

Thomond Park - Own HAAKA

Homecoming

.....Follows on from: 'Friendly Winners'

24th April, 2027 Thomond Park

Late in October 2026 Oumar, Ezekiel and Ausmann visited Senegal with their fathers while their families remained at home in Limerick. The purpose of their visit was to meet with their African families that they had never met and for their fathers who had not seen since their fateful departure many years earlier. Since then, all their father's parents had died and so had some of their siblings. After a long bus journey from Dakar over two days they alighted at the terminal stop settlement along the Estuary where their fathers had once left. Nobody was there to meet them. There was an eerie presence of emptiness for everybody. Everything had changed since. Places and roads were unrecognizable. Their thrust into a third world was very challenging. Final destination was ten miles away in a remote part and no public transport was available. It was agreed that they all hail two taxis to take them there. The final two miles could only be made by foot. Their families in the village were expecting them but did not know when as the internet connections did not exist there. Late in the evening dogs started barking in the village and children had started to gather to watch as Oumar and his entourage arrived. Elders rose from their slumber and left their raised wooden huts to greet everyone. Cheering, and celebrations followed and presents given. Everyone in the village wore beautiful clean colorful clothes and head covers as their norm. The villagers were confident, happy and full of excitement and the young people were curious and anxious to meet their cousins to find answers to many questions they always dreamed to ask. The joy was too great, and no time could wait to start a party along the shore. Music played and your people danced acknowledging their arrival. Oumar, Ezekiel and Ausmann were in awe in their new experience. The young cousins were surprised how similar and familiar they all looked alike. Stories were exchanged and lots of food eaten. Many questions were answered, and their cousins could not stop asking more. The Irish accents were different to what they had expected. Conversations were managed in Wolof as their cousins spoke no English. Their clothes became a commodity for conversation, and some thought they could be exchanged for local products others extracted promises that they would receive some in post someday. After a long night they all found places to sleep. Some went outdoor on raised wooden beds to prevent snakes attacking or floods. Everyone slept well on raised grounds.

The next morning the players decided to tour around and had the assistance from their young admiring cousins. The ladies were anxious to win hearts and the players were living in the moments of their popularity. Everyone was smiling. Nature had its way. It was potentially a love island in reality playing out. Days were spent boating and visiting nearby islands and meeting other tribes. Everywhere they went public attention followed. The players were living as never before and belonging to a place they imagined they had left themselves. It was surreal. Their fluency in Wolof increased and so did their needs to know it. It was their wholesome experience. The worlds on two continents meeting in one small place creating seismic moments.

Oumar was also a fluent Gaelic speaker, and the other players were a good average. Something resonated deep down inside him. Something philosophical and very different was playing out. Information processing was on overdrive. Oumar was thinking and hacking his experience and translating it into meaningful reality in his own personal life. Pacing the village, casting eyes around him, capturing photographic images in his mind, listening to the rhythm of the locals in conversation, observing the day to day encounters, and allowing his mind to drift to the edge of the precipice as he began to touch his nirvana was enlightening. Eureka moments drifted inside his mind. and bursting with experiences. Finally, feeling enriched and anxious to share he quickly sought his mates and their fathers as they sat on the center village ground in a tribal outer circle sharing in the passing around a large dish of bread baked by a family in the village. Extended members of the family also were seated some in the outer circle and others as members inside. Daily encounters like this gathering are commonplace by villagers to discuss their day-to-day businesses. They call it their Da-Jaloo. Among the those gathered from the village included the Ooaakatari, the Tesoxor and the Tan Assermaan. The ordinary villagers that were representative members were known as the Tan Assermaan Da-Jaloo. Seated between the Ooaakatari and the Tesoxor were the Farata and the See, two prominent spiritual advisors that wore effigies of their See -La Na Gi. The village hut in front of the grounds where everyone was seated was called the Aar Ras: the home of the Ooaakatari. Separately, close nearby another gathering of the elders in the village took place in another circular ground known as the Sen. They are sometimes called upon for wisdom and enlightenment. Oumar had his note paper for recording the societal structures and their operations and purposes. Other notes previously taken down included the names of all the local boats and their stories. Elsewhere in the village the Firdu were practicing their war dances and Oumar found striking similarities of this practice from watching rugby at home.

After living among the villagers for four weeks Oumar had concluded that his tribal ancestry shared the same primal culture with his own native Gaelic language. He wanted to project this into his life at home in Ireland so as to define himself and his mates and their families with their identities. By doing this he believed that the algorithm of Black History would be repaired and should be seen to be normal and assimilated.

Upon their return home and with a gift from the Farata of an image of See- La Na Gi, Oumar and his mates had agreed to make changes to Irish Rugby to incorporate the Aaka as part of a new pre-match ritual. As players with Munster Rugby Team Oumar, Ausmann and Ezekiel began their endeavor in earnest. Following written applications to the committee and lots of public relations exercise their requests were granted subject to approval of acceptable wording for the chants. In January 2027 full approval was granted. Their club was the first on The Isles to make this possible.

On the 24th of April 2027 their first opportunity had arrived to play against Leinster and to make their mark in rugby history on The Isles. Some Munster and Leinster players also played in the Irish team and were good mates. Before the match there was an anticipation of what might happen. Then the Munster Team took their Aaka positions. Posing seriously and outstretched and on bended knees and projecting bulging eyes with protruding lips, their chants began in heavy low tones, stamping the grounds and pounding, reciting words that the opposing team could not understand. Fear in the opposing team was felt like a victim to the prey. Turning backs against Munster during the chanting only made their matters worse for Leinster. When the chants finished there was an eerie silence. Then loud applause from the Munster followers followed and later all in attendance joined in unison. History was finally recorded.