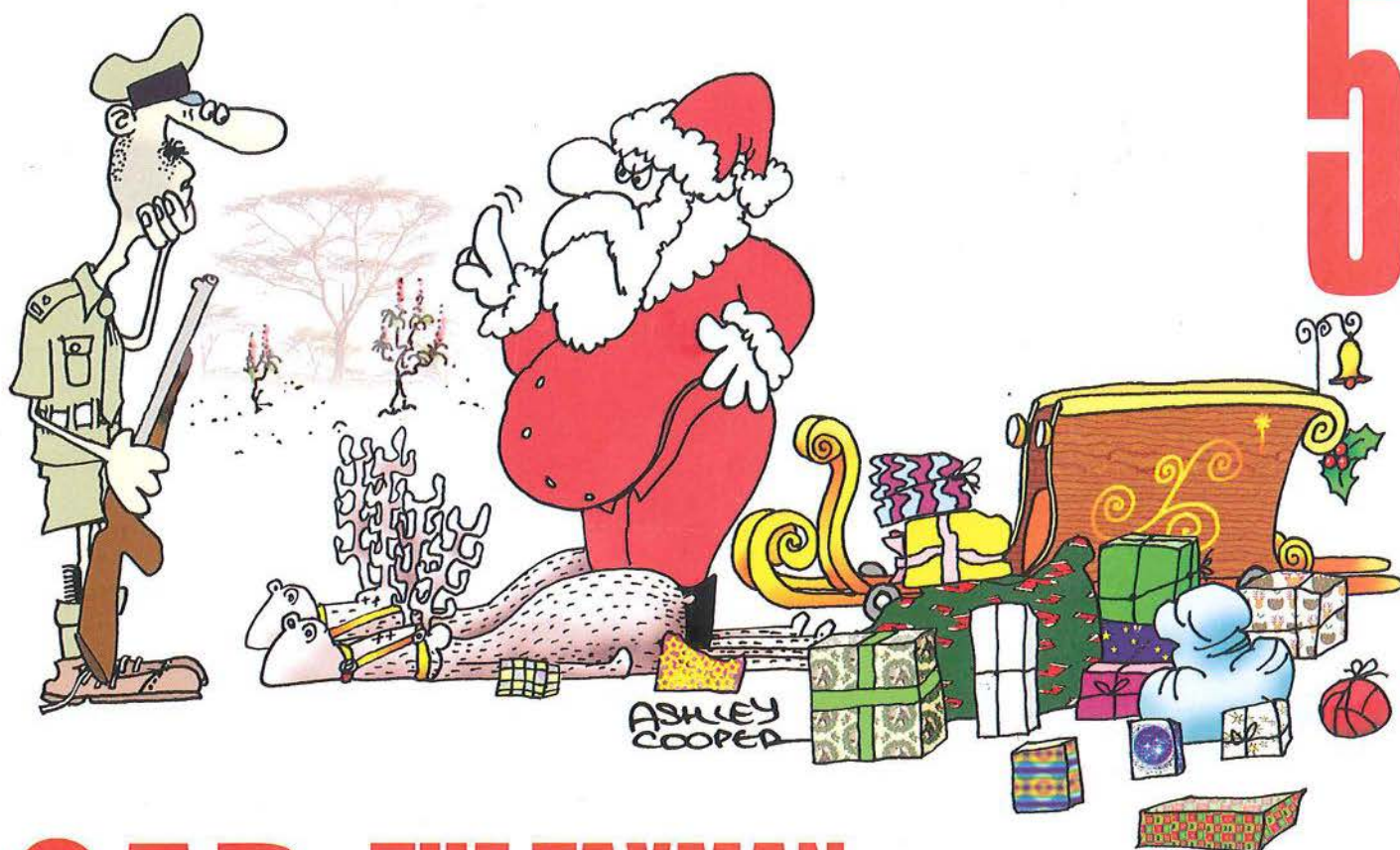


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52



## SAB: THE TAXMAN COMETH

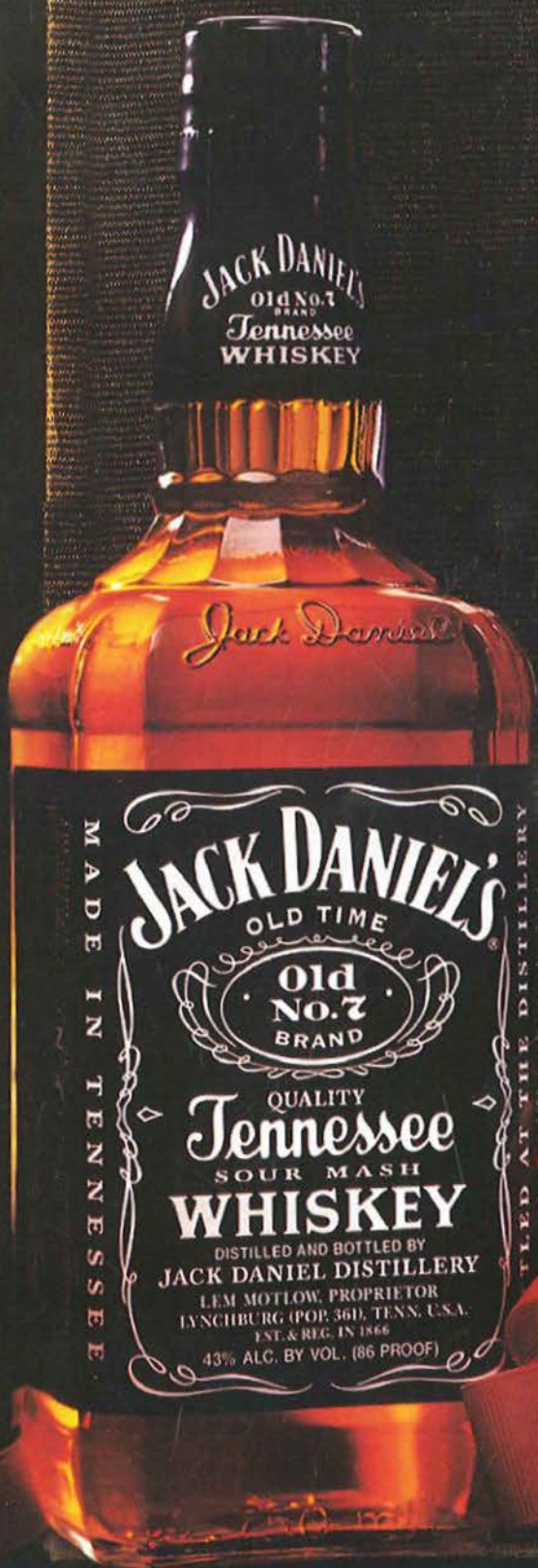
+ Darrel Bristow-Bovey rats on Ben Trovato + The Italian con job +

+ How Denel boss had Joe Modise in his pocket + The Aids apocalypse that never was +

+ Ian Senior dances the KahnKahn with his wife's attorney + Harold Strachan's Xmas joint +







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## SA Breweries' lying Dutchmen



When SAB, in the name of its newly dressed-up affiliate company in the Netherlands, took a small T-shirt company to court for parodying its Black Label trademark it declared war on the media and transparency

**4 Letters** SARS gets sniffy about Breweries ■ More birthday nostalgia ■ Pick 'n Pay 'n Pay'n Pay ■ Hefer lumps it ■ Voyager (again) ■ Old Mutual's slime green ■ In the Limpopoo

**7 Dear reader** Aids: Tidings of comfort and joy

**11 MK boss for sale** PW Botha's military men had Joe Modise bought months before the ANC cadre became defence minister

**12 Over a Darrel** A famous copy-writer finds himself embroiled in an ill-fated love triangle involving Ben Trovato, the petite editor of a major women's magazine and a virgin

**14 Lucky Viv** Gambling tycoon Vivian Reddy's name has been linked to Jacob Zuma, Schabir Shaik, graft, bribery and corruption, but we know he's clean as a whistle – he told us himself

**16 You Kahn not be serious!** Did a well-known divorce lawyer manage to keep his clothes on when he had a clandestine meeting with his client's estranged husband?

**17 Was Venter's shlenter Robbie-ry?** We reveal where the great 'Doctor' Bill may have got the idea for his copycat memo

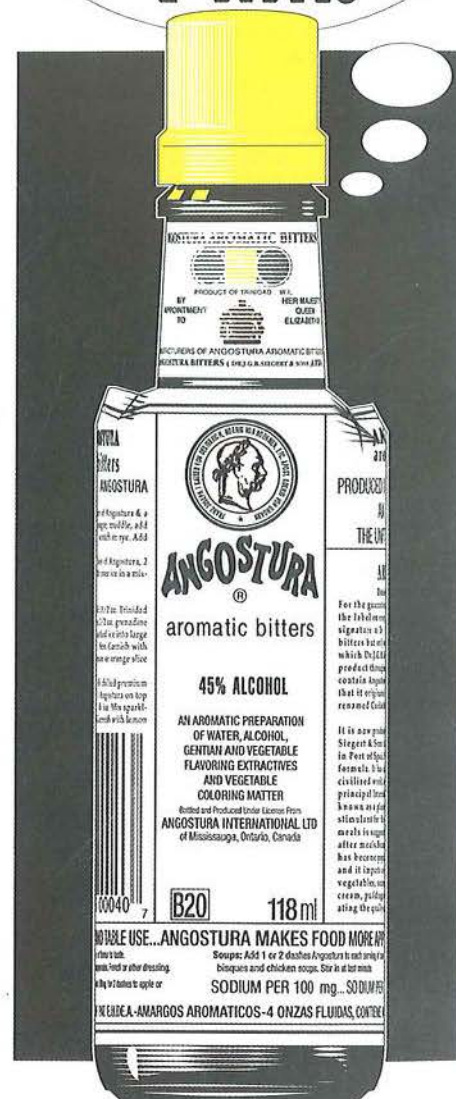
**18 The Italian con job** Was it his Latin charm or could it have been the forged \$40m bank guarantee in Antonio Bellicoso's back pocket that had top South African politicians and moguls falling for his grandiose chat-up lines?

**24 Apocalypse when?** Rian Malan revisits South Africa's Aids statistics and finds that all is not as it seems

**28 A Landmark encounter** Rachel Jones takes on the might of a 'Large Group Awareness Training' outfit and finds herself, cajoled, warned and threatened with having her wages attached in perpetuity

**34 Last Word** If you can't smoke a Christmas joint the coolest way to imbibe your insangu is in crunchies, finds Harold Strachan

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### Stand and deliver

I refer to your article "SAB's dirty secret" (*nose51*). Would you be so kind as to furnish me with copies of all the documents on which you based your article.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

**Shelley-Anne Carreira**

SA Revenue Service

Corporate Division, Randburg

*Dear Reader, should we, or shouldn't we? - Ed.*

### In a froth over SAB

Shame on you SAB! Such a big multinational bullying a tiny company that was closer to the truth with their spoof

majority of people drink? Your product, I think. And who supplies the 30,000-40,000 illegal shebeens in the Western Cape with beer? I am trying to guess.

May your froth flop.

**Nasty Aftertaste**

Cape Town

### Birthday nostalgia

I was somewhat disappointed to see no mention of *noseweek*'s predecessor, *Nose*, in your 10th birthday issue musings.

I still have an original copy (No.4 dated October 1984) of *Nose* which features both Louis Luyt and Jannie

while editor of the *Financial Mail*), and corrupt dealings at the University of Venda - all riveting stuff.

If my arithmetic is correct, *noseweek* is far from being an irascible teenager and is in fact a bullet-proof twenty something... all the more reason to be worried. What happened in the intervening years? Were you detained?

**Greg Voigt**

By email

*You don't want to know. - Ed.*

### Dazed and confused

Since subscribing to *noseweek* I have been in a state of shock, reeling from one

### Pick'n Pay'n Pay'n Pay

Please follow through on your Pick 'n Pay exposé (*nose51*). Just wish I'd recorded the details of all the sordid methods used unashamedly to screw suppliers for deals, discounts, rebates, "confidentials", listing fees, advertising allowances, promotional discounts, donations and more, that resulted in suppliers pouring huge sums into the coffers of Raymond, "The Housewife's Friend", leading to price rises on everything.

At least Mugabe is open about ripping off the people. Raymond and his cohort's convincing, soft-spoken smugness is sickening to suppliers. The only one that deserves accolades is his PR who by now must be consumed with guilt over the bullshit fed to the South African consumer over the years.

**Milner Llewellyn**

Plettenberg Bay

### No-Hefer-hum

It's a disgrace that Bulelani Nguka has to sit at the Hefer Commission day after day instead of attending to the good work of the Scorpions.

As far as I've read in the media, the Scorpions really did get the crooks - which we really need to support in South Africa! We should not be made to chase red herrings ... it seems the Scorpions got really close this time.

**Pam Herr**

Fish Hoek

### Voyager

While I think *noseweek* the finest magazine available, I found the criticism of the Voyager scheme in November's issue a little misdirected.

Mr Oberholzer, having received at least R120,000-worth of airline tickets for only R50,000-odd, and having had six business class seats confirmed by SAA within a day (has anybody ever been so lucky?!) then goes ballistic on being overcharged R4005 and fires off no less than (including copies) 52 emails to retrieve the charge.

Mr Oberholzer is clearly a

**'At least Mugabe is open about ripping off the public. Raymond [Ackerman]'s soft-spoken smugness is sickening'**

Black Label logo than they ever imagined. C'mon drop the case before you look even sillier than you do. And pay your taxes - it's the right thing to do!

A police chief brought into the Western Cape from Gauteng recently to stem rising crime said that 99% of all crimes were alcohol-related. And what do the

Le Roux on the cover. The contents are especially enthralling, and include under-the-table dealings at the Transvaal Rugby Football Union (*The more things change...*), De Beers' curtain of silence on illegal mining activity in Namibia (including aspersions cast on Stephen Mulholland's editorial independence

month to the next as you uncover the nefarious deeds/deals of too many individuals, corporations, multinationals and government agencies.

I will no longer buy life insurance, shares, beer [*Hallelujah!* - Ed.] and might even switch my allegiance from P&P to Shoprite Checkers - unless of course you have the goods on them as well.

Maybe I shall go back to the old-fashioned way used by the Voortrekkers of producing fresh vegetables, dried meat, soap and keep a cow in my backyard.

At least that is one way of ensuring I'm not ingesting any stealthily grown GM products or shampoos laced with toxins. [*We know about the GM seeds ... wait until the wind blows ...but, Oh-mi-god, shampoo too?! - Ed.*] Is there just one company, one person in this country who actually does an honest day's work commensurate with his/her exorbitant salary or fees? If so, stand up and be counted. Or have we become a nation of greedy, lying, double-dealing, thieves? I do have an honest lawyer though.

**J Maxwell**

Rosebank

*For a while there we thought you were being serious. - Ed.*

**Gus**



*Your present is the here and now!*



rich man to be able to provide his whole, large, family with a holiday in rural Hungary.

**Boris Yawitch**  
Bedford Park

#### **SAA: amaBokke off**

I had to laugh: every time I watched the Boks being bashed in World Cup games, there was British Airways proudly declaring it was the official carrier of the SA Rugby team to Australia

But it remains an indictment of our own national carrier. Could SAA not get their act together to take our rugby lads to Oz? Or do you think the Boks gave up waiting for SAA to come through with their bookings?

**Richard van Breda**  
Johannesburg

#### **Slime green Old Mutual**

There is a serious problem with insurance fraud in this country – I'm talking about the outrageous frauds pulled by insurance companies on their clients.

A colleague recently had his Old Mutual endowment policy analysed. When he signed up for the policy in 1995, the salesman calculated the following "illustrative" maturity values for his policy: a "low" of R182,000, and "high" of R259,000. Which was very persuasive.

But now, eight years later, a statement from Old

Mutual reads: "Total paid by policyholder to date: R30,768.89. Current value of policy: R19,761.66." Surely there's something wrong here, my colleague thought. Well, yes. Old Mutual has actually lost R11,007.23 – a third – of his investment for him.

