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Wild Coast mining

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Iqbal Survé's
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Mandela Bay saviour
helped looting he was
supposed to stop

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Time warp estate battles to hold clock back

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With your help Noseweek, has WASPs and cellphone service providers that have been stealing our air time with their backs against the wall.

More than 10200 people signed our petition in the first week of Noseweek's online campaign!

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<https://dearsouthafrica.co.za/noseweek-2>

When we last looked, 10275 cellphone users had signed up.

Help us double the numbers by the end of November 2018.

Letters

Good read and a crying shame

I FOUND YOUR EXTRACT FROM *SECRET Pigeon Service* most interesting and enjoyable. I am fascinated by war stories, probably courtesy of a father in the RAF, who won a DFC (Distinguished Flying Cross) in WW2.

Then there's the late 104-year-old Zabalaza Mshengu. Dr Nomsa Dlamini calls the fact that the old man died without getting transfer of his land after a 12-year wait "sad". It's a crying shame, that's what!

Mo Haarhoff
Stellenbosch

The responsible officials at the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform clearly have no shame. They also have no brains – either that or they were or are waiting for a bribe. How else explains that we are still waiting 12 years on?
– Ed.

Trouble cashing in RSA bonds

I INVESTED A LARGE SUM OF MONEY AT 10% interest, fixed for five years, in RSA Retail Savings Bonds on 15 February 2016.

On 1 September 2018 I emailed an "Early withdrawal form – for investments of one year and older" to the National Treasury at queries@rsaretailbonds.gov.za

I noted that payments under this option "shall take seven working



"Here, probably. Where do you see yourself in five years?"

© 2017 Jonny Hawkins

days to be fully processed and paid".

On 1 September I received an email from heat@treasury.gov.za logging my Early Withdrawal as incident #222195. I had expected to be paid by 12 September.

The "Helpline" (on 012 315 5888) has always operated promptly and has been helpful, but when I phoned on 14 September, the helpline was "out of action" so I sent in another email to queries@rsaretailbonds.gov.za saying: "Helpline out of action. Please advise urgently what is delaying this withdrawal" and quoted incident #222195

I received no response.

On 17 September I called the

helpline once again. After the usual introduction I opted for option 2 but music was played for 12 minutes. I could not hang on and ended the call. At 15:25 I called again and after holding on for 15 minutes I ended the call and resorted to email again – only to get the standard automated reply:

"Hi michael wolffe, the following new Incident has been logged for you: Incident #232115 Summary: Why the delay? ... Kind Regards HEAT Service Desk"

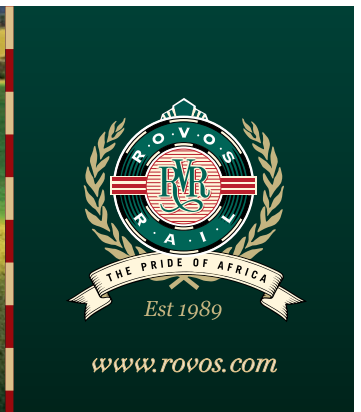
By 19 September and needing some of this cash to pay taxes and medical, I again tried the helpline, was transferred to music. I simultaneously phoned *Noseweek* because I thought there is something seriously wrong with a government department that should act with meticulous honesty. The call to Treasury ended after 27 minutes with a flat phone battery and no answer at all.

As I write this note it is 18h20 on 21 September and still no monies have been received from Treasury.

What is going on in this government department?

Michael Wolffe
Sea Point

On 1 October Mr Wolffe received payment of the full amount from Treasury, with no comment, apology or explanation. Noseweek tried calling the department for a response, but gave up after holding on for 15 minutes. These days a lot



of people are obviously queuing up to talk to the National Treasury. – Ed.

Nedbank v offshore widow

I HAVE JUST READ YOUR JULY INSTALMENT of the Nedbank offshore saga (nose225), subtitled “After mauling widow, whinging lawyer seeks to muzzle her”. This is better than a soap opera – but can you believe such evil people still mingle with – and pass themselves off as – honourable people?

‘Cry the Beloved Country’
Pretoria

Selling stock they haven’t got

AFTER YEARS OF READING YOUR GREAT mag, I remain impressed by the content. Thank you for keeping us informed about the shenanigans in this remarkable country of ours.

My contribution: Takealot advertises a wide range of products for sale on their website. Any items you select are placed in your “shopping basket”. You proceed to checkout to confirm your order and pay for it.

You then expect prompt delivery – but that is often not the case. Instead you are as likely to get an email notifying you that items you have already paid for are not in stock.

Why take money for goods that are not actually available? Is this not fraud? It seems their IT system cannot determine whether the item is available until you have paid for it.

Is this a cheap overdraft facility for them, collecting customers’ money for non-available products? It is certainly a problem that does not appear to trouble them as, in a year, they have done nothing about it.

Anton Duivestein
Stanford

Legal brutality from SARS

I AND MY FAMILY FOUND OURSELVES ON the street with nowhere to live after SARS assessed my company’s R14-million claim for a VAT refund as fraud in terms of Section 73.

SARS claimed to have determined that the fleet of helicopters I had bought for R100m were in fact worth

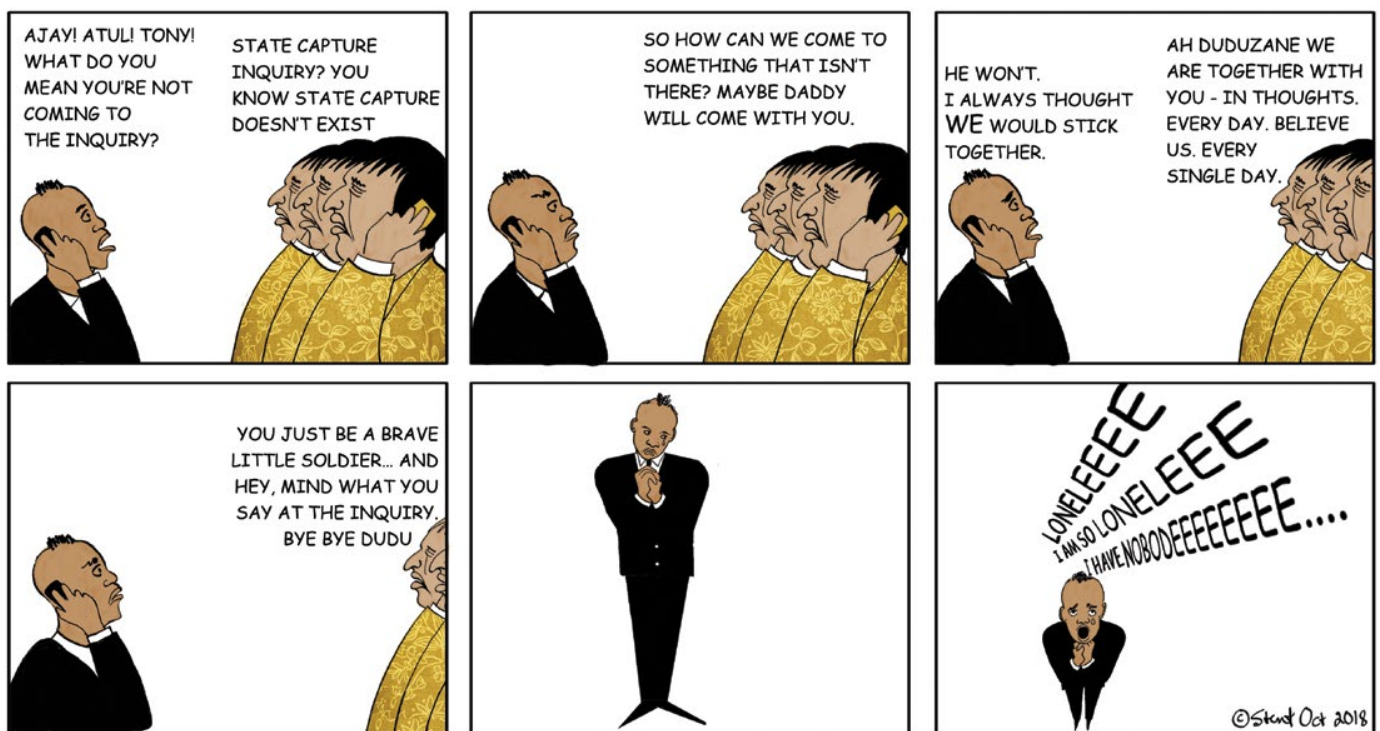
nil – slapped on a 300% penalty, and instead of us collecting a R14m refund, I was faced with SARS demanding immediate payment of R58m.

I have been advised by two tax professors, Phillip Haupt and Peter Surtees, that this is an impossibility in terms of our VAT law, and that SARS have acted unlawfully.

SARS nevertheless liquidated and took my farm where we live, and a helicopter company, in payment of their unlawful claim, all executed via a well-orchestrated legal racket on the so-called “pay now, argue later” basis. They have effectively ensured I have no resources with which to argue. How can such legal brutality pass muster in terms of our Constitution? In fact, no one at SARS could ever explain how they came to these figures and assessment.

I am happy to go head to head with Mr Kingon or whomever on a public forum. The company liquidated is Aeronastic Properties Ltd. The VAT return in question was for April/May 2009.

Peter Dale
Melkbos



Stent

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Editorial

Justice delayed is justice denied

RECENTLY CAME UPON THIS REPORT ON THE US news website OZY:

“Vernon Madison has suffered multiple strokes that have left him blind, with dead brain tissue and urinary incontinence, and unable to walk independently or remember the crime that put him on death row three decades ago. In October, the US Supreme Court was to consider whether the state of Alabama can legally kill Madison – who murdered a police officer in 1985 – despite the degenerative medical condition that has robbed him of the ability to understand the circumstances of his execution.

“The case tackles evolving standards of decency and the US Constitution’s prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment.”

Surely the real inhumanity lies less in executing a man suffering from senile dementia than in the relentless torture of having kept him, anyone, hovering on death row for 30 years.

Back home, a criminal case *Noseweek* reported on in March 2005, (both accused had been arrested two years earlier) is still on trial in the South Gauteng High Court – with the end not yet in sight. Whether the accused are guilty or not, when a criminal prosecution has been in process for 16 years, isn’t it time to question the morality, the sanity of it all? Apart from questioning the competence of the prosecution, what about the cost?

On 12 December 2002 various SARS officials and major tax offenders that had struck deals with SARS signed affidavits in support of charges to be laid against Gary Porritt, the main man behind a company called Tigon. Anyone remember it?

Porritt was arrested in Pietermaritzburg on 14 December 2002. The only reason given was a reference to contraventions of the Income Tax Act. Porritt was granted R1 million bail.

Over the next two-and-a-half years the State was granted 10 postponements as their investigations were incomplete. Only after finally being ordered by the court to produce an indictment, did they do so on 29 July 2005. The indictment listed 3,160 main counts and 3,254 alternative counts. Of these, the only counts relating to tax were 80 alternative counts. But the entire prosecution has been driven by SARS.

On 12 March 2003 Sue Bennett, Porritt’s partner was also arrested.

In the following month various companies associated with Tigon were put into liquidation or under judicial management by SARS.

March 2005: Seven different locations were raided. Hundreds of thousands of documents and electronic storage devices were seized. The State took another two-and-a-half years

to compile an inventory of documents seized.

April 2005: Magistrate told the high court trial would begin in January 2006. (It did not.)

April 2007: State finally provides Bennett with an electronic copy of the case dossier against her. The index fills 530,594 pages.

June 2007: State aborts Durban case against Porritt withdrawing all charges. Trial in Johannesburg still to proceed.

May 2008: Porritt receives paper copy of only portion of the case docket against him (13 months after judge ordered State to produce it.)

The years 2009 and 2010 were occupied with court applications to compel the State/SARS to produce documents and with attempts to obtain legal aid to employ Defence counsel adequately qualified for the case.

September 2010: Bennett given emergency heart-bypass requiring 12-week recuperation.

2011-2015: more of the same. Much dirty dealing by the prosecution, determined to nail the accused. The defendants’ (inadequate) legal aid is withdrawn.

27 July 2015: State issues warrants for Porritt and Bennett to appear for resumption of the case, now before Judge BS Spilg.

An unsuccessful application by the defendants for a permanent stay of prosecution was heard on 5 December 2015.

Argument was only concluded on 25 March 2016 and the accused only got to formally plead to the charges against them on 17 July that year.

2017: Trial continues on and off, with Bennett taking short periods off on medical advice when high stress levels exacerbate her heart condition.

June 2017: Porritt starts suffering black-outs; Judge Spilg accuses him of shamming. When he fails to appear at court as he is in hospital undergoing tests, the judge orders his arrest (in hospital) and cancels his bail; Porritt has been in detention at Johannesburg Central prison ever since, being brought to court each day in the early hours by crowded prison transport. He is having to prepare his defence overnight in a cell which he shares with up to 30 other inmates. He stores his court files under his bed.

Baragwanath Hospital has since diagnosed Porritt as suffering from paroxysmal atrial fibrillation. Judge Spilg says he is unable to consider new medical evidence.

