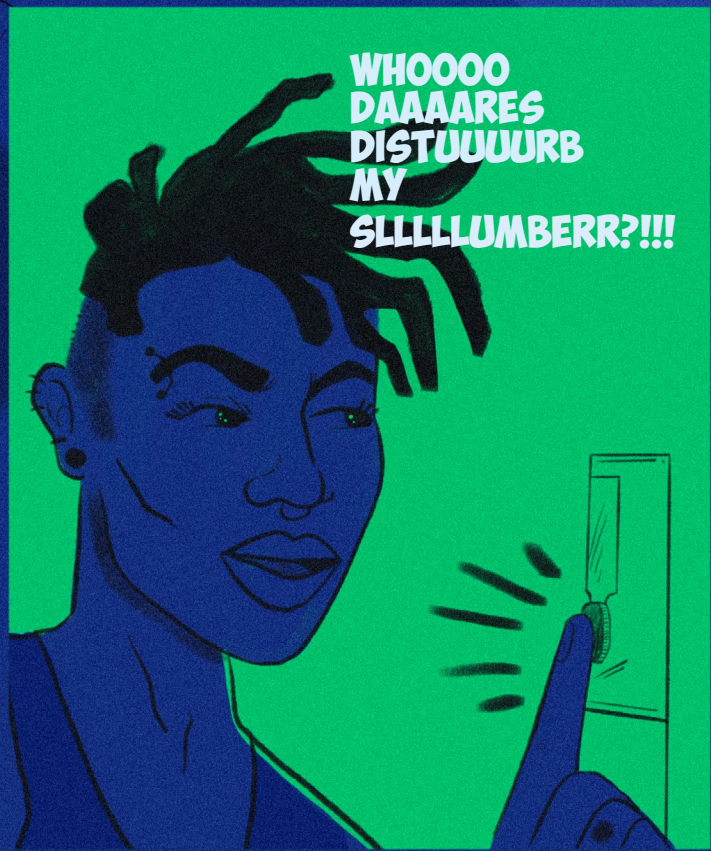
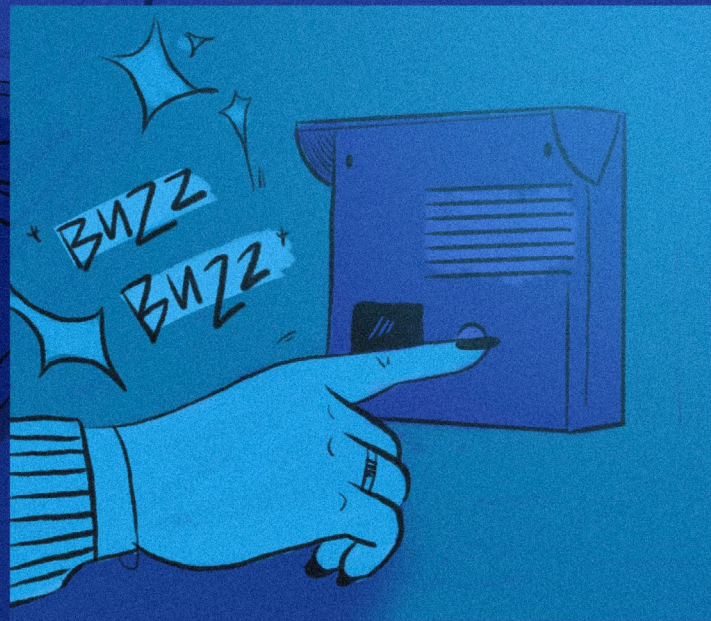
THANKS, NANA!



## CHAPTER 2: WHAT THE WATER KNOWS









YOU'RE SUCH A DRAMA QUEEN...

OH, MY DEAREST AFI... I AM THE QUEEN OF DRAMA!



HYDEPHARMA HAS LAUNCHED A FULLY FLEDGED, CLEARLY FAKE, GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGN THAT SIMULATES LOCAL VOICES IN SUPPORT OF THE COMPANY.

SO A BUNCH OF BOTS THAT ARE DEFENDING AND PRAISING THEM IN COMMENT SECTIONS? SHOCKER...



DID YOU GET THE FILE I SENT YOU?

I GOT IT... AND I DID SOME DIGGING ALREADY. IT'S BAD...

I KNOW...

NO AFI... IT'S REALLY BAD... COME, WE HAVE A LOT OF GROUND TO COVER.



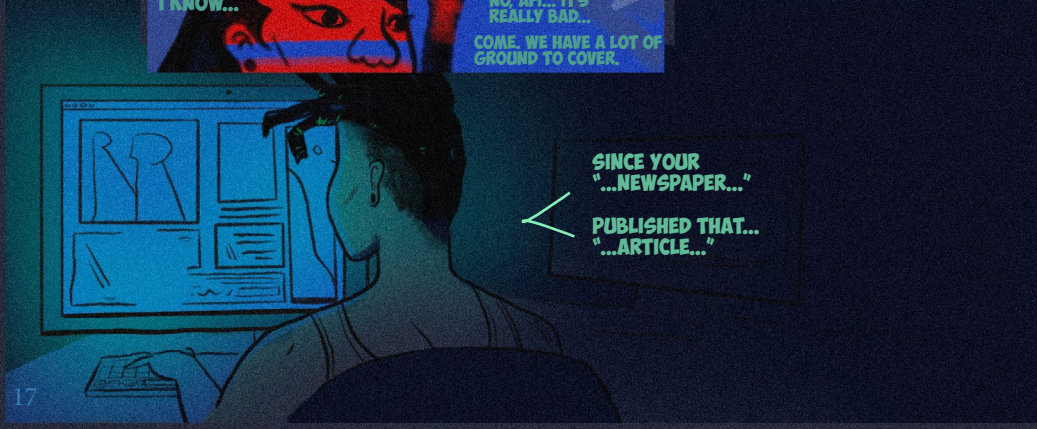
AND THEY'RE HARASSING PROTESTORS BY TROLLING AND SPAMMING THEIR PAGES WITH DISINFORMATION...

"NO WAY HYDEPHARMA IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WATER POLLUTION. THEY'VE ALWAYS BEEN COMMITTED TO FOSTERING HEALTHY SOCIETAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SPACES.

AND THEY CREATE JOBS IN OKYENA. HYDEPHARMA FOR THE PEOPLE, HYDEPHARMA FOR THE WIN!"

FAKE PROFILE PICTURES, FAKE NAMES, AND OF COURSE, FAKE STORIES...

LOOK...



SINCE YOUR "...NEWSPAPER..." PUBLISHED THAT... "...ARTICLE..."