Had he simply left his money under his bed, he would be R11,000 better off today. Had he put it on fixed deposit at 10% interest a year, he would be about R25,000 richer than he is today.

How, in the 12 remaining years, will his policy reach even the "low" value? [It won't. But should your friend feel bad, just remind him that it is better to give than to receive. Think how happy he's made all those Old Mutual executives! – Ed.]

They seem to count on the fact that by the time payout day arrives, most people have forgotten the projections used to sell them the investment.

Question: What was the average salary increase enjoyed by Old Mutual directors during this period?

Insurers and fund managers should all be forced to provide easy-to-read monthly statements, telling you exactly how much you've put in, how much your investment is presently worth – and how much of your money they have lost.

Continual measurement and evaluation might help to keep them honest.

**Michael J Naidoo**

Summerstrand, Port Elizabeth  
Already in nose34 we had occasion to write: "The average South African has more reason to fear that Old Mutual will lose his pension and retirement savings – and resist all attempts to have itself held accountable for the loss – than he need fear being held up by armed robbers or hijackers." When next you see that green, just remember to think "slime" and "Mike Levett". – Ed.

#### **In the Limpopoo?**

We act for Premier Ngako Ramathlodi and MEC Thaba Mufamadi. In nose50 you published an article that was wrongful and defamatory of our clients.

Your magazine is widely read by the general public as well as politicians. It is also widely distributed in the Limpopo Province. Our clients are held in high esteem in political and social circles.

[A two page précis of our report – commencing with the caption 'Limpopo premier took R5m pensions backhand, says leading businessman who claims he fronted the deal' – has been cut. – Ed.]

You failed to take reasonable steps to independently verify that our clients have no interest in the company Northern Corporate

Investments Holding [our report suggests they had an undisclosed beneficial interest] and are not directors of the company [we never said they were].

You should have taken reasonable steps to find credible corroboration of Habakuk Shikoane's unfounded allegations. [We did. See nose50.] Our clients were not given adequate opportunity to respond to the serious, unfounded and defamatory allegations. [They were; again see nose50.]

Statements in the article were intended to mean that our clients hold secret shares in Northern Corporate Investment Holdings; that they each irregularly and unlawfully received R5m in addition to their official salaries; that they interfered in the tender process; and that they are unfit to hold public office.

We have been instructed to demand that you publish an unconditional retraction of the article and an apology in your next issue, including an announcement on the cover page to that effect. Should you fail to accede to our demands, we have been instructed to institute a claim for damages in the amount of R5-million.

**De Klerk Mandelstam**  
attorneys

Johannesburg

Watch this space! – Ed

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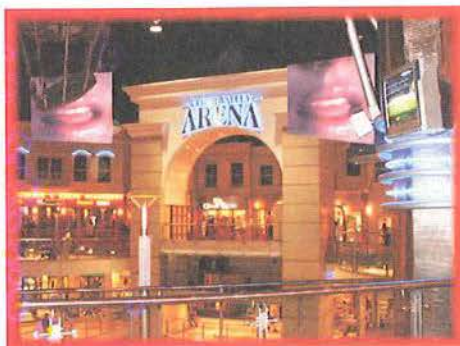
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# AIDS: GLAD TIDINGS

**A**uthor and journalist Rian Malan has made a happy discovery: the statisticians at the Medical Research Council that three years ago announced that the Aids apocalypse was upon us, have quietly been downscaling their estimates of Aids deaths in South Africa ... to less than half the number of deaths they claimed were Aids-related in 2000.

In fact, if you didn't know what's been cooked up in the statisticians' kitchen over the past two years, you might have thought the once massive HIV-Aids epidemic is miraculously on the retreat in South Africa. Indications are that even their latest, reduced estimates – all based on contrived statistical “models”, rather than on real, measured infection and death rates – are still too high. (One is tempted to ask: If the anti-retroviral drug programme had already been rolled out, might we all mistakenly have attributed the now reduced Aids death rate to the drugs?)

If you find Malan's piece on page 24 hard to believe, note these recent developments:

HIV Management Solutions (a commercial spinoff of the Wits medical faculty) recently completed two important surveys of real HIV prevalence in South Africa: the one amongst employees of South Africa's four major banks, the other of all Telkom's employees. The surveys are believed to be the biggest HIV-prevalence surveys ever conducted in SA. Tens of thousands of were tested.

The banks' survey revealed an HIV prevalence rate of 3.4%. The Telkom survey, according to well-informed sources, found an infection rate of 2.7%.

This is less than half the already reduced rate most recently predicted by the MRC's statistical modellers.

Good news! Hurrah! Much less illness; far fewer deaths in the pipeline! you exclaim.

The banks were certainly happy to publish their result because it is not in their shareholders' interest to exaggerate the problem. (Why Telkom has not yet published its survey result we cannot imagine.)

But how come not a peep in the media? And why no mention on HIV Management Solutions' own website of any of their own survey statistics? (All you'll find there are the original horror forecasts of *Dorrington et al* at the MRC.) Must we deduce that it's obviously not in their shareholder's interest to cut the hype (or even just to present the facts)?

Another indicator of the real incidence of

HIV-Aids might be found at the JSE. All listed companies have to release earnings reports twice a year. In them they are also obliged to mention factors that have a material impact on their business. We've checked every one of them this year for mention of HIV-Aids, and found only two such mentions – out of 167 companies that are listed.

The one was Discovery, as you would expect – but the only mention of Aids in their 60-page statement was a line saying they had decided to close their Aids reserve fund of R120m, no reason given.

The other was Shoprite Holdings, owner of Checkers, the biggest grocery chain in Africa. Their only comment: “The advance of HIV/Aids has not had a noticeable effect on the Group's sales patterns or employment statistics for the year under review.”

Beyond anecdotes – stories one hears from doctors and friends – Africa's Aids pandemic has indeed until now been something of a computer game. Which is not to say there are not people dying of this dread condition. The question here is: is the statistical computer game doing them – and us – any good? What we – and especially sufferers from Aids – surely don't need is to have the subject reduced to a script for a B-grade horror movie.

Let's not forget: just one of the consequences of the dramatic reduction in the Aids mortality estimates suggests the prognosis for those tested HIV-positive could perhaps be much, much better than was once predicted. And that they can now with greater confidence devote more of their time and energy to making the most of life, and be less pre-occupied with death.

It's clear to most intelligent people that Aids in Africa, no matter what it's immediate cause, is another symptom of the maldistribution of resources between rich and poor – access to food, education, employment and all forms of medical care. Some of the celebrities at Nelson Mandela's 46664 Aids concert touched on the point when they said that Aids in Africa is a political and human rights issue, not just a health issue.

Ironically, this was the point President Mbeki once appeared to want to argue – but as Mr Big Spender at the arms bazaar, he simply lacked the credibility to pull it off.

We suspect inviting Western teenagers to listen to popsongs for a minute or two – even if it raises hundreds of millions of dollars for the Mandela Foundation – isn't going to begin to solve the problem either.

**The Editor**



# SAB'S LYING DUTCHMEN

When South African Breweries – in the name of its newly dressed-up Dutch affiliate company South African Breweries International (Finance) BV – took a small company, Laugh It Off, to court for parodying its Black Label trademark on a T-shirt, the beer giant and its Pretoria trademark attorneys Adams and Adams declared war on the media – and transparency

For those not in the know, these days a T-shirt is a medium for communicating information, ideas and a different point of view!

We have joined the battle in defence of the media and of the public's right to know, its right to differ – and maybe even its right to laugh.

In our last issue we reported that we had obtained secret documents which revealed how, in the apartheid era, SA Breweries secretly financed the purchase of the Black Label beer trademark rights by two anonymously held companies, which had secretly been set up by its directors and registered in two different Caribbean tax havens.

We also revealed how, for at least 20 years, SAB paid millions of dollars in trademark royalties annually – based on its Black Label beer sales throughout Southern Africa – to these offshore companies. In this way

SAB's Graham Mackay

SAB's Meyer Kahn

ASHLEY COOPER



they effectively evaded South African income tax and created a substantial "slush fund" or secret asset base offshore, known to and controlled by those directors only.

It has never been revealed to SAB shareholders how much money was accumulated in these offshore companies, who controlled the companies and their funds and, finally, what became of the companies and their cash and other assets.

In *nose51* we told how further tax frauds had been committed when the company extracted trademark royalties from subsidiary companies it set up in the former so-called independent black homelands, Transkei and Boputhatswana. For many years these royalty receipts were – wrongly – reflected in SAB's accounts and tax returns as being "sourced" offshore, so that they were not taxed in South Africa – or anywhere.

When, in 1992, the company was advised by its auditors that the Receiver of Revenue was likely to discover the fraud if it continued to describe these royalties in its South African accounts and tax returns as it had done in the past, the whole operation was hurriedly moved offshore.

SA Breweries has not responded to any of these detailed disclosures.

Shareholders and the public also need to be told if, and to what extent, SAB directors, both past and present, derived personal benefits – in the form of directors' fees, dividends, salaries, offshore allowances, retirement benefits and bonuses – from the offshore companies that were not listed as subsidiaries or assets of the company, although they were acquired with company resources.

To get around all these problems – so we believe – Adrian Botha of SAB Corporate Communications in London has responded to our article with a single-paragraph general denial, which would be laughable were its implications not so serious. The statement:

"In regard to the allegations made in the *noseweek* article, the company is satisfied that it has operated in a transparent manner and has ensured that the appropriate authorities have been fully apprised of company structures and transactions. We therefore reject the claims made by the magazine that the company has acted unethically

and/or illegally."

To test SAB's claim to "transparency" we combed through all its annual reports from 1980, when it purchased the Black Label trademark rights, until today, in search of the appropriate disclosures.

We discovered that the Black Label transaction has not been recorded or accounted for in any report to SAB's shareholders. And the little tax problem relating to the reporting of royalties from Transkei and Bop? Not a single mention. Who controlled the offshore companies then? And who controls them now? No mention of that.

And which authorities might SAB's directors have regarded as the "appropriate" ones to "apprise" of their secret offshore transactions and assets? The priest hearing confession that day in the local Catholic church? President PW Botha's military intelligence department? The company registrar of Panama could, we suppose, pass as an "appropriate authority" in some quarters!

So the questions remain: when, and

exactly of what, did SAB "apprise" whoever it was? We would have thought the most appropriate people to report all these matters to were – and still are – SAB's shareholders.

To get back to SAB's annual reports and accounts: The original transaction documents for the secretive R14.4m purchase of the Black Label trademark rights from Carling O'Keef Breweries of Canada on 29 April 1980 named Southern Investments NV of the Netherlands Antilles and its Dutch subsidiary, Niagara 18, as the purchasers. Later the deal was ceded to another company indirectly controlled by SAB or its directors, Avalon International Inc, registered in Panama.

Not only was this major coup not mentioned in SAB's annual report for fiscal 1981; Southern Investments NV and Avalon International Inc don't get a single mention in SAB's annual reports to shareholders – from then until now.

Right away it's worth noting that SABMiller's present chief executive Graham Mackay started in the beer

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division when he joined SAB in 1978, becoming its managing director in 1987. So he was very much around when all these strange and secretive things were happening.

Current chairman, Meyer Kahn, joined SAB in 1966. He was appointed to the board in 1981, so he should know quite a lot, too. (In 1997 he became SA's top cop when he was seconded to the South African Police Service as chief executive for a two-and-a-half-year stint. So what he doesn't know, he can easily find out.)

The accounts for 1981 did list some income from "fees and royalties" – R230,000. We know the royalties charged on all the Black Label beer sold locally in that year amounted to much, much more than that – but then, of course, that was (fraudulently?) being reflected in the company's South African consolidated accounts as expenditure, not as income.

## 'Divulging detailed information about these activities is not in the best interests of SAB or its shareholders.'

In the section "Interests in Consolidated Subsidiaries" the amount of R1.5m was listed for unnamed "miscellaneous" entities. And R1.3m was invested in "other" unlisted companies. But these figures don't match anything we know about the Black Label deal either.

We do know that the list of subsidiaries in those years was never complete. A note in the 1983 accounts explains that it was considered "that the disclosure in these statements of such information in respect of the remaining subsidiaries would entail expenses out of proportion to the value to members."

Mention of trademarks? Hardly anything over the years from 1980. Under "Extraordinary Items" in the notes to 1987's financial statements there is a terse: "write down of foreign trademark: (R6.2m)". That can't be Black Label.

In Meyer Kahn's 1990 chief executive's report, under non-RSA interests, he states: "The group continues to pursue investment opportunities beyond the borders of the Republic.... At the present time divulging detailed

information about these activities is not in the best interests of SAB or its shareholders."

Why? So much for SAB's present statement to *noseweek* that the company "has operated in a transparent manner". And so much for the group's code of conduct, committing personnel "to act in a fashion that will earn the group the reputation of being transparent and frank in its dealings with and disclosures to all stakeholders ... jealous of its standing as regards integrity and credibility; consistent in honouring its legal and moral obligations...."

Kahn adds (in that 1990 report) that SAB's investment in these unconsolidated mystery "foreign subsidiary and associate companies" totalled R153m in fiscal 1990. Earnings from them totalled "an impressive" R48m – 30% up on the previous year.

The following year, 1991, an apologetic note creeps into Kahn's report

over these mystery goings-on. "Unfortunately divulging more information about these activities is still not in the best interests of SAB or its shareholders." By now investment in the undercover entities had increased to R181m and they had produced increased earnings of R57m.

In 1993 we see the establishment of Westgate Worldwide, a 100% SAB-owned subsidiary established [*when and where, we ask – Ed.*] to handle the beverage-related investments and activities of SAB outside South Africa. "In the UK the well-known pure sparkling juice Appletiser is produced and distributed nationally by Coca-Cola Schweppes Beverages, under licence from Westgate's trademark-owning subsidiary Niagara International BV," says Kahn. Ah, the first mention of Niagara! (By 1997 Westgate Worldwide had become SAB International.)

SAB's 100 year commemorative brochure, published in 1995, illustrates the secrecy employed by SAB in earlier years. Recalling its clandestine purchase of the Rolling Rock brewery in the US, the author says: "Tragically,

South Africa's plunge into financial isolation in late 1985, accompanied by worldwide sanctions and boycotts, could not have happened at a worse time for SAB. However, although the structures set up to contain the US investment ensured absolute anonymity of ultimate ownership, the spectacular rebirth of Rolling Rock was attracting widespread attention and interest.

"The political risk became too great and SAB made a hurried exit during 1988, selling the operation to a Canadian brewer." Funds from the secret sale were redeployed into "a brewing opportunity in the Canary Islands".

Finally, in July 2002 SAB acquired America's second largest brewer Miller Brewing for \$5bn. In the 283-page tome outlining the position of both companies, anyone seeking information on SAB's previously-undeclared offshore subsidiaries or detail on the Black Label trademark would be dis-

appointed. Not one word on the subject.

No wonder MacKay and Kahn donned their clogs and cloth caps and used their Dutch reincarnation – claiming it had no links to all those nasty doings in the apartheid days – when they went to court to silence the Black Labour; White Guilt T-shirt makers!

SAB's advocate, Philip Ginsburg SC, argued in the Cape High Court that only SAB's Dutch trademark holding company – no other South African Breweries entity – was a party to the case against Laugh It Off. Laugh It Off, he said, could therefore not rely upon the past conduct of South African Breweries (the South African company) as justification for the "comments" made on its T-shirt.

Ginsburg went as far as to allege that Laugh It Off had "lied" by suggesting that the Black Label trademark holder had been tainted by SA Breweries' South African business activities. His Dutch client, said Mr Ginsburg without even a blush, had not even traded in South Africa. It was purely and simply (and cleanly) an offshore intellectual property-owning concern. How dare Laugh It Off link South African Breweries and Black Label (its primary exploitative brand) to his client?!