Porritt is currently still cross-examining the first prosecution witness.

A date is yet to be set for an appeal against Spilg’s incarceration order, to be heard by a full bench of the Gauteng High Court.

You thought we have a world-class judicial system? Think again.

The Editor.

Mob boss's attorney sues Namibian paper for defamation

Case will be important test for country's media freedom

A NAMIBIAN LAWYER HAS FILED A libel suit against the country's largest daily newspaper over Panama Papers-related stories that linked the lawyer to companies used by Sicilian Mafia kingpin Vito Palazzolo, who was long a resident in South Africa (noses 8,9,23,24&36.)

Lawyer Henn Diekmann, who specialises in foreign investments in Namibia, alleges he was libelled in two stories that *The Namibian* published in 2016 and 2017. The stories resulted from reporting and from data unearthed as part of the Panama Papers investigation by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ).

Diekmann's lawsuit names the publisher of *The Namibian*, Free Press of Namibia (Pty) Ltd, and editors and reporters Tangeni Amupadhi, Shinovene Immanuel, Tileni Mongudhi and Ndanki Kahiurika as defendants. Immanuel is a member of ICIJ.

Amupadhi, *The Namibian's* editor, told ICIJ: "This is an attempt to intimidate and stop us and the rest of the news media from writing about people who clearly have a lot of resources to keep their activities secret.

"We have followed the best journalistic practices [and] stand by our reporting."

The Sicilian Mafia used Namibia as a port of call for cocaine trafficking throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, according to media reports.

The Namibian revealed that Palazzolo, also known as Robert von Palace Kolbatschenko, a name he assumed while ambassador plenipotentiary for Ciskei in the apartheid years (see *Diary of a Don*, nose8) held up to 14 bank accounts with millions of dollars in Namibia.

Palazzolo was arrested in Bangkok in 2012 on an Interpol warrant to face charges in Italy related to his Mafia-associated activities. In December 2013, he was extradited to Italy where he remains in jail in Milan. He previ-



Vito Palazzolo

ously served a three-year jail term in Switzerland for laundering proceeds of the Mafia's heroin trade in America – the so-called Pizza Connection.

The Namibian reported that Palazzolo and his family owned or used local companies involved in diamond mining and real estate, including one company in which the son of Namibia's founding president was a shareholder.

In May 2016, referencing emails and documents from the ICIJ's Panama Papers probe and, separately, communications obtained between the governments of Italy and Namibia, *The Namibian* expanded on its reporting.

Diekmann was the director of a Seychelles company linked through a fellow director to Palazzolo, *The Namibian* reported. A Hong Kong entity, H. Diekmann Trust, was a shareholder in the same company.

The Namibian reported that Diekmann was included in email correspondence about another Seychelles company alongside "Robert von Palace," the name assumed by Palazzolo in South Africa in the 1980s, and the name by which he was identified in the Panama Papers documents.

Diekmann was also a co-director

with Palazzolo's son of yet another company, *The Namibian* reported.

Diekmann denies wrongdoing. He declined to answer questions sent by ICIJ but has previously told *The Namibian* he was "simply a lawyer representing clients". He also rejected the newspaper's defence that it has the duty to publish information in the public interest.

Amupadhi said that to lose the case would be "a killer" for his paper, as the defeat could come with legal costs five-times greater than the \$20,000 (R293,315) in damages sought.

The Namibian's lawyer, Norman Tjombe, said that Diekmann's claim could be an important test of media freedom, which is protected under Namibia's constitution. "Potentially, this will be the first case where an attempt will be made to broaden the defences available to the press in Namibia in defamation cases," Tjombe wrote in an email shared with ICIJ.

Namibia is widely seen as one of Africa's media success stories. Global media freedom watchdog Reporters without Borders recently ranked it second only to Ghana in its annual press freedom index for Africa.

But the fact that Namibia has not experienced violence against reporters or overtly repressive legislation of the kind adopted in other African countries "does not mean that Namibian journalists and media do not face difficulties or challenges," said Arnaud Froger, head of the Reporters without Borders' Africa desk.

"Access to information should be guaranteed in a law, and journalists should be protected from abusive defamation lawsuits," he said.

Editor Amupadhi added: "We face several challenges, including the lack of an access-to-information law in a political and economic governance environment which is substantially non-transparent and unaccountable."

● This report was sponsored by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ). ■

Paedophile priest and the Catholics' 17-year cover-up

IN OCTOBER, WILLIAM SEGODISHO went public with the story of how he had been raped and sexually abused in the 1980s by Father William MacCurtain, a Jesuit priest then based at the Cathedral of Christ the King in Doornfontein, Johannesburg.

Segodisho said he decided to speak out because the church had blocked his attempts over the past 17 years to get the priest reported to the police and have him extradited to South Africa from the UK to stand trial for his crimes.

Segodisho's renewed fight for justice was inspired by reports on the "Sidney Frankel Eight" case – first revealed in *Noseweek* (nose180). The case of the victims of paedophile stockbroker Sidney Frankel – who are by now all middle-aged – was taken on by Sandton attorney Ian Levitt, a longtime *Noseweek* subscriber. Levitt shepherded their case all the way to the Constitutional Court.

In June this year the court ruled that the law which imposed a 20-year limit on prosecution for sexual assault was unconstitutional. The court also changed the definition of rape to include men as possible rape victims.

Earlier this year Levitt agreed to take on Segodisho's case as well.

Segodisho tells his story in an affidavit filed at the Hillbrow police station in February this year.

A primary school classmate of Julius Malema, Segodisho fled as a 13-year-old from Limpopo to Johannesburg in 1986 after he was involved in violent protests against apartheid-era police. The abuse, which is said to have happened between 1986 and 1989, occurred after the priest befriended Segodisho while he was living at a street shelter for children in Hillbrow, Johannesburg.

"Streetwise enrolled me in an informal school and a shelter. Through Streetwise I met a priest by the name of William MacCurtain, known to me

as Father Bill. I could see I had made an impression on him. I thought this was due to my academic promise.

"Father Bill convinced me to go stay with him at the Christ King Cathedral at 186 Nugget Street, Doornfontein in a dormitory for priests. I shared a room with Father Bill.

"Shortly after I moved into his room, Father Bill started to molest me sexually by fondling my private parts, kissing me on the mouth and putting his penis between my thighs. Father Bill made it clear to me that if I did not co-operate with him in this regard he would stop taking care of me."

In 1986 Segodisho went to boarding school. "Father Bill made me an altar boy so that I could spend my weekends with him. He would often give me whiskey before molesting me.

"During 1986 he took me to a place called Big Fisherman in KwaZulu-Natal. This was the first time I was penetrated in my anus. I don't remember much of that night. I woke up and something was not right. It was so painful.

"I said: 'Father Bill I know what you did to me last night'.

"He said: 'It'll never happen again, I don't know what got into me' and he apologised.

"It didn't stop.

"One weekend after mass I approached the only black priest in church. I didn't trust the other white priests, I thought they were all like Father Bill.

"The black priest was Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa [*Mkhathshwa was a prominent cleric in South Africa's anti-apartheid movement. Later he became an MP, a deputy Minister of Education and Mayor of the Tshwane. He has been awarded The Order of Luthuli in Silver. He currently heads the Moral Rejuvenation Movement.*]

"I said to Father Smangaliso: 'There's something I want to tell you about Father Bill'. I got him as he was coming out of the reception. 'I want

you to please help me', I said.

"The father looked at me and said: 'I think I know what you're going to tell me and I would rather not be involved. Go to the Superior and tell him'.

"I suspect the other priests also knew.

"I didn't know, but Father Bill had seen me talking to Father Smangaliso. 'What did you say to Father Smangaliso?', he asked me. I lied and told him that Father Smangaliso 'knows everything'. 'But how could you? After all I have done for you?'

"I was happy because after that he kept his distance. Less than six months later he came and said he is leaving for England and he is never coming back. Which he did."

Commented Rees Mann, executive director of South African Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse: "Instead of helping Segodisho, when he first reported the priest to the South African Catholic church authorities, the church's officials simply transferred him back to the UK.

"Who knows what he did when he returned to the UK."

In a statement, Father Thabo Motshengwa, chairperson of the Archdiocese of Johannesburg's Professional Conduct Committee, said the church took all cases of child abuse seriously. "The first we heard about this case was in February. It was never formally [*and informally?*] reported to the Catholic Archdiocese of Johannesburg or any of its professional conduct committees.

"The Catholic Church, is serious in addressing this issue and has special dedicated local and national professional conduct committees which investigate every reported case."

He said the committees liaised directly with the victims, police, schools and the National Prosecuting Authority on reported cases.

"According to South African law, criminal charges have to be laid first and the legal process has to take its



Rape victim William Segodisho (above) and paedophile priest Father William MacCurtain

course before the Catholic Church can intervene.

“When the case was reported in 2001, the priest had already returned to the UK in 1990. He was informed of the allegations by the British Provincial and withdrawn from all active ministry. He has never ministered in public again.”

Motshegwa said an investigation was carried out by the British Province of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuit order) because he was a member and they had jurisdiction over him.

“A local lawyer met with Segodisho and his lawyers at the time in Johannesburg. The Diocesan authorities were verbally notified of the case. It was agreed that those responsible for him must deal with the case.”

So how did they deal with the case? *Noseweek* is now in a position to answer that question. On July 2, 2003 the Society of Jesus in South Africa, “a religious organisation practising as such under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church” agreed in a formal document to pay (“donate”) R25,000 to Segodisho in exchange for his “perpetual silence”.

Significantly – because it implies that such cases are not infrequent in the Catholic church – the document begins with a statement that “the Donor was involved in investigating a sexual abuse claim by the Recipient against one of the priests in the Roman Catholic Church in terms of the Protocol for Church Personnel

in regard to the Sexual Abuse of Children.”

Later it records that: “The Donor has decided, despite the allegations by the Recipient not being confirmed, to assist the Recipient [...] with an ex gratia payment with the aim of assisting the Recipient and his family with their financial needs.”

It goes on to make clear that “the ex-gratia payment is in no way an admission of liability arising from the allegations of the recipient”.

But it wasn't all generosity. There was a quid-pro-quo required: “The

donor requires that the ex-gratia payment be kept confidential in order to protect its interest and to prevent the public obtaining and exploiting such information to the detriment of both parties.”

Segodisho was required to undertake to “treat the Confidential Information as strictly confidential; not to disclose, whether for financial gain or otherwise, to any person any of the confidential information.”

The “Confidential Information” was defined as: “all information relating to the allegations made by the recipient, the information relating to the ex-gratia payment made by the Donor, and documentation related to the assessment and investigation of the allegations, including all correspondences exchanged between the parties.”

Father MacCurtain returned to the UK in 1990. Now 84 and frail, he has been living in a Jesuit nursing facility in England for the past eight years. On 10 October he said the following in a statement issued in response to questions put to him by BBC TV South: “I recognise that my behaviour towards Mr Segodisho in the 1980s violated the trust he had put in me as a Catholic priest.

“I deeply regret the pain that I have caused him and would wish to apologise to him unreservedly. I realise, though, that such an apology cannot right the wrongs done to him at that time, or the suffering he has endured since.” ■

‘Shortly after I moved into his room, Father Bill started to molest me sexually by fondling my private parts’



Down and dirty

Deception, lies and conspiracies at the heart of the on-going Xolobeni fight about mining the Wild Coast

RESIDENT ANTI-MINING ACTIVISTS at Xolobeni on the Eastern Cape's pristine Wild Coast believe the minister of mining and the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) are promoting the creation of a number of "puppet" pro-mining lobby groups in their region.

The long-established, locally formed anti-mining lobby group Amadiba Crisis Committee (see *noses* 116,188,189,195,200,201,205,208,214 &216) believe that South Africa's Department of Mineral Resources and the Perth-based Australian mining company Transworld Energy and Mineral Resources (TEM), also known as Mineral Resource Commodities (MRC), are deliberately creating new "affected" groups and then, after all the groups are formally recognised, will make sure they easily out-vote the community's no-mining representatives in any consultative forum to be set up by the department.

Already two of the "trusts" referred to by Minister of Mineral Resources Gwede Mantashe in a 27 September media statement as being pro-mining – the Mdatya Trust and the Bekela Trust – have been found by *Noseweek* not to exist.

Meanwhile on 31 August, just two days after Mantashe gave a speech at the Africa Downunder Conference in Perth, Australia, MRC released its 2018 half-year results presentation and stated the "new South African Government was pro-mining". Added to this are several recent interviews by Mantashe that appear to show his eagerness for the mining project to go ahead.

Chief punter for the pro-mining lobby is Zamile Qunya who tells everyone who will listen that a proposed mineral sands mine on the Wild Coast will significantly change

for the better the way people live, improve education and health care in the region, provide 3,000 construction jobs and just over 1,000 permanent, direct jobs for a project that will run for more than two decades.

The proposed mine is expected to be one of the largest mineral sand mines in the world.

"I grew up in Xolobeni. Poverty in this area must end with me," said Qunya.

