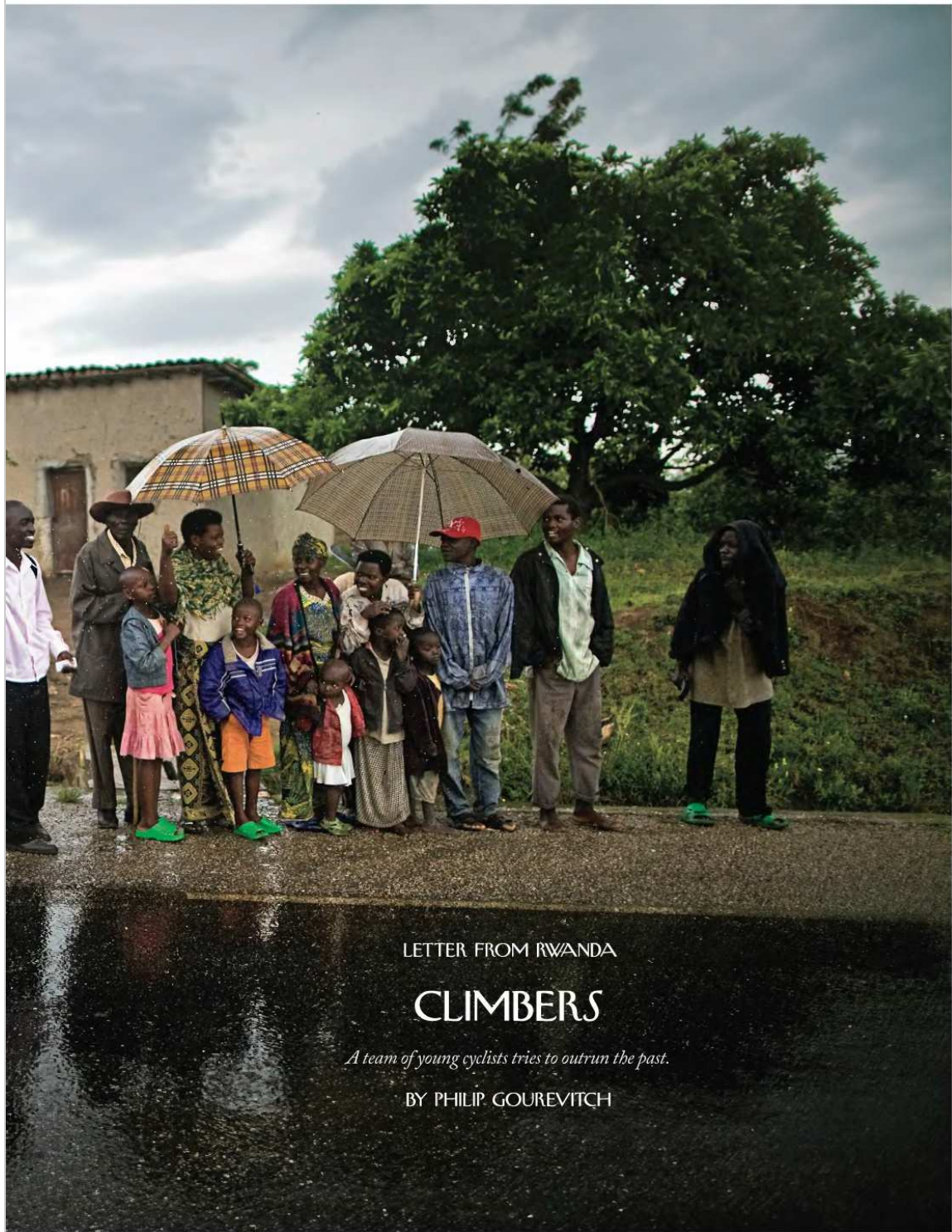




"This is the land of second chances," the coach of Team Rwanda says. The riders—Hutus and Tutsis—find that cycling gives suffering a



LETTER FROM RWANDA

CLIMBERS

A team of young cyclists tries to outrun the past.

BY PHILIP GOUREVITCH

MAGNUM

purpose. Above, team members compete in the Tour of Rwanda, in November, 2010. Photographs by Dominic Nabr.

Gasore Hategeka bought his first bicycle in 2008. It was a heavily used, Chinese-made single-speed, and it cost thirty-five thousand Rwandan francs—roughly sixty dollars. Gasore, who was about twenty years old, had worked for nearly half his life before he could afford it. His father had once owned a bicycle, and although Gasore told me that he could not remember much from when he was young, he said, “I liked how the bike worked, the device. I remember him carrying me on the bike to work the fields far from our village, and when my father died I thought of the bike.” So he felt a calling, or that is how he liked to explain himself. He said, “It was my dream always—it was always in my head, the bike.” When Gasore spoke of *the bike*, he meant something almost mystical: the embodiment of an ideal of self-propulsion.

Gasore isn't sure exactly when he was born, so he doesn't know if he was nine or ten in 1997, when his father died. His mother had died when he was an infant, and his father had remarried and had more children. Sometimes his father came home, and sometimes he brought food, but not most of the time. He was a hard drinker, who got so far gone that he couldn't afford the next drink—and Gasore said that the thirst, plus tuberculosis, did him in. But Gasore didn't sound sure about that, either. He kept qualifying his account of

his father's death with the words “I think.” The way he told his story, there was only one thing certain about his childhood. “I had to fend for myself, or else die,” he said.

In northwest Rwanda, in the wet, chilly foothills of the Virunga volcanoes, the soil is black from lava, and ideal for growing potatoes. As a small child, armed with a sack, Gasore began making the rounds of village trading centers to scavenge fallen bits of potato. On good days, he might find a banana or an onion, too. When he was orphaned, he became a *maibobo*, a street kid—one of hundreds of thousands of children in Rwanda without adults to shelter them. Amid the country's general poverty and hardship, theirs was a particularly mean existence, but for Gasore it was not such a big change. As he grew, the potato dealers put him to work, filling the hundred-kilo sacks that they trucked out to the rest of Rwanda. He was paid a coin here, a coin there, and, because he knew how to live without money, whenever he saved five hundred francs (nearly a dollar) he hid it away.

In time, he began carting potatoes on wooden bikes—Flintstonean scooters made from machete-hewn planks and beams, and fitted with machete-whittled wheels—and, when he was grown, he found his place among the labor gangs that loaded the potato sacks onto trucks. Now he could earn as much as

five hundred francs a day. Still, he allowed himself only one expense that wasn't strictly a necessity. “There were guys who had bikes you could rent by the hour to learn to ride,” he said. “When I had a little money, I went, and the owner of the bike would run behind and push me. Then I'd go back to work, and when I got paid I'd buy another lesson.” Like a lot of Rwandans, Gasore didn't know how to read or write, but he could count his money. Ten thousand francs was the price of a hundred-kilo sack of potatoes, and when he had it he bought one. He planted the potatoes on a patch of land that his father had left him, and a few months later, when he sold his crop, he had multiplied his wealth fourfold. “Immediately, in my head, there was the bike,” he told me.

Rural Rwandans tend to spend their lives within a day's walking distance—roughly a fifteen-mile radius—of their homes. In that limited geography, the bicycle is the prevalent form of mechanized transport. Few Rwandans can afford a bike, yet where there is one it can pay for itself. On the same day that Gasore bought his he used his remaining five thousand francs to join the local bike-taxi association. Gasore preferred hauling cargo to passengers, and the longer the trip the better: he liked to see the country, and he liked the workout. There isn't much flat land in Rwanda, and the northwest is all peaks and troughs. Gasore's village, Sashwara, sits at one of the highest points on the main road, a mile and a half above sea level. To the town of Gisenyi, on the border with Congo, is about forty miles, and downhill almost all the way. For Gasore, who frequently made the round trip in a day, the steep climb home was his favorite part. Although he could make as much as two thousand francs on the Gisenyi run, he took even greater pleasure in making good time.

When he told me his story, Gasore never brought up the defining cataclysms of recent Rwandan history: the genocide of 1994, or the civil war that preceded it and the renewed war that devastated the northwest in its aftermath. He had grown up in the midst of inescapable violence—at least eight hundred thousand people were exterminated in a hundred days, when the government mobilized mobs from the



“Why is everyone’s valuable input so stupid?”

Hutu majority to exterminate the Tutsi minority. Millions more, most of them Hutus, were displaced from their homes or fled into exile. Gasore's family was Hutu, but he didn't speak about that. In accounting for himself, he told only of private hardships, and of how he had pedaled away from them as fast as he could. His only interest in history was to make his mark in it as a cyclist. When he lived on the street as a boy, he had caught glimpses of the Tour of Rwanda, a gruelling, multi-stage bicycle race that winds through the country for a week every year, and, he told me, "I asked myself whether, one day, I would have the chance to do that."