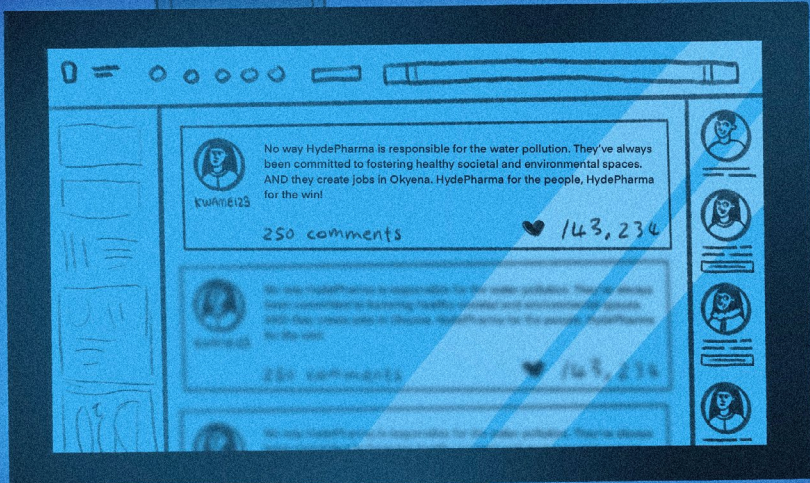


Ygggh!

YEAH, OKAY, KWAME123 WITH YOUR PROFILE THAT WAS CREATED... (LOOKS) ...YESTERDAY AND HAS TWO WHOLE FOLLOWERS!

HEY, COME NOW...

IT'S JUST SO FRUSTRATING, AND THE WORST PART OF IT ALL - PEOPLE ARE BUYING INTO THIS!



**AFI**  
LOOK AT ALL OF THE LIKES AND SHARES ON THESE POSTS!

**KOJO**  
THE GENERAL POPULATION ISN'T TOO CLUED UP ON AI AND THE WAY IT INFLUENCES THE MEDIA THEY CONSUME.

**AFI**  
YOU CAN'T BE WARY OF SOMETHING IF YOU DON'T KNOW IT'S A THREAT IN THE FIRST PLACE...

**KOJO**  
EXACTLY. AND MAKING IT LOOK LIKE THE PRAISE FOR HYDEPHARMA AND THE HATE FOR THESE PROTESTORS ARE COMING FROM "THE PEOPLE"?

CLASSIC ASTROTURFING... THESE BOTS ARE OUTNUMBERING PROTESTORS AND ACTIVISTS 10 TO 1. THEY'RE DROWNING OUT THE TRUTH BEFORE IT IS EVEN UTTERED.

ALSO DOESN'T HELP THAT IT'S BEING ENDORSED AND SPREAD BY A REPUTABLE NEWS SOURCE LIKE THE AHANTAN PRESS...

DON'T EVEN GET ME STARTED ON THAT....

I MEAN RED JUMPSUITS? HOW MUCH MORE LITERAL DOES A RED FLAG NEED TO GET?!

RIGHT. I HATE WORKING THERE SO MUCH... BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I HAVE TO...



THAT'S YOUR IDEA FACE, I LIKE YOUR IDEA FACE...

HOW FAST CAN YOU GET A BLOG UP AND RUNNING...

FAST.

GREAT. YOU DO THAT...

WHILE YOU GO?

WHILE I GO RALLY SOME TROOPS OF OUR OWN...



AFI!

PICK ME UP A BURGER AND SHAKE ON YOUR WAY BACK, PLEASE AND THANK YOU?!

REALLY? NO "GOOD LUCK?" NO "BE CAREFUL"?

WHAT CAN I SAY - REVOLUTIONS MAKE ME HUNGRY...





"cough!"  
"cough!"  
"cough!"



I'M SORRY, BUT WHATEVER YOU'RE SELLING, WE CAN'T AFFORD IT...

IS THAT BECAUSE OF THE WATER?

I'M SORRY, DEAR, I HAVE TO -



I'M AMMA. AND THAT'S MY SON LUMO.

I'M AFI. PLEASE TO MEET YOU.

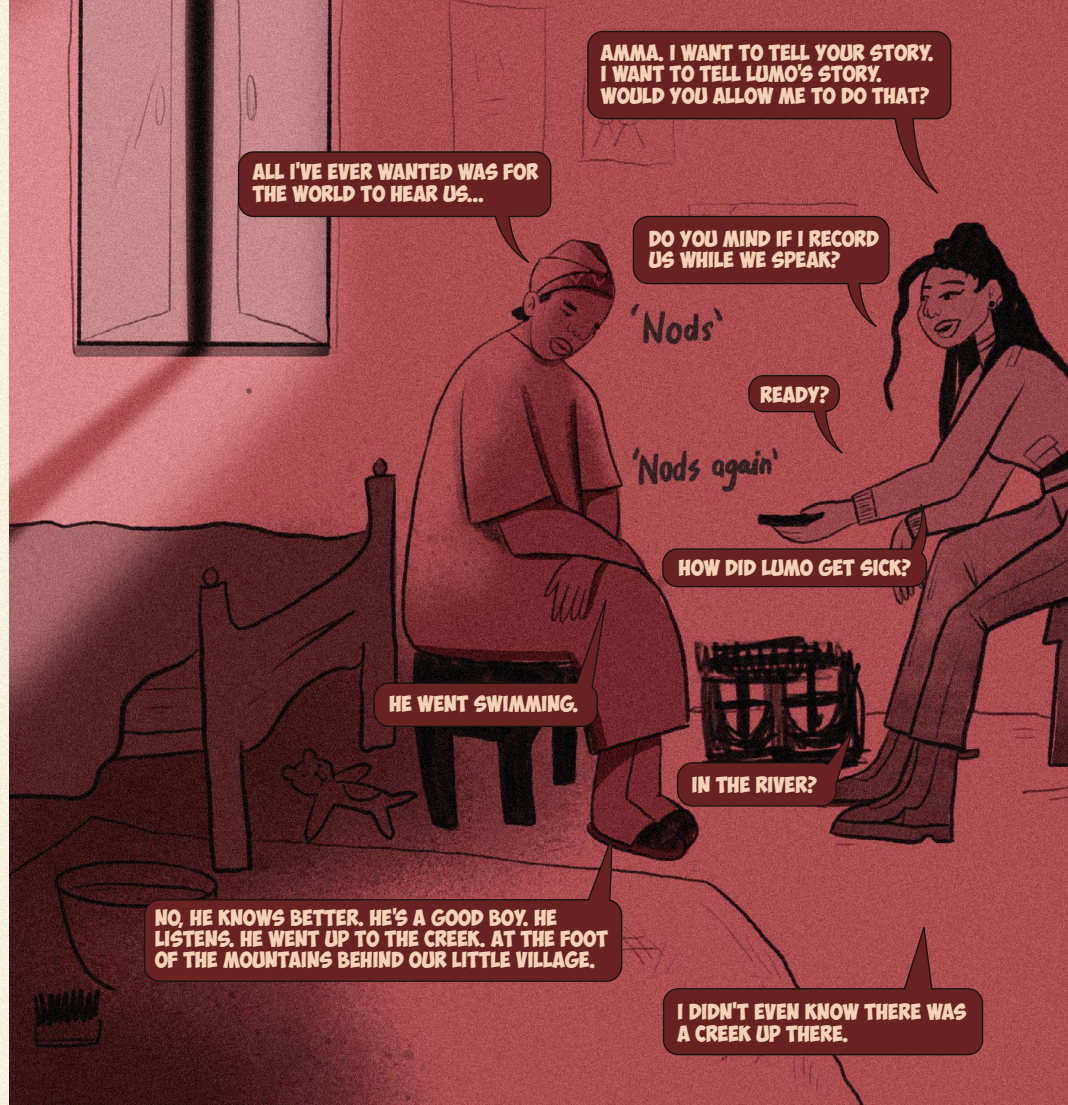
STEP INSIDE, AFI...



