

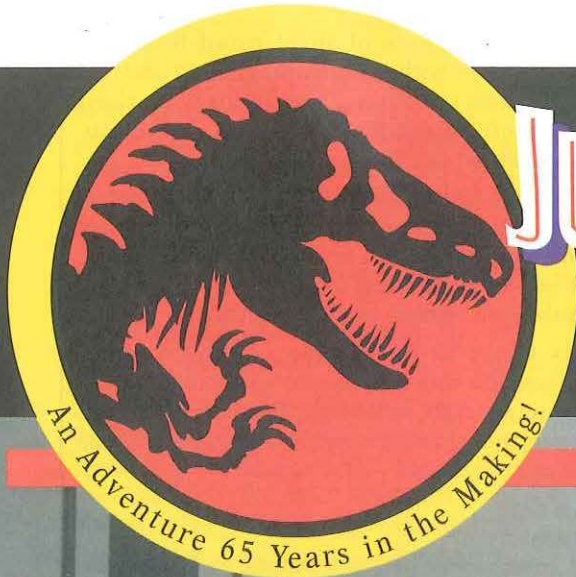
news you're not supposed to know.

nose WEEK

COVER
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issue No 4



JURASSIC PARK TWO

A Southern Sun Production

I just love
jumping on
old bones...



Starring:

Jan S Marais as MASSOSPONDYLUS Fleet Footed and Wide Ranging • Piet G Koornhof as CYNOGNATHUS Half Mammal Half Reptile

noseWEEK

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

OCT 1993

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Welcome, Dear Reader

This month you will have noticed a change in our masthead — We tell what you aren't supposed to know, it says. Who, after all, has the right to "suppose" what you and I — adult and equal citizens — are not fit or entitled to know? Secrecy deprives people of freedom — because it deprives them of their freedom of choice. In a democracy, that is the power of the people.

About the only legitimate use of secrecy we can think of, is as a strategy to confuse and gain an advantage over a hostile enemy. Which tells you something about the relationship between government and people we have had in South Africa until now. It also tells you how some corporations continue to view the public, and how they assume they have the right to deceive and manipulate their shareholders, their customers and the public at large. And our judges, too often, still go along with that line, tragically revealing a great deal about their origins, historically, socially and morally speaking.

According to our common law, it is a crime to disguise

yourself or to assume a false identity. We would have thought the reasons are obvious. It is also easy to see that an abstract trait, such as reputation, is as much part of one's identity as one's sex or a large nose. Yet, by means of a claimed right to secrecy, governments and corporations are allowed to parade — and trade on — a false reputation. This month's example is our expose of the secret recorded Minutes of the administrators of the Motor Industries Pension Fund.

The founding fathers of the United States of America, patriots with faith in themselves and the future of their country, proclaimed in their Declaration of Independence: "... let facts be submitted to a candid world."

Like them, we have faith in the liberating power of knowledge and information. If we know how and why something happened, and who benefited by it, then we will know the right thing to do: To whom to give our vote, our money and our friendship.

Contrary to the all-too-common cynicism of our time, we reaffirm with our exposes that it does matter whether you do right or wrong. We have to relearn to exercise moral judgement. In that, and in the truth, lie our only hope.

Cover Story

Pictured on our cover are Jan S Marais, ex Trust Bank, Fundtrust etc., and friends Kate and Piet and Marcel — he between court appearances, they between TV appearances — to celebrate the Cape Sun's tenth anniversary. Thanks to Top of The Times/Cape Times for pic, and SA Museum for details of Karoo dinosaurs.

LETTERS

To the Editor

Readers will note that noseWEEK is still banned from bookshops controlled by CNA / The Literary Group, which include all branches of Exclusive Books, Bookworm and Pilgrims. Remember this when you are shopping for books and remember freedom of speech.

THAT HANDBOOK GETS GRATIFYING RESULTS

Dear Sir,

My name is Gus. Since the cartoon on page 3 of noseWEEK 2 appeared I have been overwhelmed with propositions. Thank you!

Gus

Orange Grove

Anything for your greater pleasure - Ed

Dear Sir,

As a founder subscriber to nose, I looked forward gleefully to your re-entry into the national sewers. Three issues on — so far OK. The hatchet jobs on the Van der Veldes and Zac De Beer were a little contrived, but, what the hell, that goes with the territory. More venom than wit, but early days.

But wait, something is missing. Not a word about the struggle folk. No frauds, lechers, bullies or rogues in the liberation constituency? Not from where I see it, pal. Can it be that Welz has lost his balls and joined the ranks of the politically correct?

Robin Carlisle, MP

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa
Cape Town

Why, Mr Carlisle, we at noseWEEK are always correct. Anyway, how nice to find you floating down our sewer. Admittedly the Van der Veldes were a bit of a bad joke, but De Beer is hardly a subject for wit. We note — with regret —

that you carefully sidestep the problem of his secret life in Pretoria. Terrified into line, like friend Tony, by the fear of losing Anglo's pocket money?. As for the "liberation constituency" — they have yet to acquire the power and the money sufficient to justify our closer attention. But be happy, each dog will have his day. Meanwhile, why are you in such a hurry for us to move on? Suddenly everyone at this moment in time basically speaking seems to have dropped preacher Clem Sunter's fishy Chinese proverb about teaching them to fish, in favour of Andy Warhol's "every man is entitled to his 15 minutes of infamy". At noseWEEK you're entitled to a little bitty longer.

Nevertheless, as a special gesture to show we are not altogether unaccommodating, this month's DP scoundrel — Johannesburg city councillor Clive Gilbert, who for years enjoyed the protection of party bignobs Uncle Zac and Gubby Gibson — is hoping to join the ANC. (See Page 10) Maybe, like you, he is hoping that way to speed their progress to perfidy. — Ed.

NO PEACE FOR OUR FANNY

South Africa is really a remarkable country with some remarkable people. Take Nobel laureates, for example. We can boast two Nobel Peace Prize winners — Albert Lutuli and Archbishop Desmond Tutu — a Nobel prizewinner for Literature, Nadine Gordimer, and the Nobel Prize for Medicine was awarded to Max Theiler for his research on yellow fever. A proud score for any country. And all considered well-deserved winners by thinking people all over the world.

Besides your actual winners there must, presumably, also be many South Africans who get nominated each year but who fail to win.

Well there's at least one that we know of, and that is Ms Frances Kendall of Johannesburg. Who's she? we hear you cry. Well, Ms Kendall, first of all, is the wife of Leon Louw, the sometimes slightly loony founder and head of the Free Market Foundation. Fired with the fervour of the religious fanatic, the pair of them travel the length and breadth of our fair country extolling the benefits of the Canton system or the joys of the free market, just as if they'd invented it all.

They are often to be found on TV as experts on a future South Africa, motherhood or sex — depending on which of their books has just appeared. They usually appear intense and serious: convinced of their own intelligence and superiority. Weighed down by the sheer responsibility of it all, their conviction carries them ever onward.

The Louws, by the way, publish their own books under the imprint Amagi — which means heaven only knows what, but it sounds holy to me. One wise man, perhaps? Jointly they've written *South Africa: The Solution* and *Let The People Govern*. Frances alone has written *Super Parents Super Children* and, lately, *The Sex-Y Factor*. One wonders what Freud would have made of that little lot of titles.

Anyway, at every possible opportunity, in person or in print, Ms Kendall describes herself as a "Nobel Prize nominee".

Nobel prize nominee? What prize? Could it be Physics when, if she wins, she would join such luminaries as Lord Rayleigh (1904) for his investigation of the densities of the most important gases?

Or Drs Burton Richter and Samuel Ting (1976) for their pioneering work in the discovery of a heavy elementary particle of a new kind?

Could it be for Chemistry? Or Medicine?

No, according to her CV, which also tells us that she "grew up in Mombasa where she enjoyed a carefree childhood swimming, snorkelling and ballet dancing," she was nominated, jointly with her husband, for the Nobel Peace Prize itself, the cherry on the top, as it were, for "their efforts to bring about a peaceful outcome to South Africa's problems".