In 2007, a national cycling team was established, and shortly before Gasore began riding his taxi-bike the team set up its training camp twenty-five miles east of Sashwara, in the town of Ruhengeri. As he plied his trade routes, Gasore watched the helmeted racers whiz by, dazzling in their tight Team Rwanda jerseys and shorts—in the national colors of blue, yellow, and green—crouched over the curved handlebars of their slender road bikes, pedalling in close formation. "I would chase them," he told me. "Even when I had a passenger, I would race after the racers." On the long descent to Gisenyi, he could keep up for three minutes at a stretch. He began to train every morning before work, pushing himself up hills and down. He called out to the racers to ask when they'd be by again, and he'd lay in wait for them. Once, he stripped everything he could off his fatigued taxi-bike—passenger seat, cargo racks, fenders, kickstand. "Then, when I joined them, we were really riding together," Gasore said. For eight months, he trained alone, until, he said, "I told myself, 'I can do it.'"

One of the Team Rwanda riders, Innocent Sibomana, was from Sashwara, too, and had also started as a taxi-biker. Sibomana, as everyone called him, encouraged Gasore to enter some local races. Gasore qualified for the district competition, then the regional competition, and before long he turned up with his taxi-bike at a national race. He did well enough that the Team Rwanda coach took notice and gave him a racing bike. In June of 2009, he brought him onto the team. Gasore had been riding for about a year.

In February of 2010, Team Rwanda

flew to West Africa, to ride in the Tour of Cameroon, against teams from across Africa and from Europe. Gasore didn't do so well or so badly during the first stages. Early on the third day, he rode onto the gravel- and litter-strewn shoulder of the road, got a puncture, and lost time while he waited for the team's follow car to screech up and replace his tire. He caught up with the peloton—the main pack of riders—then did it again: cut onto the shoulder and flattened out. This time, when he rejoined the pack, he got impatient with his teammates. It seemed to him they weren't riding very ambitiously. The strategy and the tactics of cycling in a team road race are devilishly complex. At the finish of each stage, riders are ranked both individually and by team, but the Tour is won by the sum of the daily rankings. Teamwork is essential, not only within a team but also among teams—to economize on wind drag, conserve energy, wear out opponents, attack and break away or fend off others' attacks—and teams play off one another in a constant drama of shifting alliances. Gasore knew from his training that he was to hang in with the group, at least until the final stretch. But in the middle of the race, in the middle of the pack of nearly a hundred riders, he felt that the training made no sense.

"At a certain moment, I didn't respect the rules," Gasore said. During a steep climb, he took off and outstripped everyone. He was well out in the lead by the top of the hill, all alone. He looked back and hesitated, but he heard voices cheering—his coach was waving him on, shouting, "Go, go!"—and he redoubled his effort. He didn't win the Tour, but when he climbed onto the podium at the finish line that afternoon, Gasore was the first Rwandan cyclist ever to take first place in a stage in professional international competition.

Gasore is a quiet, watchful man, not large but physically powerful. In his presence, you can feel the feral solitude of the boy who held his own among other vagabond children. I met him in the spring of last year, at a one-story brick house in the shade of a pair of towering, fruit-laden avocado trees, off a dirt lane in Ruhengeri. This is where Team Rwanda's coach, Jonathan Boyer, a fifty-

five-year-old American whom everyone calls Jock, lives with his pets: Zulu the dog, Kongo the cat, and Jambo the pied crow. Every week, the team gathers in Ruhengeri for three or four days of training camp. Gasore, who lives nearby, had arrived early, but a number of his teammates had to pedal more than a hundred miles to get there. As they rolled in, they disappeared into the hot shower—a luxury that none have at home—then hung around, swapping news, getting their bikes tuned by the team mechanic, and updating their Facebook pages, or simply gazing at photographs of themselves in action on Jock's computers. The mood was homey and easy, and, as his teammates gathered, Gasore seemed to relax and brighten; in the team, he said, he had a family.

Many of the riders speak of Jock as the team's father, and he refers to them as his boys. Rwanda, of course, is best known for its fratricidal past, but Jock never inquires about the riders' histories beyond what they wish to tell him. "I see them as their potential and nothing else," he told me. Seventeen years ago, during the genocide, the riders were young boys. They had no agency in the crimes that defined their nation. All of them, Hutu and Tutsi, had been scarred, and they knew each other's stories. They knew how they had been divided by identity in the past, and that those divisions still figure in Rwandan life, but they wanted to be known for something else. "Rwanda needs heroes," a sports fan in Kigali, the capital, told me, and by doing something that every Rwandan could identify with—riding bicycles—these young men were fulfilling that need.

Cycling is an excruciating sport—a rider's power is only as great as his capacity to endure pain—and it is often remarked that the best cyclists experience their physical agonies as a relief from private torments. The bike gives suffering a purpose. Jock, who was one of America's foremost cycling champions in the nineteen-eighties, told me that he got into racing to get out of the house after his parents divorced. "I relate to pain," he said. Gasore's home-town teammate, Sibomana, told me much the same thing. When he bought his first bike (like Gasore, with earnings from growing potatoes), Sibomana had gone joyriding. With the bike, he felt rich and tried to act

accordingly, like a man of leisure and ease: "Every time I'd come to a beautiful place, I'd pedal around, checking it out." Then he took up racing, and he found the hardship addictive. "The bike is good. I forgot all the pain I had before I joined the team," Sibó told me. "Cycling is like a fatal drug. When you get into it, you don't want to do anything else. You don't look to one side or another."

The Team Rwanda riders I met in Ruhengeri had all started out as taximen or cargo haulers, and that made sense to Sibó. "After the war, the people where I'm from really worked a lot," he said, and added, "To get out of the past, I think the only way is to work." A boom in the potato market had allowed many of his neighbors to buy pickup trucks and build new houses, and as they toiled in the fields, he said, he pedaled his bike. With his share of the team's prizes, he had bought goats, hired field hands to work his potato patch, and installed electricity in his grandmother's house, where he lived. Being on Team Rwanda made him a star to the people in his village—not because it made him different, he said, but because his effort made him familiar. "They know that I suffer a lot. It's more like they have pity for me, and they know that if I've earned something it's because I worked too hard."

In the morning, in Ruhengeri, Jock and his girlfriend, Kimberly Coats, who helps manage the team, prepared breakfast, heaping a bowl for each rider with several pounds of food: a thick layer of porridge, topped with bread, scrambled eggs, an avocado or two, and a half-dozen bananas. Then everyone pedaled out to the main road to warm up with a ten-mile climb in the high mountain air. Jock rode alongside on a motorbike, and I sat behind him. After a while, he split the riders into three teams to race one another, almost entirely uphill, to a finish line about thirty miles away. Everyone on the winning team would get a prize of two thousand francs. In a country where the average daily wage is perhaps eight hundred francs, Jock said, "It's enough to give them a good motivation."

The race ran between shabby peasant villages, through tea plantations and fields planted with beans, carrots, and corn, past herdsmen with long staffs following cattle, a work gang of convicted *génocidaires*, roadside barbers, and

schoolgirls skipping and singing in pleated smocks. It began to drizzle, and Jock urged the riders on as the pavement grew slick. At one point, a local cargo-bike rider found himself in the midst of the racers, and started cranking to keep up for a hundred feet, straining in his flip-flops, his rear fender laden with three bleating goats. Children on the road shoulders cheered and sprinted alongside till they got winded and fell away laughing. The riders from the northwest were familiar presences, often hailed by name. And yet the distance between the athletes—on their expensive road bikes, with their American coach following, iPhone stopwatch in hand—and the world that they tore through seemed as though it could be measured in centuries.

Five years ago, Jock Boyer lived with his mother in the house where he grew up, in Carmel, California, and ran a bike shop in Marina, just up the coast. As a boy, he dreamed of becoming a big-animal veterinarian in Africa. "That's all I wanted to do," he said. In his early twenties, he'd spent a month travelling through South Africa, Rhodesia, Mozambique, Swaziland, and Lesotho, and he said, "I absolutely adored it." But, in early 2006, when his boyhood friend Tom Ritchey asked him to come along for a cycling adventure to Rwanda, Jock said no. Tom told him that was a mistake. He had recently returned from a mountain-biking trek there, and he described the journey as the most meaningful experience of his life. Tom was a celebrated bike designer and bike builder (he is known as an inventor of the mountain bike), and his work had made him wealthy. But his wife had just left him, and he'd set off for the trip in despair. Rwanda snapped him out of it. A decade after the genocide, an influx of foreign visitors had come to Rwanda, and, like many of them, Tom was astonished to find that the country felt alive with belief in a better future. For Rwandans, existence meant forgiveness, or, at least, a capacity to endure the unforgivable; there was no choice. Tom, an evangelical Christian, wanted to serve, and he believed that he could serve Rwanda by doing what he did best: bikes.

