Rwanda

- Many students saw “Hotel Rwanda.”
- Rapid genocide that required close proximity killing.
- Student: the people who were being slaughtered weren’t really resisting. Not much resistance on the part of the Tutsis.
- There was the common perception that Rwandan society was obedient.
- Both killers and victims followed orders.
- What happened seemingly caught the world unaware.
- In hindsight, the world looks back and can see the indicators leading up to the conflict.
- 800,000 people killed over three months
- The Tutsis are in the minority.
- Many moderate Hutus were killed as well
- Ended in mid July when the RPF took over the government.
- History of Rwanda is important.

History of Rwanda

- Colonized by the Belgians
- Most famously known for their colonization of the Congo by King Leopold
- Belgians favored the Tutsis
- According to conventional historical accounts: very few distinctive cultural markers between the Hutus and the Tutsis: shared language, same culture, etc.
- Hutus tended to be land people and Tutsis were herd people.
- There isn’t a long history of ethnic tension

Note: the following notes are a synopsis of the documentary film and do not represent the views of Prof. Nobles or her students.

Movie: Ghosts of Rwanda. Frontline (PBS) co-production with BBC. Writer, producer, and director: Greg Barker.

- 800,000 people slaughtered by government.
- The entire world turned away.
- International community claimed they didn’t know what was going on.

August 1993

- General Romeo Dallaire, commander for UN
- The rebels were mostly Tutsis.
- Persecuted for decades.
- The Hutus had ruled since independence from Belgium in the 60s.
- Under the peace accord, the Hutus were required to share authority with the Tutsis.
- Only 2500 armed troops were sent by the UN. The commander was ill prepared.
• Mysterious riots and assassinations occurred.
• There were reports of a third force, but they couldn’t figure out who it was.
• Dallaire wasn’t allowed intelligence capabilities so couldn’t figure out.

January 1994
• From inside the third force, an informant emerged
• Hutus extremist were plotting to derail the peace agreement and exterminate the Tutsis.
• They were planning to kill some of Dallaire’s forces who were Belgian.
• They hoped the UN and Belgium would pack up and leave.
• Dallaire wanted to raid the militia’s supplies and briefed the UN.
• Kofi Annan was skeptical
• Ordered Dallaire not to take action and share the information with the Rwandan government who had ties to the extremists.
• Annan told Dallaire that he wasn’t allowed to raid the arms caches. Annan didn’t want to use force.
• 18 American soldiers were killed in Mogadishu 3 months earlier in Somalia when a black hawk helicopters had been shot down.
• This incident changed America’s reaction to Rwanda

March 1994
• The official line from the UN was that Rwanda was still safe.
• There was a sense of security because of the large UN presence.
• Hutu extremists imported machetes and composed a death list
• People tried to tell the US Embassy of the meticulously planned genocide.

April 6, 1994
• In central Kigali, group gathered at Laura Lane’s. US diplomat.
• Huge explosion.
• Someone had fired a missile that shot down the Hutu president’s airplane.
• No one knows even now.
• UN commanders summoned for emergency meeting.
• Hutu extremist, Dismas Nsensiyaremye, was in control and chairing the meeting.
• Said he wanted to launch an apocalypse
• Dallaire wanted Madame Agathe Uwilingiyimana more moderate to take his place.

April 7
• Dallaire ordered not to intervene and avoid armed conflict.
• Dallaire sent troops to guard Madame Agathe but not allowed to use force.
• Dallaire tried to find extremist leader.
• Rwandan troops stormed prime minister’s house.
• At gunpoint, the UN troops surrendered their weapons
• 10 Belgian troops taken hostage.
• The Ghanaian troops were released.
• Prime minister was murdered.
• Dallaire was searching for extremist leaders and was on his way to the meeting
• He didn’t know about the prime minister.
• Dallaire demanded to know what happened to his troops, but didn’t take any physical action to rescue the troops.
• In the corner of the morgue was a pile of potato bags, they turned out to be bodies.

