

TRANSCRIPT . JANUARY 2010

Njoki Ngumi: “Blood Is Not Going To Cleanse Bloodstains.”

Njoki Ngumi has just finished medical school and is about to become a doctor.

You don't like reading newspapers. Why?

I don't like reading articles that are always saying the same thing about this particular politician who everybody knows has been involved in the post-election violence, for instance, now coming to say “I want to save forests. I'm a good person.” I feel like spitting on the newspaper, quite frankly. That's one reason.

Another reason is I resent how easy Kenyans are to turn. We can be focused on one thing. Let's say we're focused on post-election violence, what are we doing to unite tribes? So we get turned away from those things into nonsense like cracking jokes about sex boycotts for two weeks.

Somebody was actually asking me why Kenyan youth so powerless? Why are we not members of political parties, for instance? Because if these things are going to change, we are going to change them. We aren't as powerless as we think we are.

We can evolve from just being interested in 24: Season 7 and Gossip Girl, you know. That challenged me. I have never thought of being a member of a political party, and every time people ask me “Are you

interested in politics?” – because I'm usually very vocal about these things – I laugh.

Maybe, even though it's very unsexy to say you're interested in politics – maybe people should become interested in politics and in human rights and these NGO things that all of us run away from.

Do you think we will fight in 2012?

Shucks. I hate that question. I really do. Oh, my goodness. The reality is, I think we're not facing the issues that drove us to fight in the first place.

We're not putting them on the table and saying, “Here. This is it.”, and yelling about it, screaming about it, calling the mothers of people who were killed, the wives of people whose arms were slashed off.

We're not calling those people to the forefront to ask them, “Express yourselves. Say this is what you think justice would be.”

People are not owning up to doing some of these things. A lot of people still have a lot of hatred bottled up in them. A lot of people still

have a lot of revenge, and they're waiting to hurt somebody because they have been hurt.

It's a very valid thing to want to do, but it's not a thing that's going to build. When you talk to some of the people around, you discover that there are very many people who have many plans not to be around in 2012.

For me, that doesn't even mean keeping safe. That means these are votes that are not going to be cast. Are we gaining, by scaring people to the point that they just don't want to be around even to vote, so that they can stay alive?

What the hell? I really hope we don't. Blood is not going to cleanse bloodstains. Does that make sense?

I like leaving a gap for hope to punch holes in everything that we think might happen, could happen, will happen. Bloodshed is a very real thing, we've seen it before and we can see it again. The fact is, people are buying guns. The fact is, people are planning not to be here, so...

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KuweniSerious. 2010.