The country's chief export was coffee, and Tom had been introduced to Rwanda

by an American businessman named Dan Cooper, who helped bring Costco and Starbucks into the local coffee market. But the harvest was still transported largely on foot, or balanced in small bundles on the ubiquitous Chinese and Indian one-speed bikes. In the absence of better transportation, crops rotted, and economic life stagnated. To make the process more efficient, Tom was designing an elongated cargo bike that could carry far larger loads. He and Dan were tapping their networks—influential businessmen, Christians, and cyclists—to get the bikes made and sent to Rwanda. They called their nonprofit organization Project Rwanda, and to help launch it they were organizing a national bike rally, the Wooden Bike Classic, where they would introduce mountain biking to Rwandans. Tom wanted Jock to be there.

Jock shared Tom's passion for bicycles, and his Christian faith; he was a Seventh-Day Adventist, and a devoted reader of evangelical literature. But, he told me, "I didn't know where Rwanda was. I didn't really know much about the genocide, and wasn't really interested in knowing. All my life, I've rarely looked at TV, never read magazines, never got newspapers, never listened to the radio. I knew what was going on in my world and that sufficed. I did my thing."

Jock's thing was cycling. In Moab, Utah, where he was born, his father worked as a surveyor and a prospector of gold and uranium. Jock, who shares something of Sam Shepard's lean, wind-planed handsomeness, made him sound like the father in a Shepard play: a dreamer and wanderer, an unaccountable man, who would disappear to go prospecting in the desert or to follow a rumor of fortune to Mexico. Jock was six when his mother left the marriage and took her three kids to California. She came from the Swift family, of the Chicago meat-packing firm Swift & Company—her grandfather was the general manager of the Chicago Union Stock Yards when Upton Sinclair published "The Jungle"—and there was enough money in that inheritance to buy the house in Carmel and to pay tuition at the best private schools. Other people's fathers taught Jock to ride a bike. He took to it immediately: the simultaneous sensations of escape and of pursuit. He began racing, and winning, when he was fourteen, and at seventeen

he left for Europe, where he rode, mostly on French teams, for the next fifteen years. In 1981, he was the first American cyclist to compete in the Tour de France.

Jock completed the Tour five times, and at his best, in 1983, he finished twelfth. As an American abroad, he had no great following. He was a cyclist's cyclist, and even among his own kind he

A bad decade followed: his Dutch partners squeezed him out of his business; he made an unhappy marriage, cheated on his wife with a teen-ager, and wound up in jail for lewd acts with a minor. It was as if, in giving up racing and coming home, he had caused his life to come unstrung. In 2003, when he got out of jail, and got divorced, he got back

The Wooden Bike Classic was held in the town of Kibuye, which sits on the shore of Lake Kivu, amid a jigsaw puzzle of hilly peninsulas and deeply carved coves. The landscapes in Rwanda are unfailingly picturesque, and, among them, Kibuye is known as a place of uncommon natural enchantment. By contrast, the scores of cyclists rolling in from



A former street kid, Gasore Hategeka earned money for a bicycle by loading potato trucks. "It was always in my head, the bike," he said.

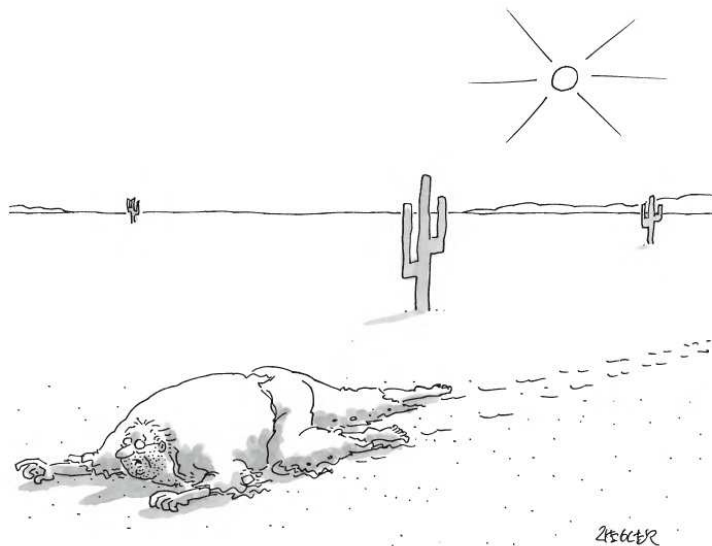
was seen as solitary: a Bible reader, a teetotaler, and, even more eccentrically among the protein-mad carnivores on the circuit, a vegetarian, with ever-evolving theories of dietary purity. Nobody ever accused Boyer of doping. A French coach called him "un marginal," but his sense of apartness was a source of strength. In 1985, he won the punishing Race Across America, pedalling more than three thousand miles in a little over nine days, including only twenty-seven hours of sleep. In all, he had won more than forty professional races by the age of thirty-two, when he retired from competition. He spent five years in Holland, exporting bicycle parts to America, before returning to Carmel in 1992 to take up the importing end of the trade.

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on his bike. He rode at least fifty miles a day, and sometimes closer to a hundred. In his teens, he had been known as a "senior slayer," for beating seasoned cyclists, and now he beat riders half his age. When he turned fifty, he announced that he would ride again in the Race Across America, in a new category of competition that required riders to take forty hours of rest. In the summer of 2006, despite a nasty crash, he won in ten days.

"That was when Tom Ritchey said, 'I need you in Rwanda,'" Jock told me. He told Ritchey he couldn't afford to leave his bike shop; he couldn't even afford airfare. Ritchey said he'd get him the ticket. Jock studied a map of Africa; the little blotch labelled "Rwanda" meant nothing to him. But he went

all over the country made for a motley company. They rode bikes welded and rewelded at the joints, with tires that exploded when fully inflated, and they wore unlikely uniforms: ski sweaters or button-down dress shirts, say, with tattered flannel trousers and shower sandals. In addition to the wooden-bike race, there was a taxi-bike road race and Rwanda's first mountain-bike race. There were blowouts, and crashes—at least one rider had to be fished out of the lake—and there were displays of raw strength and determination. The rider who won the mountain-bike race, a quiet young man named Adrien Niyonshuti, particularly impressed Jock. But what could a cyclist aspire to in Rwanda? The Wooden Bike Classic was a far cry



"Water...water...and maybe just a tiny piece of pie."

from the high-tech, corporate-sponsored world of international cycling. Then again, even the most cosseted professional is only as good as his will to accept hardship, and here was the sport stripped to its essence: human beings as engines striving against all that held them back. Before Jock went home, he told Adrien he'd come to see him again.

Adrien has a boyish, almost birdish bearing, and a shy, inward seriousness that gives no hint of his relentless force on a bicycle. He comes from a family that is now largely extinct but was known for generations for producing athletes. His maternal grandfather had been a great wrestler, who, according to family lore, grappled with Mwami Mutara Rudahigwa, Rwanda's penultimate monarch, and pinned him; his uncle Emmanuel was a national cycling champion before the genocide. Adrien started racing at fifteen, when he won a radio in a one-speed competition in his home town of Rwamagana, in eastern Rwanda. Emmanuel gave him coaching and encouragement. Then Emmanuel died, and Adrien inherited his steel racing bike, which the family had been able to recover after the genocide. One of Adrien's older brothers, a long-haul

trucker, took over as his mentor, but soon he died, too—tuberculosis, Adrien said. Still, by nineteen, Adrien was gaining recognition as the strongest young rider in Rwanda. The Wooden Bike Classic was the first race he won. His prize was the mountain bike that the Americans had loaned him to ride in the race. He loved the bike, but there was no use in being the only mountain biker in the country, so he resumed training on his road bike. When Jock said he'd come back, Adrien didn't trust him. *Muzungu* tended to come, create excitement, make promises, and disappear.

Adrien was seven at the time of the genocide. He was the youngest of his parents' nine children, and the only one still living with them at their farm, just outside Rwamagana. His mother's pet name for him was Dessert, because, she said, just when she thought she was through having children there was Adrien, "like a sweet after you've eaten your fill." The family was Tutsi, and when the genocide began, in April of 1994, Adrien's parents took him to hide among their banana trees. Sometimes he says he was too young to remember, but most of the time he says he remembers too much. His parents, who were Muslims, normally prayed five times a day, and during their first

days in the bush Adrien knew that his father was scared because he seemed to be praying constantly.

One night, Adrien heard his parents arguing. His father wanted to flee; he thought they would be safer at Adrien's grandmother's house, on the other side of town. His mother said no; they would lose everything they owned. Their farm had abundant crops, chickens, goats, and, Adrien said, "a lot of cows," the traditional measure of wealth in Rwanda. Adrien's father didn't think that the place was worth dying for, but his mother wouldn't be budged, until a gang of Interahamwe—the civilian militia dedicated to the extermination of Tutsis—came hunting for the family. Then they ran. Adrien's grandmother's house now felt too far away, so they headed to town. "There's a Swahili saying that the death of many is like a wedding," Adrien's mother told me, when I visited her in Rwamagana. The saying, she explained, meant that the members of a community live and die together: "They go where everyone else is. They don't expect to survive." She added, "It's very cynical."

