

# Stealing of Port Elizabeth by ANC – new book of horrors; Ed Herbst preview

[30th October 2017](#) by [\[email protected\]](#)

*Over the course of the evening, Maria told me about a web of corruption that worked on multiple levels. Pulling the strings were ANC regional politicians, mainly from a faction known as the Stalini group, who controlled the metro Council. Abetting the corruption was a set of powerful, strategically positioned city officials and political staffers, whose real bosses were not the City Manager or the Mayor, but rather ringleaders outside government. Indeed, some of these officials, who had first operated on behalf of the party bosses, had become free agents controlling their own corrupt networks, diverting public money into their own pockets. Threats and intimidation were part of the daily lives of councilors who refused to be part of the system, and some had even been killed for tackling corruption. For the first time, I was given a glimpse of how the web of party connections, private interests and compliant officials interrelated. As I went home that night, my ears were ringing and I felt anxious. In my work on local government, I'd seen my fair share of dysfunction and corruption. But what I'd just heard about Nelson Mandela Bay, and what that revealed about the state of the country more broadly, was deeply disturbing. How many similar stories were unfolding far away from the scrutiny of the media and the public? I was also upset that someone as principled and upstanding as Maria could be cornered and forced to live in fear. Back at my computer, I sat down and tried to turn what Maria had told me into a logical structure. I wanted to understand clearly who was who among the metro's various administrative and political players, and how they were connected. Late that night, I finished and read through my report, which brought the municipality and the connection with the ANC into focus. I had something I could present to Pravin, the sort of detailed intelligence picture that I knew he was looking*

for.