Now there's a laugh! ☐



# MODISE WAS BOUGHT

**O**n Monday 14 July 1997, Ian Deetlefs, an anglicised Afrikaner from KwaZulu-Natal, tall, neat and always the gentleman, informed his colleagues on the board of Log-Tek Holdings Ltd (a company listed on the JSE), that there was a possibility that the company could acquire Conlog – an electrical and water-metering business that at that stage was in the Anglo American stable – at a “favourable” price.

The board agreed and Deetlefs, a newcomer, wasted no time. He immediately set about negotiating with Anglo (Amic Industries to be precise) – but, surprisingly, not on behalf of Log-Tek, but on behalf of a company called Charleston Marketing.

On 5 August 1997 the deal was concluded: Charleston Marketing bought the business of Conlog – not the company – from Amic for R34m. Charleston didn't have any money of its own to make the purchase: it borrowed the entire purchase sum from New Republic Bank, whose new Malaysian owners seemed eager to please this mystery new company.

On 28 August, Charleston Marketing changed its name to Conlog (Pty) Ltd.

Mr Deetlefs was ready to get back to his friends at Log-Tek. Log-Tek's minute book records that in September he told the board that his negotiations on their behalf had advanced well. He recommended that Log-Tek proceed to purchase Conlog. The board minutes do not record any mention of Charleston Marketing – or of any deal that Deetlefs had done in advance of the proposed purchase of Conlog by Log-Tek, a logistics company listed on the JSE.

In November Log-Tek did a new share issue in order to raise the extra capital it needed to buy all the shares in Conlog (Pty) Ltd – for an agreed price of R124m! (The sellers were to get 22.5m Log-Tek shares, valued at R5.50 each. Log-Tek would also guarantee repayment of the NRB loan.) Log-Tek's board were, presumably, none the wiser, but, thanks to Deetlefs – without having invested a cent of their own money and

in less than four months – the shareholders of Conlog had bought a business for R34m and sold it for R124m, making themselves a cool R90m profit!

The lucky shareholders were a number of trusts, including the Letaba Trust, the Ad Astra Trust, the Khangela Trust, and the IDT Trust.

So what, you say? Well, for a start, the trustees and ultimate beneficiaries of those trusts were the self-same Ian Deetlefs – Major-General Deetlefs to you – who also happened to be head of state-owned arms conglomerate Denel. Former Armscor boss Ron Haywood, and minister of defence Joe Modise (since deceased).

The big boys of the old era were showing the big boys of the new how they made big bucks on the side without anyone finding out.

And how did we find out? Well, needless to say, not too long thereafter Log-Tek and its successor company, Dynamic Cables RSA Ltd, took a bad turn. And some people who subsequently bought those Log-Tek shares (a fair number of them at high prices from those trusts) are very, very angry. They have made it their business to find out.

**B**ut now for the seriously unfunny part. Old MK commander Joe Modise's shares were held in a trust called the Letaba Trust. That trust was established in Pietermaritzburg in February (and registered in April) 1994 – several months before Modise became South Africa's first post-apartheid minister of defence. A founding trustee of the trust was Ian Deetlefs. In terms of the trust deed, during Ian Deetlefs's lifetime, no other person may be assumed as a trustee without his approval. This means that even before the new government had assumed power, military officers of the old order had “bought” Modise by seducing him into improper business relationships where they exercised a significant measure of control over his financial affairs.

And Deetlefs, Haywood and Modise would be key players – probably the key players – in driving South Africa's arms procurement programme.

Ian Deetlefs was a pillar of the old military establishment. His urbane manner hides his decidedly shady approach to business. That much is immediately apparent once you get onto the trail of the many trusts he uses to hide his secret business interests.

**F**or example: the Ad Astra Trust, registered in Pretoria in 1997, has Ian Deetlefs as trustee; its sole beneficiary is the Khangela Trust (trustee I Deetlefs), registered in 1984. Beneficiary of the Khangela Trust is the Idee Family Trust (registered in 1989 and not to be confused with the IDT Trust, of which Ian Deetlefs is also a trustee). Only when you get to the Idee Trust do you learn that the ultimate beneficiaries of the whole network are ... Ian Deetlefs and his wife and children.

There's another curious feature to all these trusts: names are frequently duplicated. For example, there's a second Ad Astra Trust – also registered in Pretoria in 1997 – but it has Ron Haywood as a trustee. And its beneficiary is the Haywood Family Trust. (Deetlefs registered his Ad Astra Trust some months after Haywood's.)

There's also a second Letaba Trust, this one registered in Pretoria in 1997. Deetlefs is also a trustee of this trust – but its beneficiaries are not Joe Modise and his family. Its beneficiary is the Khangela trust that, down the line, as you will recall, benefits Ian Deetlefs and his family.

An unhappy purchaser of Log-Tek shares has observed in court papers: “Deetlefs' conduct in establishing certain trusts which hold the selfsame name as other pre-existing trusts of which he is aware falls to be considered with circumspection and raises questions regarding the true identity of the parties to certain agreements.” Indeed. ▢



# PETITE EDITOR HAS BONKING BEN OVER A DARREL

## FOLLOWERS OF COLUMNIST

Ben Trovato may have been intrigued by his piece in the *Cape Times* on 4 November under the headline: "How I was unjustly and undeservedly branded a cheating, philandering, two-timing tomcat". They'd be forgiven for thinking the story was just another torrid – and somewhat tasteless – fictional outpouring.

For the benefit of those who aren't blessed to live in Snoektown and missed the column in question, it recounts how our rakish but impecunious anti-hero (married to the "demented" and "frigid" Brenda) is invited by an "illicit consort" on a trip to the Seychelles – only to be dumped by said consort before takeoff.

"I would have done my duty by her. I'm not a human sponge," wailed Trovato in his column. "I would have made conversation, poured the wine and allowed her to mount and dismount at will." (Ah, the rage of a gigolo scorned!)

But it is not to be. Just hours before he is due to jet off with his squeeze-on-the-side, the trip is "ripped from beneath" him at "the very last moment".

"The catalyst for the implosion of my relationship with the illicit consort and the instant termination of the holiday of a lifetime was a series of flirtatious emails I exchanged with a 25-year-old Christian virgin whom I never even set eyes upon," moans Trovato.

The whole thing sounds so wild, you'd be forgiven for assuming it was all made up. But we happen to know otherwise. A source has whispered to *nosweek* that Trovato's story, which its creator cunningly would have us believe is nothing more than a ripping yarn, is actually rooted in solid fact.

It's all appallingly post-modern.

More dismaying still, much-admired copy-typist Darrel Bristow-Bovey (presumably in this instance playing himself in what is beginning to resemble a Restoration sex farce) enters the fray. But wait, we're running ahead of ourselves.

The creator of Ben Trovato (a pseudonym which literally means "well invented") is a little-known documentary filmmaker, based in Cape Town. Let's say his real name is Tristan. Tristan copied the idea

When columnist Ben Trovato tried to get doubly lucky in love, punting used romantic rhymes, he little suspected that high-minded recycling expert Darrel Bristow-Bovey would be the one to betray him

## How I was unjustly and undeservedly branded a cheating,



BEN TROVATO

UNTIL last Friday night, all intentions were that this morning would see me sprawling beneath a spreading banyan tree with a scant purple cocktail in one hand and the well-rounded rump of my illicit consort in the other while a skimpily clad Seychelles girl-servant bowed discreetly behind the bleating obscenities in breathless anticipation of fulfilling my every desire.

But, last Friday night, in a fit of fit to see what my computer hot wire to an illicit electronic connection with IT a warm beer in a checkers bag at my elbow. Passing through the window, they pelted and laugh at me and are distracted and slap each

other and scratch a bit and then fall down. I find them materially less virile than the scorpions that are equally permitted to drink and eat and beg and die in their own country.

tion of principal by law. But, last Friday night, in a fit of fit to see what my computer hot wire to an illicit electronic connection with IT a warm beer in a checkers bag at my elbow. Passing through the window, they pelted and laugh at me and are distracted and slap each

pay their way. I don't know when or why this happened, but it did. So when they offer something for free, especially a trip to the Seychelles, know that you are going to end up paying dearly in emotional currency.

For a holiday like this I was prepared to pay anything. I was asked a small sum. How strange, then, that I ended up paying to be dumped for a trip that was ripped from beneath me at the very last moment. How brave I am!

for Ben Trovato from British humourist William Donaldson (who invented the boorish, xenophobic letter writer Henry Root more than 20 years ago). His initial aim was to author what Trovato acknowledges is copycat book, *à la* Root, of satirical letters to celebrities.

Having achieved some modest success with his book, Trovato started writing a regular column in local newspapers. The fictional Trovato is characterised as a homophobic misogynist stuck in a tortured marriage to the sadly "demented" Brenda. His columns have caught on and he has mustered a not-insignificant following. But as Trovato's success has grown, so has his creator, Tristan's, ego – and his boldness. With time, Trovato's columns have become markedly cruder and increasingly sexist. Which, it now emerges, has opened a whole new window of opportunity for his creator, Tristan.

There is no wifely Brenda in Tristan's life. The real person behind the Trovato mask is not married; he's a bachelor-with-a-history. During the last year he managed to seduce the petite editor – no less – of a leading women's magazine by email, charming her with his romantic and suggestive wit.

Some time after June, fortysomething Tristan quit his spectacularly sited Clifton home and moved in



– temporarily, you understand – with the lovely lady editor (let's call her Isolde). That was not the full extent of her generosity. She also invited him to join her on a Seychelles holiday she had swung as a freebie.

All the while, unknown to Isolde, Tristan was engaged in another email dalliance – with a twentysomething spinster of a certain Natal parish, who had also been hooked by Trovato's column. (He refers to her in his column as a "Christian virgin", so let's call her Mary.) Tristan's correspondence with Mary apparently included some poetic lines. Somehow – fate is cruel – these fell into the hands of award-winning copywriter Darrel Bristow-Bovey, who happened to know both women in Tristan's life. Outraged by Tristan's

It's a sad business all round. But there is a small chink of light in all this. As a result of *noseweek's* investigation Darrel Bristow-Bovey has become unexpectedly reconciled with his estranged scruples. When we asked him to comment on his role in the story, he proffered this heartwarming reply:

I am sorry, but I am absolutely not able to help. I appear to be the last person left in South Africa who believes:

a) that private lives, except in exceptional cases (for instance, should the President of South Africa be sleeping with Saddam Hussein, are properly kept private, if they do not involve some national interest or genuine public interest (and I do not mean the contemporary definition of public interest: "anything the public might or might not be persuaded to find interesting");

b) that the current trend for journalists to fall upon and indeed gleefully participate in the misfortune of



**'It is unfortunate for you that I am neither Robert Kirby nor David Bullard. They would have been more than eager to hurt a fellow columnist'** – Darrel Bristow-Bovey

their fellows is despicable.

I see absolutely no newsworthiness in the story you outline, even assuming it to be true. What a world it is when other people's heartbreaks and personal unhappinesses are the stuff we feed readers in order to entertain them. So alas, no, I cannot help you. It is unfortunate for you that I am neither Robert Kirby nor David Bullard. They would have been more than eager to help hurt another columnist.

Best wishes

Darrel Bristow-Bovey

We are deeply indebted to Darrel (we're assuming the wording of the letter is his, since his name appears on it) for reassuring us that there's at least one journalist left in South Africa who knows what ethics are and when to take them out of mothballs.

■ All the Ben Trovato columns that have appeared in the *Cape Times* can be read on the newspaper's website – except the column that appeared on 4 November. Of that you will find no trace. Hmm. ☐

duplicity, and eager to ingratiate himself with Isolde, Darrel forwarded his poetic correspondence with Mary to the fragrant female editor (who he has befriended and reportedly much admires – not least, we suspect, as a potential customer for his column-inches).

Isolde recognised certain lines in the poems sent to the virginal Mary as identical to some Tristan had used to win his way with her. Enraged at finding herself in the role of secondhand rose – just before they were due to fly into the Seychelles sunset – Isolde kicked her cheating paramour out of her heart and home. And, of course, off the flight.

In a fit of remorse, Darrel apologised to Tristan. But, alas, it was all too late. Having been cheated out of his accommodation, adulation and island freebie, Tristan was not in a forgiving mood.

# strategy

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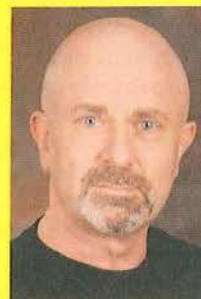
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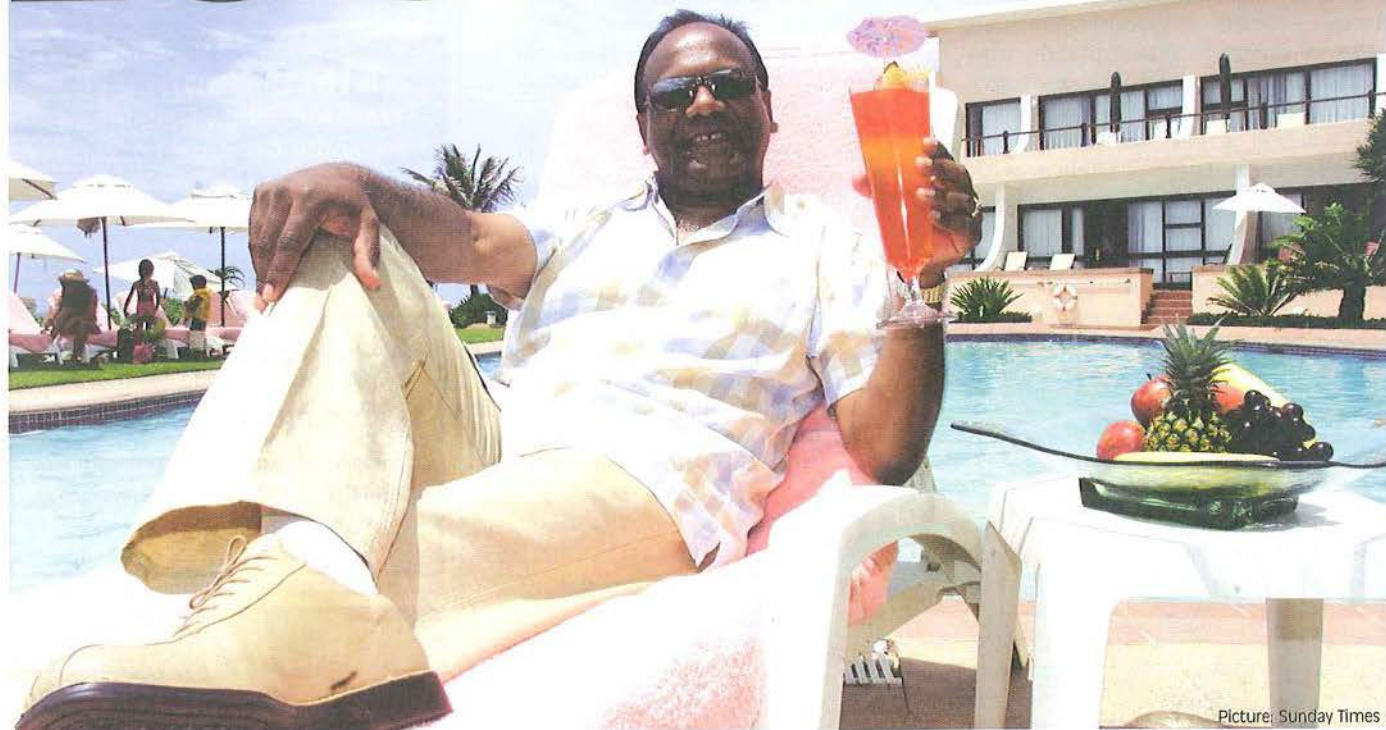
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# LUCKY VIV



## VIVIAN REDDY, THE

self-made millionaire, through whose accounts Schabir Shaik has been charged with laundering a R1m bribe for Jacob Zuma, counts virtually the entire cabinet as his personal friends. He boasts that 18 cabinet ministers and deputy ministers were amongst the guests at his 50th birthday bash earlier this year. Talk of power and influence!