Qunya is an active director in MRC's equally controversial Western Cape operation, the Tormin mineral sands mine (*noses*188,201&214). He is also the founder – although he states he is no longer an active director – of Xolobeni's BEE partners, Xolobeni Empowerment Company (Xolco). He now considers himself a "community leader" in the Xolobeni debate.

"The majority of people are for the

project. Only a minority is against it," said Qunya.

And he is fairly positive that Mantashe will lift the moratorium placed on mining activity in the area by former minister Mosebenzi Zwane, although he is not sure when. He said the case for mining was strong, as the project was "environmentally sound, has social benefits and is bankable".

He also refutes claims by the Amadiba Crisis Committee that people would be kicked off their land, although he admitted agricultural land would likely be lost.

"People living in close proximity of the mine can volunteer to be moved but it's up to them," he said.

However he can't escape the label by the Amadiba Crisis Committee that he is simply "the right hand man of MRC in South Africa" to push the "Xolobeni Mining Project".

He also didn't help his cause when he recently agreed to an interview with TV news station eNCA, where he presented a group of "pro-mining" community members to be interviewed. But he did not mention they were in fact his mother and her neighbours. His mother's carer even gave a different name and did all the talking.

Neither did he inform the journalist about his links to MRC, instead telling journalist Malungelo Booi he was merely a community leader.

In September Booi did two television reports on the proposed mine.

Qunya told *Noseweek* he had not hidden his true identity which Booi could have found had he searched his name online. He confirmed that the Mdatya Trust and the Bekela Trust were "new" and not yet registered. The Department of Mineral Resources said it didn't keep details of the trusts.

Booi who hails from nearby Port St Johns said in a series of interviews

Chief punter for the pro-mining lobby, Zamile Qunya, tells everyone who will listen that a proposed mine will significantly change for the better the way people live



Zamile Qunya

with various people across the region that it was difficult to ascertain exactly where people stood on the mine.

“I wondered if some people were being coerced to have a certain opinion,” said Booi. In one instance, he said, a woman had changed from being anti-mining to pro-mining instantaneously when asked whether she would go before the camera.

Booi came under harsh criticism by Amadiba who said days later in a statement that “journalists at eNCA have no experience from propaganda and deception” and “maybe they cannot smell danger when they are being used”.

Booi said communities reacted to his questions depending on which village they belonged to. He added that he was often seen as “a spy” sent by either the pro- or anti-mining groups and that earning people’s trust was hard.

Amadiba Crisis Committee spokesperson Nonhle Mbuthuma said that as far she was aware their relationship with Mantashe “was at an all-time low” and that the two trusts named Mdatya and Bekela, were created by the minister “without any agreement”.

Other pro-mining groups, according to Mantashe, were the Xolobeni Development Trust; Amadiba Development Forum; Mzamba Taxi Association; the Eastern Cape Contractors’ Forum; BEE partner Xolco Bizana Chamber of Commerce; and King Zanozuko Sigcau.

“We’ve never heard of these other organisations such as Bizana Business Forum. And why is the Taxi Federation interested in what is going on with the mine? There will not be any new roads or routes,” said Mbuthuma.

“Between department and MRC they have created ‘new’ stakeholders who

don’t even live in the area. The plan is to then create a committee fairly represented by all these organisations which will, in turn, create a situation where we are continuously outvoted. The department and MRC want to make us a minority voter in our own land. If the mining goes ahead we will be kicked off our land. We will lose everything.

“We are self-sufficient. The government is pushing us to be dependent on them. We don’t have services here but we don’t have service delivery protests because everything we need is here. And the graves of our forefathers are here,” said Mbuthuma.

At least 70 homesteads will be affected, she said, whereas Qunya had claimed that none would be affected.

“These people will lose not only their homes but their fields, access to the

ocean and neighbourhood. And if they are moved, no one knows where they will go,” said Mbuthuma.

The Department of Mineral Resources told *Noseweek* that, due to the moratorium, any discussion on how and when people could be removed from land to make way for the mine was “pre-emptive”. The department also reaffirmed that “No mining right has been granted in Xolobeni”.

Meanwhile MRC is still considering selling its 56% stake in Transworld Energy and Resources (SA) (Pty) Ltd which owns the Xolobeni Mineral Sands Project, to another BEE partner Keysha Investments 178 (Pty) Ltd.

The only listed director of Keysha is Prince Mzwandile Maraqana, who is spokesman for the recently enthroned AmaMpondo King Zanozuko Tyelovuyo Sigcau. ■



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Time warp estate battles to hold clock back

Fierce rules, tough fines and a ferocious code of conduct keep the residents of this Gauteng paradise in order, while their tranquil way of life is under threat from all sides.

Jack Lundin dropped in

JOBURG'S BEST-KEPT SECRET LIES WITH only the N3 and the teeming township of Alexandra separating it from the hustle and bustle of Sandton City. Yet in the rarified time warp that is the “virtually crime free” Thornhill Estate the clock is kept firmly back: old tin-roofed houses set solidly on enormous tree-laden stands, numerous parks and public gardens, a stream and ponds with tadpoles and frogs, lakes and 1,600 open hectares along the boundary.

But from outside the wire, this

bygone way of life is under threat. Nevada Group razed 290 pine trees from the wood around the Chapel of St Francis in the Wood to make way for its Flamingo Shopping Centre; there's Balwin's Eco Estate with its hundreds of upmarket apartments; property mogul Irene Tsai's M&T Development has secret plans to pepper those 1,600 empty hectares with 30,000 high density homes; development has decimated the 900ha Modderfontein nature reserve, with its 280 species of birdlife, to just 230ha.

For some of the 513 households on beleaguered Thornhill Estate it's all doom and gloom; for others the exciting march of progress. Either way, all the fuss and development outside has made it boom time in the old estate. Most of the 123-year-old houses have been revamped, in some cases razed and replaced – like the ponderous old 1940s arrival, a semi that's going for an unbelievable R8.5m.

Thornhill stands are more than generous – 929m², 1,335m², 1,641m² are just some. And, you immediately



13 Provan Road (above) recently sold for R2.6m and (right) bucolic Thornhill scenes



notice, everything is immaculate – no unsightly washing hanging out to dry; no barking dogs or noisy kids; no pellet guns or quad bikes. That’s because it’s not allowed. There are a lot of Rules. You’ve got to behave yourself, or the homeowners’ trustees will be on to you.

Thornhill Estate goes back to 1895, when it was known as Hamburg Village, a collection of tin houses knocked up by the explosives giant now known as AECI to house workers it imported from Europe to work at their dynamite factory, in what was to become the small East Rand town of Modderfontein. The explosives were for the gold mines of the Rand, then two days’ journey away by cart. A 1,600ha safety buffer of empty land lay between plant and village.

Hamburg was for the German-

speaking contingent. Tactfully renamed Antwerp Village during the Great War of 1914-18, it bears Belgian street names to this day: Brussels, Louvain, Bruges and Provan. Now it’s Thornhill and some of its residents, like 76-year-old retired accountant Keith Martin, grew up here. Martin’s father, a mechanical engineer from the UK, arrived in 1936. The family paid rent of £7/month to the company for tin-roofed 13 Provan Road.

Martin went to nursery school in the village’s church hall, later taking the school bus daily to Highlands North High School. “It was a very tight, nice little community with a very strong social club,” he recalls. “I learnt to swim in dam no 3 (now renamed Fish Eagle

Dam) till they decided the dams were too toxic from the factory for swimming.”

In 1994 eight workers died when a massive explosion rocked the nitroglycerine plant in the dynamite factory. AECI moved to safer water-based products, reducing the need for the 1,600ha land buffer.

Thornhill, had become rundown. Wrecked cars littering neglected gardens and Heartland, AECI’s property wing, was hard pushed to get R150,000 for the old tin houses. But as the Joburg footprint expanded and families searched for new safe havens to rear their young, Thornhill began to revive. Keith Martin, for one, returned in 2002 and he and his wife Wendy

built a new house on a stand by the stream that runs through the estate. A leading light in the Modderfontein Conservation Society, Martin bemoans the “massive” development now taking place all around, such as the eyesore of Fish Eagle View, now going up around dam number 3, “all three-to-four-storey high-density apartment units, cheek by jowl, with very little space.”

In retirement – he’s 76 – Martin keeps the books for the family’s school uniform business. He says most residents deplore the all-enveloping development. “Generally people are not empathetic. We bought here for the ambiance of the village and the estate with the dams and streams. The surrounding area has been drastically eroded.”

Martin marvels at the soaring house prices on Thornhill. The other day his old childhood home, 13 Provan, changed hands for R2.6m. “Quite amazing what houses are going for here,” he says.

Another returnee is Allan Bartram. His father was workshop supervisor in the AECI dynamite factory. Bartram grew up at 14 Thornhill Road and returned in 2005 after 36 years away, buying number 27. Cash-flush after selling his hydraulics company to Germany’s Hansa-Flex, when his old family home (number 14), with its 2,000m² grounds came on the market eight years ago, he picked it up for R1.35m. Now his daughter Moni and her husband Gerrit Caldo, who looks after Thornhill’s parks and public gardens, live there and Bartram reckons that even with no material improvements number 14 is worth around R6m. Last year, for good measure, he snapped up number 29, next door to his own, for R3.9m as an investment.

The story of Thornhill Estate came to *Noseweek* from Allan Bartram with a complaint that he and 32 others were being double charged by Joburg City Council for their electricity, with notices of termination if they didn’t cough up. Seems that when prepaid electric meters were installed inside everyone’s houses years ago the old conventional meters out in the street were left still ticking.

Recently the council decided to start reading them and sent bemused residents – all of whom were dutifully buying prepaid units – the bills. For numbers 14 and 27 Thornhill Road, Bartram faced demands totalling

R48,178. The 32 others have been billed between R3,000 and R169,000, plus one luckless individual who’s been hit for R1,457,000. The dispute was unresolved as we went to press.

Now 67, Bartram admits his heart “almost skips a beat” when he looks back to the delights of growing up in what he calls “Modder Village”: learning to swim at dam number 1, the changing rooms there that became the Dynamite Café, with its “raucous” parties accompanied by Procol Harum, the Hollies and the Beatles. The café, he recalls, was the venue for “our first kiss and first drink taken within its safe walls”.

It’s really thanks to Allan Bartram that the Thornhill Estate is what it is today. Soon after his return he became a trustee of the then bankrupt Thornhill Homeowners’ Association (THOA) and ploughed his own money into revitalizing and reshaping the derelict open spaces.

Unhappy with the way things were being run by the board of trustees, he ousted the lot of them and took over as chairman, assisted by three fellow residents including Armour Gittings, who in office hours is the gimlet-eyed head of a special investigations unit tracking down stolen fleet cars at Avis SA.

Although no longer a trustee,

As for residents’ building contractors, their daunting list of penalties includes a fine of R5,896 for every worker caught sleeping on site



Allan Bartram

Bartram’s name still adorns, as author, Thornhill Homeowners Association’s updated 23-page Code of Conduct, Rules and Regulations. There’s a six-page addendum listing 18 specific wrongdoings, with a schedule of fines and penalties. Not forgetting 20 more offences and their penalties for residents’ building contractors.

At times, it must seem to the sternly-administered estate residents that they’re living under house arrest, with only an ankle bracelet missing. The trustees are unrepentant. You will be required to “forego certain freedoms” if you want to be part of this “unique community” warns the Code of Conduct.

Here’s a taste of THOA’s sins and their penalties (fines are calculated as a multiple of the monthly levy, which is currently R1,474.10 for everyone). Dogs off the leash in public areas and excessive canine disturbance both carry a factor of 0.40, or R589 per incident; maltreatment of Estate wild and domesticated geese and ducks: up to R1,105; exceeding the 40kph speed limit: R442; malicious damage to fauna and flora: R1,105; illegal buildings or walls: R1,474/month until compliance.

Penalties are added to the levy, with interest for late payers at prime plus 9% – ie a hefty 19%. Those who don’t pay up, or who otherwise contravene Estate Rules, risk being denied entry at the gatehouse and having their biometric fingerprint access suspended. THOA relies mainly on the levy for its R8.9m annual income. In his financial report present chairman Stephen Burrow records only three serious arrears, “all of which are currently under legal process”.

As for residents’ building contractors, their daunting list of penalties includes a fine of R5,896 for every

worker caught sleeping on site. For “undisciplined workers” it’s R1,105/worker. A note says the onus for payment of contractors’ fines rests ultimately with the property owner.

Under all-embracing Breach of General Estate Rules (fine of R589/breach), what really gets up the trustees’ noses are “Unsightly Objects” such as washing and mats draped over walls, garden furniture or fences. Such items must not be visible from the road or a neighbour’s garden, it is decreed. No person may keep more than two dogs and/or two cats without written permission. Pets found without ownership tags will be immediately “removed”. THOA may also demand the “removal” of a particular pet that becomes a nuisance.

Anyone wishing to repaint their house must ensure that the selected colour complies with the Estate’s official colour palette. No quad bikes or the discharge of pellet guns on any part of the estate. And there will be “NO tolerance or abuse (verbal or physical) of security employees.

