

# A reporter's personal story about brush with untouchables

By [Stephen Grootes: @StephenGrootes](#)

17 Mar 2010

It's a terrible sight. To see your colleague, the guy you've bonded with, your mate, your brother in journalistic arms, kicking and screaming and shouting for help. He's being held back, five large black-suited men surrounding him, shouting at him, ignoring the legal definition of assault and simply not giving a rat's arse.



President Zuma's bodyguard screams at Stephen Grootes. Photo: Michel Bega/The Citizen, republished courtesy of The Daily Maverick

We've seen the brutality of the bodyguards of the rich and mighty way too many times already. These walking suspenders of South Africa's Constitution seem impervious to public outrage, above the law, violent, angry and arrogant.

You do what any other person would do, you hit "Record", and you run in to help. To no avail. It's the most frustrating thing for a man. You can push and pull, you're using everything you've ever thought of, including your brain. You're shouting, "Why can't we just talk about this", in the back of your mind is that guy in Cape Town who just disappeared for 24 hours. And they just look at you and squeeze harder.

It's humiliating. It's embarrassing. There's something about knowing the other side is stronger than you, more violent, they'll do things you never would and it's sickening to know they will get away with it.

This was my Tuesday morning [16 March 2010]. More importantly, it was Tshepo Lesole's Tuesday morning.

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## ABOUT STEPHEN GROOTES: @STEPHENGROOTES

Stephen Grootes is an Eyewitness News ([www.ewn.co.za](http://www.ewn.co.za)) reporter who also writes for *The Daily Maverick* ([www.thedailymaverick.co.za](http://www.thedailymaverick.co.za)).

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