

Once upon a time there was a great country.

Its leader liked his job... too much.

He had waited so long to rise to be leader, that he did not want to relinquish his role. Even when it was in the best interests of his great country to do so.

He hung on too tight... and when challenged, he even broke the law to stay in power. Elections were so risky that he kept trying to consolidate his power. He kept shuffling his key advisors and ministers. Loyalty came to mean more to him than integrity or performance.

He even ordered burglars to invade the opposition party's hotel room, to "gather intelligence". That is State-Security-speak for what is otherwise known as robbery.

But they got caught. The rest is history...

That great country ended up paralysed by the Watergate scandal. That was the name of the hotel that was burgled for him.

It was so painful to watch him try to hang on. He became more and more isolated. He was once a great leader who had made some great moves. But he was now a pariah, suspected of crimes.

But to convict a President, you need more than proof. Because they can pull strings and levers. They appoint to Attorney General, who appoints the judges, who put the burglars on trial. It was sad. It got to be pathetic. A great man going down.

Then as the investigation closed in around him, he moved on from shuffling his cabinet members to tampering with the evidence. It went from bad to worse. Some of his advisors ended up in jail but he managed to evade the inevitable for the longest time.

Then it happened. He got cornered. It came sooner than people expected, especially those who still admired him and his tenacity. Especially his own family and inner circle.

He resigned in disgrace.

His Deputy President took over. I remember him saying "our national nightmare is over".

As soon as the dust began to settle and the unprecedented tension abated, the new President pardoned that late great leader. Who remained in solitude, sequestered in his kraal for a very long time. He licked his wounds, which took longer to heal than that great country's wounds. It bounced back.

But he did not live happily ever after.