Think of it, folks, if Fanny were to win she would be up there with the likes of US President Woodrow Wilson (1920), Nansen the Explorer (1922), Albert Schweitzer (1953), Martin Luther King (1964) and Mother Theresa (1979).

What, you might ask, have these people got in common with Ms Kendall? Did Mother Theresa snorkel, perhaps? Did Nansen dance a bit? And Albert Schweitzer — did he ponder on the Sex-Y factor?

Anyway, it is all very exciting and we thought it would be good to know how one gets on the list. So we phoned Ms Kendall. She confirmed that she and her husband had, indeed, been nominated for a Peace Prize several times. When we asked who nominated them she said it was "Um ... a Norwegian, Mr Kai Stensrod", but she wasn't sure how to spell his name. "He got together with some Norwegian politicians and nominated us," she said.

The Nobel Foundation in Stockholm had "no knowledge about a Mr Stensrod", and directed us to the Norwegian Nobel Committee in Oslo.

Well, the Director of the Norwegian Nobel Institute, Geir Lundestad, declined to say whether or not the Louws had been nominated — due to the statutes of the Nobel Committee which state that their papers remain confidential for a period of 50 years. However, he did say:

"It is very easy to be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Thousands and thousands have the right to make a nomination for the prize. This year we had 120 nominations (some candidates being nominated by as many as 100 persons). Thus if a person with the right to make a nomination sends us a letter nominating someone, this is automatically a valid nomination. Therefore, being nominated does not imply any approval on the part of the Committee members. The element of approval comes only with the selection of the laureate among those nominated.

"We ask those who make nominations to keep the nominations confidential. Unfortunately, for various reasons this request is frequently not adhered to. The fact that nominations are disclosed sometimes leads to self-promotion from candidates who may indeed be nominated, but where the nomination, as mentioned earlier, does not imply any sort of approval from the Norwegian Nobel Committee. We regret such self-promotion."

When we told Ms Kendall of the confidentiality of the nominations, she said: "Well nobody ever told me about that. When we were in Norway, everyone knew that Helen Suzman had been nominated several times."

You're probably right, Fanny, but they didn't hear it from Mrs Suzman. ■

SELLING SA FOR A PHONE

Deals struck behind closed doors, which commit South Africa to a new cellular telephone system, could see the country landed with another Moss-gas-type disaster — and all the money we hope to raise from the IMF down the tubes and back in Switzerland in less than a year.

The decision, reached without public debate, appears to be so irrational — unpatriotic even — in terms of the country's resources and economic needs, that the only questions that remain to be answered are commercial: Who stands to be paid? How much? and By whom?

Or have we opted for the Zairean option: Pay the President (and a small army) to keep the airport open, give him a cellular phone — and to hell with the roads, the phones, jobs, hospitals and schools. They, after all, are only for the people.

Some years ago the Post Office launched a German mobile telephone system in our major cities. Called C-Netz, it is an analogue system that operates on the 450mHz band. The infrastructure was provided by Siemens at a cost of about R25 million, and the actual telephones were supplied to subscribers by Philips or Siemens at R15 000 a piece. Setting up, infrastructure and marketing costs were paid for by the Post Office. After several years it has 13 000 subscribers.

The Post Office telephone department has since been "privatised" into Telkom. While still operating with capital acquired from the taxpayer, Telkom's new status apparently entitles it to sell-off the C-Netz network — which it has done — to a private company, Vodacom, without calling for tenders, without disclosing the purchase price and without being subject to any sort of public scrutiny. That is not all.

The analogue C-Netz system has since been superseded in the world

of electronics by a more complex to operate, and a more expensive to buy, digital system, GSM. Its main advantage is that it is more secure against fraud and un-invited listeners. But most users find the simpler, cheaper analogue system we already have, serves their needs well enough — as does most of America, where you can now buy an analogue mobile or cellular telephone for \$100 or less. Buy a middle-sized car and you get one free.

Experience in the electronics industry has shown that it takes no longer than ten years for any system to be overtaken by a new one. In countries where money is not the problem, they change whole systems that often: Large parts of Europe already have the newer, better GSM digital telephone system installed.

MOSSGAS

But then of course, if money was no problem, Moss-gas would have been a great success — it does make petrol out of gas, and many engineers and salesmen are proud of their achievement. The fact that the cost has devastated the country's economy is not *their* problem. It is ours. And the politicians who sanctioned it have nothing to be proud of.

The fact that a poorer country cannot always keep pace with the latest in technology, might not satisfy the ambitions of local engineers and moguls.

[The fact that Telkom has already erected various unsightly masts to accommodate the GSM system (Camps Bay residents might recall), before any public policy decisions had been taken, suggests such ambitions may be at play. We note that the engineer and mba graduate in charge of the mobile phone system at Telkom, has resigned to join Vodacom — and that Vodacom is amongst those now licensed to introduce the

newer, more expensive system.]

But seen from an economic point of view, the inability of less developed countries to keep up with every phase and fashion could be to their advantage. As in the case of mobile telephones.

The digital "cellular" telephone Vodacom and others are wanting to introduce in SA — at huge expense — is already itself about to be superseded. The world's leader in mobile communications, Motorola (this year it anticipates after-tax profits of \$985 million) and other major corporations such as Philco and Lockheed have formed an international consortium to launch Project Iridium. In less than a decade the world will operate on a single, international cellular phone system. By the year 2000 — in only seven years time — Low Earth Orbiting satellites criss-crossing the globe, will replace the unsightly masts and exchanges that we, gullible fools, are still wanting to erect. The satellite contracts have already been awarded to Lockheed and Hughes, and the launch contracts to Russian and French companies. While the initial cost is high, it will be born by the countries that can afford it.

But, as with our existing analogue system, where early subscribers paid R15 000 for a phone that can now be bought in America for less than R500, the costs will drop rapidly. Project Iridium is planned to cater for 1 billion subscribers worldwide.

For the intervening few years, would it not make a lot more sense (for the country, if not for the salesmen and their friends in high places) to stick with the system we have got, and have already paid for? We can even expand it — at bargain basement prices — using the second hand equipment that rich European countries are dumping.

Foreign electronics companies are, of course, desperate to find buyers for their "newer" gsm systems,

with obsolescence looming so close. Such companies have traditionally seen South Africa as a suitably unsophisticated customer, with more bullion than brains. They will even help us get a good loan from the IMF, to finance the deal.

But it seems to make a lot more sense for South Africa to expand the obsolete system it already has — at a fraction of the price —

rather than buy two obsolete systems at full price. We could do with some \$90 mobile phones!

SA could save money in the short term, and gain an enormous long term advantage: with a lower initial cost, we will be able to build a bigger subscriber base, faster. Which makes both political and economic sense. Come the year 2000 or 2003, we might then have both a strong enough economy and

a large enough number of subscribers to allow us to enter the age of Iridium. By then our obsolete mobile phone system should be well and truly used, long paid for — and ready to throw away. Pity the same can't be said for Mossgas.

[Next month: More about Vodafone UK, and its not-so-clean uncle in the arms business, Racal. We think you ought to know.] ■

THE FNB STORY — PART TWO

Mr Reynolds to the rescue . . .

The story to date:

In February last year, First National Bank knew that its old client, KPL-ETSA (Pty) Ltd was insolvent. Worst still, by April its liability to the bank totalled R33 million (R18 million on overdraft and another R15 million in outstanding guarantees).

KPL had incurred massive losses on various engineering contracts, including the Venetia diamond mine, where Venetia ended up paying only R11 million for a job that cost KPL R32 million to complete.

Coincidentally, Mr Basil Hersov is chairman of FNB and chairman and major shareholder of Anglo Vaal, a major beneficiary of the new Venetia mine.

So, from FNB's point of view, it was important to keep the company afloat just long enough to complete the contracts it had guaranteed. The bank made a secret plan — called an "orderly wind-down" — whereby other creditors, kept in the dark, would be encouraged to finance the

completion of the contracts, with no hope of being paid.