In the years before the genocide, much of northern Rwanda was destabilized by civil war between the entrenched Hutu dictatorship and a predominately Tutsi rebel force called the Rwandan Patriotic Front. In 1992, the R.P.F., under the leadership of Paul Kagame (now Rwanda's President), launched a major offensive in the northeast, causing tens of thousands of Hutu civilians to flee their homes. At that time, Adrien's father gave refuge to a displaced Hutu family—fellow-Muslims—who had later settled in Rwamagana; and now, after running through the bush with his wife and son, he went to that family, and they were taken in. One of their hosts' sons was a local Interahamwe chief, so it took a few days before the neighbors began to suspect that the family was sheltering Tutsis. Still, within a week of their arrival, Adrien's family looked out to find the house surrounded by the militia. "I remember perfectly that it was between eleven-thirty and noon when they arrived," Adrien said. The killers had machetes and jugs of gasoline, and Adrien heard them say, "Let's burn them alive."

Then it began to pour. April is the height of the wet season in Rwanda, and the rain falls hard and loud. Against a

roof, it is deafening, and even outdoors its roar so drowns all other hearing that, for many witnesses, whole scenes of the genocide played out like a silent movie: people killing and dying in a gloom, seen through bright veils of rain. Adrien watched his attackers bolt for shelter, and when the rain stopped he heard people shouting that the R.P.F. had attacked a bus at the edge of town. "The Interahamwe went to go see," he said. "So that day we were not killed."

There was nowhere else for Adrien's family to go, and the next day the Interahamwe appeared again at noon. This time, as they arrived, there was shooting in the distance. The R.P.F. was taking the town. The killers fled, and the rebels moved through Rwamagana, escorting survivors to the hospital to wait for trucks to evacuate them to protection camps in Kayonza, behind the front lines. Adrien's mother told me that all along the road they saw Tutsi corpses, and when they got to the camp there was a pushcart with the bodies of three young boys and two girls. "Ah!" she cried, waving a handkerchief in front of her eyes. "I'll never be able to forget that image." By the time the R.P.F. had gained control of the country, that July, six of her children—five sons and a daughter—had been killed.

The Interahamwe had attacked Adrien's grandmother's house, where Adrien's sister and the baby she was carrying were maimed with a machete and left for dead. The two of them were the sole survivors of that massacre; later, the bodies of more than forty family members were found, stuffed into a shallow trough designed for fermenting banana mash to make beer. Adrien's family never moved back to the farm; the house was destroyed, and these days a tenant farmer works the land. The family that protected Adrien's in Rwamagana had fled with them to the camp, and returned with them, once again taking them into their home. "Even today," Adrien said, "we are like two brother families."

I spoke to Adrien for hours about the genocide, but, except for his description of the Interahamwe who came with the gasoline, he related his ordeal without any visual detail. "He didn't see much," his mother told me. Then she said, "He saw some things. He was very young and I tried not to let him see all the dead." But how could he not have? He told me

that if he goes three days without riding his bicycle the memories come on so strong that he has disabling headaches.

Adrien trained hard enough in the months after the Wooden Bike Classic to put the Americans out of his mind. Then, in February of 2007, he got a call that Jock was back in Rwanda, and was recruiting a team. (This time, when Tom Ritchey and Dan Cooper had asked Jock to go to Rwanda, they didn't have to ask twice. But just for three months, Jock said, on a trial basis.) In the course of a week, Jock tested some twenty cyclists on his CompuTrainer—a device that connects a stationary bike to a laptop to measure a rider's power and speed—and selected the top ten for intensive training. He put them up at a local church hostel, fed them heartily, gave them a little pocket money, and worked them out so fiercely that when Adrien looked back on his past five years of riding he said, "Until now, I was just joking." At the end of the month, Jock thanked half the riders and sent them home. He told the rest that they were now Team Rwanda. Adrien

made the cut, and the next month Jock picked him and one other teammate to fly to South Africa to compete in the Cape Epic, the biggest professional mountain-bike race in the world.

Adrien had never seen a great modern city before Cape Town; he had never seen the ocean; and he had never imagined a competition like the Epic, an eight-stage race across the rugged, shifting terrain of the Western Cape, in which more than a thousand bikers, riding in teams of two, covered as many as eighty off-road miles a day. There were sand traps, stream crossings, and long stretches where you had to carry your bike over boulder fields. The logistics of the operation were on a military scale. At the finish line each day, the riders were met by twelve hundred individual tents, tractor trailers with hot showers, a field mess, and brigades of support staff: mechanics, masseurs, doctors, and television crews. Adrien didn't speak English, just some schoolboy French, which allowed him to communicate with Jock. Beyond that, he could only stare.

He and Jock rode as a team, and when



they finished the first stage in twenty-fourth place he heard someone ask about him, "Where's this guy from?" Their Team Rwanda jerseys tended to attract curiosity. Wasn't Rwanda just a killing field? Adrien didn't mind; it felt good to respond by riding his bike. But his body had never felt so destroyed. Just to climb the steps to the shower trailer was a torment. "Eesh," Adrien said. "It's no place for me." He was sure he was finished. "I told Jock, 'Please, coach, this is not my race. Why did you take me to this race, coach?' 'Nah,' he told me. 'Don't worry, it's a nice race.'"

Adrien liked Jock's toughness. "He knows the suffering part of cycling better than us," he told me. "You know, some people in my country don't have anybody to push them. Like when I was in school, nobody was asking me anything. If you have somebody push you, you have to see, to use your mind. If I get strong, I help myself. I don't help him." Each day of the Epic, he rode with greater confidence. On the sixth day, he finished thirteenth, and at the end of the race he and Jock took thirty-third place over all in a field of six hundred and seven teams. (The other Rwandan rider, Rafiki Jean de Dieu Uwimana, and his teammate, another American, finished sixty-third.) Jock was astonished, but if Adrien was he didn't show it. When he returned to Rwanda, he went straight back into training. "After that," he said, "we were going to America."

The Americans—they were born before us," Rafiki told me, when I asked him about the two months that Team Rwanda spent travelling around the American West, in the summer of 2007. Many of the riders hadn't seen Kigali before they joined the team, but over the years they have got used to travelling. Jock has sent them to South Africa for intensive training at a camp run by the U.C.I. (Union Cycliste Internationale), the world bicycling federation, and flown them to U.C.I. races all over the continent. After competitions in West Africa and North Africa, the team is always full of stories of organizational chaos and corruption (fistfights with bike thieves, missed meals because caterers absconded with their fees, poorly marked routes with signs that sent half the riders off course). Rwanda, by contrast, is known for its

strict social order, and the riders take pride in that. But in America, Rafiki said, "it's another world—there's no resemblance to things here." Five Rwandan riders flew into San Francisco, loaded into Jock's motor home, and rolled through Las Vegas, and on to Utah for a week of training, then down to New Mexico, to ride in the Tour of the Gila, and back to California for more races on the way to Hood River, Oregon, where they entered the Mt. Hood Cycling Classic.

Americans who encountered the team were impressed by the riders' easy familiarity, but the Rwandans were constantly struck by the strangeness of American ways. "When we left California for New Mexico, there were places where you find someone living in the middle of nowhere," Rafiki said. "He has a house, a car, a motorbike, electricity, water—everything you need—but the guy lives all alone in the middle of a forest. You ask yourself why." Rafiki had taken to counting the miles between homes: twenty, fifty, more. "In Rwanda, everyone lives clustered together to get along," he said. "If someone can't start a fire, he can ask for a match next door. If he doesn't have a mortar for grinding, he can go borrow his neighbor's mortar. But here's this guy, living in the bush alone."

Rafiki said that he had never known real cold until his first night in an air-conditioned hotel in California. All the riders complained that they were freezing, but when Jock went to their rooms in the morning he found the beds untouched. "They said they had never had sheets, so they slept on top of the covers," he told me. Jock suggested that they take hot showers, and after that, he said, "the whole rooms would be like steam rooms. They'd go to sleep in the shower." When the Rwandans saw horses, they had to ask what they were. Jock arranged for them to go riding. At Whole Foods, they took trophy photographs of one another in the aisles. Wherever they went, Americans invited them into their homes, and the Rwandans couldn't stop laughing when they found their hosts living with animals: dogs, parrots, hamsters, fish.

Jock had brought them to America, in part, because a racer learns by racing against superior athletes. He wanted them to know what their sport could be, what they were up against. He believed that there might be a future Olympian

among them, but he knew that was impossible unless they believed it, too. He asked them to ask a lot of themselves. And he brought them to America, too, because he wanted to show them off.