Reddy is fond of blowing his own trumpet – and insisting that he's squeaky clean: he doesn't have a single lucrative government contract, he says. In fact, he doesn't do business with government, making him immune to temptation when it comes to his relationships with politicians.

But Reddy does have at least one very lucrative business thanks to the state – the Monte-Vista Casino licence in Newcastle, awarded to his Balele Leisure Group.

And the Registrar of Companies lists as a director of Balele Leisure one Senzele Johannes Mhlungu – who

**His name has been linked to Jacob Zuma, bribery and corruption, and the KZN ex-MEC in charge of gambling is a director of his gaming business, but tycoon Vivian Reddy is 'squeaky clean' – he told us himself**

happens to share an ID number with IFP heavyweight, Johnson Senzele Mhlungu. It's Reddy's closeness with Mhlungu that casts the first shadow of a doubt over his claim to be "squeaky clean". Mhlungu, better known in provincial government circles as "Johnny", is KwaZulu-Natal's former MEC for Finance – in which position he was in charge of gambling in the province.

Mhlungu took an active personal interest in casino licensing during his tenure as MEC. He was a director of Khulani Holdings, a company that – up to at least 1996 – was extremely keen to bid for two or more casino licences in KZN.

Central government originally allocated five casino licences to KZN. Mhlungu was not happy with this and simply drafted his own provincial gambling policy, which would have given KZN more. He also wrote numerous letters to Ken Ladbrooke, the provincial chief director for gaming and betting, asking for his support. In the letters,



Mhlungu argued that his draft provincial gambling policy did not "really" defy central government – it simply increased the number of casinos in KZN. "It's to make the province more attractive to the gambler", he said.

*noseweek* is informed that Ladbroke was more than happy to back Mhlungu

were granted casino licences. Licence-holders could only use temporary casino sites while building the larger, permanent casino complexes. The temporary sites could be simple and cheap, but the permanent ones were expected to be large, extravagant complexes to attract tourists to the province and generate

major permanent site and had plans drawn of what the finished permanent complex would look like: very impressive!

Meantime, he took over the old Iscor Club, slapped on a coat of paint, erected a night-club stage and crammed in some fruit machines and gambling tables. It is in the poorest area of Newcastle, populated by pensioners and former Iscor workers, many of them jobless. The casino is by all appearances doing well; it is filled with lots of desperate people hoping against hope to strike it rich.

Reddy was supposed to have completed his permanent casino complex in the wealthier part of town more than a year ago. But as yet not even the foundations are down.

The Gambling Board and the Premier have taken no action, even though Reddy risks losing his licence and paying huge fines. **■**

## Mhlungu's proposed ordinance would have allowed relatives of elected officials to own up to 5% of a casino

– but the pair withdrew the proposal when central government threatened to take Mhlungu to the Constitutional Court.

One of the clauses in Mhlungu's proposed gambling ordinance even outraged Home Affairs Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi: it would have allowed relatives of elected officials – including those on the Gambling Board – each to own up to 5% of a casino. That also happened to contravene national gambling laws.

Mhlungu was forced to back down on writing his own provincial gambling policy, but continued to preside over the creation of the original KZN Gambling Board, and supervised the birth of the KZN gambling industry.

According to the IFP's Durban office, Mhlungu resigned his post as MEC for Finance in mid-1998, just after the preferred finalists for casino licences were named. The IFP pointed out however that: "Mr Mhlungu is of course not disillusioned with the party. He is still a proud member – and he is, of course related to His Royal Highness Prince Gideon Zulu – one of our proudest office bearers."

Mhlungu is not only related to Zulu, but he is in business with him as a director of Ondini Motors. (Irene Buthelezi, the chief's wife, is on the board too.) Mhlungu is also a close personal friend of KZN Premier, Lionel Mtshali. Attempts to get hold of the former politician have failed to date.

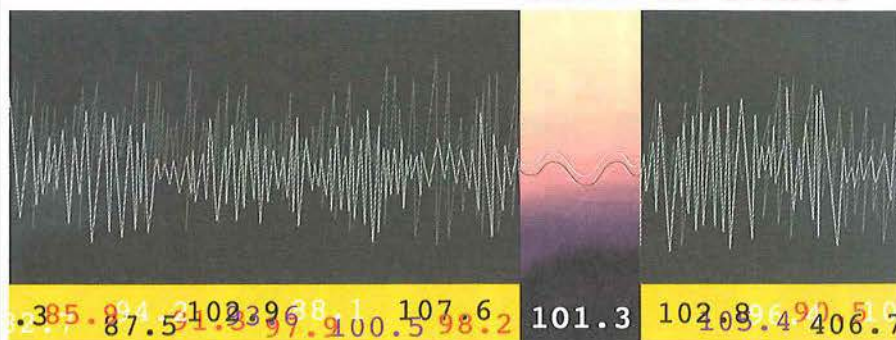
Peter Miller succeeded Mhlungu as MEC for Finance. Miller told the Gambling Board he intended to be strict with casino licence-holders, binding them to a commitment in their applications to develop larger permanent sites if they

millions in taxes.

Miller only got to keep the gambling portfolio for a few months.

Among those who had obtained temporary casino licences was Vivian Reddy. He bought land to build his

### calm in chaos



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# BRIAN DOES THE KAHNKAHN

## HE'S THE HUGH HEFNER

of the South African legal profession! Yes, Johannesburg attorney Brian Kahn has had some capers in his time as the snaps above attest.

Kahn, who has notched up several marriages between the party-going, is now 57. His most recent wife, Annie, is a youthful former secretary at his law practice.

The Jan Smuts Avenue practice of the earringed attorney – Kahn is the sole partner – is noteworthy not only for the opulence of its offices but also for Kahn's strict policy of employing only women.

Surrounded by his doting employees, Kahn's latest dilemma is how

**When Ian Senior had a clandestine meeting with his estranged wife's lawyer, he made the attorney an offer he could not refuse, but did he do it with his clothes on?**

is he going to respond to ex-client Brenda Kaye's high court action against him for R960,319 she claims he overcharged her in fees. And quite a bill it was – see *nose51*. Kahn represented Kaye in her divorce action against Solid Doors mega-millionaire Ian Senior.

Readers will recall that Kaye's divorce settlement (R7m for her and R5m for her legal team) was hammered out at a most unusual private meeting between Kahn and Ian Senior. Prior to that meeting Kaye had expected to get a settlement of at least R30m.

*noseweek's* phones have been trilling with callers' theories about what went on between Brenda's attorney, Mr Kahn, and her ex, Mr Senior, behind



**HANDLING THE CASE:** Divorce lawyer Brian Kahn (facing page) cross-examines a client in an attempt to get to the bottom of things

those closed doors on 14 December 2000, that so radically reduced Brenda's prospects.

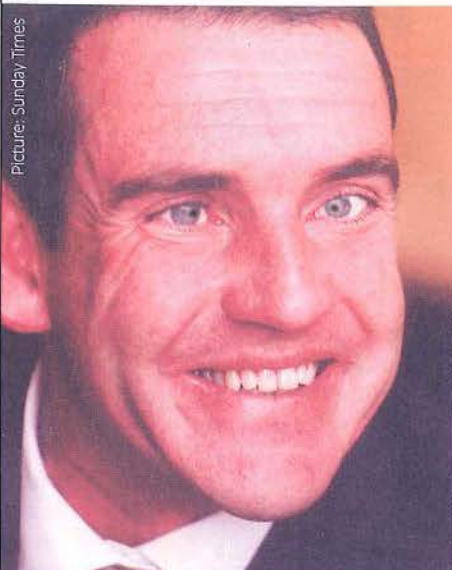
The meeting was arranged at short notice by Senior and, at his insistence, excluded his own highly regarded attorney, Mr Krawitz – and Kahn's client, Senior's about-to-be ex-wife Brenda. What is it that Senior had to say to his wife's lawyer Kahn that he did not wish his own reputable lawyer, or his wife herself, to be witness to?

Whatever it was, it mightily inspired Kahn to, in great haste, set about psychologically bludgeoning his client into the mediocre R7m settlement – this after Senior had just been driven (by Brenda's discovery of his offshore bank account details) to concede in court that he was worth at least R100-million.

In Johannesburg legal circles, rumours abound which suggest that what Senior had so secretly to tell Kahn, involved Kahn's own personal interests, rather than those of his client, Brenda Kaye. Some callers to *noseweek* even insisted that the recordings of Senior's private telephone conversations, that were produced in the case in support of Brenda's divorce action, were not the only recordings that might have influenced the outcome of the case. What can it all mean? We hope they're not implying what we *think* they might – no, we don't for a moment believe such stories of a longstanding member of the legal profession! But, of course, that's what you get when you have strange meetings behind closed doors. Some of us with wilder imaginations even start wondering if they kept their clothes on.

Meanwhile we hear that Kahn has been considering a payment of circa R150,000 in settlement of Kaye's claim. The deal was apparently on the verge of being signed when our last issue hit the newsstand. Hope we haven't upset the applecart! ☐

## WAS 'DR' VENTER'S COPYCAT BOOK BAREFACED ROBBIE-RY?



Picture: Sunday Times

**CHIEF WHO CAME TO DINNER:**  
Altron's Robbie Venter

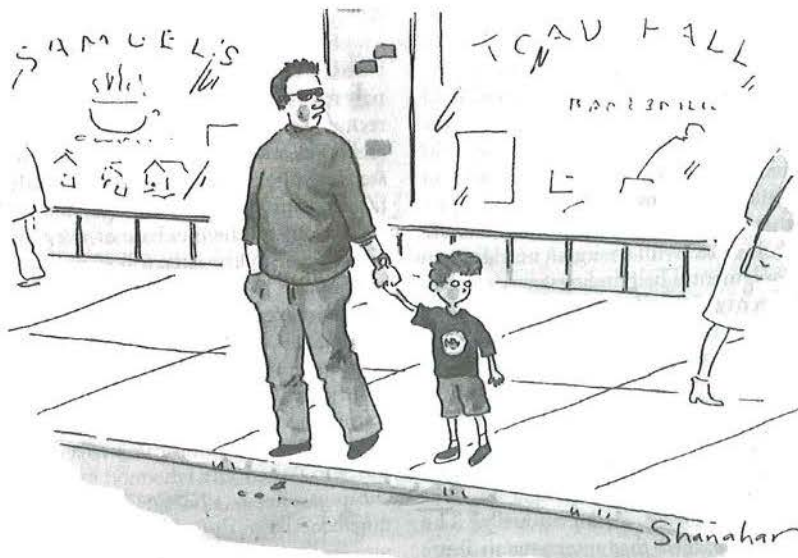
Some readers are still puzzling over the 1978 dating of Altron executive chairman "Dr" Bill Venter's now-famous memo on the saving of paper clips (nose 50). And its remarkable similarity to a 1985 memo to the staff of US investment bank Bear Sterns from its boss Alan C Greenberg.

Stop lolling about! Greenberg's

original memo was included in his collection *Memos from the Chairman* published in book form in 1996. Venter's copycat version appeared in his tome *Memos from the Chairman*, published earlier this year. Clearly Venter's copycat paper clip memo was back-dated so far that no one was likely to remember that it had never, in fact, done the rounds at Altron as "Staff Information Notice No. B.320/78".

Who brought Greenberg's memo to the more recent attention of the great "Dr" Bill? An extract from Altron's 2003 annual report provides a clue. "Dr" Bill's son, Robbie Venter, is now Altron's chief executive, and Robbie's bio note states: "Four years merchant banking experience in the US, latter part at Vice-President, Bear Stearns & Co Inc (1987-1990.)"

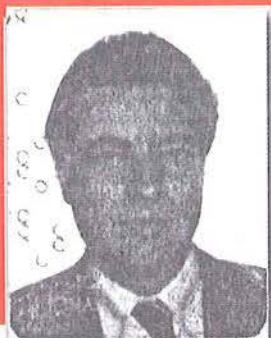
*noseweek* put in a call to Robbie Venter at Altron to enquire if he was the source of dad's great inspiration. Sadly, Robbie could not take our call. Grant Rogerson, group executive, corporate relations, was deputed to speak to us on his behalf. "We really don't have any comment," was his enlightening contribution to Altron's much-trumpeted doctrine of transparency. ☐



"If your mother asks, we crossed at the corner."



# THE ITALIAN CON JOB



## SLEEK, SUAVE AND OOZING

Italian charm, Antonio Bellicoso descended on South Africa earlier this year with a wardrobe of sharp suits, silk shirts and handmade boots. Nestling in his elegant leather briefcase was his *piece de resistance* – a six-page bank guarantee for US\$40m issued by the Banco de Brazil.

Bellicoso, 51, declared himself a representative of the Italian government, here to make multi-million rand investments that would generate up to 100,000 jobs. [Didn't we just know it? The Italians are such kind people!]

It may have been the tailored suits, the Latin charm, or perhaps it was the phoney \$40m bank guarantee in his back pocket that seduced an impressive bunch of previously disadvantaged businesspeople and politicians into falling for Antonio Bellicoso's grandiose promises

Two of his projects:

■ His own family firm in Italy, Italian Brakes, would set up a R36m manufacturing plant in SA to supply shoe blocks and brake pads to aircraft and armoured vehicles of the SA National Defence Force at a bargain price.

■ In Limpopo province the self-styled millionaire would fund the establishment of a R52m tomato paste factory in a joint venture between disadvantaged local tomato farmers and Italy's giant Rossi & Catelli company. [*Bubs, remember: Rossi and Catelli tomato paste. Must have. When next you're in Carlucci's.* – Ed.]

With the help of Solomon "Solly" Simelane, a former agent in the South African Secret Service, Bellicoso gathered together an impressed bunch of previously disadvantaged co-directors to form a black economic empowerment company to do these fine things.

On the board of Big Cedar Trading 96 were:

■ Mavis Masilela, businesswoman wife of the head of SA's Defence Ministry, defence secretary January Masilela;

■ Thoko Mabena, ANC Women's League executive member and Mpumalanga legislature member;

■ Julius Modise, former head of security and intelligence for the ANC in exile (1977-1994);



■ Moses Ralinala, a political analyst working for the Africa Institute of South Africa;

■ And, of course, ex spook Solly Simelane himself.

When last heard of, Simelane's career in the SA Secret Service ended abruptly on 19 August 1995, when police arrested him on charges of trying to deal in unwrought gold. (He was suspended from the service on 5 September 1995, but no case had been brought against him by the time he retired on 31 March 1997. Sometimes the men who know, know too much.)

The red carpet was laid down for Big Cedar Trading. Bellicoso had a cordial meeting with the Italian Ambassador to SA, Valerio Astraldi. In Limpopo the king of the VhaVenda nation, Tony Mphephu, danced with joy as his farmers tilled their paste-destined tomato crops. And after a chat with Sipho Zikode, director of the industrial participation secretariat at

he was representing the Italian government and other stupid things like this. We didn't give him any kind of support. We just listened to him – and now he's suddenly disappeared."

A forged \$40m bank guarantee? Sounds familiar? Remember our story about the colourful Californian duo Clint Graves and his son Clint jnr, who promised to inject \$1bn and create 85,000 jobs here with their ambitious Project Africa (nose41)? They didn't have a dime, it transpired, but had hoped to raise \$400m to kick-start the project with a dodgy Diamond Reserve Certificate.

In that saga, Standard Bank in Alberton called in the cops after being asked to send an inter-bank "Swift" message to a Swiss bank, confirming an ocean diamond mine as security for the \$400m.

Again, it's Standard Bank – this time its international business centre in Johannesburg's Fox Street – that has foiled a fiddle. "We see three

## The following month, the Banco de Brazil denounced the \$40m bank guarantee as a worthless forgery

the Department of Trade & Industry, the department approved a proposed business plan for the Italian Brakes project.

Funding for the empowerment company's grand schemes? No problem, declared Bellicoso, waving his US\$40m bank guarantee. The South African banks would advance as much as was needed on the strength of this document.

But the South African banks declined to advance anything. And on 28 September, informing his fellow directors that his aging mother had fallen ill in Italy, Bellicoso made a hurried departure from SA. The following month in Sao Paulo, Brazil, the Banco de Brazil denounced the \$40m bank guarantee as a worthless forgery.