April 8, 1994
• In the wake of Somalia, Rwanda triggered an immediate response by Washington.
• Clinton administration ordered an immediate evacuation of all American citizens in Rwanda.
• Couldn’t risk their lives by waiting it out.
• Laura Lane coordinated evacuation.
• Lane wanted to stay at US embassy so it could serve as a safe haven for those not causing the violence.
• All embassies in Kigali were closed.
• Polish priests were taken as hostages and chopped apart with machetes.
• There were 150 people in the church.
• Most were attacked with machetes.
• These were ordinary men, women, and children and were targeted simply because they were Tutsi.

Northern Rwanda
• The Tutsi rebels were preparing to respond.
• Paul Kagame-Rwandan Patriotic Front.
• Rebels declared the peace process dead.

April 9, 1994
• 1,000 French and Belgian paratroopers came into Rwanda and weren’t under UN command. Their mission was to get the expatriates out. They took control of the airport.
• Tutsis emerged from a hospital building and Tutsi told the troops that they were surrounded by militia.
• When it was clear the soldiers couldn’t help, the Tutsis appealed to the journalists.
• All western troops were ordered to not evacuate any Rwandans.
• Basically came down to evacuating all light skinned people and leaving the dark skinned.
• With the airport taking fire, the US evacuated the embassy employees by car.

April 10, 1994
• Karl Wilkins—an Adventist was the only American who stayed in Rwanda.
• Belgium was a country in crisis. 10 Belgian soldiers dead
• Belgium wanted out, but didn’t want to face embarrassment of pulling out.
• Asked Warren Christopher, US Secretary of State, understood why Belgian government wanted out.
Christopher requested that Madeleine Albright (UN ambassador) to pull out troops.
In listening to the African delegates, Albright thought we were wrong.
Albright argued over how many troops to pull out.
US demanded withdrawal.
UN instructs Dallaire to shut down peacekeeping mission.
Henry Anyidoho, Deputy UN commander didn’t think it should be shut down.
Anyidoho said Ghanaian peacekeepers would stay. Not many troops or well equipped, but good troops.
So Dallaire stayed. Thought it was morally corrupt to leave.

Nyarubuye, Rwanda
As UN debated whether to stay in Rwanda, the Hutu extremist wanted to exploit the cultural obedience of the Tutsi
Propaganda emerged telling Hutus that Tutsi abused Hutus for a long time.
Extremist radio stations told Hutus to eliminate their neighbors.
“Kill them like rats.”
When the war began, people changed. People fled from their homes.
Valentine, 12, went to a Catholic Church in Nyarubuye along with 5,000 other Tutsi. Her parents thought the church would be safe. No one would be killed in a church. They thought.
On April. 15, Hutus found out about the Tutsis hiding in the church.
Soldiers shot at the people in the church.
Hutus said: All those that were there should be killed and no one should survive.
They started killing and hacking with machetes.
They didn’t kill Valentina because she hid under dead bodies.
She waited among the dead for a long time; the dogs came to eat the bodies during the night.
She stayed in a small room for 43 days.
Tutsi rebel army pushed south towards the capital and found villages of massacred people.
Extremist Hutus accelerated killings when they found out about the Tutsi rebels.
Jakabanda replaced the Prime Minister Madame Agathe.

Red Cross hospital, Kigali
Extremist Hutus referred to wounded Tutsi survivors as those “not finished off.”
The Red Cross never left Rwanda.
Rwandan troops stopped a Red Cross caravan and 6 patients were killed.
The Red Cross decided to make this public, BBC, etc.
The publicity embarrassed the troops and gave the Red Cross safe passage throughout Rwanda.
Philippe Gaillard, International Committee of the Red Cross head of delegation in Rwanda from 1993 to 1994, cultivated a relationship with the extremist that he believes saved 65,000 lives.