



IN

What do victims of human rights abuses expect from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?

The opinions are varied but Chris Ribeiro will be satisfied with nothing less than the prosecution of his parents' killers, reports ALICE COETZEE.

Voice of grief

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"IF MY parents' killers get amnesty, it will be like having my parents killed for the second time," says Chris Ribeiro. He can neither forgive nor forget the assassination of Fabian and Florence Ribeiro, who were gunned down in their Mamelodi home on 1 December 1986.

Carrying his grief like a constant, dark shadow, Chris, 32, says it has become a personal crusade to find the killers and see them brought to justice. "If the killers are not going to face the music then I am not interested in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. If the commission's purpose is just to establish the state's guilt - something we all know - then it will be futile. The intent should be prosecution," he says.

According to the draft bill, the commission will not itself have the power to prosecute. The proposal is that people who committed offences before or on 5 December 1993 will receive amnesty in exchange for full disclosure of the truth. Perpetrators who do not take part in this process will be liable for prosecution and the commission will forward their names to the attorney-general who will decide whether or not to prosecute. Amnesty is not automatic however, particularly in the case of heinous crimes.

Chris is adamant that the commission must have full powers of investigation. "I don't want anybody to be protected, from PW Botha downwards," he says.

Fabian Ribeiro was a prominent medical doctor in Mamelodi, his wife a businesswoman. Both were dedicated and respected community

Running into the house he found his father shot in the head so many times that blood was spurting out. Florence had been shot in the chest. Chris held her she sighed once, as if to say goodbye.

In the aftermath of shock and confusion, the police were not called, yet both the father and mother were taken to the house. Afterwards he learned that the police had been stationed in the street behind the house. A group of soldiers was further down the road preventing people from passing the house.

The ambulance men found that the father was dead. She was taken to Mamelodi Hospital and died through the township and she was taken to the hospital.

The house was sealed and Chris was threatened to shoot him if he persisted in his quest to get him away. "They were removing a body from the house."

In the subsequent arraignment of the father, the attorney-general for Information stated that the death of the father was linked to the ANC, PAC and Azapo. Five years later the commission established that there was sufficient evidence to link the Ribeiro's deaths. Yet there were no charges. Noel Robey, who was linked to the father's death, had his move was made to extradite him.

The commission has not yet