Most residents, it seems, toe the line without complaint. “The rules and constitution I believe have been excellently designed with qualified lawyers for everyone’s benefit,” says an unrepentant Allan Bartram. “When I was chairman, the few who rebelled or complained are by far in the minority and often included the people who do bugger all, but when the fan is struck they are the first wanting help.

“In 2004 I arranged a reunion of old Modder residents. We had nearly 500 people from all parts of the world arrive – even my Grade 1 teacher. It was the most wonderful experience and to this day I keep the survivors of that time informed of events and deaths. That’s why I don’t really care for anyone who has an issue with me.”

Residents of the Thornhill Estate are mostly white. Bartram puts it at 95%. “Very few black people own houses here,” he says.

One of the few is Lindiwe Hani, daughter of assassinated South African Communist Party leader Chris Hani. “I think affluent blacks prefer places like Sandton and Bryanston where you get more modernity. Thornhill still has an old village feel about it.”

The trustees’ biggest scare came five years ago, when AECI sold off that 1,600ha buffer between Thornhill and the old Modderfontein dynamite factory for R1billion to a Chinese development



Residents were alarmed by a Chinese plan to build a mega-city nearby that would become ‘the capital of Africa’ – but it didn’t get off the ground

company. Hong Kong-listed Shanghai Zendai announced they were going to build an R84bn smart city along the valley linking dams number 2 and 3 that would eclipse nearby Sandton City and become the future capital “for the whole of Africa”.

But it never got off the ground. Zendai SA ran out of funds and with net liabilities running at R216m abandoned its lofty project, citing SA’s economic conditions, the uncertain future of the real estate market and fluctuations of the rand. But now the Thornhill Estate trustees are wondering whether they’ve tumbled from the frying pan into the fire. Last year the Competition Tribunal approved Zendai SA’s R1.8bn sale of the development asset to JR 2098 Investments, an entity controlled by M&T Holdings (owned by property mogul Irene Tsai and her family).

Part of this empire is M&T Development, responsible for swathes of high density apartments in Centurion frequently featured in *HelloPeter* for water bubbles in the walls, sagging ceilings, cracked walls and leaking showers.

M&T Development is believed to have plans for 30,000 high density residential units on those 1,600 Modderfontein hectares, though project head Leticia Potts says “It’s quite a big area and we haven’t finished all those numbers”. Relations between M&T and the apprehensive Thornhill Estate trustees have been strained and Potts takes our call reluctantly. How many units (starting price R699,000) have you built at Fish Eagle View? “I’m not sure,” replies Potts, who knows perfectly well.

Stephen Burrow, the bluff 57-year-old Scot and present chairman of the Thornhill Homeowners’ Association,

eyes all this, as well as the emergence of Nevada’s Flamingo Shopping Centre with its strip mall and flagship Checkers at the estate’s entrance, with trepidation. He says the estate itself is “virtually crime-free” but hijackings and “horrendous” crime in the area is a worry. Burrow is particularly upset (“steam comes flowing out of my ears”) when he sees the multiplying piles of rubble dumped along the road as he drives to his offices in Craighall, where he works as a financial adviser. He appeals to residents for video footage evidence to catch the culprits – “but please don’t do anything that puts you at risk”.

The chairman’s still licking his wounds after losing a battle with Nevada to retain the old roundabout at Thornhill’s entrance, now replaced by – horrors – traffic lights. “So, traffic lights will be the order of the day as progress sweeps our suburb out of the backwater we have loved so much into a new, busy neighbourhood,” Burrow sighs in the estate’s newsletter.

His remaining hope is that along with all this unseemly progress, Thornhill will be “promoted by the powers that be as the heritage centre of Modderfontein”.

In the meantime, to bolster defences inside the wire, trustee and chairman of Thornhill’s security committee, Armour Gittings, has overseen the purchase of two new security vehicles, and the installation of high-beam lights along the 4.1km perimeter fence that encircles the estate.

In a massive operation, this entire perimeter fence has also been plinthed – great quantities of concrete poured under it to prevent outsiders from tunnelling their way into the strange world of the time warp estate. ■

Dispatches from the front

A low-intensity civil war is grinding on just north of Pretoria. By Wessel Ebersohn

A LOW-INTENSITY CIVIL WAR IS being waged just north of Pretoria. Between the dusty business district of Bon Accord and the continually spreading townships of Hammanskraal and Soshanguve, farmers and plot-holders are struggling to hold on to their land, while shack dwellers and other opportunists try to take possession of them.

One of the recent victims of the district's undeclared war was Johnny Moloi*, a nephew of the owner of the plot on which he lived.

Usually in farm attacks the aggressors are black and the victims white, but this was not the case on this occasion. Johnny's uncle, who bought his plot a few years ago, is one of the growing number of black owners of plots in the area. Moloi lived in a house on the plot while he studied information technology. No meaningful farming was being conducted. He was simply the caretaker.

The attackers left his dead body in the living room of what is a modest middle-class home. He had received a blow to the head with a blunt instrument and was stabbed many times. His hands and feet were bound with iron bailing wire, his wrists and the Achilles tendons of both legs had been severed, and he appeared to have been sodomised.

The reason for his death is a matter for conjecture. Some locals say he had a disagreement with Mozambican immigrants and that the people from that country are always the most militant, so it must have been them. White people from surrounding areas say the reason is simply that the young man's family are property owners and the

killers are probably shack dwellers who resent their relative wealth.

To gain access to the property you have to pass through two gates, the motors of which no longer function. The tanks where an attempt was made to farm fish are dry and the garden is dying. A bitch has just given birth to 14 puppies. Another young man is now looking after the property. He feeds the dogs, keeps the doors and windows locked and is careful around strangers.

Within a few hundred metres of the plot where Moloi died, the battle lines are drawn between those who have practically nothing and those who are trying to hold on to the limited assets they do possess. Piet van der Vyfer* one of the last white plot owners in the Inderminne area, has lost sections of his fence wire and more than half his fence posts. His plot is a few hundred metres from the nearest shack village, a sprawling cluster of huts adjoining Hammanskraal. The huts are made of rusted corrugated iron, plastic refuse bags, cardboard sheets from boxes and the wood of disused packing cases. The men, South Africans, Zimbabweans, Mozambicans and others are largely unemployed. In a country in which unemployment runs close to 40%, and 60% among young black men, this is less than surprising.

Like all plot holders in the area, Van der Vyfer lives under a state of siege. Almost all his white neighbours have either sold their properties for much less than they paid or simply deserted them. The neighbouring plot on the Hammanskraal side of Van der Vyfer's property has lost all its fencing wire. Men with no other income, presu-

ably from the shack village, are cutting down the trees to sell for fire wood.

Van der Vyfer, a 70-year-old retired businessman, bought the property ten years ago and has erected a charming thatched roof house on the plot for himself and his wife. The intention was for them to spend their closing years on their smallholding. As the months pass this looks increasingly unlikely. A possible design weakness in the house is its thatch roof. This became clear when a neighbourhood watch operative left wheelbarrows belonging to allegedly illegal wood cutters on Van der Vyfer's property. "You may not give back the wheelbarrows to them," the neighbourhood watch man said. "They are evidence now."

He took the admonishment seriously, but not wisely. The next day a gathering outside his gate demanded the return of their wheelbarrows or "we will burn down your house with you and your wife inside it." Van der Vyfer resisted and that night the gang of illegal woodcutters remained outside his front gate all night, shouting threats.

"We never slept," his wife says. Numerous calls to the police brought no visits from officers, no men dispatched to the scene, no reaction whatever. The burning down of the Van der Vyfer home was probably only prevented by the presence of members of the neighbourhood watch who stood guard throughout the night. Adding to the Van der Vyfers' concern was the knowledge that another house in the area had been burnt down, just after the owners, an elderly couple, were evacuated. Within 24 hours of that incident everything saleable that



remained on the property had been stolen.

In answer to a query about his future, Van der Vyfer says, “I don’t know. I have guns. I will resist anyone who tries to take my land from me.”

Apart from the dangers posed by hostile human beings, this is not easy country in any respect. To the immediate south of Hammanskraal is dense bushveld country that possesses a singular beauty all its own. On many plots the trees and bushes have never been cleared and grow so close together that walking among them is difficult. Rainfall throughout the region is a purely summer phenomenon. In most years there is no rainfall at all between May and November. As winter deepens, boreholes empty, the veld becomes tinder-box dry and fires, many of them caused by arsonists, are an almost daily occurrence.

The Sunday morning before this article was written eight fires, originating in different places, swept through Bultfontein and neighbouring Vastfontein, a plot area 30km south of Hammanskraal. Apart from the effect on some hundreds of hectares of grazing and bush, two houses and a number of outbuildings were

Bultfontein, an area of about 200 plots, suffers on average more than one break-in nightly. Borehole pumps, livestock, a seemingly endless variety of tools, building materials and other items are stolen

destroyed. The municipal fire brigade with the help of 37 plot owners in their bakkies, some towing water tanks, took till after dark to put out the flames. On the Tuesday a new fire broke out, severely damaging grazing on another five plots. Again the municipal firefighters with the help of the local volunteers extinguished the fire by early afternoon.

The fires among the plots are more damaging than in most places. Most of the plot owners feel they cannot afford insurance. But just as the neighbours put out the fires, they also came to the help of those who lost most. By Wednesday of that week a plot family who had lost 300 metres of water pipe had it replaced as a gift. They also received enough furniture to fill their home as soon as it is repaired.

Along the edge of Bultfontein, the remains of a game farm has for some years served as a bulwark between the plot owners and the homeless. Situated in a strip along the crest of a row of hills, it was the home of a variety of antelope, monkeys, leopards and even lions. More recently it has been rented for cattle farming.

The investor who owns it was apparently unaware of the first shacks to go up on his land. The hundreds of thousands of hectares of the place make that a reasonable possibility. The appearance of the first shacks opened the door to a flood of homeless people. The result is that the fences on the Bultfontein side of the game farm, much like those in the Inderminne area, are down and the shack village is spreading over the crest of the hill. The plot owners of Bultfontein, of which close to a quarter are black, watch the advance of the shack community – no longer restrained by a fence line – and the guards of the old game farm, with growing trepidation

Being a bulwark is no laughing matter. The pressures faced by the man who hired the game farm for his cattle has found himself unable to deal with the presence of the shack community. At the time of writing he has been charged with murder, following the killing of an intruder.

The community’s fears are not without foundation. Bultfontein, an area of about 200 plots, suffers on average more than one break-in nightly. Borehole pumps, livestock, a seemingly endless variety of tools, building materials and other items are stolen. Fence wire is cut regularly,

often the wire and poles are stolen. Many plot owners patrol their fences daily to repair the previous night's damage.

The government's recent announcement that land can be expropriated without compensation has been interpreted by many as freedom to seize what they believe should be theirs. On occasion, plot owners and their workers are attacked. Some have been killed. One of the worst recent cases was the multiple stabbing of an elderly neighbour as he stepped out of his house at 11 one evening to secure the gate to an animal enclosure. Earlier this year the naked corpse of a white woman was found spread-eagled on a street in neighbouring Honingnestkrans. In the week before this article was written, two workers on one of the plots were shot by intruders, but survived.

This is a religious community in which people take seriously God's role in their lives. If things go well with you and you have no great problems with intruders, cutworm or any other local plague, you have the Lord to thank. If things go badly, you had better examine yourself because the Lord is punishing you. Situate the area in the USA and it would be seen as part of the Bible Belt. There are probably more churches per square kilometre here than anywhere else in the country. Community meetings, held regularly to discuss security issues, are opened and closed with prayer.

It is also a polite community. If anyone is ten years younger than you, they call you Oom or Tannie (Uncle or Auntie). If you are the younger one, people would be surprised if you did not reciprocate. Coming home one afternoon, I stopped at our gate and opened the car door to get out. A young woman who has a well-paying job that involves international travel and dealing with highly sophisticated clients happened to be parked nearby. As I stopped, she leapt from her car and made for the gate. I tried to stop her, but she was not to be deterred. "No, Oom," she said, "naturally I'll open the gate for you." For someone who has spent most of his adult life in Johannesburg, it came as something of a surprise.

The atmosphere of fear is subtle. People continue with their lives, without outward displays of terror, but take special precautions. The barking of dogs getting closer and closer as a band of intruders moves through the

plots at night, the high, insistent cry of plovers who have been disturbed, the flash of a torch somewhere on your land, a sharp knocking on a door or window or the recorded crying of a baby or a puppy at two in the morning, the aim of which is to draw you outside: at any of these warning signs, outside security lights are switched on and firearms readied, if you have them, and you peer out through cracks in the curtains to assess the dangers.

Not possessing a firearm is a cause for surprise. "You can't live on a plot without a firearm," we have been told.

Fear has resulted in a strong sense of unity. In an effort to protect their families, Bultfontein plot owners, both black and white, are organising a community watch. In this they have been assisted by the neighbouring Vastfontein community where an excellent community policing forum has been operating for some time.