Tom Ritchey and Dan Cooper had hired Jock with the idea that Team Rwanda would help to promote Project Rwanda's coffee-bike program and, more broadly, to boost Rwanda itself, as a country with a future and not just a past. But, while Project Rwanda was a not-for-profit, it was not a charity. "It's not aid," Jock insisted. Ritchey's coffee-bikes were to be sold at cost, generally on credit against the income they would generate. And the team's coach and athletes were recruited as professionals; although there was no prospect of turning a profit, the hope from the start was to attract corporate sponsorship. In the meantime, the budget—a couple of hundred thousand dollars a year—was made up, more or less hand to mouth, from donations.

Cooper told me that when he was soliciting funds for Team Rwanda a prospective donor said, "That's a lot of money for such a small number of people." Cooper disagreed. "If you're going to give," he said, "you need to give eyeball to eyeball. The further out you get, where you can't see the eyeballs you're interacting with, the less impact you have, and the more danger of potentially having a negative effect. To me, Team Rwanda represents that ideology—investing in a few individuals who will hopefully affect many individuals."

Jock worked the riders hard in America, but their inexperience showed. They dropped out of a stage in their first race, in New Mexico, and in later competitions they straggled at the back of the pack. Adrien and Rafiki felt the failure acutely. The Americans had training, technical expertise, and technique. They knew how to work together and against one another in a race. They understood gear ratios, ergonomics, and aerodynamics, while Jock struggled to impress on the Rwandans the simplest things, like not to stop pedalling when they ate or drank as they rode. In Rwanda, he kept losing riders for weeks at a time to malaria. He fussed over their diets, and pleaded with them to drink purified water, but on any given day, he said, "ninety per cent have intestinal parasites." That was easy to cure. "One pill,

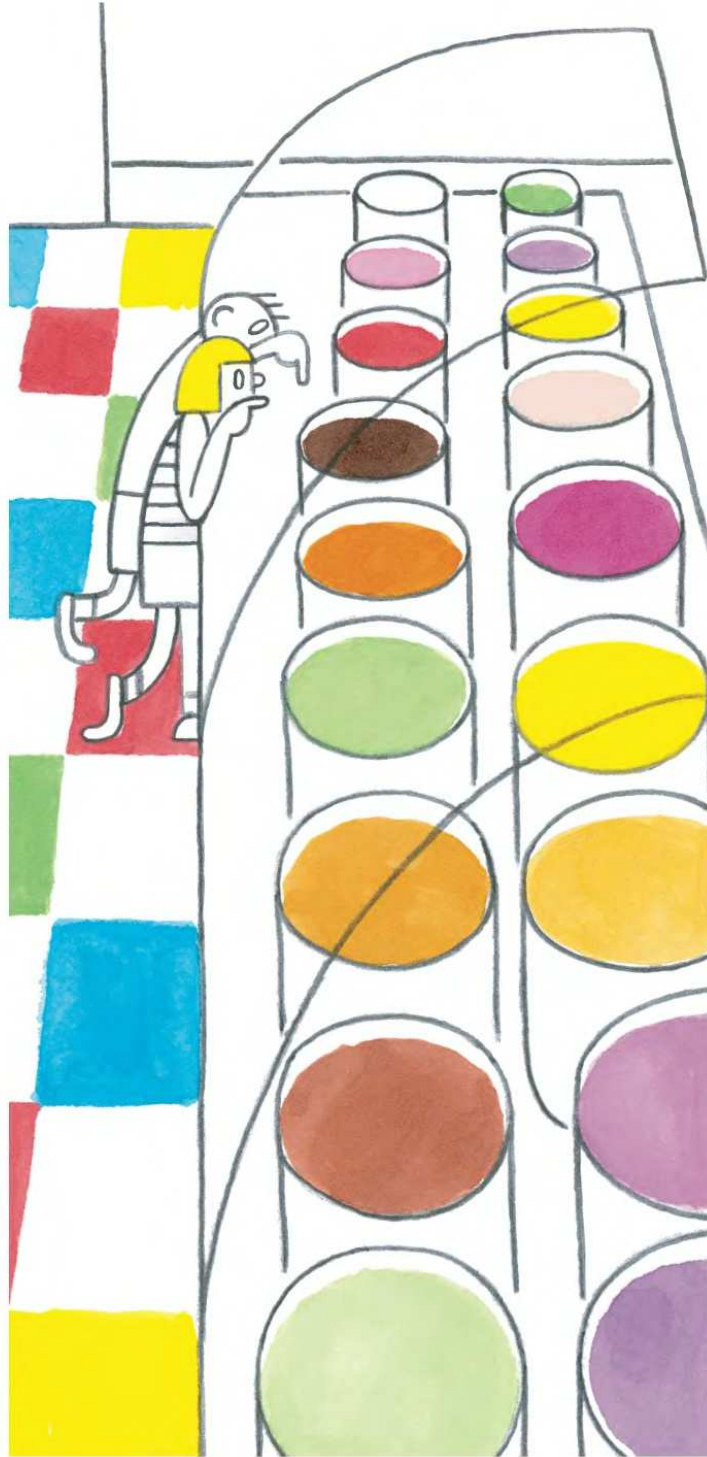
one day, gone," he said. "Except then you drink bad water again, and they're back."

To Jock, "the total frustration of dealing with people who have no habits of strategic thinking" was a great part of the appeal of working with the Rwandan riders, equal only to "the exhilaration of their raw power and ability." He'd lower a rider's seat an inch and a half, and explain how this would increase the power of his pedal strokes by five or six per cent, and the next day the seat was back at the old level. Jock saw the problem as rooted in poverty: "You might be dead tomorrow, so why think about it?" On their return from America, the Rwandans felt that they had disappointed him with their constant losses, and assumed that he would leave. But Jock had the opposite reaction. The trip made him understand how important it was for the Rwandans to win. When they got home, he put them on salary—a hundred dollars a month (more than twice the average national income), plus a small bonus each time they came to training camp—and he gave them all new bikes.

A week before the Tour of Rwanda, last November, the African Continental Championships were held in Kigali. The big event for Team Rwanda was the final road race, because the first two riders to finish would be qualified for the 2012 Olympic Games, in London. Only seven African road racers are allowed to enter the Olympics, and teams had made their way to Kigali from twenty African countries. At the starting line, there was a minute of silence to commemorate a young Rwandan spectator who had been struck and killed, a few days earlier, by the Ivory Coast team car. Then the riders were off. Adrien was Rwanda's hope, but for the first half of the ninety-mile race Gasore took and held the lead. When at last he tired, and fell back, Adrien made his move to break away on a steep hill. But as he stood up on his pedals his chain snapped. Gasore promptly swapped bikes with Adrien, so that Adrien could keep going, but although he made up much of his lost time, it was not enough to qualify him for the Olympics.

Still, the team had begun to come together. In 2008, Adrien rode again in the Cape Epic, this time with a Rwandan teammate, and they finished twenty-

SKETCHBOOK BY RICHARD MCGUIRE



sixth; then he came home and won the Tour of Rwanda; and soon afterward he was signed on to ride for Africa's top professional bike team, M.T.N. Cycling, in South Africa. Gasore's stage win in Cameroon had so inspired his teammates that another rider won two later stages of the same tour. The team had grown; now as many as sixteen riders showed up at training camp each week. The money still came mostly from America (Amway and Walmart both contributed), but Rwanda's Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Culture now paid for some of the foreign travel, and helped to underwrite the Tour of Rwanda.

The Tour had become a big deal. In 2009, the U.C.I. made it an official race on the international circuit, increasing its prize purses and its draw. The Tour that year included teams from twelve countries in Africa and Europe, and Rwandans lined the roads to watch and cheer. At the finish, in Kigali, Adrien came in third, behind a pair of Moroccans. The city was so crowded with spectators that the police presence had to be tripled to secure the cyclists a clear path. In all, Jock said, it was estimated that some three million Rwandans had seen the race. By contrast, Project Rwanda's coffee-bike project was stalled. Although a Harvard study had found that Tom Ritchey's bikes hugely increased profits for cargo haulers, the

price of getting the bikes to landlocked Rwanda (one of the most expensive destinations on earth to ship a container of freight, perhaps second only to Antarctica) made the bikes unaffordable on the local market. Cycling as a sport had become an end in itself, and the team's cyclists were becoming famous in Rwanda. Their names were on the radio, and their jerseys were recognized everywhere. "The team is working," Jock told me. "I'm flabbergasted."

Rwanda's high birth rate—five to six children in an average family—combined with a public-health revolution that helps far more of those children survive, has resulted in a population explosion. The government says that there are eleven million Rwandans, an increase of as much as a hundred per cent since the genocide, and more than half of them are under the age of twenty. Against such numbers, the success of a handful of bicyclists may seem paltry. But the team's riders were aware of their power to inspire. When they went riding at home, young men and boys would try to tag along.