It is a criminal offence for those in control of a company to continue trading when they know it is insolvent. In May FNB undertook to restore KPL to solvency. The fact that an exact amount was not stated did not present a problem to the company's auditor, as, according to FNB's undertaking, it would depend "on what is required by the auditors to put the company into a solvent position".

FNB never did restore KPL to solvency, but KPL continued to incur debts — and to complete contracts, relieving FNB of its obligations.

On 3 September 1992 FNB ordered KPL to make no further payments to creditors. This put FNB at an even greater advantage: all money flowing into the company now went directly to reducing the overdraft at FNB, giving the bank an illegal preference over other creditors.

KPL was placed into liquidation on 30 September, owing creditors many millions. Now read on ...

On the same day that KPL's directors applied to have their company placed in liquidation, the MD, Mr A Hartley, left South Africa, and has not been available since to be questioned at an enquiry into events prior to the liquidation. (In the last weeks before liquidation, he was particularly concerned about questions that might be asked of directors concerning their knowledge of the company's insolvent position.) But he did not travel far — he went just across the border to Botswana, where he had a new job arranged with LTA Autecon.

Which brings us to Mr Philip

Reynolds, partner in auditors Ernst & Young and head of their Johannesburg Trust division.

In FNB's original plan, it was hoped to avoid liquidation at the end of the "wind down", and to rather to sell KPL, with its expensive, specialised equipment and accumulated tax loss, to a competitor. LTA Autecon, which, fortuitously, is a sister company of FNB, was such a competitor. FNB management made a confidential approach to LTA Autecon, who called in their auditor, Mr Reynolds, to advise them on possible take-over strategies. Reynolds spent two months investigating

KPL's accounts on LTA's behalf. He was present at the meeting on 3 September when the bank froze all payments to KPL's creditors.

FNB were, apparently, so pleased with what they saw of auditor Reynolds that on 24 September they approached Ernst & Young with a request that he should accept the bank's nomination as liquidator of KPL when the company was put into liquidation on 30 September. Reynolds declared himself willing to accept the lucrative appointment.

A week later Reynolds was voted in as provisional liquidator by FNB, who for that purpose falsely

claimed to be by far the largest creditor.

Immediately after his appointment, Reynolds, curiously, sought to persuade KPL's other creditors that it was not worth launching an enquiry into what had happened, and assured them that he found it difficult to believe that senior bank officials could be guilty of intent to defraud, or of gross negligence.

Outraged creditors have been campaigning ever since for Reynolds' dismissal.

He has granted concessions to FNB which most creditors regarded as prejudicial to their interests. He proposed selling KPL's equipment to LTA, out of hand, and at a price which creditors thought outrageously low. They objected to the Master of the Supreme Court, and the sale was called off.

LTA Autecon has, in the meantime, been using trucks and equipment from KPL's yard, by what arrangement we do not know.

Reynolds did auction off all KPL's filing cabinets — which, it then transpired, still contained important documents relevant to the Venetia contract. These are now lost.

For no declared reason, he has attempted to fire the attorneys and advocates appointed by the creditors to investigate the role of FNB in the debacle. These lawyers, after aggressively interrogating bank officials and auditors at the secret commission of enquiry, advised in favour of suing the bank.

Reynolds gave no reasons for firing attorneys Eiser and Kantor and replacing them with Bell Dewar & Hall, a large firm with long established relationships with Johannesburg big business. Which immediately raises the question: What made Bell Dewar more acceptable to Mr Reynolds?

When, in June, creditors petitioned the Minister of Justice to have Reynolds dismissed and to have attorneys Eiser & Kantor reinstated, Reynolds hastily agreed to reappoint them, lamely explaining that Bell Dewar and Hall had come up with the same legal opinion as Eiser and Kantor.

Meanwhile creditors have given notice that they intend passing a

resolution instructing the liquidator to sue FNB for payment of whatever is required to restore KPL to solvency.

The bank denies having to restore KPL to solvency, and is, in fact, still attempting to prove a claim against the company in liquidation. At a creditors' meeting held before Mrs H M Raath, a Johannesburg magistrate, creditors objected to the claim. Mrs Raath then refused FNB's claim. The bank has applied to the Supreme Court to rule Mrs Raath out of order, claiming she had no authority to judge the issue. The case is pending.

A liquidator seeking appointment by the Master of the Supreme Court is required to sign an affidavit declaring that he has had no prior interest or involvement with the company or any of its creditors. Superficially Reynolds appears to have none — he was not KPL's auditor and his client LTA is not a creditor. But a chartered accountant may be expected to have more than a superficial understanding of what constitutes a conflict of interest.

Besides his involvement with LTA, whose dealings with FNB and KPL just prior to liquidation might in all probability have been at issue in any subsequent inquiry, Reynolds clearly relied on FNB's support for his appointment as liquidator.

The fundamental dispute — at the secret insolvency inquiry, at the hearing before the magistrate, and now in the Supreme Court —

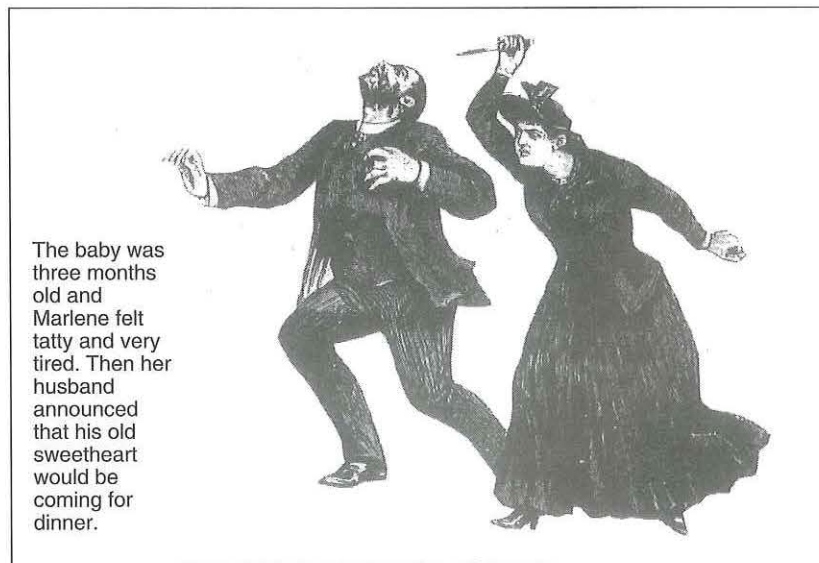
revolves around whether FNB is a creditor as it alleges, or whether, as all the other creditors claim, it is a debtor in terms of its undertaking to restore the company to solvency. Even by its own subsequent admission, the bank vastly overstated its claims at R23 million to get Mr Reynolds elected. It has now reduced its claim to R8 million.

If, of course, FNB is a debtor and not a creditor, and if it is obliged to restore the company to solvency, then (i) Mr Reynolds was not validly nominated or elected as liquidator by FNB; (ii) if the company were no longer insolvent, he would have no job. And (iii) Mr Reynolds's client, LTA Autecon, could be faced with a major competitor restored to good health. Can there be any doubt that Mr Reynolds has a profound personal interest in the outcome of the issue most central to the liquidation of KPL?

In response to appeals to the Master for his dismissal, Mr Reynolds has declared: "There is no reason why I should favour or protect either FNB or the directors of KPL."

He has also written to the Master: "If you give any weight at all to the allegations made against me ... then I believe you should not only remove me from this matter, but should also remove me from your panel of liquidators."

Strong stuff. But you said it, Mr Reynolds, not us. ■



The baby was three months old and Marlene felt tatty and very tired. Then her husband announced that his old sweetheart would be coming for dinner.

Wild Cinnamon Cards published by Buchu Books, PO Box 2580, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa.

GHOSTS

In July 1992, Bruce Anderson was deported from SA to the UK with just a day's notice. Earlier that month, when President De Klerk was in Maputo to open the new Polana Hotel, President Chissano had told him that Anderson was involved in smuggling arms to Inkatha.

When Anderson came to SA in the 70s, he already had a conviction for drug dealing, and is still wanted in Zimbabwe for fraud.