I DON'T MEAN TO INTRUDE, OR SELL YOU SOMETHING, AUNTY. I'M A JOURNALIST.

WHO DO YOU WRITE FOR?

I'M INDEPENDENT. AND I ONLY CARE ABOUT THE TRUTH. THE TRUTH ABOUT HYDEPHARMA AND WHAT THEY'RE DOING TO OUR WATER AND OUR PEOPLE...



ALL I'VE EVER WANTED WAS FOR THE WORLD TO HEAR US...

AMMA. I WANT TO TELL YOUR STORY. I WANT TO TELL LUMO'S STORY. WOULD YOU ALLOW ME TO DO THAT?

DO YOU MIND IF I RECORD US WHILE WE SPEAK?

'Nods'

READY?

'Nods again'

HOW DID LUMO GET SICK?

HE WENT SWIMMING.

IN THE RIVER?

NO, HE KNOWS BETTER. HE'S A GOOD BOY. HE LISTENS. HE WENT UP TO THE CREEK. AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAINS BEHIND OUR LITTLE VILLAGE.

I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THERE WAS A CREEK UP THERE.



NOBODY DID. IT USED TO BE OUR VILLAGE'S BEST KEPT SECRET. IT KEPT US HYDRATED, SUSTAINED OUR ANIMALS AND OUR CROPS, AND THE CHILDREN LOVED IT SO VERY MUCH... THAT WAS UNTIL...

UNTIL?

I THINK YOU NEED TO GO SPEAK TO OLD MAN YANKA ABOUT THE CREEK... HE LIVES THREE HOUSES DOWN...

AFI, PLEASE HELP US? PLEASE TELL THE WORLD ABOUT THOSE MONSTERS AT HYDEPHARMA AND HOW THEY'RE RUINING OUR LIVES AND THE FUTURE OF OUR BABIES... THEY DESERVE BETTER...

MY LUMO DESERVES SO MUCH BETTER...

I PROMISE I WILL...

HELLO, UNCLE. I'M SO SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, BUT I JUST SPOKE TO AMMA...

HOW'S THE BOY DOING?

NOT TOO GOOD, UNCLE...

HMMM...

I'M A JOURNALIST, UNCLE. AMMA TOLD ME ABOUT THE CREEK AND -

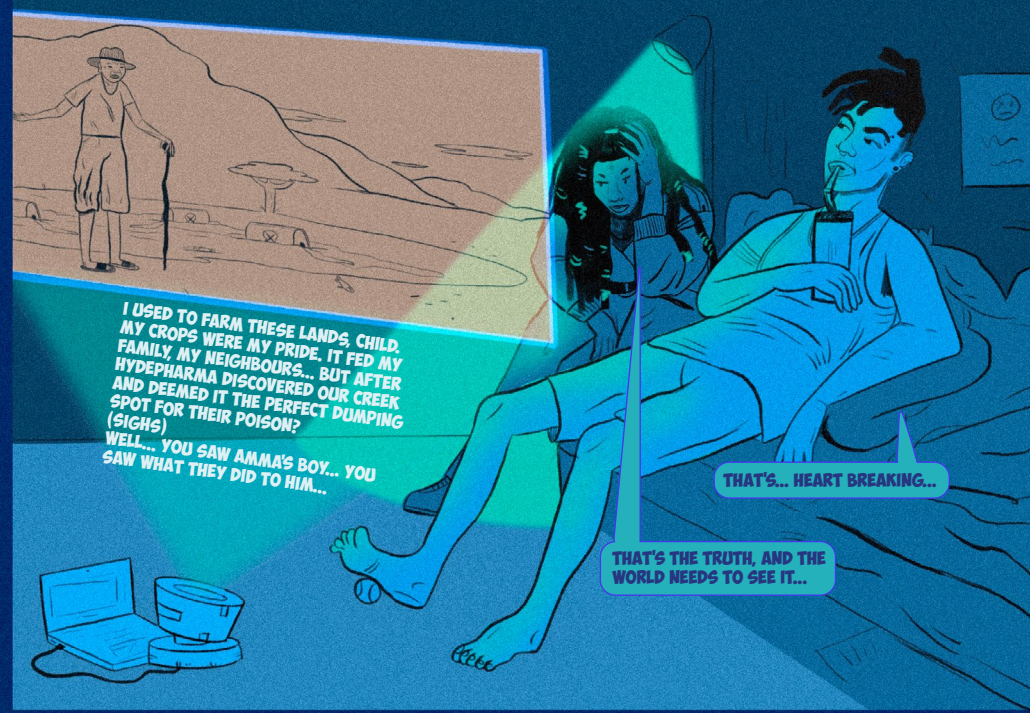
I'LL GO SHOW YOU, CHILD. BUT I MUST WARN YOU. IT'S A SAD SIGHT. A SAD, SAD SIGHT...

COME CHILD. YOUR TRUTH AWAITS.

YES, UNCLE...

HMMM...

I'M READY FOR IT, UNCLE. WHATEVER IT TAKES TO UNCOVER THE TRUTH...



