



**MINISTRY: FINANCE  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**ADDRESS TO THE LAUNCH OF  
“MANDELA – THE AUTHORISED PORTRAIT”**

**MANDELA HOUSE, JOHANNESBURG, 09 OCTOBER 2006**

**TREVOR A MANUEL, MP**

Director of Ceremonies

Mr President;

Madiba and Aunt Graca

Trustees of the Mandela Foundation

Your Excellencies

Distinguished Guests

I was so completely overwhelmed by Comrade Kathy’s call last week that I did not pause to consider what the assigned task was. How do you make a speech about a book, when you are not its author, critic, salesman, or possess some profound academic knowledge about the subject? Well, unfortunately, here I am – only because I was too shocked to ask Comrade Kathy the questions last week.

I am sure that the biggest challenge to the Mandela family, to the publishers and the authors was to ward off the inevitable feeling, “Not another biography”. This is the difficult paradigm within which, I am sure, they had to set about their tasks.

So, they took the exciting past 88 years of South Africa’s history, and into this history they wove the footprints of Madiba – a traverse from Mveso, to Qunu, to Johannesburg, 12 African States – including an important stint in Ethiopia, back, Durban, Pretoria, Robben Island, Victor Verster, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town – succeeding in this journey to provide a remarkable account of this country, and continent, and of the special love of the subject for all of it. Of course, more importantly, there is the manner in which Madiba was shaped by his circumstances and how he, in return, contributed to shaping history. But, if this was all they accomplished, we would have had just another dense authorised biography.

Then the innovation – the accounts and perspectives of 58 people from around the world who interacted with Madiba – as friends, comrades, fellow-prisoners, prison warders, celebrities, colleagues, employees, and even the odd successor – and have captured the mosaic of his life.

Let me attempt to share with you from the portrait a flavour of the measure of Madiba

- There is this early account by Pallo Jordan of one whom describes as “always sets a great store by what he had learned and absorbed in the rural setting,” through to Billy Nair’s description of Madiba being both a democrat and a gentleman of the first order.
- There is the humility and caring described by so many, but few as poignantly as by Eddie Daniels.
- There are several accounts of Madiba, the “respectful militant” – apparent from his communications with his captors to the messages conveyed to a

range of people from commoners to heads of government, whose policies he obviously disagreed with.

- The most amazing story of friendship is perhaps told by President Clinton who writes, “Mandela will never know how much he helped me get through that period.”
- The book is replete with examples of the moral leadership demonstrated by Madiba, a leadership by example. President Mbeki writes, “I hope that people like Madiba and others of that senior leadership see in the younger people like us that they have succeeded in a way in replicating themselves.”

But, before you arrive at the conclusion that the book is the beatification of Nelson Mandela in print, let me advise that there are both counter accounts of these glowing accounts and curious idiosyncracies – I encountered the word “Anglophile” more times in this book than in almost any other.

Do the editors and publishers succeed? I want the reader to be the judge of that. Though this portrait left me wondering about the bits not yet recorded. What would Moses Kotane’s recall be of the differences on the formation of uMkhonto we Sizwe? What would former President F W De Klerk’s recollection be of that wonderful trio of photographs on page 253? How would Nkosi Mangosotho Buthelezi want the entry of the IFP into the negotiations to be recorded in history? Or, what may have happened in our history if Madiba and Cecil Williams had followed the correct security procedures on that fateful trip to Durban? We can but wonder about these and many other stories told and untold in this wonderful compilation.

The authors have woven this strong thread of soft power throughout the book – Madiba’s style is that of persuasion and example – consistently applied to a variety of circumstances. The power is not soft because of the absence of any other means – Madiba obviously learnt from his many lunches at Kapitan’s that

the soft power works only if people on the other side understand that you can use the masala if the need arises.

But perhaps, the strongest sense that this portrait conveys is that Ubuntu is real – we are because they are – and that the values of Ubuntu and the commitments to service are as noble now as they were in Qunu in 1920's, only perhaps more needed now to define us as Africans who care in a caring democracy.

I want to express my sincerest appreciation to all who were involved in this production and with it the hope that the messages will be understood, and the life of Madiba, so graphically accounted, emulated.

Thank You