Following a tip-off on the Presidential exchange at the Polana, Sunday Star reporters, Peta Thorneycroft and Jacques Pauw, traced Anderson in London and persuaded him to tell his story under oath.

Anderson had in earlier years been personal assistant to Ndabaninge Sithole in the then Rhodesia, when (he admits) he was also working for SA Military Intelligence. He also helped raise funds to set up Renamo, together with Col Garth Barrett of the Rhodesian SAS.

In the affidavit, he admitted to being involved in a project to get arms to Inkatha from Mocambique. His former Rhodesian colleague, Garth Barrett, confirmed that Anderson had come to him looking for arms.

The Sunday Star was keen to get further confirmation of the story from Maputo, but this had become a delicate matter as the Maputo government had, in the meantime, embarked on peace talks with Renamo. It was decided to send Thorneycroft to Maputo. Unable to speak Portuguese and having no contacts in Maputo, she approached Wessel Jordaan, a former SA Recce who now works for the ANC, and asked him to accompany her to help with introductions. The mission failed because of The Maputo Government's reluctance to risk upsetting peace talks.

The Sunday Star published Anderson's affidavit in October last year but, although Inkatha was enraged, nothing happened until February this year. Inkatha then issued a press release in which it claimed that Pauw and Thorneycroft had "colluded with the National Intelligence Service" to smear Inkatha. The press release, issued by homeland Chief Minister

Mangosuthu Buthelezi, based the claim on an allegation that Wessel Jordaan was, "a NIS agent". A press conference would be held three days later in which the "proof" would be made public. But at the press conference, all that was produced was an Inkatha official who said that he had confronted Jordaan with the claim, and that it had not been denied.

Approached by reporters for comment, Jordaan said that a man had knocked on his door and asked him "Are you NIS?", to which — admitted Jordaan — he had replied "Fuck off," before slamming the door shut.

The people at Inkatha in charge of investigating the alleged NIS connection to the story were Philip Powell, himself an ex Security Police sergeant, and Ed Tillet. Tillet was thrown out of Rhodes's Journalism School for exam cheating, before being appointed a researcher at the Inkatha Institute.

The Inkatha claims were published by various newspapers and featured on TV news, briefly causing some anxiety at the Sunday Star for Thorneycroft's safety, as she was then on an assignment in Zimbabwe. More serious in the long term, however, was to be the effect on Pauw.

At the time, various of the former Military Intelligence officers fired by President De Klerk were preparing to tell Pauw what they knew about dirty tricks projects. The public suggestion by Buthelezi that Pauw might be connected with NIS was enough to frighten them off.

Some weeks later Pauw was involved in secretly interviewing former assistant chief auditor Jaap Serfontein about corruption in the Department of Transport when, again, the Inkatha connection conveniently fouled it up. Serfontein clammed up when a man called Freddy Cave — a former colleague of Powell's in the Security Police and now a PI in Durban — called to inform him that Pauw was "a spy from NIS". He warned Serfontein to stay away from Pauw — which he did until, after many more visits, Cave overplayed his hand by informing the auditor that he intended to kill Pauw. Cave said he held Pauw

responsible for his policeman brother's death.

Cave claimed that his brother had once gone to Pauw (while he was still at Vrye Weekblad) and told him of a "NIS conspiracy" to murder Kwa Zulu policemen. Instead of reporting on the conspiracy, Pauw had informed the NIS, he said, and NIS had subsequently "murdered his brother".

Serfontein, troubled by being made privy to murder plans, decided it best to at least warn the intended victim, and re-established contact with Pauw at the Sunday Star. Pauw was there when Cave arrived on his next visit — to confront him, and the intrepid PI instantly fled in his blue Golf. This time the reporter did inform NIS — that they were alleged to have murdered Kwa Zulu policemen.

A NIS officer is known to have called on Serfontein, but nothing further was heard of the matter — except that the Sunday Star received a bland fax enquiry from Inkatha, signed by Ed Tillet, asking if Pauw had "ever become aware of a plot to assassinate policemen".

Next the Aida Parker Newsletter — that traditional missive of the nutty right — announced an exclusive: it had obtained (anonymously in the post) a copy of a "S A Communist Party policy document, dated October 1992" in which Pauw was described as a NIS agent. The Communist Party promptly denied that they had such a policy document, or that they suspected Pauw of being a NIS agent.

We have no lead on who might have planted this forgery on poor Ms Parker. But we do know that Philip Powell, that other Inkatha researcher charged with finding links between NIS and reporter Pauw, worked as researcher for Ms Parker before he went to work for Inkatha.

We also know, that, intentionally or not, Inkatha's advisors have ensured — for the time being — that the public hears nothing of Military Intelligence dirty tricks. And that when it comes to Chief Buthelezi's party, there are still a remarkable number of things that go bump in the dark. ■

SECRET SINS

Administrators of the R1,5 billion Pension Funds of the National Industrial Council for the Motor Industry are desperate to keep their affairs secret.

By their own — strictly private — admission, the Funds have lost fortunes due to their negligence and incompetence.

Among the funds are the Motor Industries Staff Association Pension Fund and the Auto Workers' Pension Fund.

The funds are not accountable to the Registrar of Pensions and in practice there is no real accountability to the workers who are forced to contribute to them.

The amounts in these funds are almost unimaginably vast. Just two of them — the Industrial Council for the Iron & Steel Industry, and the National Industrial Council for the Motor Industry — between them control funds totalling in excess of six billion rands. And there are more than 90 Industrial Councils.

It is widely accepted that such conditions provide the perfect climate for corruption and incompetence to thrive.

noseWEEK has obtained recordings of confidential minutes. They contain admissions of grave mismanagement, incompetence and claims of corruption in the management of funds totalling R1,5 billion.

The Board Chairman is Mr Graeme Anderson, a Pretoria garage owner, and include millionaire, Cecil Jowell (he is a director of two JSE-listed companies), Mr John Herdman, a Port Elizabeth industrialist, and, on the trade union side, Mr L Kettleas, National Secretary (Collective Bargaining) of NUMSA, and Mr Johan du Plessis of MISA.

A row about incompetence and alleged "crookery" in the funds has raged behind the scenes for the past two years. The recordings reveal that the chairman of the Motor Industry Employees' Union of SA, Mr P Pienaar, resigned from the Board last year after an boardroom showdown when he accused employer representatives of trying to "take over" the funds. But in public he said nothing. General Manager, Mr John Hobbs, Property Manager, Mr J Winter, and the board's committee clerk, Mr A C Murray, were fired.

Contracts worth more than R100m with a developer were suddenly cancelled. The developer, Mr Martin Janit, claims a fund official defamed

him, and is suing the fund for more than R113 million.

Lawyers have written to the two ex-managers, demanding that they pay R22 million to the fund — said to be interest lost by the fund due to their negligence. The men can never pay of this amount, and it appears the letter may have been intended to silence them.

The demand did, however, give one of the directors pause for thought: "Can you sue an employee for negligence? ... because, if you were able to do it, it would open a huge — I mean, I am beginning to worry about the things that I have done," Mr Jowell is heard to say on tape.

A request for contribution figures by a Pretoria manufacturer prompts more fears:

Mr Du Plessis: "... it is very unlikely that workers would ask for a thing like that. I see that they have got a CA for a financial manager; I think this bugger wants it."

Mr Jowell concurs: I would be careful about giving information ... "

New General Manager, Mr Hennie Look: "Otherwise this information is going to be bandied around and is going to be used against us ... "

When last year's financial statements come up for discussion, the reason becomes clear:

The funds' actuary had placed "grave question marks" against values reflected in the accounts for properties owned by the various funds. His projections indicated a shortfall of assets to meet liabilities of R26 million in one fund and a shortfall of R66m in another. Unless members contributions were immediately increased by 2% of their salaries, for the next six years, the funds would not be able to meet their commitments.

"To me this is the most damning indictment of our running of this pension fund," Mr Herdman says.