I USED TO FARM THESE LANDS, CHILD. MY CROPS WERE MY PRIDE. IT FED MY FAMILY, MY NEIGHBOURS... BUT AFTER HYDEPHARMA DISCOVERED OUR CREEK AND DEEMED IT THE PERFECT DUMPING SPOT FOR THEIR POISON? WELL... YOU SAW AMMA'S BOY... YOU SAW WHAT THEY DID TO HIM...

THAT'S... HEART BREAKING...

THAT'S THE TRUTH, AND THE WORLD NEEDS TO SEE IT...



WHAT?



NO WAY...

A WHOLE BUNCH OF AI-GENERATED HEADLINES AND... A DEEPFAKE VIDEO OF A LOCAL FARMER CONFESSING TO POLLUTING THE RIVER HIMSELF...

"I PUMPED CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZER INTO THE RIVER. MOST OF US DO... WE DIDN'T KNOW THE HARM IT WOULD CAUSE. THAT IT WOULD MAKE OUR PEOPLE SICK."



WHAT THE ACTUAL?!

YOU NEED TO GET YOUR FOOTAGE OUT THERE, AFI. THE WORLD NEEDS IT NOW MORE THAN EVER.

SHOW ME THE BLOG...

LATER THAT EVENING:

SEVENTH SPELL CHECK SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED!

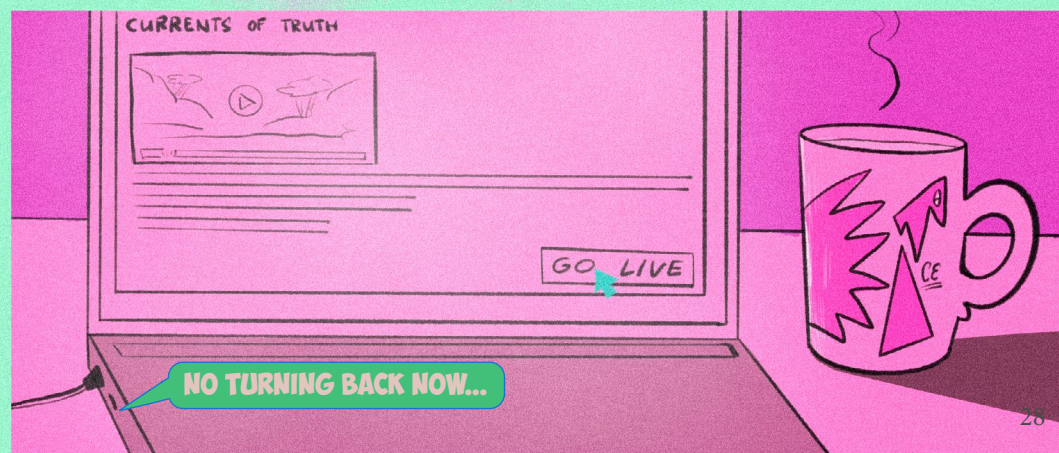
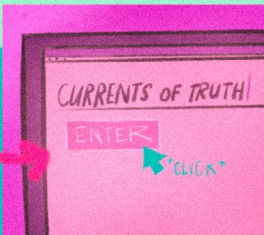
AND THE VIDEOS?

RAW AND UNEDITED, JUST LIKE YOU WANTED.

GOOD. I DON'T WANT ANY SIGNS OF MANIPULATION OF ANY SORT. NOBODY MUST DOUBT THE VALIDITY OF AMMA AND OLD MAN YANKAH'S STORIES.

ALL THAT REMAINS NOW IS...

NO TURNING BACK NOW...



HOW MUCH LONGER?

HACKING INTO A MULTI-BILLION-DOLLAR CORPORATION ISN'T EXACTLY A WALK IN THE PARK...

BUT IF YOU'RE AS AWESOME AS I AM...

+ Typing +

WE'VE GOT THEM...







WHO? ARE YOU OKAY, SIKA? IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN HELP YOU WITH?

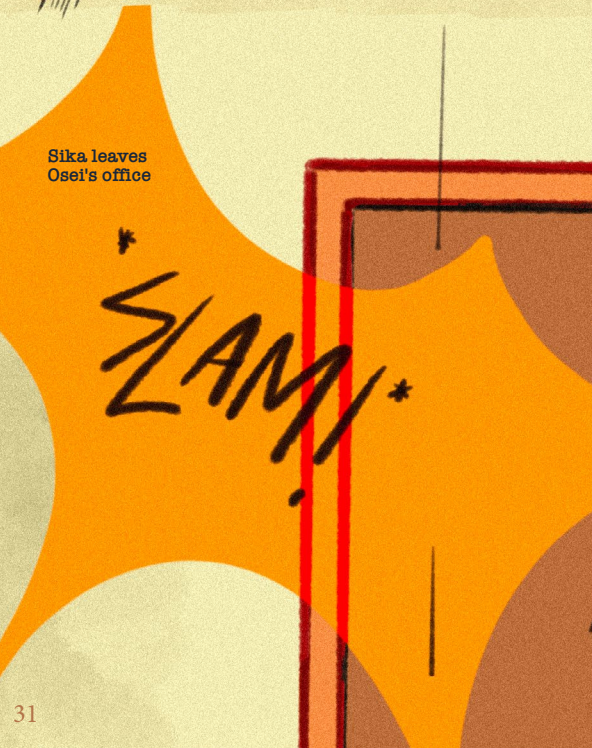
WHERE IS SHE?!

DON'T PLAY DUMB WITH ME, OLD MAN! YOU'VE PROBABLY SEEN THAT LITTLE CHANCER'S BLOG. THAT SILLY LITTLE ATTEMPT TO -

SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER?

YOU ENCOURAGED IT, DIDN'T YOU? I SHOULD'VE KNOWN IT...

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE ON ABOUT, SIKA. LIKE YOU SAID, I'M JUST THE SILLY OLD MAN IN HIS DUSTY LITTLE OFFICE...



Sika leaves Osei's office



OH, YOU'VE REALLY DONE IT NOW, KID...

\*GIGGLES\*



\*SMIRKS\*

THANKS FOR HAVING MY BACK, OSEI. AND FOR YOUR ADVICE AND GUIDANCE. YOU'VE BEEN SUCH AN INSPIRATION TO ME.

OLD MAN...



I HAVE TO GO NOW...

KEEP ON GIVING THEM HELL! I'M PROUD OF YOU!

AFI! NOW!



KOJO

WE KNEW THEY WEREN'T JUST GOING TO LET THIS ONE SLIDE, AFI. WHEN YOU PRESSED THAT UPLOAD BUTTON, YOU DECLARED WAR AGAINST HYDEPHARMA...

AFI

THAT DOESN'T LOOK GOOD...

AFI

I DECLARED WAR AGAINST CORRUPTION, GREED AND DISINFORMATION...