Alessandro Modiano, head of the economic section at the Italian Embassy says: "We discovered that Bellicoso was going around saying

or four of these scams a month at Standard alone," says a senior manager of the bank's international staff. "The trick is very similar to a Nigerian 419 scam, where you try and get an upfront fee."

A director of a company called Delta Mining – to whom Bellicoso had proposed another of his schemes – took the Italian's purported bank guarantee to Standard in October, asking if it was genuine. "The minute I read it I saw it didn't make sense, it was a whole lot of garbage," says the senior manager. "We have a relationship with the Banco de Brazil and I contacted them in Sao Paulo.

"They said there was no such guarantee and the document was fraudulent. Banco de Brazil told me they put out a warning to all international banks in June, saying there are guarantees floating around which are definitely not issued by them."

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So who is Antonio Bellicoso? And what was his game here?

His home is in Avellino, a small town near the southern Italian city of Naples. It appears that his family does have an interest in a business called Italian Brakes, which has a factory in the Naples suburb of Striano. But whether Bellicoso is involved in it is open to question.

When *noseweek* phoned the number listed in the company's brochure, a young lady named Annaliza said that Antonio Bellicoso was her uncle, but she hadn't seen him for a year. Does he work for Italian Brakes? "I don't know exactly," said Annaliza.

Has Italian Brakes sent Bellicoso to open a factory in South Africa? "I don't know anything about it."

Solly Simelane says: "We know someone who went to Italy to check out Bellicoso. The family does have a factory there, but apparently they have disowned Antonio."

Bellicoso – wherever he might be – a frantic email about Wesbank's pending car swoop, three days before they grabbed the car. Bellicoso's reply: "Return the car to them. I will buy a new one when I'll [sic] be back."

Estimates of Bellico's outstanding debts: Borrowed from a friend: R240,000; bodyguard's salary owing: R145,000; catering company: R6500; liquor store account: R5000.

With the elusive entrepreneur vanished and the news that the \$40m bank guarantee is a dud, the plans for the much-trumpeted Italian Brakes factory project in SA and the tomato paste plan in Limpopo seem doomed. And Bellicoso's former black empowerment partners are left ruing the day they met what they now are convinced was a conman extraordinaire.

They're embarrassed, to say the least. So much so that when *noseweek* started making inquiries

that this matter is about his wife, not him," protested Masilela's director of communications Sam Mkhwanazi. But the defence secretary did confirm that the empowerment directors had been properly appointed to Big Cedar Trading.

Is Masilela annoyed that his wife was dragged into all this? "No, he's not very much concerned about the wife," says Mkhwanazi. "His attitude is that everybody is authorised to participate in economic activities. But of course he's annoyed that this person [Bellicoso] was not straightforward."

Political analyst Ralinala was company secretary of Big Cedar Trading. But first he had a thing or two to say about *noseweek*. "I'm a little disappointed with the way you're running this whole thing," he complained. "You're calling almost everybody. People are questioning your agenda." [Agenda? And here we thought we were just having a fun

## 'Someone went to Italy to check out Bellicoso. The family does have a factory, but apparently they've disowned Antonio'

On May 29 this year Bellicoso moved into 5 Wexford Avenue in Johannesburg's posh suburb of Westcliff. The rental on the fully-furnished mansion was R30,000 a month and the Italian used his Amex card to shell out R90,000 (two months deposit and the rent for June).

The rent for September was never paid and on October 6, after Bellicoso had left the country, his ex-SAPS bodyguard Johan Bronkhorst (salary of R40,000 a month promised, but only a fraction of that paid) arrived at the mansion at 8am to find that Harry Walker, MD of Mining & Industrial Supplies, had chained the security gates and reclaimed the property. (It's owned by Walker's UK-based son Gavin).

Also repossessed – on October 27 – was Bellicoso's silver BMW X5, which he bought on tick from Wesbank at the beginning of August. When it was repossessed, about R669,000 was still owing.

Bodyguard Bronkhorst sent

Solly Simelane tried to distance them all from the fiasco. The ex SA Secret Service man used his old disinformation tricks to try and convince us that he and his black co-directors had never agreed to be directors of Big Cedar Trading in the first place. Bellicoso had simply obtained their names from business cards and listed them as directors without their knowledge. "He gets your business card and uses the name," claimed Simelane.

Really? We contacted the office of defence secretary Masilela in Pretoria to ask him how his wife Mavis had been appointed director by the runaway entrepreneur. (A couple of years ago Mavis Masilela was acting finance head of the corruption-riddled Mpumalanga Parks Board, at a time when her husband was the provincial agriculture MEC.)

For some reason, the defence chief took great umbrage at our call to his office. "According to him it is very clear in terms of the documentation

*time playing spook-the-spook with Solly! – Ed.]*

Why did ex-spook Simelane misinform us? "Maybe he just didn't want to talk to you about this case," said Ralinala. "Almost every one of us thought the chap [Bellicoso] was genuine in the beginning.

"We lost a lot of our private money. When we first met Antonio he said he was going to fund every single thing. But we had some disagreements with him.

"The Limpopo tomato paste factory became a very sad story. That is the one which pissed me off 100%, because I'm very popular in that area. Those farmers, I know them.

"Rossi & Catelli were going to build a factory there for free. We were all impressed. But when Antonio came with the contract, it said they wanted five million euros [more than R40m] from the farmers.

"Antonio opened a bank account for Big Cedar Trading with FNB Corporate and kept promising there



would be money coming into it. Then he went behind our backs and got a credit facility on the account. The bank gave him a facility without consulting us – and we owned 60% of the company. When I called the bank I was told Antonio was owing R51,000.

"He wanted to form a second company called Company B. We said: 'you do not actually have money; you want to use Company B as a way to get money to fund Company A.' That's where the bank guarantee story came in. He kept saying the bank guarantee's coming from Italy and so forth and so forth."

At a board meeting on 7 August – which Bellicoso refused to attend – Masilela was deputed to write to FNB Corporate instructing the immediate suspension of the credit facility. Bellicoso responded by firing all his empowerment directors.

Rossi & Catelli still hope that the paste factory will get built. "After 25 years in the industry I can guarantee you that the quality and the quantity of tomatoes grown in Limpopo is really fantastic," says the company's financial manager Franco Zanecelli. "Yields are more than 120 tons a hectare."

Speaking from corporate HQ in Italy, Zanecelli explains: "Unfortunately there was this accident – meeting this gentleman [Bellicoso]. It stopped everything. "I hope to come to South Africa soon to solve this problem. I am interested to proceed. It could be a really good business for the farmers and also for us."

On 7 November *noseweek* emailed some questions to Bellicoso. "I am very happy of your interest in the matter," he replied two days later from wherever he might be.

"I am glad to explain what happened in South Africa related to my programme of investments and you will be very surprised. I am very busy at the moment. I will send you a proper report in the course of this week."

We chased him up on 16 November. The following day he emailed: "I am very sorry for the delay. I am still travelling. I will try to send the report by tomorrow evening, at the most the day after."

Still waiting. ☐

Nosepitability



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# OLD WINE NEW BOTTLES

**Some journalists we know,** but need not name here, plagiarise bits of writing by other writers that they find irresistible. Others, like Cape Town's freebie prince Graham Howe (a prolific writer of promotional advertising copy and of newspaper and magazine articles about wine, food and travel), find bits of their own writing so irresistible that they copy them from one article to the next!

An article he wrote earlier this year for an online wine publication, wine.co.za, elicited two email comments on the piece. The letter writers complained that it had already appeared in the current edition of the British magazine *Wine and Spirits International* for which Howe is a correspondent. Our author waxed most indignant in response: the two articles were "two totally distinct takes on the issue", he protested. Something the emailers seemed not to have noticed.

An earlier article written for the December 2001 edition of *Wine and Spirits International*, also turned up something interesting to admirers of Howe's devotion to recycling. At least a few chunks of it were uncannily reminiscent of an advertorial for the big SA wine producer Distell, that appeared in the same month in

another British magazine, *Decanter*. Take this from the Distell ad:

Coenie Snyman ... makes the Fleur du Cap red wines and creates contemporary blends ... for the best-selling Two Oceans range. He explains, 'Making wines for the export market has encouraged the evolution of new wine styles in South Africa – accessible wines with intense fruit, colour and soft tannins, made through minimal intervention in the cellar.' In a long-term partnership with Distell's suppliers, he works closely with viticulturalists in the vineyards, to source high-quality grapes grown under optimum conditions for making wine with a sense of place.

Here's the *Wine & Spirits* version:

"Coenie Snyman ... creates contemporary Cape red blends for Fleur du Cap and other export labels. He explains: 'Making wines for the export market has encouraged the evolution of new wine styles in Stellenbosch – accessible, New World wines with intense fruit, colour and soft tannins, made through minimal intervention in the cellar.' In a long-term partnership with Distell's suppliers, he works closely with viticulturalists in the region's vineyards, to source high-quality grapes grown under optimum conditions for making wine with a sense of place."

The Distell advertorial has no byline – but as we would be loath to accuse Howe of plagiarism, it's surely reasonable to assume that it was he who wrote these and other parallel paragraphs. Did *Wine and Spirits International* know that their "correspondent" was using material simultaneously being used in an advertisement in a competing publication? Apart from some repeated paragraphs, the article was also heavily weighted towards favourably mentioning Distell, the company that Howe seems to have had on his mind at the time.

Now Howe is suing the producers and editors of the independent wine magazine *Grape*, for R100,000 in damages for allegedly defaming him by publishing the following amusing little piece in one of their recent editions:

We hacks love to talk about our peers,

especially the more successful of them, so do indulge me a little longer in my doubts about the fundamental health of local journalism. I'm told that Graham Howe (who is to the integrity and independence of wine writing approximately what George Bush is to world peace and justice) is wanting more acknowledgement, as well as money and freebies. It seems he's so convinced of the merits of his assiduity on behalf of his employers, that he thinks he should be listed as one of the regular contributors to *Wine* magazine. Maybe he should."

Which led us to thinking: Howe may of course have been misled into believing that what he does is accepted journalistic practice by the deals struck by his old employers, Independent Newspapers, to fill their sports and travel pages with cheap copy designed to keep their advertisers happy. (Howe still often writes bylined pieces for *Top of the Times* and other publications, but as often he writes unsigned advertorial pieces, for which he is paid by the wine producers or their PR companies. The latter pieces

**'Graham Howe is to the integrity and independence of wine writing what George Bush is to world peace'**

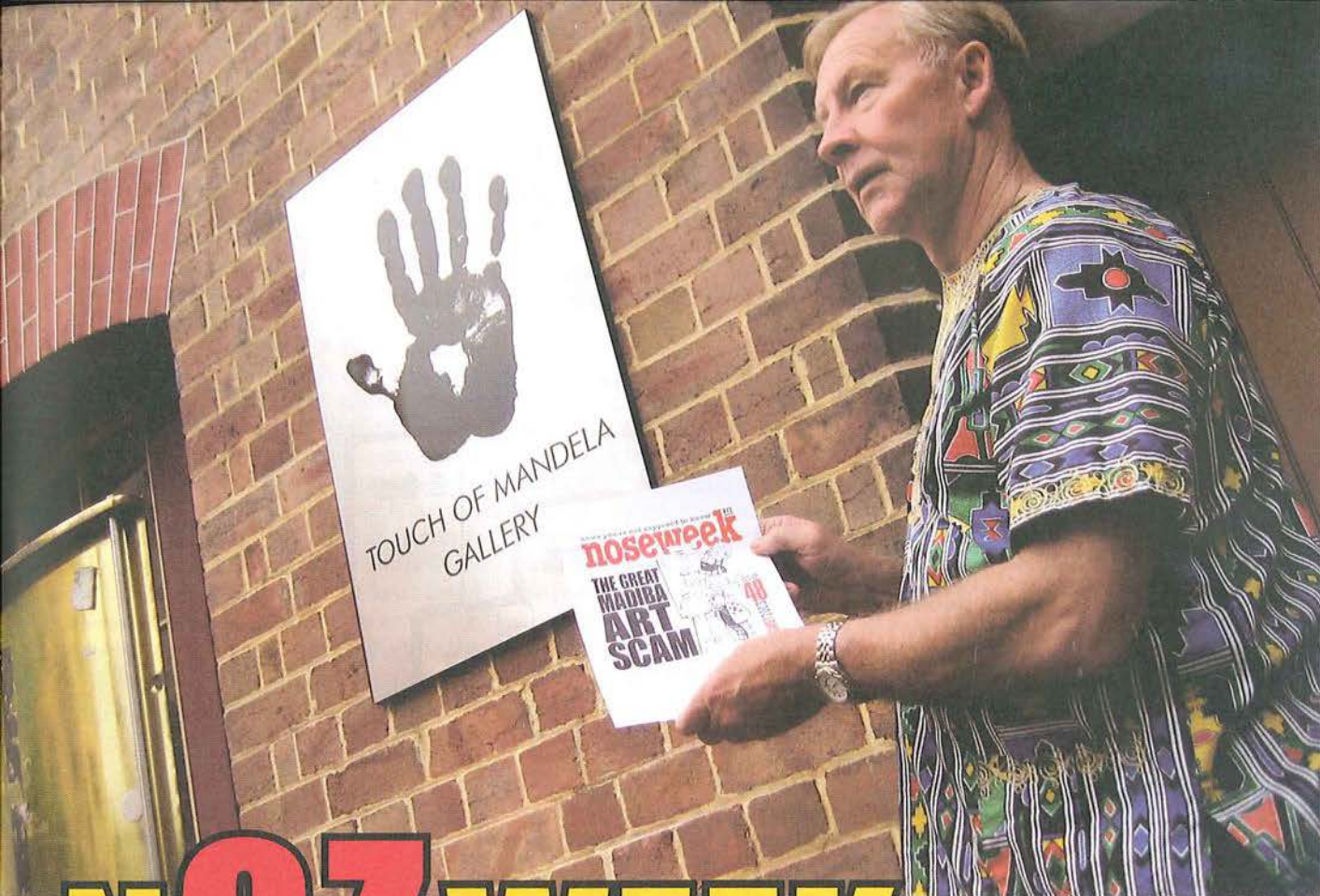
regularly appear in *Wine* magazine – hence the crack in *Grape*.)

Most tellingly, Independent Newspapers' attorneys in Cape Town, Lionel Murray, Schwormsted and Louw are acting for Howe in his case against *Grape*, so they must consider what Howe does defensible.

*Grape*, a subscription magazine that has made independent wine writing its mission, is defending the action – assisted by *noseweek's* attorney, Michael Murphy. Watch this space for developments.

■ Howe is, of course, not the only wine writer to profit from conflicting interests: the latest issue of *Winelands* contains a long article on wine producer De Wetshof, written by journalist Arnold Kirkby ... who happens, in his other life, to be ... PR for De Wetshof. ▢





# NOZWEEK AND 'MANDELA'S' ART

**On Wednesday evening,** 22 October, guests attending the Australian launch of the latest range in Mandela art works at the new Touch of Mandela art gallery in the Sydney harbour area, were met on the pavement outside the gallery by a worthy-looking seventysomething white man in a Mandela shirt. He handed them a few photocopied pages which he politely asked them to read.

Yes, unmistakably, there on the front page was *noseweek's* masthead!

There was great consternation in the gallery for the next 20 minutes with much phoning which eventually resulted in the arrival of an official of the Sydney Harbour and Foreshore Authority. The harbour copper told the lone protester he needed a permit to hand out "literature" in the harbour area.

"I had checked with my lawyer and he had assured me that I was quite

within my rights to hand out anything on a public footpath provided it was not a prohibited publication," Derek McIntosh later told *noseweek*. "But I was not about to get into an argument – I knew nothing about a permit being required – so I moved on to the other side of the street to watch the proceedings."