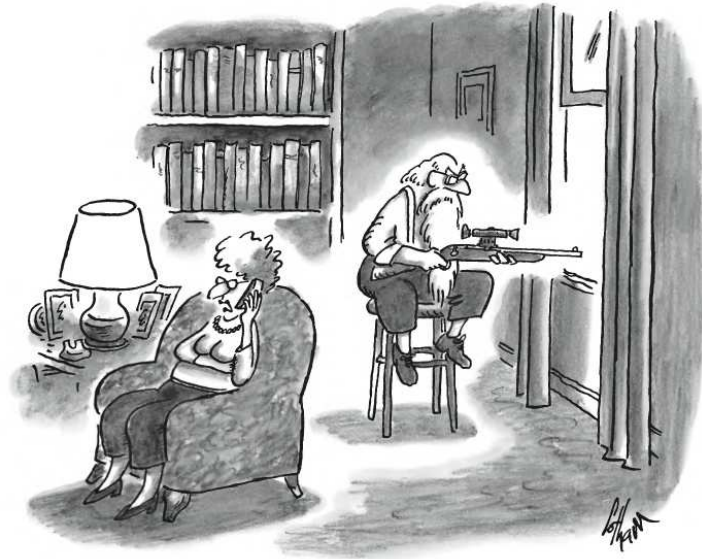
Adrien had effectively adopted a street kid in Rwamagana, a genocide orphan named Godfrey Gahemba. He joined the team at sixteen, and a year later, in 2008, he finished third in the Tour of Rwanda. Adrien loved Godfrey; everybody did. Jock thought there was no

limit to where he might go. Not long after that 2008 Tour, Adrien was in South Africa when he got a call that his father was severely ill. By the time he got home, his father was dead. Adrien stuck around for a few weeks to help his mother and to ride with Godfrey. One day, they rode alongside a local race in Rwamagana. They were passing out water bottles when Godfrey's handlebars locked with another rider's and he toppled into the road, where he was crushed by a follow car.

"I went to the funeral of this kid and it looked like every person in a hundred miles came, most of them under fifteen," Jock told me, when we met, in Kigali, in April of last year. "I asked the mayor if he'd ever seen such a crowd. The mayor said, 'This kid gave hope to so many people.'" Jock nodded at a television, which was playing footage of genocide massacre sites and survivor testimonies. "I mean, look what they're coming out of. Nothing—or worse than nothing."

April is the anniversary of the genocide, a month of resurgent memories for Rwandans, and of official commemorations. "How can a team emerge out of all that?" Jock said. "How can you change identities?" It was a good question, and for Jock it seemed personal. Tom Ritchey knew Jock's criminal record when he hired him to coach the Rwandan riders, and, as Dan Cooper said, "The more Team Rwanda gets famous and successful, the more Jock's scarlet letter ends up shining." When I met Jock, all he said about the period before he came to Rwanda was "I had a really bad time of my life then, just made some really poor decisions." The girl was sixteen in 2002, when she told police that Jock had groped her on multiple occasions in a three-year period, beginning when she was twelve. He admitted it at once, and faced the possibility of twenty years in prison. After he pleaded guilty, he was given a one-year sentence, because he was judged to be of no further threat to anyone, including the girl; he served nine months in the Monterey County jail before he was released on probation.

Jock's girlfriend, Kimberly Coats, who is forty-five, had come to work for Project Rwanda after she lost her home in Las Vegas's real-estate crash. She knew Jock's story before she met him.



"He's angry about getting old."

What's more, she had been a volunteer for fifteen years for an advocacy group for abused and neglected children. She said that when she and Jock became a couple he asked her, "If you know my past, why did you come?" She told him, "You know what I think? I think you were really stupid, you put yourself in a bad situation, and you didn't think. That's what it was." She said, "It's just so obvious to me that he's not a predator."

Jock was less forgiving of himself. Last November, we sat on a veranda at a Kigali hotel as a tremendous storm blew over the city. The sky blackened, wind bent the treetops flat, and for more than an hour rain pummelled down. Spray blew over us, till we were dripping and shivering. Jock showed no desire to move. "I totally love it," he said. "Every hurricane, I want to be in it." I asked him how, as a man in his forties, he had gone for a girl thirty years younger, not just once but repeatedly. He said that he knew her family, so they began innocently, and he said, "It was an emotional attachment, you know, best-friend attachment. We did a lot together, just normal stuff." Was he telling me that he had fallen in love with the child? You don't go to jail for being best friends. "We were always fully clothed," he said. Did he consider her a victim? "Of course. Yeah. You have to." He said, "I totally went out of the realm of what I should have done, and the trust that was put in me."

He never spoke to the girl again, and has refused to reveal her identity. "When I look back, it's just so foreign to me," he said. "It was an anomaly in my whole character. I just can't relate to any of it." He still has to register, once a year in California, as a sex offender. In the eyes of the world, he said at one point, "it would have been better if I had killed somebody." But there was nothing to be done: some wrongs cannot be made right. "I decided that I'm just going to go forward, and the past is marred," he said. Christianity was his great solace. He was born again in 1980 and baptized as an Adventist twelve years later. "I totally depend on it," he said. "Just knowing God's always there."

The American professional cyclist Scott Nydam told me that when Jock's name comes up among colleagues it never takes long before his crime is discussed. "No one understands it," he said. Nydam was raised in the Christian Reformed

Church, but he is skeptical of redemption narratives. Last year, while recovering from brain injuries sustained in bike crashes, Nydam volunteered to help coach Team Rwanda for several months, and he told me this story about Jock: "We walk into the office one time, and he's sobbing. He's watching a video, with Muhammad Ali talking about 'I'm so fast, I turn out the light and I'm in bed before it's dark. I murdered a rock.' And then there's this quote about our biggest fear is not that we're inadequate; it's that we're powerful beyond measure. And then there's an image of the movie with Brad Pitt as a boxer, and he's getting beaten to shit. And then there's Muhammad Ali, like, 'I'm the greatest, I'm the greatest.'" Nydam wondered why those flashes of footage brought Jock to tears. "He was a great cyclist," he said. "And, shit, if you fall from grace, he fucking fell from grace. I mean, how do you reconcile that? I know he was a good cyclist, but I also know he's on that watch list. How do you deal with that, other than move to Africa?"

Jock bristles at the notion that he fled to Rwanda to do penance. "I was O.K. with being where I was," he said. "I had incredible support from family and friends there. I had a business that was going. I raced. I rode. It wasn't like, you know, I need to do this humanitarian thing now." He allowed that it was "almost ironic" that Rwanda was where he had anchored. "This is the land of second chances," he said. "Murderers are walking around here all over the place. The government let them out of their prisons as they admitted to what they did, and a lot of them are building homes for the widows of families that they slaughtered." Yet he told me that was just a coincidence: "I could never have picked this place. I didn't even know the history."

A lot of Rwandans, Hutu and Tutsi, tell you that they wish that they could forget their country's history—that they could account for their own lives without having to account for the genocide and the civil wars. The urgent question in the aftermath of the genocide was: How can a people divided by such extreme and intimate bloodshed live together again? President Kagame's R.P.F., which has been the country's ruling party since 1994, proposed a seemingly simple answer: We are all Rwandans now, first

and foremost. This was the founding doctrine of the new Rwandan state, to which all its institutions and practices were to be dedicated. The extermination of close to a million people by their fellow-citizens is bound to define the country's history for generations to come. The idea, then, was to contain a hideously broken nation in a collective identity. That identity has the advantage of being significantly true—whatever subcategories you may carve them into, all Rwandans share the same nationality and language—and it has the disadvantage of any universalist diktat, that many other truths have to be suppressed, blurred, and ignored in order for it to take hold. The paradox is that in the name of putting the genocide behind them Rwandans have had it held constantly in front of them, as a warning of the perils of divided identity. And for a young generation that is scarred by its historical inheritance, but free of any direct accountability, it is not enough simply to coexist and to bury the memory of the slaughter; there is a need to make the idea of being Rwandan have greater value.

When Adrien went to South Africa to try out for M.T.N. Cycling, he went with Nathan Byukusenge, a Rwandan teammate. Early in 2009, armed thugs broke into the team house near Johannesburg. Adrien hid in his clothes closet while Nathan was beaten, and a Zambian rider was stabbed. When the thieves left, Adrien found Nathan crying, "No, no, I have to go back to my country. This country is very bad. I don't want to die in this country." Nathan was also a genocide survivor, and during the attack he felt as if it was 1994 again. Adrien, too, had endured flashbacks as he lay in his closet, but he thought that Nathan was wrong to quit the M.T.N. team. "I told Nathan, Don't think like this," he said. "This is the time to focus on training. Don't think that back there is a nice situation and you can't die." After all, not every moment of violence was historically significant: Adrien's young protégé, Godfrey, had just been killed in an entirely meaningless accident. And yet, when Nathan went home, and Adrien stayed in South Africa, they both explained the decision in terms of being a genocide survivor.