KOJO

(SMIRKS)  
YES, THAT'S WHAT I SAID...



'FAKE JOURNALIST.' 'PAID AGITATOR.'  
'ATTENTION SEEKING LIAR!'

DON'T ENGAGE, AFI. THEY'RE NOT JUST TROLLING YOU, THEY'RE BAITING YOU. IF YOU JUMP INTO THE RING NOW, YOU'LL JUST GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT. THESE BOTS ARE PROGRAMMED TO EXHAUST YOU INTO SUBMISSION.

BUT THEY'RE FLAGGING MY POSTS AS FAKE NEWS! I USED RAW FOOTAGE AND DIRECT QUOTES! HOW CAN THEY CALL THIS FAKE?!



AS LONG AS IT FITS THEIR AGENDA, THEY'LL CALL IT WHAT THEY NEED TO. DISINFORMATION DOESN'T STOP AT SPREADING LIES. IT'S ALSO ABOUT SILENCING THE TRUTH.

HOW DID THEY EVEN GET TO MY BLOG THAT FAST? IT DOESN'T EVEN REACH THAT MANY PEOPLE?

THESE BOTS DON'T DISCRIMINATE, AFI. HYDEPHARMA'S AI IS PROGRAMMED TO MONITOR SOCIAL MEDIA AND NEWS PLATFORMS FOR ANYTHING THAT GOES AGAINST THEIR NARRATIVE.

THE SECOND THEY SEE SOMETHING LIKE YOUR STORY, NO MATTER HOW BIG OR SMALL, THEY'LL FLOOD IT WITH COMPLAINTS, SMUT AND CONTRADICTORY DISCOURSE.



WHAT'S GOING ON NOW?

THE PLATFORM THAT HOSTS YOUR BLOG NEEDS TO VERIFY THE VALIDITY OF YOUR CONTENT.

KOJO

THEY THINK THESE BOTS ARE REAL PEOPLE REPORTING YOU, SO THEIR ALGORITHMS ARE FLAGGING YOUR POSTS. BUT KEEP CALM - THEY'RE NOT GOING TO PURGE YOUR CONTENT OR ANYTHING, BUT YOU WILL BE OFFLINE FOR A WHILE...

AFI

A WHILE?

KOJO

COULD BE AN HOUR. COULD BE 24. POINT IS THAT HYDEPHARMA IS GETTING DONE WHAT THEY SET OUT TO DO. PUT OBSTACLES IN YOUR WAY THAT'LL DETER YOU FROM TELLING THE TRUTH.

AFI

SO WHAT DO WE DO IN THE MEANTIME?

KOJO

REMEMBER HOW I TOLD YOU I'M AN 'IT' SPECIALIST?

AFI

YES?

KOJO

WELL, THAT'S NOT ENTIRELY TRUE... MY UHM, TECHNICAL PROFICIENCY ALSO ALLOWS ME TO FIND BACKDOORS INTO SYSTEMS THAT ONE USUALLY DOESN'T HAVE ACCESS TO. LEGALLY...

AFI

SO YOU'RE A HACKER?

KOJO

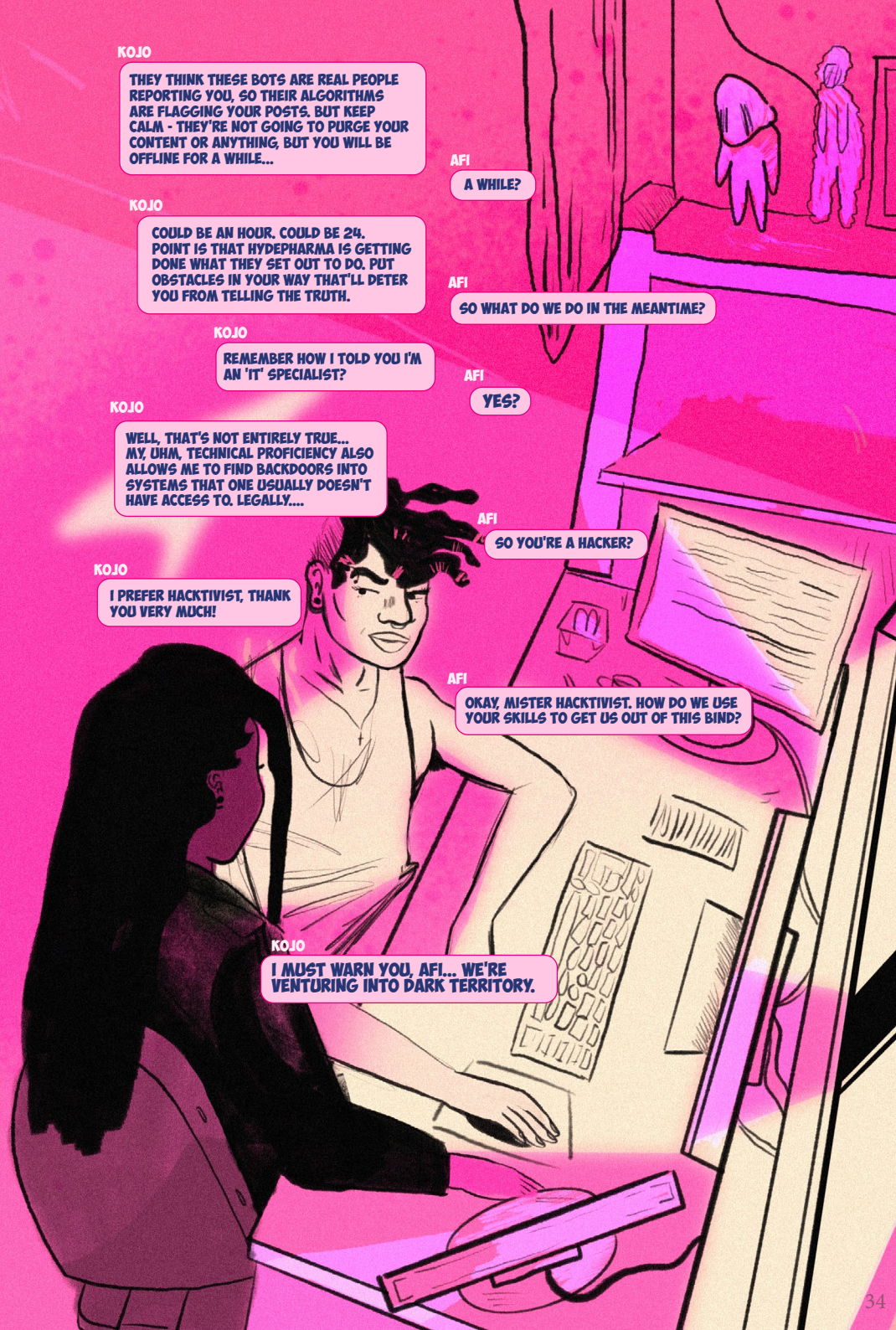
I PREFER HACKTIVIST, THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

AFI

OKAY, MISTER HACKTIVIST. HOW DO WE USE YOUR SKILLS TO GET US OUT OF THIS BIND?