Main reason for the shortfalls was their massive over investment, contrary to the guidelines of the Registrar of Pensions — in land and buildings. The funds have 47% of their assets in fixed properties producing very low returns, whereas their actuary thought that "anything above ten or fifteen percent needs to be very strongly justified".

Mr Herdman: "I do not believe that we at any time sat and very seriously considered that we should have so much in property, so much in shares, so much in cash and so on. We seemed to get dragged into [a] property investment by a very smart talk-

ing gentleman who produced beautiful models and, I mean, within three or four hours we had taken decisions involving R100 million which no-one in the business world would ever dream of doing. . . "

Quite apart from any "possible crookery", he says, "I do not believe we could achieve 80% of our property if we said to anybody outside, buy our portfolio."

A building bought by one of the funds for R4,8 million, was reflected in its books at a value of R6,5 million — based on what the staff thought it ought to earn. They ignored the fact that the property was, in fact, earning R1,8 million less.

From 1989 the fund's income yield had dropped from 13% to 9,4%. "I was horrified, but not surprised. Our performance was pretty awful then already," Mr Herdman says. He recollects how the fund once took part in a national survey: "We were so bad that our staff said they could not understand the figures — we could not possibly be *that* bad.

"So we withdrew from the survey. . . we were afraid to recognise that we were doing a poor job, and we are still doing it," he said.

On the accounts of the MOTEM Fund, he says: "It is a quite horrifying situation." Income had dropped by two-thirds. Interest had dropped by 75%. "How do we defend our performance as trustees?" he asks.

Mr Du Plessis preferred to put the blame on previous staff, who he accused of being "liars and crooks" and of being "mediocre".

"If we were in a business we would have to advise our shareholders and our creditors and everybody else," Mr Jowell says. "Should we not be advising our members, our shareholders or somebody?" Members certainly were not told.

Board members were not keen on letting even the Registrar know. "I do not believe [our over-exposure to property] has anything to do with the Registrar of Pensions anyway. . . said the chairman.

They nevertheless decided it might be better to "play it low-key". "You don't want to make too many waves because they will amend the regulations and include us in ..." a director observes.

* Copies of the Fund's Annual Statements available from the Registrar, have 4 pages missing — the actuary's report.

(To be continued).

Wanna buy a qualification?

Are you in the fashion or beauty business and feeling inadequate?

Do you want a certificate to hang on your wall which, if you haven't quite made it yet will dupe prospective clients into believing you have achieved greatness in your profession? Well, for a small consideration, the publishers of *Femme Magazine* will fix you up. Pam Parkin, who has established a successful and highly professional fashion training business in Cape Town, recently received a form letter from "E Gunter, President" of the aforesaid publishers of *Femme*. "Dear Ms Perkins" the letter began, and went on to say that she had "been selected as one of South Africa's achievers in the fashion and beauty industry".

As an achiever, the letter continued, she was eligible to be featured in the next edition of their prestigious 20th Century Fashion and Beauty Trade Reference Manual, the "Who's Who of the trade, which is distributed both locally and internationally".

If she responded in time to this marvellous opportunity, E Gunter promised that she would receive a 20th Century Fashion and Beauty Award Certificate, "to bear witness that you are a participant in the Biographical List of fashion and beauty Leaders of Influence".

And what a certificate! The accompanying brochure calls it "extraordinary ... signed and authenticated with a gold seal. The noticeable feature of this Award certificate is that it recognises the distinct selectivity of you as one of the influential achievers in the fashion and beauty industry this century."

Just the thing to impress poor, undereducated and desperate people seeking a qualification, or needing to rely on one before risking their hard-earned pittance.

And, as the brochure says, it "is not often that an individual is chosen to be among a select

Susie Jordan wins our Biggest Bunkum Book Award

Twentieth Century Achievement Award

This is to certify that

Pat Smith

has been recognised as being most admirable and whose career achievements and social contributions have been selected for permanent documentation in

*The 20th Century Fashion
and Beauty Industry Trade
Reference Manual.*

E. GUNTER
PRESIDENT

Expertly crafted



Susie Jordan

group of admired achievers". Before you write off for your own Certificate, read on.

The Certificate is available only to those who choose to appear in "The 20th Century Fashion and Beauty Industry Trade Reference Manual". To appear in the Manual you must complete a detailed application form listing, inter alia, your personal, family, education, career and outstanding achievements — although you'd have thought they'd have had some idea of all this before they appointed you as an achiever, wouldn't you?

But that is not all. You must also buy — and pay for in advance —

two copies of this "expertly crafted in navy and gold" publication, at a total cost of R550.

Well noseWEEK's got a few awards all of its own. If the publishers of *Femme* would like to send us a bank guaranteed cheque for R30 000 (VAT incl.) we will send them two beautifully crafted certificates, complete with gold seal.

The first is for achievement in publishing 1993's *Biggest Bunkum Book* (Local category).

The second is for the year's *Crappiest Copywriter*. The brochure is littered with stirring lines such as "By definition, these (the chosen) individuals in the trade are achievers with vision,

integrity and a sense of social commitment", and — our favourite — "the publishers feel the need to record the biographies of an elite group who have helped mould their industries in South Africa to be on a par with their peers internationally".

Well, you might say that anyone daft enough to send off

R550 to such a scheme deserves what they get. But as Pam Parkin (known to E. Gunter, President, as Ms Perkins) observed, it won't be a joke to the people who see, read and believe those 20th Century Achievement Award Certificates which will surely be prominently displayed on every second rate wall.

Desperate to apply for this latest offering from the House of Susie Jordan? No need to be anxious. Ms Gunter says the application forms were sent out by bulk postage, resulting in terrible delays — so she's extended the closing date to mid-October. ■

JOHANNESBURG'S NOT-SO-NICE COUNCILLORS CLIVE AND CECIL

Some Johannesburg City councillors just aren't very nice — definitely not the sort of people you would risk inviting home to meet the family.

Take Management Committee Member Cecil Bass, for instance. Councillor Bass used to be in the habit over summer weekends of taking his wife and kids to visit second cousin Jack Eliasov — the Eliasovs had a holiday house on the Vaal River; great Sunday lunches were served, and the kids had a ball in the river. On 30 December 1989, it was again such an occasion. Not only were the kids in need of entertainment over the Christmas and New Year holiday, but Cecil's brother, with his new bride were out from England for the festive period, and were sure to enjoy a day on the river.

After a pleasant brunch served by Mrs Eliasov, host Jack was prevailed upon to tow the kids on a special rubber tube behind his motorboat. Cecil came along in the boat for the joyride and, after the kids had had their fun, was persuaded to "have a go" too. Minutes later, what had been a great fun day in the sun turned to tragedy when Cecil, gaily trailing on his tube, struck a submerged pipe — part of an abandoned jetty. He was terribly hurt and was immediately rushed to hospital, where for the next several months he was treated for a severely broken pelvis and various other painful and debilitating injuries. A concerned Jack went to visit him regularly and, say friends, paid the first R12 000-odd of the excess medical expenses. (Cecil's Council Medical Aid fund pays most of the bills.)

Slowly Cecil recovered to the extent that, although he retains a limp, he is now the Council's main man promoting the City's bid to one day host the Olympics. (To

better equip him for the job, last year the entire Bass family went overseas to see how the Olympics were done in Madrid, and also took in Euro-Disneyland in France.)

But nearly two-and-a-half years after the accident, Jack Eliasov was in for a rude shock. Instead of the entire Bass family rocking up for the usual day's entertainment, the Deputy Sheriff arrived with a summons, in which Councillor Bass demanded that his erstwhile host pay him R1,3 million in damages: R300 000 for past and future medical expenses, R900 000 for estimated loss of earnings, and R80 000 for pain and suffering. All this is said to have been caused by Jack's alleged negligence and lack of skill in piloting a boat on the Vaal while having a City Councillor in tow on a rubber tube. The Eliasovs carry no personal liability insurance, and if the claim should succeed, Jack will be financially ruined.