The function was not that well attended. But within minutes McIntosh had most effectively made his point. Most of the guests who had received copies of *noseweek's* two-part exposé of the Mandela art scam – he had managed to hand out more than 20 before the cop arrived – starting reading them immediately.

Two days later the *noseweek* story made it on to the gossip page of *The Sydney Morning Herald*. The paper quoted *noseweek* and the main promoter of the "Mandela art concept", Ross Calder's response.

We had reported that the "Mandela"

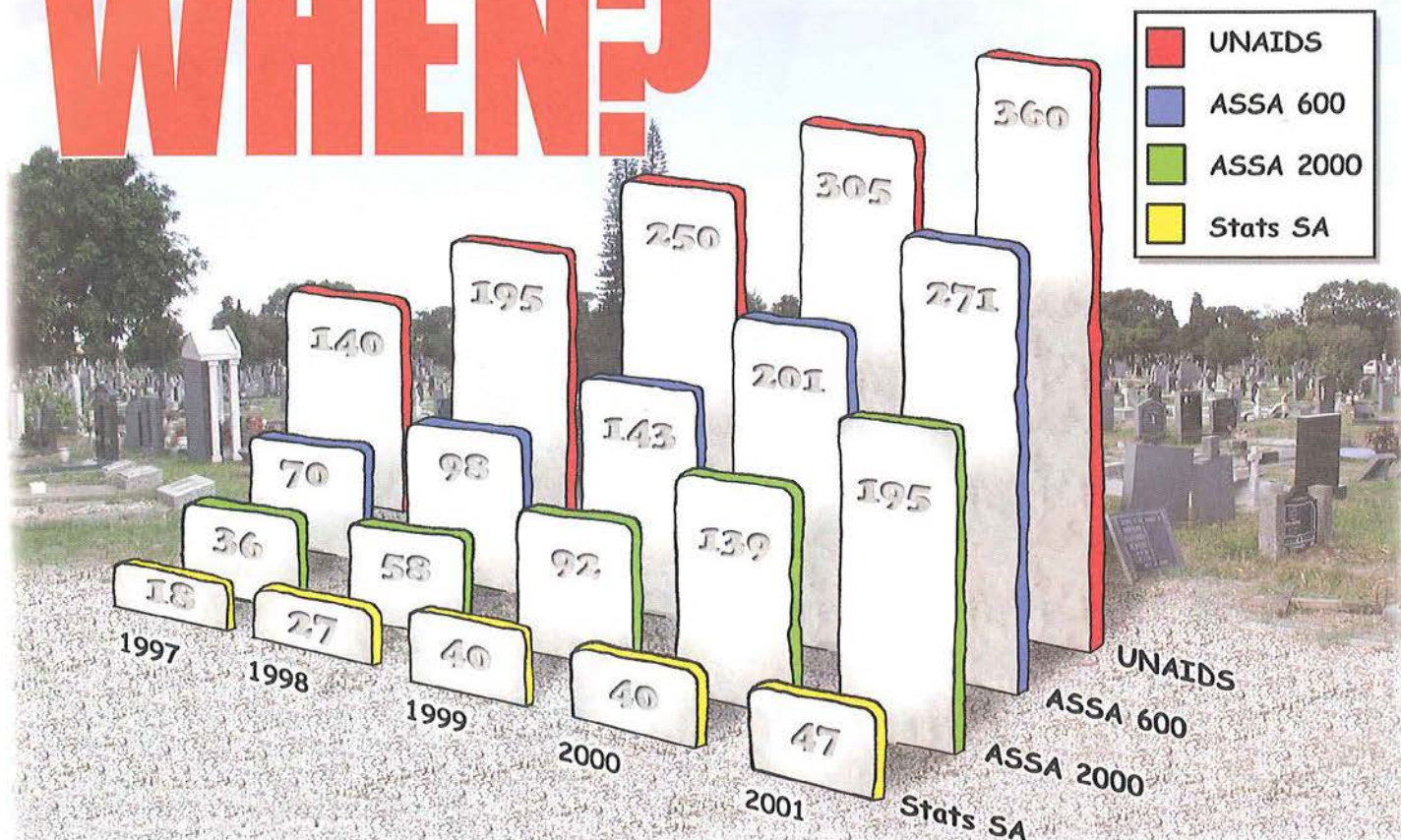
artworks were not by Mandela, but had been "conceptualised" by artists hired by Calder's "concept marketing" company. And that the proceeds (after Calder had taken his cut) were not going to the Mandela Children's Fund, but to another Mandela trust of which Mr Mandela and his relatives were the only beneficiaries.

Calder admitted that the proceeds were going to Mr Mandela personally and not to the Children's Fund ("but Mandela is then distributing it to charity as an upcoming audit of the books will show"), but he angrily assured the *Herald* that he had personally seen Mandela do the drawings. He told the *Herald* that *noseweek* is "a scummy magazine run by unsavoury folk".

■ *Funny, when we think of Mr Calder "scummy" and "unsavoury" are just the sort of adjectives that come to mind. Meanwhile we'll be looking out for the audit report he has so generously undertaken to produce for public inspection at year-end. And expect to hear more from Australia. – Ed. [E]*



# APOCALYPSE WHEN?



## AS I WRITE, MY WIFE

fingers the blade of a carving knife and eyes the back of my neck, apologies to Chandler and so on. She's sick of this. It's been going on forever. We met in Los Angeles in the 1980s, at the very dawn of the Aids era. All the newspapers were full of prophecies about the heterosexual epidemic that was about to blight our lives. She wouldn't sleep with me until I had HIV clearance.

Later we moved to South Africa, where the anxiety deepened. Every newspaper we opened provided more details about the Aids bomb that was about to explode over our heads. Premature deaths would double by 2010. Life expectancy would fall to 35. Africa's hunger crisis would persist "for generations" because so many people would be weakened by HIV infections.



Aids is the most political disease

ever, writes **Rian Malan**, as he revisits the statistics and finds some pleasant surprises

**Annual Aids mortality predicted by three Aids computer models compared with the actual number of deaths (front row) attributed to Aids as reported by Statistics SA**

UNAIDS data was derived from "Epidemiological Fact Sheets." Stats SA data was derived from "Causes of Death in South Africa 1997-2001, P0309.2." For purposes of comparison, Aids deaths for the ASSA models have been corrected (3rd order polynomial curve fitting) to represent Aids deaths for the calendar year of the year in question, rather than the default output of the models (The 12 month period starting Nov 1, of the year in question for ASSA 600, and the 12 month period starting July 1, of the year in question for ASSA 2000).

I have seen pictures of people dying of Aids – a terrible sight. I visualised Jo'burg, with such corpses stacked in the streets, as in the days of the black plague. It was scary, very scary. That's why I accepted a contract to assassinate Thabo Mbeki when he started questioning HIV basics. I speak metaphorically, of course. The weapon was words, and the contractor was a US magazine that suspected Mbeki had gone off his rocker. So did I. Everyone knew the facts, and



there was one fact that overwhelmed all others: 250,000 South Africans had died of Aids in 1999, the year preceding. A quarter-million deaths in a single year. This was horrible. Apocalyptic, in fact. By far the worst catastrophe in South Africa's history.

I thought of a novel way to demonstrate Mbeki's folly. My article would open with a scene in a coffin factory where men worked overtime to provide caskets for the dead while the president consorted with mad scientists who believed Aids was a fantasy. I opened the 1999 *Yellow Pages* and set to work, only to discover that half of Jo'burg's coffin factories (okay, two out of four) listed there had gone out of business since it was printed. More surprising still, the survivors claimed it was business as usual, no boom anywhere. "How can that be?" I cried, citing official UN estimates of a quarter-million HIV casualties in the year preceding. Abe Schwegman of B&A coffins scratched his head. "I don't know," he said. "You tell me."

## WE ALL KNOW, THANKS

to Twain, that statistics are often the lowest form of lie, but when it comes to HIV/Aids, we suspend all scepticism. Why? Aids is the most political disease ever. We have been fighting about it since the day it was identified. The key battleground is public perception, and the most deadly weapon is the estimate. When I lived in LA, HIV incidence was estimated to be doubling every year or so. In 1985, a science journal estimated that 1.7 million Americans were already infected, with "three to five million" soon likely to follow suit. Oprah Winfrey told the nation that by 1990, "one in five heterosexuals will be dead of Aids."

We now know that these estimates were vastly and indeed deliberately exaggerated, but they achieved the desired end: Aids was catapulted to the top of the West's spending agenda, and the estimators turned their attention elsewhere. India's epidemic was likened to "a volcano waiting to explode." Africa

These estimates were vastly and indeed deliberately exaggerated, but they achieved the desired end: Aids was catapulted to the top of the West's spending agenda

By the end of the day I was following Mbeki into Aids dementia, and the rest was very ugly: ruined dinner parties, broken friendships, ridicule, fights with US editors. And I never even became a proper dissident. I was just interrogating the estimates, but the madam's patience wore thin anyway. Her eyes glazed over. Her fingers thrummed irritably on tables. After a year she put her foot down. Choose, she said. Aids or me. So I severed all ties with conspiracy theorists, put my papers in the garage, and sat out the rest of the war on the sidelines.

Hostilities ended on November 12, 2003, when the government announced a R12bn, five-year programme to provide antiretroviral drugs through state hospitals. The war was over. It was safe to come out again. I sat down at my machine. As I write, the madam is standing behind me, hands on hips. She does not like what she sees. There will be trouble unless I keep this brief.

faced "a tidal wave of death." By 1992 they were estimating that all humanity was threatened.



Who were they, these estimators? For the most part, they worked in Geneva for the World Health Organisation (WHO) or UNAIDS, using a computer simulator called Epimodel. Every year, all over Africa, blood samples would be taken from a small sample of pregnant women and screened for signs of HIV infection. The results would be programmed into Epimodel, which transmuted them into estimates. If so many women were infected, it followed that a similar proportion of their husbands and lovers must be infected, too. These hypothetical unfortunates would proceed to die in dumbfounding numbers, leaving throngs of hypothetical orphans behind them.

Because Africa is disorganised and in some parts, unknowable, we had little choice other than to accept this. ("We" always expect the worst of Africa,

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anyway.) Reporting on Aids in Africa became a quest for anecdotes to support Geneva's estimates, and the estimates grew ever more terrible – 9.6 million cumulative Aids deaths by 1997, rising to 17 million three years later.

Or so we were told. After my bad experience with Joburg's Yellow Pages, I visited the swamplands west of Lake Victoria where Aids first emerged and was said to have wrought ghastly havoc. I gathered reams of anecdote about the epidemic, but statistical corroboration was hard to come by. According to government census bureaux, death rates in the worst-affected areas had been in decline since world war two. Aids-era mortality studies yielded some of the lowest "crude" death rates (rate of deaths from all causes) ever measured. Populations seemed to have exploded even as the epidemic was peaking.

Ask Aids experts about this, and they say the historic data is too uncertain to make valid comparisons. But these same experts will tell you that South Africa is vastly different – "The only country in sub-Saharan Africa where sufficient deaths are routinely registered to attempt to produce national estimates of mortality," says British demographer Ian Timaeus, a titan in his field. According to Timaeus, upwards of 80% of deaths are registered here, which makes us unique: the only corner of Africa where it's possible to judge computer-generated Aids estimates against objective reality.

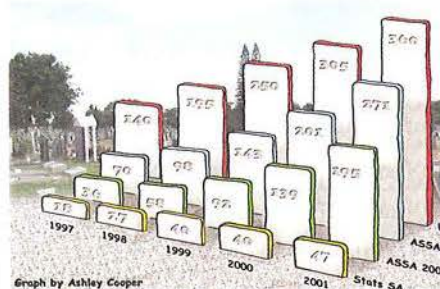
In the year 2000, even as I was reaching for the *Yellow Pages*, Timaeus joined a team of South African researchers bent on eliminating all doubts about the magnitude of our Aids epidemic. Sponsored by the Medical Research Council, the team's mission was to validate (for the first time ever) the output of Aids computer models against real-life death registration. Towards this end, the Medical Research Council (MRC) team was granted privileged access to death reports as they streamed into Home Affairs in Pretoria. The first results became available in 2001, and they ran thus: 339,000 adult deaths in 1998, 375,000 in 1999, and 410,000 in 2000.

This was grimly consistent with predictions of rising mortality, but the scale was problematic. Epimodel estimated 250,000 Aids deaths in 1999, but there were only 375,000 adult deaths in total that year – far too few to accommodate

UN claims on behalf of the HI virus. In short, Epimodel had failed its first and only reality check. The MRC quietly shelved it in favour of their own, local model called ASSA 600, which yielded a "more realistic" death toll from Aids of 143,000 for calendar year 1999.

At this level, Aids deaths were about 40% of the total, which left only 232,000 deaths from non-HIV causes. This, too, was implausibly low, but the MRC made the problem vanish by stating that deaths from ordinary disease had declined at the cumulatively massive rate of nearly 3% per year since 1985. This seemed very odd. How could deaths decrease in the face of new cholera and malaria epidemics, mounting poverty, the reportedly widespread emergence of drug-resistant killer microbes and a health system said to be in "terminal decline?"

But anyway, these guys were the experts, and their tinkering achieved the desired end: modelled Aids deaths and real deaths were reconciled, the



books balanced, truth was revealed. The fruit of the MRC's ground-breaking labour was published in June 2001, and Mbeki's hash appeared to have been settled, along with mine. To be sure, I carped about curious adjustments, but fell silent in the face of graphs showing massive changes in the pattern of death, with more and more people dying at sexually active ages. "How can you argue with this?" cried my wife, eyes flashing angrily. I couldn't. I put my Aids papers in the garage and ate my hat.

A few months later, it started coming up again.

And here I must introduce Rodney Richards, whom I met in cyberspace at the height of my HIV obsession. Rodney was a dissident from Colorado, US, but also a scientist with impressive credentials, including a doctorate in biochemistry and a 10-year stint designing advanced methods of HIV diagnosis.

Unlike many of his peers, Rodney had the grace to be tormented by doubts from time to time, and believed these would be settled in South Africa, the only African country where vast exaggerations could not pass undetected.

Around October 2001, he contacted me to say that the vaunted ASSA 600 model had been quietly retired and replaced by ASSA 2000, which was producing estimates even lower than its predecessor: for calendar 1999, a "mere" 92,000 Aids deaths in total. Rodney interpreted this to mean that real-life deaths were not exploding at the predicted rate, hence the need for downward revisions. A year later came another surprise, this time in the form of a Stats SA study of actual death certificates. All deaths caused by HIV or any of its euphemisms were counted as Aids deaths, and there was evidence for only 40,000 such in 1999.

I daren't pursue any of this, not with a wife sworn to leave if I reverted to old bad habits. Besides, I could barely credit it anyway, even when Census 2001 produced further alarms. Guided by computer-generated estimates, most demographers were forecasting that SA's population growth would slow to around 1.6% per annum as the Aids epidemic kicked in. Instead, Census 2001 revealed that it was growing at a healthy 2% a year. I tried to ask Stats SA for an explanation, but their phones just rang. Ace demographer Professor Laurie Schlemmer told me that census mortality data is being withheld from publication, apparently because it is "sensitive."

And then this from Rodney a few months back: "ASSA 2000 has also been retired." He directed me to the MRC website, where I found a report noting that modelling was an inexact science, and that "the number of people dying of Aids has only now started to increase." A new model was in the works, said the MRC, and it would probably produce estimates "about 10% lower than the estimates contained in this booklet."

The revision was necessitated, I was told, by the discovery of a tiny overestimate of HIV prevalence in 2002. But small things have geometric impact in Aids models, and lowering the 2002 figure causes the whole epidemic curve behind it to sag. Rodney was reluctant, because such an exercise is not scientifically valid, but I persuaded him to run the revised number on his own simula-



tor and see what he came up with for 1999. The answer, very crudely, was an Aids death toll somewhere around 65,000 – a far cry indeed from the 250,000 initially put forth by UNAIDS.

The madam has just read this, and she is not impressed. "It's obscene," she says. "You're treating this as if it's just a computer game. People are dying out there."