KOJO

I MUST WARN YOU, AFI... WE'RE VENTURING INTO DARK TERRITORY.



KOJO

HACKING A POWERFUL CORPORATE  
ENTITY LIKE HYDEPHARMA IS  
SERIOUS BUSINESS...

KOJO - WE NEED TO DO THIS. FOR AMMA, LUMO,  
YANKAH, AND EVERYBODY IN OKYENA.  
THEIR STORY NEEDS TO BE HEARD.

KOJO

LET'S DO IT THEN...

## CHAPTER 3: WAVES OF TRUTH

EMAILS, CONTRACTS, NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENTS.... DO I WANT TO KNOW HOW YOU GOT YOUR HANDS ON THESE..?

KOJO  
PROBABLY NOT...

FIGURED... SO WHAT NOW? WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO DO WITH ALL OF...THIS?

WE ACTUALLY HAVE NO IDEA. HYDEPHARMA'S BOTS GOT MY BLOG FLAGGED.

YEAH, I SAW...  
(SIGHS)  
LISTEN, AFI. IF YOU BROUGHT ME HERE TO HELP, I'M NOT SURE WHAT I'M ABLE TO DO. WE BOTH KNOW AHANTAN IS ALSO COMPROMISED...

(GESTURES TO LAPTOP)

LOOK HERE - BANK STATEMENTS OF ALL THE HUSH MONEY SIKA RECEIVED FROM HYDEPHARMA. IF I WERE TO PITCH THIS STORY TO HER, SHE'D KILL IT BEFORE I EVEN WROTE A SINGLE WORD.

BUT....

HAVE YOU GUYS EVER HEARD OF THE BLOOD HOUNDS?

THE ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP?

osibisa

Fight  
4 FREEDOM!

KOJO'S  
MONEY

I MIGHT KNOW SOMEONE WHO KNOWS SOMEONE WHO KNOWS A BLOOD HOUND...

OSEI, YOU'RE A GENIUS! THE BLOOD HOUNDS ARE INDEPENDENT, TRUSTWORTHY AND REVERED FOR TAKING DOWN CORPORATIONS THAT HARM THE ENVIRONMENT.

THIS IS PERFECT! WE CAN GIVE THEM THE FILES AND HAVE THEM BREAK IT! WITH THEIR STAMP OF APPROVAL, IT'LL BE UNDENIABLE!

IT'S A BIT MORE COMPLICATED THAN THAT... THE BLOOD HOUNDS ARE REALLY MILITANT. AND THEY DON'T HIDE BEHIND MASKS AND AVATARS. THEY BELIEVE IN SPEAKING THE TRUTH AS THEMSELVES. AND THEY'RE GOING TO EXPECT YOU TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THESE FILES, AFI.

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THIS, AFI. IT FEELS DANGEROUS. HYDEPHARMA WON'T JUST TAKE THIS LYING DOWN. THEY'RE GONNA GO DOWN SWINGING. AND IT'S GOING TO BE YOU THAT'S IN THAT RING WITH THEM...

(CONSIDERS, THEN GRITS HER TEETH) IT WON'T BE JUST ME. I HAVE YOU. I HAVE OSEI. I HAVE AMMA AND LUMO. OLD MAN YANKAH.

AFI...

NO, KOJO. I HAVE TO DO THIS. THE TRUTH NEEDS TO COME OUT.

AND I HAVE TO BELIEVE THAT THE PEOPLE OF OKYENA WILL RALLY BEHIND ME. (LOOKS AT OSEI)

GET ME A MEETING WITH THE BLOOD HOUNDS...

LATER THAT EVENING:

I JUST NEED TO SAY THIS AGAIN - BAD IDEA...

DOESN'T MEAN IT WON'T WORK...

HERE WE GO...

WHICH ONE OF YOU IS AFI?

I AM.

ARE YOU READY TO SAVE YOUR PEOPLE, AFI?

I AM.

THEN LET'S GET TO WORK.

A FEW DAYS LATER:



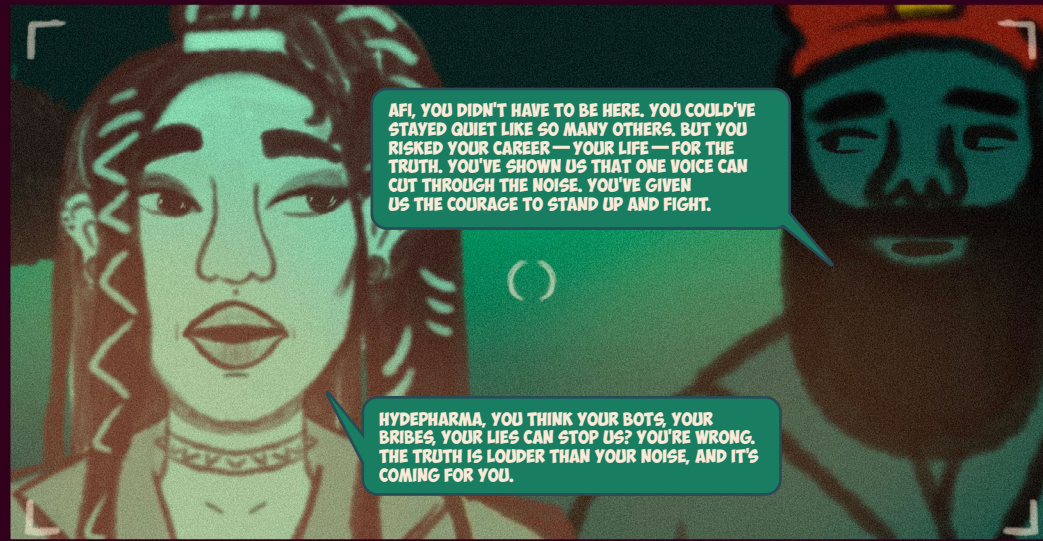
THIS EMAIL SHOWS HYDEPHARMA PAID THE AHANTAN PRESS TO PUBLISH DISINFORMATION, SHIFTING THE BLAME ONTO THE VERY PEOPLE THEY'RE POISONING. EVERY ARTICLE THEY RAN WAS SCRIPTED BY HYDEPHARMA'S PR TEAM.