As usual, after the lawyers have been paid their modest few hundreds of thousands of rands in fees, the courts will, in their own good time, "find" the law and do their bit to spread the damage around. Meanwhile readers would be well advised to think twice before providing free hospitality for Councillor Bass. There's no such thing as a (risk-) free lunch.

And then there's rebel Councillor Clive Gilbert, frequently Bass's opponent in Council. Various Johannesburg newspapers have recently reported that Councillor Gilbert (there by the grace of the Democratic Party) is seriously thinking of joining the ANC. It remains to be seen whether the ANC is seriously thinking of having him.

Councillor Gilbert was the DP's new star in 1988, when he was nominated for the safe Orange Grove ward. So remarkably keen were the party's leadership on their new recruit, that Uncle Zac was

determined not to hear anything about Gilbert's curious financial dealings and links with Johannesburg's underworld. A dossier of documents referring to these uncomfortable matters, handed to the DP leadership at the time, was for some strange reason never disclosed to the nomination committee responsible for screening candidates.

Not long after his election to the City Council, there was a flood of letters in the press from grateful ratepayers praising Councillor Gilbert. Unfortunately none of the authors could be traced, and the letters so trustingly published by the Star, etc., are now believed to have emanated from a source not far removed from the Gilbert family.

A year ago Clive Gilbert faced a showdown with colleagues in the DP caucus — but not about these delicate matters. He was simply being too critical of the council executive in public. Rather than be sacked from the caucus, he resigned — but remained on the City Council as an Independent.

Councillor Gilbert has frequently claimed that he is unjustly tarred with the same brush as his notorious gangster brother, John, whose financially and psychologically ruined victims are to be found around the globe. But victims are not totally without reason in seeing more than just family ties between them.

Most serious was an extraordinary incident in October 1979 when Clive was alleged to have assisted brother John and other Joburg gangsters in an armed robbery.

The events were described by the victim, one David Prissman, in a statement to the police early in 1980. Prissman had supplied diamonds on approval to another well-known gem dealer, Ezra Kaplan of African American Diamonds (Pty) Ltd, who, in turn, then sold them

to John Gilbert. Kaplan did not know at the time that charming Mr Gilbert was an insolvent twice over — and a ruthless psychopath.

John Gilbert gave Kaplan a series of post-dated cheques for the diamonds, totalling R150 000, and drawn on Povi Motorcar and Finance Corporation — a garage in Fox Street, Johannesburg, “owned” by fellow gangster, Yosi Yosepovitch. However, Prissman told Kaplan he was not prepared to accept the cheques. When Gilbert was told, he agreed to return some of the diamonds and pay cash next day for the rest.

But that afternoon, as Prissman was entering Armadale Place in Bree Street, he found himself surrounded by the Gilbert brothers and some of their “friends”. Prissman was forced into a lift and several witnesses testified to seeing Clive Gilbert press the barrel of a gun — Prissman himself thought it was a 9mm parabellum — to Prissman’s head, while shouting “If any harm comes to John or his family, you’re a dead man!”. Meanwhile John Gilbert forced Prissman to hand back the cheques, grabbed his appro book and tore out the page relating to the transaction. That was the last either Prissman or Kaplan saw of the diamonds or payment.

Neither Clive nor John Gilbert were charged in court with armed robbery because, mysteriously, the police dossier disappeared, and was recovered only years later at a private address.

John Gilbert fled South Africa in February 1985, shortly after he had been ordered to produce various documents at an insolvency inquiry being held into his third insolvency. Brother Clive drove him to the airport. He headed for Australia, where he promptly married a blond citizen to obtain residence rights. (Only possible because, years earlier he had, for various reasons, taken the precaution of divorcing his Israeli wife, although they had continued to live together for years thereafter. In Australia he continued his career of fraud and, before long, abandoned his new wife (in

debt) and moved on to Britain with old wife Shoshana — where he has since been sequestered again.

Various of John Gilbert’s frauds were carried out from the Johannesburg premises of the family business, Gilbert Estates. In one of the earlier and more notorious, called Brickall, hundreds of people who responded to adverts in the Star, were persuaded to pay cash up front for bricks that were never delivered. Clive paid for the adverts, the office and the telephone, but later when the victims and Star Line came looking for the money, he claimed that he was “not his brother’s keeper”. The cash went into various accounts, including some controlled by their mother, Mrs Doris Gilbert. She, too, has said she is not her son’s keeper. She only keeps his money.

**Witnesses testified
how Clive Gilbert
pressed the barrel of
a gun to Prissman’s
head, shouting
“If harm comes to
John . . . you’re a
dead man”**

Mr Sydney Melunsky, who worked as a salesman for Gilbert Estates from 1981 to 1983 (Clive Gilbert was in charge of the business at the time), has testified under oath about how he was threatened jointly by the Gilberts — Clive, John and mother Doris — to keep quiet and not to sue for the money they owed him, or they would “see to it” that he got nothing. At the end they owed him R36 000 — and he got nothing. Again the debts arose from shady diamond deals, a series of post-dated cheques and business deals involving the sale of butcheries — Boksburg Fresh Meat Supply and Shane’s Butchery amongst them — which were stripped of their assets and run into debt by John Gilbert

before being fraudulently sold by Gilbert Estates.

While gangster John was always officially insolvent, he nevertheless invariably drove a Mercedes, if not a Cadillac. Clive, too, at one time had a red Mercedes (when John wasn’t driving it to Sun City or selling it for a small deposit to several buyers at the same time — including a secretary to the Commissioner of Police). This particular Mercedes was registered in Clive’s name, but, inexplicably, at an address in Bedfordview — the owner of which had never heard of the Gilberts.

It’s amazing how many people through the years have managed to gain the impression that Clive, although, is an attorney, when asked directly, he will readily admit he never was. Clive Gilbert abandoned his legal studies - and his attorney’s articles with widely-respected attorney, Leon Isaacs — in 1969, and went to assist his brother in the property business that made John, then only 21, a self-made millionaire worthy of a report in Time Magazine. Needless to say, within a year, John was bankrupt and the scheme came unstuck, leaving scores of prospective home buyers stranded.

Attorney Isaacs’s life and legal practice were later to be devastated by the doings of John Gilbert.

A broken Mr Isaacs would later say of his encounter with Clive’s brother: “One of his favourite remarks was that he leaves a trail of dead bodies behind him ... I have come to understand what that means ... financial death, death of name, death of dignity, death of ruination, every kind of death except the final death waited for me. He systematically set out to ruin me. Everything that is dear to me is gone.”

Clive Gilbert has, nevertheless, gone to extraordinary lengths to protect his brother and prevent his victims from obtaining redress. There is good reason for suspecting that some of brother John’s ill-gotten gains have been safely invested in properties in which Councillor Gilbert has an interest. ■

*Maureen Barnes on TV***BLOOD AND BLOODY-MINDEDNESS**

It is a pretty shaming thing for a so-called TV critic to admit, but I've got to the stage where I don't want to watch or to listen to anything real anymore.

There's too much reality here. And it leaves the viewer saturated with misery. First comes the news where every night we are shown the obligatory pool of blood marking the spot where human beings died that day. Then there's the day's body count and list of atrocities. If you don't actually appear on the news, dead or alive, you are left feeling drained, helpless, guilty and very depressed.

And it is all reported so badly, no attempt is made at an interpretation of the events which might at least advance some understanding. SATV functions to a recipe and seems to think that gory photographs, followed by any equally routine one-sentence comment from first the ANC, then the Nats, then Inkatha, then the Conservative Party — each blameless and accusing others of responsibility for the atrocity — to be sufficient. Investigative reporting, for which laughably they give each other awards, is non-existent. They should get Isobel Jones on the news, she'd achieve more than their pathetic news reporters.

Light relief comes in the form of pictures of the fighting and starving in Somalia or Bosnia — presumably to console us that we are not the only ones having a tough time.

Next in the reality stakes comes the daily Agenda, then there is Future Imperfect (where participants are asked to deal with more, imagined horror scenarios in the future), Top Level and Carte Blanche — the latter interspersing local horrors with fun things, usually imported, about mass murderers, gay dwarfs, Siamese Twins and other curiosities.