Well, yes. I concede that. People are dying, but that doesn't spare us from the fact that Africa's Aids pandemic is something of a computer game. The real question is: is the game doing the dying – or us – any good? Modellers claim omniscience, but in truth, as they themselves admit, all estimates are subject to uncertainties and large margins of error. Much larger than expected, in some cases.

Consider, for instance, all those newspaper stories portraying South African universities as crucibles of rampant HIV infection. A year or so back, modellers produced estimates showing that one in four SA undergraduates were doomed. Prevalence obviously shifted according to racial composition and region, with KwaZulu-Natal institutions worst affected and Rand Afrikaans University (still 70% white)

that do not resolve rapidly (within one to two weeks) are also tested for HIV. As a result, a large number of HIV tests are done every week. This prison, which holds 550 inmates and is always full or overfull, has an HIV infection rate of 2-4% and has had only two deaths from Aids in the seven years I have been working there." Dyer goes on to express a dim view of statistics that give the impression that "the whole of South Africa will be depopulated within 24 months," and concludes by stating, "HIV infection in SA prisons is currently 2.3%."

This seemed to imply that the Prisons Department had quietly conducted an HIV survey among inmates, but Dyer declined further comment, so let's turn to another enigma. SA's medical aid schemes have set up special programmes to manage an anticipated flood of middle-class HIV cases. The modellers estimated that around 450,000 people are eligible, but only 22,500 have joined up.

In the *Sunday Times*, experts attributed this staggering shortfall to fear of stigmatisation, implying that middle class South Africans are so prudish they would rather die than consult their GPs about a sexually transmit-

## SA scientists have proved that Geneva is producing estimates that seem designed to force a certain outcome

coming in at 9.5%.

In the case of RAU, this exercise predicted that one in 10 students would be infected, but real-life tests on a random sample of 1188 real students yielded a startlingly different conclusion: on-campus prevalence was 1.1%, barely a ninth of the modelled figure. "Doubt is cast on present estimates," said the RAU report, "and further research is strongly advocated."

Grahamstown district surgeon Stuart Dyer has reached a similar conclusion about HIV prevalence in South Africa's prisons, where up to 60% of inmates are said to be infected. "Sexually transmitted diseases are common in the prison where I work," he wrote to *The Lancet*, "and all prisoners who have any such disease are tested for HIV. Prisoners with any other illnesses

ted disease. Do you buy that? I don't. Another argument is that most HIV-infected people show no symptoms and are therefore ignorant of their HIV-positive status. I don't buy that either – not when it comes to the middle class people who belong to medical aid schemes. Middle class people are tested when applying for jobs, bonds or insurance policies, and one assumes that middle class sexual athletes have tests just in case. They see the doctor even for relatively mild illness – which one in two HIV-positives should be experiencing. People are encouraged to join the programme immediately they test HIV-positive, so that their condition can be monitored. Even if you accept, against all odds, that only 25% are aware of their condition, 112,500 people should have come forth to join the HIV management programmes. Instead,

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## AIDS

From page 27

we're stuck with 22,500, a four-to-one shortfall – which would tend to support other indications that the infection rate in this population has been significantly overestimated.

And so we come to the end of this diatribe. The ashtrays are overflowing, the room strewn with scientific papers. One says the number of Aids orphans in Africa might be 30-50% lower than commonly claimed. Another states that real-life death rates among Africa's teachers are "typically two to six times lower" than estimated. A third – headlined, "Cry the beloved paradigm" – argues that sex can't account for HIV's modelled rampage across parts of Africa unless you assume a probability of transmission per coital act 300 times higher than anything ever measured. I could go on, but the madam is spitting mad, and it's more than my life is worth to continue.

Besides, I'm not sure what it all means. All that is clear at this point is that over the past four years, SA scientists have proved beyond any reasonable doubt that Geneva is producing estimates that seem designed to force a certain outcome. Because Western activists (and scientists, and drug companies) find Aids more compelling than any other African problem, they say we should spend upwards of \$300 dollars a year keeping an individual alive with Aids drugs. This is a noble proposition – but what if that individual's friends and neighbours are dying in much larger numbers of starvation or politically less interesting, but equally fatal, diseases that could be cured for a few cents if medicines were made available, which often aren't?

It is time to have a debate about this. Such a debate couldn't begin until someone had assessed the accuracy of the estimates emanating from Geneva. The MRC rose to the occasion. We should be proud of them, and they of themselves. And we should share their discoveries with African and Asian states before they are overwhelmed by lobbyists seeking to commandeer a disproportionate amount of pitifully limited health resources to fight a condition that is undoubtedly deadly, but whose rate of occurrence appears to have been hugely overestimated, skewing political, financial and humanitarian agendas. ☐

# Large Group Awareness Training FOR SELF ENRICHMENT

## You've long known

that US multinationals are masters at strip-mining our natural resources, our cultural insecurities and our third-world economy. (The fairy stories and pseudo sex we get from Hollywood – all in glorious Technicolor™ – make it seem such fun!) But did you know that they've found there's profit to be made from strip-mining your personality, too?

It's done by means of something called Large Group Awareness Training – LGAT for short. You didn't know that? Well, then, meet one of the more creative multinational corporations to reach our shores in recent years: Landmark Education Corporation of San Francisco, California.

Landmark is deeply rooted in the LGAT tradition, but avoids using the term.

Instead the company claims to offer a unique road to "extraordinary and even miraculous results" and "limitless opportunities for growth and development" through its weekend seminars.

According to a 1986 report by the American Psychological Association, Large Group Awareness Training was launched in California in the 1960s by a con man called William Penn Patrick. (The perversely brilliant Penn Patrick also founded Holiday Magic, a notorious franchise pyramid. It took US law enforcement agencies nearly 15 years to kill off Holiday Magic's prolific money-grabbing tentacles. Penn Patrick's pupils have been a worldwide plague ever since and in South Africa have included the people behind Total Image and the World Dynamics Institute – and even one of the masterminds of the Salem oil fraud.)

The name Holiday Magic is catchy and therefore springs more readily to mind, but it is Penn Patrick's Leadership Dynamics Institute that is of more immediate concern now. While exploiting the desperation of the poor with his Holiday Magic sales pyramid, he discovered he could, at the same time, cash in on their emotional neediness by operating a psychological pyramid scheme alongside it. To train and inspire Holiday Magic recruits (to recruit an ever bigger flood of franchisees – essential for the success of the pyramid) Penn Patrick devised a "personal enrichment" or motivational training programme for them.

Leadership Dynamics Institute was set up to market the programme.

Participants (who paid for the privilege) were beaten, sexually abused, tortured and persuaded to publicly confess their most secret sins and weaknesses. Penn Patrick had discovered that they could be mightily motivated by all this ... to recruit more buyers for Holiday Magic franchises – and to attend more training seminars!

Ever since, psychologists and students of creative accounting have been fascinated by Penn Patrick's schemes and discoveries. And, not surprisingly, dozens of companies have come into the LGAT act, all of them with milder methods, but many catching the attention of cult awareness and cult victim advocacy groups and psychologists researching mind-control.

Because of the growing flood of negative comment, the LGAT business is bad lately in the US, and Europeans are sceptical too, so the developing world is a target market – especially to Landmark, the market leader.

Independent scientific researchers almost across the board have found LGAT psychologically risky, and none have found it worthwhile for real, long-term personal growth. Most participants reported greater wellbeing and adjustment after courses, but this was not borne out by objective criteria: they felt great (at least for a short time), but – more plainly put than you're likely to find in the psychology journals – the jerks amongst them were still jerks, because of new feelings of "infantile omnipotence" in the form of grandiose beliefs and expectations brought about by LGAT.

The jerks also became exploitable jerks, hyped up about their confessional "breakthroughs" and ready to take repeat and "more advanced" seminars ... and to recruit, recruit, recruit. In some, it looks like an addiction to confession and a compulsion to prove their "integrity" by keeping the recruiting promises that were extracted from them in the high-intensity seminars. Some, it has been reported, end up losing friends, jobs, chances to complete education. Rick Ross, an American anti-cult activist and researcher, says he gets constant complaints about Landmark. ☐



# A LANDMARK ENCOUNTER

**Rachel Jones is cajoled, threatened and bullied, and risks having her wages attached for the rest of her life in an attempt to find out the truth behind a purportedly life-changing training**

## I FIRST RAN INTO

Large Group Awareness Training (LGAT) in 1994, when a friend told me I had to do Life Training – it would change my life, give me insight, unlock my potential. She hinted at an end to our friendship if I didn't trust her on this. But it was only when I found myself at a Landmark recruiting session earlier this year that I began to be really intrigued. Here was an "education" system that was almost indistinguishable from its own marketing. And when I started to ask questions, I found Landmark using the same kinds of manipulations on me as it did on its clients.

When I questioned the R1495 fee, the recruiter tried to turn the subject to my pathology in asking such questions. Seminars typically start this way, I knew, so I was not deterred. I asked where all the money went. At the projected size of 300 attendees, the upcoming seminar would gross about R450,000. With business-class flights (later I was told that seminar

leaders fly economy), a good hotel and a nice fee for the leader (later I was told the leaders are on salary), and a conference-type venue, only about R100,000 would be needed for expenses. "We don't make any secret about Landmark being a for-profit company," I was told, "but it doesn't pay out dividends. All of the profit goes into expanding the programme."

But this expansion was mainly through volunteers (like himself, who "didn't get paid anything") – how much could it cost?

Why was I so determined to "make him wrong"? was his response. But he understood: his way of "being" had once also been to be "right", but Landmark had helped him to see the way he "be-ed", and things could really open up for me if I could begin to see the way I "be".

I approached Landmark headquarters in California (no Landmark people in South Africa would talk to me), asking in a brief email for a summary of the company's audited financial statements and a budget for the

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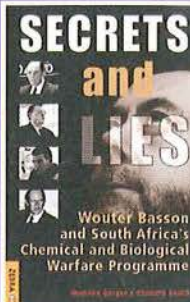
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upcoming Cape Town seminar. I said I needed this information to understand the apparent wide gap between expenses and fees. The email caused big excitement.

On the phone, Sandy Bernasek, a spokesperson (and also a seminar leader) tried a number of moves to avoid giving me information. She swept through emotional appeal (why wouldn't I trust her?) to "begging the question" of my bias (insisting it was a fact we must both accept) to "poisoning the well" (how terrible a person I must be to attack such a useful and beloved company). When I wouldn't cave in, she began aggressively interrupting and changing the subject.

She finally threatened that Landmark would "take it very seriously" if I didn't include in my article the "information" they sent me, which turned out to be a hefty bundle of promotional material. She also set me up for the "compliance tactic" of "social proof": I was told there had been a "witness" to the conversation who agreed with Bernasek that I was being awful.

A day or two later a letter and half a kilo of documents arrived by courier from attorney Art Schreiber in San Francisco. "I am providing you with all of the information set forth above [there was an itemised list] so you can ensure that your proposed article reflects the accurate facts regarding Landmark Education and the Landmark Forum," he wrote. The rest of the letter, with much emphasis and repetition, put me "on notice" of a possible lawsuit, with a judgment against my future wages if I thought (as I had said) I was too poor to worry about being sued.

I did get some financial information in the letter, but it wasn't anything close to what I'd asked for. And there was nothing to dispel the suspicion that Landmark participants in developing countries make sacrifices to pay the kind of American corporate compensation and other expenses that are a worldwide scandal.

I was told, for example, that Landmark is "an employee owned [sic] company with no employee owning more than 2% of the stock." And no dividends are paid out, remember? Profits go into "expanding the programme"? But I found out elsewhere

that half of the company's pre-tax profits go to Werner Erhard, the brother of the CEO, for "licensing" of the Landmark seminars' "technology".

Landmark's links to Erhard are a BIG touchy point.

Werner Erhard (a name he assumed to dodge an abandoned wife and children), was an ex-used car and encyclopaedia salesman who, like Penn Patrick, did the self-actualisation rounds in California in the 1960s; he seems to have been most strongly influenced by his stint in Scientology. (The idea of a "technology" that promises to deal with all the maladjustments of life is familiar from there.)

According to a range of credible witnesses, Erhard was a violent, delusional despot in pre-Landmark enterprises called est (Erhard Seminar Trainings) and The Forum: calling himself God, and giving brutal beatings. His daughters said he had sexually abused them. (The girls later recanted, claiming they had been bribed and coerced to lie about their father - but their stories of abuse are widely regarded as more plausible than their later claims of bribery and coercion.)

Est (like Scientology) became a

**Erhard was a violent, delusional despot in pre-Landmark enterprises: calling himself God, and giving brutal beatings. His daughters said he had sexually abused them**

multi-million-dollar enterprise. The allegations from the American media against Erhard were, however, so devastating that from 1991 he went into hiding. (He is said to be living high somewhere in the Cayman Islands.) But, in the meantime, he had licenced the seminar "technology" to his brother. Methods were toned down. Leaders no longer screamed obscenities at participants in the "seminars" or forbade them to move from their chairs for any reason.

According to Adrian Perkel, a lecturer in psychology at the University of the Western Cape, recent years have seen an even less rough style in LGAT across the board; there used to be more psychological roadkill than now. But the basic structure of the seminars—very long hours, big crowds, high fees, strict rules, confrontation and confession—is the same.

But back to my discussions with Landmark in San Francisco: All in all, the nature of our exchange told me more than did the information I was allowed to have.

Our email exchanges continued for weeks, as I sorted through the information packet and tried to place it in context. Schreiber, Landmark's "General Counsel", must be one busy attorney. At first I was flattered by his rapt fear of an article I hadn't even thought out yet. But the more I looked, the more I saw myself as a mere part of his routine, perhaps like golf or flossing.

It seems that just about any journalist who takes an interest in Landmark gets a threatening letter and a collection of promotional materials purporting to state the indispensable "facts".

Landmark sued *Elle* magazine, apparently for nothing but not incorporating Schreiber's "package" into a 1995 article on Landmark. The lawyer cited "lack of research", "shoddy research", "irresponsible statements" and the "evident intent of the writer to denigrate the reputation of Landmark".

The article was about the author's personal experience of a Landmark seminar. She truthfully reported what happened there, and she came across as moderate in her comments. Was "research" into the package sup-



# Don't Tibet on it

## Inspired by Landmark

its graduates take on various "community" projects, but the overwhelming favorites are recruiting, raising money, and just spending their own so that more people take Landmark courses. It's really great for Landmark. That way the company can't be held accountable for any dishonesty and overreach its disciples might be guilty of in their enthusiasm to promote the cause.

The website ILovePossibility.info, for example, is "not in any way associated with Landmark Education". But: "We aspire that our website contributes to having LE's work shine brighter and touch more people as time goes by." But: "Any failure to live up to this aspiration is solely our responsibility and shall not reflect negatively in any way on Landmark." Kind of like a religion, what?

Some of the "graduates" of David Ure, once a Landmark seminar leader in Cape Town, have been firing up their recruiting with the story of "a seminar held for 300 monks and the Dalai Lama in the foothills of Tibet"; a seminar by which "Landmark took on transforming the political situation there". When I contacted Tibetan exile officialdom for comment, I got a very polite version of

"What the @#%& are you talking about?" The UK Landmark office, where Ure is now based, promised that he would get back to me, but repeated reminders produced no contact. Indian Landmark offices were likewise unresponsive. Meanwhile, the story of the Dalai Lama as a Landmark graduate spreads via Landmark disciples. One confirmed that the Tibetan bulletin came straight from David Ure's mouth – but the disciple became nervous at the idea of my investigating the information and publishing the result. At this point it emerged that the facts might be "confidential".

Now Landmark followers are coming to the rescue of the South African black townships, with a scholarship programme (for Landmark courses only) for several hundred of their inhabitants. Bruce Mujik, a music studio owner who has been celebrating in the media his Landmark-induced bestowal of himself on a house in Guguletu, is heading fundraising for the programme.