I TRUSTED THE AHANTAN PRESS. I BELIEVED JOURNALISM COULD STILL SERVE THE PEOPLE. BUT NOW I SEE — THEY'RE NOT JUST COMPLICIT. THEY'RE GUILTY. GUILTY OF LETTING A CORPORATION POISON THIS RIVER AND THIS COMMUNITY.



THIS IS RIVER ATA-ADOO. ONCE THE HEART OF OKYENA, IT FED FAMILIES, SUSTAINED CROPS, AND NURTURED LIFE. NOW, IT'S A GRAVEYARD. POLLUTED BY THE UNCHECKED GREED OF HYDEPHARMA.

FOR MONTHS, THIS CORPORATION HAS Poured TOXIC WASTE INTO THIS RIVER, POISONING EVERYTHING IT TOUCHES. AND THEY HAVEN'T STOPPED THERE. THEY'VE POISONED THE TRUTH TOO, USING AI-GENERATED LIES AND MEDIA COMPLICITY TO SILENCE VOICES LIKE OURS.



AFI, YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO BE HERE. YOU COULD'VE STAYED QUIET LIKE SO MANY OTHERS. BUT YOU RISKED YOUR CAREER — YOUR LIFE — FOR THE TRUTH. YOU'VE SHOWN US THAT ONE VOICE CAN CUT THROUGH THE NOISE. YOU'VE GIVEN US THE COURAGE TO STAND UP AND FIGHT.

HYDEPHARMA, YOU THINK YOUR BOTS, YOUR BRIBES, YOUR LIES CAN STOP US? YOU'RE WRONG. THE TRUTH IS LOUDER THAN YOUR NOISE, AND IT'S COMING FOR YOU.



HYDEPHARMA'S AI ARMY IS FLOODING THE INTERNET WITH FAKE ACCOUNTS LIKE THIS ONE. BOTS DESIGNED TO SPREAD LIES ABOUT THE VILLAGERS. THEY CALL THEM 'LAZY,' ACCUSE THEM OF DUMPING CHEMICALS THEMSELVES. THESE AREN'T REAL PEOPLE — THESE ARE MANUFACTURED VOICES

AND HERE'S PROOF OF HOW DEEP THEIR CORRUPTION RUNS.



WE'RE NOT JUST FIGHTING FOR THIS RIVER — WE'RE FIGHTING FOR OUR FUTURE. FOR JUSTICE. YOU'VE SILENCED THE PEOPLE FOR TOO LONG, BUT NOW, WE'RE DONE TAKING IT.

An illustration on the left side of the page shows a newspaper with a headline. The headline reads "HYDE PHARMA EXPOSED FOR POLLUTING RIVER". Below it, another headline reads "LOCAL JOURNALIST DROPS GAUNTLET ON GREEDY PHARMA COMPANY". A photograph of a woman is visible at the bottom of the newspaper. On the right side of the page, a man wearing a red hard hat and a white lab coat stands with his hands in his pockets. A speech bubble points from him to a text box containing a statement from HydePharma.

**HYDE PHARMA  
EXPOSED FOR  
POLLUTING RIVER**

**LOCAL JOURNALIST  
DROPS GAUNTLET  
ON GREEDY  
PHARMA COMPANY**

AT HYDEPHARMA, OUR MISSION HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO IMPROVE LIVES AND PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT. RECENT CLAIMS ACCUSING US OF POLLUTING THE RIVER ATA-ADOO AND SPREADING MISINFORMATION ARE NOT ONLY BASELESS BUT DEEPLY MISLEADING. WE OPERATE UNDER STRICT ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS AND HAVE PARTNERED WITH INDEPENDENT ORGANISATIONS TO ENSURE TRANSPARENCY IN ALL WE DO.

IN TODAY'S DIGITAL AGE, DISINFORMATION CAN SPREAD RAPIDLY, FUELLED BY GROUPS WITH HIDDEN AGENDAS. WE URGE EVERYONE TO RELY ON VERIFIED FACTS. HYDEPHARMA REMAINS COMMITTED TO THE WELLBEING OF OKYENA AND THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE.