Worst of all is the talking. The endless, endless talking. The giving of ill-considered opinions by politicians; the military; the police; the sociologists; the visiting experts; the trades unionists; the strikers; the

workers; the bosses. They've all got opinions. They're entitled. But I don't want to hear any more of them.

Perhaps it all comes down to the dehumanisation of events. Even now we get "Fifty black mineworkers and Mr Van der Merwe were killed in a rock fall". The Nats have always been good at that — after all what is apartheid but the basic dehumanisation of people? We've now got to the stage where it is difficult to tell whether you are looking at today's corpses or a rerun of yesterday's. Is this the way civilised people should feel?

And if anyone tells me they understand what the hell is going on at the "negotiating table" at the World Trade Centre, I know they're lying. I'm sick of going to dinners where people (including me) feel obliged to pretend they understand the latest "break through". (The only thing we all understood was the break-in — and that they clearly couldn't cope with.) Human beings aren't genetically programmed with an attention span long enough to listen to the interminable reports. We've been bombarded with it all for so long now, that I can't even remember which side I'm supposed to be on. Will it ever end?

I suspect that it's all a stalling exercise to gain the Nats extra time to rush through laws, award contracts and make arrangements to suit their own personal financial needs and those of their chums.

At the end of it all the ANC will be in power, Gatsha B will still be whining and the whites, unless they are reasonable and repentant, will be irrelevant. No amount of wishful thinking, bloodshed or bloody-mindedness can change that. Compared to what we are going through now, it seems a reasonable enough prospect. So why not stop talking and just get it over with?

Even though I've got to the stage where all I want to watch are Disney movies, I must admit that

Ulibambe Lingashoni: *Hold Up The Sun* — a history of the ANC — is a terrific piece of work, if the first episodes are anything to go by. It is an excellent example of how the most terrible facts, if presented with humanity, and constructed in an intelligent way, can make enthralling viewing. You are left sad — certainly; shamed — definitely, but, at the same time, inspired by the incredible courage and endurance of ordinary decent people.

RADIO :

Radio has the advantage over the telly of having no pictures. You only see what you want to see which, these days, comes as a great relief. Here are some of the programmes which brighten my life and make me forget for a while the general malaise of the times.

It takes a lot to make me wake up regularly at 7 a.m. on a Sunday, but Ronald Charles's "Classics by Request" does. And it always proves worth the sacrifice. What a joy this programme is. As a musician he knows his stuff, but he is never superior, never patronising. His wry comments on the music and the interesting tidbits of background information he shares with us makes this very special listening indeed.

One does not need to see Monica Fairall's pretty face to know she is a star broadcaster. Her programme "Pathways to Health" is entertaining and informative, but it is "Let the Good Times Roll" — her scintillating rock'n roll programme for "oldies" (Gawd!) on Friday nights at 7-30 which gives me the greatest pleasure. Efforts not to miss this show have reeked havoc with my social life at home and away. One evening I deserted my visitors and was happily in the kitchen singing along with the rockers of my youth.

Radio continued:

Time just flies when you are having fun. A hungry guest knocked at the kitchen door and plaintively asked "Can I join the party?"

Another musical treat is Michael Findlay who, every morning, from Monday to Friday offers a delicious

three quarters of an hour of jolly tunes of the '50s, '60s and '70s. Those were the days.

You can keep Loving. I don't miss a Georgette Heyer morning serial (repeated at 7-15 p.m. on week-days). Latest dramatisation of these often underrated historical novels is "Cousin Kate". Featuring actors of

the calibre of Shelagh Holliday, Bruce Millar, Graham Armitage and Gaby Lomberg, the production — by Julia Ann Malone — is really well done. The fine voices and good acting come as a welcome change from the strangled accents of the news reporters on Radio SA. ■

nose in a thriller



THE WAY THROUGH THE WOODS by Colin Dexter (Pan Macmillan)

I've always had a reluctance to read any book-of-the-film/TV series. Most of these are hastily-cobbled efforts intended to milk the last drop of profit from what might originally have been a good idea.

While I had, therefore, heard of the hugely popular "Inspector Morse" British TV series — there have been seven to date — I had never been

inclined to read any of Colin Dexter's thrillers about the detective. The moment I opened "The Way Through the Woods" and read the extract from the poem with the same title by Rudyard Kipling, I realised my mistake. This turned out to be a satisfyingly literary thriller. As a quotation freak, I was enchanted by the many quotations Dexter has found to cleverly signpost the trail. No wonder it is high on the UK best-seller list.

Set in and around Blenheim Palace, the intricate plot tells of a young Swedish tourist who disappears without trace. A year passes and then a letter to the Times raises some questions. Enter Morse.

Great stuff — and I am now going to have a good time reading all Dexter's previous novels, which, I have recently learned, do, in fact, predate the TV series.

DEAD MEAT by Philip Kerr (Chatto & Windus)

This year Philip Kerr was selected as one of the Best of Young British Novelists. "Dead Meat" is set in St Petersburg with its hunger, poverty and changing beaurocracy. An investigator from Moscow arrives to find out more about the increase in organised crime and has to work with the local expert, detective Yevgeni Grushko.

It's a fast-paced novel which tells much about modern Russia and its various ethnic inhabitants. Even the gangsters are organised on ethnic lines. — A Georgian thug found dead in the boot of a car; the Abkhazians organising taxi scams; the Chechens running a prostitution ring. Deadly enemies of each other and the world at large.

If you enjoyed "Gorky Park" this one is for you.

NINTENDO RISING

Game Over . How Nintendo Zapped an Industry, Captured Your Money, and Enslaved Your Children. by David Sheff (Hodder & Stoughton)

Although the story of the rise, rise and rise of Nintendo isn't supposed to be a thriller, I've included it here because it reads like a thriller. The history of this Japanese company, which has become one of the business wonders of the world, is not only thrilling, but at times pretty sinister too.

In a small Moscow apartment we meet the two creative geniuses — one of them the 17-year-old son of a nuclear physicist — who one afternoon watched the fish in the city aquarium and were inspired to create a new game on their PC at home. Tetris and all its offspring were born — and an entire industry took another giant leap into the future.

The tale that follows includes a thrilling court case and international intrigue, with men from the giant

Atari Corp in the USA competing with Robert Maxwell's UK-based Mirrorsoft and the Japanese Nintendo. Each sends a secret mission to Moscow in a winner-takes-all race to track down the two young inventors of the world's greatest video game. After that they plan to tie down Russia's political masters in a billion dollar deal. Maxwell calls in friends Margeret Thatcher and Gorbachev for a bit of extra leverage, the men from Atari sign a deal that isn't quite what they thought it was and Nintendo ... ah, Nintendo ...

In 1949, Hiroshi Yamauchi, took over the then only moderately successful company, which, when it was founded in Kyoto by his great-grandfather in 1889, manufactured hand-made playing cards. Hiroshi, only 22, immediately moved into video games and by 1991 Nintendo's annual earnings outstripped Sony by over 400 m.

Just one video game, "Super Mario Bros.3", would sell more copies than any video game in history — seven million in the US alone

Yamauchi is brilliant, ruthless and exploitative. Running a streamlined operation and using cunning and talent, he built up the company until Nintendo's profits per employee were consistently greater than that of any other Japanese company.

In 1991 Nintendo earned \$1,5 m per employee. Internationally, the company employed around 5000 people. That year Sony, with 50 000 employees, earned \$400 less. Nintendo is now the number one Japanese corporation, ahead of Toyota and Honda. American business is still reeling from the impact of this company and David Sheff, has written his story in a gripping and eminently readable way. He believes that Nintendo is now better positioned than any other company in the world to cash in on inter-active multi-media — the technological growth industry of the next decade — to take it another step further on the road to Well, just buy the book and read all about it.

— Maureen Barnes

nosing about the Art World with Pince Nez

JOBURG'S ART ROUTE TO IMAGE ENHANCEMENT

If there is a culture peculiar to the locals in Johannesburg, it appears all to do with self image, public image and money — who has it and who dispenses it.