Genuine support comes from its members. The young men of the community are quick to come to the assistance of families and older people, pursuing intruders through plots and farms, usually driving them away and, on occasion, making arrests.

The entire community is linked together by WhatsApp and radio links so that news of attacks reaches every family in minutes. Every evening the community policing forum radios every plot or farm on its list. The entire process takes the best part of an hour and if anyone does not answer the reason for their silence is investigated.

Serious attacks often result in support for the victims arriving from all directions. These community arrangements are all that stand between plot owners and complete chaos. While properties lose value and many members of the community fear for their safety, the police offer very little assistance and none in mob situations. When confronted by a mob the Hammanskraal police withdraw. The impression is created that they are not going to endanger themselves protecting a white property owner.

Plot owners who report attacks at the police station struggle even to get a case number out of those on duty. After a recent attempted burglary I was assured by a sergeant that a case number was not necessary, he would be on our property the next morning to investigate and would give us the case number then. He never came and

after that I was unable to raise him on the telephone.

In the case of a break-in, during which we lost a substantial amount of moveable property, the police visited us but a promised second visit to take fingerprints never materialised. Ironically we were told that the Hammanskraal district is listed as a low crime area. This is not surprising in view of the fact that the police avoid opening cases, presumably to keep the official figures low. Speaking to other members of the community, similar stories are repeated endlessly.

To be fair to the police though, they are hopelessly under-resourced. Hammanskraal police station has only three motor vehicles, and often one or more is out of commission. A vehicle sent in for service sometimes takes more than three months before it is returned. And under these circumstances they are required to serve an area of over 1,000km², including the densely populated town of Hammanskraal itself. Essentially, the same applies to the manpower situation. Too few vehicles and too few officers make visible policing a distant dream.

Into this mix – which applies in much of the country – some politicians have chosen to call the situation genocide. The word suggests a systematic extermination of an ethnic or religious group. What we are faced with is not that. It is, more accurately, a disregard for the safety of white rural citizens as a result of either a cavalier, uninterested attitude, or else a simple matter of incompetence.

Despite the prevailing circumstances, Piet van der Vyfer was warned by a police captain not to shoot at anyone invading his property. "He will have a civil case against you then and we will not be able to help." Not that they ever had.

Perhaps the most telling comment comes from another plot owner. "My children are all educated and have moved overseas. All I want for myself is to die on my own land."

The week after this article was written, an elderly woman was shot dead by intruders in the early morning hours while in bed with her husband.

* The names of crime victims in this article have been changed to protect them and their families. ■

● *Wessel Ebersohn is an internationally published South African novelist.*

Mandela Bay

City saviour who wrote the book on ANC-looting of Nelson Mandela Bay Metro actually helped the theft. By Jonathan Erasmus

THE MAN WHO WROTE THE WIDELY acclaimed exposé of ANC corruption, *How to Steal a City: The Battle for Nelson Mandela Bay*, Crispian Olver, it emerges, opened the way to a final multi-million-rand heist from the city's coffers in the run up to the 2016 local government elections.

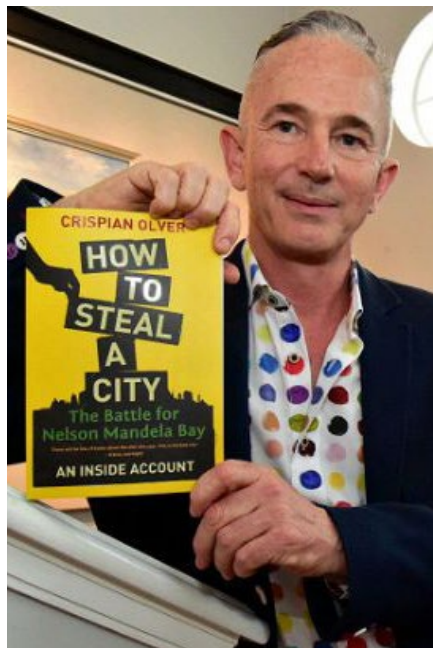
Olver, was “parachuted” into the metro administration in late 2015 by then Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Pravin Gordhan. It was Olver who first pushed for an existing municipal contract with ANC-connected Mohlaleng Media (Pty) Ltd to be extended to supply services to any number of municipal departments without tender, despite numerous red flags having been raised about the company.

Olver had sweeping administrative and political powers to try to save the municipality from ruin and the ANC from electoral defeat in the 2016 poll.

“I could see nothing untoward about the contract although I knew the guy who owned the company was an ANC apparatchik called Cheslyn Mostert. He has for many years done business linked to ANC-controlled municipalities. The company's ownership structure was fairly opaque but it was operational and we made use of it,” Olver admitted in an interview with *Noseweek*.

Despite concerns about the contract that were communicated to then-mayor Danny Jordaan's office (*nose216*), it soon took on a life on its own and suddenly became the conduit for the purchase of just about any service by any department – from overalls, to food, to transport, to paying musicians – circumventing all tender processes and with next to zero accountability.

Sufficient evidence has emerged



Crispian Olver

showing that the company submitted massively inflated invoices for services while it operated with impunity under the cover of the city's then-ANC leadership – leaving in its wake a series of distressed businesses that were simply never paid.

In one example, Mohlaleng controversially took over the web-hosting contract in December 2014. They then sub-contracted the service back to the previous web-hosting contractor, Mars Technologies. Mohlaleng charged the city R110,880 for the service, but Mars Technologies was “squeezed” by Mohlaleng into settling for just over R80,000 a month, allowing Mohlaleng to skim R30,000 for doing nothing.

Despite this massive margin, Mohlaleng repeatedly did not pay Mars Technologies, resulting in the provider having no option but to turn

off the website, twice, crippling city services. Mars has subsequently won the contract back and is now charging just less than R80,000 a month for the same service.

In terms of its original contract, Mohlaleng was to provide any service required by the city's communications directorate on an “as and when required” basis over 36 months – with a fee cap of R7.4 million. But it quickly became a full time job, with the company at one point taking up office space in the city's administrative building rent free.

Between December 2014 and August 2016 the company invoiced the city for R21.04m and was accused of somehow using city money to print the ANC manifesto circulated at local rallies and printing posters and shirts for the ANC's election campaign.

Olver told *Noseweek* he didn't have sight of what Mohlaleng was charging but that the city “was riddled with corruption”, with “skimming” taking place on “almost every single contract we looked at”.

This Mohlaleng contract, which was suspended in September 2016, has become ground zero for the political battle between Mayor Mongameli Bobani and his DA predecessor, Athol Trollip, but for different reasons.

When Trollip took office he commissioned an “independent” investigation into the contract by Brown, Braude and Vlok Attorneys who in turn briefed advocates Bruce Morrison and Elmien Vermeulen to do the job. They completed their probe in July. The scope of the investigation was simple: to answer the question, did the ANC benefit from the contract?

The reason it took so long to complete the investigation was because key documents had disappeared. Also, in November 2017, Trollip told municipal manager Johann Mettler that

the draft was so poor it could not be deemed “classified”. He then ordered that it be redone.

Trollip told *Noseweek* that the report, which has not yet been made public, never found that the ANC had directly benefited from the Mohlaleng contract. “It doesn’t say the contract paid for ANC party political work and that is one of the reasons I gave the municipal manager as to why the investigation had not been thorough enough. I told [*the investigators*] the report was not adequate, but I can’t make them find all the findings I want them to find. If I could do that, there would be a lot of people in jail,” said Trollip.

Noseweek was unable to access any other information about what was contained in the report.

According to Trollip the final report could not be tabled before council because the ANC kept on bringing votes of no-confidence against him and disrupting council meetings.

On the other hand, new mayor Mongameli Bobani, directed by his United Democratic Movement (UDM) party boss Bantu Holomisa, has not denied that the company was likely part of widescale looting for the benefit of the ANC. However they believe Mettler and Trollip ignored the city’s own internal audit findings which concluded that Mettler and Olver were partly to blame for the spending frenzy. This twist effectively means the Trollip-commissioned investigation will remain buried.

Holomisa claims that Trollip and Mettler purged the metro’s internal audit officers Werner Wiehart and Bonita Chan, first by removing them from any involvement in the “independent” probe, and then by suspending them.

Holomisa has based his opinion on a dossier compiled by Wiehart – a fast-talking, swashbuckling, arrogant ex-cop.

But the evidence produced by Wiehart does identify Olver as a central roleplayer in the Mohlaleng saga. The evidence cannot merely be dismissed as the ranting of an “nutcase” – as Olver described Wiehart when speaking to *Noseweek*.

In September Holomisa wrote to Auditor-General Kimi Makwetu to probe Wiehart’s accusation. Trollip in turn has welcomed it, stating it will “clear” his name and expose the real looters. Makwetu told *Noseweek* his

Wiehart’s document is laced with palace intrigue but it is also fuelled with an obvious resentment against Mettler and Trollip

office would decide shortly on whether they will pursue the complaint.

Wiehart’s document is laced with palace intrigue but it is also fuelled with an obvious resentment against Mettler and Trollip.

Wiehart – and Holomisa – believe Mettler illegally extended the scope of the Mohlaleng contract in February 2016, allowing various city departments to procure services from them. Wiehart said the extension was signed without the municipal manager having seen the original service level agreement and therefore was deemed “irregular expenditure”, according to the Municipal Finance Management Act. Trollip is accused of having turned a blind eye to Wiehart’s findings and then appointing the then-acting municipal manager Mettler, without informing the council of these allegations, to a full-time role in November 2016.

Olver, a lifelong ANC activist, was central to Mohlaleng’s scope being expanded.

He was part of the “clean-up crew” that was to include Mettler and national soccer boss Danny Jordaan. He helped see the end of the former city manager Mpilo Mbambisa, who left on a R1,047m package, and the “redeployment” of mayor Benson Fihla. Mettler arrived in December 2014 and in May 2015, Jordaan was brought in as mayor.

Olver needed the Mohlaleng contract so he could hire two more political staffers for Jordaan’s office to help boost his image amongst local voters. He convinced Mettler on 29

February 2016 to sign an addendum to Mohlaleng’s service level agreement, so that other directorates – with the mayor’s office firmly in mind – could make use of their services.

Olver, who belonged to what would become known as the Ramaphosa faction, saw the Mohlaleng contract as a means to help the ANC win the upcoming election.

Six days later the company provided Grant Pascoe, a former DA Cape Town chairperson, who has since joined the ANC, and Vukile Pokwana, a former journalist turned PR hack, at a combined cost of R192,888 a month.

While Holomisa believes the two “political appointments” were irregular, Olver disagrees. “I specifically used the [*expansion of the Mohlaleng contract*] to hire two communications people in Danny’s office, which some people have alleged was corrupt. We thought it was justified. I don’t think there was anything untoward about it,” Olver told *Noseweek*.

The reason Pascoe and Pokwana had to be paid by Mohlaleng was because all the available political posts financed directly by the city, were already filled.

A key reason why Mettler is suspended (having been disciplined by Bobani in September), is over his signing of the addendum service level agreement (SLA) and for not seeing the original SLA beforehand. It would later transpire that there was no original, which meant that Mohlaleng operated without any guidelines to its scope of work.

The manager responsible for this oversight was insurance fraudster Roland Williams, who was fired by Olver as head of the communications directorate for, among other issues, his handling of the Mohlaleng contract.

With the contract now being loaded with added monthly costs, by June 2016 – and 18 months into Mohlaleng’s three-year contract – the cap of R7.4m had long surpassed the R10m mark.

Mettler would later tell his internal audit department head Bonita Chan, who started probing the contract shortly after the 2016 election, that he had wanted to terminate the contract but was persuaded not to do so.

Mettler told Chan he had asked Olver to “pursue the possibility of absorbing Pascoe and Vukile Pokwana into the political staff in order to relieve pressure on Mohlaleng Media resources”.

He also told her he was concerned

that an “as and when” contract had reached its limit.

On 21 June 2016 city COO Mzwake Clay pleaded in a letter with Mettler to lift the cap. He made particular mention that if this didn’t happen it would result in the “temporary suspension of the work done by the two communication specialists in the office of the executive mayor”.

Mettler told Clay he would ask the Bid Adjudication Committee to lift the cap but added that the city should terminate Mohlaleng’s contract in September 2016 and find a new service provider.

Days later Olver, having chatted to both the “slightly incompetent” head of communication Kupido Baron and Clay, emailed Mettler stressing the need for the Mohlaleng cap not only to be lifted but to be allowed to run until September 2017.

He also said he had spoken to the mayor’s office “regarding the appointment of Grant [Pascoe] and Vukile [Pohwana] on to the mayor’s political staff” but that he was advised “all the available posts have recently been taken up”.

“We will continue to look around for other posts to absorb them into, but for the meantime it seems they need to stay where they are on the Mohlaleng contract,” said Olver. It was clear that Olver needed the contract to run to strengthen Jordaan’s office.

By 15 July 2016 the cap was lifted. What happened next was a spending frenzy.