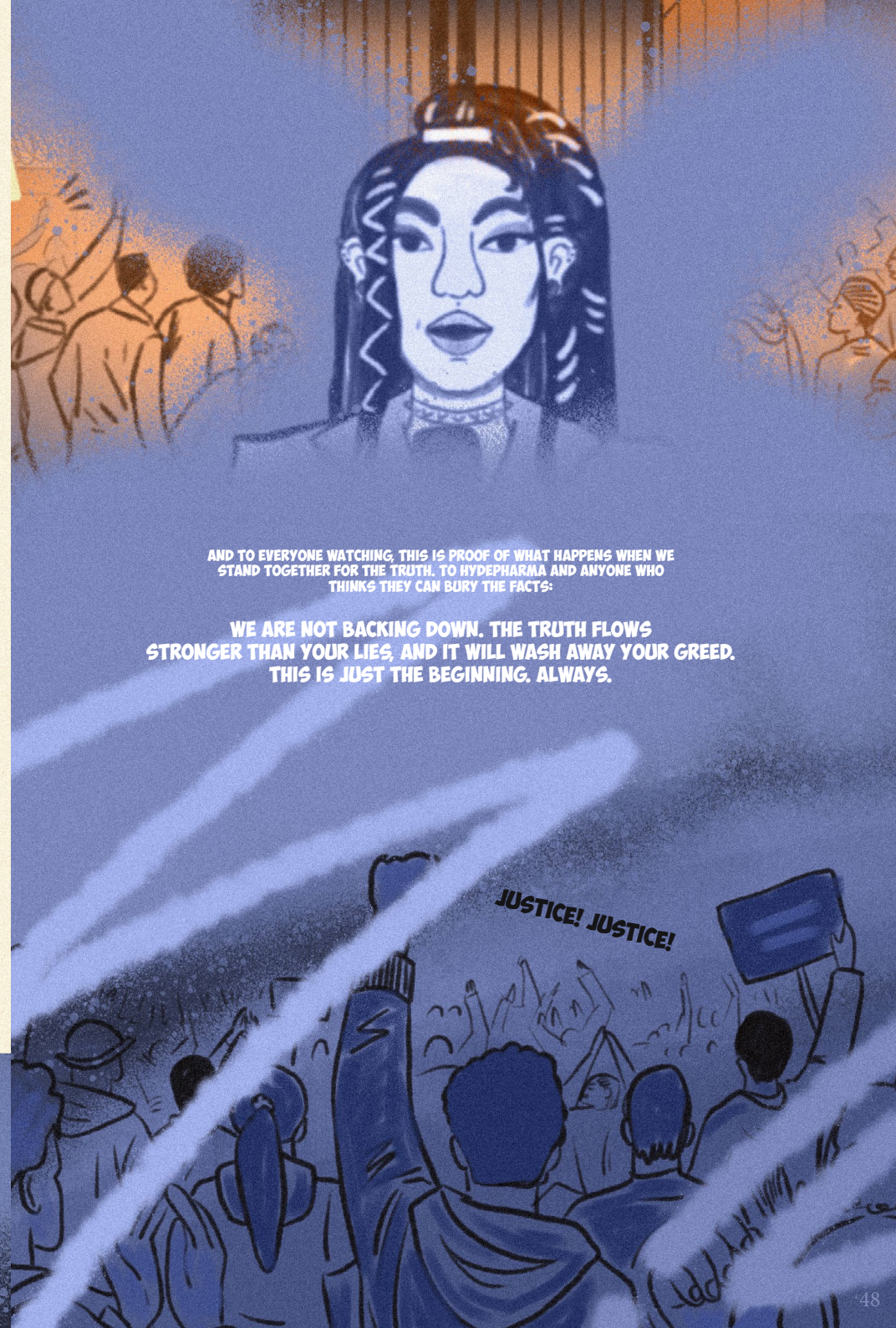




I'M REPORTING LIVE FROM THE GATES OF HYDEPHARMA'S OKYENA PLANT, WHERE AUTHORITIES HAVE LAUNCHED A FULLSCALE RAID FOLLOWING MOUNTING EVIDENCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL VIOLATIONS AND CORRUPTION. WHAT BEGAN AS WHISPERS OF DISCONTENT HAS NOW GROWN INTO A ROAR, AS BRAVE WHISTLE-BLOWERS AND INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATORS UNCOVERED YEARS OF DECEPTION HIDDEN BEHIND THESE WALLS.


AFI (CONT'D)  
FOR TOO LONG, HYDEPHARMA POLLUTED OUR RIVERS, OUR LANDS, AND OUR MINDS — DISMISSING US AS POWERLESS. BUT TODAY, THE PEOPLE OF OKYENA ARE PROVING THEM WRONG. THIS RAID ISN'T JUST ABOUT UNCOVERING ILLEGAL PRACTICES; IT'S ABOUT HOLDING A CORPORATION ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE LIVES IT DESTROYED.

OFFICIALS HAVE ALREADY CONFIRMED THE RECOVERY OF DOCUMENTS THAT MAY LINK HYDEPHARMA TO THE SYSTEMATIC COVER-UP OF TOXIC WASTE DUMPING AND THE DELIBERATE SPREAD OF DISINFORMATION TO SILENCE THIS COMMUNITY. THIS IS MORE THAN A VICTORY, IT'S A RECKONING.



AND TO EVERYONE WATCHING, THIS IS PROOF OF WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE STAND TOGETHER FOR THE TRUTH. TO HYDEPHARMA AND ANYONE WHO THINKS THEY CAN BURY THE FACTS:

**WE ARE NOT BACKING DOWN. THE TRUTH FLOWS STRONGER THAN YOUR LIES, AND IT WILL WASH AWAY YOUR GREED. THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING. ALWAYS.**



THERE SHE IS — THE VOICE OF OKYENA!  
YOU SHOULD'VE SEEN YOURSELF UP THERE, AFI.  
TOOK DOWN AN EMPIRE WITH NOTHING BUT A  
MICROPHONE AND A BACKBONE.


IT WASN'T JUST ME. IT WAS EVERYONE  
— THE PEOPLE, THE BLOOD HOUNDS, YOU  
TWO. THIS WAS A TEAM EFFORT. I JUST...  
TOLD THE STORY.

AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT MATTERED.  
IN THE END, TRUTH CUTS THROUGH THE  
NOISE. DISINFORMATION MAY SPREAD  
FAST, BUT IT'S FRAGILE. ONCE YOU  
SHINE A LIGHT ON IT, IT CRUMBLES.

YOU'RE THAT LIGHT. DON'T SELL YOURSELF SHORT,  
AFI. YOU USED EVERY TOOL YOU HAD — YOUR  
VOICE, YOUR CONNECTIONS, AND EVEN A LITTLE TECH  
MAGIC FROM YOURS TRULY.

I'LL GIVE YOU THAT ONE - YOUR AI  
WIZARDRY CAME IN HANDY. EXPOSING  
THOSE FAKE ACCOUNTS, TRACKING THEIR  
BOYS AND 'HACKTIVIST-ING' THEM...

IT JUST GOES TO SHOW WHAT TECHNOLOGY  
CAN DO WHEN IT'S IN THE RIGHT HANDS.



THAT'S THE THING ABOUT TECHNOLOGY,  
AFI. IT'S NOT GOOD OR BAD — IT'S HOW  
WE USE IT. AI DOESN'T CREATE LIES,  
PEOPLE DO, BUT IT CAN ALSO AMPLIFY  
TRUTH, LIKE IT DID FOR YOU.

THE HAND THAT WIELDS  
THE HAMMER...

EXACTLY...

THE RIVER STILL HAS A LONG WAY TO  
HEAL, OUR PEOPLE, TOO. BUT WITHOUT  
THE POISON AND TOXICITY IN OUR MIDST...

AND THE LIES THAT MAKE IT  
FESTER AND SPREAD...

OKYENA WILL BE FINE.

I THINK SO, TOO. NO, I KNOW SO. IT'S  
NOT JUST ABOUT WHAT WE  
EXPOSED — IT'S ABOUT WHAT WE  
BUILT. PEOPLE AREN'T AFRAID TO ASK  
QUESTIONS ANYMORE. THEY'RE  
READY TO FIGHT FOR ANSWERS.

AND THAT'S HOW WE KEEP  
DISINFORMATION IN CHECK — BY  
STAYING VIGILANT AS A PEOPLE.

AND BY PRACTICING RESPONSIBLE AND  
ETHICAL JOURNALISM.



## IMPRINT

**Publisher**  
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.  
Media Programme Sub-Saharan Africa  
Currents of Truth  
A Journalist's Quest for Justice in the Age of AI

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**ISBN**  
978-1-0370-4626-1 (print)    978-1-0370-4627-8 (e-book)

Download an electronic copy of Currents of Truth – A Journalist's Quest for Justice in the Age of AI from [www.kas.de/mediaafrica](http://www.kas.de/mediaafrica)

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**Printing**  
Typo Printing Investments, Johannesburg, South Africa