Go to any of the openings at theatres or art galleries and you will immediately spot the artistic cognoscenti — all dressed and behaving in ways to demonstrate clearly their particular role playing attitudes.

- **Linda Goodman's** gallery attracts the earnest mother/daughter combination out to improve their minds and display their intellectual interest in contemporary art, albeit still safely within the confines of Northern suburbs gentility. Also Cosmopolitans with a long time and genuine interest in visual art, but intent on buying well, which means an art work with a decent resale value, preferably in Europe, to where it will be shipped, ostensibly for restoration purposes. Linda has her loyal band of artists who make an appearance too, afraid to step out of line in case her promises to show their work at an international art fair are negated by any apparent or suspected switch of allegiance.

- **The Everard Read Gallery** attracts the WASPs, wild life art lovers and those who enjoy the sensation of being cherished by master salesmen Mark Read and Ian Keogan, who dispense good cheer, cold white wine and unstinting admiration for the client's good judgement in selecting a particular work. Their openings are more in the realm of high class cocktail parties; the actual art viewing and buying take place in private on a preview day by special and personalised invitation.

- By contrast, **Trent Read's** openings at his controversial and therefore highly publicised contemporary art gallery bring out all the artistic young lions — headed up by self proclaimed king of the avant garde Kendell Geers, and assisted by young hopefuls like Wayne Barker, Robert Weinek and Alan Aldworth. Designer stubble, leather, earrings and plain old grunge much in evidence. Other visitors to this gallery include



Andrew Donaldson

mothers killing time between school lifts, whose offspring are titillated and amused by the mostly salacious work on view.

- **Ricky Burnett's** eclectic **Newtown Galleries** attracts numbers of the grunge set too, nearly all poor and often more interested in the free drink than what's on the walls. Attendees sometimes include a handful of visitors from the North, drawn by partner Mary Slack's name on the invitation and the thrill of being able to tell their

friends that they had braved the drive into the city on a Sunday evening.

The only person who regularly attends openings at each of these galleries is the ubiquitous David Bennett who wanders bemusedly around, glass in hand and sporting a nautical looking cap.

The pity of all this is that the name of the cultural game is self promotion. A recent performance of "Theatre-sports", an acting game in which the players have to act out scenarios proposed by the audience was almost ruined by the absurdity of the audience's suggestions — each calculated to show off the trendy wit and intellectual prowess of the proposer, rather than to add to the fun of the evening. By the way, the audience was composed mainly of the sort of people who wear T shirts bearing slogans like "I am not gay but my boyfriend is."

With the notable exception of music lovers there seems to be a feeling that arts and culture should not be just enjoyed; that appreciation requires a *look*, an *attitude* and an *image* on the part of the viewer.

The hordes of Zairians and other fans who crammed the Electric Workshop to listen and dance to the music of Manu Dibango showed what art appreciation might have been. Why not participate and enjoy our South African cultural experiences, whatever their sources may be, rather than judging them and adjusting our reaction to them according to a fashion yardstick imported at third hand from Europe and America. ■

Pigging Out...



Sandton

Vilamoura in the Sandton Sun

Vasco da Gama, Bartolomeu Diaz, Ferdinand Magellan — the Portuguese have a proud history as seafarers, discoverers and navigators. Escoffier was French, as, sadly, are Paul Bocuse and Marcel Roux. Portugal, however, is noted for discovering 1001 clever things to do with salted cod fish.

The highlights of Portuguese cuisine were drawn from her colonial past. Whereas the Dutch colonised Indonesia and brought home nasi goreng, and the British yoked India, the Portuguese found inspiration for their cuisine in the culinary centres of Angola and Mocambique.

Vilamoura, too, is on an expansionist path. We tried the branch recently opened in the Sandton Sun in what was Villa dei Cesari and Spats. The Spats part echoes hollowly, but the ex-Villa dei Cesari — now Portugesified — is a far cry from the Vilamoura in Hurlingham.

The red and green theme has gone. (One can only thank heralds past that the Portuguese and Italians were not blessed with national colours of puce and purple — can you imagine the decor in the restaurants?) Southern Sun Florentine merges uneasily with the Lusitanian — the shiny terracotta floors, the pictorial wall tiles, *trompe l'oeil*, chandeliers and large fountain live face to face with bad

ceramic wall plates, plastic palm trees, polyester ivy creeping up Italianate columns and a partially mirrored ceiling.

We searched the cavernous chamber for someone we'd recognise — perhaps Johannesburg's most famous Portuguese people. No Barbara Barnard and Joe da Silva. Maybe Vilamoura doesn't buy Joe's prawns. Joe Berardo was nowhere to be seen. Alex and Don Barrell — could they be taking mum out for a little bacalhau? No. The clientele was more a happy merger of Morningside Manor and Bordeaux — Jewrassic Park meets Boerassic Park.

We ordered wine. Our waiter approved our request for an ice bucket as, he assured us, "the wine at Vilamoura is always very warm. I suppose it's where they keep it." I'd always speculated on what the prawns had eaten before I ate them, but this was going too far.

During the deep dark days of P W Botha the Department of Information invented a community of 600 000 Portuguese in South Africa as a threat which was used against a European Community then leaning towards sanctions. (A marvellous irony lies in the fact that the National Party is now counting on 600 000 Portuguese votes on April 27 and the CP is overcoming its anti-Catholic xenophobia to accommodate this constituency.) The pity, however, is that there aren't 600 000 Portuguese in SA — or even half that number, I can tell you with some authority. Had we a Portuguese community of hundreds of thousands perhaps Vilamoura would have found sufficient staff to speed up the service and run the kitchen slightly faster.

There has been a national flowering of restaurants specialising in fish — the free Marketeers and Clem Sunter groupies have got it all wrong. The reformist battle cry for the new SA is surely "teach them to fish" — not "Let them eat fish". Anyway, how could they eat fish from a menu with more SQs than prices.

The clams were throat burningly, lip puckeringly salty. The "baby lobsters", which our waiter assured us were "probably illegally got from

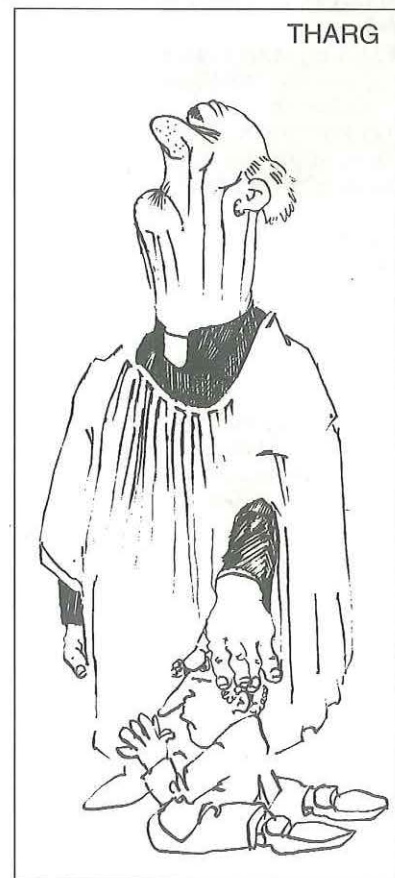
the border between Natal and Mocambique", were served with a choice of Lemon-Butter or Garlic-Butter sauce. Butter? we asked the waiter. Not margarine? We were thrice assured that butter is butter. The closest this "butter" had ever been to a cow was in the kitchen of Vilamoura. This was definitely not butter. This was margarine or Castrol GTX.

Definitely not butter.

Vilamoura has mastered the technique of serving enormous platters of chips and rice. This, I assume, is meant to foster the illusion of value for money. My "Portuguese curried crab" arrived on a huge plate drowned in litres of bright yellow sauce. Crab? The sauce was so unsubtle that what lived under it could have been shredded turnip and no-one would be any the wiser.

Dessert. The Vilamoura Special was described to us. We decided to skip this condensed milk laden delight, called for the bill, fainted, paid and left. All the way home I saw eyes painted on the prow of my car.

THARG



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