As a comparison, from December 2014 to May 2016 Mohlaleng had billed the city for R9,76m-worth of services, averaging just under R550,000 a month. Yet in June, July and August 2016 they billed the city

for a combined total of R11,3m.

These payments were actioned by Clay, Baron and the director in the mayor’s office Roelf Basson. At least R6,2m was authorised by Noxolo Nqwazi – then director of Sport, Arts, Recreation and Culture – within just five days, to pay for the “Mandela Music Festival”. (In mid-October 2018 Nqwazi was appointed acting municipal manager by Bobani.)

Among the reckless spending was the amount of R315,000 spent on the failed launch of the city’s Metro Police; a total of R7,580,000.02 on Mandela Music Festival; a Health and Safety event costing R168,480.52; and R192,888 on a sound system for the 2016 State of City Address (R70,000 more than all the other expenses incurred for the event combined).

“When I investigate corruption, when people raise caps it raises red flags. It was certainly a red flag but it is not a corrupt activity in itself [*to raise the cap*] although it can hide corrupt activity,” Olver told *Noseweek*.

“I guess the correct thing to have done was what Trollip eventually did and terminate the contract. But when you are trying to do 1,000 things at the same time, sometimes you have to work with what you’ve got and change what you can. Hindsight is a great thing but at the time we didn’t have it,” said Olver.

Trollip, who was voted out as mayor in a vote of no-confidence in August, said that Olver was “certainly privy to increasing that contract”. “He had considerable influence. The police are now probing various matters in the city and President Cyril Ramaphosa has identified this city for special attention. It’s a good thing he has, because the same looters [*pre-August*

2016] are now back in power,” said Trollip. He was referring to the coalition which is propping up Bobani. It is mostly made up of ANC members who were instrumental in the party’s 2016 electoral defeat.

Olver still believes Mohlaleng was fairly priced although he admits “their work and output could have done with a huge amount of improvement”.

He said that Mettler was “in any event” in the clear, his only mistake being not having the Trollip-initiated investigation tabled before council “promptly”. He said Bobani has no interest in releasing the report now as it doesn’t serve his political agenda.

“I think what Trollip did was to clean up and reform. The ANC had an opportunity to clean itself up but by getting into bed with Bobani they have completely alienated themselves from the electorate,” said Olver.

UDM leader Holomisa, on the other hand believes that Olver, Mettler and Trollip have a case to answer.

“They need to offer us a big explanation. Olver was part of the questionable transactions and they took place under the watch of Mettler – the accounting officer.

“When Bobani pointed out to Trollip his concerns over Mettler, Trollip had Bobani removed as deputy mayor on trumped up charges,” Holomisa told *Noseweek*.

The suspensions of Wiehart and Chan, he said, were unacceptable.

Wiehart told *Noseweek* he believes his “integrity and objectivity is intact” and that he and Chan will eventually be cleared.

Mohlaleng’s CEO Musa Thabethe has consistently denied since 2016 that the company was involved in any wrongdoing. ■



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China's role in Iqbal Survé's bull shop

Puzzled readers of Independent Newspaper titles may wonder why they're being treated to front-page stories about capsized cruisers on the Yangtze River. **Ed Herbst** joins the dots

HELEN ZILLE WROTE AN OPEN letter to Iqbal Survé, owner of the Sekunjalo Independent Media newspapers, on 18 January in 2015, saying: "Conducted in parallel with the extremely dangerous phenomenon of 'state capture', the process of consolidating our democracy is endangered by 'media capture' and the incremental obliteration of critical voices."

And on 13 September this year Tatenda Gwaambuka, writing for www.africanexponent.com, said: "The disheartening fact is that China is acting in cahoots with African governments to curtail citizens' freedoms. It is as pathetic as it is depraved. Surely after recovering from the great political molestation of the colonial era, Africa deserves better friends."

The antipathy of the African National Congress to media freedom mirrors that of its National Party predecessors. Each controlled the SABC. Each sought to intimidate newspapers with threats of draconian control, but eventually abandoned that approach. The National Party then established *The Citizen* in 1976 through fertilizer magnate Louis Luyt, secretly using money from an SA Defence Force slush fund.

The ANC bought control of a dozen former Argus Group newspapers in 2013 by using Public Investment Corporation funding – a R1-billion soft loan to Iqbal Survé's company, Sekunjalo.

Among the shareholders of Iqbal Survé's Independent News Media company are two Chinese companies, Interacom Investment Holding Limited-China International Television Corporation (CITVC) and

China-Africa Development Fund (Cadfund) which have a 20% stake in the Sekunjalo newspapers.

Among the first senior staff to be dismissed by Survé were *Cape Times* editor Alide Dasnois and political reporter Donwald Pressly. Each had published articles about the November 2011 Sekunjalo fishing fleet tender scandal on the watch of former Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries' minister Tina Joemat-Pettersson that saw SMIT Amandla Marine lose the contract to operate and maintain our marine patrol and research vessels, leaving our oceans vulnerable to plunder by foreign fishing vessels for several years thereafter.

Since then, more than 100 of the newspaper company's finest talents have left Survé's employ, having resigned, asked for early retirement, been dismissed or been retrenched.

In a media release dated 9 December 2013, shortly after the Sekunjalo takeover of the Indy newspapers, Survé stated that... "In conclusion I want to state for the record that I, together with the leadership of this group, remain fully committed to the editorial independence of all our journalists and editors. To suggest otherwise is patently false and devoid of truth."

In 2015, Zille expressed her concerns about Survé's stewardship of the Indy newspapers in a prescient open letter in which she invoked the threat of "media capture" and the "incremental obliteration of critical voices".

She was vindicated when the news broke recently that Survé, apparently after pressure from the Chinese government and his Chinese shareholders, had terminated the services of Azad Essa, an *Al Jazeera* journalist

who contributed a weekly column to Survé's newspapers. His contributions were ended because he had written an article which was critical of Chinese oppression of Muslim minorities in the northwest of China.

What should be noted is that immediately after the takeover of the Indy newspapers by Survé, he sent a deputy editor, Yunus Kemp, to China to study propaganda methods in a country where media freedom does not exist. This was revealed in a July 2015 *Daily Maverick* article by Marianne Thamm headlined "Media freedom: South African government sees how it's done in China".

Here is the text of Azad Essa's Facebook post after he was notified of his banning: "I have been writing a foreign affairs column for Independent Media for the past 2 years. I have focussed on neglected issues around the globe, zooming in on race, immigration, poverty, and prejudice.

"This week I wrote about how Chinese authorities are holding more than 1 million Uyghur Muslims in internment camps in the Xinjiang province.

"I was fully aware that China International Television Corporation (CITVC) and China-Africa Development Fund (Cadfund) have a stake in Independent Media and that the column might ruffle feathers.

"But the piece was published in print in newspapers around the country on Wednesday. When I enquired when the piece would go up online, I received a mail saying 'a decision has been made not to publish it online'.

"When I asked for clarity from online editors, I received no response.

"This morning my weekly column

was cancelled. I was told the following: 'With the redesign of our papers and the new system, there are changes regarding the columnists being used'.

"Is this the future of corporate censorship in SA? And is this where the continent's future relationship with China is headed?"

"I defy you to find a single equivalent instance in South African media history where a newspaper owner, financially beholden to a foreign country, has deferred to that country and dismissed a journalist for writing a report critical of human rights abuses and oppression of minorities in the funding country."

This was not, however, the first time that Survé had dismissed a journalist as result of outside pressure and, on the previous occasion, the pressure came from the ANC.

He fired *Sunday Independent* editor Wally Mbhele in May 2017 because Mbhele had angered the ANC when this newspaper published an article about Brian Molefe – widely perceived to be a Gupta stooge and utterly corrupt – being parachuted into Parliament. Survé complained to the Press Council about the *Sunday Times* exposé of this treatment of Mbhele and the complaint was dismissed.

Do the dismissals of Wally Mbhele and Azad Essa not indicate that Survé's employees lack journalistic autonomy and can be dismissed at the whim of his political overlords?

Azad Essa then posted an article on the *Foreign Policy* website which was headlined "China is buying African media's silence". "In South Africa, Independent Media – partly owned by the China International Television Corporation and China-Africa Development Fund – is replete with sycophantic praise for Chinese investment, lacks critical engagement with the much-ballyhooed BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) project, and fails to ask basic questions on Chinese motives in Africa. Instead of holding power to account, it has become its most ardent cheerleader."

There is overwhelming evidence to prove Essa's contention about the fawning coverage of China in Iqbal Survé's newspapers and, if you doubt that, just Google "IOL + China".

Then there are the pro-Chinese articles written by Survé himself.

The dwindling number of *Cape Times* readers know only too well

about this obeisance to China and Survé's Chinese funders because events in that country which have no relevance whatsoever to their lives, regularly feature as front page lead articles.

On 1 June 2015, a cruise ship capsized on the Yangtze River, thousands of kilometres from Cape Town and 452 lives were lost.

It is unlikely that any *Cape Times* readers were amongst the bereaved. So why did the *Cape Times* – a week after this tragedy – have, as its front page lead, an article headlined "China mourning as one"?

From the moment of the Sekunjalo takeover, white staff were threatened in writing, served with letters from Survé's lawyers and purged. Every effort was made by the *Cape Times* under editor Aneez Salie to portray white South Africans as innately racist and to distance the newspaper from its traditional readership, most of them white and resident in the "leafy suburbs". Its disgraceful attack on UCT, its vice-chancellor Dr Max Price and its deification of the Fallist fascists and their leader, the misogynistic arsonist, Chumani Maxwele, is proof of that.

The Indy newspapers recently changed their layout style to resemble the *Sunday Times* and Salie, in an accompanying editorial on 3 September, explained the rationale behind his anti-white stance which is the antithesis of Nelson Mandela's lifelong campaign – nation-building through reconciliation.


"No longer do we serve primarily the descendants of the English colonists.

"We are humbled and deeply grateful that you the readers warmed to this approach with loyal support, rejecting calls for a boycott by those colonial, unrepentant racists who once prostituted the *Cape Times* for their narrow political ends."

That is typical *Cape Times* fake news because the Audit Bureau of Circulation figures show that there has been a steady decline in subscribers since the Sekunjalo takeover and sales have now dropped below 30,000 for the first time in that newspaper's modern history.

With the recent migration of Andrew Donaldson's "Famous Grouse" column to *Politicsweb*, for many of those old readers the only remaining reason to buy the Saturday edition of the *Weekend Argus* no longer exists. ■

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The next jobs premier

Prospective DA head of the Western Cape government, Alan Winde, has launched nearly a dozen businesses, but says that running a province is going to be his greatest entrepreneurial challenge so far. By Sue Segar

ALAN WINDE HAS DONE QUITE A FEW things in his life – including starting and running at least ten businesses – before entering politics. But now, since being named the DA's candidate for Premier of the Western Cape, he faces possibly his biggest challenge ever.

“If I become premier, it will be the biggest company I've ever run: a R65-billion company with seven million customers. That's the province. And there are lots and lots of issues besides jobs that face society,” said Winde when interviewed by *Noseweek* shortly after the announcement of his candidacy. We met on Heritage Day at his home in Claremont, Cape Town, after the passionate cyclist had done a morning ride to Kalk Bay and back.

Winde, who is currently Western Cape Minister of Economic Opportunities, has served in the Provincial Legislature for the DA since 1999.

DA leader Mmusi Maimane has described him as “the next jobs premier”. Indeed, in nine years as an MEC involved in economic development, job creation has been at the forefront of his work; about 600,000 new jobs have been created in the Western Cape between 2009 and 2018. But for Winde, running the province would involve much more than providing jobs. “We want to create a province that's safe, innovative, green, full of opportunity and full of hope.”

He said the selection panel for the post of premier had wanted to discuss the “three big things a province should be prioritising – jobs, health and education” – but I said we've already been doing those things, I want to talk



Alan Winde

about three other things – safety and security, public transport and resilience.

“But there's also a fourth thing. The DA has in recent months been running a campaign called Let's Talk and we've had hundreds of public meetings. What has emerged is that service delivery is a huge issue, whether it is water, electricity, serviced sites for housing or land etc. Local governments are at the coalface in all these issues. What the people want is efficient and effective local governments.

“The safety and security issue is a tough one, because the constitutional mandate to deal with this rests with the national government, and provinces have got oversight. We are busy trying to ramp up that oversight and enable local government to assist in building a safe environment. We need to get more metro police and traffic police on the ground. We also need to bring in technology and innovation to help us fight crime. And we must work with the private sector. There are more security personnel in this province than police. How do we connect those dots and work together?”

On public transport, we need to do a lot more because that can really bolster the economy. We need to be much more synergistic.

In terms of resilience, we need to make sure resilience is part of our provincial DNA. The city is doing some great work on resilience. It is all about energy, water and climate change. We need to make sure that our communities are ready for climate change, for the Fourth Industrial Revolution or whatever else is coming our way. We

need to think differently about how resilient we are as a society. We've done some great stuff in energy – we have more than 3,000 independent power producers in the City of Cape Town already – and we have become very resilient in terms of water. Since the drought, we probably have the equivalent of one of our big dams stored in water tanks around the municipalities of the Cape.

