

# Music to Security Branch fears



In a second extract from his book, former security police 'dirty tricks' expert

**Paul Erasmus** tells how he put the brakes on singer Roger Lucey's career

*Whatever happened in that office  
God and the cops will only know.  
The law has ways of keeping it quiet  
So that nothing at all will show  
But at 3 o'clock that same afternoon  
Longile fell five floors  
Lay dead below on the street outside  
They quickly raked his body behind  
closed doors*

— Roger Lucey's song about the death of detainee Lungile Thabalazi

**I**n June 1979, I attended a show at His Majesty's Theatre, Johannesburg, to see a new personality in South African music, Roger Lucey.

He was a brilliant musician and his band, the Zub Zub Marauders, was making waves among the young white university liberal set — and at Security Branch head office.

Lucey's music and his views on the South African political scene had been picked up during monitoring of a Voice of America transmission.

I was sent to identify him and "see what could be done about stopping this filth".

I attended all of Lucey's shows, secretly recording his haunting, plaintive, beautiful ballads, faithfully transcribing the words and forwarding the lot to head office.

They were incensed at the lyrics.

They were even angrier when Lucey's first LP, *The Road is Much Longer*, was cut and it contained songs like his tribute to Lungile Thabalazi.

It was forwarded to the Publications Control Board.



Roger Lucey: The police wanted to stop the musician's 'filthy' music

Head office were still awaiting the PCB decision when I contacted Lucey's record company, WEA Records. I told their public relations officer that the record had been banned and demanded to know how many had been pressed and to whom they were distributed.

I also planted the seed that Lucey was a prime security suspect, connected with either the African National Congress or the South

African Communist Party and dropped a hint that he was facing imminent arrest.

WEA were aghast and went to great lengths to assure me that they didn't want trouble with the authorities.

I then went to Hillbrow Records, South Africa's biggest music shop, and confiscated all their copies — about 20 LPs and tapes which were in the shop on a trial basis.

I don't know what happened with his WEA contract, but assumed that our "dirty tricks" had worked, as I know of no further LPs or tapes they produced.

We then set about disrupting his live shows.

At one we were monitoring at a Braamfontein restaurant, we stopped things mid-track by pouring teargas powder into the airconditioner — and then watched the evacuation from across the road with great amusement.

This "action" was followed up the following day by a series of phone calls threatening to blow up the restaurant if they continued with his shows. It was no surprise, then, that the management didn't renew his contract.

WH11, the Security Branch telephone tap section, revealed his other gig venues, and I gave them the same treatment, telling them what happened at the Braamfontein restaurant.

Lucey must have wondered, and is probably still wondering, what went wrong with his musical career!

Having attended so many of Lucey's shows, I had become a fan — and still am (with a collection of his recordings which I still listen to). I felt bad about the whole thing. What a waste of talent

I really believe he would have gone onto great heights on the music scene.

But at the time, he was just another "red" who had to be stopped.

Next week: A tale of torture in South West Africa