

Intention Before the Test

A Journey Recorded Before DNA Results

(1964–2026)

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(1964–2026)*

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Note on Composition

This work was structured and written through a focused collaboration with ChatGPT AI over a period of three days, based on material developed over a lifetime of research, memory, and analytical reconstruction.

The content presented in this book originates from my own experience, documented records, oral family history, and long-standing study. These elements were provided progressively, clarified in context, and defined in meaning throughout the process.

The writing was developed through an interactive method. Information was presented, rendered into written form, reviewed, and refined repeatedly until it accurately reflected the intended position. Each section was examined and confirmed before proceeding further.

The role of ChatGPT AI in this process was to assist in structuring, articulating, and refining the material into a coherent written form. It did not originate the underlying content, nor did it determine the conclusions presented.

All source material, interpretation, and final verification remain my own.

The purpose of this method was not speed, but precision of record.

The result is a record that reflects a position established prior to the availability of DNA results, preserved without adjustment and presented for comparison with the evidence that is to follow.

**This is my understanding, recorded before the
evidence—
so that when the evidence comes, it measures me.**

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Method Statement

This work is not presented as a conclusion.

It is presented as a record.

What follows is my understanding of my ancestry, constructed through documented genealogy, oral family history, historical context, and long-term analytical reconstruction.

It is written **before the introduction of genetic evidence**.

The purpose of this record is not to confirm, defend, or prove a predetermined identity.

It is to establish a **clear, structured position** that exists independently of future results.

In most cases, narratives of ancestry are shaped *after* genetic testing, allowing new data to redefine memory, interpretation, and identity.

This work takes the opposite approach.

Here, the position is declared first.

The framework is constructed in full, including its uncertainties, ranges, and unresolved components.

Each element is documented in its place—not as certainty, but as **measured understanding**.

Genetic testing, when introduced, is not treated as the origin of truth, nor as a replacement for historical record.

It is treated as a **separate line of evidence**, to be compared against what has already been set down.

The relationship is therefore not:

Evidence → Narrative

but:

Narrative → Measured by Evidence

This distinction is central.

The intention of this work is to prevent retrospective adjustment—to ensure that no part of the record is reshaped to align with later findings.

What is written here remains as it is.

If the evidence aligns, it confirms the strength of the reconstruction.

If it diverges, it reveals the limits of the current understanding and allows a more accurate one to emerge.

In either case, the record stands.

This is not belief.

It is not a claim of certainty.

It is an account of understanding, fixed in time, and presented for comparison.

Prologue — A Birth Without Welcome

I was born in the afternoon of a Cape Town summer's day, on the 3rd of November 1964, at the foot of the left side of Table Mountain, overlooking the Bo-Kaap.

There was no celebration.

My mother was alone. She had no circle of support, no family presence to receive the child she had carried. My father was nearly two thousand kilometres away in Durban, working to support a new household that had already become the subject of deep tension within the family.

He had married my mother while still married to his first wife. This decision, among other matters, created a division that ran through the entire family. Many did not accept my mother—and by extension, did not accept the child she carried. The wives and daughters, in particular, made their feelings known. My mother was despised by most of them, and I was the coming evidence of what they did not accept.

I entered the world under those conditions.

My mother was twenty-one years old. She had been raised a Christian, not by her own parents, but by her maternal grandfather, Charles Chapman—a man who had himself been adopted and did not know his biological parents. What was known of him was this: his father was English, and his mother was a Cape Coloured woman. He had five sons and two daughters. The third of those sons, Hermanus Chapman, was my mother's father. Her mother was Gladys Mary Williams.

My mother's name was Agnes Catherine Chapman.

Her upbringing was shaped by absence. When she was about two years old, she was taken into the care of her grandfather Charles and his wife, Norah Pogue. Her own mother was not part of her daily life—and even as a small child, when told that her mother was nearby, she would run away. That instinct of flight reflects the world she had been placed into before she could understand it.

She was raised by her grandfather and grandmother until Norah Pogue passed away. Charles Chapman later remarried, and together they continued to raise my mother—until she came into the life of my father, Abdullah Abu Bakr Effendi.

When her family came to know that she would be with my father, they did not approve. Their objections were both religious and personal. They were practicing Christians—Protestant on her father's side and Catholic on her mother's—and they could not accept that she would join herself to a man who already had a wife and children.

At that time, my father's existing family consisted of five daughters and two sons, ranging in age from nineteen down to one. The second eldest of his children was my half-brother, Muhammad Shukri—and he was notably free of the hostility that marked so many of the others.

None of this welcome waited for me on the day I arrived.

My mother took a train from Plumstead to Cape Town and made her way alone to the maternity hospital in Lion Street, in the historic neighbourhood of Bo-Kaap. She had no one with her.

When the nurse came to ask what the child was to be named,

my mother had no answer. She knew that naming the child was my father's role, and that he would come. The nurse needed something for the registration. She wrote down the name **Becket**.

And so I was registered as *Becket Effendi*—a fact I would not discover until I was nearly ten years old.

When my father arrived, he performed the naming and gave me the name **Muhammad Abdullah Abu Bakr Zzobri**—named after himself and after the great Shaykh of Knowledge, Abdullah Abu Bakr Effendi (1814–1880), my ancestor and his.

From that day forward, I was not separated from either of my parents for a single day until I was well into my early teens.

But the conditions of that first day remained.

I had come into the world without welcome, to a mother who was alone, in a city where my father was absent, into a family that had not wanted either of us.

That was the beginning.

What follows is not belief, but a structured understanding—set down before the evidence, to be measured when it comes.

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