“We have a national plan for fighting an election but obviously we have to look at our vision for the province. If I am putting my hand up to be premier, I don't want to just be elected on jobs. I want to be elected on the vision for this province.

“One thing is definite: I love this province and I love this country. I want to be the premier. I will soon be criss-crossing the province to talk about my vision, but I will be going with an open mind and an ear, to listen to what the province wants. I will have to start looking at everything with a different eye – an eye on the province – and work out how to bring my flavour to the challenges.”

Winde believes South Africa cannot be a just and proper society with the existing poverty gaps. “Everything we do must be towards creating an environment where everyone has an equal opportunity in life. That means you have to get education right, lift poverty levels, get the economy right. Obviously government will provide housing but if you can get unemployment down, more people could look after themselves. We need to address poverty and crime so we can take things to the next level.”

Winde, takes pride in his “open-door” policy as the only provincial government minister to have an office situated alongside other businesses in Long Street, in Cape Town's CBD. His office is all glass and if you stand in the street outside, you can actually see him at his desk. “We have no security, no police, no metal detectors,” said Winde.

Winde's office takes part in Cape Town's First Thursdays (of each month) when galleries, shops and other venues stay open into the night and the streets throng with happy crowds.

“We've jumped at the First Thursday opportunity to invite people into our office to give talks – different entrepreneurs to hold exhibitions, we offer tips on how to start a business. We gener-

Winde believes South Africa cannot be a just society with the existing poverty gaps

ally work till 10pm, interacting with members of the public on all aspects of the economy. First Thursdays are an opportunity for networking. For instance someone will come in and say, ‘I want to start a fruit juice company’. We can give them advice on who to talk to. People just walk in. It's such a nice vibe.

“Sometimes we have successful entrepreneurs just telling their stories. Some come and put their product out – we had a guy displaying socks that he's making – some people drive from the Karoo with their products! We have walk-in investors, consuls general come in, we even had the deputy mayor of London walking in! It's all about an open office. They know they don't have to have an appointment with me.”

Until now, said Winde, he had been focused on how he could make a difference within his portfolio, “but as of last week I have to think about the whole of society, the whole spectrum, so my brain is in overdrive.”

Ebrahim Rasool recently hit out at Winde, saying “the stars had aligned” when the DA named him as their choice for the next premier, accusing him of presiding over “the effective implosion of the Western Cape economy over the last decade”.

Rasool said: “We left him with a growth rate of 5.8%; he brought it down to 1.3 percent. We left him with an unemployment rate of 18.9%; he took it to its height of 23%. Most distressingly, Winde took the crime statistics from

a reported low of 330,000 to almost 400,000.” Social housing delivery had also decreased in the province under the DA, added Rasool.

Winde shot back that Rasool's comments were devoid of fact and common sense. “In the context of a global recession, the Western Cape has fared better than South Africa in every economic indicator.

“The province boasts the lowest broad unemployment rate in the country by 14 percentage points. Between 2012 and 2018, employment in the province grew between 60% and 100% faster than that of South Africa as a whole. And it has outpaced Gauteng and KZN – the traditional economic engine rooms of South Africa – by over 300% since 2008.

“Cape Town has now been declared sub-Saharan Africa's leading financial hub. The Greater Cape Town region has also been named Africa's tech capital, employing more residents in this sector than Nairobi and Lagos put together. And we have the best land-reform success rate in the country.

“By being a clean and corruption-free government, we have achieved greater business confidence, leading to local and global investment. We have handed out more title deeds since coming into office than any other province.”

To Rasool's accusations that he drummed up Day Zero Panic, Winde retorted: “We tackled it (as well as the impact on tourism) head on... and together with our partners... we set about fundamentally changing the way residents and businesses use water, reducing consumption by more than half and gaining global recognition for our efforts.

“Despite these successes, we believe that every person who has actively sought an opportunity and cannot find one, is one too many. That's why we are focused with laser-like intensity on growing the economy and creating jobs for our residents...”

Winde counts among his achievements as MEC of Finance, the incorporation of Cape Town Routes Unlimited into Wesgro as the single economic development delivery agency of the Western Cape.

Highlights during his time as MEC for Economic Opportunities include the introduction of Project Khulisa, the economic development strategy focusing on the three areas that have the biggest potential for growth

and job creation: tourism, agri-processing and oil and gas.

“Under Project Khulisa one of the major successes has been air access – the project to increase the number of direct flights into Cape Town International Airport. Since 2015, they have negotiated 14 route expansions, 13 new routes and added 700,000 additional seats. Another success has been that wine exports to China and Angola have doubled since 2015.”

Winde also prides himself on the launch of three new cycle routes aimed at increasing cycle tourism in the province (with a fourth in the works).

Then there’s the Madiba Legacy Project to build a legacy route centred on Nelson Mandela. “Part of this includes the design and installation of the Madiba statue on the balcony of City Hall earlier this year.”

Another string to Winde’s bow is that the Western Cape has consistently been a major driver of job creation in South Africa. “The QLFS from StatsSA shows that the Western Cape produced 40% of the country’s total jobs, while contributing only 15% towards the economy. Between 2012 and 2018 employment in the province grew between 60% and 100% faster than that of South Africa as a whole. It has outpaced Gauteng and KZN, the traditional economic engine rooms of South Africa, by over 300% since 2008.”

Winde also prides himself on thinking way beyond his portfolio, and in constantly synergising with other ministries, a quality he believes will stand him in good stead should he become the premier.

“My job is the economy but last year, there were two issues not related

to my portfolio that were seriously affecting the economy and the city. One was safety on Table Mountain, which was becoming a brand issue and the other, which wasn’t reported as much, was the ATM fraud in the city. Business people and tourists were being targeted by what appeared to be a syndicate. This time last year the average was 45 ATM hits a month.

“We realised we had a big problem because when we got hold of the SAPS or the metro police and said tourists were being hit in the city, the cops would say, ‘Yes, but 17 people are being murdered every day in gang violence’. So we decided we needed to think differently about ATM fraud.

“Our Social Development department runs the Chrysalis Academy in Tokai. We take children at risk and put them on this programme. We took some

The right thing

ALAN WINDE GREW UP ON A FRUIT farm in Muldersdrift where his mother, Ingrid, farmed mainly peaches. His father, Dave, was an entrepreneur who, among other ventures, ran a factory that assembled Anglepoise lamps.

Winde says he inherited his entrepreneurial gene from his father. He remembers as a child “sitting around the table at night, hearing about the bank manager, the clients and the invoices”, and that during the peach season he and his two sisters would be roped in to take the fruit to market. In the school holidays, he had to help at his father’s factory.

Winde also recalls hanging posters during elections in the early days of the then Democratic Party. “My parents would always volunteer for the Progressive Federal Party or the DP during elections.”

Winde’s family sold the farm when he was about 14 years old and moved to Knysna, where he completed matric. He then joined the South African Navy, in Communications, and on his days off worked unpaid for a company in Cape Town “just to learn the ropes of the business”. After his stint in the navy, he returned to Knysna to join his parents in their screenprinting and signwriting

business. “The first thing I did was to bring in technology. We computerised everything.”

The young Winde then started another nine businesses. “I’d spot a need and do the research and development. Every time I saw an opportunity, I started another business.” These included a bicycle company, a courier service, a travel firm and a resin and moulding business.

“In those days, if you wanted your bike serviced, you took it to the general dealer. There was no bicycle shop. A guy who worked at the general dealer knocked on my door one day and asked if he could work for me. I said, ‘come back tomorrow with a list of what we need to open a single-service bike shop.’ He brought the list and we started a bike shop. Today it is Knysna Cycleworks. It’s still going strong.”

When Winde saw a need for a courier service in Knysna, he started one. And so it went. “I never had all ten businesses at the same time. I always had two or three going, but then I would be doing the research for the others.”

Winde did not go to university. “I learnt through experience and hard knocks. I did short courses in finance and marketing to get myself up on things. That’s what it’s all about today. That’s what the e-learning platforms

are doing for us as an economy.”

Winde recalls how, in 1996, when it was time for the rural and district council elections, only two political parties – the National Party and the ANC – made themselves available for the elections. “I was not interested in voting for either of them. I was away in Cape Town... and got a phone call from a friend to tell me that we had an independent candidate to stand in the elections – and that it was actually me!

“We had to form a political party, so we formed the Outeniqua Independent Party. We made banners at my tarpaulin company, then shipped them over to our screenprinting company; we printed posters and pamphlets. My office became an election office.”

Winde won the seat, which covered a constituency from Plettenberg Bay to Mossel Bay.

“When I got to council the first time, the ANC mayor in Knysna said, ‘If we nominate you for Mayor, will you take the seat?’ I was shocked. Suddenly I realised I was the swing vote between the ANC and the NP. I had to suddenly figure out what politics was all about. I was 29. It was all good fun!”

Winde served as a councillor on the South Cape District Council and the Outeniqua Rural Council (which merged into one) for about two years.

youngsters out of that programme and gave them some training. If you walk around the city now, you will see these youngsters handing out pamphlets warning people about ATM fraud. Through this action and through a well-thought-out partnership, we have turned the ATM fraud situation around. I believe very strongly in partnerships.

“In terms of the safety on the mountain, it has been tricky as we have less jurisdiction because it is run by a national park and our police don’t have the manpower to police Table Mountain. Our project is in progress and we aim to use data and drones, as well as coordinating SAPS guys with people from the Pedal Power Association.”

Asked what kind of premier he would be, Winde replied: “An open and



Alan and Tracy Winde

accessible premier.”

What chance does the DA have of taking the province again in next

year’s poll? “We have a good chance,” said Winde.

“Obviously my goal is to increase the DA vote in the province, which means we must increase from 58%. It will be a tough ask.

“I think that 25 years into democracy, voters have legitimate questions. South Africa has the potential to be the leading country in Africa, but we have been in big trouble in terms of leadership in recent years. Other African countries like Rwanda, Kenya and Mauritius, are doing amazing things and stand the chance of forging ahead of us.

“We can’t fix everything all at once, but as a country we have a lot of work to do. We need to take a long, hard look at national policy. We need to be much bolder to get to the next level.” ■

“My sister did my accounts and every month she’d show me what I’d earned from politics – R750 a month – and then she’d show me my that my fax bill was more than I earned, never mind my fuel bill from driving around talking to people with problems. She said it was a very bad idea to be involved in politics.”

Just when Winde had decided to focus more on his businesses, he was asked by the leadership of the DP to run for the Western Cape Provincial Parliament.

“I decided to accept the challenge, resigned as an independent and started campaigning for the DP, becoming a Member of the Provincial Legislature in 1999. At that stage and for my first ten years, the DA was in opposition, apart from a short stint in a coalition government.”

For a decade after that, Winde served in various positions in the legislature, including as Chief Whip of the official opposition and as Western Cape Provincial Finance Chairperson.

In 2009, following the DA’s success in the provincial election, he was appointed Western Cape Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Tourism. In 2014, when the DA once again won the Western Cape with an even greater majority, Winde was appointed Minister of Economic Opportunities, in charge of Agriculture and Economic Development and Tourism. “From Day One it was about jobs, because South Africa is about jobs. Then, when we went into the election

the second time, in 2014, Premier Helen Zille asked whether I’d be prepared to head up Agriculture and Economic Development – which together make quite a big portfolio.”

When Winde got into government, he sold all his businesses. “For most of my time in Parliament, I have not been involved in business and I have no shares in any business. I have to ensure there are no conflicts-of-interest, especially as MEC for Economic Development.”

Winde, who was diagnosed with Type 2 (lifestyle induced) diabetes ten years ago, took up cycling, changed his eating habits and lost 20kg. He is now a committed cyclist.

Although Winde works a 16-hour day on average, he is an avid reader and has “about 20 books” next to his bed, ranging from *Sapiens* (by Yuval Noah Harari) to Mandy Wiener’s book *Ministry of Crime*, to *The Four-Day Working Week* by Donna Stevenson.

When I tell him there’s a fat chance that as premier he will have a four-day working week, he responds: “Actually, that is the future. We already see it with millennials; I visited the Facebook headquarters in Silicon Valley and wished I was 20 years younger.

“Nobody there has a nine-to-five job, they’re all project driven. If you finish your month’s project in four days, you go home. That’s how you get innovation going.”

Imagine if we could have more jobs,

fewer hours and a better quality of life. More people would have jobs. The Western Cape economy is tourism-focused. But tourism doesn’t stop at five o’clock or over weekends. Tourism involves a lot of shifts. So why is our economy not done in shifts?

Winde loves technology and innovation and is fascinated by the Fourth Industrial Revolution. “You just have to see what’s going on in our department in agriculture... with the guys who are working the drones.

“For me what’s exciting is that a lot of the tech entrepreneurs are staying here. Our region is becoming the Silicon Valley of Africa. That’s exactly what we need for future jobs.”

Winde’s wife Tracy has worked as a volunteer for years at the Iris House Children’s Hospice in Cape Town. “She is involved both at board level as well as in building relationships with the families of children in the hospice. It is her passion and she works hard at it.”