It is far easier for Tutsis, like Adrien and Nathan, to speak openly about their memories than it is for Hutus. After all,

surviving genocide is Rwanda's official story, and a few years ago the government formally began referring to the extermination as "the genocide against the Tutsis." (The traumas of the civil wars that preceded and followed the genocide are hardly acknowledged in recent official commemorations, and there has been no public accounting for the many casualties of those wars, Hutu and Tutsi.) Meanwhile, the government has promulgated uncommonly broad laws that forbid "divisionist" speech by proscribing any form of expression that a court might interpret as pitting Hutu against Tutsi; and those laws, combined with the unspoken taboo that arises from an external perception of collective Hutu blame and an internal sense of collective shame, have stifled the expression of Hutu historical trauma. The fear is that any equation of Hutu and Tutsi experience amounts to a sort of genocide negation. That concern is real: Hutu Power ideology is far from extinguished in the broad Rwandan polity. But the policies of ethnic neutrality have created a new set of confusions.

In Rwanda, it has always been uncouth to ask who is Hutu and who is Tutsi, but these days it is widely considered taboo, if not downright illegal. Rwandans, of course, know who is who, and, as a Presidential aide told me, "You'd probably have to arrest everyone in the country every night for ethnic divisionism, if you could hear how we talk about each other in our homes." Even outsiders often don't need to ask about people's ethnicity: if you talk to Rwandans who were in the country in 1994 about their family and they don't tell you that they are genocide survivors, it's a pretty sure bet that they are Hutus. That was the case for most of the riders on Team Rwanda. In the day-to-day life of the team, ethnic identity seemed irrelevant. But, when it came to reckoning with the inescapable past, the ease with which the Tutsi survivors expressed the obvious connection of their ordeals to the present was in sharp contrast to the reticence of their Hutu teammates.

When I asked Gasore if he remembered the genocide and the wars, which had been entirely absent in his account of his origins, he told me, "No, no—I was too young in that time. I was

really young." But he was the same age as Adrien. After the genocide, much of the Hutu population of the northwest had fled into Congo (then still known as Zaire), and stayed there until the end of 1996, when Kagame sent his Army to drive them home and to hunt down those who resisted. Gasore said that he had no memories of that, either. In the years that followed, remnant forces of the Hutu Power army and genocidal militias returned from Congo to Rwanda to wage a war of terror in the northwest. The Army responded with characteristic fury, and the war raged for nearly two years before the insurgency was effectively suppressed, at terrible cost to the civilians caught in the middle of it, who were accused of collaboration by both sides. Tens of thousands were killed, and hundreds of thousands forced from their homes. Gasore's village was in the middle of the war zone, and I wondered if his father's death, in 1997, might have had any connection to the conflict. No, he said: "Tuberculosis—I think."

Three other riders on the team had grown up as Hutus in the northwest at the same time as Gasore, and they did not hesitate to tell me how their families had suffered. Sibó, his neighbor in Sashwara who had brought him onto the team, recalled being displaced in 1994, and walking to Congo, carrying nothing but a gallon jug of cooking oil. Another rider spent two years with his family in the Mugunga camp, outside Goma, then returned to his village, only to flee again during the second war. He had lost a brother in the wars. The third rider from the northwest said that Hutu insurgents had killed his father in 1997, and his family then found refuge with the government soldiers on the main road. "There were many deaths in this region," he said. "I know many people who died."

Only Gasore claimed to have been untouched by history, and yet he was the only one on the team to have lost every-



thing, to have grown up totally unschooled and alone. I was curious to see the home he had made for himself, and one day last November he arranged for his friend and roommate, a high-school boy named Janvier, to show me the place. It was a day when the Tour of Rwanda passed through Sashwara, and by late morning thousands of spectators had massed there along the road's shoulders. When the first rider appeared, women began ululating, and the crowd let out a roar that grew wilder when he was recognized as Gasore. He had fought his way up a long climb to the front of the pack, and as he blew through the village, where a year and a half earlier he had been hustling taxi-bike fares, he smiled and flashed a victory sign.

I found Janvier as the throng broke up, and he took me to see the house where Sibó was raised by his grandmother, a tidy rectangle of whitewashed brick. Sibó's grandmother invited us into the parlor and found a few small wooden chairs. As we talked, she said nothing of the genocide, only that in 1994 nearly everyone she knew fled to Congo. Gasore, too, she said. Janvier agreed: they weren't there together—Janvier had come home quickly, and Gasore only later—but he was sure of it. When they returned, Sibó's grandmother said, her family was diminished: a son and a daughter and both of her sons-in-law died in Congo. And back in Rwanda they had to run again, when the infiltrators came killing and pillaging. She had taken her family to hide in the forest, but there was shooting from all sides, and government helicopters dropping bombs, so they returned after a few months, and found protection with the government soldiers. "Now it's very safe, thank God. If it continues like this until my death, I will die happy. Before, you know, we could sit here like this and you'd see everybody knocked down by bullets."

"Gasore's father died here during the second war," I said.

"I discussed it with him one time," Janvier replied. "Gasore told me that government soldiers came once, and took his father on a motorbike to Mutura, on the road to Gisenyi. They gave him a bad beating. The evening he came back, he was almost dead. And a couple of days later he died." Janvier didn't

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know why the soldiers had taken him. He told me that Gasore had said, "Maybe there was a problem."

Janvier led me through the town to Gasore's place. Along the way, we passed ragged young men, doubled over as they lugged hundred-kilo sacks of potatoes. A blind man with a cane, sporting a fedora, worked his way up a rough path of volcanic earth. Drying laundry was strewn on the hedges, and a radio somewhere played country blues.

We entered Gasore's home through a low, ill-fitting wooden door. There was a tiny mud-floored anteroom, dark and bare except for a pair of shoes that hung, soles out, on a peg beside a bike helmet. Another door opened into a chamber just big enough for a double bed, with a little space to stand at its foot and on one side. This was where Gasore and Janvier lived together, a normal sleeping arrangement in Rwanda, even a generous one—with a proper bed frame and a mattress for just two people. Until a few years ago, Gasore had lived in a less spacious house—it had no anteroom—and the upgrade had increased his rent from five dollars a month to nine. Janvier and I sat on the bed. Overhead, just beneath a roof of iron

sheeting, a clothesline sagged under a load of clean clothing, serving as Gasore's closet. The walls of the room were hung with cycling medals and race tags and snapshots of the team, and papered with clippings and posters: a Crucifixion scene, a tribute to the slain South African reggae star Lucky Philip Dube, a news photo of President Kagame, an M.T.N. Cycling postcard of Adrien, a portrait of Alicia Keys. By the head of the bed hung a large sheet of white paper, on which Gasore had begun to practice writing. Big, uneven capital letters ran across the bottom, and higher up were words he had copied: "PEN," "PULLEY," "MENU," "GO TO," "RWANDA."

The next morning, I told Gasore about my visit, and asked him if it was true that he'd gone to Congo as a boy. "Yes," he said, without any change of tone or manner. And his father? "My father was taken by soldiers. They took him to the military camp at Bigogwe, not far from where we lived. They kept him there a few days. They beat him—really beat him up seriously. He came back, and two days later he was dead."

"Were you there when he died?"

"Yes, I was there."

Gasore didn't know why his father

was taken. He didn't seem to care, either; he gave no acknowledgment that he had changed his story. He seemed to be saying, What difference does it really make? The history that he had obscured had literally given him nothing. It had rendered him a wild boy, and he had chosen not to be annihilated. By riding his bike, he had made good on that choice, and that was the story he wanted to tell. The way he had told it was untrue, and at the same time full of truth. Gasore was no less a victim of his history than Adrien was of his, but what they had more deeply in common was a horror of victimhood. "That history—that's the history of the older generation," Gasore said, speaking of the genocide and the wars. "It's the older generation who made that whole story, and we're turning the page to make a new Rwanda. I have no problem with people. For instance, the guy you saw there, Janvier, he's a Tutsi. You saw, he lives at my place, and he's a Tutsi."

Cycling is not an obvious spectator sport. On the descents, the riders knife by at fifty miles an hour, which is thrilling to behold, unless you think about their bodily integrity, in which

case it seems impossible that any of them will survive. Even on the climbs, there is no way to know what is happening in the race by standing still along the way as the riders churn by. But throughout the Tour of Rwanda last November the roadside throngs appeared endless, and, judging by the noise they made when the bikes were before them, they were not disappointed by the spectacle. I had asked Adrien's mother if she would come out to see him on the first day of the Tour, when the route ran east from Kigali and passed through Rwamagana. She said no: "He would ride by so quickly, I wouldn't even recognize him." In fact, she hadn't seen him in a year. He'd been in Rwanda for two weeks already, but they'd only spoken on the phone.