Where exactly the money will come from, he is reluctant to say. Recent Landmark graduates? Well, yes. Another source says its American Landmark graduates. What would we do without Americans to solve the rest of the world's problems?

posed to have stopped her from saying anything negative at all? Landmark dropped the suit with no reported concessions from *Elle*, but the company's approach to the media does not seem to have changed.

This may be because aggression often works. Landmark sued the Cult Awareness Network, for example, helping Scientology-associated groups bankrupt the organisation through litigation in 1997. (Scientology then bought the CAN and runs it through an affiliate. Anybody seeking help in exiting a cult should perhaps consider contacting some other hotline.)

Just the threat of a lawsuit by a large American corporation can terrify most people into submission. In 1999 Schreiber was able to list six magazines that had printed retractions of the accusation that Landmark was a cult (and I have copies of two more retractions since then).

Landmark treats the cult accusation as a straw man, as if knocking

that down should end discussion of the company's practices. But here's the really cute part. You don't have to say that Landmark is a cult to get forced into a retraction of that statement.

Dr Margaret Singer, of the University of California at Berkeley, is the world's leading cult expert. She and the mainstream of her psychologist colleagues think that only organisations that routinely make big inroads into their members' well-being merit the name "cult". No one has ever accused Landmark of making its adherents panhandle in airports, wear stupid clothes, etc. So Singer obviously wouldn't ever call Landmark a cult, would she? In her book *Cults in Our Midst* (1995), as well as everywhere else, she hasn't.

But her research into cults has informed her concern about other, milder "deceptive and indirect techniques of persuasion and control", some of which included Landmark

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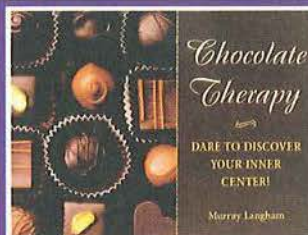


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practices, so she mentioned Landmark in her book, factually. Landmark sued her. It was because she had mentioned the organisation in a book about cults, Schreiber told me. So no less-harmful entity should ever be mentioned in the context of any more-harmful one, no matter how indisputable or relevant the relationship? That's evidently how Schreiber sees it.

I asked how the Singer lawsuit squared with the stated company policy. Which of Singer's statements were "inaccurate" "false" and "defamatory"? No answer.

Legal processes squeezed out of Singer a statement that Landmark was not a cult and didn't meet the criteria for a cult, and Landmark distributes this statement as if it is a retraction.

She now refuses to comment about Landmark's techniques, saying with admirable frankness to *The Phoenix New Times*, "The S.O.B.s have already sued me once." My own letter asking whether she would consider breaking her silence was answered in kind tones by her husband: she is too ill to correspond. (She is in her 70s.) He wished me luck.

With what kind of coverage, then, is Landmark satisfied? I got several approved newspaper articles in the information package. Rule No. 1 seems to be to write what Landmark wants you to write. In fairness, the journalists who cooperated seem to have been lazy and trusting rather than dishonest. "Facts" are simply repeated from Landmark's own material or its media progeny.

The September 2003 *Fair Lady* article on Landmark did not even comment on the arithmetic of the claim that Landmark is "owned by 200 individuals, each with a stake of about 3%". Several publications agree with *Fair Lady* in reporting that Werner Erhard "was eventually cleared of all tax charges". But it doesn't take much digging to find that Erhard was convicted of tax fraud involving \$15m, and that the judgment was upheld on appeal. I asked whether Landmark disputed these facts or was unaware of them. No answer.

Another issue on which the "responsible" journalists have followed like

## Landmark's claim that the 'research' in its information pack was independent truly beggared belief

sheep is that of Erhard and his programme est's relationship to the Landmark Forum. The rampaging, greedy guru must be kept as much out of the picture as possible. "The est Training was an educational programme that ceased being offered to the public in December, 1984, more than six years prior to, and unrelated to, the establishment of Landmark," fibs Schreiber on one essential point.

The truth: between est and Landmark, Erhard ran a somewhat toned-down version of est called The Forum. Landmark's basic course is called The Landmark Forum and sometimes The Forum. They didn't even bother to come up with a distinct name. And why would they? They have the licence to Erhard's "technology". Landmark CEO Harry Rosenberg, Erhard's brother, worked for est. Landmark seminars are indistinguishable in basic techniques, differing from est mainly in their being less harsh and aggressive.

Landmark's claim that the "research" in its information packet was "independent" truly beggared belief when applied to the work of

The Talent Foundation, which was founded shortly after his first Landmark experiences by Sir Christopher Ball, an avowedly very enthusiastic Landmark adherent. (His testimonial compares Landmark to Shakespeare, Mozart and Turner and scarily records his mass recruiting efforts.).

Ball, in reporting on The Talent Foundation's study of Landmark, looked forward to "sponsoring" another study to confirm the amazingly positive findings.

But this is not as bad as professional authority selling out. Raymond Fowler, Ph.D., executive vice-president and CEO of the American Psychological Association, wrote a report declaring Landmark seminars harmless and having nothing to do with psychotherapy. (If they had, their unqualified purveyors could be arrested, not to mention having their pants sued off them.)

He compared the seminars to conversations with family and friends, invoking a rather horrifying picture of his home and social life but not a great deal of confidence in his professional judgment. Was Fowler "independent" as in not getting paid? I asked Landmark. No answer. I asked Fowler himself. No answer.

To validate Landmark commercially, there is the "Harvard study". My copy has on it the Harvard seal (Veritas ["Truth"]), the heading "Harvard Business School", a copyright attribution to The President and Fellows of Harvard College in one footnote, and a disclaimer in another: Harvard doesn't actually endorse this document. No wonder: it was only a business case study for classroom use.

Harvard forbids the promotional use of these studies. This is to prevent professors from purveying advertising in Harvard's name.

Landmark was found pretty swell in the case study. The main author, Professor Karen Wruck, seems not to have used information from any impartial or opposition sources, but only what Landmark gave her. Some passages read like a mere kissing of Landmark's butt:

"Enrollment is a conversation or series of conversations which create new possibilities and result in a



commitment to take action to make those possibilities a reality. Landmark Education Corporation's leaders put it as follows: 'Enrollment is generating a possibility in another's listening, such that they step into that possibility committedly and act.' It is not, for example, persuading or coercing someone...."

I could find out nothing from the professor (now, perhaps not coincidentally, working not for Harvard, but for Ohio State University) about how the study came about. Harvard no longer teaches the case study, sells copies (Landmark reportedly bought tens of thousands) or keeps them in the library.

Harvard also made Landmark agree not to use the study for promotional purposes. I guess that means, to Landmark, that recruiters can still cite the study, and that journalists can still get copies they are told they need to assimilate in order to write "the facts" and not get sued.

Nearly the bulkiest promotional item, an article from the Australian Financial Review of April 24-27, 2003, was about Mark Waller, an Australian artist.

Author Paul Monk thinks Mark Waller's art is "in the great tradition of Raphael and Michelangelo". Citing Caravaggio, Rossetti, Rilke, William James and Nietzsche—and the "mainstream American philosopher William W. Bartley III" (an est adherent who wrote a sycophantic biography of Werner Erhard)—Monk riffs for two pages on Mark Waller's paintings.

These concentrate on tall blonds in skimpy angel costumes and dolphins soaring up through plastic-blue oceans. But Waller dreamed of a New York exhibition, and he believed Landmark could help him.

Missing a day of the Australian seminar because of the birth of his child, he fulfilled his "undertaking" (standard for Landmark participants) to go anywhere in the world in order to complete the seminar, no matter what it took.

It took flying to New York (via Tokyo) ten days after September 11, 2001, to attend a seminar that had been booked to take place in the World Trade Center. Landmark was about being unstoppable and promised to make its graduates unstoppable.

He was a hero to his Landmark classmates. To keep the joyous momentum up, he planned to raise \$1m through a New York charity fundraising exhibition of his and other work in June 2003.

I emailed him in early August to ask how much he had raised. He didn't say, but he said other stuff, including, "I am starting The Ripple Effect [sic] Foundation which will primarily promote the principle, 'the ripple effect' and as a by product [sic] will raise money for charity."

A by-product? I recalled Werner Erhard's Hunger Project to "raise awareness" about hunger—only \$2m out of \$67m raised went to relief organisations, according to *Mother Jones* magazine (the nose-week of America). How much money had Waller raised and for which charities? I persisted in asking. And if charity was a by-product, what was the main purpose of the foundation?

He answered that the aim of the foundation was to "have people become aware" of the ripple effect.

He didn't say anything about charitable donations, only that "very few paintings were sold in NY" and that he didn't have "up to date [sic] details about sales". The way he responded began to look familiar. Landmark courses, which he continued to take, had made a "profound difference" to him.

In line with the consumer come-on of LGAT (Get a new meaning for the past, new goals, a whole new life—in just a few hours!), measurable gains that do occur tend to be fairly shallow. Meeting sales targets, and the writing of the novel *Fight Club*, have been credibly attributed to LGAT inspiration. But the costs? As the analyst Kevin Garvey told New York Magazine, "I don't care if [the participants] can screw better or make more money—their freedom is being taken away."

The common outcomes of therapy—self-knowledge, compassion, change of mind about what is important in life—are not on offer. At best, LGAT is a tool to feel good fast and go straight for what you want: to test power in its raw form. At their high price, the leaders will teach you to be like them. ■

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Mrs CR Robertson, Pretoria Heights 7560  
Mr MJ Scheckter, Mill Park 6001  
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BY HAROLD STRACHAN

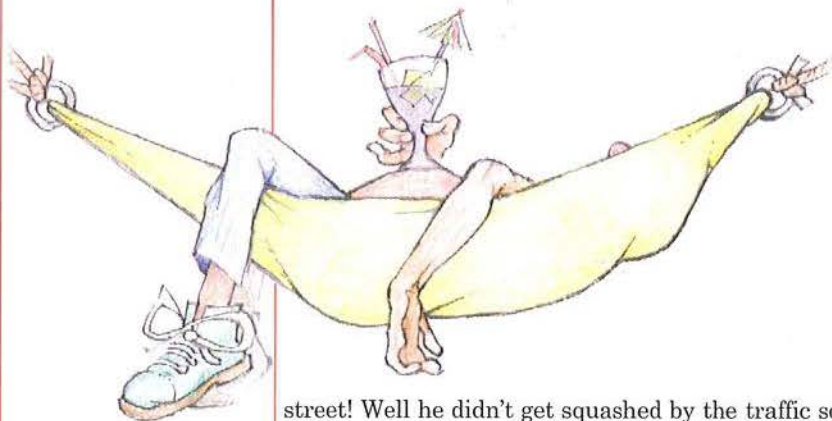
## NOEL, NOEL

## WELL, THOUGHT I, THIS

year I won't flee the scene with Jewish and Muslim anglers and sit in the middle of Durban harbour in a small boat. This time I'll do the goodwill hypocrisy for the sake of the grandchildren, with prezzies in fancy paper quaintly hung on the tropical litchi Christmas tree, and there'll be a big generous braai-fire with spuds and onions and things in foil and a generous platter of meat all marinading in a special P'nP decoction from a bottle, and a generous over-supply of liquor from barrel, still and vat around the globe. I rig up a hammock twixt the branches of the litchi for beautiful youth to loll in with small sunshades stuck in fruit floating on a purple distillate with red drinking straws, and beaded bubbles winking at the brim.

The coals are gently glowing. All is right. There is a small hoot at the garden gate. The family enters: daughter, husband, boy, girl. Prezzies! prezzies! We all smile sententiously, like Midwest Americans on Thanksgiving Day. Dad spies the hammock and claims occupation rights, he's got brains that boy, he'll go far in this world. He's going to dodge the whole gewoel. The kids spill all prezzies out on the table: dolls, wind-up cars, silk shirts, chocolates and a strange little hand-decorated paper bag with four crunchies; each has one, except Mom, she is off to the loo, she'll have hers later. There's a wind-up set of false teeth too, which jump and chatter, what a scream!

Young Ben takes over the ancient male rite of fire-priest and flings the spuds in the coals. We each choose a lump of meat and he places these skilfully on the mesh. Excitement is mounting. The bickering is starting. Don't play with the fire, you're too small. I'm not, I'm six. That's too small. Well you're also too small. I'm not I'm 12. Scream. A tiny boy from across the road stands gaping adenoidally at the meat, stark naked, covered head to foot with snot and perspiration this steamy coastal noon. Dust sticks all over him, and small bits of dry grass and odd feathers from passing birds and powdery old white Doberman faeces. His jaw hangs open. He wipes his nose on his arm. I pour a triple vodka in a tall glass with a twist of naartjie peel and a good dash of bitters and top up with Indian tonic containing genuine quinine, the bottle says, and balance it on Dad's belly in the hammock. Poor sod, he deserves it.



Who did  
you say  
gave you  
those  
crunchies?  
You know  
why she  
makes  
crunchies,  
don't you;  
they're full  
of insangu

The yelling rises to a crescendo: He says I have stolen Mom's crunchie just because I have eaten off this little corner and I was taking it to Mom so there! Then why did you hide it behind your back when I saw you taking it from the bag? Skre-e-em! Yell!

Most of Dad's vodka is inside his belly by now. Cry the Beloved Crunchie, he murmurs. Give me that bloody thing, cries Mom in desperation, and takes the crunchie and purposefully eats it there and then. The small boy is pissing on the bromeliads. Never mind, say I, maybe it'll discourage the mosquitoes. His ma bursts in at the gate: Chaiceleigh O my Chaiceleigh! she cries, and clasps him to her bosom. O my GOD, so small and all alone in the

street! Well he didn't get squashed by the traffic so that's okay then hay, say I, and hand Chaiceleigh a length of wots which he sticks in his worshole as he eyes the chops. OmyGodOmyGodChaiceleigh! sobs his ma, disappearing in steep audioperspective across the way.

Then silence. Why is everything suddenly so ominously quiet? asks Mom. Dad is trying round two with cane this time, and the kids are softly giggling and swallowing the last of the steak and spuds and an entire bag of Portuguese rolls is gone. I grip the arms of my chair. O my GOD! I cry. The kids have got the munchies, a sure symptom! WHO did you say gave you those crunchies? Tina? You know why she makes crunchies, don't you; they're full of *insangu*.

So THAT'S why I suddenly feel such Peace on Earth and Goodwill towards Mankind, says Mom. By this time the kids are asleep on the grass, and Dad too in his hammock and a thousand miles away. How about a bit of the old tiptoe then? I say. You know, make hay while the sun shines, eh? Carpe diem? Gather ye rosebuds while ye may? I fling all the bones and braai residuum in the big tin dish where the dogs are imprisoned in the kitchen and fetch out the wee portable CD player and a couple of discs of blues guitar and we dance kaalvoet on the carpet of leaves under the litchi tree. □



# PERSONAL

**Ann, Mike, Mallory, Rachel and Christopher** Festive season greetings, love Nicky.

**Festive Greetings** to all from the Coppins of Hill Crest.

**Grant** what sort of mac are you? jmps.

**Happy 70th** Harry Factor. Lov – Verabe.

**Music Industry** Friends and associates please note "I am back" emilf@worldonline.co.za

**Once you have faced** the impossible, only the possible remains. Ahmed Essop.

**Promote soccer** at formerly white schools in Cape Town ten years after 1994. It's about time.

**To RJ's and CD's** please renew your subs to *noseweek*. You need to know! Mother.

**Will South Africa** be a new Zimbabwe? Without a free press it could. G Maher.

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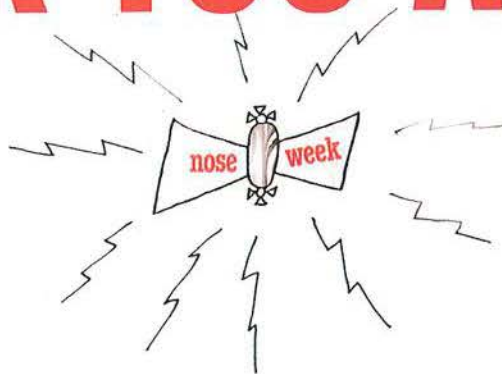
# What's up doc?

# by Ashley Cooper





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