The couple have two children, Jason, 19, a musician who is studying sound engineering, and Lauren, who is in Grade ten at Rustenburg Girls’ High School. Winde is chairman of the school’s governing body.

Winde says his guiding star is his wife Tracy, “who brings mindfulness, spirituality and ethics into my life. Her whole philosophy is that we must be true and right and do the right thing”. ■



Rabid Naartjie. Philosophy and change

PULITZER WINNING JOURNALIST Michiko Kakutani, used to be the chief literary critic for the *New York Times*, that “failing” purveyor of “fake news”, according to its chief target, Donald Trump. Thus one would not expect a defence of the Rabid Naartjie from Kakutani, and she certainly does not provide one. But nor is this the standard liberal rant against (we can perhaps agree?) the worst American president in history.

Kakutani doesn’t downplay Trump’s many failings – failures of veracity, accountability, empathy, policy, common human decency – but she is less interested in yet another enumeration of the man’s many deviations from even the most rudimentary of human norms, than in the reason why such a person should have come to be the leader of what still likes to regard itself as the greatest nation on earth. Yes, we’ve all read the various analyses, most of them centring on resentment of a Democratic Party elite, in conjunction with the aching discontent of a disinherited white working class – many of us see in the UK’s catastrophic Brexit vote a manifestation of the same discontents.

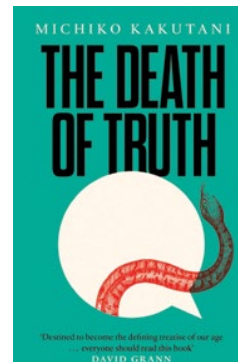
Kakutani doesn’t contest this analysis, but, like the literary critic she is, she is more interested in what we may call the philosophical-intellectual climate that nurtured such a toxic plant. She takes the (relatively) long historical view, and her touchstones are in the early twentieth century: Huxley’s *Brave New World*, Orwell’s *1984* and other writings, and in particular Hannah Arendt’s reflections on totalitarianism and its enablers. What she finds in all these writers is an emphasis on language, and its deliberate debasement in the totalitarian agenda. She sums up her own agenda in this book: “To examine how a disregard for facts, the displacement of reason by emotion, and the corrosion of language are diminishing the very value of truth, and what that means for America and the world.” She quotes from Arendt’s 1971 essay, “Lying in Politics”: “The historian

knows how vulnerable is the whole texture of facts in which we spend our daily life; it is always in danger of being perforated by single lies or torn to shreds by the organised lying of groups, nations, or classes, or denied and distorted, often carefully covered up by reams of falsehoods or simply allowed to fall into oblivion.”

Seen from this historical perspective, Trump is something more sinister than a grotesque clown who somehow bumbled onto the world stage: he is the avatar of Lenin and Stalin, Mussolini and Hitler, and his methods are startlingly similar to theirs: “authoritarian regimes throughout history have co-opted everyday language in an effort to control not just how people communicate but also how they think.”

Of course, Kakutani doesn’t realistically envisage holocausts and gulags on American soil; but it is sobering to be reminded how many hard-won amenities of civil society have been eroded in a short time under the Trump administration. Trump may not be aiming for world domination – Trump is interested only in Trump – but he is the “useful idiot” of extreme alt-right ideologues like Steve Bannon and Steve Miller. And whereas his mutilation of language may be the instinctive obfuscation of the carnival barker rather than a conscious strategy, behind him, encouraging him and enabling his most extreme deviations from reason and truth, are the alt-right and their various patrons and beneficiaries – the energy lobby, the NRA, not to mention the Russians, out to destabilise and demoralise western democracies.

This is where, according to Kakutani, the age of gobbledygook, Thatcher’s spin doctors and Reagan’s bluster, meets the age of the internet, with its fake Facebook accounts, its bots, its literally millions of fraudulent posts, aimed



THE DEATH OF TRUTH
by Michiko Kakutani
(William Collins)

at shoring up far-right regimes everywhere and discrediting the liberal opposition. All this is well documented and not particularly controversial (except among Trump supporters, few of whom, even of those who can read, are likely to be reading Kakutani); but where Kakutani may ruffle a few feathers is in her tracing back the death of truth to the abstruse teachings of post-modernism, in particular in its philosophical guise of decon-

struction, with its emphasis on the indeterminacy of language and the relativity of truth.

Kakutani takes as her case in point the history of Paul de Man, a leading practitioner of deconstruction, who was revealed after his death (and after a stellar career at Yale) to have been a virulently anti-Semitic Nazi sympathiser in his native Belgium. The most shameful part of this history, according to Kakutani, was that Jacques Derrida, “one of post-modernism’s founding fathers”, and probably the most prominent philosopher of his time, chose to defend De Man, “suggesting that his words actually subverted what they appeared to say or that there was too much ambiguity inherent in his words to assign moral responsibility”.

Thus, weirdly, Jacques Derrida ends up on the same page in history as Donald Trump and Kellyanne Conway and their “alternative facts”. Not, of course, that the Donald or most of his supporters will ever have heard of Derrida; but how many of the Parisian rabble intent on eradicating the aristocrats had ever heard of Jean-Jacques Rousseau? Perhaps, after all, philosophers can change the world – not always for the better, if Kakutani is to be believed. ■

Letter from Umjindi

BHEKI MASHILE



Reminder. A mind is a terrible thing to waste

A MIND IS A TERRIBLE THING TO waste, read the infamous slogan used by the USA's United Negro College Fund. A short while ago I had reason to be reminded of that slogan.

What brought this on? Well, strained muscles from a fall that left me unable to drive or walk. Being in this kind of situation leads to serious frustrations, especially for someone like myself who can be highly strung and annoyingly impatient.

So what's a crippled boy to do? Clearly my only option was to draw in one of my trusted workers to be my personal assistant for driving, going to the shop etc. Generally this man was to become my errand boy. (Oops! Did I just say that? Sorry. He is not my "errand boy" but rather a much appreciated assistant. Good thing I am not white, otherwise this little "errand boy" faux pas would make national news.

However, if I thought that bringing in Sdumo's help would ease my frustration, my pain, and make my temporarily crippled life a little easier, boy oh boy, would I be proven wrong.

It began with our first trip to the supermarket. I send Sdumo in to get a few basic things – bread, milk, ground beef and pasta, but I sense trouble when he says, "I don't know what ground beef is". I remind myself to get off my American high horse and I tell the fella I mean mincemeat.

Then, while driving back to the farm I notice he bought the mincemeat from the store's butchery. Major irritation. "Why the heck didn't you get the mince from the meat fridge? There you get great money-saving specials of the day," I say.

He responds: "I always buy from the butcher".

I say, "That's because in the kasi (township) you have no choice but to buy from the local butchery, you idiot." But my inner voice immediately kicks in and objects to the idiot remark, saying "Easy there, Mr Snob".

Next, we get to the farm and, as he puts the milk in the fridge, I notice it is fat free. Bheki the snob and Mr Annoyed gather forces and go on a tirade: "Why the hell would you buy me fat-free milk? Do I look to you as if I need to worry about fat?"

"But this is the milk I always buy," he says.

"B***s***t," I say. "You just grabbed milk. Why didn't you read it?"

As soon as he leaves, I hear that inner voice pipe up again and it says: "Hey genius, did it ever dawn on you that Sdumo does not have a good grasp of spoken English not to mention that he clearly can't read it."

Inner voice continues, "Listen you idiot that's why you got fat-free milk, and how often do you think he goes to the supermarket when he survives on piece jobs? He might be part-time with you, but it's probably his first steady job. So, naturally, his shopping habits would be for the little he can afford at

the spaza which is convenient for him."

Yup, the inner voice is correct. I am – and feel like – an idiot for not picking up on these things. So I respond to the inner voice. "Okay," I tell myself, "Next time I will have to write a shopping list and instruct him to ask one of the store clerks to help."

Well, the next time the need for some groceries arises, I follow my own advice and write a shopping list to be presented to a store clerk. The items on the list are not just simple, I even write them in both English and Siswati. Furthermore, I take the pains to thoroughly explain what the items are. Included is coconut hair food, a hair moisturiser (hey, gotta take care of those natty dreads). So I sit in the bakkie and wait – thoroughly satisfied that nothing can go wrong.

Well, Sdumo comes back and I casually look into the plastic bag. I see a box of oatmeal and some of the other items and give the thumbs up.

We get home and while unpacking the groceries I notice that instead of the coconut hair food he bought a 500g bag of coconut flakes. To say I went ballistic is an understatement. I say, "I wanted to moisturise my hair, not give it coconut frosting like on a cake!" He says, "It wasn't me, it was the clerk."

I quickly compose myself and in the kindest way I ask whether he can read English. Not surprisingly the answer is no. I then ask, "How much of what I say in English do you understand?" "Very little," is the answer.

"As of today you are my English pupil and not only will I teach you to speak it, I will teach you to read it.

"Oh, and by the way, while we are at it I am also going to teach you how to shop so that you can stretch the meagre wage I pay you."

With a big smile on his face he says, "Eish! *Awati ukutsi ngabeungsite kanjani* (loosely translated: you have no idea how much you would have helped me)."

Yes indeed, a mind is a terrible thing to waste. ■

**If I thought that bringing
in Sdumo's help would
ease my frustration and
make my temporarily
crippled life a little
easier, boy oh boy, would
I be proven wrong**



The King's Speech. Peanut gallery

I CAN'T RECALL EXACTLY WHEN, BUT somewhere about 1936 when I was eleven-or-so years old, here in English Middle-Class Colonial Natal, we were all told at school to be sure to listen to the wireless at eight o'clock one certain night because the King was going to speak to his Empire. It was a great day, but listening had to be at night because that's when the newly discovered Heaviside Layer became activated a hundred-or-so miles above the Earth, you see. Nobody knew what this layer was made of, some said it was factory smoke, some that it was marie biscuit crumbs, but it allowed shortwave radio signals to bounce off back to the ground far away over the horizon. Other waves just vanished into space.

Be that as it may, the SABC did a heroic job and captured all the short-waves and rebroadcast them as medium waves and now we could all huddle round our wireless sets with great big glowing hot valves set at the 42-metre wavelength and hold our breaths in expectation until suddenly there he was! The King himself! In London! It seemed he was speaking in bed with blankets pulled over his head and a finger up his nose, but it was him, I mean he, all right, talking to us straight in real time!

Thereafter it became fashionable for small boys whose parents had a wireless to try and speak like that. At school we were taught to write with pen and ink and had blotting paper supplied by the Natal Education Department, and certain boys would roll up bits of this with spit and stick it up their noses, but you could always see the end sticking out a little and this was seen as cheating. But I got lucky. Whilst chomping peanuts and hurtling downhill on my pushbike one fine morn a brittle sort of insect struck my nose and caused me to sneeze violently,



blowing one of the nuts which hadn't yet got chomped clean into my schnoz from behind. I could neither blow it out nor schnork it back. Back at school all gathered round to peer up my nostrils. I had been an unnoticed figure until now. Now even the big boys looked upon me with awe, I had got it dead right, I spoke with great majesty.

Soon came the Christmas holidays, we were off to the Pretoria half of the family. Here all spoke their English with an Afrikaans accent. Why do you talk so funny? said my Auntie Aggie. Because I have got a peanut up my nose and that's the way the King speaks, said I. Are you telling me the King sticks peanuts up his nose for fancy speaking, said Auntie Aggie, or

are you talking about your Zulu king in Natal? The way she and my Auntie Miems carried on you'd swear it was they who had bloody dynamite up their noses. Aggie said they should sort of hook it out with an unspecified instrument, Miems said they should blow it out with sort of mouth-to-nose, but my ma said that might damage the brain. I got on with eating my porridge.

A loud rattle at the front door and here stood Oom Piet Liebenberg who had worked his way up in the railway ranks and was now stationmaster at Park Station in Joburg, and he'd put on a smart dark suit with a silver tie and some nice brilliantine on his hair to visit family in Pretoria with his free train ticket. Hullo all! called Oom Piet. Harold's got a peanut up his nose, said Auntie Aggie, and wrung her hands. Now Oom Piet had been on kommando as a young man and knew all about self-help first-aid, he comes up behind me and lands a helse klap on the back of my head. There is a monkey-nut in your pap, says he. Oh sis! I cry, it's all covered in snot! En toe? says he and nips the peanut out of my porridge with forefinger and thumb, hauls out his hanky, wipes it dry and hands it to me. Plant that in Durban, says he, and by Christmas next year you will have a lovely monkey-nut tree.

Well I did that, but of course no tree grew. I asked my class teacher Miss Fleming who was not only beautiful but wondrous wise why there was no tree. Now that is actually a bean called a groundnut, said she, because that's where all the beans grow, on the roots, and you have to dig them up. Only the leaves grow above ground. So next Christmas I went straight to Oom Piet and confronted him about his lies.

Lucky it didn't grow inside your head, hey, said he, so your brain would've been full of leaves and you would've gone mad like your blerrie King. ■

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