"I came for the competition," Adrien said. "And if I do the competition amid family life I will not concentrate well. So I prefer to finish the competition and then I will see the family afterward." He was very strict. And he was fragile. When we spoke before the Tour on the veranda at the team's hotel, he told me that he was not looking forward to the Rwamagana run. "It's hard when I go to the east," he said. "I see the house of my grandmother, where everyone was killed, and all the memories come back." He'd gone out that way on a training ride, and saw that his grandmother's house had long since been destroyed. He said, "I begin to think about it all again, and I try to pedal very quickly to

get away. But it never leaves my head." Adrien stopped talking, and after a moment he said, "The problem I have, especially when I win a race, and everyone else is there with their family, I have no one with me." He hung his head, sobbed, and ran from the veranda and into the hotel.

Adrien finished fifth the first day of the Tour, and the next day he rose to third place over all. The fourth stage was the long, hard mountain run from Kigali to Gisenyi. In the first hour, a Kenyan rider's bike broke on a fast descent, launching him over the handlebars to slam into one of the Rwandans, and when they disentangled they found that the Rwandan's ankle was broken. A little later, Gasore, who'd fallen behind the peloton, crashed on a patch of gravel, and skinned his right forearm and left hand. "When I am at the rear of a race, I always fall," he said.

I was riding on the back of a motorbike, and I caught up to Adrien just past Ruhengeri, where the heaviest climbing begins. The first time he'd attempted the Tour, seven years earlier, he had felt like dropping out at this point. Now it looked as though he were leading the Tour. Then the hills ahead of us lined up a little differently and I could see three cyclists cresting a rise about a mile ahead. There were no other Rwandan riders in sight, but as I cruised alongside Adrien he slowly started to separate from the peloton. He wasn't straining; he didn't even ap-

pear to be trying to break away. For miles, he climbed like that, floating alone between the front group and the main pack, until he had enough of a lead on those behind him that it would have been very hard for them to catch him. Then he unleashed his power, and for nearly twenty minutes he climbed alone, at full speed, until he caught the three riders at the front. One of them fell back, and Adrien moved into the lead position.

In the rough little villages along the road, the crowds were thick and loud, and time and again a look of ecstatic astonishment would ignite a face as someone recognized the Rwandan jersey in the lead. The air got colder as we rode past the volcanoes, and the sky got lower and darker. At midday, the light was black, and the ceiling seemed to hover almost within reach. When it began to drizzle, I thought we were passing through a cloud. Then, just as we began the long final descent to Gisenyi, a drop of three thousand feet in elevation over eighteen and a half miles, the rain crashed down.

At thirty miles an hour, the rain stung. At fifty miles an hour, I was sure it was raising welts—and I was wearing long pants and a windbreaker, with a face shield on my helmet. Adrien was as good as naked in his racing togs. He should not have been able to see a thing. The rain filled my shoes, and the drops bounced like tiny Ping-Pong balls on the tarmac; each time the road swung around the next curve, it seemed that all of us—the three riders I was chasing, and my motorbike—would go straight off into the abyss. And Adrien was trying to go faster still.

Having led the two other riders to the gates of Gisenyi, he got left seconds behind at the finish line, but he crossed it with his arms held high, fists pumping. He knew the various riders' cumulative times for all the stages so far, and thought he'd topped them. The officials had to do the math, so he waded through the downpour to sit beneath an awning. The math took a long time, and the rain would not let up. But, when the P.A. system crackled to life, Adrien was right. He'd won the yellow jersey. He leaped from his seat, straight up, with a radiant smile, and Kimberly whipped out her phone to take a picture. But, in the sec-



"This is why you read the instructions."

and that it took her to get it in position, his face collapsed into a mask of absolute loneliness.

The next day, on the return to Kigali, Adrien held on to the yellow jersey. The fans were beside themselves, and his smile held strong. But he was not happy with his teammates. Two days in a row, he had won for them, and they had not been there to help. And as the Tour progressed they did not rally. Adrien fell to second place, then seventh, then eighth, which is where he finished, five minutes behind the Eritrean champion. Now, with the races over, Adrien had to go home to visit his mother. But she didn't get to see much of him. From the minute he arrived, there was a swarm of visitors, people he knew and people he didn't know, smiling and scraping, and insisting on an audience, to explain their troubles and to tell him how he should help. Adrien retreated swiftly to the home he keeps in Kigali, a small place, enclosed by a warren of other houses. He felt much better there. "People don't know where I go, what I do, or where I live," he said. "When I stay in my home town, people ask a lot of questions and ask for money. Here I feel safe and there is no trouble."

"The poor do not like when a poor person gets somewhere," Jock said. "When riders go to America, go to Cameroon, go to South Africa, and come home, they are bombarded so much by a multitude of people, mostly family members, for money." The pressure played havoc with the team's concentration. "My riders are threatened all the time: 'Just give me money,'" Jock said. "When they're at a race: 'I need money, you've got to give me money.' It's a battle for them."

By local standards, the riders did make a lot of money. To encourage teamwork at races, Jock pooled prizes and shared them among those who took part, between that and their salaries, and sports ministry bonuses for representing Rwanda in international races, he said, solid team members make at least six thousand dollars a year—more than ten times what they earned before joining the team. By custom, a Rwandan who prospers, however modestly, is obliged to look after his needier relatives, and the self-definition of family can become ab-

surdly extended. Get ahead in Rwanda, and suddenly everyone is calling you brother, or uncle, or cousin, or, to really make the point, *muzungu*.

Between paying for school fees, food, clothing, and shelter, and dealing with the perpetual health crises and deaths in their family orbits, the riders operated like the heads of small private foundations. To protect their capital, they invested in small businesses—taxi-bikes or motorbikes to lease, or farmland for others to work—and, at the same time, they started building new homes, where they could have families of their own. Four of the five original team members have new houses, and even so, Jock said, a rider had recently told him, "No matter how much we earn, no matter how much you give us, we will always be in the same position." Jock often said of his cyclists, "Rwandans are great climbers." But poverty's downward drag could make the climb out of it feel Sisyphean.

One afternoon, in Kigali, I went to see Rafiki, who had built himself a house at the edge of town. In the early years of Team Rwanda, Rafiki had been a star: articulate, funny, full of confidence. But then he had a girlfriend, and then the girlfriend had a baby, and then the girlfriend took off. Rafiki showed me the baby, Jonathan, named for Jock. He was sitting on the dirt floor of Rafiki's outdoor kitchen, and he looked worryingly small for his age. Rafiki was proud of his house, which had electricity, and was near the road. But it was only two spare concrete rooms, and it sat right over a malarial wetland. I had the impression that this might be as good as it was going to get for Rafiki. Already, life was tugging him away from the bike, while younger riders like Adrien and Gasore, who had a monomania and a drive that he could no longer muster, outstripped him.

Ask Adrien who his girlfriend is, and he will tell you, "My bike." He loves his country, too, he says, but he does not want to live there again until he's done with cycling. "If I live in Rwanda, there are too many problems," he said. "When I have money, I try to send it back to help my family. But, if I come, there's this

family drama, there's everything I saw in Rwanda, there are memories that come back, my mind is not tranquil. When I am far from my country, then I can concentrate on my biking. When I am finished, I will return to live in Rwanda. But, for now, I need my concentration and to advance in the world."

In February, in a competition in South Africa, Adrien qualified for the Olympics as a mountain biker. He got that far by shutting everything else out, and that's how he intends to keep going: "All that I am interested in, today, is bicycling. Even if I think of other things, I can't do anything about them for now. All that I see before me is the sport."

Gasore, of course, doesn't have to shut anybody out to concentrate. "I'm the result of a very difficult situation," he said. "When I earn my money, it's because I work very hard. There's no person there to push me. I have to use my strength. So if anyone came to ask me for money, imagine!" He was happy to help poor or sick people in his community, and anyone who wanted to ride a bike as hard as he rode his. Young men were forever asking to train with him, he said, but they never came back for more than a day or two. So I was surprised to get an e-mail from Jock a few weeks ago, saying that he had just taken a powerful new rider onto the team, a kid named Janvier Hadi, who kept winning single-speed races, and who tested spectacularly on the CompuTrainer. It was the same Janvier who had showed me around Sashwara. "When fitting his bike today I was asking him questions about where he lived and stuff," Jock wrote. "I find out that he lives with Gasore!"

Gasore, meanwhile, went to Switzerland this summer, to train at the U.C.I. World Cycling Center, in Aigle. Unlike Adrien, he was not worried about how his success would be perceived when he returned home. "There's nobody who can come and say, Listen, I helped you, now you're nationally famous," he told me. "There's nobody can do that. It's me myself who struggled, and here I am." ♦

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Philip Gourevitch talks about Rwanda.

